

Announcer: The Church of the Air is presented by CBS Radio so that men of many faiths may speak to a nationwide congregation. Today's service is presented in conjunction with the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and comes from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, through the facilities of Station KSL in Salt Lake City. The speaker will be LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church. Music is provided by the Tabernacle Choir under the direction of J. Spencer Cornwall. Frank W. Asper is at the organ.

The Choir opens with a hymn by Eliza R. Snow sung in a setting by Ebenezer Beesley: "Great is the Lord; 'tis good to praise His high and holy name: Well may the Saints in latter day His wondrous love proclaim."

(The Choir sang "Great is the Lord.")

Announcer: "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah. . . . When the earth begins to tremble, bid our fearful thoughts be

still; when Thy judgments spread destruction, keep us safe on Zion's Hill."—"Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah."

(The Choir sang: "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah"—Hughes-Robinson)

Announcer: "How wondrous and great Thy works, God of praise! How just, King of Saints, and true are thy ways! O who shall not fear thee, and honor thy name? Thou only art holy, Thou only supreme."

(The Choir sang: "How wondrous and Great"—Haydn)

Announcer: We shall now hear on this *Church of the Air* service LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, frequently referred to as the Mormon Church. LeGrand Richards was formerly Presiding Bishop of the Church, and, in addition, has long and widely served in civic and business affairs. He has titled today's talk by the scriptural text: "CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL SERVE."

ELDER LEGRAND RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I GREET you this morning as one who, for many years, has been particularly interested in the problems of youth. I have come face to face with thousands of the young people of this great land. I have looked into their promising countenances, have grasped their hands, have shared their dreams and aspirations. I love them and I feel concern for them. I have come to feel that, more than anything else, they need to be taught faith in God and in His eternal principles. They live in a world of changing standards and attitudes; but God has not changed, for He is the same yesterday, today and forever, and His principles and commandments are immutable.

And so today I should like to direct my remarks to the youth of the land, and to all who lead them. They are at the crossroads, and I speak with their future happiness in mind.

Jesus, the Great Teacher, in order to help men choose the proper course of life, the road which would bring them eternal happiness, said:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)

To every individual comes the responsibility of choosing his way; the wide and broad way, that leadeth to destruction; or the strait and narrow way which leadeth unto life,—and, I should like to add: to respect, achievement and happiness.

With this in mind, I call attention to three of many problems with which our youth are faced. The first I mention is the growing practice of profanity.

Sunday, October 5

Third Day

Our young people are particularly susceptible to it. During the war many communications were received from men in the Armed Forces containing alarming statements such as this:

"I have been amazed, astonished, and disgusted at some of the things I have seen and heard in the six weeks that I have been with Uncle Sam. I never expected to hear the swearing and vile talk that I have heard, not in a so-called Christian country. Where have the parents been to let a generation grow up so morally wrong?"

And to this question might be added: Where have the teachers of our youth been, and have we of the clergy done all that we might have done?

The Lord has never rescinded the commandment He gave to Israel of old through His great Prophet Moses:

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. (Exodus 20:7)

Have we as parents taught our children this great commandment in sincerity, so they may have reason to feel their parents believe the Lord meant what He said? It is difficult to understand how a person may truly approach God in prayer, seeking a blessing at His hand, and at the same time be so disrespectful as to take His name in vain. During the dark days of the Civil War, Lincoln issued an order to the Army and Navy which contained the following statement: "The discipline and character of the National Forces should not suffer, nor the cause they defend be imperiled by the profanation of the Sabbath Day or the name of the Most High."

We are told that he went "so far as to admonish a certain general, who was addicted to the habit of profanity, to abandon the habit himself and to use his authority to discourage it among the soldiers."

Profanity is incompatible with reverence. Surely at this critical time in our nation's history, when we need the sustaining help of God, we should see

that we offend Him not by reason of our language. I appeal to our young people everywhere to hold in reverence the sacred name of Deity, that they may walk acceptably before the Lord and so that should there come a time in their lives when they need His sustaining help they may go to Him with good conscience and call upon Him with faith that He will hear their plea.

I now pass to a second problem confronting our youth, and that is the indiscriminate and intemperate use of alcoholic beverages. A short time ago I was asked to speak to the inmates of a state penitentiary. At the close of the meeting quite a number remained to discuss their problems with me, and I was invited to return and talk to the Alcoholics Anonymous group. I listened to the stories of some of this group. The leader, a comparatively young man, said something like this: "I thank God for the privilege of being in this institution." I was surprised at what he said, but he went on to explain: "Before I came here I was no good to myself, to my family, or my country. I was just no good—period. But now I have hope that when I leave here I will be worth something to somebody."

Can you imagine a man having followed the "broad" road so far that he could thank God for the privilege of being behind prison bars in the hope that he might be able to extirpate himself, and again be able to plant his feet on the strait and narrow way "which leadeth unto life"?

One cannot go among such men without having his heart touched with great sympathy for them and their families. You think of all the factors which brought them to this status. You think of blighted hopes and aspirations. You wonder if perhaps their parents set them along this path by reason of a bad example. As you look at a man helpless, no longer master of himself, you think of the man who induced him to take his first drink.

The Lord has made it clear that our bodies are the tabernacles of our spirits. We cannot abuse and offend the body

without offending our Creator. To our young people I should like to say that we live in a time when competition, whether in war or in peace, demands clear minds and steady hearts. It becomes each of us to refrain from those substances which in any way might impair our abilities or which might place us in a position where we no longer would feel that we were on the Lord's side.

I have time to mention only one other matter and I do so with concern in my heart for our young people. I speak of virtue and chastity. It is encouraging to find men and women in all walks of life who are seriously disturbed about our moral standards. I state my case with a quotation from the "*Womans Home Companion*" of September, 1949, under the heading "Is Chastity Outmoded?"

"Today we talk about sex with an unembarrassed frankness that would have filled our grandparents with amazement and horror. This new liberty of speech has its counterpart in behavior. In many circles the traditional restraints in sex conduct are considered stuffy and out of fashion. Chastity, say modern people, is outmoded."

People may have changed their thinking, but God has not changed. His laws are eternal. Truth is eternal. If we will save our civilization, it will be because we return to an observance of God's laws.

The Lord gave unto ancient Israel the commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14) And the Savior put His stamp of approval upon this commandment and added:

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28)

In the light of such a statement, surely no Christian can feel that chastity is outmoded.

An American prophet, Alma, taught his son Corianton that adultery was "most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost"; that "wickedness never was happiness"; and that "no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of God."

I am happy to represent a people who have taught such from the beginning of our history. We are striving to teach our children, as our parents have taught us, that there is no double standard of morality and virtue in the sight of God; that He expects every man to protect his virtue, and that of every woman, even though it might cost him his life so to do. To the boys of our Church, upon entering the Armed Forces and leaving their homes, the Presidency of the Church made this statement: "Better dead clean than alive unclean."

During the last war, a doctor who was returning from service in the Islands of the Pacific, said to me: "In the islands everyone lets his standards down." Then he added, "But there was a young nurse there from your community whom no man could touch. She said, 'I left my home clean and I am going to return the way I left.'" It was her faith in God, and her respect for the teachings of her parents and church that gave her the courage to choose the strait and narrow way, "which leadeth unto life."

Surely her children and her children's children unto the latest generation will call her blessed for the nobility of her soul. When I think of this girl, and thousands of others throughout the land like her, I compare them with Joseph who was sold into Egypt by his brothers and who later became the savior of his father's family. Potiphar's wife tried repeatedly to seduce him, but as he resisted her and fled from her he said:

... How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? (Genesis 39:9)

"How glorious is he who lives the chaste life. He walks unfeared in the

Sunday, October 5

Third Day

full glare of the noonday sun, for he is without moral infirmity. He can be reached by no shafts of base calumny, for his armour is without flaw. His virtue cannot be challenged by any just accuser, for he lives above reproach. His cheek is never blotched with shame, for he is without hidden sin. He is honored and respected by all mankind, for he is beyond their censure. He is loved by the Lord, for he stands without blemish. The exaltations of eternities await his coming." (Message of the First Presidency, October, 1942)

And so I plead with the youth, keep yourselves clean. Virtue may be old-fashioned, but it is the foundation on which great characters, and great families, and great nations are established; and without it decay is inevitable.

I have some fear that we, the spiritual leaders of the people, in our interpretation of the word of the Lord with respect to the great principles of repentance and forgiveness of sin, have so emphasized the principle of forgiveness that an attitude of complacency is growing among us based on the assumption that if we sin a little we may be forgiven to go on our way without loss. I am inclined to believe that we are in need of placing greater emphasis on abstinence from sin and less on forgiveness, for God has not abrogated the law that as ye sow, so shall ye reap.

And so, in conclusion, I should like to urge our youth as they go into the Armed Services, or as they prepare to meet life, to resist the temptation to profane the name of Deity that they may be blameless before the Lord; to keep their bodies free from those substances which will impede their progress; and to live according to the laws of virtue that generations to come may call them blessed.

Finally, a word to those who teach and lead the youth of the land: Our great responsibility is to teach the youth, with the full power of example and precept, that the Lord desires that His children should be happy, and that the way of happiness is righteousness.

If we are remiss in this responsibility, God will not hold us guiltless.

My parting counsel and advice I give unto you in the words of the Prophet Joshua who said in speaking to the hosts of Israel:

... choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. (Joshua 24:15)

God help us to choose the right and to assist others so to do, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(The Choir sang: "The Morning Breaks"—Careless-Pratt)

Announcer: And now the Choir closes this *Church of the Air* service with words by Harriet Beecher Stowe, sung to the music of Harry Row Shelley in a song that speaks of a glorious eternal continuance: "So shall it be at last in that bright morning, when the soul waketh and life's shadows flee. Oh, in that hour, fairer than daylight's dawning, shall rise the glorious thought, I am with thee."

(The Choir sang: "Still, Still with Thee"—Shelley)

Announcer: You have been attending CBS Radio's *Church of the Air*, coming to you from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, through the facilities of Station KSL in Salt Lake City. This service was presented in conjunction with the Semi-Annual General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the speaker was LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church. Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir under the direction of J. Spencer Cornwall. Frank Asper was at the organ. . . .

Time and facilities for the Church of the Air are provided without charge by CBS Radio and its affiliated stations, and in the same spirit the participating speakers and choirs give their services.