

President David O. McKay:

Elder LeGrand Richards of the

Council of the Twelve will now speak to us, and he will be followed by Elder Bruce McConkie.

ELDER LEGRAND RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

AT THE opening session of this great conference yesterday, President David O. McKay gave us two great objectives: the one, to put our homes in order, and the second, to proclaim the divine mission of the Redeemer of the world. We have listened to some beautiful talks on those subjects, and particularly on the mission of the Redeemer of the world since that opening address, especially appropriate in view of the fact that today is Easter, when all the Christian world is celebrating that event.

I should like to tell you an experience I had while laboring as a missionary in New Bedford, Massachusetts, some years ago. We were approaching the Easter Sunday, and I had a discussion with a minister of the gospel about the mission of the Redeemer of the world. I had him explain to me the God in whom he believed. Naturally, in keeping with the ordinary orthodox Christian view, he explained how God the Father, and God the Son and God the Holy Ghost were one God, and then he went on to indicate their works and said, in substance, that they were so large that they filled the whole universe, and so small that they could dwell in our hearts; that they were the life of the plants and flowers and everything around us. And then I interjected this question, "What are we celebrating this week?" And he said, "The Easter." I said, "What does that really mean?" "Well," he said, "it's the resurrection of Christ." I said, "Just what do you mean by the resurrection of Christ?" Then I led him to explain. I said, "You mean that the stone was actually rolled away and that when the women came to the tomb that the angels proclaimed that he was not there, that he was arisen, that the very

body that was taken down from the cross and laid in that tomb had arisen?" And he admitted that that was true.

And I said that in that body he appeared to his disciples and when doubting Thomas questioned the fact that he was actually the Redeemer whom they had known, he asked Thomas to put his hand in the wound in Jesus' side and feel the prints in his hands, and see that "I am the same," for, said he, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (See Luke 24:39.) And to indicate further the fact that he had that same body that was laid away in the tomb, he took fish and honeycomb and ate with them. I said, "Now that was the same body that he laid away in the tomb, wasn't it?" And he agreed that it was.

And then I led him on through the experience of the Savior in ministering among his disciples for forty days until in the presence of five hundred of the brethren he was carried away in the clouds of heaven, and two men dressed in white apparel stood and said, as the brethren gazed into heaven to watch him ascend, ". . . Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11.) And he agreed that that actually happened.

And then I said, "My friend, where is the body that Jesus took out of the tomb, if he and the Father are one, and an essence everywhere present in the world? Would you say that Jesus died a second death and laid his body down again?" And he thought for a few minutes. He said, "I am afraid I can't answer that. I have never thought of it before in that way."

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Now, brothers and sisters, I thank God that we have a recommitment to this earth in our day and time that he does have his body, that he does actually exist as the Redeemer of the world, that he did break the bands of death, that the grave might have no victory in that it delivered up his body, as it will do for all of us, of which we have heard such wonderful testimonies here in this conference.

Sometime ago, Brother Clifford Young gave a Church of the Air address. He told me following that of some of the letters he had received commenting on his address. And one was from a minister of the gospel, in which he said something like this: "It pleases me greatly to know that the Mormons believe in the Christ." I have thought a great deal about that statement since, and I have thought of the feeling the world has toward our people. I have compared it to the time when Paul stood at Rome to be judged, and they said unto him, ". . . we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against." (Acts 28:22.) Why did they speak against it? Was it not the same when Paul stood there bound in chains, when he delivered that marvelous testimony before Agrippa and Festus, when Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (*Ibid.*, 26:28.) And Festus said, ". . . thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." (*Ibid.*, 26:24.) To which Paul replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." (*Ibid.*, 26:25.) And then he said: "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." (*Ibid.*, 26:29.) Think of Saul just shortly before that, when they laid at his feet the cloaks of those who stoned and put to death Stephen, the prophet of God. And you remember how Stephen gazed into heaven and saw Jesus sitting on the right hand of his

Father. And then Saul went from that experience into Damascus with an order to persecute the Christians.

That is just like the world. They don't understand, and so they malign us, and they tell all manner of things that are not true, and they do not have the right conception, just like Paul of old. But when the testimony had come to Paul, he was a different man. The Church hadn't changed; Christ hadn't changed; his truth was the same; but Saul of Tarsus had changed. He was now Paul, the Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A short time ago I sent one of our Church books to a distant relative on my mother's side, back in Massachusetts. My cousin, Merlin Steed, had been there and had visited him. He wrote Merlin a letter and said he had spent three weeks reading the book. He said, "It is a great eye opener to me. It is the first book I have ever read in favor of the Mormons." And then he added this statement, "I doubt if you have any idea of the fantastic yarns that are current in New England concerning the Mormon Church. Some of them are so wild that I doubt if the persons who tell them really believe what they are saying themselves."

That is what we have to meet in the world. If the Lord would but take that prejudice out of their hearts! I ask this question: Why did they persecute the saints of old? Why did they put to death the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ? Why did they crucify our Lord? Only because of the darkness that covered their minds and the efforts of the evil one to destroy the work of God in the earth, and for that same reason, they misunderstand the motives of this great Church today.

I had an experience in Oregon after my first mission. I had spent some time with a prominent businessman. He didn't know I was a Mormon, and he painted the Mormons and the Mormon missionaries so black it almost made my blood run cold. When he was through, I said, "My friend, now

don't you feel embarrassed, because," I said, "you are sitting right here at the side of a Mormon missionary." He went red in the face, and I said, "I forgive you," because I had qualified him before. I said, "Have you ever read a Mormon book?" He said, "No." I said, "Have you ever met a Mormon?" And he said, "No." I said, "I forgive you because you are not supposed to know any better. Where did you get your information from?" "Oh," he said, "you hear it on the streets, and you read it in the magazines and in the newspapers; everybody knows what the Mormons are."

Now, brethren and sisters, if there is any Church in this world that really believes that Jesus is the Christ, surely it is the Latter-day Saints. No Church has ever exalted him as has this Church. He is the head of the Church, literally, as the man is the head of the woman; the Church bears his name; and there was no other Church in the world that bore his name when he committed it to this Church and commanded that the Church should be named after him. The whole premise of Mormonism is based upon the fact that the Father and the Son literally appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith. They couldn't have done that if they were only an essence, everywhere present in the world. With that glorified body that Jesus took out of the tomb, he appeared to Joseph Smith, and if that thing did not actually transpire, we have no right to be assembled here in a conference claiming to be the Church of Jesus Christ. And if it did actually transpire, then all the people of this world will ultimately have to accept of the work that he established through the Prophet that he raised up in this dispensation.

We have had testimony borne here today of how he appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, and I would like to leave this thought with you. It wasn't only what Jesus taught. You remember that he said to those of old, "If ye believe not my words, believe then my works." Here are the

works of the Lord Jesus Christ, the establishment of his great Church.

As I have sat here in this conference, I have thought of the words of Nephi of old who saw our day and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth, and he said he saw the Saints of God scattered upon the face of the whole earth and the power of God resting upon them in great glory. And I testify to you that the power of God is with this Church in great glory today.

I would like to add another thought. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven." (Matt 7:21.) In the world today, in the Christian world, there are too many just saying, "Lord, Lord," and they are not doing the will of our Father. Then I remind you that when Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem and recalled how they had rejected him, he cried out, as it were, in the anguish of his soul,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! (*Ibid.*, 23:37.)

And then he said,

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (*Ibid.*, 23:38-39.)

Now I want to tell you that when God the Eternal Father, through his Son Jesus Christ, sends a prophet unto the inhabitants of the earth, when they reject the prophet of God, they reject Christ the Lord. That, he has declared through his own words.

I would like to call your attention to the promise in the Book of Mormon of the prophet that God declared he would send, the promise he made to

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Joseph who was sold into Egypt that in the latter days out of his seed, he would raise up a choice seer and prophet like unto Moses. And then I remind you that in holy writ we read that there was no prophet in Israel like unto Moses because Moses talked with God face to face, as one man speaks with his friend. According to the scriptures, most of the prophets received the word of God by inspiration, but Moses talked with God, and God declared that in this day he would raise up a prophet like unto Moses. And then he said, "Unto him will I give power to bring forth my word," and there isn't time to recount, but you just think of what the Lord has brought forth through this modern Prophet. Then he said, "And not to the bringing forth my word only—but to the convincing them of my word which shall already have gone forth among them," and that is what the missionaries of this Church are doing all over the world. They are opening the Bible, the stick of Judah, and teaching the people things they have never heard of. I have told people in the mission field plenty of times that I would show them out of that book

things they had never read in their lives, I didn't care how many times they had read it. And then the Lord declared that "the thing which the Lord shall bring forth" by this Prophet like unto Moses, "shall bring my people unto salvation."

Brothers and sisters, I leave my testimony with you that the resurrected Christ lives today, that he is directing his Church, that he has raised up a Prophet like unto Moses of old, and that if we will follow his teachings they will lead us unto salvation. May God help each one of us to do this I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Choir and the congregation sang the hymn, "We Thank Thee, O God, For A Prophet."

President David O. McKay:

Elder LeGrand Richards, of the Council of the Twelve, has just concluded speaking. We shall now hear from Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Milton R. Hunter.

ELDER BRUCE R. McCONKIE

Of the First Council of the Seventy

THE Holy Ghost

is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him, as well in times of old as in the time that he should manifest himself unto the children of men.

For he is the same yesterday, today, and forever; and the way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto him.

For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round. (1 Ne. 10:17-19.)

The Father, a personage of tabernacle

having flesh and bones, begat us as spirits in the beginning and ordained the plan whereby we might have power to grow in intelligence and knowledge and become like him.

The Son, his Firstborn in the spirit and Only Begotten in the flesh, under his direction, became the Creator and Redeemer of the earth and all things that are on it. From time to time he has revealed to men the plan of salvation, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Ghost, a personage of spirit, is their minister, who has been given the power and assigned the functions of bearing record of the Father and the Son, of revealing the truths