I do not want to say more today, but I plead, brethren and sisters, for an effort on our part to so instil in the hearts and minds of growing children, who are our responsibility, a desire to make this the highest social relationship that there is, a grand, glorious religious privilege entered into with the approval of the priesthood of God, with a determination that nothing under heaven shall ever disrupt it.

God bless us in it, I pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Antoine R. Ivins, of the First Council of Seventy. The Choir and Congregation will now join in singing, "Redeemer of Israel," following which we will hear from Elder LeGrand Richards.

The Choir and congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Redeemer of Israel."

President David O. McKay:

Elder LeGrand Richards, of the Council of the Twelve, will now speak to us. Elder Richards will be followed by Elder Ezra Taft Benson.

ELDER LEGRAND RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I FEEL humble, my brothers and sisters, as I occupy this position. I pray that I may enjoy the Spirit of the Lord for the few moments that I am here. Since our last conference, I have had the privilege, by appointment of the First Presidency, of visiting the islands of the Pacific, and now I think I can understand why Brother Matthew Cowley loved those colonies and people as he did, because I found the love they had in their hearts for him. It was while I was in New Zealand that I received the word of his passing. Those people truly love him, and as you travel through the Church and you feel the faith and the spirit of the members in whichever land you happen to go, be it in those lands, or in the Hawaiian Islands, or in Europe, you cannot help but be impressed with the words of the Apostle Paul, when he said:

> For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
>
> For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
>
> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:26-28.)

And that to me is one of the marvelous things about this Church, about which President McKay spoke this morning, when he told of the announcement the Lord made to the Prophet Joseph that a marvelous work was about to come forth among the children of men. The faith and the unity and the oneness that exists among the Saints of God wherever you find them, whatever their color might be, is a wonderful thing to me.

And another is the marvelous feeling of faith that the Lord plants in the hearts of the missionaries. I have seen missionaries in the field who would gladly have given their lives for the testimony of the truth that the Lord had given to them.

We had a missionary in our mission, who was on his second mission, and he told of when he was on his first mission. While at lunch, two men rode up on horseback and said, "Aren't you holding a meeting this afternoon?" and he said, "No, we hadn't planned on it." "Well," the man said, "there is a whole group over at the chapel waiting for you, and they expect you to come." So the missionary said, "We will be right over," and when they arrived they

found a posse of men on horses with lasso ropes, and they said, "We are going to string you Mormon elders up to this tree." This missionary happened to be a bit witty, and he said, "Well, that is all right, but there is no hurry about it, is there? Come on inside, and let's talk it over," and before they got through, the leader of the mob took the two elders home with him. But there they were, facing even death, as it were, but there was no fear because of the marvelous Spirit the Lord has put into this work.

I have heard it said, I have never read it, that once the Prophet Joseph, when he appeared before the President of the United States, was asked the difference between this Church and other churches, and he said, "The difference is that we have the Holy Ghost," and then I thought of Peter before he received the Holy Ghost, how he denied the Christ three times during one night, and after he had received the Holy Ghost, you remember, when he was asked by the chief priests, if they had not commanded him not to preach Christ and him crucified in the streets of Jerusalem, and his reply was: "Whom shall men obey? God or man." (See Acts 5:29.)

I thank God that among the marvelous things in this Church is this wonderful spirit that binds the Saints together and motivates the members of the Church to be willing to sacrifice, in order to build the kingdom of God in the earth.

I would like to say a few words about another phase of this great and marvelous work that has appealed to me, and that is the fulfilment of prophecy. As I read the words of Isaiah, I read that the Lord has planned all of his work from the beginning, and he has permitted his prophets so to announce unto the people. That is why Peter tells us that,

> We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:
>
> Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.
>
> For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (II Peter 1:19-21.)

And so, today, we have the more sure word of prophecy, and as I read the prophecies of the scriptures and those of our modern prophets, I am sure in my own mind that there has never been a period in the history of the world when there were as many prophecies being fulfilled as there are today.

There will not be time to go into the details of what has transpired in the restoration of the gospel, in the gathering of the Saints to these valleys of the mountains, in the building of these holy temples. I think of the words of President Young when the cornerstone of this Salt Lake Temple was laid, when he made this statement:

"This morning we have assembled on one of the most solemn, interesting, joyful, and glorious occasions that ever have transpired, or will transpire among the children of men, while the earth continues in its present organization, and is occupied for its present purposes. And I congratulate my brethren and sisters that it is our unspeakable privilege to stand here this day, and minister before the Lord on an occasion which has caused the tongues and pens of Prophets to speak and write for many scores of centuries which are past." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 632, 1925 ed.)

Think of it! Some three thousand years ago, the Lord permitted Isaiah and Micah to see this temple, and they declared:

> And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.
>
> And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. (Isa. 2:2-3.)

Do we need any better evidence of the fulfilment of this prophecy than these great congregations that are assembling here to worship the Lord and to listen to the words of his prophets of this dispensation.

I think also of the words of Jesus, as he walked along the way to Emmaus with his two disciples, "But their eyes were holden that they should not know him," and then after listening to them tell of the events that had transpired in Jerusalem pertaining to the crucifixion of the Lord, he said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." And then he began with Moses and the prophets and showed them how that in all things the prophets had testified of him and what would transpire as part of his ministry and his labors. And then we are told that he opened the understanding of his Apostles, that they might understand the scriptures. (Luke 24:16, 25.)

And then we are told by Mormon that ". . . the eternal purposes of the Lord shall roll on, until all his promises shall be fulfilled." And then Mormon said, "Search the prophecies of Isaiah." And then he made known that in the day when these prophecies should be fulfilled, that it would be given unto the people to understand them. (Mormon 8:22-23.)

And as I read the prophecies of Isaiah, it seems to me that the Lord almost permitted him to live more in our day than when he was actually upon the earth, for so many of his prophecies deal with the latter-days and the things that are to transpire in this dispensation.

I think of the words of one of our worthy patriarchs, not so long ago. He was in his nineties, and one of his friends said, "Brother-so-and-so, wouldn't you rather pass on into the next world, where your wife is and so many of your loved ones, and so many of your friends?" And he rebuked him and said, "Not much. I have lived to see the Lord accomplish so much in this dispensation, I want to stay as long as I can and see him finish his work."

It would be an interesting thing were there time to consider the prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled, but I do want to say a word about what is going on over in Jerusalem and the Holy Land at this present time. So many of the prophets, and the Savior of the world, himself, and particularly when he visited the Nephites, have told of the day when the Jews would be gathered back to that land and how the Lord would fight their battles and how he would do a marvelous work among them. And when you read what is going on and see how they have become a nation today, it is a wonderful thing.

And then I contrast the prophecies with relation to their regathering and their rebuilding of their temple and their rebuilding of the waste places that have been desolate according to the prophets for many generations, with the prophecy of Isaiah with respect to the destruction of the great city of Babylon. You will remember at the time it was the greatest city in all the world. It is interesting to read the descriptions of it, with its beautiful gardens, and yet Isaiah announced that that city would be destroyed; he said that it would never be rebuilt, that it would never be inhabited from generation to generation, that it would become the abode of reptiles and wild animals, and that the Arabs would no more pitch their tents there. That was a declaration that the greatest city in the world would not only be destroyed, but it would also never be rebuilt.

No one would dare say that of any of our great cities today. Now, contrast that with the destruction of Jerusalem. The Savior said it would be plowed as an acre and not one stone would be left upon another, but all of the prophets declared it would be rebuilt, and not only that, but that her waste places should also be restored until it should become as the garden of Eden.

And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.

And they shall say, This land that was

desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. (Ezek. 36:34-35.)

If you read your current magazines, such as the article that appeared in the March *Reader's Digest* about what is going on over there, how the men use the Bible to find where the springs and wells were, and the reservoirs and the iron mines, it is a marvelous thing, and that land is being rebuilt.

I could not help but think, as I read some of these articles, of how Brother Orson Hyde would feel today. He was sent there in 1841 by the Presidency of the Church to dedicate that land for the regathering of the Jews. At that time, it was a wasteland, with very few people there, and today they are going back by the thousands and by the hundreds of thousands.

I have in my heart a feeling that it will not be long until the Presidency of the Church will feel to open up the missionary work among these people, because the Savior indicated that the fulness of his gospel would be preached unto them in the latter days and not only that, but also in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph, he indicated that the gospel was to be preached, as President McKay pointed out, to all nations, to the Gentiles, first, and then to the Jews, so that the day will come when we will carry the message to them.

I have one specific little illustration of how it would appear the Lord is working with them I would like to refer to here today. First, I will read a few words from Zachariah, the twelfth chapter:

In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. (Zach. 12:8-9.)

The Lord said he would fight their battles and that they should be strong, like unto David. When David went out to meet Goliath, no mortal man would ever have thought that in and of himself he could have conquered that great giant. David went forth, and when Goliath ridiculed him, saying, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" David replied: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

"This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand," and by that same power, the Lord is today wresting this great land of promise and delivering it back unto his people. (See I Sam. 17: 43, 45.)

A short time ago, when a committee was sent there by President Truman, they were told by Chaim Weizmann, the first president of Israel, that it was their belief in a "mystical force that would return the Jews to the land of Israel, that had kept them alive."

In the *Jewish Hope*, of September 1950, was an article by Arthur U. Michelson. I will not take time to read it, but he tells of a visit he made to Jerusalem, when he heard the experience of the Jewish army. They had only one cannon, and were facing the Arabs with their well-trained and equipped army, and so when they used this cannon, they moved it from place to place so the enemy would think they had many, and every time the cannon was fired, they would beat tin cans in order to make a lot of noise so that the enemy would think they had many cannons.

I want to read what he said about what happened when the armies of Israel were about to give up:

"One of the officials has told me how much the Jews had to suffer. They had hardly anything with which to resist the heavy attacks of the Arabs who were well organized and equipped with the latest weapons. Besides, they had neither food nor water, because all their supplies were cut off. . . .

"At this critical moment, God showed them that he was on their side, for

he performed one of the greatest miracles that ever happened. The Arabs suddenly threw down their arms and surrendered. When their delegation appeared with the white flag, they asked, "Where are the three men that led you, and where are all the troops we saw?" The Jews told them that they did not know anything of the three men, for this group was their entire force. The Arabs said that they saw three persons, with long beards and flowing white robes who warned them not to fight any longer, otherwise they would all be killed. They became so frightened that they decided to give up. What an encouragement this was for the Jews to realize that God was fighting for them."

And then he told about another case when one man with a white robe and a long beard appeared, and they all saw him, and they gave up their arms. Now I do not know, but the Lord said that he would do something for the Jews in the latter days, and when he permitted the Three Nephites to tarry upon this land, he said:

> And behold they will be among the Gentiles, and the Gentiles shall know them not.
>
> They will also be among the Jews, and the Jews shall know them not.
>
> And it shall come to pass, when the Lord seeth fit in his wisdom that they shall minister unto all the scattered tribes of Israel, and unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, and shall bring out of them unto Jesus many souls, that their desire may be fulfilled, and also because of the convincing power of God which is in them. (3 Ne. 28:27-29.)

Whoever these persons were, they seemed to have "convincing power" sufficient to cause a whole army to surrender.

In permitting these Three Nephites to tarry upon the earth until he, Jesus, should come in his glory, he must have had in mind some great things for them to accomplish in bringing about a fulfilment of his promises. Whether it was they who convinced the army of the Arabs to surrender, I do not know, but this I do know: That what is going on in the Holy Land should convince one that the Lord is moving rapidly toward restoring the Jews to the land of their fathers and is giving them that land and redeeming it from its waste condition, as the prophets have foretold.

In closing, I give you the words of Isaiah. I believe the words of the prophets with all my heart.

> The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. (Isa. 40:8.)

To me prophecy is one of the great evidences that there is really a God and that he is directing his work and will do so to its ultimate decreed destiny, and I bear you this witness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER EZRA TAFT BENSON

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My beloved brethren and sisters and friends: Humbly I acknowledge the great honor, privilege, and responsibility which is mine, as I look into your faces. I am grateful for this conference—thankful to the Lord that I am able to be here, to mingle with you, partake of this sweet spirit, and grateful to him that he has seen fit to call these general conferences of the Church and the quarterly conferences in the stakes of Zion.

I have in mind a desire to offer just a word of hope and encouragement and admonition this afternoon. I owe a great deal, as all of us who are gathered here do, to this great Church and kingdom of which we are a part. Throughout my life, I have felt very keenly my obligation to this, the Church and king-