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Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

THIS HAS been a glorious conference. It pleases me greatly to notice that at each succeeding conference there is a larger sprinkling of Japanese and Chinese brothers and sisters; of Hawaiians and other islanders; of Indians, Mexicans, Spanish-Americans and others. It makes me very happy indeed, and I wish to address my remarks this morning in behalf of those minorities.

Recently there came to my desk a letter, anonymously written. Generally the wastebasket receives all such messages, written by people who have not the courage to sign their statements. But this time I saved it. It reads in part as follows:

I never dreamed I would live to see the day when the Church would invite an Indian buck to talk in the Salt Lake Tabernacle—an Indian buck appointed a bishop—an Indian squaw to talk in the Ogden Tabernacle—Indians to go through the Salt Lake Temple—

The sacred places desecrated by the invasion of everything that is forced on the white race. . . .

This letter now goes into the fire also, but it gives me the theme for the words I wish to say today.

If Mrs. Anonymous were the only one who felt that way! However, from many places and different directions I hear intolerant expressions. While there is an ever-increasing number of people who are kind and willing to accept the minority groups as they come into the Church, there are still many who speak in disparaging terms, who priestlike and Levite-like pass by on the other side of the street.

It would be a delightful step forward if our newspapers and periodicals and our writers and speakers would discontinue the term *buck* and *squaw* and substitute "Indian men and women" or "Lamanite brethren and sisters."

Their ancestors and ancient prophets foresaw this day and knew that this people would be reviled and disparaged.

In the letter quoted, there is the suggestion of a superior race! From the dawn of history we have seen so-called superior races go down from the heights to the depths in a long parade of exits. Among them were the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. They, with more modern nations, have been defeated in battle, humiliated and crushed in economic life. Is the implication of Mrs. Anonymous justified that the white race or the American people is superior? John the Baptist, in forceful terms, rebuked a similar self-styled superior group:

O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. (Matt. 3:7-9.)

The Lord would have eliminated bigotry and class distinction. He talked to the Samaritan woman at the well, healed the centurion's kin, and blessed the child of the Canaanitish woman. And though he personally came to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" and sent his Apostles first to them rather than to the Samaritans and other Gentiles, yet he later sent Paul to bring the gospel to the Gentiles and revealed to Peter that the gospel was for all. The prejudices were deep-rooted in Peter, and it took a vision from heaven to help him to cast off his bias. The voice had commanded: "Rise, Peter; kill, and eat," when the vessel descended from the heaven containing all manner of beasts, reptiles and fowls. Punctilious Peter expressed his life-long prejudices and habits in saying, "Not so,

Tuesday, April 6

Fourth Day

Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." Then the heavenly voice made clear that the program was for all. "What God hath cleansed," it said, "that call not thou common." Peter's long-sustained prejudices gave way finally under the power of the thrice repeated command. When the devout Gentile Cornelius immediately thereafter appealed to him for the gospel, the full meaning of the vision burst upon Peter and he exclaimed, "God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." (See Acts 10:11-28.)

And when those of the circumcised complained, Peter, now very sure, rehearsed the whole story and concluded with these memorable words:

Men and brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

And put no difference between us and them. (*Ibid.*, 15:7-9.)

"What was I that I could withstand God," he said in defense.

The gospel had been brought to the Jew or Israel, and now was to be taken to the Gentile. It was for all.

The Savior finally instructed his Apostles:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matt. 28:19.)

And through the Prophet Nephi he

... inviteth them all to come unto him ... and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile. (2 Nephi 26:33.)

Then see how the Lord preserved the Bible through the dark ages and preserved the Book of Mormon gold plates through the same barren period so that both of these holy scriptures might be brought by the Gentiles back to Israel and fulfil the saying that "the first shall

be last and the last shall be first." (See Matt 19:30.)

And now, Mrs. Anonymous, when the Lord has made of all flesh equal; when he has accepted both the Gentiles and Israel; when he finds no difference between them, who are we to find a difference and to exclude from the Church and its activities and blessings the lowly Indian? Have you read the scriptures, ancient or modern? Have you felt the magnanimity of the Savior, his kindness, his mercy, his love?

If the Lord were to acknowledge a superior race, would it not be Israel, the very people whom you would spurn and deprive? Do you carry in your veins as pure Israelitish blood as those whom you criticize? Do you find any scriptures, my critic, which would show that the Christ would exclude the Lamanite Israelites from the waters of baptism, from the priesthood, from the pulpit, or from the temple? Did not the Lord remove the Amalekites, Midianites, Canaanites to make place for the chosen Israel, and when centuries later he saw the impending destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and when it was imminent that Judah and Israel were to be captured and exiled, did not the Lord send a righteous few, under Lehi, to find and colonize this American land, this choicest land under heaven? Did he not lead and teach and punish and forgive this same people through a thousand hectic years of varied experience and did he not reiterate frequently his willingness to forgive and his eagerness to bless this very people? Did not the Lord show special and preferred interest in his Israel? Did he not reserve for them alone his personal visits and ministrations? And did he not himself make a personal visit of many days to his Lehite people and say to them:

Ye are my disciples. . . .

And behold, this is the land of your inheritance; and the Father hath given it unto you.

And they [the Jews] understood me not that I said they [the Lehtes] shall hear my

voice; and they understood me not that the Gentiles should not at any time hear my voice—that I should not manifest myself unto them save it were by the Holy Ghost.

But behold, ye have both heard my voice, and seen me; and ye are my sheep, and ye are numbered among those whom the Father hath given me. (3 Nephi 15:12-13, 23-24.)

Would those who scorn the Indian and deprive him of the blessings remember how the Lord loves his Lamanites and how he told his first leaders in this dispensation to

... journey among the Lamanites.

And it shall be given thee ... what thou shalt do. (D. & C. 28:14-15.)

Remember how he authorized them to build up his Church "among the Lamanites" (*ibid.*, 30:6) and from the later Prophet, John Taylor, who said: "And now we must instruct them further and organize them into churches with proper presidencies, attach them to our stakes and organizations." (*The Gospel Kingdom*, p. 247.)

In the days immediately preceding the coming of the Lord, even the Lamanite Prophet Samuel felt the sting and smart of the caustic discriminations when he said:

And now, because I am a Lamanite, and have spoken unto you the words which the Lord commanded me, and because it was hard against you, ye are angry with me and do seek to destroy me, and have cast me out from among you. (Helaman 14:10.)

If Mrs. Anonymous would exclude the Indian from the temple, how could she justify the Lord's provision that they would assist in the building of the New Jerusalem with its temple?

O intolerance, thou art an ugly creature! What crimes have been committed under thy influence, what injustices under thy Satanic spell!

Charlotte Gilman wrote: "I ran into a prejudice that quite cut off my view." (From Stanza I of "An Obstacle.")

It was to a hypocritical and intolerant group to whom the Lord gave his classic parable,

... unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke 18:9-14.)

If it be so wrong for fraternization and brotherhood with minority groups and their filling Church positions and pews and pulpits of the Lord's Church, why did the Apostle Peter maintain so positively: "[God] ... put no difference between us and them." (Acts 15:8-9.)

And, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." (*ibid.*, 11:9.)

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. (*ibid.*, 10:34-35.)

Did not the Lord know that in these times there would be many duplicates of Mr. and Mrs. Anonymous who might need the warning which he gave through his Prophet Moroni: "... Who will despise the works of the Lord? Who will despise the children of Christ? Behold, all ye who are despisers of the works of the Lord." (Mormon 9:26.)

The Prophet Mormon wrote:

Yea, wo unto him that shall deny the revelations of the Lord. ...

Yea, and ye need not any longer hiss, nor spurn, nor make game of the Jews, nor any of the remnant of the House of Israel; for behold, the Lord remembereth his covenant unto them ... according to that which he hath sworn. (3 Nephi 29:6, 8.)

Tuesday, April 6

Fourth Day

It is most evident that all of the many prejudiced ones fail to catch the spirit of the gospel and the teachings of the Christ as they hiss and spurn and scoff and criticize. The Lord said in Matthew:

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: . . .

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. (Matt. 7:1-5.)

And again, the Lord said through Paul:

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for where-in thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; . . .

And thinkest thou this, O man . . . that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? (Roman 2:1, 3.)

And again, through Moroni:

For behold, the same that judgeth rashly shall be judged rashly again; . . . he that smiteth shall be smitten again, of the Lord. (Mormon 8:19.)

I remember that the Lord was long-suffering with ancient Israel. For a long time he endured their pettiness, listened to their eternal complaining, revolted at their filthiness, groaned at their idolatries and their adulteries, and wept at their faithlessness; and yet finally forgave them and led the rising generation of them into the promised land. They had been the victims of four centuries of destructive background of servitude but consistent now with their continued faithfulness, every door was opened to them toward immortality and eternal life.

Here he has the Indian or Lamanite, with a background of twenty-five centuries of superstition, degradation, idolatry, and indolence. He has loathed their wickedness, chastised them, brought the Gentiles to them for nursing fathers and mothers, and (it would seem) has finally forgiven them. Their

sufferings have been sore, their humiliation complete, their punishment severe and long, their heartaches many, and their opportunities reduced. Has he not now forgiven them and accepted them? Can we not now forgive and accept them? Ancient Israel was given forty years. Can we not allow at least forty years of patient and intensive proselyting and organizing among modern Israel before we judge too harshly?

What a monster is prejudice! It means pre-judging. How many of us are guilty of it? Often we think ourselves free of its destructive force, but we need only to test ourselves. Our expressions, our voice tones, our movements, our thoughts betray us. We are often so willing that others make the contacts, do the proselyting, have the associations. Until we project ourselves into the very situation, we little realize our bias and our prejudice.

Why will we, the prospered, the blessed, hiss? When, oh, when, will we cease to spurn? When will we who think we are free of bias, purge from our souls the sometimes unconscious prejudice we possess? When will we end our making game of these wanderers? When will we cease throwing our pennies disdainfully to them at the gate?

Mr. and Mrs. Anonymous: I present to you a people who, according to prophecies, have been scattered and driven, defrauded and deprived, who are a "branch of the tree of Israel—lost from its body—wanderers in a strange land"—their own land. I give you nations who have gone through the deep waters of the rivers of sorrow and anguish and pain; a people who have had visited upon their heads the sins of their fathers not unto the third and fourth generation but through a hundred generations. I bring to you a multitude who have asked for bread and have received a stone and who have asked for fish and have been given a serpent. (See 3 Nephi 14:9-10.)

This people ask not for your distant, faraway sympathy, your haughty dis-

dain, your despicable contempt, your supercilious scorn, your turned-up nose, your scathing snobbery, your arrogant scoffing, nor your cold, calculating tolerance. It is a people who, unable to raise themselves by their own bootstraps, call for assistance from those who can push and lift and open doors. It is a people who pray for mercy, ask forgiveness, beg for membership in the kingdom with its opportunities to learn and do. It is a good folk who ask for fraternity, a handclasp of friendship, a word of encouragement; it is a group of nations who cry for warm acceptance and sincere brotherhood. I give you a chosen race, an affectionate and warm-hearted people, a responsive but timid and frightened folk, a simple group with childlike faith. I point you to a people in whose veins flows the blood of prophets and martyrs; a people who have intelligence and capacity to climb to former heights but who need the vision and the opportunity and the assistance of the nursing parents.

These people can rise to the loftiness of their fathers when opportunity has knocked at their door a few generations. If we fully help them, they can eventually soar to greatness. The ungerminated seeds are waiting for the rains of kindness and opportunity; the sunshine of gospel truth; the cultivation through the Church program of training and activity, and the seeds will come to life, and the harvest will be fabulous, for the Lord has promised it repeatedly.

O ye, who hiss and spurn, despise and scoff, who condemn and reject, and who in your haughty pride place yourselves above and superior to these Nephite-Lamanites: I pray you to not despise them until you are able to equal their faraway folk who had such faith and fortitude and strength—until you have that faith to burn at the stake with the Prophet Abinadi. It is possible that the prophet's children may be among us. Some of them could be now called Lagunas or Shoshones.

I beg of you, do not disparage the Lamanite-Nephites unless you, too, have the devoutness and strength to abandon

public office to do missionary work among a despised people and this without compensation, as did the four sons of Mosiah; until you too can walk away from the ease and luxury and the emoluments and power of kingship to hunger and thirst, to be persecuted, imprisoned, and beaten for fourteen years of proselyting endeavor as did their people, Ammon and his brothers, and as did the great Nephii who gave up the judgeship to proselyte. Some of their descendants also could be among us. Their seed could be called Samoans or Maoris.

I ask you: Do not scoff and ignore these Nephite-Lamanites unless you can equal their forebears in greatness and until you can kneel with those thousands of Ammonite Saints in the sand on the field of battle while they sang songs of praise as their very lives were being snuffed out by their enemies. Could you look heavenward, smiling and singing, while the bloodthirsty demons slashed your body with sword and scimitar? Perhaps the children of the Ammonites are with us. They could be called Zunis or Hopis.

Do not prate your power of speech or your fearlessness unless you too could stand with the Prophet Samuel on the city wall, dodging stones and spears and arrows while trying to preach the gospel of salvation. The very descendants of this great prophet are with us. They may be Navajos or Cherokees.

I ask you who sneer: Are you better mothers than those of the Ammonites? Those Lamanite women trained their sons in faith to the extent that they fought many battles and came home clean, full of faith. Are you training your sons as did they? Do your sons resist evil, grow to greatness, receive manifestations from the Lord? Do your sons praise your names and say, "We knew our mothers knew it. We are blessed of the Lord because we live his commandments as our mothers taught us." The posterity of these unparalleled mothers and these faithful sons may be among us and may be called Mayas or Pimas.

Tuesday, April 6

Fourth Day

I urge you: Do not mock in derision until and unless you, too, have children loved and fondled by the Lord of creation, children who are encircled about with fire and ministered unto by angels—children who prophesy unutterable things. Their children could be the Piutes or Mohicans among us.

Do not condemn and make game of these good Lamanite-Nephites until you have produced a superior people who compare with their ancestors who lived for nearly three centuries in peace and righteousness. Has our own nation ever exceeded a quarter century without war and commotion?

Let us not spurn these Nephite-Lamanites until we are assured that we, too, have the love of the Savior as did their people when the Lord stood in their midst and ordained them with his own hands, blessed them with his own voice, forgave them with his own great heart, broke the bread, poured the wine, and gave the sacrament himself to these upright folk; until we shall have the privilege of feeling the prints of the nails in his hands and feet, and the spear wound in his side.

And in these living descendants are all the seeds of faith and growth and

development, of honor and integrity and greatness. They wait but for opportunity, encouragement, and brotherliness; and these will be redeemed, will rise and will become a blessed people. God has said it.

I love the Lamanites, the Indians, and all their cousins. I expect to see them rise and fulfil their destiny. I know that the prophecies concerning them will all be fulfilled.

May God bless the Lamanite-Nephite peoples, stir their hearts; bless the missionaries that are sent unto them; and help us, their nursing parents. And may God speed the day of their total deliverance. This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

The speaker to whom we have just listened is Elder Spencer W. Kimball, of the Council of the Twelve. For the sustaining vote of this General Conference, there will now be presented the General Authorities, the General Officers, and the General Auxiliary Officers of the Church. President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., will present these officers.

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., Second Counselor in the First Presidency, presented for the vote of the people the General Authorities, General Officers, and General Auxiliary Officers of the Church as follows, and they were unanimously sustained by those present.

GENERAL AUTHORITIES OF THE CHURCH

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

David O. McKay, Prophet, Seer and Revelator, and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Stephen L. Richards, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

J. Reuben Clark, Jr., Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Joseph Fielding Smith

QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Joseph Fielding Smith
Harold B. Lee
Spencer W. Kimball
Ezra Taft Benson
Mark E. Petersen
Henry D. Moyle

Delbert L. Stapley
Marion G. Romney
LeGrand Richards
Adam S. Bennion
Richard L. Evans
George Q. Morris