

## ELDER LEGRAND RICHARDS

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**M**Y BROTHERS AND SISTERS: I rejoice with you in the wonderful testimonies and instructions we have received in this conference. I pray that the Lord will let me have the spirit of testimony bearing for the few moments that I stand before you.

After listening to the beautiful discourse here this afternoon by President Clark on the life and the mission of the Redeemer of the world, and remembering what President McKay said this morning, as he counted his blessings and advised us to count ours, and he put at the head of the list in counting his blessings the great work of the Master, I am sure that all of us as Latter-day Saints feel that the greatest event of recorded history of all time was the life and the mission of the Redeemer of the world.

His work is not yet finished. We read in the Book of Mormon that—

... my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever. (2 Nephi 29:9.)

And I think today of him as the Creator of worlds, as we are told in the Pearl of Great Price, unnumbered to man, "but all things are numbered unto me," the Lord said, for I made them and by the power of mine Only Begotten, created I them. (See Moses 1:33, 35.)

Then I think of his great atonement and of the promises that yet await us of his unfinished work. You remember when he stood before the chief priest of the Jews, Caiaphas, and Caiaphas said,

... I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. (Matt. 26:63.)

And Jesus answered,

Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (*Ibid.*, 26:64.)

It is this "coming in the clouds of heaven," and the work that is necessary to be done to prepare for his coming that I would like to say a few words about this afternoon. Let us turn to the holy scriptures for the promises of the resurrection, and President Clark has referred to the resurrection. Think of getting our bodies back out of the grave and being reunited with our loved ones, and then read the testimony of John when he was banished upon the Isle of Patmos, describing that time:

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. . . .

He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. (Rev. 21:4, 7.)

Then we read farther that it is they who die in Christ who shall come forth in the morning of the first resurrection, but that the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years are ended.

What is there in this world that we could do as individuals to repay for the privilege of coming forth in the morning of the first resurrection and receiving our loved ones and being united with them and with the servants of the Living God, and with the Redeemer of the world, when he comes in the clouds of heaven?

If we understood really what the gospel is, we would know why Jesus said that the merchantman seeking costly pearls would sell all that he had in order that he might acquire it and called it the Pearl of Great Price, and we would also understand what he meant when he said,

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt. 16:26.)

We just do not have the capacity to appreciate the great blessings that await the faithful, for the Lord said to the Prophet:

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Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory. (D & C 76:6.)

In this great preparation the Master is to make, it requires that he have an organization. He called his twelve, humble men they were, but they were men who could be taught, and they were men full of faith, and they were true to the testimony that they had, and they went forth fearlessly even until each one gave his life, except the Apostle John, who was privileged to tarry until the Savior should come, for the testimony of Jesus that burned in their souls.

I sit here among these brethren who are special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ unto the world. I do not believe there is one of them who would not give his life willingly for the testimony of Jesus. I know that the Presidency of this Church never has to ask any of these men if he is willing to go here or there or assume this responsibility or that responsibility. They could not find men in all the world who would be more willing to accept the assignments that come to them. I know they are men of God. I know the joy of the testimony of the Holy Ghost, that rapture that fills your bosom as you feel yourself in his very presence. I know it is worth every effort that we can put forth.

In our meeting in the temple yesterday, one of the Presidency indicated that he thought one of the things we needed to teach the Saints most was to live worthy to go to the temples. We are building temples. They are great institutions in the Church, and we should teach our young people to appreciate them. I had this additional thought that what our people, who have been through the temple, need to know is the sacredness of the obligations they enter into in these holy temples.

When they agree there to consecrate all that they have and all that they are for the building up of the kingdom of God, I do believe that in the eyes of the Lord they are not idle words; that we ought to put first our duty and responsibility to the priesthood that we bear and to the building of the kingdom of God, and all other things ought to be secondary unto that. And if we realize this, and we realize the majesty of this great work in which we are en-

gaged, it would not be difficult for us to do that very thing.

I have great faith in the fulfilment of the prophecies. I think of the words of Jesus as he walked along the way to Emmaus following his crucifixion. The eyes of the two disciples, as you will recall, were holden that they could not recognize him, and as he heard them talking of the things that had been done in Jerusalem, (his crucifixion), he answered, ". . . O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:" And then he explained to them from the scriptures the words of Moses and the prophets how that they had all testified of him and of his work. Then we are told he opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. (See Luke 24.)

And then we have the words of Peter in which he said,

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 day 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 that is what makes the word of prophecy more sure than anything else in all this world.

We ought to analyze the prophecies with respect to this great latter-day dispensation and the preparation for the coming of the Son of Man as he testified to Caiaphas that he would come in the clouds of heaven.

I would like to read to you a statement about the need of a prophet. This is from a minister. While I was in the South, two conventions were held by one of the large churches in Atlanta, Georgia, and in one of them Bishop Warren A. Candler, among other things, made this statement:

"We need the reappearance of prophets sent from God."

Then Dr. Ainsworth discussed the condition of the world and the need of something to arrest the world from its present decadent condition, and asked these words:

"Never in the nation's history was the arresting voice of a prophet of God more needed than it is today."

Then here are the words of a minister in England a few years ago:

"We all recognize that something has got to be done, for at the moment we are in a plight where our earthly leaders falter, our people drift and die. We cannot forget that when the blind set out to lead the blind, chances are that both will find themselves in a ditch. *A dictator being out of the question, what about a prophet?* The prophet never is self-appointed. It is well to keep that in mind. Nor is he chosen of his fellows. Always he is heaven-sent; yet I am cheered at the thought that he has the knack of appearing at the right time. That being so, I incline to the belief that our prophet must surely be getting ready for us. Let us not forget that; hope and pray as we will for his coming. Men have an old habit of greeting the true prophet with stones. We need not be surprised if an old-fashioned welcome awaits the prophet of our day. No one can say when such a prophet will come, but of our need of him there is no question."

We find people today who say, "Well, we could accept your message, but we cannot believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet." If they believed in the pre-existent life, they could then understand. When Jeremiah was called as a boy to be a prophet, he could not understand it, and the Lord said to him,

Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. (Jer. 1:5.)

The Lord not only knew Jeremiah, but he also knew Joseph Smith. Three thousand years ago the Lord revealed unto Joseph who was sold into Egypt, that in the latter-days, out of his loins, he would raise up a choice seer and a prophet like unto Moses. (2 Nephi 3:11, 14-17.)

And we read in holy writ that there was no prophet in all Israel like unto Moses because Moses talked with God face to face, and that is the kind of prophet the Lord promised Joseph he would raise up out of his loins in the latter days, and that Joseph Smith was

this promised Prophet is our testimony to the world. The things that Jesus and the prophets declared would have to be accomplished before his coming, could not be accomplished without a prophet through whom the Lord could work.

We read in Malachi where the Lord said through his prophet that he would send a messenger to prepare the way for his coming, and swiftly he would come to his temple. Who but a prophet could be this messenger? Has there ever been a time that he came swiftly to his temple? How could the temple be prepared for his coming without a prophet? This promise has reference to his second coming, for Malachi adds:

... who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap. (Mal. 3:2.)

So in his last coming, he will come swiftly to his temple. He will come to sit in judgment, as Malachi saw, and Malachi's thoughts, going along that same line, saw the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord in the latter-days when

... all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. (*Ibid.*, 4:1.)

And then he goes on to say that before that day he would send Elijah the prophet to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. Now why does not the world believe that Elijah will come? They can believe that he was taken to heaven in the clouds of heaven, in a flaming chariot, and here is the promise that he should come in the latter days. And we bear witness that Elijah did come, and because of the knowledge and the information he brought, we continue to build these temples and do this great work that is being done in the temples of the Lord.

When Peter was speaking to those who had put to death the Christ, he said,

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

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And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you. (Acts 3:19-20.)

Now, remember he had already been among them. He had already been crucified, and here is the promise of Peter that the Lord would send him again, but he adds:

Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (*Ibid.*, 3:21.)

How can one believe the Holy Bible and not believe that one of the preparatory things for the coming of the Redeemer of the world would be a "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

We have mentioned the coming of Elijah. President Clark mentioned the restoration of the priesthood, the Aaronic and the Melchizedek, and then there was the kingdom to be set up that Daniel saw in the last days that should become as a great mountain and fill the whole earth, and how could that be without a prophet of God?

Then there was the new record of Joseph to come forth to be joined with the record of Judah according to the command the Lord gave to Ezekiel, and how could that be without a prophet who should do this work, for the Lord said that he would bring it forth and he would join it to the record of Judah, and he would make them one in his hands. (Ezek. 37:16-17.) The Lord works through his servants, the prophets.

These are only a few of the things the Lord promised to do before the coming of the Redeemer of the world. We bear witness to the world that this Prophet, Joseph Smith, raised up of the Lord, was in very deed the instrument that the Lord had in waiting through the centuries, in the pre-existent state when the Lord stood in the midst of the spirits and said to Abraham:

"These I will make my rulers"; for there were many of the noble and great ones there, and then he added: "Abra-

ham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born." (Abraham 3:23.)

Jesus knew that he would work through the instrumentality of his servants just as he did when he called the Twelve, and that is why he said, as he stood overlooking Jerusalem,

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!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, [notwithstanding his promise]—Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matt. 23:37-39.)

We have had some wonderful testimonies of people of standing on the great work that the Prophet Joseph has done. I cannot take time to go into that. I will just give you this one thought. The other day Brother Levi Edgar Young showed me a history of the state of Vermont, and under the caption, Sharon, we read these words:

Sharon enters the Hall of Fame by being the birthplace of one of the immortals of American history, Joseph Smith, who founded the Mormon religion.

The world is beginning to recognize the power and the spirit that is in this work, a power which causes every man to be willing to devote himself to the building of the kingdom which is the kind of power and influence that can overcome the world and establish his kingdom in the earth.

I bear you my witness that this is in very deed the work of the Lord, and that he is at the helm, and I do it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us. Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us.