

The answer to all the problems in the world is the gospel of Jesus Christ, which enables us to overcome all adversities, sin, and death, and go back into the presence of God fit to dwell in his presence, through the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

I bear this humble witness that this is the Church of Jesus Christ, organized by him personally; that President David O. McKay is conducting the affairs of

this Church as the Lord Jesus Christ directs him, and I bear this witness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder George Q. Morris, member of the Council of the Twelve. Our concluding speaker will be Elder LeGrand Richards of the same Council.

ELDER LEGRAND RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I rejoice, my brothers and sisters, in the privilege of attending this conference with you and with my Brethren here on this stand. I love them, I love the Saints.

I thought when we listened to the report of the growth of the Church, how your hearts must rejoice! When I think of our visits to your stakes and your missions and what you and your families are contributing to the growth of the Church, surely that is what we labor for with all our hearts and souls and that is what we pray for! The Lord is blessing the efforts of the Saints throughout the world. May he continue to do so.

I thought that in the few moments I have here today I would like to make a few comments on a question that was asked me in a letter I received a few weeks ago from a nonmember of the Church whom I met on one of my visits in the Church. The question was this: "Please, sir, tell me why you think Joseph Smith was a prophet of God." I have preached on that subject for fifty years, and the more I do the more my heart is made to rejoice. I make these comments:

I believe the Bible to be the word of God. I believe, as has already been stated here today, that God had a plan when he created this earth, when he placed man upon it, just as definitely as any architect ever draws a plan for a building before it is constructed.

I believe the words of Isaiah when he said that the Lord declared the end from the beginning. I think it is our duty to understand that plan, to study

it, that we might know and understand the purposes of the Lord in the creation of this world and what is yet to transpire before the coming of Christ, our Lord, to rule and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords, as he and the prophets have declared.

I believe the words of the Apostle Peter when he said 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 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.)

I believe that the word of prophecy is a more sure word than anything else we have in this world.

I like the words of the Savior on that same subject as he walked beside his disciples on the way to Emmaus when he said:

. . . O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. (Luke 24:25.)

And then beginning with Moses and the prophets, he showed them how that in all things they testified of him.

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. (*Ibid.*, 24:45.)

Just as the prophets of old declared the coming of Christ in the Meridian

of Time and gave the signs that would accompany his coming, even to the casting of lots for his raiment when he was crucified, so have the prophets looked forward to the latter days when he would come in the clouds of heaven, and so have they proclaimed the events that would precede his coming. When he was here upon this earth, he was always looking forward to his final coming when he would come in power to reign among the children of men as King of kings and Lord of lords, and we should know something of the events that are to transpire to prepare the way for his coming.

I like the words of the prophet Amos in which he said,

Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7.)

Never has there been a dispensation of God's truth in the earth without a prophet at its head except for the brief time that Jesus labored among men and stood as the head, and he called his Twelve, and as Paul tells us:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, . . .

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, . . . (Eph. 4:11-14.)

You only need to look at the world today to know how we are becoming more divided year after year instead of more united because the apostles and prophets whom God put in his Church to bring unity of the faith were done away with.

I would like to refer to a few prophecies of the things that are to transpire before he comes. I quote first from the third chapter of Malachi, the first verse:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. (Mal. 3:1.)

When he sends his messenger, who could he be other than a prophet of God, since God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets? And if he sends his messenger to prepare the way for his coming, that he may come swiftly to his temple, we could expect that all the promises of the prophets pertaining to the preparation for his coming would be fulfilled under the direction of this messenger. And these promises could not be fulfilled except there was a prophet unto whom God could reveal his mind and will and give wisdom beyond the wisdom of man to accomplish all the prophets have foretold.

Briefly, let us refer to the promise given by Daniel in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. He had already forgotten his dream, and he called for the wise men and the soothsayers and astrologers, and none of them could tell him his dream. Then he sent for the prophet in Israel, and Daniel took it up with the Lord. And he said that there was a God in heaven who maketh known Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the interpretation thereof. Then Daniel told him of the rise and fall of the kingdoms of this world until the latter days when the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed or given to another people, but it would go forth until it would become as a great mountain and fill the whole earth, and it would stand forever, until one like the Son of Man would come in the clouds of heaven, to the Ancient of days.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (Dan. 7:14.)

Why do we read these things in the scriptures if they are not meant to be fulfilled? How can the world accept the scriptures and then believe that all these things can transpire without a prophet of the Living God to whom God can reveal his mind and will?

I bear you witness that Joseph Smith was the messenger sent, that he was the instrument in the hands of God in setting up this kingdom.

There is not time to go into details, but anyone with a fair mind who will analyze the organization of this Church and what it is accomplishing and the great order of the priesthood (for every man and every man's son can bear the priesthood of God and become partners with him in the building of his kingdom), could not hope to find anything else to compare with it in all the world. There just is not such an organization.

In the olden days they used to liken this Church to the German army. You know what happened to that, but the Church is still going on. One of our Presidents of the United States made the statement not long ago that the greatest organization in the world for the development of men and women was the Mormon Church. And one of our great writers recently said he considered it the most dynamic church in America. We know there is no other organization like it in this world, and any thoughtful person who will investigate will come to that conclusion; and that is one of the tangible evidences that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, that he was the instrument in the hands of our Father in heaven in setting up his kingdom in the earth.

If we could but take time to go into some of the achievements of the Church—take, for instance, our welfare program. Of those who come here and see what we are doing, one man wrote recently, "Why aren't we all Mormons?" Another wrote, "I guess I am on the wrong boat." The world begins to see that we have a program the like of which cannot be found anywhere in this world today.

Then we come to our youth program, and those who come among us bear witness that there is nothing like it in the world. We know that is true.

Then we come to the great missionary program of this Church, and there is not anything like it in all this world. I tell you, the sacrifices that men and women and their children make to help carry this gospel message to every land and every clime must be a most wonderful, acceptable thing to our Father in heaven because he has indicated his interest in carrying the gospel to the nations of the earth.

So I give to my friends this great organization as one of the tangible evidences that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.

I would like to refer briefly to the promise in the fourth chapter of Malachi:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Mal. 4:5-6.)

Does the world believe this promise? And if Elijah were to come, to whom would he come other than to a prophet of God, since God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets?

We bear witness that Elijah has come. You heard something of our microfilming program here today. Since Elijah came, there has been a wave sweep over this world in the interests of genealogy and record keeping such as the world has never dreamed of in years before. We have referred to the promise of the Lord through Malachi (*Ibid.*, 3:1) that he would send his messenger to prepare the way before him that he might come suddenly to his temple. How can he come to his temple except a temple is built in the earth to prepare for his coming, and who could build such a temple except a prophet of God?

Now, compare that with the work of Elijah who brought the keys of the great temple program, and then the words of Isaiah whom the Lord permitted to look down through the stream of time for three thousand years and who saw the last days with the mountain of the Lord's house established in the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills, and that all nations would flow unto it 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. 2:3.)

You people who are here, and your parents before you, have been gathered from the nations to come to the house

of the Lord in the top of the mountains. That could not have transpired without a prophet unto whom God could reveal his mind and his will and give instructions as to what temples are for; and this all is a part of the work of Elijah. This temple standing on this block is another tangible evidence that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.

Let me give you the Book of Mormon. No man can believe the Bible and believe the words of the prophets without knowing that there is a companion volume of scripture that God the Eternal Father commanded should be written and declared that he would bring forth and join to the stick of Judah, which is the Bible, making them one in his hands, and one before his eyes.

How could he do that without a prophet of God to bring forth that marvelous record and join it to the record of Judah? We have that record before us. It has been before the world now for one hundred and thirty years, and people by the thousands and hundreds of thousands have borne witness that the promise contained in that book has been realized in their behalf in that God has manifested unto them the truth of the words of that book.

In Washington just recently, while holding a missionary meeting, a young mother of two children, a new convert to the Church, was asked to say a few words, and when she stood up, she said,

The missionaries promised me if I would read the Book of Mormon and ask God the Eternal Father, that he would manifest the truth of it unto me by the power of the Holy Ghost. I did that. I got down on my knees, and then I read that book, and my whole soul was illuminated, and I knew that that book was divine.

This is another tangible evidence that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God and one that the world has not yet been able to account for except as the Prophet Joseph declared.

In closing I leave you this one thought: We have been told that our convert baptisms last year reached nearly 32,000. If anybody who wants to know the truth would go out into these missions and interview those men and women who have left the teachings of

their parents and joined this Church, he would find that they will testify that their membership in this Church has literally changed their lives.

One convert put it in words like this: "When I think of who I was when the gospel found me and what I am today, I cannot believe I am the same man. I do not think the same thoughts. I do not have the same habits. I do not have the same ambitions and desires in life." Membership in this Church will make bad men good and good men better.

That is what the Lord meant when he said we were to be born again. So I say to you that it is not what people know about this Church that holds them out, it is what they do not know about it, because it is God's eternal truth, and that is another of the tangible evidences that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. I bear you my solemn witness that I know it in every fibre of my being, and I pray God to bless you all, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He who has just spoken to us is Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve.

A meeting devoted to the work of the stake and foreign missions will be held in the Tabernacle this evening at seven o'clock. Mission presidents in attendance at the General Conference, all stake mission presidents and stake missionaries, bishoprics and the presidencies of stakes, are requested to attend this meeting. An invitation is extended, also, to members of High Councils, presidents of Seventies quorums, and the General Boards of auxiliary organizations—this evening at seven o'clock.

The Brigham Young University Combined Choruses will now favor us with "Praise Ye the Lord," conducted by Elder Don L. Earl. The closing prayer will be offered by Elder Orlando T. Barrus, president of the North Tooele Stake, after which this Conference will stand adjourned until ten o'clock tomorrow morning.

We wish to say in behalf of you who have enjoyed the presence and the sing-