

way we live and by what we teach.

I heard a testimony just a week ago from a very fine man who has recently come into the Church. He was first impressed by the life of certain members of the Church whom he met. He became interested and investigated. He had a son fourteen years of age who likewise was interested in the missionaries and attended their meetings in the branch. The son came home one day and to the utter surprise of his father said, "Father, I have a testimony," and this man said, "Now in our church nobody ever testifies."

It is in Christianity a forgotten art practically, but with us it is the most essential thing of our whole program, brothers and sisters, that we should gain that testimony; that we should live true to it, and that when we accept responsibility in the priesthood we should magnify it.

Now we who keep records know that there is a large percentage of men who have been ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood who are not magnifying their callings. We have a program, brothers and sisters, that we have been advocating for sometime, to which reference was made today, to try to interest those people and bring them to pray and study that they may come to understand these things and then go forth to reclaim their privileges as members of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Of course there is plenty of incentive for it. To those of you who were here last night I recommend again the passages in the Doctrine and Covenants

that Brother Romney read to you, that he who receives these callings in the priesthood and magnifies them fully can eventually attain to the powers of God. That is the incentive, brothers and sisters. When we go to these people, we must go in love and kindness, helpful as we can in the hope that they will listen to us.

I pray that God will bless us that we may understand individually our own problems, understand that the privileges of membership in the Church of Jesus Christ are individual privileges, and that no man should let the conduct of another man prevent his using these privileges to his own exaltation. If people who come into the Church could come understanding that it is an individual problem pure and simple with them, then these other things that they observe at times would have no effect upon their lives.

Brethren and sisters, we have the problem not only of our own people, but also of assimilating and absorbing and helping the many people who are being baptized into the Church. May God help us to do all these things, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Antoine R. Ivins of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us. We will now hear Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder Alma Sonne.

ELDER HOWARD W. HUNTER

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

In the nineteenth chapter of John we read the story of an influential man who was secretly a disciple of Christ, but because of fear, was not openly a disciple. Those who declared themselves as followers of Christ were not popular in Jerusalem during this period of controversy. Joseph of Arimathea was secretly a disciple, but his fear of what others might think or do prevented him from declaring his allegiance until after the crucifixion of the Master.

Joseph of Arimathea was a man of wealth and station in Jerusalem. We can assume that he had a wide acquaintance and was a man of influence. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, the assembly of seventy-one men constituting the supreme council of the aristocracy which administered the Jewish law. It was because of his membership in this tribunal that he was referred to as "counsellor." Mark refers to him as "... an honourable counsellor, which

also waited for the kingdom of God. . . ." (Mark 15:43.) He waited in the background, doing nothing to support or sustain the Master. No doubt he had heard Jesus and listened to his teachings, for we are told that he was a secret disciple of the Savior.

When the council was called into session early in the morning, following the Last Supper and the betrayal, Joseph either absented himself from the council or refused to vote. He took no part in the proceedings, hoping no doubt to save his own conscience. He would not lift a finger to condemn the Savior, nor would he defend him openly.

There are many like Joseph of Arimathea, who do not declare loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ, but merely "wait for the kingdom." Like Joseph they are secret followers of Jesus and halfhearted, lukewarm Christians. Secret disciples of Christ are almost in the same category as those who are antagonistic. They are much the same as persons among us today who have only a halfhearted interest in our great democratic way of life and are as dangerous to the future freedom of the world as those who are openly avowed to destroy democracy.

We would have greater respect for Joseph, if he had taken a strong position in the council and defended Jesus. We cannot assume that this would have changed the judgment or saved him from the cross, because he stated at the supper that he would shortly leave them. Nevertheless, we have respect for one who stands upon moral convictions and upholds the right.

We have more respect for one who honestly doubts than for one who fears to declare loyalty. Thomas doubted. He traveled the path from faith through the valley of doubt to new heights of faith. This is the course that many follow in life. As children we accepted as fact the things which were told to us by our parents or our teachers because of the confidence that we had in them. A little boy will jump from a high place without fear if his father tells him that he will catch him. The little fellow has faith that his father will not let him fall. As children grow older, they commence to think for themselves, to question and have doubts about those things which are not subject to tangible proof.

I have sympathy for young men and young women when honest doubts enter their minds and they engage in the great conflict of resolving doubts. These doubts can be resolved, if they have an honest desire to know the truth, by exercising moral, spiritual, and mental effort. They will emerge from the conflict into a firmer, stronger, larger faith because of the struggle. They have gone from a simple, trusting faith, through doubt and conflict, into a solid substantial faith which ripens into testimony. The Bible is replete with such examples. We think of Abraham in the Old Testament and Thomas in Christ's time.

Now to return to Joseph of Arimathea, the record does not indicate to us that he doubted as did Thomas. We are told he was ". . . a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear. . . ." (John 19:38.) He believed secretly because he was afraid of public opinion. Among our own people, in our communities, in our nation and throughout the world, there are secret followers of Jesus and halfhearted Christians—onlookers who have a noncommittal attitude. Why is it that so many will not commit themselves?

Joseph of Arimathea was only a secret disciple because of what others would think of him. He would not risk his social position nor the respect of his associates. It is fear that causes men to be noncommittal. They are afraid to declare their loyalty and assume active responsibility. The easy way is to let someone else be the leader and assume the responsibility. The world needs men who are willing to step forward and declare themselves. The world needs men who will lift the load of responsibility to their shoulders and carry it high under the banner of Jesus Christ—men who are willing to defend the right openly. I am always impressed by the missionaries of this Church. They are willing to accept the call to serve two years or more at their own expense and give freely of their time without monetary compensation, to cry repentance and declare that Jesus is the Christ. This is the type of devotion to principle that is needed in the world today.

How can men of conscience ignore the teachings of the Master in their daily affairs, in business, or in government? We stand by and wink at many things

because we fear to do anything about them. We may be against crime or communism, but what do we do about it? We may be against corruption in government or against juvenile delinquency, but what do we do about it? We may have a belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ, but what are we doing about it? We need to push fear into the background and come forward with a definite, positive declaration, and assume responsibility.

The pathway to exaltation is well defined. We are told to have faith—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and repent of those things which are not according to his teachings. After this change of mental attitude, and with firm resolution, we must declare ourselves by going into the waters of baptism, thereby making a covenant with the Lord to keep his commandments. Can we thereafter be a secret disciple? Can we stand on the sidelines and merely observe? This is a day for action. This is the time for decision, not tomorrow, not next week. This is the time to make our covenant with the Lord. Now is the time for those who have been noncommittal or who have had a halfhearted interest to come out boldly and declare belief in Christ and be willing to demonstrate faith by works.

We acquire more regard for Joseph of Arimathea as we continue to read. Although he was "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear . . ." and although he was one who "waited for the kingdom of God," yet he was finally moved to action. The account continues:

"He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

"And when Joseph had taken the

body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

"And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed." (Matt. 27:58-60.)

I wonder if there was not a tear in Joseph's eye as he placed the body of Jesus in the tomb. Surely he thought of the events which had taken place earlier on that day, when as a member of the Council he had failed to come to the defense of the Master. Should we not search our own souls and inquire of ourselves if we are loyal? Are we, too, only secret disciples of Christ?

This same Jesus who died on the cross and whose body was placed in the tomb came forth on the third day thereafter. He was resurrected and lives today—the Savior of the world.

This is my witness. He stands before us with arms outstretched to our vision, and those same words spoken to the disciples in Jerusalem should ring in our ears:

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (*Ibid.*, 16:24-25.)

May we be his disciples openly, fearlessly, and with devotion, I humbly pray in his name. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom you have just listened, is Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve. Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve, will be our next speaker.

ELDER ALMA SONNE

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren and sisters, I believe I speak for the Assistants to the Quorum of the Twelve when I express my goodwill and my good feelings towards the three men who have been called to associate with us in our work. I know these men personally. I know they are good men. I know they are capable, and I know, too, their willingness to

lay upon the altar any worldly possessions they have in order to serve the Lord in spirit and in truth.

I believe in the future of the Church. I believe it has a great destiny. I believe in its moral standards. I believe its program is effective and the Church will grow and develop as the missionary effort increases in the world. I believe