

ELDER LEGRAND RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I am happy to greet you Latter-day Saints this morning, assembled in this great conference of the Church, and all who are listening in over the radio and the television. I thank the Lord above all other things in my life for my membership in this Church and for my association with the Latter-day Saints.

Yesterday in President McKay's most inspiring address, he related some of the incidents in connection with the organization of the Church 132 years ago, and he quoted from a revelation given by the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith over a year before the Church was organized in which the Lord said that a marvelous work was about to come forth among the children of men.

If the world could only understand what that marvelous work is and where they could learn about it. You do not read about it in the newspapers. President McKay related many of the marvelous things that have occurred in the world, but we have to go to the scriptures and to the words of the prophets to learn what that marvelous work is.

Isaiah saw the same thing that would come to pass in our day when he said: ". . . Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

"Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." (Isaiah 29:13-14.)

When the Lord indicated that he would do a marvelous work and wonder, if it were marvelous and wonderful in his eyes, what would it be in the eyes of the world if they just understood it?

There are so many other prophecies like the one of Daniel in his interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream where the Lord indicated that in the

latter days, and we live in the latter days, he would set up his kingdom in the earth, never to be thrown down or given to another people. Never in the history of the world has such a kingdom been set up with a promise that it would never be thrown down or given to another people, but Daniel said that it would roll forth like a little stone cut out of the mountain without hands until it would become as a great mountain and fill the whole earth. (See Daniel 2.)

When we hear about how this work is spreading in the world, we cannot help realizing that this is that marvelous work and a wonder, just described in different terms by Daniel as compared with the one that Isaiah tells us of, and Isaiah said that the wisdom of their wise men would perish, and the understanding of their prudent men would be hid, because they cannot understand and comprehend, any more than they could understand and comprehend the work that Jesus established when he was here upon the earth, and so they crucified him. You remember he said: ". . . Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. . . ." (Luke 23:34.)

We have many other prophecies. Isaiah said that the Lord had declared the end from the beginning. (See *ibid.*, 46:10.) He said: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." (*Ibid.*, 40:8.)

Where do we learn the word of our God? We read in the scriptures the words of Amos the Prophet that: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7.)

So that if the Lord should ever undertake to fulfil the promises made to the Prophet Joseph Smith and to Isaiah and to Daniel, then we would have to look to find that work headed by a prophet, because God could not do, according to his plan and purposes, the work he decreed he would do without a prophet. Thank God for the prophets of this dispensation.

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Second Day

You remember how Jesus said that the people of his day crucified the living prophets, but they decorated the graves of the dead prophets. And history is just repeating itself today. So we turn to the living prophets to learn of this marvelous work and a wonder the Lord promised to do and to learn of the kingdom the Lord promised to set up in the latter days.

We know that this Church is the fulfillment of those very prophecies and many, many others, relating to this marvelous work that God said he would establish in the latter days, and we would that all men everywhere might know as we know, and we bear witness of it, and that is the reason for the great missionary program of the Church where we have some 11,000 of our young men and women out in the world with no thought of any earthly gain, only a desire to share with the people of the world the marvelous truths of the gospel.

We converted a very prominent banker not long ago, and when I attended one of the conferences at which he was present, I asked him if he would like to say a few words in the conference. He stood up and said something like this: "Mormonism is not only a religion, it is a way of life." And why should it not be a way of life? It is not just a Sunday religion. It is a religion that enters into our lives until the first thing in the life of a Latter-day Saint is to serve the Lord and honor his priesthood, where every man can bear the priesthood of God and help to build the kingdom of God in the earth. I thank the Lord for such a Church as that.

You remember the story about when one of the brethren was asked what his business was, and he said, "My business, sir, is to serve the Lord. I mend shoes for a living." Now that is the way the Latter-day Saints feel. Our business is to serve the Lord, and then we mend shoes for a living.

A short time ago, and many of you may be familiar with this, there was a very prominent minister delivering an address on what was called the National Brotherhood Week, and he talked about the Mormons. He was discussing the

merits of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and after admitting that he had always had a very erroneous idea about the Mormons, he made this statement: "What are the things that I like about the Mormons?" Then he enumerates some of them, one by one, and indicates that it is a way of life; for instance, he says his first thought is a clear statement of faith, a statement of faith that young people can grasp, understanding what it is. Then he mentions and discusses some of its teachings, such as eternal progression. What a marvelous truth this Church has revealed to the world. Revelation taking place today. What a world it would be if everybody believed in the revelations of God in our day!

And then he speaks of eternal marriage. Is it not strange that as plainly as that principle is taught in the Holy Scriptures, that we should be the only Church that teaches it? All other churches perform their marriages "until death do you part." I know there are some ministers who would like to perform their marriages for eternity, because I have talked with them. I cannot take time to tell you of these experiences this morning, but one of our Mormon boys was being married in southern California a few years ago. He was marrying out of the Church, and her minister was to perform the ceremony. In talking with this young couple in advance, he said, "Now, if there is anything special you would like me to say when I perform the ceremony, if you will indicate it, I will be glad to say it." This young Mormon boy spoke up and said, "Reverend, when you pronounce us husband and wife, if you would do it for time and eternity, you would surely make me happy." The minister raised his head, and said, "Isn't that a beautiful thought? Why don't we all get married like that?" We would all get married like that if we lived properly, and if we understood God's eternal truth when he said it was not good for man to be alone and gave him a help meet before death ever came into this world. Through the atonement of Christ, we are to be restored to man's former condition. If it was not good

for man to be alone before death came into the world, it will not be good for man to be alone when there is no more death.

To us who understand this principle, we cannot understand why the world cannot believe when it is taught so plainly. I could tell you of other ministers who have admitted to me that they believe eternal marriage is a principle of the scriptures, but they are not allowed to teach it in their own churches.

Then this minister said, when mentioning these things, "But is this faith bad?" Is it bad to believe in eternal progression? Is it bad to believe in revelation? Is it bad to believe in the eternal duration of the marriage covenant?

Then he adds: "The second thing I like about them is that they have a way of life. Their religion enters into their life immediately." Then he discusses our attitude toward work, toward accepting help from the government and our standards of living necessary to prepare us to serve in the Church, and then he says, "I do not know whether it is because of this way of life to which their religion is related so intimately or not, but they are perhaps the healthiest people in the world. During the war, in Utah you found more people or men acceptable for the services than any other state in the United States." Then he states, "Utah is the first state in the United States in education and perhaps the best in the world."

If we have what we claim, a marvelous work and a wonder, should it not inspire us as a people to live up to its standards? It is nothing more than what Jesus said that we should let our light so shine before men that they, seeing our good works, should glorify our Father which is in heaven. (See Matt. 5:16.)

Then this man says, "The third thing I like about the Mormon faith, it is a family-centered religion. This family-centered religion begins with family prayers in the morning, family prayers at night, and no food is eaten until it is blessed. The entire family goes to Church, led by the father and the mother." I interviewed a young man for his mission a short time ago in south-

ern Utah, and he had just returned from spending eighteen months in an army camp in Germany. He said, "We Mormon boys went to the Chief Chaplain to see if we could get permission to hold our meetings in the government chapel, and he said, 'Well, we would like to accommodate you, but it is in such constant use, we cannot do it. There is a classroom in the basement; you can use that,'" and then he asked for a report of attendance at their meetings and when the first report was handed in, the chaplain said, "My, you must have a lot of Mormon boys at this base." He was told that there were thirty-five. He shook his head and said, "I can't believe it. How do you do it? You have more boys attending your meetings than I have attending mine, and I have five thousand Protestant boys under my supervision." Now, when thirty-five Mormon boys far away from their homes and their loved ones and their bishops and their best girls can make a better record of attending church than five thousand Protestant boys, does not that tell you something about the spiritual power that there is in this Church, that leads them to the house of worship?

I told this story in California and one of the brethren there said, "I was raised in one of the largest churches in San Francisco. We had a beautiful building. We had over ten thousand members, and our average attendance was less than one hundred." According to our statistics, we would have had, with that many, thirty-six hundred average attendance at the meetings.

Then this minister tells about the home evening and about the fellowship in the Church and the youth program, how they associate together. I heard a minister on the radio in California make this statement, "What we need is a church for the youth of the land. We have been preaching to the old folks and letting the young folks go to the devil." He said, "That is why our churches are empty today."

A minister in talking over the radio in Los Angeles held a question and answer box, and one evening the first question asked was, "What church is doing the most for its young people?" And his answer was, "The Mormon

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Church," and then he explained our standards of living and what the Church did for its young people, and we have had many such comments as that. Then he talked about our preparation of our young people for marriage.

There isn't time to discuss more of this minister's comments on what he likes about the Mormons. I have only discussed three, and there are seven, so I will skip them. But I come now to the seventh, where he talks about the service in the Church. He took as an illustration a stake president, and he knew all about it. He lived in one of our communities, and he told about the number of meetings he held, the number of miles he traveled, and some of them travel great distances, and then after he discussed that, and he could just as well have discussed the bishops, too, he said, "They care for their members." And then he adds, "Unless the laymen of the church reassume their responsibility, I do not believe the Protestant church has a future."

I would like to read a few statements in closing from recent converts to the Church that I have received during the last few days. I only have time to read one, and that is from a retired minister—he was not retired when we converted him—I think he may be in this audience this morning. I copied this out of a letter less than thirty days old: "My testimony grows and grows.

Where we were once blind, we now see."

Would it not be marvelous if all the world could see and come out of darkness, as Peter said, to his marvelous light, and we have it to offer, and we invite all men everywhere to listen to our message, and I always say that there is not an honest man or an honest woman in this world who really loves the Lord who would not join this Church if he knew what it was.

Then this convert adds, "We never knew of such love as we now have for each other and all others. Some of our former friends say that they have never before witnessed such a change as has come over us."

My time is up. God bless us, brothers and sisters, and help us to carry on in the great assignment that is ours and bear witness of the truth that the world might share with us this marvelous work and a wonder, I pray and leave my blessing with you good people, in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We have just listened to Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve. President Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Quorum, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Antoine R. Ivins.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My beloved brethren and sisters, I feel like I had just passed through a tornado. (laughter) I did not say that to make you laugh. But the Lord never blessed me with a voice nor the quality to explode when I get up to deliver a discourse, so I am deficient in those things. I do wish to say, however, that I have a testimony of this truth. I am grateful for it. I do not remember the time when I did not believe in the mission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ nor in the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and I hope you will forgive me if I get a little personal.

I was trained at my mother's knee to

love the Prophet Joseph Smith and to love my Redeemer. I never knew my Grandmother Smith. I have always regretted that, because she was one of the most noble women who ever lived, but I did know her good sister, my Aunt Mercy Thompson, and as a boy I used to go and visit her in her home and sit at her knee, where she told me stories about the Prophet Joseph Smith, and, oh, how grateful I am for that experience.

I know that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is in very deed the kingdom of God, the same kingdom that was seen by a great king long before the birth of Christ in a dream or a