

May I just mention here that we wish to express to Brother Asper our sincere appreciation for his many years of devoted and efficient service and we hope that he may continue to render such service as he may be called upon to do.

President McKay, as far as I can observe, the voting is unanimous in the affirmative.

President N. Eldon Tanner

We have just listened to the report from the clerk of the conference, Elder Joseph W. Anderson, giving statistical

data; and Elder Orval W. Adams gave a report of the Church Finance Committee; and from President Hugh B. Brown of the First Presidency, who presented for your sustaining vote the General Authorities, general officers, and general auxiliary officers of the Church. We thank you, brethren and sisters, for this sustaining vote.

Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker this morning, and he will be followed by Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve.

Brother Romney.

ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

President McKay and Counselors, President Smith, the rest of the General Authorities, brothers and sisters and friends, I am embarrassed. Since my secretary gave the press and translators my notes, I have decided not to use them. Please accept my apologies, and don't blame her. Brother Evans, my co-worker, advised me on the way over here this morning that we have a much larger television and radio audience than I thought we would have. Therefore, on the 135th anniversary of the establishment of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I have decided to say a word or two about the message the Lord charged this his Church to declare, particularly with respect to present and future world conditions.

I make no apology for the scriptures I am going to read. Of them the Lord said: "What I . . . have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, . . ." (D&C 1:38.) In using these scriptures, I have no ill will toward the world—nothing but love and a hope that the world will listen to what the Almighty himself has said.

Fifteen months ago, in the *Deseret News*, was a column in which Sydney J. Harris referred to an entry in

the log of Peary when he was trying to reach the North Pole.

"On this trip, he traveled a whole day [northward], . . . At night, when he checked his bearings . . . , he found to his surprise that he was much further South than he had been in the morning.

"All day . . . he had been driving toward the North on an immense iceberg drawn southward by an ocean current.

"And sometimes," said the commentator, "it occurs to me that we are all standing on this iceberg, racing forward in one direction, while the very ground beneath us moves implacably in the other direction.

"With tremendous speed and power, we are moving toward discoveries and inventions that utterly dwarf Peary's conquest of the North Pole. In medicine, in technology, in food supply, in materials and techniques and processes, we have made more progress in the last fifty years than was made in the previous five hundred.

"Yet, at the same time, the ground we are standing on steadily seems to move backward, drawn not by ocean currents, but by social currents too vast and deep for us to comprehend, much less to control.

"As we check our bearings . . . at this point in history, we are more surprised

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and appalled than Peary to learn that we are 'farther South' than our fathers and grandfathers were.

"The first two-thirds of the 20th Century have witnessed a monumental regression from the hopes and aspirations of the 19th Century. For now, with all the new techniques at our disposal for mastering nature and controlling our own destinies, we appear further than ever from our goals." (Sydney J. Harris, *Deseret News*, January 7, 1964.)

From the October 13, 1964, issue of the same paper, I clipped the following from Walter Lippmann.

Our Civilization Is Going Forward Backwards

"Nobody knows," he says, "just why our affluent society is filled with so much anxiety, or just why crime is increasing so alarmingly among the young. . . . These [and other conditions which he cites] are all matters which can be mentioned, but which cannot be debated seriously, because the wisest men among us are still searching for, but have not found, the answers."

Now, like the rest of the world, informed Latter-day Saints are fully aware that our civilization is going forward backwards and that our affluent society is filled with much anxiety. But, unlike the rest of the world, we are not "still searching for . . . the answers." We know what they are. The Almighty himself has revealed them. He has made known the cause of the downward drift, and he has revealed the one and only remedy therefor. We not only know these things; but, as already said, we are under a divine charge to declare them to the world.

God Has Revealed the Remedy

And so, pursuant to this charge, we do declare that more than a century ago God our Eternal Father, knowing where the course of men was leading, opened the heavens and gave warning. He not only confirmed the drift; he pointed out the reason for it. He revealed also the remedy for it. He further predicted the awful consequences of a failure to follow that remedy.

And finally, he gave assurance that righteousness, peace, and happiness will ultimately prevail among the inhabitants of the earth.

This, of course, is not the time or the place for an exhaustive review of what the Lord said on these vital issues. A few quotations will suffice, however, to indicate the nature of what he revealed.

First, as to the downward drift: On the night of September 21, 1823, an angel, who introduced himself as "a messenger sent from the presence of God," appeared at the bedside of Joseph Smith, Jun., and informed him ". . . of great judgments which were coming upon the earth, with great desolations by famine, sword, and pestilence; and that these grievous judgments would come on the earth in this generation. . . ." (Joseph Smith 2:33, 45.)

On Christmas day 1832 about thirty years before the Civil War broke out, the Lord said to the Prophet:

"Verily, thus saith the Lord concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls;

"And the time will come that war will be poured out upon all nations. . .

"And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations;" (D&C 87:1-2, 6.)

That the Lord's purpose in revealing these unhappy impending calamities was not to condemn but to save mankind is evidenced by the fact that with the warning he identified the cause and revealed the means by which the calamities may be turned aside.

As to their cause, he said, speaking of the inhabitants of the earth, ". . . they have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant;

"They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own God, whose image is in the likeness of the world, . . ." (*Ibid.*, 1:15-16.)

We are, then, going forward backwards, and our affluent society is filled with much anxiety because the inhabitants of the world ". . . seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own God, . . ." (*Ibid.* 1:16.) I ask you candidly, how could current attitudes of men and nations throughout the world be more accurately described?

To me the foregoing statements clearly reveal the fact that if men do not humble themselves and cease relying solely upon their own wisdom, if they do not turn and seek the Lord to establish his righteousness, they will implement the "decreed . . . end of all nations." (*Ibid.*, 87:6.)

As to the way to avoid the calamities, the Lord, in his preface to the publication of a compilation of some of the revelations which he gave during the restoration, said:

"Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments;

"And also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world; and all this. . .

". . . that man should not counsel his fellow man [that is, rely upon his own judgment], neither trust in the arm of flesh—

"But that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world;

"That faith also might increase in the earth;

"That mine everlasting covenant might be established [that from which the world had strayed];

"That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers." (*Ibid.*, 1:17-23.)

The Remedy: The Gospel of Jesus Christ

The commandments referred to in these scriptures, which were given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and which others were commanded to declare to the world, collectively embrace the pure and simple gospel of Jesus Christ, which gospel is the remedy to the problems of our times. Because it now is, and has always been, the only plan by which men can live in righteousness, peace, and happiness in the earth, the Lord has from the beginning repeatedly revealed it. He revealed it to Adam. Thereafter he revealed it to Enoch, to Noah, the Jaredites, Abraham, Moses, and the prophets, and to the Nephites. Jesus himself personally taught it in the Meridian of Time, both in the land of Jerusalem and in America. It contains the ordinances from which the Lord said the inhabitants of the earth had strayed. It is the "everlasting covenant" which he said they had broken. It leads men to "seek the Lord to establish his righteousness." It is literally, as Paul says, "the power of God unto salvation." (Rom. 1:16.)

For the purpose of saving mankind in this world, and in the world to come, the Lord revealed it anew in this dispensation through the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jun. Through him also the Lord, 135 years ago today, re-established his Church, ". . . even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (D&C 115:4), commonly known as "the Mormon Church." This Church is the Lord's appointed custodian and legal administrator of the ordinances of his gospel.

Backwardness Can Be Reversed

If enough people will accept and live it, the troubles of the world will fade away as the hoarfrost before the burning rays of the rising sun. Our going forward backwards will be reversed, and the anxieties of our "affluent society" will diminish and cease.

Otherwise, a Desolating Scourge

And what if enough people do not accept the remedy? Well, in such event the inhabitants of the earth will suffer

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the consequences of their disobedience. I say this humbly but confidently because the Lord himself said to the Prophet Joseph Smith in March of 1829:

"... this generation shall have my word through you"; and

"Verily, I say unto you, that we shall come unto the inhabitants of the earth if they will not hearken unto my words;

"For a desolating scourge shall go forth among the inhabitants of the earth, and shall continue to be poured out from time to time, if they repent not, until the earth is empty, and the inhabitants thereof are consumed away and utterly destroyed by the brightness of my coming.

"Behold, I tell you these things, even as I also told the people of the destruction of Jerusalem; and my word shall be verified at this time as it hath hitherto been verified." (*Ibid.* 5:10, 5, 19-20.)

Our choice, then, is clear. Men, in the exercise of their God-given free agency, will make—in fact, they are now making day by day—the decision.

Such, in brief and inadequate outline, is the message which we, the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, are under divine charge to declare to the world. For as the Lord told his prophets in dispensations past, so he told his modern Prophet, Joseph Smith, that the revelations which had been given to him were not for the sake of himself and his associates only, but were for the sake of the whole world. In the preface already referred to he said,

"... the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth, ... unto all men, ...

"And again, verily I say unto you, O inhabitants of the earth: I the Lord am willing to make these things known unto all flesh"; (*Ibid.*, 1:11, 2, 34.)

As to who should make the declaration, the Lord was equally explicit. Speaking to the Prophet, he said, "... ye shall teach them unto all men; for they shall be taught unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people." (*Ibid.*, 42:58.)

"The voice of warning shall be to all people"

"And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days." (*Ibid.*, 1:4.)

"Send forth the elders of my church unto the nations which are afar off; unto the islands of the sea; send forth unto foreign lands; call upon all nations," (*Ibid.*, 133:8.)

In conclusion, let me say that the message we declare includes the glorious assurance that in the end righteousness, peace, and happiness will come to the inhabitants of the earth. Whether after the destruction foreshadowed or as a result of repentance, men return to his ordinances, abide by his everlasting covenant, and "seek the Lord to establish his righteousness," remains to be seen.

The Second Advent of Our Lord, Jesus Christ

The assurance of the glorious day of peace is frequently given in connection with references to the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. This one I have taken from the 45th section of the Doctrine and Covenants.

"... I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people, and for the Gentiles to seek to it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me.

"Wherefore, come ye unto it, ...

"And it shall come to pass that he that feareth me shall be looking forth for the great day of the Lord to come, even for the signs of the coming of the Son of Man.

"And they shall see signs and wonders, for they shall be shown forth in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath. ...

"... and, behold, I will come; and they shall see me in the clouds of heaven, clothed with power and great glory; with all the holy angels; ...

"And at that day, ... shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins.

"For they that are wise and have received the truth [the gospel of Jesus Christ], and have taken the Holy Spirit

for their guide [and are directed by the Holy Ghost], and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they . . . shall abide the day.

“And the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance; and they shall multiply and wax strong, and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation.

“For the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their king and their law-giver.” (*Ibid.*, 45:9-10, 39-40, 44, 56-59.)

God grant that we may heed the message and be prepared for that great day I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve. Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, will be our next speaker. Elder Richards.

ELDER FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brothers and sisters, I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will guide and direct me as I speak to you on this the 135th anniversary of the organization of the Church.

Differences

One of the most frequent questions asked members of the Church is, “What is the difference between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and other churches?”

All that God Has Revealed

There are many important differences, but one of the most basic and significant is stated in our ninth article of faith: “We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”

Many call us a peculiar people because we believe in modern revelation.

By way of explanation, in the year 1820 Joseph Smith, a boy of 14, living in the state of New York, was interested in joining a church but was unable to determine which church was right.

“If any of you lack wisdom”

In his own words he said, “While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chap-

ter and fifth verse, which reads, ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.’

“Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. . . .

“At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to ‘ask of god.’” (Joseph Smith 2:11-13.)

So in accordance with his determination to ask of God, one beautiful spring morning in 1820 he retired to a grove of trees on his father’s farm and knelt in prayer.

“My Beloved Son”

As he was praying he saw a pillar of light exactly over his head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon him. When the light rested upon him, he saw, standing above him in the air, two personages in the form of men, whose brightness and glory defied all description. One of them called Joseph Smith by name and said, “*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him.*” (*Ibid.*, 2:17.)

He could see them as clearly as we see one another. And he could see that his own body was created in the image and likeness of God. At that time the