

Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

Elder LeGrand Richards of the

Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

Elder LeGrand Richards

Of the Council of the Twelve

I feel very honored, brothers and sisters, in having been invited to share my testimony and add it to those of all my brethren that have been given in this session and the previous sessions of this conference because, with all my heart and soul, I know this is the Lord's work, that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of the world, the head of His church, that Joseph Smith was His prophet, for the establishment of His kingdom here upon this earth in the latter days to prepare the way for His second coming.

Blessings

During the summer months, the vacation period, I had to spend a few weeks at home with a little ailment. It gave me an opportunity to read a few books, and I read my patriarchal blessing and the blessings that I received from presidents of the Church when I was set apart as mission president twice; when I was set apart as the Presiding Bishop of the Church; and last of all when President David O. McKay, assisted by his counselors and the members of the Quorum of the Twelve, laid his hands upon my head twenty-four years ago last April in the holy temple and ordained me an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the blessing, President McKay gave me a charge that I should be a witness of Him, and that I should bear witness of His divine calling and the divine calling of His prophet Joseph Smith and of the truths of the restored gospel. And my, the joy I have had in these 24 1/2

years trying to respond and be obedient to the charge that President McKay gave me upon that occasion. I have had great joy and happiness therein.

I have come to feel the meaning of the words of the prophet Nephi when he said: "[The Lord] hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh." (2 Ne. 4:21.) Have you ever felt that? When you have gooseflesh all over by the power of the Spirit? I think of the words of the apostle Paul when he said that those who "have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

"If they shall fall away," it would be impossible "to renew them again unto repentance." (Heb. 6:5-6.)

Now from that I get the feeling as Paul expressed it that even here in mortality we can taste of the powers of the world to come.

I have many rich friends. I have never seen any tears of joy flow from their eyes because of anything they had purchased with their money. But I have seen plenty of tears of joy in the eyes of the humble of this earth in the mission field, in testimony meetings, and in His servants under the influence and power of the Spirit of God. So I know that it is real.

When I was a young boy in a little country town, I can remember our Sunday School teacher giving us the words of John the Baptist, when he said that he baptized with water for the forgiveness of sins but he said: "One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he

shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Luke 3:16.) I couldn't imagine what that fire meant when I was a boy but I have lived long enough to know. I have been lifted beyond my own natural abilities under the influence and power of the Spirit of the Lord as I have borne witness of the truth of this gospel upon many occasions until it is a part of my very being, and I would like to give you that testimony here today.

Simple truths

Now I have in mind that I would like to say a few words today about a statement of the apostle Paul's. He said: "I fear, lest by any means . . . your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (2 Cor. 11:3.) And I tell you throughout the world the minds of men have been corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, and they have taught the commandments of men rather than the simple truths revealed in the Lord's holy word.

I think of the words of Isaiah. He said:

"Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant,

"Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth." (Isa. 24:5-6.)

Then I think also of the experience when Emperor Constantine called the Nicea Council, held way back in 325 A.D. when 318 bishops spent four weeks in discussion and debate over the divinity and personality of Jesus Christ and God. Think of that! Their minds were confused and corrupted or else they would have followed the simple teachings of the scriptures and there would have been no need of their spending four weeks in debate to decide that question. Thank the Lord that, through the restoration of the gospel, those simple truths are a part of us and of our great work, and our minds are not corrupted.

Nature of Deity

I will give you another little illustration of what I mean. When I was doing missionary work back in Massachusetts some years ago, and it was near Easter time, I had a conversation in the home of a retired minister. I asked him if he would explain to me his concept of the Deity. He told of the universal feeling and the teachings of the churches, that he believed that the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost were one God, but a spiritual God—not a physical God—that there was an influence that permeated the earth, the life of the flowers and the trees and so forth.

Then I said: "Well, what are they celebrating Easter for?"

And he said: "The resurrection of Christ."

And I said: "And just what do you mean by that? Did His spirit come back and take possession of His body when the stone was rolled away, and He arose, and when the women came to the sepulchre, there sat an angel, one at the foot and one at the head, and they said: 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen' (Luke 24:5-6)? Then you remember how many times He appeared to the Twelve and then He had them feel the prints in His hands and the wound in His side, and said: 'Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.' (Luke 24:39.) Then He took fish and honeycomb and ate with them. After spending forty days with His disciples, then He ascended to heaven and as He went up, two men in white apparel stood and said: 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.'" (Acts 1:11.)

Then I said to this minister: "Now how in the world can you believe in a spirit rather than that personal Christ that went into heaven? Did you feel that He died again, that He should be just an

essence in the world rather than to have that very body that He took up and became the first fruits of the resurrection, which is a reality, and not just a spiritual resurrection?"

The minister thought a minute and then he said: "I have never thought of it like that before."

Corrupted ideas

Now Moses knew that this condition would prevail, for when he went to lead the children of Israel into the promised land, he told them that they would not remain there long, but that they would be scattered among the nations, that they would worship gods made by the hands of men that could neither see, nor hear, nor taste, nor smell. (See Deut. 4:28.) Now isn't that the god of the Christian world today? And Moses knew that this condition would prevail all that long time ago—but he didn't leave it at that. He said that in the latter days (and we live in the latter days) if they should seek after God they should surely find him, and they did.

What a difference between the corrupted idea of the Christ, compared with when Stephen was stoned to death and he gazed into heaven and he saw Jesus standing on the right hand of His Father. How could He stand on His right side or right hand if He had no body? How could He stand if He had no feet? Then compare this also with the marvelous vision of the Prophet Joseph in this dispensation when a light descended from heaven, according to his testimony, brighter than the noon-day sun. In the midst of that glorious light were two heavenly messengers: the Father and the Son. The Father, pointing to the Son, said: "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith 2:17.)

That is the simplicity that is in Christ, and if the world would only follow the simple things that I have referred to briefly here today, how

could they believe in just an essence that is everywhere present?

Truth restored

You remember what Jesus said in the Beatitudes? Among other things He said: "For blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8.) According to the corrupted ideas of the Christian world today, what would they hope to see when they see Him if He is just a spirit everywhere present? Would they see the flowers and the plants and the trees? Not so with the Latter-day Saints. We look forward to the day when we will see Him come in power and great glory, and it doesn't make sense to think that He discarded that body that He could be everywhere present, that He and the Father could be the same person.

Well, that is one of the great truths that has come through the restoration of the gospel in these days. I bear witness to that, and I know that He lives. He is at the head of the Church. Like Paul said, the Church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. 2:20.) I have a witness that He is at the head of this church, that He is guiding it and directing it, and I don't see how any sane person could study what the Church has accomplished since the days that He appeared with the Father, and then think that it is the work of man.

Joseph Smith

Now speaking of the Prophet Joseph Smith, I want to give you a little testimony. A few years ago when Brother John A. Widtsoe was alive, he gave a series of lectures on the Doctrine and Covenants in the Barrett Hall, and Sister Richards and I attended those lectures. He had Sister Inez Witbeck there—she could read beautifully—and he would say, "Sister Witbeck, read section so-and-so," and then request

certain verses from another section. Then he would stand up and say: "Now you college students, you college professors, could you write anything like that?" Then he would add: "I wish I could." And he had been president of two universities and written textbooks that had been used all over the land. This church has produced many great leaders in finance, industry, and education, but none of them have attempted to contribute what the Prophet Joseph gave although he had scarcely seen the inside of a schoolroom.

In the early days he surrounded himself with many wise men—men who had had college training. Some of them thought that they could write revelations better than the Prophet Joseph did. So the Lord gave them a test. He told the prophet to choose the wisest among them and let him write a revelation equal to the least of those that the Lord had given through the Prophet Joseph, and if he was successful in so doing, he would be under no condemnation if he failed to bear witness of the truth of the revelations He had given through the prophet. But none of them could do it. As I say, smart as our leaders are and have been, none of them can hope to approximate what the Prophet Joseph gave.

Revelations

My testimony is that no man has ever lived upon the face of the earth outside of the Redeemer of the world that has given as much revealed truth to the world as the Prophet Joseph Smith. How could anyone read the Doctrine and Covenants, and study it, and think that Joseph Smith wrote it?

Take this as an illustration—the seventy-sixth section of the Doctrine and Covenants. We read in the Bible that Paul (although he didn't say it was himself) knew a man in Christ Jesus who was caught up into the third heaven—and there can't be a third

heaven without a first and a second—and such an one was caught up into paradise (and then we have a place below that!). But Paul was not permitted to write what he saw, how we should live or how the Lord would judge those that would go to the heaven that he likened to the sun, and the one like unto the moon, and the one like unto the stars, as Brother Sill mentioned here today. (See 2 Cor. 12:2-4; 1 Cor. 15:40-42.)

But that revelation was reserved to be revealed to the prophet of this dispensation and is known as the seventy-sixth section of the Doctrine and Covenants. When the prophet received that revelation, he said: "[It was] a transcript from the records of the eternal world." (*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 1:252.) Many of our scriptures were written long before man was upon the earth. That is why we read of Christ, the Lamb slain before the foundation of this earth. Not that He was literally slain, but in the Lord's great eternal plan, He had offered Himself and He was to give His life.

Testimony

Now I pray God to bless all of you—that is only a little start, but oh my! when I think of what the Prophet Joseph has given us in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, the Book of Mormon, and then that marvelous testimony of the three witnesses. How could any sane person, a lover of truth, read that testimony and then not want to know whether that book is true, and then read the promise in the latter part of it, that if any man would read it and ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, having faith that the Lord would manifest the truth of it unto him by the power of the Holy Ghost. (See Moro. 10:4-5.)

I bear witness to that end—that it is the word of God. This is His church—it will triumph in the earth; and as I see

these great area conferences the Brethren are holding, I wouldn't be surprised if it is not too far distant when great multitudes, even congregations, will join the Church, for this is the only way to eternal exaltation.

God bless you all, I pray, and leave you my blessing and witness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the General Priesthood Meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 7 P.M.

The Sunday Morning Session will be broadcast by many radio and television stations in the Western United States and Canada, and by way of oceanic cable to members assembled in 100 chapels in England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and Austria.

KSL Radio and KIRO Radio at Seattle will rebroadcast sessions over extensive distances, beginning at midnight following each conference day's proceedings.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir Broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the marvelous Mormon Youth Chorus. We are thankful for the presence of you young people here today and for the beautiful numbers you have rendered.

With Brother Robert C. Bowden conducting and Brother Roy M. Darley at the organ, the Chorus will now favor us with: "O Lord God."

Following the singing, the Benediction will be offered by Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and President of the Chile Santiago Mission.

The Chorus sang the number, "O Lord God."

The benediction was pronounced by Elder William R. Bradford of the First Quorum of the Seventy and President of the Chile Santiago Mission.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The General Priesthood Meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 7 o'clock P.M. on Saturday, October 2, 1976, with President Spencer W. Kimball presiding and conducting.

A Combined Men's Choir from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus provided the music for this session. Brothers Jerold Ottley and

Robert C. Bowden conducted and Robert Cundick was at the organ.

President Kimball made the following opening remarks:

President Spencer W. Kimball

Brethren, we are assembled in the general priesthood session of the 146th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.