

A solo, "The blind plowman," was sung by Brother Melvin Watson, who is blind.

## PRESIDENT ANTHONY W. IVINS

### *First Counselor in the First Presidency*

This is the last session, my brethren and sisters, of the conference. I have been reminded of the scripture that I am about to quote.

It is now more than 2,000 years ago since the Lord called the Prophet Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, commanding him to go and proclaim his word to the house of Israel. The Israelitish people had departed from faith in the God of their fathers and had turned to the worship of idols. Ezekiel, in obedience to the commandments of the Lord, went out to the people who dwelt upon the river Chebar and abode with them seven days. He was amazed at their wickedness, their idolatry, and he hesitated, reluctant to deliver the message which the Lord had commanded him to take to them.

#### EZEKIEL REBUKED

At the end of that time the Lord rebuked him and said to him:

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

"Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

#### RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP

I have often read these words of the prophet and have asked myself this question, What is their application to you? What is the responsibility that you are under in the capacity which you occupy in the Church and in the nation? The answer has always been the same. It is this, that whatever my profession, whether it be as a citizen of the government to which I have given allegiance, or a member of the Church with which I am affiliated, it becomes my duty to magnify in my life and to teach others to do so, the ideals for which my country stands, and the creed which my Church teaches. If I fail in this and lead others away from loyalty to their country or devotion to the truths of religion, I assume the responsibility of not only being a violator of the laws made for the protection and temporal welfare of the citizens, but of the law of God which has been given to us for the salvation of our souls.

This places upon me, if I properly understand it, and upon every other person who assumes the responsibility of leadership, whether it be in the Church or state, a tremendous responsibility, a responsibility which I always feel when I stand before a congregation of my brethren and sisters, as I do now, upon occasions of this kind, and I always feel

the necessity of dependence upon the Lord and upon you, my brethren and sisters, for help.

#### A MARVELOUS CHANGE

This is a congregation of people composed almost exclusively of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly known to the world as Mormons. We are here in a building known throughout the world as the Mormon tabernacle. We are listening to an organ the tones of which have become known throughout the world. We are here in an environment of flowers, of trees, with beauty and peace all around us. I remember a time when this block of ground on which these buildings stand, where these trees grow, these flowers bloom, was a barren waste. I have played upon this block when there was not a shrub or spear of grass on it. It was a gravelly part of the bed of City Creek. I have seen it grow from that time until now. I knew the men who were the builders of it. We are now in a city which we call Salt Lake, in a state which we call Utah, now one of the 48 states of the confederation which constitutes the United States of America. Only yesterday there was no tabernacle, no flowers, no Salt Lake City, no State of Utah; and going back just a little farther, only yesterday, as time ticks off its moments, and hours, and days, and years, and aeons, there was no government of the United States of America.

#### THE MORMON PIONEERS

What is it that has brought this about? Why is this great congregation of men and women assembled here this afternoon? Anglo Saxon men and women as a rule, people whose forefathers many of them laid or assisted in the laying of the foundation upon which our government rests. I knew these men and women as perhaps few men now living knew them. This Mormon Pioneer, I knew his faith, I knew his industry, I knew his integrity, I knew his devotion to the government of which he formed a part, for he believed that it was a God-given government. He knew that it was not alone the doing of men, that had brought him to this forbidding looking country, and yet in its ruggedness and its barrenness grand beyond comprehension. And so he toiled on. When difficulties confronted him he prayed to the Lord for light and strength, and then went out and did the thing that was required of him. Profoundly religious he held in reverential respect the religion of other men. He knew that other people found God in temples built with hands, just as he found him here under the stars where he worshipped in those early days.

I think of those men, I think of their statesmanship. They were the peers of any of their time, intellectually, educationally, largely men who had come from the New England states of our republic, the descendants of the Pilgrims whom the Lord brought there, and it was He who brought them here. They knew it.

#### DESTINY FORETOLD

I shall not take time to go back and prove to you the truth of Elder

Talmage's remarks of yesterday. This country in which we live had been declared by the prophets thousands of years ago to have been given by God our Father to the covenant people of Israel. The coming of Columbus was not a thing of chance. The prophets predicted his coming ages ago. He came here under the inspiration, the impulse, unknown perhaps to him, of the Spirit of the Lord, just as we are led to do many things without just knowing the reason why, for the accomplishment of a divine purpose. The establishment in this country of a government to which the oppressed of all nations should come for refuge, for freedom. He declared that no kings should ever rule here, centuries before Columbus sailed from the port of Spain. He told the history of this country, its past, its present, and declared its future destiny, just as definitely as he declared its past history.

What is that destiny? It is that this government of ours shall persist; it shall continue; it shall never be thrown down; no enemy that comes against it shall ever triumph—upon this one condition, that the people to whom the Lord has given these bounteous blessings; these miracles which have come to the earth during my lifetime, these people who have grown from an exceedingly small beginning to be the wealthiest, perhaps the most important in influence—I believe I am justified in saying it—that there is in the world—upon condition that they serve the Lord of the land, who is Jesus Christ.

#### GOD, THE AUTHOR OF IT

Where much is given much is expected. This land, to God our Father, is a chosen land, dedicated as I have said to the principle of liberty and freedom, not license.

Our fathers, under His inspiration, gave us the constitution of our country, the bill of rights which defines our privileges and places limitations beyond which we may not go. Liberty, when carried to the extreme, results in license. I want to impress upon this congregation, my brethren and sisters who are here, that the Lord our God has been the author of it all. It was he who led you from your native lands. You people from the green fields and lanes of England, you did not leave your homes because you did not love your native land. You had fought for it, defended it, and were ready to fight for it again. You people from Scotland, you people from Ireland and Wales, from Germany and the islands of the sea, oh if I only had the time to go back and tell you I could show you that the whole story of your lives had been written by the finger of God.

So we are here; here, thank the Lord, citizens of the best government in the world. We are here, members of the Church of Christ our Lord which has been restored through the medium of heavenly messengers who had authority to give to men upon earth, the keys of the holy priesthood. What for? For the redemption of the human family. Whether men believe it or not these things are true, and ultimately they will believe it, and there is no power either in earth or hell that can stay the progress of the Church, unless its people prove recreant to the

covenants that they have entered into with our Father who is in heaven. Just so, there is no power that can wreck the government that God has established in this country unless it be the people themselves, and that I do not expect nor believe can occur.

#### BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

The Lord in his scripture tells us that no one can come to this land unless he be brought or directed by the Spirit of the Lord, and so he has brought this people here. He brought the faith of the devoted Puritans of New England; he brought the patriotism of the Dutch at New York; he brought the gallantry of the cavaliers of Virginia; the light-hearted energy of the French of New Orleans. Just the kind of composite body of men to establish a government that could not be dominated by any particular race or tongue, but made composite, that all men might be welcomed to it, live under and enjoy its privileges.

#### ARMY THREATENS

And so the government has struggled on. From the very beginning the ship of state has been at times upon a stormy sea. With the dismissal of the army after the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown the soldiers were discharged. There was no money with which to pay them. They were in open revolt. Generals in the army accused Washington of being the author of all their troubles. They would have made him king and disregarded the confederacy of states which formed the Union. They threatened to march against the Congress which was in session at Philadelphia, and it became necessary to remove it to Princeton.

Now let me read something that I want you to hear. While these men were assembled together in secret conclave, Washington unexpectedly walked into the room where they were seated. Fiske says: "Washington suddenly came into the meeting and amidst profound silence broke forth in a most eloquent and profound speech. All were hushed by that majestic presence and those solemn tones. He pleaded for tolerance, for patience, for trust in the newly born government which would in the end pay them that which it owed. They listened, the soldiers listened, hesitated and yielded to the irresistible presence of the man who more than any other had made the establishment of the nation possible."

I revere this man. To me he has been a man of destiny, a prophet if we have ever had one. I read frequently his last address to the American people. It is a treasure house of wisdom, of prophecy, of political philosophy.

#### PERPLEXING SITUATIONS

Our government is now very much in the condition that it was at that early time. Demands are made upon it which are exceedingly difficult to comply with. The soldiers of our country are in an ugly mood because their requests are not granted. The resources of the

country are not sufficient to meet the demands made upon it, notwithstanding the great increase in taxes which has recently been levied. The bulletin boards, while this conference has been in session, have announced that the budget of the government is still five hundred million dollars short of balance. What is the result going to be? I do not know; I do not want to assume the responsibility of indicating, but I do know that there are some things which will help. I do know that Elder Richards this afternoon has declared to you in plain terms some of the things that must be accomplished. There is about ten billions of dollars of gold in the world. Our national debt is twenty billions of dollars. What the debt of other nations of the world is I do not know, I have not taken the time to determine, but this I do know, that the World war cost about two hundred billions of dollars, and that does not take into consideration the amount which was paid for the restoration of property destroyed, nor does it take into consideration the fact that I believe nearly ten millions of men, if I remember the figures correctly, were either killed or permanently disabled and taken away from the forces which create the industries of the world. So that altogether I calculate that at least two hundred and fifty billions of dollars was the cost of that great war. Will the debt ever be paid? It never will. That goes without saying. Some part of it may be, I do not know. No one will deny the fact that the government at present is confronted with perplexing situations, questions of great import. How they are to be solved men appear not to know, and I do not know. One thing that I do know, is that the American people are capable of solving these problems if the voice of the people could be heard. I have faith in the soul of these American people which God has brought to this land. He has said, and I am only repeating his words, that the nation shall persist, that it shall be able to meet any emergency that shall arise if it will only, as I have stated, have faith in the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ.

#### DISREGARD FOR LAW

It appears to me that three things are more responsible than all else for our present condition. The first is the unusual disposition upon the part of many of the citizens of our country to disregard the obligation of obedience to civil law. I do not need to quote these notes that I have here to show you that in the opinion of the best thinkers of our country, chaos hangs over it unless something can be done to restrain crime and the open violation of law which exists in the United States today. Criminals sit upon juries where their own friends are being tried, while business men and others who should be there decline or avoid such service. Murder is committed in the light of day. Murderers and thieves are released from jail or from courts by habeas corpus many times before the prisoner ever reaches the bar of justice. Lawlessness is in every city of the land. Wicked men go out in the darkness at night like animals of prey, here in our own city, seeking whom they might devour, preying upon the innocent and unprotected. The officers

of the law do the best they can to prevent it. We who are citizens pay too little attention to it and give them too little support. Just as long as prominent men in our nation, bankers, merchants, business men, congressmen and legislators ignore the law themselves, how can they expect that this condition can be overcome? Do I exaggerate when I say that men are elected to office who are unworthy, and never should have been chosen? Every man who goes to the Congress of the United States holds up his hand and covenants with God that he will obey the Constitution of our country, and then frequently he goes right out and violates it. It applies to men who are sent up to our legislature. They enter into that covenant and then disregard it. I know how I should feel if I did a thing of that kind. I would know that I was a perjurer and I would expect to be impeached and sent home where I belonged. Some such method as that will have to be adopted before our house cleaning will be complete.

#### DISREGARD FOR RELIGION AND PURSUIT OF WEALTH

In conclusion, let me read some quotations that I have made from this man whom we refer to as the father of our country. I said there were three things responsible for this spirit of lawlessness. Another one is the disregard of religion that is gradually but surely manifesting itself among the people. Enough has been said in this conference to satisfy you that this is not an idle statement that I am making. These sheets that I have before me are covered with statistics that corroborate the truth of what I say. The next thing to be avoided is the unbridled and unreasonable pursuit of wealth which has characterized the people of the United States ever since the World war terminated. I expect that we have made more millionaires—Senator Smoot will know whether I state it correctly or not—I suppose we have made more millionaires in the United States since the war than existed perhaps altogether before (Senator Smoot confirmed this statement). What does that mean? It means that whenever you multiply millionaires tribulation comes to someone, and as this selfish desire for the accumulation of wealth has gone on among certain people and in certain sections other people have become poorer and poorer, until we have at last reached the crisis in which we find ourselves today.

#### QUOTES WASHINGTON

Washington in this address to which I have referred, and I wish every member of the Church would read it—not only read it but make it a part of the governing rule of his life—says:

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked—" and I ask it of you—"Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which

are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

Another basic principle: "The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and alter their constitution or government. But the constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit act of the people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.

"All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put, in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common counsels, and modified by mutual interests."

#### RESPONSIBILITY OF CITIZENSHIP

I am going to ask you this question, and ask it in plainness, because it appears to me to be a vital one, and if I stand here and express a thought that is wrong, nevertheless believing it to be solemnly right, then I have justified myself as Ezekiel did when he went down to the house of Israel. I am asking myself this question: Is there not some responsibility resting upon the citizenship of the United States because of the indifference they have manifested, particularly during the past decade, in regard to those who are to represent them in the Congress of our nation, the legislatures of our states and the boards of direction in the municipalities of those states and counties?

I believe I will say it—I believe that in many instances we have become so accustomed to and so committed to party rule, to arrangements made by professional politicians, regardless of the real voice and desire of the people, that we have felt it our duty to follow them whether they are right or wrong. Just a word of solemn warning: I say to you regardless of party politics, regardless of your past affiliations, in this time of extremity, and it is a time of extremity, see to it that honest men, wise men, capable men are sent to represent you in the organizations of the country, the bodies which formulate our laws and appoint the men who administer them. You know that the constitution of the United States gives Congress certain privileges and rights. There are certain other sacred privileges and rights that it does not confer upon them and that they should not be permitted to overstep. They formulate and pass the laws which govern our lives, control our property, proclaim peace or war. The administration of those laws that they pass is limited. The administration goes to the administrative bodies.

#### FEARS PATERNAL GOVERNMENT

I fear this, that under existing conditions we are gradually drifting

toward a paternal government, a government which will so intrench itself that the people will become powerless to disrupt it, in which the lives and liberty of the people at large may be jeopardized. They are pouring millions of dollars in this time of need into sources for the benefit of the people and it is a great benefit and perhaps salvation, but it is going to result in this—I am going to make this statement—that if the present policy is continued it will not be long until the government will be in the banking business, it will be in the farming business, it will be in the cattle and sheep business, for many of these debts will never be paid. That will mean the appointment of innumerable agencies. The government now is overloaded with commissions and agencies, some of them administering the very laws that Congress itself has enacted. Someone else should be administering those laws. If you want to save yourselves from the bondage of debt and political influences which are not of your own choosing I ask you to think of what I have said.

#### LEGISLATORS OF EARLY DAYS

Oh, I remember those old legislative bodies which assembled in Utah. I knew the men that were in them. They were men of faith, men who taught me faith in a living God, that he is the same good heavenly Father that he ever was and will watch over and bless righteous people wherever they are. They taught me obedience to the laws of my country. They taught me patriotism to my country and to this government of which I am speaking; that it was dearer to me than life itself; that it should be defended; that it should be protected, not only from enemies from without, but enemies from within. They are the most dangerous enemies of all. And I have never seen a moment in my life that I did not stand ready to give it that protection. I am ready now, as old as I am, and I always have been, not only to say the thing but to do it. I will not be walked over rough shod by the lawless element that is now seeking to get control of this country.

#### GIVES BLESSING

God bless you, my brethren and sisters, keep you in the path of rectitude, keep you true to the Church, to the state and to each other, and some means will come by which we will be able to pay these debts and relieve ourselves. We may be leveled down before that, and I do not know but that would be a good thing. We would all be very much alike. The prophet Isaiah tells us that it shall be "as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him." And we are nearing that condition now. I do not know who is the worse off today, the banker who is lending money, or the person to whom he lends it.

God bless you, is my humble prayer, through Jesus Christ. Amen.