

## PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

My beloved fellow workers, brethren and sisters: I wish I were within my power of expression to let you know just what my true feelings are on this momentous occasion. I would wish that you might look into my heart and see there for yourselves just what those feelings are.

## RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP

It is just one week ago today that the realization came to me that this responsibility of leadership would probably fall upon my shoulders. I received word that President George Albert Smith had taken a turn for the worse, and that the doctor thought the end was not far off. I hastened to his bedside, and with his weeping daughters, son, and other kinfolk, I entered his sickroom. For the first time, he failed to recognize me.

Then I had to accept the realization that the Lord had chosen not to answer our pleadings as we would have had them answered, and that he was going to take him home to himself. Thankfully, he rallied again later in the day. Several days preceding that visit, as President Clark and I were considering problems of import pertaining to the Church, he, ever solicitous of the welfare of the Church and of my feelings, would say, "The responsibility will be yours to make this decision," but each time I would refuse to face what to him seemed a reality.

## NEED FOR SUPPORT

When that reality came, as I tell you, I was deeply moved. And I am today, and pray that I may, even though inadequately, be able to tell you how weighty this responsibility seems.

The Lord has said that the three presiding high priests chosen by the body, appointed and ordained to this office of presidency, are to be "upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the Church." No one can preside over this Church without first being in tune with the head of the Church, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He is our head. This is his Church. Without his divine guidance and constant inspiration, we cannot succeed. With his guidance, with his inspiration, we cannot fail.

Next to that as a sustaining potent power, comes the confidence, faith, prayers, and united support of the Church.

I pledge to you that I shall do my best so to live as to merit the companionship of the Holy Spirit, and pray here in your presence that my counselors and I may indeed be "partakers of the divine spirit."

## SPIRIT OF UNITY

Next to that, unitedly we plead with you for a continuation of your love and confidence as you have expressed it today. From you members of the Twelve, we ask for that love and sympathy expressed in our sacred Council. From the Assistants to the Twelve, the Patriarch, the First Council of the Seventy, the Presiding Bishopric, we ask that the spirit of unity expressed so fervently by our Lord and Savior when he was saying good-by to the Twelve, may be manifest by us all.

You remember he said, as he left them: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:11, 20-21.)

Brethren and sisters, brethren of the General Authorities, God keep us as one, overlooking weaknesses we may see, keeping an eye single to the glory of God and the advancement of his work.

## HELP OF MEMBERSHIP

And now to the members of the Church: We all need your help, your faith and prayers, not your adverse criticisms, but your help. You can do that in prayer if you cannot reach us in person. The potency of those prayers throughout the Church came to me yesterday when I received a letter from a neighbor in my old home town. He was milking his cows when the word came over his radio which he has in his barn that President Smith had passed. He sensed what that would mean to his former fellow-townsmen, and he left his barn and went to the house and told his wife. Immediately they called their little children, and there in that humble home, suspending their activities, they knelt down as a family and offered prayer. The significance of that scene I leave for you to understand. Multiply that by a hundred thousand, two hundred thousand, half a million homes, and see the power in the unity and prayers, and the sustaining influence in the body of the Church.

Today you have by your vote placed upon us the greatest responsibility, as well as the greatest honor, that lies within your power to bestow as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Your doing so increases the duty of the First Presidency to render service to the people.

## EXAMPLE OF SERVICE

When the Savior was about to leave his Apostles, he gave them a great example of service. You remember he girded himself

with a towel and washed his disciples' feet. Peter, feeling it was a menial work for a servant, said, "... dost thou wash my feet? . . . Thou shalt never wash my feet."

The Savior answered "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

"Nay then," said the chief Apostle, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.

"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." (See John 13:6, 8-10, 7.)

And then he washed his feet, and those of the others also. Returning the basin to the side of the door, ungirding himself, and putting on his robe, he returned to his position with the Twelve, and said:

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." (*Ibid.*, 13:13-14.)

What an example of service to those great servants, followers of the Christ! He that is greatest among you, let him be least. So we sense the obligation to be of greater service to the membership of the Church, to devote our lives to the advancement of the kingdom of God on earth.

#### BLESSING AND TESTIMONY

God bless you, brothers and sisters. May the spirit of this occasion remain in our hearts. May it be felt throughout the uttermost parts of the earth, wherever there is a branch in all the world, that that spirit might be a unifying power in increasing the testimony of the divinity of this work, that it may grow in its influence for good in the establishment of peace throughout the world.

I bear you my testimony that the head of this Church is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I know the reality of his existence, of his willingness to guide and direct all who serve him. I know he restored, with his Father, to the Prophet Joseph Smith the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness. I know that these brethren whom you have sustained today are men of God. I love them. Don't you think anything else. God's will has been done.

May we have increased power to be true to the responsibilities that the Lord and you have placed upon us, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.