

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.*Second Counselor in the First Presidency*

MY BRETHREN, from his vision, his enthusiasm, and vigor, we seem to have a real Presiding Bishop. I hope that all you bishops will get in training, because if you keep up with him, you are going to have to run. I congratulate him on the very thorough consideration which he has given to the problems which are within his jurisdiction.

My brethren, again, it is a great, I can hardly say pleasure, because this is not a pleasure for me, but it certainly is a great privilege, and a great honor to stand before this great body of the Priesthood, and a great responsibility to try to say something that would be helpful to you, encouraging to you, and perhaps instructive. I do not intend to speak long. President McKay and President Richards are still to talk, the house is warm, and I am sure from the way you are packed in, that you are not too comfortable. We up here have plenty of room. Somebody said, "there is always room at the top."

I have thought I might say just a word, and I can crystallize what I have to say in a very few words, about our living up to our opportunities and our privileges and our rights. We hear so often that these are troublous times and dread times, that we become weary of the constant reminder of something of which we are practically all too fully aware.

I recently had an experience, I am still having it, in my own family, of a dread disease, polio. As I have watched this little granddaughter of mine, who is getting well very rapidly and is promised a full recovery, I have become conscious of how relatively helpless we stand in the presence of some of these modern diseases. It seems as if the medical profession no sooner gets hold of some disease (some that we have known for generations, for centuries, have not yet been conquered), but so soon as the medical profession gets hold

of them something else, unknown, pops up to take its place.

This morning in the Welfare meeting, Dr. Woodward was explaining how they were building resistance seeds, and he referred to the smut which affects our grains. He said that nature was just as busy inventing new varieties of smut that we did not know anything about and could not handle, as we were busy in trying to find some way of fighting those we knew about. And it does seem to me sometimes as if that is the way in which nature acts with reference to the bodily ailments of the human family.

Now coming to the point: Brethren, I know, as I know that I am talking to you, that the spirit of the Lord can help, and does help, where medical science is helpless. You have all had, I am sure, that experience. I do not need to tell it to you, but if you have not had it, then if you do have it, you will feel yourselves blessed beyond all measure if you are in a position to go to the Lord and ask for his help.

When physicians tell you that little can be done, that they know nothing about the disease, I tell you, you fall back awfully fast on the Lord, and if we go to the Lord, in humility, having lived reasonably righteously, the Lord will hear us. And I am sure the Lord overlooks many, many imperfections, overlooks some transgressions, doubtless. He gives us the benefit of all of the doubts, and then, it being his will and in his wisdom, he gives us the blessings we ask for, for ourselves or for our loved ones.

I am told that the three-year-old son of Brother Darley, our assistant organist, has just been stricken today with polio. I know what is in that poor man's heart and the heart of the mother. May the Lord bless and heal his little one.

Now, brethren, are you living, and this is the point I want to get out, are you living so that you can go to the

Lord with reasonable confidence that he will hear you? Can you go and ask him to heal your little ones? or yourselves? or your wife? If you can, when the time comes you will be happy and you will go to the Lord in faith, and the prayer of faith availeth much.

As I said this morning, it has always seemed to me that in our prayer, and in our faith, we should always say to the Lord, "not our will, but thine be done."

Now, brethren, do not put off putting yourself in order, if you are not in order, yielding obedience to the commandments of the Lord, so that, when the time comes, if it comes, and I pray that it will not come to any of you, but when the time comes, you will be able to go to the Lord with a pure heart, and invoke his blessings upon you.

I have often, I think always, since I have been talking to you here, I have spoken of unity. The Presiding Bishop tonight has pointed out in a striking way, how we can unitedly help to save these tens of thousands of our brethren, bring them back into the fold, get them active, get them so that they have a right to enjoy the blessings of the Priesthood, the rights to which we are entitled. Join hands with the bishop, help him to work out his problems,

help to bring these brethren to a knowledge of the truth.

Somewhere in them, if they have ever been baptized and if they have not, if they come from Latter-day Saint families, there is a spark which may be but faintly glowing, but spark it is, and with a breath of helpfulness, solicitation, you can fan that spark into a flame that will build in that man or that woman with faith in God, and ultimately develop in him, a testimony of the Restored Gospel.

Brethren, I wish I could make you feel the urgency of this. I do not know when the Lord is coming. I have no idea about it. But I do know this, that the signs we have today are the signs which he said would precede his coming. Similar signs have been in other days and he did not come. But these signs we do now have, and if the Lord's prophecies, the prophecies of his servants shall come true, and they will, we shall have more than one plague against which to preserve ourselves, against which we shall want to call all the faith that we can possess, to buttress our call to our Heavenly Father for his sustaining power, his comfort, his consolation, and for the healing influences of his Spirit.

God pour this Spirit into the hearts of all of us, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRESIDENT STEPHEN L RICHARDS

First Counselor in the First Presidency

I SHALL be very grateful, my brethren, if I may be blessed in a brief effort to render some help and encouragement in a division of the work which has become very dear to my heart. I speak of the missionary work of the Church.

I bring you a few items of report that may be of some interest since we inaugurated six months ago some few changes in the administration of our work and in plans for it. We have had some little diminution in the stakes in the number of missionaries serving in a stake missionary capacity, but for-

tunately we have had more converts, and more converts per missionary, than we had even with larger numbers of missionaries, which would seem to be reasonably interpreted as being an indication that the following of careful plans has been productive.

In the foreign mission fields in the last six months, we have had a decline in numbers of missionaries of approximately one thousand, but up to date there has been no sizable decline in the number of baptisms, and in fact some missions with declining numbers have produced more converts, and many