

ing for truth. They were seeking for light. They were not satisfied, and in the midst of their search, someone came to them with the truths of the gospel. They prayed about it and sought the Lord intensely, intently, with all their hearts, and came to receive a divine testimony by which they knew that this is the gospel of Jesus Christ. One young woman said, "I had been studying the gospel, and this night I came to a meeting and I heard them sing, "Joseph Smith's First Prayer," which gave in song the story of the first vision, and before they had finished that song, into my heart the Spirit bore testimony that this is the Church and kingdom of God." So within the heart of everyone, every honest seeker after truth, if he has the desire to know, and studies with real intent and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God may be

within him, or in other words, the power to receive it is his.

I bear you my humble witness that this is the Church and kingdom of God in the earth. This is the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. Except for the fact that it is but a continuation of the same gospel, the same fundamental principles, the same authority which has existed from the beginning of time, we would have to say with Napoleon I,

Except you can prove to me that this religion has been from the beginning, I will not believe.

God help us to take this message out to the world and convince them of the power of the gospel and the power which is within them to receive the kingdom of God while it is yet day, I pray humbly in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

## BISHOP THORPE B. ISAACSON

### *First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric*

**P**RESIDENT McKay, President Richards, and President Clark, my beloved brethren and sisters: I feel very humble this afternoon in standing before you and in occupying this position. I sincerely pray that you will have a silent prayer in your heart for me, and I humbly pray that the Lord will sustain me. There is a very beautiful, sweet spirit here; there was this morning. We recognize that spirit as the sweet Spirit of our Father in heaven.

As members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have a great responsibility; we have an individual responsibility. Membership in the Church is not for the idler, nor for one who would seek an easy way to salvation. However, it should not be too difficult for us to keep the commandments of the Lord if we have a desire in our hearts to do so and if we are willing to make the effort. True, we must form good habits of righteous living, and good habits are just as easy and in fact easier to form than are bad

habits. It should not be too difficult for us to be truthful and honest and prayerful and to meet our obligations honestly.

Yes, we have the right to choose which way we want to go. Thereby we develop our own strength of character. However, if we do only the things required of us, we may not gain full development. To do right only because we are forced to do so, rather than because we have a desire to do so, does not contribute to proper development of character; for the Lord, speaking to us in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 58, Verses 26 to 29, says:

For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch

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as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned.

Probably our first and greatest responsibility is to see that we ourselves live righteously and well. When a man fails in life, the cause is sometimes within himself. We are often destroyed from within as well as from forces without. Wrongdoing destroys our morale and makes us an easy victim to outward forces that would also weaken us spiritually; and spirituality is as essential to a man's soul as vitamins are to his body.

Unless we can banish indifference, conquer indolence, renounce injustice, overcome intemperance, expel intolerance, and abolish ingratitude from our souls, we may not be good representative members of the Church, for has not the Psalmist said: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." (Psalm 127:1.)

Let us for a moment consider indifference. Indifference can bring great tragedy into our souls, whether it be indifference to the laws of the land or indifference to the laws of God or indifference to the rights and privileges of each other. When we break the laws of the land, there is a penalty. When we break the laws of God, there is likewise a penalty; and when we show indifference to each other, somebody suffers.

Consider desecration of the Sabbath day. Surely our Father in heaven must have felt that this was important when he gave us the commandment concerning the Sabbath day, for he said to us beginning in Exodus 20:8, and if we could only think of this when we break the Sabbath day, I think we would be more careful about it:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any

work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Ex. 20:8-11.)

To so many people, Sunday is now spoken of as a holiday, not a "holy day." Let us consider this before we break the Sabbath day.

Now there are many ways of being truthful. We may not exactly tell a lie, but if we fail to raise our voices to set a situation right when we could, aren't we as guilty as the one who fails to tell all the truth? Indifference is one way to start one on the road to sorrow.

Indolence is another destroying characteristic. One of the greatest factors in building character is work and our attitude toward that work. I remember hearing President Clark one day say to some of us, "I am grateful for the blessings of work." Personally I consider it a challenge. I consider it a cure for heartache and discouragement. If we can accomplish something worth while as we go about our day's work, we can retire at night feeling that our day has been well spent.

When Brigham Young led the Saints into this, the Salt Lake Valley, he knew that there were some among them who would not assume their rightful responsibility, and he knew that it would take the combined efforts of all if they were to survive and be at all successful. He impressed upon them the need to work in order to eat. The Lord has told us in Genesis 3:19: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, . . ." I believe it is our individual responsibility to work hard, and I am including work and service in the Church.

Injustice is another great evil. Perhaps as Latter-day Saints we must be concerned with the justice and welfare of all people, because the membership of this Church is made up of people from all nations, your grandparents and

mine from foreign countries, united in a common cause, that of bringing salvation to the souls of men.

In our different walks of life we must be careful not to put our own personal interests above the welfare of the group. This would be unjust. In public life we have seen people who consider the effect of every act, first how will it affect myself, and how will it affect the other people later?

Selfishness is one of the greatest causes of injustice. Few there are of us who can see fault in ourselves—meanness of spirit, pettiness of disposition. Few of us will admit to befriending a man because he is right, rather than because of his importance. How often have we heard parents tell their children, "I wish you wouldn't associate with our neighbor's children because they are not of our own social status." These are gross injustices, but they are prevalent among us today. We must renounce injustice if we would grow spiritually.

We should try to overcome intemperance because it is self-defeating, devastating to character, and paralyzing to one's own progress. We have seen men in prominent places of our communities bring sorrow and disgrace upon themselves and their families because they failed to curb an appetite.

A few months ago it was my privilege to ride across the country on a train, and there I met a high-ranking army officer, and we visited for many hours. Among other things he told me that the increase in nervous disorders in the army, brought about largely by alcohol and other things, was very disturbing and alarming. He indicated that it was the most self-defeating factor that the army had to contend with, and then he told me that one-third of the beds of the hospitals of this country were occupied by patients with nervous disorders, largely brought about by the use of alcohol and other drugs, and that it would be very alarming to the country if we knew the true status.

Intolerance is another self-destroying evil. If it isn't banished out of our

character, it may reflect on the Church as well as on ourselves, because brotherhood like charity begins at home. If we would be tolerant, we must obey the first and great commandment; we must love the Lord our God with all our heart, might, mind and strength, and then we must love our neighbor as ourselves.

Brotherhood and the love of mankind must be resident in our hearts, on our streets, in our towns. Otherwise we may not have it in our own hearts. We largely judge others by ourselves. If we are intolerant of others, we can expect the same treatment ourselves. The inner strength of the Church reveals itself to a great extent in our way of treating others.

Now probably the greatest sin of all is the sin of ingratitude, but we, favored of all our Father's children, should fill our hearts with gratitude for the magnitude of the power of the gospel and the blessings that he has brought to us. The resources by which we advance are the real qualities of character that we possess. We must show gratitude for our blessings. We can be judged more by what we love than by what we own.

Our greatest blessings as a people are spiritual, not material. The older I become, the more I am convinced that there are not many things of very much importance which do not belong to the spiritual. There are the things that are important, and then there are the other things.

Nothing can contribute so much to our own growth as being home-loving, God-fearing, freedom-earning, temperate men and women.

May we as individuals consider our own responsibility in the Church and try to become better Latter-day Saints. Each of us could perhaps make one or two adjustments in our own lives that would make us better Latter-day Saints.

I feel good in this work because it is the work of the Lord. I love the people; you have been wonderful to me as I go to you from stake to stake. And I am grateful for the opportunity of

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partaking of your spirit and of hearing your testimonies. Your kindnesses and courtesies to all the brethren are appreciated. We feel a closeness and warmth through our association with you.

Personally I am unable to express my gratitude for my association with these fine men. I have great love and respect and admiration for each one of them. I am particularly grateful for my close association with Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin and Bishop Carl Buehner. I love these men. Yes, we talk together, and we pray together. When one has sorrow, we all have sorrow. I am grateful for my association with all of my brethren of the General Authorities. As I get to know them, I would class it as the greatest experience in my life to be with them and partake of their spirit and their advice and counsel, because they are prophets of God. Do you regard these brethren as you would the Apostles of old? In Doctrine and Covenants, Section 68, Verse 4, may we remember this:

And whatsoever they [our leaders] shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.

Now I think as a people we should keep that in mind when these brethren give us advice and counsel. Talk about love that abideth in the heart of men, I know of no people in the world that has the example to follow as does this people in the President of the Church. Talk about love and beauty. I am sure we could do well to try and emulate that spirit and that love, and that is the same love that the Savior exemplified when he was here upon the earth.

This is a sweet work. It couldn't be anything else because it is the work of our Father in heaven among the children of men. I have had some experiences in school work as a teacher for seventeen years, as superintendent of schools, as an athletic coach, and I had

some satisfaction in it, and I am grateful for those experiences, but they are not like this work. There isn't anything like it in the world, and I would plead with every man and woman and boy and girl in the Church to have some activity, to be rendering some service in the Church. While I have been associated with this work, I am sure that I have been the greatest benefactor. It has been sweet and uplifting to me. From the bottom of my heart I want to thank the Lord for his kindnesses to me. I know what it is to be humble, I believe, and I know when I go to the Lord in the proper spirit that my prayers are answered. I know the Spirit of the Lord is understandable. I know that the Spirit of the Lord may be to us ever prevalent if we ourselves keep in tune with his Spirit. May the Lord bless us and give us the power to help each other be happy. May he give us true comfort and genuine friendship, and may he bless us that we may fulfil the measure of our creation here upon the earth that when our time comes to leave mortality we may leave without feeling sorry for the way that we have treated each other. Let us give each other those flowers and those praises and those kind words now, here, while we are alive to enjoy them.

I would plead with my friends and associates who are members of the Church to affiliate yourselves with all the activities of the Church. Then you will know what great blessings are and you will know what happiness is, and the Lord will bless you, and I would plead with and encourage my friends who are not members of the Church that they will consider seriously baptism into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

May God bless us that we may be true Latter-day Saints, that we may be humble and prayerful, that we may render that sweet service which the Lord expects of us, and receive the blessings that he has in store for us, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.