

earnest invitation to investigate for themselves.

In conclusion, I leave this parting word. I have deep respect, esteem, and love in my heart for all men and women everywhere who may be rightly counted Christian. I have regard for all who practise the Christian virtues. I know that the Christ loves those who love him, and who serve him, even with limited knowledge of his real nature and his true gospel.

God bless Christianity, "the body of

Christian believers," and true friends of Jesus, I ask humbly in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President David O. McKay:

You have just heard President Stephen L. Richards of the First Presidency of the Church. We will now hear from Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church. He will be followed by Bishop Isaacson.

### ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

#### *Patriarch to the Church*

**B**ROTHERS AND SISTERS, I seek an interest in your faith and prayers. This is a humbling experience, and I hope that I will always appreciate the honors and the blessings that have been given to me and that I shall always appreciate the blessings of the Lord.

The other night a cartoon appeared in *The Deseret News* which showed Uncle Sam deluged in the overflowing contents of a large horn of plenty. The title read, "Isn't it time we count our blessings?" These cartoonists have a gift of catching the essence of a situation and portraying it very graphically. We live in a land blessed above all other nations—not only a choice land, but also a choice generation. In addition to all the luxuries of modern living, we have the blessings of the fulness of the gospel. Today we do not have the physical opposition of hardship and persecution that we had in the earlier days.

The Church is growing very rapidly, and our missionaries are having amazing success. The people of the world are impressed with the accomplishments of the Church. But, brothers and sisters, if we learn anything from history—and history is our greatest teacher—we learn that our present favorable conditions may have a hidden danger. Some of these dangers were referred to by President McKay this morning. Do you remember what happened so often in the Book of Mormon? When the people were righteous, they enjoyed pros-

perity. With prosperity came a feeling of self-sufficiency and pride. They forgot to acknowledge the Lord as the Giver of all their blessings. They lost their humility. Not until they were chastened and humbled did righteousness and prosperity return.

Let us enjoy the prosperity in which we live, with humble gratitude in our hearts, expressing our thanks to the Lord. Let us be humble in all our prayers. Beware of lip service. Remember how the Lord criticized the hypocrites who prayed openly for the glory of men. He said,

Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. (Matt. 6:5.)

It is not always the words we use in prayer that count so much as the spirit in which they are said. If we are truly humble, we will acknowledge the hand of the Lord in all our righteous endeavors. Praying without humility is praying without faith. You just cannot have true faith without humility. What better example do we have than the simple, humble prayer of a child?

President George Albert Smith has told a story which I think will bear repeating.

It was about a nine-year-old boy who was to undergo a serious operation. As they prepared to give him the anesthetic, he asked those attending him to pray for him. When they told him they could not, he said, "If you can't pray

Sunday, April 3

Second Day

for me, will you please wait while I pray for myself?"

They removed the sheet, and he knelt on the operating table, bowed his head and said, "Heavenly Father, I am an orphan boy. I am awful sick. Won't you please make me well? Bless these men who are going to operate that they will do it right. If you will make me well, I will try to be a good man. Thank you, Heavenly Father, for making me well."

When he finished praying, he lay down. The doctors' and nurses' eyes were filled with tears. Then he said, "I am ready."

The operation was successful, and the boy speedily recovered.

The doctor later said, "I have operated on hundreds of people, men and women who thought they had faith to be healed, but never, until I stood over that little boy have I felt the presence of God as I felt it then. That boy opened the windows of heaven and talked to his Heavenly Father as one would talk to another, face to face. I am a better man for having had the experience of hearing a small boy talk to his Father in heaven as if he were present."

Humility is one of the qualities that help build faith. Would a missionary be successful if he were not humble? He has to be teachable with a receptive mind before he can teach others, and to be teachable, he must be humble. And we should all be missionaries.

All the requirements of living the gospel become easier through humility.

A young man told me his experience in becoming a member of the Church, which is typical of many in their activities of investigating the Church. He said the missionaries came to the lesson on the Word of Wisdom. He and his wife were both users of tobacco. After the meeting was over and the missionaries had left, they talked it over with each other and decided between themselves, "Well, if that is what the Lord wants and if this is the Lord's Church, we will try it." He said that he was not particularly concerned about himself, he thought he could do it easily; he was worried about his wife; she had never tried to quit before. On the other hand, he had quit several times. After

proving to himself that he could quit, of course, he went back to the use of cigarets again. But he said in this case, it was just the reverse. His wife quit without any apparent difficulty, but he had tremendous difficulty. He became nervous and irritable. He could not rest. He was cranky among his fellow workers. He could not sleep at night. But inasmuch as his wife had quit, he was not going to be outdone by her. So, one night, he became so restless, so disturbed that he could not sleep, and his wife suggested to him that he pray about it. He thought that was a good joke. He ridiculed the idea of prayer; he said, "This is something I have to do. Nobody can help me with this. I can do this." But as the night passed, and he had done everything he could to stimulate sleep and rest without any success, finally in despair he humbled himself enough to kneel at the side of the bed and pray vocally. According to his own testimony, he said that he got up from his prayer, got into bed, went to sleep, and has never been tempted by cigarets since. He has absolutely lost the taste for tobacco. He said, "The Word of Wisdom was not a health program for me. It was a lesson in humility." He said, "I had to learn humility." That is what it meant to him. As it is with many of the requirements of the Church, we have to demonstrate humble obedience.

It is a humbling experience to look into the sky and contemplate the stars—just try to count all those you can see with the naked eye. Throughout the ages, man has tried to count them, and as telescopes have been made larger and larger, the scope has increased until we realize the utter impossibility of numbering all the stars. How small are we then, when we consider that God is the Master and Creator of the universe.

Just stand on the rim of the Grand Canyon and feel your insignificance as you gaze on the grandeur and immensity of nature or watch the beauties of Niagara and realize your own weakness in the presence of such great power.

Then ask yourself as David asked our Maker and the Creator of all: "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" (Ps. 8:4.)

Yes, God is mindful of you and me

because we are his children. He has given us this earth and all we have—the very air we breathe, food to eat, life itself. He rewards us for every good deed. Of ourselves we are nothing. Brothers and sisters, let us not be self-sufficient. Let us not forget to be humble and acknowledge the Lord, who is so good to us.

King Benjamin told his people:

And now, in the first place, he hath created you, and granted unto you your lives, for which ye are indebted unto him.

And secondly, he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you; for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you; and therefore he hath paid you. And ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be forever and ever; therefore, of what have ye to boast?

And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created of the dust of the earth; but behold, it belongeth to him who created you. (Mosiah 2:23-25.)

My brothers and sisters, be not lifted up in the pride of your hearts that you forget the Giver of all your blessings. Do not let self-righteousness rob you of

humility before God. Acknowledge him in all things. Let your faith be simple and childlike.

On one occasion,

... came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18:1-4.)

May we then be humble as a little child is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We have just listened to Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church. Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson of the Presiding Bishopric of the Church will be our next speaker. The Presiding Bishopric of the Church holds the Presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood.

## BISHOP THORPE B. ISAACSON

### *First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric*

President McKay, President Richards, President Clark, my beloved brethren of the General Authorities, my dear brothers and sisters and friends:

I feel very humble in standing before this great audience today, and I sincerely ask for a solemn prayer in your hearts in my behalf. I am grateful to be here with you in this great general conference of the Church. Truly, we have been spiritually strengthened and built up in our faith. We come here for that purpose, and I pray that the Lord will help me that I may say something that will give you strength and increase your faith and your testimony.

We spend much of our time in our business and temporal affairs, in our educational, social, and recreational life. We spend a great deal of our time in government and politics. Probably

that is as it should be, but I wonder how much time we actually spend in developing the spiritual side of our lives—probably, may I say, the better part of our lives? The older I become, the more I realize that this is the better side of our lives and certainly the most important side of our lives.

It is not uncommon for thousands of us Latter-day Saints to bow our heads in prayer and close our eyes, and to follow the prayer of him who may be mouth. Truly we are a praying people. The world has judged us to be a praying people, and we confess that we not only pray in large gatherings at conference, but we also pray every day of our lives, and we accept the principle of prayer.

I would like to say a few words about the Aaronic Priesthood. I am directing my remarks particularly to those concerned with Aaronic Priesthood boys