

BISHOP THORPE B. ISAACSON
First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

PRESIDENT MCKAY, President Richards, President Clark, my dear brothers and sisters and friends, I think this is the most humbling of all experiences, and I believe it would be for you if you were occupying this position. I deeply and sincerely pray that the Lord will sustain me the few minutes that I shall speak today. I will be most grateful to you for an interest in your faith and prayers and for your patience and your kind understanding.

Conference time is a marvelous time. People all over the world who are listening to the conference on the radio, or who are watching the conference proceedings on television, those who are in attendance and those who are reading of the conference, as well as those who are here that will take these messages back to their respective places of labor will all be blessed and benefited from this conference of worship.

In trying to illustrate conference time, I would like to refer to a statement made the other day in a local newspaper by Brother Jack M. Reed, who is the *Tribune* Church editor. With his permission may I quote:

"Conference" is sort of a magic word that transforms Salt Lake City . . . thousands of persons converging upon Temple Square—and affect in small measure or large the daily lives of nearly everyone in Utah's capital city.

Personally, I think in a measure that describes the great spiritual uplift and the importance of the general conference of God's true Church on the earth.

It is just ten years ago today that my first assignment came to speak to the general conference of the Church. I would be a very ungrateful person if I did not first publicly thank the Lord for his kindnesses and mercies to me. Time will not permit me to tell you the wonderful blessings that have come to me during these lovely ten years of service. However, I believe I have worked harder during these past ten years than in any other ten years of my life, but likewise this work has given me great joy and happiness for which

I am truly grateful, and I am deeply indebted to the Lord and to the Church.

Likewise, I would be ungrateful if I did not publicly thank my wife and my family for their co-operation and assistance. They have helped me a great deal, and I know they have prayed diligently for me in this work. They have taken my responsibilities and assisted me in many ways with my personal chores, and I know it was because they wanted my Church work to come first. I can truly and humbly say that I love my Church work more than any other work that I have done in my life. I have had many fascinating positions, such as teaching, coaching athletics, salesmanship work, and business experiences, but there is nothing that compares with the work and the service in the Church. Nothing will give a person the joy and happiness that he gets from service to his brethren and his fellow men in Church work.

I would like to thank the members of the wards and stakes that I have had the privilege of visiting. Your wonderful loyalty and devotion to the Church has been an inspiration to me. My faith and my testimony have been strengthened because of your glorious example. Your devotion, your loyalty, your love for the Church, and your willingness to take care of all Church assignments are truly a great tribute to you and the Lord will bless you.

Some of the things that I said ten years ago when I first spoke in the general conference of the Church, among other things I said then, I would like to repeat now—at that time I had only been associated with the Brethren of the General Authorities for about three months—I stated then that I had learned to love the General Authorities very much. I also testified to you then that I knew these Brethren are men of God; and today again, I want to re-emphasize to you and testify to you that I love these men very much—every one of them, and I know truly that they are men of God. I know that President David O. McKay is a living prophet of Jesus Christ the same as were the

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Second Day

prophets of old, and with him President Richards and President Clark, together with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and all of the other General Authorities of the Church—I know they are Prophets and servants of God our Eternal Father. May I also testify to you that I believe they are divinely called of the Lord, and I hope that you believe that. I would like also to testify to you that I know they constantly seek divine guidance, and I also testify to you that they receive divine guidance from our Holy Father.

I trust the Brethren, and especially Apostle Delbert L. Stapley, will forgive me if I tell you of the kind invitation from the First Presidency to all of the General Authorities to a meeting in the temple prior to the commencement of this general conference. I do not have the time nor the ability to describe to you the spirit of that meeting in the temple on Thursday morning. Brother Stapley offered the prayer, and I am certain that we all felt that his prayer ascended to our Father in heaven and that that prayer was answered in our behalf. Truly that sweet spirit which was experienced in that meeting as Brother Stapley was offering that prayer has carried over until now, and it will carry through the entire conference.

Today I intended to say a few things, but I have changed my mind because of the lack of time. However, because of my sincere interest in the rehabilitation of alcoholics, I would like to pay a tribute to those who are trying to overcome this habit or disease, and to overcome the cruel monster of alcohol. I would like to say a word of encouragement to 11,000 alcoholics in the state of Utah and about 5,000,000 alcoholics in the United States, because of an experience that I had with one of them last night following our missionary meeting held in the Tabernacle. I was very proud of this man who has triumphed and who has conquered that cruel monster alcohol. Yes, I want to pay tribute to him to whom I talked last night for his triumph. I want to testify to the others who desire a way to overcome that habit and that disease that, as this wonderful man who had conquered and had triumphed and who had made a wonderful comeback assured

me, the only way for him or anyone else to conquer alcohol is to seek the help of God.

May I quote from Jacob, chapter 4, verse 10, from the Book of Mormon. It is the MIA theme:

Wherefore, brethren, seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice and in great mercy, over all his works.

That wonderful man who has had a struggle, as all of the alcoholics have, to defeat or conquer that habit testified strongly last night that there is only one way for anyone to overcome that treacherous habit and disease and that is by seeking the counsel of God their Father. I commend that wonderful organization (Alcoholics Anonymous) and the members who believe in God, for they will find great strength when all else seems to fail.

Yes, today we are faced with confusions and uncertainties and threats. We are sometimes tempted to agree with those who say the reason for our great difference today is that our problems are so different from those faced by other generations. But this is not so; the only difference is our forefathers relied on God our Eternal Father for everything. Today there are too many of us that have forgotten God. We feel self-sufficient. Even as strong as we think we are, it is always dangerous to feel or think that we do not need to rely on a Divine Power, and I would like to refer to that Divine Power as the Power of God our Eternal Father.

In closing, may I give you one quick illustration regarding this passage:

... seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy over all his works.

Here is my story:

A few weeks ago a business associate of mine asked me to go with him to make the acquaintance of and visit and talk with eight wonderful young Latter-day Saint practising physicians. He wanted me to go to see these doctors and meet them, wishing that I would agree to write a letter recommending con-

sideration for these doctors so they could successfully get a loan to build a medical clinic. I agreed to go with him.

As we discussed the time for the appointment with these doctors, my friend informed me that it could either be in the morning between 6:30 and 7 o'clock or after 9 o'clock at night. I then decided that it would be better for me to meet them in the morning between 6:30 and 7 o'clock. We left Salt Lake City very early. It was dark because it was in the winter months. We drove to their offices some little way out of Salt Lake City, arriving between 6:30 and 7 a.m.

Soon their individual cars appeared at the office. I was then made acquainted with these wonderful, fine doctors, and we were invited into their office. After all had assembled, and we were comfortably seated, the oldest of these eight doctors—and he himself was a comparatively young man—walked over and shut the door. Then he said, "Would you mind joining us in morning prayer before we discuss our business problems with you?" Then I thought, ". . . seek not to counsel the Lord but to take counsel. . . ." I was somewhat astounded at this procedure, but I confess I was humbly grateful and proud of these young doctors. The presiding doctor called on one of the other doctors to offer the morning prayer, and he offered a very beautiful, appropriate petition to the Lord and asked for his guidance.

To my recollection, I have never had that experience with professional or businessmen before. I asked the doctors before I left, "Is this your common practice?" "Oh, yes, every morning, six days a week, we meet here between 6:30 and 7, where we lock our door, and before starting our duties of the day, call on God our Eternal Father for his divine

guidance. If for any reason one of the doctors has important or urgent surgery or an urgent patient call, we go ahead without him, and each takes his turn offering the morning prayer." Of course these doctors will be successful! I thought they were wonderful.

How many teachers, how many bankers, how many business or professional men, how many of us follow that kind of procedure every morning? These doctors are seeking the divine guidance of God their Eternal Father, and mainly they are men skilled in science, trained in their profession, but not sufficiently so that they can rely upon their own training and their own natural abilities.

God grant that each of us may seek counsel, for we ourselves know that the Lord "counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy," I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson of the Presiding Bishopric of the Church has just concluded speaking. The Chorus from the Institute of Religion at the University of Utah and the Congregation will now join in singing, "Do What Is Right." Richard P. Condie, Assistant Conductor of the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir, will lead us. Elder John Longden will follow the singing.

The Institute of Religion Chorus and the congregation sang the hymn, "Do What Is Right."

President David O. McKay:

We will now hear from Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder Eldred G. Smith.

ELDER JOHN LONGDEN

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

PRESIDENT MCKAY this morning gave recognition to the servicemen who had traveled many miles to be here, some coming from Texas and Oklahoma. I trust I shall be in order if I

ask those servicemen to stand at the present moment, please, wherever you are. [About seventy-five to one hundred stood.] Thank you very much. That is a glorious sight, and I commend you for