

Saturday, October 2

Second Day

Elder Fred W. Schwendiman, formerly president of the New Zealand South Mission.

The men of the Tabernacle Choir will now favor us with "Give Ear, O Lord."

Singing by the men of the Taber-

nacle Choir, "Give Ear O Lord."

President Hugh B. Brown:

Our first speaker this evening will be Elder Thorpe B. Isaacson, Assistant to the Twelve, and he will be followed by Elder Theodore M. Burton.

ELDER THORPE B. ISAACSON

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

President McKay, fellow workers, brethren of the priesthood:

I wish all of you could stand here and face this great audience. To all of you assembled in respective locations who are listening in, I wish you could be here to see this sight and particularly to see President McKay and be in his presence. You cannot be in his presence and not fully realize that he is a prophet of God. To you assembled in all those buildings mentioned, you may know that you are considered as part of our audience as fellow workers in the priesthood.

It is always better and perhaps easier to talk about something that is optimistic, something that is elevating, something that is pleasant and uplifting. But sometimes we have to face facts and situations. Tonight I am to speak on a subject that is not pleasant, one that is rather sad, one that is affecting the lives of far too many. My subject is that of tobacco, liquor, and alcoholism.

Alcohol Our Enemy

Now, to show you the importance and the seriousness, the sorrow and the sadness of the use of tobacco and alcohol, let me give you some bona fide figures.

Speaking of our own great state of Utah, one that we know best, reported by the Utah Alcoholism Foundation, there are now in Utah 10,400 alcoholics and 5,500 individuals who are approaching alcoholism, or a total of about 15,900. That is about twice as many as there are assembled here in this great Tabernacle tonight. Stop and

think for a moment. This means that we could fill this Tabernacle twice just as it is right now with alcoholics and individuals who are approaching alcoholism. It is just about unbelievable. However, we of the state of Utah can feel very proud in one respect because Utah has now reached a most favorable position in the United States at the present time as far as alcoholics per hundred thousand of adult population are concerned. The national average is far in excess of that of Utah, and it should be. Individuals in Utah, however, who buy and drink liquor, last year spent \$38,282,000. In the United States there are 6,500,000 alcoholics and 3,400,000 individuals approaching alcoholism, making a total of nearly 10,000,000 alcoholics or individuals approaching alcoholism. The total expenditure for all alcoholic beverages last year in the United States was \$11,373,692,000. These figures could probably be doubled if we should take into consideration other losses directly or indirectly from the use of alcohol, such as accidents, sickness, hospitalization, loss of wages, production. These figures were obtained from the United States Department of Commerce.

Now by comparison, the rate of alcoholism in the nation has increased far faster than in Utah. There has been a considerable decline in alcoholics in Utah per hundred thousand adult population. We are glad to see that our beautiful state now has one of the finest records of any state in the Union as far as alcoholics per hundred thousand adult population are concerned.

Overcome It

I would like to give you some illustrations now which might accomplish three things:

First, discourage every young man and young woman from taking his or her first drink, thereby eliminating the possibility of becoming an alcoholic.

Second, I would like to talk to those 3,400,000 who are approaching alcoholism in the United States, and the 5,500 who are approaching alcoholism in Utah.

Third, I would like to talk to those 6,500,000 alcoholics in the United States, and particularly to those 10,400 alcoholics in Utah.

In the nation we have heard a great deal lately about war on poverty and war on crime, but we have not heard very much said about liquor or alcohol. Yet, many of the crimes that are committed in this country are the result, directly or indirectly, of the use of liquor. We used to hear a great deal about the use of liquor, but recently we have become too passive. I wonder if it is because it has become too common. We used to hear something about communism. When the word came to us we shuddered, but now we have become passive, and we do not pay much attention to it anymore.

There came into existence in this country not so long ago what is known as the coffee break. This is a very detrimental factor in many respects, and with it came the extreme use of cigarettes.

Tobacco, The Slave Maker

The other day I was on the plane en route to Nauvoo, and I sat by the side of a medical research man, a very brilliant man. He told me that in spite of all the proof and research showing the danger, the disease, the cancer, and other things related to the use of tobacco, the people of this country still go on smoking as though nothing has ever been told. He said that within the next year 45,000 people in this country will die from lung cancer. He was quite critical about the American Medical Association and even Congress, itself, for not

coming out strong and forthright and telling the people the truth regarding the cigarette. The cigarette habit is dangerous, destructive, demoralizing, and undermining of the finest people in the country. You will soon see a change in any boy who starts smoking. You will see him go down and down and down.

Then, in addition to the coffee break, we have the cocktail hour, which I am sorry to say is now rather common in circles of society and business. Conventions now held all over this country are preceded by cocktail hours, both among young people and older adults. We constantly read where liquor sales are up. Whenever I read this I realize that this is the sign of eventually more alcoholics and that many more individuals are approaching alcoholism.

It is a state law now for the state to sell and distribute liquor. They claim that they are making a considerable profit out of it, but that profit is very expensive to the individual, to society, to the state and federal government. It is estimated that it costs many times more the amount realized in profit to fight crime and take care of the losses sustained by alcoholism—the serious accidents, trouble, loss of property, broken homes, lives, etc. Families are broken up. Men become bankrupt in temporal affairs as well as spiritual. Moral standards are disregarded, and crimes are committed. Profit? There is no profit in the sale of liquor, except a bookkeeping profit. It is very expensive to the individual, to the state, and to society.

Hope for the Alcoholic

Now to the alcoholic: There is hope for you. You can get help, and you can rehabilitate yourself and be free from this dreaded curse of alcohol, but you should seek help. We are glad to help you; society is glad to help you. You must seek divine strength and help from God your Father. You can be free from alcohol. Many men and women have been able to quit, and you should seek all the guidance and help you can find. There is a chance for you even yet.

Now to the individuals who are approaching alcoholism: There is great hope for you, too. The way to avoid becoming an alcoholic is to quit drinking *now*, not just taper off. Yes, we know it will be difficult; but with help and desire on your part and the determination not to go the rest of the way and become an alcoholic, you can stop. You will stop if you can really understand and be honest with yourself and resolve to stop now while you can. There is only one sure way not to become an alcoholic, and that is total abstinence as taught by this Church. The Word of Wisdom was given to us long before men ever thought of the evils. Every alcoholic will tell you that he never realized himself that he would become an alcoholic. He would never have taken that first drink, socially or otherwise, if he had known. It is not popular to take the first drink. It is actually dangerous. If you can only realize that if and when you take your first drink you are probably on your way to approaching alcoholism or on the road to becoming an alcoholic. Therefore, young people, middle-aged people, and older people, refrain from your first drink. That is the safest and the surest way of avoiding the course of sorrow, disgrace, sadness, sickness, and even death that goes with alcoholism.

Now may I relate a true story to you, although it is difficult for me because it still lingers as a very sad memory. Time will not permit me to give you all the details, but I sincerely hope and pray that it will impress the approaching alcoholics and the alcoholics themselves and all others so that you will never start to drink.

My Friend, Jack

As a boy I was reared in a small country town. I had a very choice boyfriend, whom we shall now call Jack. He and I went through school together. His parents knew my parents; his grandparents knew my grandparents. We sat in many classes together year after year. We played on the same basketball team. Both of us were guards. Jack was a fine athlete. He had the finest physique that I

have ever seen in a basketball suit. He was a handsome boy with big, clear, dark-brown eyes; black, wavy hair; a schoolgirl complexion; beautiful, white, even teeth; a brilliant mind; and a fine disposition. Jack was a good boy. I thought a lot of Jack, and I believe he thought a lot of me.

Finally school was over and we parted. I went to one section of the state to teach school, and a year later he joined me. Neither of us was married at that time. We stayed at the same place with a wonderful judge. We slept together in the same bed. Yes, he was a very close boyfriend and pal. However, it was during that year, I recall, that Jack began a little social drinking at parties. He did not think much of it. We never thought he would become an alcoholic. He never gave it a thought. Springtime came, and I was married. The day after our marriage we went on to the University of California at Berkeley to school. My wife had been a teacher in the same school with my friend Jack, and she knew him very well also. The same spring that we went to California, Jack went to Colorado. I heard nothing from him for a long time. Then I learned indirectly that he was married, and then I learned later that he was divorced. Then I learned that he was drinking heavily and was an alcoholic.

Years passed, probably twenty. I had not seen my friend during those years. One night, not so long ago, my wife and I drove to my business office here in Salt Lake City. I parked my car in front of the office and right in front of a water fountain that was on the corner. My wife waited in the car while I went upstairs to sign some letters and checks. When I came back to the car, two men were standing by the water fountain. My wife had been watching these two men. They were both very drunk. When I went to get into my car, my wife asked me to look at the two men. I did, but I could not recognize either one of them. She had been watching them for some time, and then she said to me, "Look at that man. Could that be Jack?"

I did not think so at first because his hair was now snow-white, not with

wisdom and maturity, because he was a comparatively young man; but it was white with sorrow, trouble, sin, and mistakes. His eyes were not clear, beautiful brown eyes anymore, but now they were red and bloodshot. His teeth were not white and even, but now they were yellow, decayed, and some were missing. His schoolgirl complexion was gone. He was dressed in only a T-shirt, a pair of slacks, moccasins, and no hat. I watched him; still I could not believe it was my friend Jack. Then two or three of his movements brought some memories back to my mind, and I thought possibly it was Jack. So I stepped up to him and said, "Hello, Jack." (I wish I could call him by his right name right now because I enjoyed calling him by his name. I thought so much of him as my pal.)

Then he turned and looked at me and said, "Who the heck are you?" Only he did not use "heck."

I looked at him and asked, "Don't you know me?" And he answered and said that he did not know me. Now I fully realized what liquor had done to my friend.

I said to him, "Are you Jack so and so?" He said, "Yes." When I told him who I was, he threw his arms around my neck and started to cry, and I cried with him. The other man who was with him started down the street, and I was glad to see him go because now we could have Jack in our car and talk to him.

I asked him where he stayed and where he lived, but he did not want to tell me. I asked whether he needed some money and clothes, and he said he did. I pleaded with him not to drink the next day but to come to my business office and I would help him find a job and take him to a doctor and get him some clothes. Then he cried again and said, "Will you help me?" He needed help so badly.

Later we left him where he told us to drive him. I gave him a little money, hoping that he would not spend it for liquor, but I should have known better. The next day he came to my office, but he came very drunk. I talked to him at great length, and I

persuaded him to go with me to the alcoholic rehabilitation center, which was then located on Second South (you in Salt Lake City know where that is), right above a beer parlor. We met the director of that center and talked to him for a while, and I thought, "Oh, how cruel can we be to those men." Jack agreed to stay there and not leave. I called him every day. If I did not call him, he would call me. He was already making progress now. He did not even want to leave that rehabilitation center. He did not dare to leave because in order to get out of there he had to come down some stairs and pass this beer parlor. So he stayed there day and night, week after week. I did go to see him nearly every day, or he would call me. Whenever I would go out of town, which was often—nearly every weekend—Jack would call me and tell me to hurry back and to remember to pray for him, and he would pray for me. Yes, he was making great progress.

His wife had divorced him. He had lost everything but that old T-shirt, those dirty slacks, and moccasins. He had lost his wife, his son, his daughter, his business, and his health. Weeks passed, and he continued to make progress. He did not take a drink. Finally I sent word to his wife that he was making great progress. She did not believe me, and I could not blame her. However, I asked her not to close the door, but she wanted to wait and see because she had already had so much trouble, sadness, and disappointment.

Months passed and he continued to make progress, not a drink in all that time. Later, he was made manager of that alcoholic rehabilitation center, so he could help others that came there just like he was.

To alcoholics and approaching alcoholics, I wish you could have gone to that center and seen them bring in sick men, ruined men, sad men. I have not the ability nor the strength to tell you the things that I saw in that center with those men who had been ruined by liquor. I think I hated liquor more than I had ever done before in

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my life because I could see what it had done to my pal.

One night I came to see him as I promised. It was not late, but he had gone to his room. They usually kept their doors open, and his door was open. It was a very modest room as you can imagine. Just a cot, a chair, and a dresser. As I looked into his room, as his door was open and his lights were off, I saw my friend on his knees by his bed in prayer because he realized that he needed to ask God for strength. Then and there I knew he was making greater progress than I realized. There is a divine spark in every man's soul that never wholly goes out. After weeks and months he was strong enough to leave that center. Right here I am glad to tell you that through the help of the Church, and particularly with the understanding, help, and approval of President David O. McKay, that alcoholic rehabilitation center was moved away from that beer parlor. It was moved to a decent place, and another center in this city was prepared for women.

I was not going to mention this, President McKay, but I believe I will. The credit of the Alcoholics Anonymous was not very good. They needed \$160,000 to build them a new center here and one in Ogden and one in Provo and one for women here in this city. We did not think it was fair to ask the Church to give that as a grant, so we asked them to loan it to us. I do not know whether they ever expected it back or not, but President McKay was willing to help those poor men. I am glad to tell you that that \$160,000 loaned by the Church, an interest-bearing note—mortgages on those places, signed by a lot of men in this state—has now been reduced to about \$66,000.

Oh, the great blessing this has been to these sad, down-and-out men who come there.

Later my friend felt strong enough to go to his home in California. I again corresponded with his wife and asked her to meet his train and judge for herself the improvement that he had made. She did not want to do it, but I knew that she always loved my pal,

but he had caused her so much trouble. Anyway, she agreed to meet him with her son and her daughter. I bade him good-bye here in Salt Lake City. His wife and his children did meet him and drove him to the community where he lived, not far from Los Angeles. He rented a room in an apartment house not far from where they lived. It so happened that I was going to be in that area of Long Beach to attend a stake conference and dedicate a meetinghouse. I told him and his wife that I would be there. They had not remarried yet, but they had talked some about it because she now found that he had quit his drinking. When I came to that meeting I was thrilled to see in the congregation that morning my friend, his wife, his son, and his daughter. Oh, they looked so good! I told the people that I had some very dear friends sitting in the congregation and I would like to have them stand. They knew whom I meant, and they stood. The people did not know their background, and I thought it would be all right. When they stood I was proud of them. I now saw a different man than the one I saw on the corner by that water fountain. After the services were over, we met, exchanged greetings, and I went on my way and they went on their way.

His Peace with God

Two or three days later I received a letter from my friend Jack. Oh, it was a wonderful letter, stating that he thought that he had conquered the habit that had ruined his life and the lives of his loved ones. He told me that he had made his peace with God and he hoped that he could make up to his family the things of which he had robbed them. Then he said, "I have so much to do and so little time in which to do it." Those were his exact words.

The day after I received his letter, the telephone rang and his wife was on the phone. She asked, "Have you heard about Jack?" And I thought for a moment, "Oh, I wonder if he has started drinking again." I told her that I had not heard anything about him since I left there and since I received

the letter from him. Then she told me that they had not seen him the day before nor that morning; so the owner of the apartment went to his room, unlocked the door, and found my friend dead in bed. He had died of a heart attack in his sleep. He had abused his body shamefully for those many years. But I was glad it was not the other side of the question. I was glad that she was not telling me that he had started drinking again. He told me that he thought he had made his peace with God and his family. I do not know whether he had, but I know he tried.

Alcoholics, you can quit. We pray for you approaching alcoholics to stop now while you can. To all others, shun this dreaded curse as you would a disease.

May God give strength to these alcoholics, hope and faith, and above all, the desire to forsake this cursed disease.

To the approaching alcoholics, may God bless you that you will have the strength to stop now while you can.

To youth and others, in your social hours and cocktail hours refrain completely. Total abstinence is your only guarantee. There is no other way.

Yes, we may declare war against liquor; we may declare war against disease. I am proud that the Alcoholics Anonymous teaches and practices

prayer and seeking divine guidance to give them strength to overcome this dreaded disease. There is no other way. Spirituality is as essential to a man's soul as vitamins are to his body. Facing this somewhat weary and insecure world, the only thing that you will have to fortify you in time of need and trouble is the spiritual strength that you may be able to store up. If we do not have that spiritual strength, we may not be able to stand the test nor live under the stress of the times.

I bear testimony to you alcoholics that God lives, that he will answer your prayers because he is your Father, that he will help and bless those who sincerely repent and seek his divine blessing. Every night I ask God to strengthen the alcoholics and prevent others from becoming alcoholics because I have seen what it did to one of the finest boys who ever lived. I humbly pray God to bless these men and give them the strength, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown:

You have just listened to Elder Thorpe B. Isaacson, Assistant to the Twelve. Elder Theodore M. Burton, also Assistant to the Twelve, will now discuss responsibility of holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

ELDER THEODORE M. BURTON

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren in the priesthood: I am grateful for this privilege of addressing you tonight.

Responsibilities of Men who Hold the Priesthood

The First Presidency has asked me to speak to you concerning the responsibility of holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood. As I understand the gospel, that responsibility comes through our relationship to Jesus Christ. But it is with God the Eternal Father that the covenant of the Melchizedek Priesthood is made, and with

him must that covenant be kept. It is the most sacred calling and the greatest power that God the Eternal Father has given to man, and I am fearful that too many of us do not realize the great responsibility and trust which this calling puts upon our shoulders when we covenant to become the very elect of God.

We who receive this priesthood, according to the words of Jesus Christ: "... become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.

"And also all they who receive this