

SECOND DAY

AFTERNOON MEETING

The fourth session of the Conference was held Saturday afternoon, April 6, at 2 o'clock.

The Manti Choir furnished the music for this meeting.

The hymn, "Zion Prospering, All is Well," was sung by the choir.

Elder Joseph T. Finlinson, President of the Deseret Stake, offered the invocation.

"Let the Mountains Shout for Joy," an anthem, was sung by the choir.

ELDER ALONZO A. HINCKLEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

This is an inspiring sight indeed. My soul has been stirred through the various sessions of this conference, it seems to me, to deeper depths than it has ever been sounded before. It has all been glorious. I plead now for the endowment of the Holy Ghost, to permit me to do and say that which would be proper and fitting upon this occasion.

It has been my privilege, recently, to visit more than I have ever done heretofore, the stakes of Zion. I have been deeply impressed in my visits with the people, and I have thought if I might have the liberty of the Spirit for a few moments this afternoon, that I may speak upon a very common theme, but pertaining to that which I think is perhaps one of the most potent powers in the world, that of the holy priesthood.

THE ARMY OF THE LORD

A few weeks back I was permitted to attend a stake conference. I was delighted with the numbers that came out to the various meetings on the Sabbath day. But they held a priesthood meeting in that stake Monday evening. As I went back to attend that priesthood meeting, and looked into the faces of 778 men, I was thrilled; and as they stood and, under the direction of the capable leader, sang a hymn, it seemed to me that it virtually opened the gates of heaven, that the Lord might pour out a blessing upon them. Seven hundred seventy-eight men, on a week-day evening, men who are busy making their honest living, but there assembled to better qualify themselves to offer a consecrated service to the Lord! I thought as I looked at them, this is a sort of a vision of the strength and power and virility of this Church; one stake out of the hundred and eleven, and there assembled this fine group of men.

I thought: What is the army of the Lord? I looked at a segment of it. If I multiply it by one hundred and eleven I will get some glimpse of this mighty army—90,000 men bearing the holy Melchizedek priesthood; 90,000 young men bearing the Aaronic priesthood. What a power! This is a Church of priesthood,

and priesthood is a potent power, an ever-growing, ever-increasing power,—not a wasting, not a wicked, not a destroying power, but a saving, conservative, righteous power—yes, the power of God delegated to man, delegated to man in his weakness. Yes, but not in his wickedness.

THE SOURCE OF THEIR STRENGTH

These are men possessed of faith in God our Father and in Jesus Christ, our Lord. These are men who put on the full armor of righteousness, and have forsaken Satan, the arch enemy of God, and all that he stands for. These are men who were cleansed by baptism by immersion; men who have received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands of those in authority; men unto whom the Lord has revealed his purposes concerning the salvation of men and the redemption of the world; men who have taken upon themselves and adopted every principle and order and practice of righteousness, and have now received the priesthood, with authority to speak and act in the name of the Lord.

The strength of this body of men does not consist entirely of the great numbers that I have named, nor of mass activity; but their strength consists in the fact that they have been divinely commissioned, called of God by prophecy and by the laying on of hands, and that they are organized for work, for efficiency.

There were present that evening all of the members of the stake presidency, all of the high councilors, the patriarchs, representatives of the high priests, under their presidency, members of the several quorums of seventy with their councils, several quorums of elders with their presidencies, the priests with the bishops, the teachers and the deacons with their presidencies and with their supervisors,—organized, I say.

AT THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

And in this great group of 180,000 men every man knows his file leader, and that file leader looks to another file leader; and so it passes on and on, until you reach the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Lord says of him that he is appointed as president of the high priesthood of the Church, or presiding high priest over the high priesthood of the Church, to stand at the head of the Church. The revelation says, "to be like unto Moses; behold, here is wisdom, a seer, a revelator, a translator, having all the gifts of God which he bestows upon the head of the Church;" or as it says in another revelation: "Unto him, the president of the Church, I have given the keys of the kingdom, which always belong to the presidency of the Church."

It says further, of the chief man that stands at the head of the Church, that he is the one and the only man—because the Lord never has but one upon the earth at once,—who holds the sealing power and the keys of the priesthood.

We know to whom to look, to him whom the Lord has appointed, and while he has given him two choice men to be his counselors, he says of the three, that they are appointed and ordained of God to stand in their position, and they are to be sustained by the faith and confidence and prayers of the Saints, and that these three constitute a quorum of presidency, and unto that presidency the Lord reveals the oracles of the Church for the whole church.

EVERY MAN KNOWS HIS CALLING

While the revelation is definite in outlining the responsibility, duty and authority of this presidency, the Lord, in his mercy, has made the duties and responsibilities and authority of every other man that holds the priesthood, just as clearly defined as for the presidency of the Church. Every man in this Church knows his calling, knows his place, knows his authority. There is no schism, no division, no misunderstanding, because the Lord, after he has outlined all of their duties, sends them forth to labor with this admonition:

Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.

So this hundred and eighty thousand can be added to and multiplied, and with the Lord's way never develop any friction, any misunderstanding. The opportunities in this Church are boundless. This, to my mind, is the marvelous work and wonder that the Lord said should come forth, a provision whereby every man, true, honest, and of good report, may receive by divine interposition of hands the holy priesthood; every boy over twelve years of age called to labor, given a ministry, given authority to speak and act in the name of the Lord. Nothing else like it anywhere in the world!

THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS WORK

We are a people of priesthood in very deed. Some complain who are not of us, for we are a people that enjoy the same distinction as the ancient Saints that Peter spoke of, only perhaps we enjoy it to a greater degree. He said of the people:

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

No wonder that the Lord, when he had an organization and had followed it along, line upon line, revelation upon revelation, until Joseph the Prophet was authorized to lay the foundation of the Church—no wonder that he should say:

Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of him who dwells on high, and whose eyes are upon all men; yea, verily I say: Hearken ye people from afar; and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together.

For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape;

and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated. . . .

And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days.

And they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them.

Behold, this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants.

ONLY ON PRINCIPLES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

No power can stop that. The way is perfect. The way of the Lord fails not. There are some imperfections, yes, in us, but the Lord has indicated that we should overcome our imperfections; and it has been preached in this conference how we should overcome our imperfections, and that the Lord expects it of us.

President Clawson said it is a long way to perfection, a long struggle, but he said we must be on the way. We must be struggling to that end, laying off every weakness, developing every inherent power, being added upon by the Holy Ghost, making our lives such that we have a right to officiate in the name of the Lord. That is the secret of our power. We cannot function, we cannot move the powers of heaven, we cannot bring to pass much righteousness, or any righteousness, I may say, only on principles of genuine righteousness that are in us, that we live, that we act, that we are what the Lord would have us to be. He has never lowered the standard. The standard that he gave through the Prophet Joseph Smith to the Prophet's father has never been varied or let down. The Lord said to him, when he made his inquiry in faith, believing:

Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day.

Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work;

For behold the field is white already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul;

And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work.

Remember, faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence.

What a preparation! What an army we have! What a light to the world, if we just followed and kept that high standard in our minds! There would be no boy that would drift. There would be no father nor mother but what would point their son toward the day when he should feel moving within him a spirit akin to the spirit which moved in the Master when he was but twelve years of age.

THE BOY OF TWELVE

I have cherished the belief that it was not just a "happened so" that the Lord said that a clean, wholesome boy of twelve years of age should be permitted to receive the priesthood. I believe that it is

natural to him at that period of his life to feel that he would like to be up and about his Father's business.

I think, bishops—and I speak with some degree of understanding, because I have labored in such a council—I think, presidents of stakes, I think, fathers, and I think, mothers, there is no higher ideal that could be pointed to a son than: "Watch the day, make your preparation, be ready to speak, have a spirit like a Samuel, and when the Lord calls, say: 'Lord, speak; thy servant heareth.'"

I know that the Lord wants us to have our boys, at twelve, in groups of twelve, presided over by sweet, clean, wholesome boys of their age. I know that he wants to have our boys, in groups of twenty-four, under presidencies of their own group, watching over the Church, to see that there is no iniquity, evil-speaking, or backbiting in the Church.

THE LORD'S WAY

It seems so fitting to me to think that the Lord has made provision that the young man eighteen and nineteen years of age shall sit at the feet of the bishop and be instructed, with him as president; that he shall be taught, and that he shall go into the house of the Saints; that he shall preach, teach, exhort, and expound the scripture; that ninety-six men, older, maturer, receiving the holy Melchizedek priesthood, shall stand next to the presidency of the stake and be the standing ministry of the stake; and the seventy, by their divine appointment, shall lift up their voices in every land and clime, call men unto repentance and teach them the Gospel, and induct them into the fold of Christ. So beautiful, so perfect, so complete, is the Lord's way!

HE WHO KEEPS HIS ARMOR BRIGHT

Would there be any soul that wouldn't be inspired to keep his armor bright and to be available, and to offer his first devotion unto God? Blessed is the man that finds himself in accord with this. Blessed is the man that takes upon him the whole armor of Christ. Blessed is the man who stands, as the Lord says he should, and sustains the presidency of this Church with his confidence, with his faith, with his prayers, with his works. Happy indeed is he who shall walk in the light, and his feet shall follow safe paths, and his children and his children's children after him shall rise up and call him blessed.

AN AWFUL CONDITION

But oh, for those who turn their back upon the Lord—I think I might be permitted to read a few words concerning them. To me these are doleful words:

Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord, and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned before me, saith the Lord, but have done that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them.

But those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin, and are the children of disobedience themselves.

And those who swear falsely against my servants, that they might bring them into bondage and death—

Wo unto them; because they have offended my little ones they shall be severed from the ordinances of mine house.

Their basket shall not be full, their houses and their barns shall perish, and they themselves shall be despised by those that flattered them.

They shall not have right to the priesthood, nor their posterity after them, from generation to generation.

What a condition! How do men ever reach that condition? The Lord says "Because they will not hear the voice of the Lord, nor the servants of the Lord, nor hearken to the words of the apostles and prophets, but every man walketh in his own light, according to his own way."

God help us to be free from such a fate as that, and lead us to stand valiantly for the truth forever, and reveal to us, through his Holy Spirit, through the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost, his mind and will. God help us to be so pure, so virtuous and true, that the doctrines of the priesthood shall distill upon our souls as the dews from heaven, now, henceforth and forever, I pray for you, for me, and for our children and our children's children forever, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER DAVID A. SMITH

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

Soon after I entered upon my ministry as one of the Presiding Bishopric, I was requested to tear down a monument erected by the first pioneers. It did not appear to many of us, at that time, that that work being destroyed was a monument. Many of you, no doubt, remember the rock wall that surrounded part of the block east of us. I played around it as a boy and grew up under its shadows; but the full significance of it did not come to me until the task of tearing it down was assigned to me.

As I witnessed the heavy sledge hammers break out the stones from the mortar, and saw the rock wall crumble, there came to me a picture of conditions that caused it to be erected. I saw groups of men unemployed other than the employment provided to keep them active and to help them feel they were doing their part to build a city. In this day we would call it work relief. I saw in my mind men gathering stones from the face of the earth, some burning rock for lime, others hauling sand, mixing mortar, and laying the rock and mortar into the wall.

I pleaded with Bishop Nibley to let me move one of the buttresses, to stand it as a pillar for future generations to look upon. His answer was: "We have the temple wall, and I hope the time will never come when we tear that down. This wall has served its purpose."

For the last two years it has been my duty to help pass upon the expenditure of government funds, and I could not help but think, while