

earth. Every man clothed with divine authority should walk in humility before his Maker.

A missionary's voice in this world is a very small voice. The discourses which he delivers are not so convincing as the life which he lives. God be praised for this great system of building character in men and boys. May he help those who have been commissioned to bear his message to the world, I pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

### ELDER STEPHEN L RICHARDS

#### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

If I could say anything that would contribute to a larger appreciation of the Priesthood of our Church I would be grateful indeed. I can scarcely hope to add a new thought about it. It is an old principle of our religion and all religions and it is a common subject of discourse. Because it is old, however, and because it is common, it is not stale nor trite and it is not cheap.

#### THE PRIESTHOOD DEFINED

The Priesthood is a priceless thing. It cannot be bought; it cannot be sold,—at least not for considerations that are monetary. Its values are measured in terms of benefaction and blessing. While it is essentially spiritual in nature and essence, the results which flow from its use and administration are often temporal and material. It is at once the key to the "mysteries of Godliness" and the power and authority underlying the ecclesiastical organization of God's work in the world. It is everlasting in duration. It existed before the foundations of the earth were laid and will endure eternally. In its last analysis it is the enduring, perpetual power of the Gods,—that is, Elohim; the power by which worlds have been and will be created; the power by which all everlasting covenants and conditions are established and perpetuated; the power and the only power which gives warrant and convincing assurance for the fulfilment of the highest and noblest aspirations of the human family.

The Priesthood is usually simply defined as "the power of God delegated to man." This definition, I think, is accurate. But for practical purposes I like to define the Priesthood in terms of service and I frequently call it "the perfect plan of service." I do so because it seems to me that it is only through the utilization of the divine power conferred on men that they may ever hope to realize the full import and vitality of this endowment. It is an instrument of service. Its uses and purposes are all defined in terms of service and the man who fails to use it is apt to lose it, for we are plainly told by revelation that he who neglects it "shall not be counted worthy to stand."

#### ACTIVITY REQUIRED

The Priesthood is not static and a man's ordination to it is not a static investiture. There may be some men, however, who so regard it, for they seem to be so smug and content with their ordinations.

I can well imagine such a man going into the presence of the great Eternal Judge and saying in substance, "While I was on earth I was a High Priest. I come now to claim the reward of a High Priest." I think it is not difficult to suppose what may be his answer. He will likely be met with such questions as these, "What did you do when you were a High Priest? How did you use this great power which you held? Whom did you bless with it?" Upon his reply to such interrogatories as these will his reward be predicated.

#### PRIESTHOOD COMPARED WITH A STREAM

I have sometimes compared the powers of the Priesthood bestowed on men with the waters that flow from our mountains down into the valleys below, as those waters are controlled and regulated by the law of irrigation which prevails in our western states. An early settler might have diverted from its natural channel the whole of a mountain stream upon lands which he occupied and thereby set up a claim of right and ownership to the entire flow, but the law said, "No, you cannot have the whole stream. You may have only so much of it as you can put to beneficial use in the culture and production of crops on your land,—no more." Is it not so with the great stream of power that flows from the fountain-head of God down to his servants in the earth? Can anyone claim the right to more of that power than he uses wisely and well for the blessing of his fellowmen? I think not and I believe that if he indulges such a hope he will be disappointed.

#### A PERFECT PLAN OF SERVICE

But the Priesthood is not only a plan of service, it is *the perfect* plan of service. All worthy service is commendable. The man who builds my house to shelter my family from the storms and the elements merits my approbation and gratitude. I am indebted to the man who tills the soil, for food and bodily sustenance. To the scientists, the inventors, the skilled artisans and mechanics and the captains of industry, we owe lasting praise and thanksgiving for innumerable comforts and conveniences that make life easy and desirable. The artists of the world have gratified our inner craving for expression of beauty in tender and lofty sentiment in art, music, literature and idealism.

How grateful we are for all these benefactions! We almost worship the modern medical man who, with patiently developed skill and large scientific knowledge, is able to relieve our bodily distresses, mend our broken bones, and set us up in health and vigor. We venerate our statesmen and cheer to the echo the heroes of our society.

But, who of all these, who serve so well and so nobly the interests of the human family, can do for me a service that in real vitality, in everlasting benefit, is comparable to that performed by a humble Elder in the Church who takes me into the waters of baptism and raising his hand to high heaven, truly says, "Having been commissioned of the Lord Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost." What service is there that man can give which

approaches in importance and eternal beneficence the laying on of the hands of the Priesthood and the utterance of those divine words "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" and "be confirmed a member of the Church of Christ"?

So I pronounce the Priesthood "the perfect plan of service" because through its administration and offices our lives are eternally blessed. Not only is it essential for our induction into the Church and fold of Christ but is it of constant application. We use it in the blessing of our sick, to relieve suffering, physical, mental and spiritual; for the encouragement and direction of our officers and missionaries as they are set apart for their respective duties in the Church; for the blessing and naming of little children; for the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the partaking of which we continue frequently to renew our covenants with the Savior; in the ordination of men and boys to offices in the Priesthood which are so widely distributed in our Church; and lastly and perhaps more importantly than any of the items I have mentioned, in the carrying forward of our temple work which is so unique in the world of religion and so distinctly a product of latter-day revelation in which, through the authority of the holy Priesthood, vicarious work is done for kindred dead, transcendently beautiful ceremonies and ordinances are performed for the holy, eternal, celestial marriage of man and wife, for the sealing of children to parents, for the establishment of eternal bonds and covenants as an endowment of men and women by which they make preparation to come back into the presence of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

I said the Priesthood is widely distributed in our Church. There are 180,000 men and boys who hold it. The boys have what is termed the lesser or Aaronic Priesthood. The men are ordained to the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood. Within these orders of Priesthood several offices are designated by revelation and the duties thereof prescribed. The men and boys are divided into quorums or groups in numbers conveniently designated for the establishment of fraternal relations and the accomplishment of service in the Church.

#### THE PRIESTHOOD IN THE HOME

Every man is made a better man by reason of his membership in one of these quorums and by reason of his ordination to the Priesthood. A man with the Priesthood is a better father and husband than he would otherwise be; that is, if he appreciates and uses the powers conferred upon him. He presides over his household in dignity and love. He wins the respect of his wife and children by his constant solicitation, not only for their temporal but for their spiritual welfare also. Children in a home presided over by the Priesthood do not flippantly and disrespectfully refer to their father as "the old man" or their mother as "the old woman." The very nature of the government of the Priesthood precludes such impropriety. A wife does not begrudge a man of the Priesthood his position as head of the household. She honors him as such and teaches her children to do likewise, for she well understands not only what the

Priesthood means to her husband but what it means to her too. She knows that if she sustains her husband in his Priesthood calling she has assurance of exaltation with him, and she knows moreover that if he is true to his Priesthood he will always be kind and faithful and righteous. I feel sure that if we could have more of the authority and influence of the Priesthood in the homes of the land we should have infinitely less disrespect for law and order and the established institutions of society than we now see about us everywhere.

The man of the Priesthood is a better citizen and a better neighbor than he would be without it. Holding authority himself, he is constrained to respect authority. Being a part of the government of God, he sustains all governments. His life is dedicated to service. He must be a good neighbor, serving the needs of those about him.

The man of the Priesthood loves knowledge and education. He is taught that "the glory of God is intelligence," that "man cannot be saved in ignorance," and that knowledge is power. He is enjoined to teach truth and righteousness and he knows that he cannot teach unless he learns.

#### HUMILITY AND INTEGRITY

While the Priesthood is a principle of force and action it nevertheless makes a man humble. The realization of the responsibility it entails,—this partnership with God in the exercise of His power, and the very nature of the grant itself tends to subdue natural human egotism. When one blesses the sick he knows that it would be futile to rely on his own talent, his own influence, or fine words in the presence of distress and suffering and the imminence of death. His native powers seem as nothing. He realizes that it is only through faith and with a pure heart that he can pronounce, with a power superior to his human faculties, a blessing that will be efficacious.

Those who bear the Priesthood know too that their lives must be consistent with the divine commission which has come to them. No man can lie, steal, malign his neighbor or pollute his body with poisons and defile himself with sin and expect the stream of God's power to flow through him. The holding of the Priesthood stimulates a man more than anything I know to conform his life to the standards and attributes of the Master whose authorized representative he is.

#### PRIESTHOOD FROM DIVINE SOURCE

And it is true that a man who has been properly ordained to the Priesthood in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is an authorized and duly accredited representative of the Lord Jesus Christ. To many, no doubt, this appears as a bold and highly presumptuous statement to make. But it is a fact substantiated by creditable evidence. I am not infrequently asked, particularly by those whom I ordain, as to the derivation or lineage of my Priesthood. I reply by setting forth four steps only: I was ordained by President Joseph F. Smith, he by President

Brigham Young, Brigham Young by the Three Witnesses, one of whom, Oliver Cowdery, was ordained by the angelic ministers, Peter, James and John at the beginning of this dispensation. So the authority of the Priesthood which we bear is proximate to the divine source from which it emanates. Neither its origin nor its descent is beclouded and obscured in remote antiquity by equivocal and doubtful beginnings and transfers. Living witnesses or the recorded testimony of those who have recently passed away attest the validity of each act and event which has brought to us this delegation of divine power.

Not only are we able to establish the legality of our credentials to participate in this great work but in addition thereto, I feel sure that the experience of our people with the powers of the Priesthood, extending now for more than a century of time, furnish irrefutable proof of the genuineness and divine nature of the powers which have been exercised. Spiritual manifestations and temporal blessings derived through the Priesthood have been altogether too numerous to estimate or recount. Under the Priesthood the Church was set up by a young man unlearned in the things of the world. Its marvelous organization, its procedure and practices, its ordinances and ceremonies and its incomparably beautiful and uplifting interpretation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are all attributable directly to the powers of the holy Priesthood. Even its temporal successes and those of its members, the migrations of the people and their establishment in different sections of the earth are due to the inspired direction of the Priesthood of the Church. So that, if you ask any man who has had experience with the Church or knows its history what one thing it is that more definitely distinguishes our people from any other group and what one thing is most accountable for all our successes and achievements, he will readily respond: the Priesthood of the Church of Christ.

#### ATTRIBUTES OF PRIESTHOOD

I wish all the world would come to understand the real essence and inner nature of this precious power. I fear that there are too many who look upon it as autocratic, compulsory and dictatorial. The Lord has set forth its nature and constitution in a revelation, which, it seems to me, more nearly breathes the true, kind, loving, considerate, merciful and righteous spirit of Christ than anything we have on record. I will not quote it here because you are all familiar with it. You well know how it enjoins humility, "long suffering, gentleness and meekness and love unfeigned" upon those who minister with the Priesthood, warning against any compulsion, unrighteousness and ulterior motives and advocating methods only of kindness and persuasion.

Knowing the attributes of the Priesthood as we do, we do not fear it. Our unanimity of thought and action in response to its suggestions or nominations is not constrained upon us by domination and coercion. It is but the natural product of our accord with the wisdom and the inspiration of our leaders and the persuasion of righteousness and truth. We who give our allegiance to the Priesthood are not slaves and puppets,

we are free, and the more perfectly we yield to the doctrines and the dominion of the Priesthood, the more unanimous we become in its support. It is the truth that makes one free. Error is bondage.

Very often things that are common come to be regarded as cheap. If gold were as common as clay it might not be the standard of values in the world. I fear that in some instances and with some people the extensive and common bestowal of the Priesthood upon the men and boys of our Church tends to lessen respect and deference for it. Being easy of acquirement, its value is sometimes deprecated.

This is a great and serious mistake. In the first place the Priesthood has not been easy of acquisition in this or any other dispensation when it has been in the earth. Those who acquired it in the beginning of our Church and those who have preserved it and passed it on as a heritage to this generation suffered for it and endured trials, tribulations and even death that it might be established and preserved. In the second place, it is not common among the peoples of the world. If all of our men and boys who bear it were to be distributed among the people of the world there would be but one in every ten thousand of the world's population who would hold the Priesthood of the living God. If such a distribution were actual, I have an idea that no man would look upon his Priesthood as being common or cheap.

#### ADMONITION TO BE TRUE

So I say: men of the Priesthood, be true. Use the power that God has given you. Bless your fellowmen with it. It will save you and it will save the world.

*And to the sisters may I say: support your husbands in God's work. Encourage them and commend them in the performance of their duties. It is not always easy for a tired wife to forego the help and companionship of her husband in the evening when she needs his assistance and his comfort in the care of the family. It is a real sacrifice to have him go to his duties in the Priesthood. But urge him to go; you will never regret it; your sacrifice will be rewarded.*

I wish I could say something about the quorums of the Priesthood, those divinely appointed organizations which are designed to promote and conserve the education, the brotherhood and the service of the members, but time will not permit. I must close.

In closing, I offer my personal testimony. I do so with some hesitation because my personal conviction seems so private and so sacred to me. I am constrained to do it by the hope that the assurance which has so blessed my own life may bless the lives of others.

#### A STRONG TESTIMONY

I know with a conviction that satisfies every knowing faculty that I possess, that the Priesthood of God is real and genuine, that it is a vital essence of force and power. I have felt its influence; I have been consciously aware of its passing from me as I have laid my hands on the

heads of others in the administration of its kindly offices. I have seen its effect. I know that it is more than a name and a symbolism. I prize it above all earthly possessions. I look upon it as the key to all the happiness and joy and glory for which I aspire and I would rather lose anything else that has ever come into my life than to lose my Priesthood.

I humbly pray that I may prove in some measure worthy to hold and exercise the divine power which, in the providence of God, has come to me, and that I may be worthy of the association which I have been so highly privileged to enjoy with President Smith and President Grant and the other noble men with whom my lot has been cast. I pray also that like blessings may come to all my brethren who bear the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. In His name, Amen.

The congregation sang the hymn, "We thank thee, O God, for a Prophet."

### ELDER CHARLES A. CALLIS

#### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. (John 14: 30.)

These words were spoken by Jesus in his last discourse before his crucifixion—the discourse which ended with that divine prayer that flowed from the soul of the Redeemer. That glorious sermon began with the words that have cheered myriads of souls, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." In the Savior alone are found all the treasures of love, true science and infinite wisdom. He is the joy of the desolate, the hope of the penitent.

#### RIGHTEOUSNESS BINDS SATAN

The prince of the world is Satan. He is the prince of darkness. Satan could find no taint of sin in the Savior. In the Lord there was nothing for the evil one to fasten on, for he was without blemish and without spot.

Last summer, in a certain park, I observed that a number of the trees were fast losing their beautiful leaves. They were attacked by caterpillars and worms. It was evident that these pests were attracted to those trees. In the same park were other trees; their foliage was lovely with bright colors. There was nothing in these trees to invite the destroyers. They were immune.

It is possible, thank God, for every righteous man to bind the evil one so far as he himself is concerned. The Almighty alone knows the wonderful help and example we extend to our fellow creatures when our lives are such that Satan can find nothing on which to fasten.

Each man makes his own stature, builds himself,  
Virtue alone outbuilds the Pyramids,  
Her monuments shall last when Egypt's fall.