

shall do my utmost to show my appreciation to my Lord and my brethren by being a faithful servant. I am grateful for the opportunity of working with these honored and great men of the Authorities toward whom I have always had almost a worshipful devotion. I glory in the opportunity to serve the people of this Church, to share their disappointments and sorrows, and their joys and achievements.

I know that this is the Church and Kingdom of God. It has been a part of me. Whenever it has prospered I have gloried in it. When it was criticized, it has hurt me, for it seemed a part of my very being. Every fibre in my body bears witness that this is the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness. I testify to you that this is the work of God, that Jesus is the Christ, our Redeemer, our Master, our Lord, and I bear testimony to you in all sincerity and in deepest humility, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President McKay: Elder Ezra T. Benson, whom you have sustained this day as the junior member of the Council of the Twelve, will now speak to you.

ELDER EZRA T. BENSON

Of The Council of the Twelve Apostles

My beloved brethren of the Priesthood, my heart is filled to overflowing with gratitude as I look into your faces this day—a day which I shall never forget.

I am grateful beyond my power of expression for the blessings which have come to me, and particularly for this great honor that has come to one of the weakest of your number. I love this work. All my life I have had a testimony of it and a love for the leaders of the Church and for the Priesthood of God. I know that it is true and no sacrifice is too great for this wonderful work in which we are engaged.

CALL CAME AS SURPRISE

My brethren, I must confess I had no premonition of this call, even of the shortest duration. When passing through Salt Lake and stopping over here, just between trains, enroute to Colorado on the 26th of July, President McKay indicated that the President of the Church wanted to see me a few moments. Even then such a thought as of being called to this high and holy calling never entered my mind. It was only a few minutes later that President Grant took my right hand in both of his and looked into the depths of my very soul and said: "Brother Benson, with all my heart I congratulate you and pray God's blessings to attend you; you have been chosen as the youngest Apostle of the Church."

The whole world seemed to sink. I could hardly believe it was true, that such a thing could happen, and it has been difficult since for me to realize that it is a reality.

APPRECIATION EXPRESSED FOR BLESSINGS

Brethren, I appreciate more than words can tell my membership in this Church, the Priesthood which I bear, and the blessings which have come to me through that Priesthood. I thank the Lord for my heritage, for my parents, my grandparents, and my great-grandparents who have seen fit to give their all to help in the establishment of this the kingdom of God upon the earth.

I am grateful to you, my brethren, for the messages of love and confidence which have come from all parts of the Church, and I am grateful for the hundreds of messages that have come from the friends of the Church outside our membership. They are a testimony to me of the love which the people of the world have for the leaders of this Church. I have received messages even by long-distance telephone, clear across this continent, for no purpose but to extend congratulations and commendations for this high and holy call that has come to one of their friends.

ASSOCIATION WITH PRIESTHOOD

It has been my glorious privilege to be blessed with wonderful opportunities in my life. But my happiest days have been those spent with the Priesthood and the membership of this Church.

They extend back to my boyhood days in my little country ward in southern Idaho, mingling with the Saints there, and then in the mission field, back to the Franklin Stake, and then on into the Boise Stake in Idaho, then for a year in central California, and then to Washington, D. C. My greatest joy and my great happiness have been those hours mingling with the Saints and with the Priesthood of God. Truly I have had precious privileges. The Lord has provided wonderful opportunities for me to associate with people not of our faith. I have sat in the councils of the great and the mighty in the nation's capitol. I have watched them struggle with the problems which face us as a nation. I have the confidence and the love of many men in high places.

I know something of the honors which men can bestow, but I know that there is nothing that can compare with the honors which come to us as servants of the Lord through the Priesthood of God.

A HAPPY ASSOCIATION

May I be pardoned if I refer to a recent trip during which time I passed through this city and during which time this great call was announced. I had been holding a series of meetings with cooperative and agricultural leaders throughout the southwest, in California, and in the intermountain states. While in California, I spent Saturday afternoon and Saturday night at the home of the president of the organization with which I am associated, the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives. This man is a national figure. He was a member of the Federal Farm Board during President Hoover's administration. He is a friend of our people. When my fifteen-year-old son and I bade him and his good wife good-bye on Sunday morning, with one of his men who was driving us to Bakers-

field, he called me to one side and said: "We know you've had opportunities to go elsewhere, but we want you to stay with the cooperative movement. All you need to do is name your figure. Don't become disinterested. We want you to continue." I said, "Mr. Teague, I have no desire to leave the fine group of men with whom I have been associated during the past four years. I love the cooperative movement—I believe in it. It squares with my philosophy of life, my religious philosophy."

Then only a few days later this call came. I called this man on the telephone from Grand Junction, Colorado, and said, "Mr. Teague, the Church has called me to a more important work," and then I indicated what the call was, and this good man said, "With all my heart I congratulate you." From that day until this, there have been nothing but words of praise and congratulations to me personally, but particularly for the Church and its fine ideals and standards and the type of manhood which it turns out into the world.

THE GREATER CALL

I carried in my pocket as I went through Salt Lake a note to call to my attention a matter which I proposed to discuss with some of the Brethren. I had had an opportunity for almost a year to go elsewhere at a figure that shocked me, running into tens of thousands of dollars, an offer to go into the active management of a great cooperative corporation. It would mean leaving the Washington Stake, and I had hoped to have an opportunity to confer with the leaders of the Church. But now there was no need of conferring, for in the meantime this call came, a call greater than any call that can come from men—that can be offered by the men of the world.

My brethren, I am grateful for it. I know my own limitations, my own weaknesses, and I tremble as I contemplate the great responsibilities and obligations which this call entails. But I am grateful to know that I will be associated with the best group of men in all the world. More than anything else, besides my desire to maintain my testimony, I desire the love and confidence of the Priesthood of this Church, and I pray the Lord to give me strength that I may merit that love and confidence.

I leave with you my testimony. I know that God lives. This is His work. He has again spoken from the heavens with a message for the entire world; not for a handful of Latter-day Saints only, but for all our brothers and sisters, both in and out of the Church. May God give us strength to carry that message to the world, to live the Gospel, to maintain the standards of the Church, that we may be entitled to the promised blessings, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MARVIN O. ASHTON

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

I once heard of a man who put on his tombstone, "I expected this, but not so soon." (Laughter.)

I hope that these brethren who have just spoken won't think for a