

HUNGER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO BE CULTIVATED

We have a grave responsibility to establish in our young people righteous hunger. Everyone of us knows that he has hungers for particular foods. Even now, when I'm very hungry the first thing I think of is a big bowl of beans and a piece of new bread and butter. Why? Because as a youngster, every Monday afternoon that is what I got, and now when I am hungry nothing else tastes so good. We hunger for those things we are used to. When we are hungry, we don't think of a bowl of bird-nest soup, though thousands of Chinese do. These boys who have gone out into the service of their country and get away from home and look about them for a Church to go to, hunt up other boys who are members of the Church and get together to meet. Why do they do it? Because they have a hunger in them established for it. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness." That is no mere figure of speech. Those words were wisely chosen. If we deliberately implant righteous hungers in our children, then when they are from under our roof trees they will bend their dearest efforts to satisfy the healthful appetite wise parentage has helped to cultivate. One can hunger for righteousness just as one can develop evil appetites.

It is my prayer that we shall have the wisdom and the courage so to live that our very lives will be dynamically persuasive examples to our young people of what the Church teaches, so that we may not be guilty of inflicting upon them the agonies of conflicting loyalties, and I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

I sincerely trust, my brethren, that I might enjoy the spirit of the Lord for the moment or two that I stand before you. It is now six years since the present Presiding Bishopric was sustained in its present position. I should like to say that this period of our lives has been a period of inspiration because of the fact that we have had the privilege of being so closely associated with the living prophets of God, these men who receive the mind and will of our Heavenly Father to guide and direct the destiny of this great Church. I am deeply grateful for the association that I have with you, for the privilege of visiting your stakes and wards and observing the high degree of loyalty and devotion to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ manifested by you.

GRATEFUL FOR LABORS AMONG YOUTH

The Presiding Bishopric is most grateful for the high privilege we enjoy in laboring with the youth of Zion. Of our several responsibilities and duties, we are agreed that the most important is our participation with you in directing and guiding the destiny of the Aaronic Priesthood of the Church. I want to say to you that laboring with boys and young

men, securing their confidence and trust, is the sweetest experience that can come into the life of any man. When one speaks of boys, the memory of the Boy of Nazareth always comes to mind, particularly that period of His life when He was twelve years of age. It was the custom of the Jewish people, when a boy attained the age of twelve, to make him a member of his home community. At this age, a boy was expected to have selected his life's vocation. He was given higher assignments in the study of the law, and, if he qualified, he was recognized by the religious leader, the priest, as a son of the law. The Jewish boy at the age of twelve was extended the privilege of attending the Feast of the Passover, which was held in Jerusalem. Christ at the age of twelve accompanied His father and mother to attend this great Jewish celebration, which lasted for a week. Thereafter, His parents, Joseph and Mary, started their homeward journey, and at the end of the first day of travel, they discovered Jesus was not with them. They immediately retraced their steps to the city, and, after searching diligently, they found Jesus in the temple, discussing with the scribes and wise men the problems of the day, propounding and answering questions to the amazement of these men of learning. Mary reproached her son in the following words: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

Jesus Christ, at the age of twelve, was aware of His great mission in the world, and in this day, twenty centuries since the Boy of Nazareth lived, it is most inspiring to know that young men at the age of twelve are given definite Priesthood responsibilities. The Boy of Nazareth received His training and assignments under the old Mosaic law. The young servants of God today receive their assignments and Priesthood training under the law of the divine direction of Jesus Christ, who has set in motion the great training program for the young men of the Church. The Priesthood extended to young men is the Aaronic Priesthood, after the order of Aaron, the heritage of which belongs to the descendants of Aaron and Levi; but until such time as these descendants claim their Priesthood inheritance of necessity the work is being carried on by the heirs of Ephraim and Manasseh, whose heritage is the Melchizedek Priesthood. However, the Aaronic Priesthood for these young men becomes a great school of preparation for the higher order of the Priesthood, the Melchizedek Priesthood.

THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD AND ITS FUNCTIONS

The Lord, in making known to the Prophet Joseph the powers and the rights of the Priesthood, indicated in the 107th section of the Doctrine and Covenants: "Why it is called the lesser Priesthood is because it is an appendage to the greater, or the Melchizedek Priesthood, and has power in administering outward ordinances." (D. & C. 107:14.) This statement of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph has provoked some thinking on my part, particularly as the Priesthood is related to Latter-day Saint

homes. If every Latter-day Saint home were in order as it should be, the head of that home would be one holding the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Priesthood after the order of the Son of God, and all the sons in that home of the age of twelve and over would hold the Aaronic Priesthood, an appendage to the higher Priesthood.

It occurs to me that after all, a son is an appendage to his father. He is a part of his father, and how glorious it is to contemplate the relationship of father and son in connection with the holy Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Aaronic Priesthood is an appendage to the Melchizedek Priesthood, the son is an appendage to his father, and hence they become one in the work of the Boy of Nazareth.

One of the evidences of the divine origin of the Priesthood is in its organization. Standing at the head of the Aaronic Priesthood in every ward as the presidency are three high priests, constituting the bishopric of the ward. The young men of the Church come in contact with and immediately under the direction of these common judges in Israel, these men who are endowed with inspiration from on high to guide and direct the destiny of these young servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. The bishop, according to divine revelation, stands at the head of the priests' quorum, the Lord making it known to Joseph Smith: "Also the duty of the president over the Priesthood of Aaron is to preside over forty-eight priests, and sit in council with them, to teach them the duties of their office, as is given in the covenants—This president is to be a bishop; for this is one of the duties of this Priesthood." (D. & C. 107:87, 88.) This is as it should be, for as a boy passes from adolescence to young manhood, the Lord's servant, the bishop, becomes his counselor, becomes the president of the priests' quorum to which he belongs, preparing him to function in the office of a priest as did John the Baptist of old, and eventually so qualifying him that he may receive the Melchizedek Priesthood.

As with a bishop, so with his first and second counselors. These men constitute a part of the presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood of a ward. Therefore, the first counselor should be intensely interested in the welfare of teachers or deacons and the same applies to the second counselor, affording a training for the twelve-year-old and the fifteen-year-old boy which will qualify them to receive higher offices in the Aaronic Priesthood.

DUTIES OF BISHOP IN RELATION TO THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

The bishopric of the ward participates in all of the steps which mark a young man's spiritual progress. First, in fast meeting, under the direction of the bishopric, the infant boy is presented to the Lord to receive a father's blessing and a name. Second, the bishopric directs his baptism, and in fast meeting assembled, directs his confirmation. Third, the Priesthood is conferred upon him under the hands of the bishopric, as Aaron conferred it upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Fourth, the bishopric recommends him for advancement to the Melchizedek

Priesthood. Fifth, the bishopric recommends him to the First Presidency for missionary service. Sixth, the bishop of the ward issues a certificate of worthiness in evidence of clean, sweet living, which permits the young man to enter the house of the Lord to receive his endowments and be sealed to his life's mate for time and eternity.

As we contemplate the relationship established by the divine Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ between young men and the bishopric of the Church, it should be a great source of inspiration and motivation, not only to youth but to parents and the men who preside over the Aaronic Priesthood, parents and members of bishoprics cooperating together to the end that these young men may become more than the Jewish boy at twelve, a son of the law, but instead well-trained, devoted, faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

No young man can render service in the Aaronic Priesthood sincerely without feeling the influence of the Boy of Nazareth. For example, the deacon who participates in the administration of the sacrament must think of the fact that Jesus Christ was the first to pass the sacrament to the congregation. It should have a beautiful and sacred influence upon the mind and heart of every deacon.

The ordained teacher, whose right and duty it is, as the Lord indicates in the 20th section of the Doctrine & Covenants, verse 53, "to watch over the Church always, and be with and strengthen them," is afforded a magnificent opportunity in connection with their Melchizedek Priesthood companions in watching over the flock and particularly in training young men in the great art of teaching the divine laws of the gospel. He learns to express himself freely, and in preparing a message for the people, he unconsciously converts himself to the great truths of the restored Gospel. Again this duty of teaching the people follows the example of the Boy of Nazareth, for he was the Great Teacher.

The office of a priest is one of the most inspirational offices of the entire Priesthood because of the duties involved. To kneel at the sacrament table and utter the revealed blessings on the bread and water as Christ repeated them before His assembled apostles should inspire a young man to the most high and noble motives and impress upon him the necessity of living a sweet, clean life. The privilege of performing the ordinance of baptism is one which must impress upon the young priest the reality of the Priesthood and the authority that it carries, for no young man could utter the revealed baptismal prayer without feeling that he has indeed been commissioned of Jesus Christ. With uplifted hand, he declares to the candidate and to the world, "Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." The utterance of the prayer gives him the assurance, the testimony, that his authority is valid, that the visitation of John the Baptist was a reality, and that the priesthood he holds was handed down from John the Baptist through Joseph Smith.

OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE

The Aaronic Priesthood affords the privilege of service, and with that

service there comes a fundamental training in Priesthood work to the end that some day these young servants of the Lord will receive their Priesthood inheritance, namely the Melchizedek Priesthood, which Priesthood is after the order of the Son of God. In the minds of the Presiding Bishopric, there is no question but what this sacred privilege of Priesthood service will inculcate into the hearts of these youthful servants a testimony of the restored Gospel, and they will become thoroughly familiar with the fundamental principles of the plan of life and salvation. They are taught to be clean in body and mind by observing God's law of health and to observe the law of dependability, for an assignment to pass the sacrament, to teach the people, to bless the sacrament, or to baptize someone is equivalent to keeping an appointment with Jesus Christ. The lesson of rendering service unto others exemplifies the second part of the first great commandment, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." The payment of tithing is a manifestation of their desire to return to the Lord His portion for the building up and sustaining of His kingdom here upon the earth. Participation in the welfare program affords a training and experience that will qualify them fully for the carrying on of this most important work when they obtain a place in the Melchizedek Priesthood.

TESTIMONY OF A YOUNG MAN

A great deal is said about the problem of juvenile delinquency, but how often do we consider that in our hands rests the solutions and the implements whereby the youth of Israel can be so trained that they will accept the declaration of the Boy of Nazareth, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Any young man trained properly and fully in the Aaronic Priesthood will so live that his parents will never be plagued with any kind of problem in juvenile delinquency. An illustration of what Priesthood training will do for a young man supported by excellent parents came to my attention in a recent conference wherein a young man was invited to speak. He said:

Brethren and sisters, in two days I will be eighteen years of age, and you know what that means to me. I expect to be inducted into the armed services of my country. To many this seems a hard thing for one as young as I, but it is easy, for there burns in my heart a testimony of the divinity of this great work, and because of that testimony, my heart is filled to overflowing with gratitude for the many blessings the Lord has so generously bestowed upon me. I'm grateful for my beloved parents, grateful for the Priesthood I bear, and grateful for the knowledge that should my life be taken in battle, I shall return to Him who gave me life. I'm grateful for the opportunity of mortality, and the spirit of testimony which whispers to me that I shall again have my father and mother and that the privilege of serving the Lord on the other side shall be made available to me.

The attitude of this young man, his testimony, his cleanliness, his implicit faith are all the results of a splendid home and his loyal devoted service in the cause of the Boy of Nazareth.

ADULTS HOLDING AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

Bishops preside over young men from twelve to twenty-one years of age, but there is another great army of 36,880 men over the age of twenty-one in the wards and stakes of the Church, still holding the Aaronic Priesthood. It is needless to point out to you that they, too, are your responsibility and mine, and these souls are precious in the sight of the Good Shepherd. There devolves upon us the responsibility to so motivate them and inspire them to the end that they will qualify and make themselves worthy to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and all of its attendant blessings.

The future of the Church depends upon the youth of today. Their leadership will be no more effective nor efficient than that for which you and I qualify and train them.

May we inspire every boy and young man who comes under our direction to so live the gospel and feel the importance of the priesthood that the young sisters, the companions of these boys and young men, will also be influenced to live righteously. Then, at some future date, because of their virtuous lives, these young men and women will enjoy the blessings of the Priesthood together with their life's companions. May the Lord bless us to the end that our efforts in behalf of these young servants of the Boy of Nazareth may bring into fruition his statement, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" which I humbly pray will be the blessing not only of the Aaronic Priesthood but of the Melchizedek Priesthood and every mother and every daughter in Israel.

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Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

As an example of the doubts and the vain philosophies in the minds of some of our young people I want to read you a few statements contained in an article that appeared in a publication from our own state university during the last few weeks:

A YOUNG STUDENT'S IDEA

Heaven is for children. To the child's mind it is real. For the adult it belongs to the world of fantasy and make-believe. If we have become adults we have left the idea of heaven behind. Perhaps the only mature individual who finds the everyday exhilarating and promising is the one who has supplanted his childhood beliefs in another worldly heaven with confidence in a heaven on earth. . . . The modern world is concerned chiefly with ethics rather than with theology, with better living than with the methodical analysis of the hereafter.

I suspect that that young student was thinking of the kind of heaven that too frequently is pictured, which requires much hymn singing and ever so much praying with rows and rows of saints kneeling in perpetual adoration as a continuous occupation; and perhaps his idea of God and the Creator is similar to that which has been expressed by one writer who