

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.

ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

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

spoke of God as "a sleepless active energy that actuates all things, so small and yet so complex as to dwell in the wonderful energies of life and sound and electricity, in the vital processes of human and animal form, in the motivating influences of the human heart," and so on. Such a one, who believes thus, would have no faith in the teachings of the scriptures or an understanding of their import. To one such the Church of Jesus Christ would be relegated to a mere organization of man, lacking either the reason for or the authority to administer the ordinances of salvation.

HEAVEN A REALITY

Heaven, as we have usually conceived it, is the dwelling place of the righteous, after they have left this earth life, and the place where God and Christ dwell. Of this happy state the Apostle Paul said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." The location of the place was made clear by the revelations of the Lord to us in this day when he said that the earth was to be the abiding place of those who were to inherit the celestial glory and that it would be cleansed from impurity in order to become that holy place. How the earth was to be prepared for that condition is indicated in brief visions recorded by a prophet who said he "saw a new heaven and a new earth." (Rev. 21:1-4.) Another said "and the end shall come and the heaven and the earth shall be consumed and pass away, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth." (D. & C. 29:23.)

The Prophet Joseph, speaking of the condition in which the earth would then be, after that cleansing and that purification, in its immortal state, declared that the earth would be as a crystal and a Urim and Thummim unto those who would dwell upon it. The interim dwelling place of the spirits, while this great change is taking place, is indicated in the revelation where the Prophet speaks of "a place of happiness called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care and sorrow." This rest spoken of was not to be a condition of inactivity but rather was to be what the Lord called it, a place where men and women were to enjoy the "fullness of his glory." To say that there would be no such a place as the state where one could have rewards or punishments for the things done in the flesh, would be to say that there would be no such a thing as a judgment; and to say that there would be no judgment would be to deny that there was atonement for the sins of mankind or that Jesus Christ was the author of salvation, the plan by which man could be sanctified for that holy state. To say that there was no such a thing as the atonement would be to define sin merely as a philosophical formula. If one were to doubt in a life after death or in a resurrection from the dead, as such a belief would imply, then man would be of all men most miserable, because he lacks faith in that which would follow after her life here upon this earth.

I have tried to think how a man would guide his life if he had this sort of feeling and this disbelief in heavenly things. Life, with its fleet-

ing opportunities, it seems to me, would be a mad scramble for the satisfying of one's selfish ambitions and the seeking of worldly gain. Against that the Master declared himself in a parable where He spoke of the man of affluence who was seeking about for a place wherewith to bestow his goods:

And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. (Luke 12:18-21.)

FAITH IN HEAVENLY THINGS AN ANCHOR

Without the discipline of the rewards and punishment that are spoken of in the plan of life and salvation, passions and appetites would go on unbridled; vice and crime would go on unchecked and wickedness would stalk our days. If the Church is but man-conceived, then our care of the needy would not be for the spiritual and temporal welfare of those who are to be assisted, but our care would be extended, as is the case with so many public institutions, merely with the political or the social or the economic welfare of the state or of the individuals who administer it as the chief consideration.

I have a feeling that whenever we have among our leaders those who would say that the care of the needy should be left to public institutions and not to the Church, there we have men who lack the spiritual insight into the spiritual values involved in caring for the unfortunate.

In the parable of the Savior at the close of the great Sermon on the Mount He taught very plainly the doctrine that the storms of life would descend upon the wise as well as the foolish and by inference, upon the good as well as the bad, upon the rich and the poor, and that only those would survive, when those tests and trials should come, who had built their house upon the rock, because they had listened to the things which the Lord had taught them concerning the Gospel plan.

In battle those with faith in heavenly things forbid a dangerous fatalism that oftentimes induces carelessness and recklessness in combat as well as in private conduct. The kind of difficulty in which our young men today find themselves, the terrible struggles through which they are passing in battle, is revealed in an interesting bulletin we have just received from one of our chaplains down in the Italian area. He starts this bulletin by quoting from President Grant's great blessing to the boys in the military service some time ago. As I heard President Grant declare again a blessing upon our boys, I thought how well it would be if the bishops of wards and the presidents of stakes who have chaplains or our coordinators from their stakes now serving with the armed forces would write out that message and ask that they include it in their publications so that every boy in the service might have the chance to have the words and the power of that blessing.

EXPERIENCES OF BOYS IN THE ARMY

Here was the description of some of the conditions of four hundred fifty of our boys who were in that African and Italian area:

Two of our brethren in the infantry were killed during the month on the beachhead. The base censor has informed us that their names may not yet be divulged. I recall the last time I saw them. It was at a sacrament service in a make-shift medical dispensary in a town taken a short time previously. One of them administered the sacrament. Our pioneer forefathers used to sing, "And should we die before our journey's through, happy day, all is well. We then are free from toil and sorrow, too, with the just we shall dwell." Those appropriate words, "Come, Come Ye Saints," seem to particularly apply to our day. It probably will be welcome news that _____ who was formerly reported missing in action is now definitely known as a prisoner of war in Germany. _____ is in the hospital convalescing from a shell fragment wound in his leg. Lieutenant _____ who was referred to last month as being grateful for escaping with his life when a German one hundred fifty millimeter shell struck his truck and failed to explode, is this month spending time in a hospital recuperating from the after-effects of the thunderous jolt. _____ has been released for duty again after recovering from an encounter with a shell fragment. _____ is still having his injured foot looked after by the medics but expects to be returned to duty shortly. _____ had a brief career on white sheets while getting over the effects of a mortar shell piece that crashed through his helmet and grazed his scalp. _____ fell down an eight-foot well shaft one dark night recently while under the range of enemy guns. _____ is being treated for shrapnel under the arm. _____ is being treated for frozen feet. Three other L.D.S. men, have been hospitalized for minor illness and so on.

Then he quotes two brief statements from two of our boys who have written from distant stations:

An artillery shell landed where I had most recently been. I don't know whether it was luck or inspiration that caused me to move, but whatever it was I am mighty thankful.

And another said this:

I have one of those pocket editions of the Book of Mormon. I have just completed reading it and let me say it is the best book I have ever read. I was astounded at the wonderful prophecies it contained. My testimony has certainly been increased since I read the Book of Mormon. I can sincerely say the Gospel means more to me than anything else in all the world.

When I see the faith that such of our young men are exhibiting I say likewise, thank the Lord for the power of the Gospel that they have had to guide them and keep them safe. I contrast the words written into this statement of the young student, in expressing a disbelief in a heavenly reward, with the picture of a young man who stood on the prow of the vessel going over toward the invasion coast. As the ship neared the coast within two hours' distance the men were becoming very nervous. The commanding officer was anxious as to the results of the mental strain upon the men. This young man stepped forward and said,

"Would you mind if I talk to the boys a few minutes?" And one who heard his voice wrote home to his father, a business man in the east, not a member of the Church and said, "Father, that boy talked to us for two hours, just a young man. He told us that even if our lives were taken and we had lived good clean lives, we need not be concerned, because God had a reward for the faithful, and we weren't dead actually, but we lived again and our spirits were more active than they could be here in mortality." He said, "Father, when I inquired of that young man as to who he was, I found that he was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

In my home the other night, I had a young man who spent eleven months in the Aleutian Islands, discharged because of shell-shock and injuries, recently baptized a member of the Church. He told of having met some of our boys up in the Aleutians, who invited him to come to their Sunday School. He said to me:

Brother Lee, the nearest thing I can describe in comparison to my feelings as I stood with those boys and worshipped with them, was a feeling I used to have as a little child when I clung to the knees of my mother so that I wouldn't fall. Now the Gospel has meant just that to me. I cling to it as I used to cling to my mother, so I will not fall.

As I saw this young man shattered somewhat and in a highly nervous state, because of the recent shell-shock, and in his physical disability I thought of the many thousands of our boys who may come home to us, some of them maimed and wounded as he, many of them wounded in their hearts, hurt in their thinking, and all of them needing sympathetic understanding and direction. I am asking this body of Priesthood—are we recognizing our responsibility as Priesthood quorums of the Church to be the stay and the guide of these boys as they are now in service and to be that agency that will welcome them back into the fraternity of civilian life?

A PLEA FOR MORE SPIRITUAL FOOD

As I thought of my own childhood experience and that which induced faith within me, I remember that in our sacrament meetings we didn't expect those from outside the ward to come and speak to us except on special assignment. Every man was expected to prepare himself so that when called he could stand up, as they said, "and give a reason for the hope that was within him," and I remember their testimonies. I remember their doctrinal discourses. I remember how I as a boy, grew upon that kind of spiritual food. I am asking today, are we partaking of a modern trend that makes of our sacrament meetings little else sometimes than a place for political discussions or for concerts? This is a place and a time when we ought to do more to teach the plain simple doctrines of the Gospel than we have ever done before. Our ward teachers should be prepared to go out into the homes of those who have not been privileged to come to sacrament meetings. So in all our activities may we be faithful. May we be as the teachers of Zion. May we be as the Apostle Paul said to the Corinthians:

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (I Cor. 2:1-5.)

As the leaders of Israel, may we so study and prepare ourselves that we, like the Apostle Paul, may preach the doctrines not of the world but the doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ, that the faith of Israel might not be builded on the wisdom of man but on the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, I humbly pray in His name. Amen.

The congregation sang the hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour," (L.D.S. Hymns No. 387).

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

First Counselor in the First Presidency

The Saints listening in will be grateful to know that President Grant is with us, blessing us with his presence again this afternoon.

ELDER OSCAR A. KIRKHAM

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I pray that I may enjoy the blessings of the spirit of the Lord. After thirty-one years in service with the youth of this Church it has been of great interest to me today to hear so much said about youth.

THE DUTY OF PARENTS

Recently at one of our stake conferences one of the leaders of the stake said to me, "Brother Kirkham, after the morning meeting I wish you would take the opportunity to walk home with my son. I wish you would have a little talk with him. He is not going to his Sabbath School, and I wish you would have a chat with him." So I looked for the opportunity. I took the chap by the arm, and we started down the street towards the home. I thought a very good approach would be for me to say: "You know, you have a great father, a fine man, and so I started out with words like these, and then the boy immediately turned to me and said: "Brother Kirkham, I wish you would talk to my father for me. In all my life he has never been with me to a movie. He has never taken me with him, I haven't even had a game of checkers with him. I would appreciate it." Well, we began to talk about other things.

I handed my own daughter recently, one of our new publications in