

Saturday, April 4

First Day

The Men's Chorus of the Tabernacle Choir sang "The Palms."

### President David O. McKay:

We assume, brethren, Bishop Isaacson and Brother Marble, that the ushers

have been assigned their places so that we may get a fairly good estimate of the attendance, not only in the Tabernacle, but in the other assemblies.

Our next speaker will be President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., of the First Presidency.

### PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

*Second Counselor in the First Presidency*

**M**Y BRETHREN: Obedient to President McKay's request, which is founded, I know, on a good reason, I shall take a little more time tonight than I had intended to take, but I do not intend to deprive you of the pleasure and profit of having a few words from him.

I suppose from President McKay's observation about the duty of the ushers, that he has not yet received an estimate of the number of the Priesthood who are here, on the grounds, in other buildings, and of course, we do not know the number that are listening in at the Field House at the Brigham Young University, but I am sure it is a great multitude. I suppose it is the greatest gathering of Priesthood, the true Priesthood, that has occurred in the history of the whole world.

The Lord tried to make a nation of priests out of Israel, but Israel would not, and so the Lord had to organize, as he did, giving the Priesthood to one tribe, withdrawing the Melchizedek Priesthood from their midst, and setting up the Priesthood of Aaron.

We have been more fortunate, more blessed, and I hope we may say, in truth, more obedient, than ancient Israel, we do have a nation, a people of priests, for all our male members over twelve years of age do bear the Priesthood. This Priesthood has been known by various names, but apparently the full name is the Holy Priesthood under or according to the Order of the Son of God.

I want to read to you some verses from the Book of Moses, 1st chapter and the 31st to the 33rd verses, part of the

35th and then the 37th and the 39th.

"And behold, the glory of the Lord was upon Moses, so that Moses stood in the presence of God, and talked with him face to face. And the Lord God said unto Moses: For mine own purpose have I made these things." (That is, the things of this earth.) "Here is wisdom and it remaineth in me.

"And by the word of my power, have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth.

"And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten. \* \* \*

"... For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them. \* \* \*

"And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying: The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine."

This revelation given to Moses, thousands of years ago, now finds its fruit through the great telescopes that have been recently erected, which show that there are universes, galaxies, unnumbered, some of them as much as a billion or two billion light years away, that is, it takes a billion or two billion years for light traveling 185 thousand miles per second, as I recall, to come from them to us.

Moses goes on: "And as one earth

shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words."

The modern astro-physicists suggest that galaxies may have been formed in the past and disappeared ("passed away"), that the galaxies now formed may disappear ("pass away"), and that others may be formed to take their places, for there is no end to space.

Moses continues, "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."

The Lord said that he did these works, the creation of the worlds, "by the word of his power," which is his Only Begotten Son. It seems as if when God speaks, the chaos of space answers, universes are formed, universes disappear, new worlds are created, old worlds disappear, and all this suggests, as I just read, the end is not yet.

Now, what is that "word of my power," which does these mighty works in the universe? I want to read to you what Brother Brigham said about that. He said: "If anybody wants to know what the Priesthood of the Son of God is, it is the law by which the worlds are, were, and will continue for ever and ever. It is that system which brings worlds into existence and peoples them, gives them their revolutions—their days, weeks, months, years, their seasons and times and by which they are rolled up as a scroll, as it were, and go into a higher state of existence."

That is, these measureless creations have been formed by the power of the Holy Priesthood of the Order of the Son of God. This Priesthood we, you and I, and all who stand in like places, possess, not in its fullness, as to the exercise of its power, but we do have the Priesthood. How great and how multiple are its powers, which we do in fact possess, some of you, all of you, have witnessed at one time or another in your lives.

I would like to read what the Prophet Joseph has said, some of the things he has said, about the Priesthood:

"The Priesthood," said the Prophet, "is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years." Adam (I am taking isolated sentences and passages) . . . Adam stands next to Christ, who is the great High Priest. Adam obtained his Priesthood "in the Creation, before the world was formed."

And the following statement of the Prophet is, to me, most significant "Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world"—note that—"Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose (said the Prophet) that I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council."

I like to think that not alone did such men as Adam and the Prophet Joseph receive the Priesthood before they came here. I like to think, I can give you no scripture for it, I like to think that those of us who are set apart, chosen and set apart, to come forth in this the last dispensation of time, which is to draw together all other dispensations, had a like conferring of Priesthood, though not perhaps a like setting apart.

The Prophet continues, "If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God, he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord."

That lets us glimpse the fact that we poor humans, weak and clogged with mortality, cannot obtain the priesthood fullness here, not now at any rate, nor until we have yielded obedience to all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; but when we do, that fullness will be ours.

He goes on: "It (the Priesthood) is the channel through which the Almighty commenced revealing His glory at the beginning of the creation of this earth, and through which He has continued to reveal Himself to the children of men to the present time, and through

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which He will make known His purposes to the end of time."

Now brethren, I take it that we can all glimpse something of the nature and the power of this Priesthood, which each of us has. With the possession of that power, there comes a tremendous responsibility, so great indeed, that to contemplate it seriously, is almost to crush us. Certainly, it is a humbling thing to think and try to understand, and to contemplate that you and I are clothed with that Priesthood, the same Priesthood that obtained in the creation of heavens and of worlds. But remember, we do not have and so we cannot exercise, save only a fraction, a very small fraction, of the fullness of the Priesthood, and we must be most careful in our attempted use of what we have.

Years ago, I did a little work classifying somewhat the powers of the Priesthood exercised by the Savior, as recorded in the New Testament. First, I discovered that he had exercised certain creative powers, the powers of creation: witness the turning of water into wine, the feeding of the 5,000 and the 4,000, and I repeat what I think I have said here before, about those latter miracles, please do not accept the explanation that is made by those who are tinctured by this "higher criticism," please do not accept the suggestion that the reason the 5,000 were fed was because they had taken their lunches with them.

He exercised control over the elements. You will recall that he acted in seeming disobedience to some of what we call the laws of nature. He still the troubled waters on the sea that night when the disciples thought the boat was about to be swamped, and they awakened him in their dire distress and fear. He calmed the waters. On another occasion, while the disciples were going across the sea of Galilee, in their boat, they having left him on the other side of the lake, he came to them in the night, walking on the water. They thought he was a spirit. When they found out who he was, Peter,

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the impetuous Peter, asked the Savior to bid him to come to him. The Savior bade him, Peter went over the side and started to walk towards him. But the waves piling up in front of him, his faith failed him and he began to sink. He called to the Savior to save him. The Savior said, "O ye of little faith."

He controlled life. You will remember he raised the dead, he healed the sick, and the infirm, all of these manifestations, in one sense or another involved great creative powers. Most of these exhibitions of his power have been repeated in our time by the exercise of the powers of the Priesthood we hold. I hope that if you have not recently read, you will read the Life of Jacob Hamblin. There is a man to whom the Church has not yet paid due tribute. He was a great missionary. He was a diplomat of the highest order. He was a statesman. He, time and again, used these great priesthood powers to assist him in his work. I wish that we would reprint that faith-promoting series that we had once, and would use them in our schools to build up simple faith instead of sometimes furnishing material whose sole function seems to be to raise doubts.

Brethren, have simple faith, for faith is the implementing force of the Priesthood. I want to read to you what Brother Brigham said about that. He said, "If we speak of faith in the abstract, it is the power of God by which the worlds are and were made, and is a gift of God to those who believe and obey his commandments."

If you brethren will run over in your minds the use of the Priesthood you yourselves have made, you will find that all the uses which have to do, at any rate, with the alleviating of human suffering, the bestowal of spiritual powers and graces, all of these works we do are brought about through the exercise of faith.

Now, brethren, here we are, agents of the Lord, and he, our Lord and Savior, the agent of God, the Father. That is the power we have, that is the responsibility that is ours. We must ask

ourselves what kind of agents are we. How well are we magnifying that agency, how nearly are we living in accordance with the commandments of God through which action only shall we ever receive a fulness of the Priesthood which we now possess.

I confess, brethren, that to me this is a tremendously important subject. It is a subject that can occupy our time and attention, and upon which we may exert all the mental powers we possess in order that we may gain some understanding thereon and thereof.

Brethren, let us take all of this to heart. Let us not treat the Priesthood lightly. Let us not think, as I have said to you before, that we can lay it off tonight and go out somewhere and do as the lust of pleasure dictates, and then come back and put it on and go forward again. The Priesthood cannot be treated in that way.

We should never go into a place, save we are sent on a spiritual mission, where there would be any likelihood that the Spirit of the Lord could not go with us. We should never engage in any act and so far as possible, we should not harbor any thought, to which we might not invite the Spirit of the Lord to participate with us.

Do not, let us not, I speak to myself as I speak to you, let us not think lightly of this priesthood, let us bend every effort which we possess to do nothing that will either deprive us of the Priesthood, or that will in any way impair our ability and power to exercise it.

During the last week of his sojourn on the earth as a mortal in Palestine, the Lord, returning from Bethany to Jerusalem one morning, became hungry. He saw a fig tree in the distance, and thinking to relieve his hunger, he went to it and found that it had only leaves, no fruit. So finding, he cursed the tree and declared that thenceforth forever it should not furnish fruit to any man. Critics have some difficulty in understanding that act. I do not intend to try to explain it, but I can think of it as an illustration of what will come to us, if we shall prostitute our Priest-

hood. Prostitute the Priesthood and I am sure it will be a long, laborious task to recover it in the measure to which we had it before. And when you think of what that Priesthood means, you men of families, with children,—how glorious it is to be able to go to the Lord when one of them is ill and particularly when the doctors tell you there is no hope, how glorious it is to go to the Lord and ask for his help, doing this through the power of the Priesthood which you possess, and with the knowledge that if not contrary to his wisdom, he will grant that help.

And what a tragedy it would be, if, when that time should come, and it will come to most of you, sooner or later, what a tragedy it would be, if your right to invoke your Priesthood had been lost through your transgression. What a tragedy to find you were in the position of the fig tree that had been forbidden thereafter ever to bear any fruit.

I can testify to you, my brethren, out of my own experience, that God hears and answers prayers. I can testify to you that through the exercise of the Priesthood and prayer I have seen miracles performed, persons healed. There is no question about that. One such healing of a loved one, otherwise lost, as to mortal life, is worth a thousand times more than all that it costs us to live so righteously that we do not lose our claim upon our Heavenly Father to honor our Priesthood.

Brethren, I cannot speak too earnestly and invoke too intently the wish that we shall, all of us, realize what this Priesthood means; that we shall keep ourselves clean so that nothing shall stand betwixt us and the Lord. I have spoken of the extreme case, in a way, the healing of the sick of our dear ones, but there is no hour of the day or the waking hours of the night, when we do not stand in need of comfort, of peace, of inspiration, of wisdom, that can come only from our Heavenly Father. Our priesthood is our authority to go to the Lord in times of stress.

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Let us not, my brethren, do anything that will rob us of this agency of ours, agency to represent the Lord, and he, out of his agency, to represent the Father. We stand where, in a limited way at least, we may exercise the powers which God himself might exercise if he were present.

May the Lord be with us, encourage us, help us to live as he would have us live, help us to keep his commandments, help us to act straight and to think straight, help us to guide our footsteps away from temptation (you know, frequently, I think temptation comes primarily when it is sought), I humbly pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Our next speaker will be President Hilton A. Robertson.

President Robertson presided over the Japanese Mission, he was the first president of the Chinese Mission, and was in Hong Kong. He and Brother Aki and their wives organized a branch in Hong Kong, and the Communists made it advisable to move out. They were advised to do so by the Government. The headquarters of the Chinese Mission was then moved over to San Francisco and he and his associate elders organized a branch. Though he has been released, we have under consideration ways and means of taking care of these Chinese branches.

President David O. McKay:

### ELDER HILTON A. ROBERTSON

*Formerly President of the Chinese Mission*

**T**HIS IS one of the most marvelous sights I have ever witnessed. There is nothing in the world like it.

Sister Robertson and I have been laboring with a people who comprise one-fifth of the population of the world. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, and where men have lost a knowledge of the true and living God, they have had to create for themselves, because of the desires within them, a god of their own making, and so they have depended upon the arm of flesh.

I was grateful when I arrived back from Hong Kong and received a letter from the First Presidency stating that we were welcomed back to the land of liberty, the only place in the world where there is true liberty and freedom. I believe we are living in the greatest day and age of the world. No people have ever enjoyed the blessings that we are enjoying today. When you go into a foreign land, the land of China, where the people have been oppressed, where they have no school facilities, where most of the people are illiterate, where they have no opportunity to advance, where they have no

knowledge of the true and living God, then you can realize the blessings that we enjoy.

Today, in China, with 465,000,000 people you would not see a sight like this. You would not be permitted, because of the oppression under which those people are living today to congregate as you are here this evening and to hear the word of the Lord spoken by his servants. I know you do not fully appreciate what this means.

The Chinese people live in villages. Those villages are made up of families, three or four generations of the same family. Sometimes they are in these for protection, and for other family reasons. China is made up of these villages. The evil forces which have come amongst them and oppressed them are now seeking to divide them, disrupt their family life, carry them away into captivity, disrupt any organization which might try to prohibit the advancement of that evil purpose.

Some of the families are taken away, and some individual members of families, some of the scholars, some of the