

because we are his children. He has given us this earth and all we have—the very air we breathe, food to eat, life itself. He rewards us for every good deed. Of ourselves we are nothing. Brothers and sisters, let us not be self-sufficient. Let us not forget to be humble and acknowledge the Lord, who is so good to us.

King Benjamin told his people:

And now, in the first place, he hath created you, and granted unto you your lives, for which ye are indebted unto him.

And secondly, he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you; for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you; and therefore he hath paid you. And ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be forever and ever; therefore, of what have ye to boast?

And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created of the dust of the earth; but behold, it belongeth to him who created you. (Mosiah 2:23-25.)

My brothers and sisters, be not lifted up in the pride of your hearts that you forget the Giver of all your blessings. Do not let self-righteousness rob you of

humility before God. Acknowledge him in all things. Let your faith be simple and childlike.

On one occasion,

... came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18:1-4.)

May we then be humble as a little child is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We have just listened to Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church. Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson of the Presiding Bishopric of the Church will be our next speaker. The Presiding Bishopric of the Church holds the Presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood.

BISHOP THORPE B. ISAACSON

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

PRESIDENT McKay, President Richards, President Clark, my beloved brethren of the General Authorities, my dear brothers and sisters and friends:

I feel very humble in standing before this great audience today, and I sincerely ask for a solemn prayer in your hearts in my behalf. I am grateful to be here with you in this great general conference of the Church. Truly, we have been spiritually strengthened and built up in our faith. We come here for that purpose, and I pray that the Lord will help me that I may say something that will give you strength and increase your faith and your testimony.

We spend much of our time in our business and temporal affairs, in our educational, social, and recreational life. We spend a great deal of our time in government and politics. Probably

that is as it should be, but I wonder how much time we actually spend in developing the spiritual side of our lives—probably, may I say, the better part of our lives? The older I become, the more I realize that this is the better side of our lives and certainly the most important side of our lives.

It is not uncommon for thousands of us Latter-day Saints to bow our heads in prayer and close our eyes, and to follow the prayer of him who may be mouth. Truly we are a praying people. The world has judged us to be a praying people, and we confess that we not only pray in large gatherings at conference, but we also pray every day of our lives, and we accept the principle of prayer.

I would like to say a few words about the Aaronic Priesthood. I am directing my remarks particularly to those concerned with Aaronic Priesthood boys

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from twelve to twenty-one. There are approximately seventy thousand of them in the stakes of the Church, not counting the missions. We also have about that same number of Senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood, wonderful men who bear the Aaronic Priesthood, or a total of approximately 140,000 men and boys holding that wonderful priesthood, the Aaronic Priesthood, which gives them the power and the blessing and the authority and the responsibility of acting in the name of God, our Eternal Father.

I hope, parents, that you will take an interest in these Aaronic Priesthood boys. Fathers and mothers, help them on Sunday mornings. They are sleepy; they are tired; they are growing boys. Help them to get up on Sunday morning and attend their priesthood meetings. You wonderful wives of the Senior members, encourage your husbands on Sunday morning to get up in time to put on their Sunday clothes and go to Church. That will give to them and to you great blessings that you will not know any other way.

May I try briefly to portray some of the incidents concerning the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood? I would like to take you back to the beautiful Susquehanna River, near Harmony, Pennsylvania. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, two young men, age twenty-three and twenty-two, respectively, stood on those beautiful banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania. Their faces reflected the seriousness of their thoughts. It was evident that peace permeated their entire beings, and every act bespoke humility and faith in God, their Eternal Father. They had intentionally secluded themselves from the world that they might seek the counsel of their Father in heaven.

May 15, 1829—it was a beautiful day. Winter was over. Spring was in the air. Nature had painted the leaves of the trees with a delicate green. The song of the birds overhead blended with the sounds of the river to produce harmonious overtones that added serenity to that beautiful occasion. The sun cast its golden rays through the motionless leaves of the semi-dense overgrowth, making a wonderful study in light and shadow. All was calm and peaceful,

that day. It was indeed a sacred spot and a sacred hour. Cares and worries and concern were largely overcome by the handiwork of God. The harmonious beauty that surrounded them contributed to the sacredness of the place and of the occasion, but the seriousness of their mission made them semi-oblivious to it. They now knelt together in humble prayer, seeking guidance from God, their Eternal Father.

These two young men were concerned about the principle of baptism for the remission of sins, and they desired to know more concerning the details of this sacred ordinance. What was the proper mode? How, and to whom, and by whom should this ordinance be performed? In their work of translating the Book of Mormon they had become concerned regarding the problem, as they contrasted the instructions of that sacred book with the practices of the churches of that day. They knew, however, that their Father in heaven would supply the wisdom they now sought.

And while they were engaged in prayer, a messenger, whom God had sent, appeared to them, and he spoke unto them. "I am thy fellow servant." The resurrected John the Baptist now stood before them—he, who had come out of the wilderness crying repentance to the people of his day; he, who had baptized our Lord and Savior at Bethabara in the River Jordan. Yes, this was the same John who on that sacred occasion heard the Father's voice from heaven declare, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17.) This was the same John who witnessed the Holy Ghost descend on Jesus; he, the literal descendant of Aaron who held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood by right and ordination; he of whom the Lord said, "No greater prophet born of woman" (see Luke 7:28); he, who had been beheaded for his courageous denunciation of sin and for his love of truth. Now he stood before them in majesty; the glory that surrounded him was far more brilliant than the May sunshine. His presence dispelled all doubts and all fears, and these two young men opened their souls to partake of his great wisdom.

He then laid his hands upon their heads and conferred upon them the Aaronic Priesthood keys which he had held throughout the centuries. The words of that ordination prayer were indelibly impressed upon the minds of these two young men:

Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness. (D. & C. 13.)

He then told them that the Aaronic Priesthood was an appendage of the Melchizedek Priesthood, that it had not the power of the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but that this power should later be given to them. Then he told these two young men that he came under the direction of Peter, James, and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek, which priesthood, in due time, would be conferred upon them and which later was conferred upon them.

These two young men were then directed by this messenger to go down into the river, that beautiful Susquehanna River. Joseph Smith was instructed to baptize Oliver, and Oliver, in turn, was instructed to baptize Joseph. They were then to ordain each other to the Aaronic Priesthood by the laying on of hands. Joseph ordained Oliver to the Aaronic Priesthood first, and Oliver then ordained Joseph.

This glorious spiritual experience that followed their baptism and ordination to the priesthood was accompanied by the spirit of prophecy. As they left this hallowed spot, their hearts were light. The Aaronic Priesthood was again re-

stored to the earth by an angel of God to his servants, the first time in many centuries for man to be divinely commissioned with the priesthood. This vision demonstrated conclusively that the heavens were not closed and gave positive proof of the promise of the resurrection.

I bear you my testimony that I know this priesthood was restored to the earth. I bear you my testimony that I know God lives and that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, our Redeemer and our Savior, our Elder Brother. I bear you my testimony that I know this is the true work that we are engaged in, and I know that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God. I know that President David O. McKay is a true, living prophet of God, our Eternal Father, and I bear you that testimony, and I know it to be true, and I know it by the power and gift of the Holy Ghost, that testifies to me that this is true. I bear you that testimony in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson of the Presiding Bishopric of the Church.

The congregation will now join in singing, "Redeemer of Israel," conducted by Elder J. Spencer Cornwall.

After the singing, Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve will speak to us. We are very happy to have Elder Benson with us. His duties as Secretary of Agriculture in the Cabinet of the President of the United States may compel him to leave before the end of the Conference, but we are happy to have him with us today.

Singing by the Choir and congregation, "Redeemer of Israel."

ELDER EZRA TAFT BENSON

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

MY BRETHREN AND SISTERS and friends, seen and unseen: I approach this assignment this afternoon in deep humility. It is truly a sobering experience and yet a signal honor. I seek the inspiration of heaven and your faith

and prayers as I attempt to speak for a few moments.

I am very grateful for the opportunity of being here at this great conference. I am grateful to President McKay for inviting me to come, and I