

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

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would like to say to him, in response to his kind words, that I am sure no one on earth is as happy as I that I am able to be here today.

I am very grateful that the Lord permitted our plane to land during the storm last night, just in time to get to that great priesthood meeting. As President McKay referred to the fact that seventy-one different gatherings were assembled last night, and that we had never had this many outlets for the general priesthood meeting, I thought of a rather humorous thing that was said by one of our national entertainers on TV, who is helping in a promotion program for greater consumption of dairy products. We have had some excess of these commodities. This entertainer has been employed by the farmers of this country, through the American Dairy Association, whose president is one of our stake presidents. On the air he expressed his pride at being associated with this great organization, not only an organization of farmers, but also many millions of dairy cows. "Now," he said, "ladies and gentlemen, there may be organizations with more branches, but I am sure there is no organization with more outlets."

I rejoice with you, my brethren and sisters, in this great conference. I have received a spiritual uplift from the testimonies borne, and I am particularly grateful that I was able to hear the messages of the First Presidency in the priesthood conference session last night and again today. I cannot think of a richer experience than the experience of the last twenty-four hours.

I am grateful for all of the blessings that are mine. I have been sitting here today enumerating them. I am grateful to be able to live in this day, to enjoy the freedoms and the liberties which are ours and the associations which we have in the Church and in this great nation.

I am grateful for the confidence and the love of my brethren and sisters in the Church.

As I listened to that great message of the President this morning, a message which we all need in our homes, my heart filled with gratitude and thanksgiving that the Prophet of God could in very deed speak as one having authority on this very sacred and important subject of the home and family. I am

grateful for my home and my family. I am grateful for my companion and for her inspiration, strength, and help. I know that I could not have accomplished the little that I have achieved, without her great faith, devotion, and support.

I am grateful that I have come from a good Latter-day Saint home.

I thank the Lord for the opportunity that has been mine to associate with my brethren of the General Authorities. For nine glorious years I had almost daily association with them. The last two years I have been in their presence much less frequently, and I am sure they will never know fully how much I have missed the very close and intimate association of those earlier years.

I am grateful for the faith and prayers of the Saints and for the support of good people everywhere in the responsibilities which are mine now in the government as well as in the Church. I thank God for the letters that have come during hours of stress from faithful members of the Church and good people elsewhere.

President McKay spoke of these wonderful mission presidents, and they are wonderful men. As he did so I thought of one who lies ill in a local hospital, whose illness I learned about since coming to this conference—one with whom I had the great pleasure of walking the streets of Holland at the close of the war—one of the most valiant. President Cornelius Zappey,* if you are listening in today, may I say to you that we love you, that God loves you for your devotion, and it is our prayer that he may see fit to restore you fully and speedily to health and strength. It is my hope and prayer that someday we may be able to team up again as missionaries, if not in this life, then in the eternities to come.

I am grateful for the glorious saving principles of the gospel, my brethren and sisters, for my progenitors who had the courage and the strength to accept the truth when they heard it and to join themselves with an unpopular people. I am grateful for the rich heritage which is mine. I am thankful for the mission

*President Zappey passed away April 22, 1955. He was a former president of both the Netherlands and the East Central States Missions. He had been released from the latter mission in March 1955.

of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and for those who have succeeded him, for their valiant devotion to the truth. I am grateful that I have been made the recipient of the priceless blessings that have come through the gospel.

Today I have in my heart a love not only for these, but also for all of God's children. I have no ill feeling toward any human being. With you, I hate sin, but I love the sinner. We all have need to repent.

I rejoice in the spread of the gospel and the growth of the Church in all the world. I have been thrilled as I have read the accounts of President McKay's visits to the missions in the South Pacific. I thrilled with the messages last night from two of our associates who reported on missionary activities in the South Pacific and way up in far-off Finland. I am very grateful, my brethren and sisters, for all of these priceless blessings.

I realize that through the ages there has been a tendency for truth to be pretty much on the scaffold and error on the throne. I recognize that there has been a tendency to revere prophets dead and to persecute the living oracles. I recognize that there are two great forces in the world. And as the Book of Mormon prophet said,

For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. (2 Nephi 2:11.)

I am grateful that we have our free agency which to me is an eternal blessing, an eternal principle. I recognize that today Satan, the adversary, is still alert. He is not using the means of persecution towards this people which he once used, but he is still the enemy of truth, and he is using other methods today. He is probably using the method of encouraging complacency. He is probably making an effort to lull us away into a false security because things seem well in Zion. One of the Book of Mormon prophets said this would be the case in the last days. You remember Nephi's prediction when he said:

For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will

say: All is well in Zion, yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

Therefore, wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion!

Wo be unto him that crieth: All is well! (*Ibid.*, 28:20-21, 24-25.)

Now, of course, the Church itself is God's great instrument to build and to save and to exalt men everywhere, through the application of the simple principles of the gospel. It is a way of life that will make men happy, and "men are, that they might have joy." This great instrument must withstand opposition and complacency.

The program of the Church, the mission of the Church is to build character, to lift men and women up, through giving them an opportunity to participate and take responsibility. It is our great privilege to learn of the truth and help to spread it to God's children everywhere, thus providing the means of leading them to exaltation.

In the last few weeks I have had the glorious privilege of visiting eleven of our Latin American countries. The visit was threefold in character. First of all, it was a response to invitations from leaders of those nations, particularly ministers of agriculture; it also provided an opportunity to get better acquainted with their agriculture, and also to learn something of the results of the exports which we are making into those nations, of breeding stock, such as beef cattle, dairy cattle, hogs, poultry, and also many strains of seeds; it also provided an opportunity, so the President of the United States thought, to help strengthen the bonds of friendship and understanding with our splendid neighbors south of the border.

I want to say to you, my brethren and sisters, it was a most satisfying experience. I am very grateful for the contacts I had with the Presidents of those nations, with the ministers of agriculture, and with the people generally. I appreciate the opportunity of visiting on ranches, farms, and plantations, getting into the homes of the people and feeling of their warm spirit and their friendliness toward the people of the United States.

I think the outlook down there is most encouraging. Those countries are on

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the march today, and they want to team up with the United States. They have a deep love and respect for our people here. They admire and respect our technology, our methods, our free enterprise system. They are very anxious to raise the standards of living of their own people by adopting the practices which we have followed in this country. There is an economic awakening in many of those countries, and I look for unheard of developments in the years ahead. I hope that those developments will include an increase and a spread of the restored gospel. They are moving, as it were, almost from the one-horse handplow to the caterpillar tractor overnight. They are not doing it with the slow transition as we have done it here.

I found they like to be referred to as Americans. They are very proud that they have thousands of their students here in the United States learning our way of life and learning of our agriculture and our technology. I found they were very happy to learn that to the Latter-day Saints the Promised Land, the land of Zion, includes all of North and South America. I was pleased to find, too, that there is evidence that communism has largely failed in those countries. True, there are some danger spots, still, but there is evidence that political stability is increasing. I was very much pleased as I visited personally with the Presidents of those republics, to hear them speak out in support of the principles of freedom which have meant so much to our great nation and our good neighbor to the north of us.

Our technical aid down south is paying off. They need technical assistance and encouragement more than they need grants. I feel that the future is bright, and I am very happy that our Church missions are spreading out in those lands.

I came back impressed that those people want us to help them to help themselves. The future looks bright, and I said to some of my associates upon my return that if I were a young man of twenty-five today, I would consider heading south. Probably when we get the inter-American highway completed, it will be easier for us to visit our neighbors to the south. I hope so.

I was pleased, too, to find in the travels to these eleven countries, that our Mormon people are found in almost every nation. Generally speaking, they are giving a good account of themselves. I was pleased with the contacts I had with them. Beginning in Cuba, in our visit with the then President-elect, Batista, and continuing through ten other nations—I was pleased that we had the opportunity to say something about the Church and explain the fundamentals of the gospel.

Sister Benson is a more effective missionary, I think, than her husband. It seems to me we have been shipping Church books down there for days since our return. We have sent many copies of our literature, mostly in response to conversations which she had with the gracious wives of the Presidents, ministers of agriculture, the ambassadors, and others.

I was pleased to meet our servicemen in Puerto Rico from Ramsey Air Force Base and from Fort Buchanan. In the Virgin Islands where I met, as a member of the Virgin Islands Corporation Board, I was surprised, as a certain technician, an electrical engineer, was invited in to consult with us, to find that he was a member of the Church. As similar experiences were repeated, I thought of the comment made by a businessman from the northcentral states sometime ago who registered in a Washington hotel and asked if there were any Mormons in Washington. The hotel clerk replied, "I suppose there are. They seem to be everywhere."

Well, I found them down there. Not very many, but a few of them almost everywhere! In Trinidad, which is in the British orbit, we found a member of the Church serving as one of the secretaries of the consulate. In Venezuela we had received advance letters from one or two families expressing the hope that we might hold a service while we were there. Then when I had the pleasure of addressing the American Chamber of Commerce in Caracas, who should be presiding there as president, but one of our Mormon boys from Tooele, Utah. It was a great thrill as we went from Caracas over to Barquisimeto to have the opportunity of holding a service in a hotel room with

representatives of three or four Mormon families in that area and to find that they were eager to get a Sunday School started.

In Panama, in Costa Rica, in Nicaragua, of course, we found groups of the Saints and missionaries. It was always a great pleasure to see them at the airports or to hold a brief meeting with them or to join them for breakfast or lunch. I wish our busy schedule might have permitted us to spend more time with those fine groups. Quite by accident, because of plane trouble, we stopped in Guatemala. We had the opportunity during seven hours there, to view the lovely new mission home and chapel and to have a long visit with the ambassador, and to hear him speak in praise about our people. In fact, I was pleased everywhere that we went to find the Church well spoken of.

We completed our little two and a half weeks swing by spending a Sabbath day in Mexico City with President and Sister Bowman and the missionaries and the Saints in a large gathering there. Later the next day, as I visited with the President of that republic, he expressed surprise and apparently seemed somewhat pleased to find the number of people we have right in Mexico City of our faith. He had known of our people in the Colonies, and he spoke highly of the Church and its people.

So, I might go on, my brothers and sisters. I found, too, a very friendly press, as President McKay has reported. I think there was not one loaded question put to us in all of the press conferences that we had. It was not uncommon at the end of an hour-long press conference to have representatives of the press gather around after we had discussed agriculture, and say, "Now, Mr. Secretary, we would like to turn to another subject. We would like you to tell us something about the Church." It was always a great pleasure, of course, to tell them something about the history, the organization, and the doctrine of the Church.

So, my brethren and sisters—and I've not even mentioned Colombia—it seems to me that we have a great opportunity now, as the Church moves out into the world. The Church has a wonderful

reputation. It is well thought of. It is well-known. It is so important today that all of our people, whoever they are and whatever they are, live the gospel, that they keep the commandments of God. And if they are isolated, it is important that they arrange to hold services in their own homes, that they invite in their neighbors to their Sunday Schools, that they might help to spread the gospel. In my humble judgment, the world is hungry for true religion, and we have it.

I am sure, my brethren and sisters, that in the days ahead, many will accept of the truth, particularly in the countries that I have just had the opportunity to visit.

I remember, as you do also, occasions where we have met with just a handful of people in an isolated area, and how the Lord was there with his Spirit. I remember meeting the Saints, way up in Selbongen, East Prussia, right after the war and in isolated places in Holland. I remember meeting the Saints in Czechoslovakia, just small groups. How well I remember that meeting referred to by President Matis last night far up in Larsmo, Finland. It was a small, isolated group, but the Spirit of God was present and touched the hearts of the people. So it will be everywhere our people meet if we just remain true and faithful. God grant we may do so.

May we be able to make our influence felt for good in the world because we must help to serve as the leaven which is going to leaven the world with righteousness. In large measure, that is our mission.

So, my brethren, may we prepare, as elders in Israel, to help enlarge and to strengthen the boundaries of Zion, enlarge her stakes, and build up the kingdom. God expects us to arise and shine because we are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and I believe the hope of the world because we are the stewards of the revealed truth of God.

The Lord has made it very clear in the revelations. "Verily I say unto you all," he said, back in 1838, "Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be standard for the nations." (D. & C. 115:5.)

And six years earlier, he said to a

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then struggling Church, small in numbers, inflicted with persecutions;

For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments. (*Ibid.*, 82:14.)

What are those garments? Those garments are the garments of righteousness, the garments of devotion to the truth—the gospel in action.

Our message is a world message, my brethren and sisters and friends. In that glorious first section in the Doctrine and Covenants, given as a preface to the Book of Commandments, the Lord had these words to say, which I quote to you in closing:

Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of him who dwells on high, and whose eyes are upon all men; yea, verily I say: Hearken ye people from afar; and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together.

For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated. (*Ibid.*, 1:1-2.)

These are sobering words, words from the Master, Jesus the Christ, through

his Prophet, Joseph Smith, to all God's children.

May we not be at ease in Zion. We have a tremendous responsibility. This is God's work, my brethren and sisters and friends, and I give you my testimony today that I know that God lives, that he is a Personal God, that he hears and answers prayers. I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, our Elder Brother, the Savior of mankind. I know, too, that Joseph Smith is and was a Prophet of God, an instrument in the hands of the Almighty in ushering in this the last and the greatest of all gospel dispensations. The priesthood has been restored; the truth is here in its fulness. I know it as I know that I live, and I thank God for that testimony, and pray his blessings upon all of us, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Ezra Taft Benson, member of the Council of the Twelve, also Secretary of Agriculture in the Cabinet of the President of the United States. We shall now hear from President Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Council of the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder Oscar A. Kirkham.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

MY GOOD brethren and sisters and friends, I realize that this is a very important and responsible position; that our words go out, the extent of which we do not know. It is needful, therefore, that we have the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord, that we may speak his truth. I trust that the few words that I say may find an echo in your hearts and be dictated by the Spirit of the Lord.

Near the close of a discourse by our Lord and Savior, many believed on him. It is written: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

"And ye shall know the truth, and the

truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32.)

The only truth that makes us free is the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, all truth belongs to the gospel of Jesus Christ. When our Savior was brought before Pilate, Pilate questioned him and asked him if he were a king. Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (*Ibid.*, 18:37.)

Then Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" Perhaps the Savior had no time given him to answer. Perhaps he was silent, and from that time until now