

Saturday, April 5

Second Day

you, too, could come the blessing that comes to every active bearer of the Aaronic Priesthood. I would like you to know that you are invited to come into our chapels. There have been many who have said, "I have been away so long, I think I am not wanted." You will never know how much you are wanted, and you will never know how much good it will do you, too. The Church needs you, but you also need the Church. Your family needs you, as a man magnifying the priesthood, to stand at the head of your home.

I have heard a few verses of poetry quoted that have a line which goes something like this, "And I stepped in your footsteps all the way." Would we be proud if our boys stepped in our footsteps all the way? We would if we were magnifying the priesthood and enjoying the blessings that come to us through faithful participation.

In conclusion I would like to say that it has been reported that someone said a dirt-road traveler traveling along the highway saw a sign that read, "You had better pick your rut now because you are going to be in it for the next twenty miles." There is nothing that says you are going to be in it for the rest of your

life, and while most of us may detour a little—we get in trouble, and we may be in a rut for a little while—it does not mean we cannot get out of the rut and get on a good, hard highway and make up for the years we were in the rut by getting on that road that leads us to life eternal.

I bear you my testimony, my brethren of the Aaronic Priesthood, that if you will magnify that priesthood and work for its great blessings, even greater blessings will come to you, and then one day will come to pass that which this one sister asked for, "All I want for Christmas is a temple marriage."

May it come to each of us, and may we find joy in assisting these brethren back into activity in the Church, I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Bishop Carl W. Buehner of the Presiding Bishopric. We shall now hear from Elder Clifford E. Young, Assistant to the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder Ezra Taft Benson.

### ELDER CLIFFORD E. YOUNG

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My brethren and sisters, you will readily understand that in the interest of time I can only bear my witness to the truth of the messages we have received thus far in this conference. As I have listened this morning, I have been profoundly impressed. I think that it would be a good thing for all of us, after listening to President Clark, if we could become familiar with the manual that our brethren of the Melchizedek Priesthood are using this year. As you doubtless know, we are using *Our Lord of the Gospels*, that splendid book Brother Clark has given to us after years and years of careful study. We are not Bible readers. Here is an opportunity for us in our homes to become such, and I would like to recommend that the members of the families—not only the priesthood—but all the members,

become familiar with this monumental work by reading the Melchizedek Priesthood manual. At first it may appear to be somewhat complicated and involved, but it is not. It is beautiful because of its simplicity, and I am sure all will so regard it if they read it.

Now, to make a comment or two in harmony with what has been said on this occasion: We are celebrating Easter. It is a time when our hearts are turned to our fathers, to our children, to those whom we love who have passed to the other side. I have thought a lot about my colleague, Brother Thomas E. McKay, by whom I have sat for seventeen years. I had a deep affection for him and he for me. We understood each other. This understanding of which I speak is impressively expressed in the *Letters* of Franklin K. Lane published

after his death. He was the Secretary of the Interior under Woodrow Wilson, and a man from the West. He was ill in the Mayo Hospital. It was his last illness. He wrote his memoirs, or *Letters*, and as he concluded he wrote the following the day he died:

But for my heart's content in that new land, I think I would rather loaf with Lincoln along a river bank. I know I could understand him. I would not have to learn who were his friends and who his enemies, what theories he was committed to, and what against. We could just talk and open our minds, and tell our doubts, and swap the longings of our hearts that others never heard of. He would not try to master me nor make me feel how small I was. I would dare to ask him things and know that he felt awkward about them, too. We would talk of men a lot, the kind they call the great, and I would not find him scornful. . . .

I feel that way this morning as I have thought about these Brethren, and especially about Brother Thomas E. McKay, whom I learned to admire so much.

Now, the message, briefly, is this, my brethren and sisters: These, our associates, of whom we have heard, whom we all learned to appreciate because of their devotion to the Church—and they were devoted men—I have known them for many years and had their help when I was working in stake organizations; in the MIA, the help of Brother Oscar A. Kirkham; Brother Adam S. Bennion visiting us as a member of the general Sunday School board; and then our association with Brother Thomas E. McKay for these past seventeen years.

In their passing we have learned, I think, two lessons—and I will just mention them. The first one is this: As we think of tomorrow, Easter Sunday—the Savior died on the cross, but that was not the end. He merely laid his body down to be healed of its infirmities. It was the cloak that covered his spirit. That is precisely what we will do. During those three days that his body lay in the tomb he was active. Peter tells us:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison,

Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (I Peter 3:18-20.)

Here Jesus was again teaching them. How beautifully that harmonizes with the message of hope that Brother Clark has given us.

Of course, we have to repent and make amends, but there is this message of hope because God wants to save his children. And so we lay our bodies down. The Savior laid his down, but he was active and busy, and then in three days he took it up, a body of flesh and bones. It doubtless was not entirely healed. The scars were still there. He showed them to the doubting disciples. ". . . handle me, and see;" he said, "for a spirit hath not flesh and bone; as ye see me have." (Luke 24:39.)

And so we lay our coats away. These Brethren whom we love have laid theirs away, but not their spirits. They are active on the other side. I dare say that they know this day what we are doing, and they may be near us as we meet today. It is a glorious thought—this message of Easter and the resurrection.

Now, the other lesson: As we met in the final services—we were in the Assembly Hall for Brother Thomas E. and Brother Oscar, and here in this Tabernacle for Brother Bennion—we were all touched. Our hearts were mellowed. They were full of compassion. Brethren and sisters, is not that spirit the agency that is going to make this world better prepared for the second coming of the Savior? We were all sympathetic and thoughtful of those in sorrow with no unkindness in our hearts. To me that is one of the purposes of death. We do not understand all of its purposes, but there is a refining element, a healing balm that comes from the sorrow incident to the passing of those we love.

I want to read these lines from Catherine Marshall, who wrote so feelingly after her husband's passing. Peter Marshall had been Chaplain of the U S Senate and was widely known for his faith and integrity.

For the first time I understood why the Bible speaks of God's love as a refiner's fire,

Saturday, April 5

Second Day

which burns us clean but does not consume. The pain of parting was like a burning flame in my heart, but it was a cleansing, refining action, consuming the dross and leaving the imperishable part of me intact and stronger than ever before. (From *A Man Called Peter*.)

Is not that what these experiences do for all of us? And it is true whenever we are called to a house of mourning. The Lord said, "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: . . ." (Ecc. 7:2.) He knew what sorrow, affliction, and death would do for his children, and we know from experience what they do for us.

You multiply that attitude of sympathy and thoughtfulness throughout the world—and no one is immune; it is an experience vouchsafed to everyone—and you will comprehend the saving grace that lies in sorrow, anguish, and affliction. The Lord knew what it would mean to his children; how such would rekindle in the hearts of men love, sympathy, and greater compassion and thoughtfulness toward one another.

Paul wrote of Jesus, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. 5:8.) Obedience of mind and of soul! We learn obedience of the soul, and we learn to harmonize our thinking and our feelings with all that is good because of these blessings, and then with these blessings there comes a glorious blessing of a reuniting as there came the glorious blessing of the Savior coming back to his disciples as a living reality—the Resurrected Lord.

And to you and me this has been reaffirmed in this day through the Prophet Joseph, for which we are humbly grateful to our Heavenly Father. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Clifford E. Young, Assistant to the Twelve, has just spoken to us. Our concluding speaker will be Elder Ezra Taft Benson, a member of the Council of the Twelve.

## ELDER EZRA TAFT BENSON

### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My brethren and sisters and friends, seen and unseen: I am grateful beyond my power of expression for the blessings of this conference. I have in my pocket a perfectly good manuscript which I feel impressed not to impose upon you today. There is something in my heart I should like to say in the few moments remaining in this meeting.

Like some of my Brethren who have referred to the recent passing of our three beloved associates, I, too, miss them deeply. It may come as somewhat of a surprise to some when I say that Brother Adam S. Bennion, who was older than he appeared, was my teacher. I am probably younger than I appear, but Brother Bennion was one of the truly great teachers who have touched my life.

For a term at the Alpine summer school, of Brigham Young University, I was fortunate enough to sit at the feet of Adam S. Bennion in a course that I shall never forget—a course in biog-

raphy. I remember the term paper which he assigned to us. It caused us to turn the searchlight on our own lives. The subject was "Why I Am What I Am." Under his stimulating direction that group of students searched their souls for the influences that had come into their lives, the examples that had been set them, the temptations that had crossed their paths, and the influences of the Church and of good men and women. I still have that term paper; I am grateful to Brother Bennion that he turned my thoughts inward and made me analyze my own life and the influences which had affected the life of a young man up to that time. I am grateful for the contribution which he made as one of the great teachers of the Church. My life has been enriched. He helped inspire me to seek the good things which I enjoy.

I had the glorious privilege of traveling to stake conferences with Brother Thomas E. McKay. I think I never