

Saturday, April 4

First Day

of us have who have the Melchizedek Priesthood, is a type of authority that carries with it the greatest power that has ever been revealed to humankind. The mighty forces of which we now talk so glibly, and ignorantly, are subject to the powers which you have, and they are powers which can rest effectively and fully in the humblest, the very humblest. It takes no elaborate equipment, no great funds of wealth, no tremendous political power, in order for the humblest of us to have in us the power which o'ertops everything else of which we know.

It requires no elaborate equipment, no great institutions, no scholars of years and years and years to direct us. One of the ancient prophets declared, regarding the way of blessings, "the way of holiness," that it is so plain that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." (Isaiah 35:8.)

We do not need any expensive equipment in order to live righteously, in order to have within our reach under the inspiration and power of the Lord

the greatest force, the greatest authority of which God has ever made us aware.

And so while we must do this missionary work which is so important, we must remember to keep the supporting army, the whole Church, in proper shape, with proper equipment, with righteous living, with a determination to do the right, to the last extremity if necessary.

I do not wish to speak longer. I only ask you, do not forfeit the power and the authority which you have; paraphrasing, do not sell your great spiritual birthright for a mess of pottage of some slight worldly value.

May God bless all of us, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

President Stephen L Richards of the First Presidency will now speak to us, and "you must not cut it short." (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT STEPHEN L RICHARDS

First Counselor in the First Presidency

My brethren, I rejoice with you in this semi-annual reunion of the Priesthood. It is a marvelous reunion, made possible by miracles of the modern day, for it comprehends not only those filling the Tabernacle and the areas round about, but all of the men and boys assembled across the nation. I believe that, while we are not in each other's presence, our hearts are unified, that we share the same sentiments, and that the same resolutions for the advancement of our Father's Kingdom come to all of us.

I like to see the reunion of these great powers—these powers of the Priesthood. I like to see unity in quorums. I believe the Lord expected, when quorums were instituted, that they should provide a unified strength necessary to meet the problems of this great latter-day work.

In the earlier days of the Church there were serious physical problems to meet. Sometimes our Priesthood was required to defend, other times to build,

in unison, by cooperative effort. They had to stand together. I remember not long ago when an application came to the Presidency of the Church through a family for the restoration of the father's blessings. We learned that he had been excommunicated from the Church. As I remember he lived in upper Cache Valley. And when we investigated we discovered the cause of his excommunication—trading at the store of a Gentile. Now that would seem trivial and most unjustifiable in this day. Perhaps in that day it meant much to a community of Latter-day Saints engaged in a common enterprise, seeking to establish the necessary industry for that community, and for one of the Priesthood to forsake his brethren, in the eyes of the men was regarded as a serious offense.

We do not have conditions like that today, but we do have tremendous problems to meet in the incursion of the sins of the world in our midst. In our subjection to adverse conditions morally

we have to stand together to protect ourselves, and there is great strength in standing together. The fortification that comes to an individual when he knows that his quorum members have a real and abiding interest in him, when he knows that they are watching him, has a salutary effect and it helps him, and is oftentimes a great need.

So I think that we have a necessity confronting us in all parts of the land where the Church is organized to unite our forces, our spiritual forces and strength, to resist everything that tends to prevent men from achieving their highest station in this great work of the Lord.

Now I would not take your minds far away from the temple work which has been spoken of tonight, but it occurs to me that in addition to the great necessity of compiling our genealogy and doing the work for our kindred dead, there are those living whom we should carefully keep in mind. I think of two classes tonight: first, those men among us bearing the Priesthood who have not taken their wives to the temple. I do not know how many may be represented of that class in these great meetings held throughout the land, but I venture that there are some. I ask them to pause and consider what they are depriving their wives and their families of. I know that many a good woman is hoping and praying that her husband will prepare himself to go to the temple, to have her and her children sealed to him and prepare themselves for the exalted blessings which await them through the ordinances of the House of our Lord. Brethren, you love your wives. They love you. You can do nothing more important for them than to prepare yourselves to take them to the House of the Lord.

There is another class, and they are young men, and I imagine there are literally thousands of them scattered throughout our audiences tonight, who are looking forward to life, looking forward to marriage, looking forward to careers, and with life's ambitions looking forward with great hope. I would like to say to these young men, from the very beginning you can do nothing more profitable, more contributive to your happiness, than prepare yourselves for

marriage in the temple. I know of nothing that will more strengthen family life, contribute more to its happiness than will this sacred and beautiful ceremony which is provided for us in the House of the Lord.

And how do you prepare yourselves for this beautiful and rewarding experience? Just by good living, keeping all the commandments, doing your duty within the Church, and securing a testimony of the truth which will give to you the power of the Holy Ghost. Remember, it will never profit you anything by deception to win your way into the temple. It is true that we may deceive our bishops, our presidents of stakes. Some may get recommends without revealing what they ought to reveal. It is useless. All the blessings of the temples are predicated upon faithfulness, upon obedience to the commandments. No blessing is effective unless it is based upon the good life of him who receives it. It is a mistake for anyone to think that by concealing or suppressing something that ought to be known he can secure a recommend to go to the temple. That is futile, and even worse than futile, because the suppressing of the fact is itself an additional offense.

I hope all of my young brethren and sisters, young brethren particularly since we speak to them tonight, will prepare themselves to be worthy first of the companionship of a good girl, and then to take her where she would like to go—to the temple of our Lord. Our sisters, even young ones, look forward to that great experience, and if we do not take them where they wish to go we disappoint them.

I pray that our Father will bless our young folk, our young men, that they may prepare themselves for this great and beautiful experience—the most beautiful experience that comes into our lives, the very basis of our hopes for eternal life and happiness—for after all, a home sanctified by the holy sealing in the temple forms the foundation of our eternal happiness in the life to come. And as I have often said, our exaltation is little more than the projection of our home into eternity.

The Lord bless you, brethren. May

you not only live such lives yourselves as to be worthy of these transcendent blessings, but may you teach others so to do and help them to understand the great and beautiful blessings that the gospel of our Lord holds out. You remember that wonderful statement of the Savior's: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:2.)

I do not claim to have read theological

commentaries to any great extent, but I have never heard an explanation of that wonderful statement by any theologian in this world, because I think no one has an explanation except that which has come with the restored gospel, defining the way in which men and women may prepare themselves for that high station in the mansions of our Father. May we reach that station—all of us—I humbly pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

Associated with the temple work, dwelt upon tonight by the two brethren appointed, and corroborated by the two counselors in the First Presidency, is the little simple ordinance of baptism. Many Christians do not believe that it is essential to salvation. I was but a boy when a minister visiting Huntsville shocked me by saying it was not essential, and especially by immersion. I knew of no other way but by immersion. Baptism is essential to salvation, and Christ gave the first real view of it to a member of the Sanhedrin when Nicodemus called upon him by night. I think that he was not ashamed of calling upon Jesus by day, but he was a busy man. I like to interpret that phrase, "by night," because, Nicodemus, with his work in the Sanhedrin and other ways, could better spend an hour or two with the Savior at night.

A great conversation took place, and they dwelt upon salvation, and Christ's first statement was, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." That is a sentence well worthy of consideration and contemplation. It is easier to see the temporal things, it is easier to see the lascivious things, it is easier to indulge in anything physical and animal-like. It is the animal world. But to be born out of that world into a spiritual world is advancement that the Lord requires of us, and the example that Jesus set for us. Except a man be born again, out of that world, he cannot see that spiritual light where love, kindness, self-denial, self-mastery, self-control—all of the spiritual virtues—contribute to the

development of the real man. Nicodemus could not understand that, and he spoke literally.

"How can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born again?" See the physical interpretation? Then the Savior was more explicit. He said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) There is the essentiality of baptism, whether the world thinks it merely a form or not. In those two sentences we have the purpose of life—the overcoming of the physical, the animal life, the striving and the living in the spiritual realm. There you have the three-fold purpose of baptism.

First, it is an entrance into the kingdom of God. It is the doorway, and it is significant that that doorway is by immersion. Sprinkling will not give it. It spoils the symbol. Pouring will not give it. Only by immersion can that birth mentioned by Jesus be properly carried out. There are three elements in which we are buried—the air, which is our natural element; the earth, in which we can be buried, which takes the physical, and ends it; we can be buried in water and come out, and the typical comparison of birth is complete because it means when you get a glimpse of the spiritual you want to leave off the animal life, with its appetites, indulgences, and to develop the spiritual instead of the physical side of your nature.

So we are buried in that element, burying the old man with his appetites, passions, enticements, and coming forth anew. We are born again, buried with