

Saturday, April 7

Second Day

President Hugh B. Brown:

Without in any way detracting from the beauty of the singing of our sisters and our mixed choruses, the President would have me say to this fine group from the Tabernacle Choir that there is something soul-stirring and beautiful in

a Men's Chorus. We thank them sincerely for this beautiful rendition.

Our first speaker this evening will be Bishop Robert L. Simpson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric of the Church. He will be followed by Bishop Victor L. Brown.

BISHOP ROBERT L. SIMPSON*First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric*

My dear brethren of the priesthood, this is one of the most thrilling moments that any man could experience in mortality. I am certain there is nothing to compare with it—the thrill of participating in the greatest priesthood assemblage in the history of the world. These are significant times, brethren, and we should all be grateful to be taking part in this historic priesthood meeting.

May I take just a brief moment to express personal greeting to those leaders from distant lands who have been called by a prophet to represent their people at this great conference. May I express a special, warm *Kia Ora* to those from New Zealand who have done so much for me in my life.

We extend the arm of fellowship to every man and boy sitting in distant places. You too are participants in this meeting. Though miles away, your presence is a reality, and we feel your spirit in this historic Tabernacle in spite of the distance that separates us.

Brethren, have you ever heard the beautiful song, "No Man Is an Island"? Seclusion is incompatible with the spirit of the priesthood, and when you really analyze it, what can a man do for himself with the priesthood? You young men administer the Sacrament for others. You usher and do things around the chapel for the convenience and comfort of others. The priests administer the Sacrament that others might partake.

Brethren of the Melchizedek Priesthood, you bless the sick. We do not bless ourselves with the priesthood. We call in others who have the priesthood to bless us. We are always thinking in terms of someone else when we use the priesthood. To wilfully hide ourselves and live as hermits would be to

allow our priesthood to wither and die. The Savior showed us the way; he set the pattern. His was a life of thinking and doing for others. This was the sum and substance of his entire existence in mortality.

Our great challenge here in mortality, then, is in the overcoming—the overcoming of things in mortality, these obstacles of the flesh; and in due course all appetites and habits must be brought under control that we may feel comfortable in the presence of the Lord.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. 3:21.)

Is there a priesthood holder within range of my voice that does not have as the foremost desire of his heart the great possibility of one day regaining the presence of his Heavenly Father? This is the sum and substance of it all. To aspire to this great blessing supersedes all else in the mind and heart of the priesthood holder.

All of us need help in this important process of overcoming. The man doesn't live that is capable of doing it on his own. "No man is an island"; no being can stand alone.

One of the wisest things that we can do is to benefit from others who have passed this way. Our first loyal band of pioneers who entered this beautiful valley nearly 115 years ago had scouts exploring many dead-end canyons and impossible mountain passes in selecting the best possible route for covered wagons. Subsequent companies found it much easier. The mistakes had already been made. Why make them again?

It would be foolish for us to waste

time in remaking all of the mistakes of our predecessors. In the first place, we would not live long enough to make all the mistakes, so we must do the wise thing. We must take advantage of mistakes that have already been made. Perhaps the Lord had this in mind when he gave us the thought that "the glory of God is intelligence." Certainly that man is intelligent who would take advantage of a path that has already been clearly marked.

And so, the intelligence to benefit from those who know is really the key to our success. And now we ask the question, "Who are those who know? Whom can we trust as we seek counsel on vital matters?" And I would like to direct the thinking at this point to our young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, these young men who have many problems, many questions, always wondering who would be the logical person.

It is easy to be misled. It is so simple to seek our information from the improper source. I once heard a story about a jeweler. This jeweler kept a fine-looking chronometer in his store window to attract attention and as a suggestion of accurate time keeping. Early each morning he noticed a man through the window. He would stop, look at the chronometer, and then carefully adjust his watch accordingly.

One day the jeweler was outside sweeping the walk in preparation for his day's business when the usual passerby stopped for his usual watch-setting ceremony, and the jeweler asked the man why he always stopped to set his watch at the same time every morning.

"Well, you see," said the man proudly, "I happen to be the timekeeper at the plant. One of my jobs is to blow the whistle at precisely 8:00 am and at 4:30 pm. They all depend on my whistle to be accurate." The jeweler smiled and said, "Well, do you know, for over a year now I have been setting my chronometer by your whistle!"

So you see, young men, sometimes we are misled, uncertain as to where the real authoritative source might be. Sometimes we see a fine-looking chronometer, but it has to be working properly and it has to be set properly. Sometimes we see men who are esteemed

men in the community, but they may not always be the best source for the question that we have.

Young men, you have three main authoritative sources for your information. The first is your Heavenly Father, and just as surely as the Prophet Joseph received an answer to his humble question 142 years ago, so you may expect guidance from a loving Heavenly Father.

The second authoritative source of correct counsel and guidance is available from the one you affectionately refer to as "Dad." Dad, I hope the door is open for your boy. I hope the door is open wide that he may seek counsel when it is required. I hope he can come to his dad and talk about vital matters without being embarrassed. I hope we dads are living closely enough to our family situations that we may sense the appropriate time and place for a few minutes of kindly talk, and, incidentally dads, lots of listening, lots of listening! I think this is the key to effective counseling with our young people. We have to do lots of listening. We have to have the full story before we can counsel properly.

And boys, I want to tell you that you will never have a better friend in all your lives than your dad, and don't you ever forget it.

The third authoritative source is your wonderful bishop—one who has been ordained and set apart to be the father of his ward, and especially a friend to the Aaronic Priesthood boys and to girls of corresponding age.

Bishop, are you too busy to counsel with your young people? If you are too busy, then the work load must be reorganized. How about assigning additional jobs to your counselors? How about letting them carry some of the other loads so you can free yourself for the all-important job of counseling with your young people at convenient and frequent intervals?

When to interview? Always before a boy is ordained or advanced in the priesthood. Always at the end of every year as we evaluate the boy for another Aaronic Priesthood award. And certainly whenever needed as may be directed by the Spirit of our Heavenly Father.

Saturday, April 7

Second Day

How do we interview, bishops? We interview with the spirit of love, and this should be the entire purpose of every interview—love. This should be the underlying factor. There should be no other source but love as we talk to our young people and seek to guide them in the proper direction. And like dad, the bishop should be a good listener, too, with the wisdom of Solomon.

Now, young men, we have just talked about three good sources of counsel, and I hope we do not go to the gang to get our counsel. I hope we do not go to boys of our age who have not been over the trail, boys who have just heard, but really don't know what to advise. Oh, they will always be quick to give advice, but it is not always the right source. You may even find a boy who is older than the rest, who may have set himself up as somewhat of a chronometer. He may look impressive, but, boys, let's depend on our Heavenly Father. Let's depend on dad, and let's look to the bishop for the counsel that will be most effective in our lives.

Communication—heart-to-heart communication! I wonder how much better off the world would be today if proper communication, not just words, but proper communication were taking place where we feel the spirit of what is being said and receive the true interpretation? Then counseling could go on properly. Men's minds would come to a common understanding, and there would be peace.

We read in Proverbs: "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." (Prov. 11:14.) I am certain that the Lord meant exactly what we are talking about tonight when he refers to the multitude of counselors—thousands of dads, hundreds of bishops.

Now, young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, it takes determination—determination to do the right thing at the right time. And so we as a Presiding Bishopric would admonish you tonight to seek out your dad and your bishop at the appropriate time and let them listen to your story, and I want to tell you

that you will be guided in the right path.

And, young men, as you have this determination to live your lives right and prepare yourselves for Melchizedek Priesthood opportunities tomorrow, I would quickly like to tell you a story. It comes from far-off New Zealand, and it is one of the finest stories that I have heard in a long time. It concerns a world champion.

This world champion is Peter Snell, who holds several world records, including the mile run. He set this record just a few months ago. Do you know how Peter Snell trains? Do you know what he goes through? He was telling a group of LDS people down in New Zealand just a few weeks ago that when he goes out to run, he does all of his running uphill, and then when he meets his competition on a flat track it seems like running downhill. Then he will go out and run in the sand, in the deep sand, and when he gets on a flat cinder track, he feels just as if his feet have wings on them. You will see Peter Snell out running on the wettest, most blustery, wintry day, and when you ask Peter Snell why he is out running on such a day as this, his answer is, "The opposition is all home by the fire. Now I can get the edge on them." These are the thoughts of a champion.

Young men of the priesthood, tomorrow's challenge is great. Why don't you exert the effort to do some running in the sand? Do a little plugging uphill, and work when it is not always convenient, when it might be a little stormy out; and I want to tell you young men, you will be headed in the direction of a champion in the priesthood of your Heavenly Father.

Brethren of the priesthood, I bear you my testimony that the gospel is true. I know with all my heart it is true, and I know for a surety that the boy Prophet went into the grove; there he saw God the Father and his Son. I know this just as surely as I stand here, because it has been revealed to me in my heart, and I am grateful for that.

I leave this testimony with you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.