

the letter from him. Then she told me that they had not seen him the day before nor that morning; so the owner of the apartment went to his room, unlocked the door, and found my friend dead in bed. He had died of a heart attack in his sleep. He had abused his body shamefully for those many years. But I was glad it was not the other side of the question. I was glad that she was not telling me that he had started drinking again. He told me that he thought he had made his peace with God and his family. I do not know whether he had, but I know he tried.

Alcoholics, you can quit. We pray for you approaching alcoholics to stop now while you can. To all others, shun this dreaded curse as you would a disease.

May God give strength to these alcoholics, hope and faith, and above all, the desire to forsake this cursed disease.

To the approaching alcoholics, may God bless you that you will have the strength to stop now while you can.

To youth and others, in your social hours and cocktail hours refrain completely. Total abstinence is your only guarantee. There is no other way.

Yes, we may declare war against liquor; we may declare war against disease. I am proud that the Alcoholics Anonymous teaches and practices

prayer and seeking divine guidance to give them strength to overcome this dreaded disease. There is no other way. Spirituality is as essential to a man's soul as vitamins are to his body. Facing this somewhat weary and insecure world, the only thing that you will have to fortify you in time of need and trouble is the spiritual strength that you may be able to store up. If we do not have that spiritual strength, we may not be able to stand the test nor live under the stress of the times.

I bear testimony to you alcoholics that God lives, that he will answer your prayers because he is your Father, that he will help and bless those who sincerely repent and seek his divine blessing. Every night I ask God to strengthen the alcoholics and prevent others from becoming alcoholics because I have seen what it did to one of the finest boys who ever lived. I humbly pray God to bless these men and give them the strength, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown:

You have just listened to Elder Thorpe B. Isaacson, Assistant to the Twelve. Elder Theodore M. Burton, also Assistant to the Twelve, will now discuss responsibility of holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

ELDER THEODORE M. BURTON

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren in the priesthood: I am grateful for this privilege of addressing you tonight.

Responsibilities of Men who Hold the Priesthood

The First Presidency has asked me to speak to you concerning the responsibility of holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood. As I understand the gospel, that responsibility comes through our relationship to Jesus Christ. But it is with God the Eternal Father that the covenant of the Melchizedek Priesthood is made, and with

him must that covenant be kept. It is the most sacred calling and the greatest power that God the Eternal Father has given to man, and I am fearful that too many of us do not realize the great responsibility and trust which this calling puts upon our shoulders when we covenant to become the very elect of God.

We who receive this priesthood, according to the words of Jesus Christ: "... become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.

"And also all they who receive this

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priesthood receive me, saith the Lord;

"For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;

"And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;

"And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.

"And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.

"Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father which he cannot break, neither can it be moved." (D&C 84:34-40.)

Scarcely a conference is held in which this marvelous scripture is not read, and yet some of us fail to understand its great significance.

The New Covenant

As a first step in the new and everlasting covenant, we are born anew into the family of God the Eternal Father. But how? Remember, that though we were all spirit children of God the Father, he had but one Son in the flesh, who was born upon this earth, taking upon himself flesh and bones and carrying within himself the seed of immortality, for he was in very deed Jesus Christ the Redeemer, the Anointed, the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh. Jesus Christ kept the covenant made with God the Eternal Father and became the Great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Because he kept the fullness of the covenant as a perfect Man, an obedient Son of God, and had the seed of immortality within his body, he became the firstfruits of the resurrection to live forever with that body of flesh and bones and to sit at the right hand of the Father. Through the covenant of baptism, which is called the rebirth, we are reborn into the family of God through those same three elements by which we were born into this world.

Adam was told to teach these things to his children:

"That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth

death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory;

"For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified;

"Therefore it is given to abide in you; the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment." (Moses 6:59-61.)

Birth Into His Family

Note the perfect comparison, my brethren, of birth into this world with birth into the family of Jesus Christ. Thus we take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ and become members of the royal family. If we hope to reach the presence of God the Eternal Father in the flesh with these present wonderful bodies which shall become purified and spiritualized to dwell in the presence of God, it can only be through Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh. Thus, we become through Jesus Christ members of the family of God the Father.

The Apostle Paul wrote: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." (Eph. 4:14-15.)

There is no other way, there is no other name given whereby we can

return into the presence of God the Eternal Father, with a resurrected body of flesh and bones.

Nephi said: ". . . as the Lord God liveth, there is none other name given under heaven save it be this Jesus Christ, of whom I have spoken, whereby man can be saved." (2 Nephi 25:20.)

And Peter, when he bore his testimony, used these words:

"This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:11-12.)

This doctrine is so important in understanding the deep principles of the gospel that it was repeated again in our generation:

"Behold, Jesus Christ is the name which is given of the Father, and there is none other name given whereby man can be saved;

"Wherefore, all men must take upon them the name which is given of the Father, for in that name shall they be called at the last day;

"Wherefore, if they know not the name by which they are called, they cannot have place in the kingdom of my Father." (D&C 18:23-25.)

Now brethren, I have spoken only of the *first* step along the path of progression which will yield eventually a fullness of the blessings which God the Father has in store for us if we are willing to pay the price attached to those blessings. Let us then go on to the next step up the ladder of progression.

Power of Attorney

A person going on a journey gives a power of attorney to his lawyer so he can act legally in his name. With this power the attorney can act in the name of his client and perform and execute his business just as if that person were present to perform and execute his business in person. So God our Father, by the laying on of hands by those having power to do so, has

given us, his trusted covenant sons, priesthood, to speak in his name just as if he were here himself in person. This is the Melchizedek Priesthood, or "the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God." (*Ibid.*, 107:3.)

There are those who might think God has given this priesthood power too widely in our day to men who do not appreciate this calling. However, I have faith in God and believe that this priesthood has been given widely because there are so many men now living who earned this right to receive that power through their faithfulness in the spirit world. Now they are given this power to see if they can be trusted with it, to see if they will appreciate it and magnify it according to the greatness which is within them. I believe this life is a period of testing such persons to see if they are worthy to be further magnified in the kingdom or family of God.

It is difficult for me to express the gratitude I feel for the confidence God the Father has placed in us, his children. I am reminded of the words of David, who sang:

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Ps. 8:4.)

Evidently God our Father has a higher opinion of us than we often have of ourselves, for he knows us well from our previous life. He told the Prophet Jeremiah:

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (Jer. 1:5.)

Abraham reported:

"Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

"And God saw these souls that they were good and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born." (Abraham 3:22-23.)

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The Prophet Joseph in speaking about such matters said:

"Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose that I was ordained to this very office in the Grand Council." (*DHC*, 6, 364.)

His Greatness Among Us

I am confident, my brethren, that God knows the seed of greatness which he placed within us if we would only rise to the full stature of our manhood. With that confidence in us and with faith that we would respond to that calling, God has given us not only the Aaronic, but the Melchizedek Priesthood. The Aaronic Priesthood is limited ". . . to hold the keys of the ministering of angels, and to administer in the outward ordinances, the letter of the gospel. . . ." (*D&C* 107:20.)

The Melchizedek Priesthood power is not so limited, being concerned with ". . . the spiritual blessings of the church—

"To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." (*Ibid.*, 107:18-19.)

Thus we catch an understanding of the responsibility of the Melchizedek Priesthood to speak in the name of Jesus Christ, just as if he were here in person. What great responsibility that trust puts upon our shoulders! When we place our hands upon a person's head in the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood, it is as though the Lord were performing that sacred ordinance himself. This is what he said to Edward Partridge, referring to the power of the priesthood held by Sidney Rigdon:

"And I will lay *my* hand upon you by the hand of my servant Sidney Rigdon, and you shall receive my Spirit, the Holy Ghost, even the Com-

forter, which shall teach you the peaceable things of the kingdom." (*Ibid.*, 36:2. Italics added.)

The elders of this Church have been given sealing power held in fullness by the prophet of the Lord, for elders are to seal a blessing upon the heads of those who are ill and may rebuke illness and evil spirits according to the faith within them. There is no limit placed upon the power of that faith. We are told that the faith of Enoch was so great in the use of this priesthood ". . . that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him." (*Moses* 7:13.)

To Speak the Word of God

Now let us get back to our day. The power to speak the word of God in the name of Jesus Christ has been given to thousands and tens of thousands in the Church today. That great power is to speak in the name of Jesus Christ, to speak as mature sons of God, entrusted with power so great that it is limited only by our faith. God has great faith in us as a people to give us so widely such tremendous power. It is power which can only be used in righteousness. We cannot use it in power if we are not righteous ourselves. Therein lies the great responsibility of the Melchizedek Priesthood. We cannot speak nor act with power if we do not have a testimony of Jesus Christ in whose name we are to act. In order to speak in the name of God we should be virtuous, not speak and act harshly toward our wives and children, nor neglect our meetings. We should keep the Sabbath day holy. We should not be greedy and mean in our business dealings, nor lie to and cheat our fellowmen. We should be loyal to the promises which we have

made in the temple and follow the counsel given us by the First Presidency, who speak in the name of the Lord. To use the priesthood we should magnify it by keeping our given word according to the oath and covenant of the priesthood.

I do not like to dwell on the negative side of our priesthood responsibility, but I must quote the word of God as a solemn warning to us who have had this priesthood responsibility placed upon our shoulders:

"Hearken and hear, O ye my people, saith the Lord and your God, ye whom I delight to bless with the greatest of all blessings, ye that hear me; and ye that hear me not will I curse, that have professed my name, with the heaviest of all cursings." (D&C 41:1.)

Though it is well to know this, I would rather dwell upon the promises in the words of Peter spoken directly to the brethren he called "... a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

"Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (1 Pet. 2:9-10. Italics added.)

By His Divine Power We Become Partakers of the Divine Nature

As Peter said of Jesus Christ:

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue;

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the

divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

"And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

"And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

"And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:3-8. Italics added.)

This is my testimony of the responsibility of the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is to be loyal to those who preside over us and direct us toward righteous endeavors, to become tender and gentle and kind in the use of the greatest power God has ever given to man.

In view of this great responsibility of the Melchizedek Priesthood, we might well ask God, "What manner of men ought we to be?" Let me close with the words of Jesus:

"And know ye that ye shall be judges of this people, according to the judgment which I shall give unto you, which shall be just. Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am." (3 Nephi 27:27.)

I bear my witness of the divinity of this power in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown:

Elder Theodore M. Burton has just talked to us. Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve will now discuss the effect of the draft upon missionary work.

ELDER GORDON B. HINCKLEY Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I suppose, brethren, that not in a long while have we had a communication which has brought greater disap-

pointment than did the First Presidency's letter of September 22nd, placing restrictions on the number of