

them out. If they are nothing else, they are adequate evidence that youth can live in honor. And there are tens of thousands of them who are literal saints—Latter-day Saints.

Never give up

Now parents, I desire to inspire you with hope. You who have heartache, you must never give up. No matter how dark it gets or no matter how far away or how far down your son or daughter has fallen, you must never give up. Never, never, never.

I desire to inspire you with hope.

"Soft as the voice of an angel, whispering a message unheard,

Hope with a gentle persuasion whispers her comforting word.

Wait till the darkness is over, wait till the coming of dawn,

Hope for the sunshine tomorrow, after the shower is gone.

Whispering hope, Oh how welcome thy voice. . . ."

God bless you heartbroken parents. There is no pain so piercing as that caused by the loss of a child, nor joy so exquisite as the joy at his redemption.

God lives

I come to you now as one of the Twelve, each ordained as a special witness. I affirm to you that I have that witness. I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ. I know that though the world "seeth him not, neither knoweth him," that he lives.

Heartbroken parents, lay claim upon his promise: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." (John 14:17-18.) In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

President N. Eldon Tanner

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve.

We will ask the congregation to rise and join with the choir in singing, "Come Unto Jesus," following which we shall have a brief interlude with singing by the choir.

The congregation and choir sang the hymn, "Come Unto Jesus," following which the Tabernacle Choir sang "Sing Praise to Him."

President Tanner

For the benefit of the television and radio audience who have just joined us, we are gathered in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the sixth session of the one hundred fortieth semi-annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We shall now hear from Bishop Victor L. Brown, second counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, and he will be followed by Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy.

Bishop Victor L. Brown

Of the Presiding Bishopric

● My dear brothers and sisters, I seek an interest in your faith and prayers, that I might say something this morning that will have lodging in the hearts of boys and parents and leaders.

Priesthood of Aaron conferred

"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.)

This historic event took place on

May 15, 1829. It was an answer to the prayer of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery respecting baptism for the remission of sins, which was mentioned in the Book of Mormon. The heavenly being who performed this ordinance introduced himself as John, the same who is called John the Baptist in the New Testament. It was he who, in the River Jordan over 1,800 years before, baptized the Savior, the Son of God.

He further stated to Joseph and Oliver that he acted under the direction of Peter, James, and John, who held the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood. John the Baptist held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, which is known also as the lesser priesthood, being an appendage or preparatory priesthood to the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood.

Aaronic Priesthood bearers

Today in the Church approximately 360,000 boys and men bear the Aaronic Priesthood. They outnumber by several thousand those who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. An analysis of these figures, which I shall not go into here, points up the urgency of the proper training and preparation of boys and men of the Church to assume the responsibility of leadership that will fall upon their shoulders as they mature in the gospel. The Lord has made it very clear that this preparation for leadership is the responsibility of the Aaronic Priesthood.

This, then, my brothers and sisters, is the subject about which I wish to speak today—the Aaronic Priesthood. John the Baptist, in conferring this priesthood on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, told in part what it is: "I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins."

Administering outward ordinances

The priesthood is the authority and power to act in the name of God in accomplishing his work in righteousness. The Aaronic Priesthood has

power in administering outward ordinances. Someone said, "It is the power to make things happen."

The power of the priesthood makes it possible for a young man to fulfill the commitment he made with the Savior before coming to this earth, which commitment was to help build the kingdom of God on the earth in a most significant and authoritative way.

Experience of James E. Talmage

Many of our young men understand in great depth their responsibilities as holders of the priesthood and are living lives that bring honor to it. Of course, there are those who do not take advantage of these blessings. I am convinced the reason for this lack of interest, or casual attitude, is largely due to a lack of understanding. Perhaps the experience of the late Elder James E. Talmage, one of the great men of the Church, who was recognized by the world for his keen intellect, will shed some light on what the Aaronic Priesthood can mean in the life of a boy.

"I was called and ordained one Sunday morning, without any previous notice; and that afternoon was placed as a sentinel at the door of the house in which the Saints had met for worship. As soon as I had been ordained, a feeling came to me such as I have never been able to fully describe. It seemed scarcely possible, that I, a little boy, could be so honored of God to be called to the priesthood. I had read of the sons of Aaron and of Levi who were chosen for the sacred labors of the Lesser Priesthood, but that I should be called to do part of the service that had been required of them was more than my little mind could grasp. I was both frightened and happy. Then, when I was placed on duty at the door, I forgot that I was but an eleven-year-old lad; I felt strong in the thought that I belonged to the Lord, and that he would assist me in whatever was required of me. I could not resist the conviction that other sentinels, stronger by far than I, stood by me though invisible to human eyes.

"The effect of my ordination to the

deaconship entered into all the affairs of my boyish life. I am afraid that sometimes I forgot what I was, but I have ever been thankful that oft-times I did remember, and the recollection always served to make me better. When at play on the school grounds, and perhaps tempted to take unfair advantage in the game, when in the midst of a dispute with a playmate, I would remember, and the thought would be as effective as though spoken aloud—'I am a deacon; and it is not right that a deacon should act in this way.' On examination days, when it seemed easy for me to copy some other boy's work or to 'crib' from the book, I would remember again—'I am a deacon, and must be honest and true.' When I saw other boys cheating in play or in school, I would say in my mind, 'It would be more wicked for me to do that than it is for them, because I am a deacon.'

"Nothing that was required of me in the duties of my office was irksome; the sense of the great honor of my ordination made all service welcome. I was the only deacon in the branch, and had abundant opportunity to work.

"The impression made upon my mind when I was made a deacon has never faded. The feeling that I was called to the special service of the Lord, as a bearer of the priesthood, has been a source of strength to me through the years. When later I was ordained to higher offices in the Church, the same assurance has come to me, on every such occasion—that I was in truth endowed with power from heaven, and that the Lord demanded of me that I honor his authority. I have been ordained in turn a teacher, an elder, a high priest, and lastly an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, and with every ordination there has come to me a new and soul-thrilling feeling which first I knew when I was called to be a deacon in the service of the Lord." (Course of study for the quorums of the priesthood: Deacons, 1914, pp. 135-36. Italics added.)

A spiritual experience

Brother Talmage was a boy in England at the time of his ordination. The

reason he was placed as a sentinel at the door was to warn the members of the approach of their enemies, for there was much persecution of the Church in that area. Imagine, a newly ordained deacon being given this responsibility!

There are two observations I would like to make from Brother Talmage's account of this experience. First, he was given something worthwhile to do by his leaders. They exhibited faith in him. He immediately became involved. Second, and even more important, he recognized that even though still a young boy, he had the authority and power to perform the task given him because he held the priesthood. This recognition replaced fear with courage. I believe he actually experienced the ministering of angels.

There is every reason that our young men today can have the same spiritual experience, giving them a feeling of worth and destiny, as felt by Elder Talmage.

The greatest hero

The society in which we live has many divergent viewpoints about life; and because we have been given our free agency to choose for ourselves, it is vitally important that we carefully evaluate all aspects of life before making our choices. In this process of evaluation, it is not uncommon for us, particularly in our younger years, to look to someone we admire as our ideal or our hero. It might be a parent, an athlete, a leader in the community, etc. I suggest to the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, yes, to all young men everywhere, that the greatest hero, if you will, who has ever lived is the Savior of mankind, Jesus Christ. I also suggest that his life and teachings are just as relevant today as at any time in history.

Learning about Jesus

It is particularly important that young men holding his priesthood become intimately acquainted with him in order to know and to understand him. Unfortunately, artists and others have pictured him as effeminate, soft, and sad. If we analyze his life at all,

we see a person who was masculine, strong, vigorous, interested in all that was going on about him, surely loving and kind, but at the same time one who could exhibit righteous anger. If this were not true, how could he have caused rough fishermen to follow him with just one sentence: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men?" (Matt. 4:19.) He spent his youth and young adulthood as a carpenter, a trade requiring strength and skill. Would he have dared drive the money changers from the temple had he not been a man of great strength and courage? It takes a man of unusual warmth to attract throngs of little children as the Savior did. No other man has lived whose influence has been so profound in directing the course of human behavior.

Concern about problems

As the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood become better acquainted with the life and teachings of the Savior, and as they emulate these teachings, new purpose and direction will come into their lives. They will find that the Savior was concerned with many of the same complex problems that exist today; for example, hypocrisy, one of today's most serious problems. Of all the weaknesses of men, this one was most strongly denounced by the Savior. He said: "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." (Matt. 23:13-14, 23.)

Man of courage and compassion

It took a man of great courage and vitality to speak and act as Jesus did. At the same time, all that he said and did was tempered by love, compassion, and charity.

As he hung on the cross suffering the agony of cruel torture, he said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.)

In today's world of confusion and conflict, the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth stand alone as the certain solution to man's problems. No greater opportunity or blessing can come into the life of a young man than to be called and ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood, thus being authorized to act for him who gave his life on Calvary.

An important assignment

The Aaronic Priesthood is not a make-work activity designed to keep young men busy and out of trouble. It is a segment of the government of the kingdom of God on the earth. Those holding it are empowered to perform the duties that will aid the Lord in accomplishing his work and his glory, which he said was "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

No greater nor more important assignment can come to a boy or a man than this. President Wilford Woodruff, a prophet of God, supports this assessment of the Aaronic Priesthood: ". . . I went out as a Priest, and my companion as an Elder, and we traveled thousands of miles, and had many things manifested to us. I desire to impress upon you the fact that it does not make any difference whether a man is a Priest or an Apostle, if he magnifies his calling. A Priest holds the keys of the ministering of angels. Never in my life, as an Apostle, as a Seventy, or as an Elder, have I ever had more of the protection of the Lord than while holding the office of Priest." (Wilford Woodruff, in *Millennial Star*, October 5, 1891, p. 629.)

I bear my humble witness to all who

hear my voice this day, that John the Baptist actually and literally did appear to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and conferred upon them the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood. If parents, leaders, and holders of this priesthood will recognize it for what it truly is, and if our young men will make themselves acquainted with him who stands at the head and emulate his life, a mighty and great generation

of leaders will come forth. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

President N. Eldon Tanner

We have just listened to Victor L. Brown of the Presiding Bishopric.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy will now address us, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing, "O Lord Most Holy."

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Of the First Council of the Seventy

● I desire very much to be directed by the Spirit, because I know that when a man speaks by the power of the Holy Ghost, that holy being carries the word of truth into the heart of every receptive soul.

Message of the gospel

We are servants of the Lord, and he has sent us into the world to say to every creature: "God has a message for you," and then to deliver that message in his name.

The message he has given us to proclaim in the ears of all who dwell upon the earth is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the plan of salvation. It is that Christ hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. It is a message of peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come.

This message comprises the most sobering and glorious truths of which the human mind can conceive. It is a voice of joy and gladness and thanksgiving; of glory and honor; of immortality and eternal life. And it is destined to make of this earth, a heaven; and of man, a god.

Known to the apostles and prophets of old, this glorious message was first revealed in modern times to the Prophet Joseph Smith and has since been planted in the hearts of all the true servants of the Lord by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Proclaim saving truths

And so now, obedient to the divine command, we proclaim the saving truths of the gospel, not in the spirit of contention or debate, but by way of announcement, of exhortation, and of testimony.

We are bold to say that there is a God in heaven, an infinite and holy being who is our Eternal Father and whose offspring we are in the spirit; that he ordained the plan of salvation whereby we, his spirit children, might advance and progress and become like him; that he chose his First-born in the spirit to be the Savior and Redeemer in his great plan of salvation; and that ever thereafter, to honor its chief advocate and exponent, this plan of salvation has been known as the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Salvation in Christ

We testify that according to the terms and conditions of God's eternal plan, salvation is in Christ. He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world whose blood atoneth for the sins of all those who believe in his name.

In the words of a holy angel who ministered to a Book of Mormon prophet: ". . . there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent." (Mosiah 3:17.)