

One Hundred Fourteenth

SEMI-ANNUAL

CONFERENCE

OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



Held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

October 1, 2 and 3, 1943

With Report of Discourses



Published by the
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The proceedings of this meeting will be broadcast over station KSL. We will make only such announcements as may be necessary for the audience listening in to keep in touch with the procedure.

Elder J. Spencer Cornwall will conduct the music, and Elder Frank W. Asper is at the organ.

The congregation will now join in singing, "Come Listen to a Prophet's Voice," number 27 in the Song Folder, 68 in the *Hymn Book*, 166 in your small books.

The congregation sang the hymn, "Come Listen To A Prophet's Voice."

President Heber Moon of the Duchesne Stake offered the invocation.

The hymn, "Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth" was sung by the congregation.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Dear brethren: For some time I have anticipated this experience and with a great deal of anxiety. I have seen in my mind a large congregation of intelligent leading men of the Church, men holding the Priesthood and important offices in the Church, whom I would be expected to lead in intelligent and profitable thought in matters pertaining to our eternal welfare. In thinking what I might say that would be appropriate I have thought that, as this is a General Conference of the Priesthood of the Church, I might speak on the importance of the Priesthood in the great scheme of man's salvation with the hope that it might lead to greater faithfulness in magnifying the Priesthood.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRIESTHOOD IN THE CHURCH

Priesthood is power and authority of God delegated to man to speak and act for Him in the work of salvation. We are all candidates for the blessing of eternal life and exaltation and have been from the beginning, and in the end I am sure we will be satisfied with nothing less than a fullness of glory, but these blessings cannot come to us without the exercise of Priesthood. It matters not how much faith we may have, how sincere our repentance, we can enter the Kingdom only by baptism and confirmation, and these ordinances have to be administered by the Priesthood. This really places the Priesthood on a par in importance with our membership in the Church. We might ask, do we fully appreciate our membership in the Church, and do we fully appreciate the Priesthood? There are other ordinances of supreme importance that we must receive if we would obtain eternal life and exaltation, for example, the endowments as ministered in the house of the Lord. In these endowments we are informed that they are to prepare us to enter the Celestial Kingdom. There we receive knowledge and information which with faithfulness on our part are intended to

admit us into the kingdom, knowledge that is received from no other source and without which we may never enter the Celestial Kingdom. Those ordinances are administered in the power and authority of the holy Priesthood. Do we see the importance of the Priesthood which we have received?

There are other blessings—the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, administered by the authority of the holy Priesthood entitling faithful men and women to receive that covenant, if they are true and faithful, to some of the highest and most glorious blessings that our Father has for His faithful children. A man may not attain to the goal of his existence, eternal life and exaltation, without himself bearing the Melchizedek Priesthood. He may not receive the endowments until he has first received the Priesthood. Nor can he have a wife sealed to him for time and eternity without his first having received the Priesthood. These facts make the Priesthood of equal importance with all these other ordinances of the Gospel and with salvation itself.

OBLIGATION RESTING UPON THE PRIESTHOOD

Every man that has received the Melchizedek Priesthood has received the oath and covenant of the Priesthood which the Lord has revealed and which is recorded in the eighty-fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants by which He covenants with the Lord that He will magnify that Priesthood. You and I, all of us, have received that oath and covenant, and the Lord on His part covenants to give to us all that He hath.

If by bearing this Priesthood and magnifying it before the Lord, we may have all that our Father possesses, eternal life and exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom, what more can He offer as inducement and reward for magnifying the Priesthood?

Brethren, these important offices which we hold that grow out of the Priesthood, afford us an opportunity to magnify the Priesthood. I may say that when we magnify these offices, we magnify the Priesthood, and if we fail to magnify these offices we have accepted, we fail to magnify the Priesthood.

OPPORTUNITIES NEGLECTED

There are in the Church today, according to statistics, something like thirty-five thousand men over twenty-one years of age who hold some office in the Aaronic Priesthood who have never received the Melchizedek Priesthood. Some of these men may have become disgruntled over some little thing that might be overcome if we would take up a labor with them, inquire into their feelings, manifest a little love toward them and an interest in their eternal welfare.

Some seem never to have appreciated the Gospel which they have received. They have gone as far as they care to go, apparently, lying down on the job. This we do know, that these men never having received the Melchizedek Priesthood, have not received their endowments. They have not been married according to the new and everlasting covenant.

They are living with their wives and rearing their children outside of that covenant, having married their wives for the duration of their mortal lives. Such men are in danger of losing their wives, their children, and their salvation. The Prophet Joseph Smith has left of record this statement that when God offers a man knowledge, or a blessing, and he rejects it, that man is damned. We have here shown that the Priesthood is a blessing of the highest type and degree, and the Lord offers it unto the men of his Church if they will qualify, through faithfulness, to receive it. Our boys are taken when twelve years of age and are given an office in the Aaronic Priesthood and ordained deacons that they might assist the Church, that they might learn to appreciate and magnify the Priesthood, that they might prove themselves worthy of advancement, and at the age of fifteen, if they have been worthy, they are entitled to a further ordination in that Priesthood to that of a teacher, and after two years of experience as a teacher, at seventeen they are entitled to receive the ordination of a priest. And then, at nineteen years, if the boy has proved himself all along the line to be true and faithful, he is entitled to the ordination of an elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Here lies a great responsibility, one of many resting upon the bishopric of this Church, to see that that boy be not neglected and allowed to go on to be more than twenty-one years of age without his having the privilege of receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood and its attendant blessings.

COVENANTS ENTERED INTO ARE SACRED

There is another class of people in this Church. We have no statistics, so far as I know, to determine how many, but I am sure a great many who have gone a little farther than these adult members of the Aaronic Priesthood in that they have received the Melchizedek Priesthood. They have been privileged to go to the temple and get their endowments and have a wife sealed to them and then they have neglected all their religious duties and responsibilities, disregarded their vows and covenants that they have entered into in a most sacred way and in sacred places, and seem to have no interest in their religion. The wives of these men, notwithstanding they have been sealed to their husbands for time and eternity, do not always remain with them through time and eternity. Sometimes divorcements follow because a man has not kept his covenants, is not living his religion which, to his wife, is the dearest thing in the world, and complications arise, and she secures a divorce. Another good man comes along later and courts her, wants her for eternity as well as for time. She, knowing that he is a worthy man, wants him for eternity also, and she applies to the President of the Church for a cancellation of the sealing to her husband that she may be sealed to this man, and that is often given. I suppose that the President of the Church has the evidence in each case that justifies rendering a decision in favor of the woman. If the children are old enough to decide for themselves and they elect to be sealed to their mother and their stepfather, it is permitted and the dead man loses his wife, and his children. And where there is no divorcement in a case of this kind, if the man is altogether unworthy of the woman, and of the Priesthood

and blessings that have been sealed upon him, and he should die, that woman may get a cancellation of the sealing and be sealed to another man. Now, there are some of these adult members of the Aaronic Priesthood, and some of these who have received the Priesthood endowments and sealings and have been unworthy. Now this, by way of warning to these people. I do not wish to censure. That is not my prerogative, but to indicate the way of life and salvation and what the remedy is for these men, whether they have received the Priesthood and temple blessings or not, to live happily in their homes and make their wives and families happy, and live their religion, and then if a man has had a wife sealed to him and dies under those conditions the President of the Church is under obligation to protect his rights in the matter.

SEEKING AFTER THE NEGLIGENT

Now brethren of the Priesthood, do we seek work that may be done? Do we really love these, our brethren, who are among the unfortunate as members of this Church, so as to go out after them in love, in humility, kindness, pleading, helping them to see the better way of life? Elder Lyman, in his talk here yesterday made very impressive the work that is being done in the stakes of Zion by the stake missionary work. He reported thousands of men who had been inactive who had been brought into activity. May the good work go on as well as the conversions being made of good men and women who have not been members of the Church because they have not been taught and invited to become such.

The ward teaching work is another means by which these men might be reached, and toward those who have received the Priesthood, the quorum of the Priesthood to which they belong, and the presidencies thereof have a great responsibility. With all these agencies and the individual effort which the Lord requires of us, every man to his neighbor, he that is warned to warn his neighbor, is it possible that we cannot bring these members of the Church into activity that the Lord may have their help? He needs it. The conversions made here in the stakes of Zion in recent years are greater in number than have been made in the mission fields in the same period of time. They are here to be converted. Would that all these inactive members were brought into activity. Something for us to do, brethren of the Priesthood. May the Lord help us to do it well and faithfully, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOHN H. TAYLOR

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I trust, my brethren that the Lord will bless me so that I may contribute at least a bit to the thoughtfulness of this conference.

THE HERITAGE LEFT BY THE PIONEERS

The other day a man came into the office, we began to talk about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and our families. This man's grandfather and his parents were among the early pioneers of the Church. They had made