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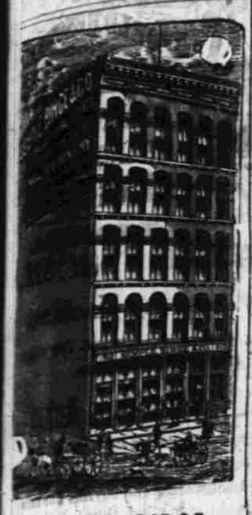

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April 9, 1877. d129

DISCOURSE

BY

PREST. BRIGHAM YOUNG,

At Logan, Cache County, on Monday Morning, May 25, 1877, at the Priesthood Meeting, held for the purpose of organizing a Stake of Zion.

REPORTED BY G. F. GIBBS.

When I have asked my counsellors or any of the brethren of the Twelve with regard to the selection of the presidency of this Stake of Zion, the reply has been, "Make your own choice, Brother Brigham, and we will vote for them." This is correct and the proper method of constituting such officers. We will give you the liberty of voting as you please, but as for the appointment that is with us to say. This is so ordered, it is so revealed and so written, and we must abide by it. The Lord in founding this work did not ask the opinion of the world as to what they thought of this, that, or the other. Suppose the prophet Joseph had sought the opinion of the orthodox world with regard to his right to receive revelations from God, how long do you think he would have waited before they sanctioned his appointment, or acknowledged that the Lord had the right and that it was his privilege to appoint whomsoever he would? The appointment of Joseph was from God, and it was in the authority of the priesthood of the Son of God that Joseph was called, ordained and set apart as "an apostle, prophet and elder in Israel, and if it had been referred to the Christian world for their approval and sanction, I think the Lord would have waited until this time. They would have got up here, there and everywhere, saying, "I oppose it."

I shall nominate, as President of this Stake of Zion, Moses Thatcher. [Carried unanimously.] It is Brother Thatcher's privilege to choose his counsellors if he wishes so to do, and it is our right and privilege to give them to him. I shall, therefore, nominate William B. Preston as his first counsellor. [Unanimously carried.] And Milton D. Hammond, who is now Bishop at Providence, as his second counsellor. I am not intimately acquainted with Brother Hammond; but I understand he is a man of good, sound judgment, a man who lives his religion and who is capable of giving counsel in almost all matters pertaining to the building up of the kingdom of God upon the earth. This is what I learn respecting him. What do you think, brethren and sisters, of this nomination? [It was seconded and carried unanimously.]

We will now present the names of the High Council for this Stake of Zion. [The names were read and they were voted for by the Conference.] When we organize a Stake of Zion we set apart a High Priest to preside over the High Priests in that Stake. He either selects his two counsellors, or we give them to him. There is but one quorum of High Priests in any Stake of Zion. For the Elders we also appoint a President and two counsellors to preside over them. When they number ninety-six, there will be a full quorum; but it is not so with the High Priests. It matters not whether they number fifty, five hundred or five thousand, or more, in a Stake of Zion, there can only be one quorum and one president; they thus differ from the Elders. Then if there should be a sufficient number of Elders to make two quorums, we would select two presidents with their counsellors; but if there were more than enough to form one quorum, and not sufficient to make two, they could meet with the first quorum until there should be enough to form a second quorum.

Forty-eight Priests form a quorum. We will have a president set apart for the Priests' quorum, who will also have two counsellors. And when there are forty-eight Priests more it will then be time to organize another quorum. The teachers and deacons will be organized too. Twenty-four form a quorum of teachers, and twelve a quorum of deacons. The Seventies are scattered all through our settlements; we do not organize them; they are already organized in their several quorums. As for mass quorums, I do not acknowledge such organizations. In consequence of operations carried on under that name I have felt disposed to change it and, instead of calling them mass quorums, name them "muss" quorums. At almost every place where they have met together, there has been quarrelling between the Seventies and the Bishop. This was first brought to my notice, by learning that when bishops gave out notice for the people to come together at a certain time, it was not an unfrequent thing for the presidents of the mass quorums of the same wards to give out their appointments for the Seventies to meet at the same hour. This would be done for the purpose of showing what great authority they had and to get up a quarrel. A president acting in this manner ought to be cut off from the Church. The Seventies are Apostles; and they stand next in authority to the Twelve. The First Presidency organize and regulate the affairs of the Church wherever they can go, or they instruct others to do it. When the First Presidency are not here, and the Twelve are here, they then attend to these matters, and their authority, by a unanimous feeling and faith in the gospel, is the same as that of the First Presidency, their decisions and doings are equal to those of the First Presidency. Next in order to them stand the Seventies. If through the providences of God the First Presidency and the Twelve were taken away, then it would be the duty of the Seventies to preach the gospel, build up the Church, and ordain every officer requisite in order to establish the Church; to ordain high priests, bishops, high counsellors, patriarchs, and set in order the whole church in all the world. This is according to the revelations given to us. This dissension has come between the seventies and the High Priests in consequence of some poor, miserable, beggarly whiners who craved after power, and who did not know what to do with the authority they already possessed. Some of these high priests would go to Joseph, saying: "Brother Joseph, do you think the Twelve have any more power than we have?" "Brother Joseph the Seventies, are they ordained to as high authority and power as the High Priests? Are the Seventies equal to the High Priests? Brother Joseph, it cannot be so, it must not be; the High Priests must be the greater, and they are first." Now, even to this day, there is contention, and I do not know but even among the first elders of Israel there may be argument as to which should come next—if anything were to happen to the First Presidency and the Twelve—the High Priests or the Seventies. Is the apostleship an outgrowth of the high priesthood, or is the high priesthood an outgrowth of the apostleship? Or, in other words, which is the highest office in the church? The office of an apostle. The apostleship is the highest authority that can be imposed upon man upon the earth. I recollect when Brother Don Carlos Smith was ordained president of the high priests' quorum, he got up a genealogical tree, and written along the trunk of this tree were the words, "The High Priests." A little distance up the trunk a limb shot out away off, which represented the Twelve Apostles." This is not according to the revelations which have been given to us. When a man is ordained an apostle, he is ordained to every calling pertaining to the holy priesthood, a man on the earth can hold; but when he is ordained a high priest, he is ordained a priest after the order of Melchisedek; it is then his right to officiate in all the offices below him. I suppose I ordained hundreds of Seventies in early days. Brother Joseph Smith has come to us many times, saying, "Brethren, you are going to ordain Seventies. Do not forget to confer the high priesthood upon them. Ordain each of them to the high priesthood, and to be one of the seventy apostles." That was my language in the ordination of the Seventies, and that is the way I ordain them now. Whether in doing so I mention the high priesthood or not, that is included. In consequence of this a little inquiry arose among the high priests respecting the high priesthood and the apostleship. The Twelve Apostles had been ordained, and every one of them happened to be high priests excepting Brother Heber C. Kimball and myself; we were elders. The fact that we were not high priests and had never been ordained to the high priesthood was taken to Brother Joseph. These cavilers wanted him to take some action about it. They wanted to know if we should not be ordained high priests. Such a suggestion made Joseph righteously angry. Said he, "My brethren, with as much as I have taught you, and as many revelations as have been given on the subject of the priesthood, that you should ask such a question!" It would be an insult to the priesthood of the Son of God to ordain a man a high priest after he had been ordained an apostle; for the apostleship holds all the keys of the priesthood upon the face of the earth, to build up the kingdom of heaven, to sanctify the people and prepare them to enter into the presence of God the Father. Now, to say that such a man, holding this priesthood, should be ordained a high priest is an insult, and I want to hear no more about it." But this agitation about the high priesthood has ever since been a matter of speculation with a few.

I say that a man that craves for office and authority does not know enough to magnify the office of a deacon; for, if he did, he would not say a word about authority, he would ask for wisdom that he might know how to magnify the priesthood placed upon him. With regard to the authority of the Church and Kingdom of God upon the earth in its organization, read the Book of Doctrine and Covenants for yourselves. We have a new edition, you can read it. Acquaint yourselves with the powers and authority of the priesthood and learn how the Church is organized. I have spoken of these things before, and yet some will say, "I want to know if the Seventies have as much authority as the High Priests." I say, unto you, Latter-day Saints, that the Seventies follow the Twelve Apostles, and the Twelve Apostles follow in the wake of the First Presidency, and the First Presidency follow in the wake of Peter, James, and John. But for the Seventies and the Twelve to have equal authority in their decisions with the First Presidency they must be unanimous, as is written in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. The priesthood which Peter, James and John held while in the flesh was the highest ever bestowed upon the children of men, and it was conferred upon Joseph and Oliver, and without it they never could have built up the Kingdom. Then after this came along the high priesthood. I have been told since I came here that Sidney Rigdon ordained Joseph a high priest. I would ask, who ordained Sidney Rigdon? What priesthood he had he got from Joseph; and then he turned around and ordained Joseph to an office, the authority to hold which he had received from Joseph! It would be unwise. If Sidney had done this, I think I would have heard of it. You can read how Joseph and Oliver got this apostleship. Then after the Conference in Kirtland, in 1831, Joseph received a revelation to ordain high priests, which he did. As far as his being ordained a high priest, it would be as proper to call for a priest, teacher or deacon to ordain me a high priest. The Lord sent his messengers, Peter, James and John, to ordain him to the highest authority that could be given. I trust that these remarks will put a stop to such foolish and absurd questions. Read the revelations and understand them.

[At this point Elder Geo. L. Farrell was elected President of the High Priests' Quorum, and Elders Charles O. Card and Thomas C. Ricks were elected as his counselors.]

The presidency of the Stake can complete this organization. They can select presidents for the Elders' Quorum, Priests', Teachers' and Deacons' Quorums, and organize everything properly in the entire Stake, and then it is done. I have been showing you how to organize a Stake of Zion. There is no need of delay or of adjourning over from one meeting till another. If you want to make presidents of quorums, select your men and organize them. But, you may say, "We may get some one who is not worth anything." Then he has a chance to prove himself, and if he is not suitable you can put another in his place at the next quarterly conference.

With regard to the authority in a Stake of Zion, all the members are amenable to the High Council with their president at their head. Suppose one of the Twelve were living here who should be guilty of lying, swearing, drinking, or purloining his neighbor's goods. He would be amenable to this High Council, and he should be dealt with. Now a question arises—can you try him and deal with him as with a lay member? No; you can try him, prove his guilt, place it upon record, and then by the united voice of the people of this Stake of Zion, you could withdraw your fellowship from him; but you could not cut him off from the Church. In one of my discourses it is stated that one of the Twelve could be cut off from the church by the local authorities of the branch or ward where he might be residing when dealt with; but it should have been stated that this action on the case would be only so far as that branch or ward was concerned. But, on the other hand, let the members of this High Council, or the presidency of this Stake get out of the way, begin to drink, swear, lie or steal, the apostles could cut any one of them off from the church, send them adrift and appoint others in their places. That is the difference between the authority of the Twelve Apostles and the authority of the High Priesthood. There is authority and there are degrees of authority, and there is a difference in degrees, callings and the authority of the priesthood. If there should be one apostle left on the earth, he can regulate and set in order the whole of the church and kingdom of God. If there is one seventy left he could do so. This order is not my getting up, it is the Lord's doings; high priests may mourn over it, the Lord has said it, and I have no right to say it is not so; it is so. I know some of you might say, "Did not Brother Joseph take high priests out of the quorum of seventies and place them in the high priests' quorum and put others in their places? Yes; but what did he do this for? I can tell you—it was to satisfy the continual teasing of ignorant men who did not know what to do with authority when they got it, and I think most of those high priests who were so anxious upon this subject afterwards apostatized. You have my word for it, I believe there were none of the whisperings of the spirit suggesting that movement, and I will give you my reasons for thinking so. They set their watch for Joseph whenever he preached on the subject. They invited him to preach at their quorum meetings on the difference between a high priest and a seventy. There had been caviling and bickering in relation to this subject, he condescended to try to do something for them. He preached upon this subject, and I say he stooped to the level of those whiners to try to do something for them. When he got through with his sermon I thought I never heard less brought forth. I could not discern that he brought forth any light, and it was the only time in my life that I ever heard Brother Joseph speak without bringing forth light and knowledge; but I could not discern anything in this. If we enquire of the Lord, if there is one man upon the face of the earth that can get to the ears of the Lord and can get him to hearken to him, he would know how it is; for there is nothing in the Doctrine and Covenants upon which an idea can be based that the High Priests have precedence over the seventies.

In the first calling of the Seventies the Prophet Joseph ordered that every one of them be set apart to the high priesthood, which is the highest priesthood except the apostleship, and to ordain each as one of the seventy apostles. If there are those present who had my hands laid upon their heads in the Kirtland Temple, they can testify that I am telling it just as it was. Some will treasure up these things in their heart, and will remember them just as I have done. From the first time I saw the Prophet Joseph I never lost a word that came from him concerning the kingdom. And this is the key of knowledge that I have to-day, that I did hearken to the words of Joseph, and treasured them up in my heart, laid them away, asking my Father in the name of his Son Jesus to bring them to my mind when needed. I treasured up the things of God, and this is the key that I hold to-day. I was anxious to learn from Joseph and the spirit of God. The spirit of revelation that was given to me has revealed to me many things which have been done. If you, my brethren, are quick to comprehend, and if you love the truth, you will treasure up these things and ponder upon them in your hearts, and when you are asked with regard to them they will be revealed to you. In my doctrinal teachings I have taught many things not written in any book, ancient or modern, and yet, notwithstanding the many things I have told the people, I have never looked into the Bible, the Book of Mormon, or the Doctrine and Covenants, or any of our church works to see whether they agreed with them or not. When I have spoken by the power of God and the Holy Ghost, it is truth, it is scripture, and I have no fears but that it will agree with all that has been revealed in every particular.

I will say to these three brethren, selected for the presidency of this Stake of Zion, that it will be their duty, just as quick as they can attend to it, to go to every ward and see that it is regularly organized; and ordain those who are to be bishops to the high priesthood and then set them apart to the bishopric, each bishop with two counselors, and then see that the several quorums of elders, priests, teachers and deacons are organized, and also to see that every person is brought within the jurisdiction of a ward; not a family or an individual to be left out; no matter if they live ten miles off, they must be enrolled in the ward, and the proper persons must know what they are doing, as well as to know what the Seventies, the High Priests and Elders and all are doing. They must see whether all these are doing their duty, living their holy religion, or whether they are breaking the Sabbath by hunting their stock or chopping wood in the canyon, fishing or hunting, or whether they indulge in drinking, intoxicating drinks, or whether they steal, lie, speak evil of their neighbor, or do anything which violates the principles of our religion.

There are many persons who, if they were asked, Do you know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God? Do you believe in the doctrines he taught? they would testify that they do, using the strongest language at their command. Will they run horses or in any way break the Sabbath? Yes, but they swear they know "Mormonism" is true. Such men must be brought into line, or we will sever them from our fellowship. It is the duty of these presidents to see that every ward in this Stake is thoroughly organized. And the Seventies, let them be diligent, help to build this temple and do all they can to strengthen and support their brethren who preside, acting as any other members of this Stake of Zion should, in being obedient to the bishops. If they were scattered over the whole world, they could be notified to come together when it is necessary to do business in the capacity of their calling.

When temples are built you will not see seats provided for the Twelve, not in this temple at any rate. The upper seat on the stand in the east end of the building will be for the First Presidency; the next seat below will be for the presidency of the Stake of Zion; the next seat below will be for the presidency of the High Priests' Quorum. The upper stand at the west end of the temple will be for those holding the Bishopric; the next will be for the presidents of the Quorum of Priests after the order of Aaron; the next below for the presidents of the Quorum of Teachers; and the next for the presidents of the Quorum of Deacons. What, says one, no seats provided for the Twelve, is not this their home? No, their homes are all over the earth, preaching the Gospel, building up the kingdom, regulating the affairs of the kingdom of God upon the earth; and we take them in as visitors. Are there places to be provided for the Seventies? No, the temples have seats provided for the First Presidency and the local authorities and not for the traveling ministry. The Twelve and the Seventies are traveling quorums to all the inhabitants of the earth. In the Stakes of Zion the Seventies should be willing to labor as directed by the bishops and the presidency of the Stake. They may meet with the high priests or with the elders as they may choose and they will always be welcome if the high priests and elders feel as they should do.

We desire Elder Thatcher and his counselors—Elders William B. Preston and Milton D. Hammond—to give expression to their feelings before the congregation respecting the appointments they have received.

[Brother Thatcher said, in substance, he would do the best he could under the direction of his brethren, the Lord helping him, to magnify the office and calling which had been given him; and Brothers Preston and Hammond expressed themselves similarly.]

[President Young resumed.]

We will now ordain and set these brethren apart to preside over this Stake of Zion.

[Elder Thatcher was then ordained a high priest and set apart to preside, and Elders Preston and Hammond being already ordained high priests, were set apart as his counselors.]

You have heard the ceremony that I have used in ordaining and setting these brethren apart to preside over this Stake of Zion; but the most of our Elders in laying their hands upon the heads of persons to confirm them members of the church, after they have been baptized, will seal all the blessings upon them that a patriarch would in giving them their patriarchal blessing, and wander off to subjects that have no relevancy to the ordinance they are attending to. When we commenced work in the Temple at St. George, I had this stopped. I took the ceremony that belongs to baptizing and the ceremony that belongs to confirming, and had them written out for the brethren to commit and use when officiating in those ordinances. If you notice I did not use any superfluous language in ordaining and setting apart these brethren. This is the proper way to do.

Some elders, who appear to think they do not preach enough at other times, when asked to open a meeting with prayer, will not forget to preach a pretty good sermon before they stop praying. They will pray for everything on and above the earth as though they offered their secret prayers in public.

Brother Joseph once asked Brother George A. Smith to close a meeting, Brother George A. said, "My prayers are too short." Said Joseph, "That is the reason I ask you." Let your prayers and sermons always be short, right to the point.

It is now time to close our meeting. We leave Brother Thatcher and his counselors to complete the organization of this Stake of Zion. In doing this they may confer with the brethren of the Twelve if they choose.

I would be pleased if time would permit to hear the sentiments of my brethren, the Twelve, on these topics on which I have touched, but I think they will all agree with me. As I remarked yesterday, we differ in our words more than we differ in our sentiments. There are no two men who can preach the same sermon, with the same words. We are all alike respecting our faith in the Gospel and the building up of the kingdom.

With regard to this Temple ground, I will pass my judgment upon the soil on which we intend to build the Temple, and say to all, that unless it is disturbed by some unseen hand, it is just as good a foundation as I could wish for, unless we had solid rock. I do not think we could have it better. We want the brethren to take hold. The presidency of the Stake will call for a certain number of men from the various wards. I trust they will be on hand, ready to be organized for this work. When men get accustomed to the work, I would suggest that they be kept on in preference to changing them for raw hands. Let the people sustain these hands and their families, so that they can be kept steadily at work at the Temple. We have called Bro. Charles O. Card to superintend the work on the Temple for the present, and told him what to do and how it should be done. The first thing to be done is to get the lime ready, pile up the sand, get away the dirt before you haul any rock; then have your roads prepared for the drawing of the rock. Let from twenty to fifty masons be kept constantly at work until the building shall be completed. I pray our Father in Heaven, in the name of Jesus Christ, to bless you all. Amen.

THE DESERET NEWS WEEKLY

For Wednesday, May 30, 1877.

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Partial Table of Contents—

Discourse by Elder Orson Pratt.
Mormonism in London.
Special Conference at Logan.
Who Might Say Something.
What is all the Noise About?
The New York *Herald's* Special and his Senseless Dispatches.
Concerning the Call for More Troops.
Basely Slandered—All Bosh, etc.
Bloody Shirt Tactics.
Corrimites Poking Fun.
Concerning Apologising.
Beaver Covetous—Wants all the Troops and Their Spare Money.
The Grand Jury of the Third District and What it Means to Do.
Mormons Peaceful, Indians Peaceful, but still Send More Troops.
The Nauvoo Legion and Arming and Drilling.
Who are These Fellows?
Night Parties.
Conference in London.
Two Days' Meetings at Peoa.
Are We not Extravagant?
Nebraska Editorial Excursionists.
Ex-Secretary McCulloch on Salt Lake City and the Mormons.
The New Raid on the Mormons.
Seventeen-year Locusts.
Not Much Choice.
The War and the Holy Land.
The Friend of the Birds.
Parson Brownlow on Himself.
Grasshopper Exterminators.
Sewing Machine Carnival Ended.
Eastern War News.
Eastern Wool Markets.
District Court Proceedings.
Estray Notices.
Letter List.
City Council Proceedings.
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