

trine and Covenants, sec. 107, verse 21) "that three presiding High Priests, chosen by the body, appointed and ordained to that office, and upheld by the confidence, faith and prayers of the Church, form a quorum of the Presidency of the Church." Now, suppose a man comes before the Church and insists that he has the right to preside over it, and also claims to be appointed of God to that position, even then something more is wanting. The people have a right in this matter to say whether they will receive him or not, and in order to make this Presidency valid, he must be supported by the voice of the people, for in ecclesiastical government, no less than in civil, the principle is true that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. The consent of the people, then, is a necessary element to make a man President of the Church. This, too, has the sanction of the Law of the Lord; for it is written as a fundamental principle in the Law of God that all things in the Church are to be done by the common consent of the Church. (See Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 26, par. 2.)

President Brigham Young says: "Joseph presided over the Church by the voice of the people. \* \* \* Does a man's being a Prophet in this Church prove that he shall be the President of it? I answer, No. A man may be a Prophet, Seer and Revelator, and it may have nothing to do with his being President of the Church. Suffice it to say that Joseph was the President of the Church as long as he lived. The people chose to have it so. He always filled that responsible station by the voice of the people. \* \* \* The keys of the Priesthood were committed to Joseph to build up the Kingdom of God on the earth, and were not to be taken from him in time or in eternity; but when he was called to preside over the Church it was by the voice of the people, though he held the keys of the Priesthood independent of their voice." (B. Y. Journal of Discourses, Vol. 1, page 133.)

But he did not hold the power to preside over them contrary to their voice. President John Taylor also left something upon record in regard to this subject:

"It is by the voice of God and the voice of the people that our present President (Brigham Young) obtained his authority. \* \* \* He obtained his authority first from God, and secondly from the people; and if a man possesses five grains of common sense, when he has the privilege of voting for or against a man he will not vote for a man that oppresses the people; he will vote according to the dictates of his conscience; for this is the right and duty of this people in the choice of their President and other leading officers of the Kingdom of God? (J. of D., vol. 1, p. 229.)

Now this is the oppressive Priesthood of which we hear so much. You will pardon me, for a few moments, I call the attention of our young brethren to this charge of oppression. There are a multitude of voices throughout our country today declaring that the "Mormon" Priesthood is oppressive. It is said to be a tyrannical power, exercising unrighteous dominion over the minds of the children of men. This is not true. The Priesthood has none of

the elements of oppression in it. Tyranny and oppression are altogether foreign to its genius.

In the days of Messiah, the mother of Zebedee's children came leading her two sons to Him, saying: "Grant that these, my sons, may sit the one on Thy right hand and the other upon thy left when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." He wanted to know if these men could endure the baptism that He would have to endure and the trials that He would have to pass through. They said they were able, and He replied:

"Ye shall be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father."

This aroused the jealousy of the Apostles, and they commented harshly upon the conduct of this woman and her sons. Jesus, observing it, called them to Him and said:

"Ye know the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them, but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

In strict harmony with this is also the exhortation of the chief Apostle, Peter, unto the Priesthood. Said he: "Feed the flock of Christ which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock." Such is the spirit of the Priesthood.

Perhaps some of our Christian friends would take offense if I were to quote a little modern scripture and say that it stood parallel to that I have read to you from the Bible. But even at the risk of giving offense, we will place a passage side by side with those just read, and challenge comparison. They are words, however, that are inspired by the same Spirit as those I have read from the New Testament. I read from the Doctrine and Covenants:

"Behold there are many called, but few are chosen; and why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—that the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven can not be controlled nor handled only upon the principle of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us it is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion, or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, amen to the Priesthood or the authority of that man."

Here I pause, and ask you to measure Sidney Rigdon by this principle. He was great in the Church of Christ. The Saints loved to listen to him. He had the ability to move the powers of heaven in teaching the truth. But

what became of him, when he sought to gratify his own vain ambition and to exercise control and dominion over the minds of men in unrighteousness? Did you ever hear of his having success after he made that vain attempt? No, you have not. Why? Because aforetime the "amen" had been pronounced upon his power and authority, as it is pronounced upon the authority and power of any man who undertakes to exercise unrighteous dominion over the minds of his fellow men to gratify his own ambition. I continue to quote the revelations:

"We learn by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose—they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous authority. Hence, many are called but few are chosen. No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by the virtue of the Priesthood, only by persuasion, by long suffering, by gentleness, and meekness and by love unfeigned—by kindness and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile. Reproving sometimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy. That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death."

Young men, when the enemies of unrighteousness undertake to tell you that the Priesthood of God is oppressive, read that passage to them, and in it let them read the evidence of their own falsehood. Be not deceived by these men who cry oppression; for while they promise you liberty, they themselves are in the bondage of sin and the bonds of iniquity. Be not deceived in them.

The Priesthood has no armies standing behind it; it has no temporal scourge in its right hand to inflict punishment upon those who rebel against it. And yet there is a force in it; but that power comes from the same source that the power did that was in Paul, and that made Felix tremble as the Apostle reasoned upon righteousness and judgment to come.

In connection with President Young's remarks on the occasion of Sidney Rigdon claiming the right to the Presidency, there is a prophecy he uttered I cannot pass without notice.

"When I came to this stand I had peculiar feelings and impressions. The faces of this people seem to say we want a shepherd to guide and lead us through this world. All who want to draw away a party from the Church after them, let them do it if they can, but they will not prosper. If any man thinks he has the influence among this people to lead away a party, let him try it, and he will find out that there is power with the Apostles which will carry them off victorious through all the world, and build up and defend the Church and Kingdom of God."

At that time there were a number of men—you understand—who undertook to be the leaders of the people. I have already spoken of Sidney Rigdon and his failure. President Young predicted it before it came to pass. What of James Strang, who led a few people to Beaver Island in Lake Michi-