

The organization of a Stake is a perfect pattern of the general organization of the Church. As God organized the whole Church with three presiding High Priests and with twelve presiding High Councilors, or a traveling High Council, so we have three High Priests to preside over a Stake, and twelve High Councilors to sit with them in judgment on matters which may be appealed to them from the Bishop's court, or may come before them originally. The Bishops are appointed to preside over wards in a Stake. A Bishop presides over one ward. He has no jurisdiction over another ward. He cannot go into another ward and act there as Bishop, because he is not set apart for that purpose. He has been appointed Bishop over a certain ward. There he has authority to preside. But his jurisdiction and his authority do not extend any farther. So with the President of a Stake. The President of the Snowflake Stake of Zion has authority in the Snowflake Stake, but he has no authority in any other Stake. Where he is set apart to preside, with his counselors, there he has jurisdiction, according to the rights and powers which pertain to his presidency. Now, as the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints presides over the Twelve, over the Presidents of Stakes and over the Bishops of wards, through all the lengths and breadths of Zion and throughout all the world, so the Presidency of a Stake presides over the Bishops in the Stake, and over the High Council, and over the High Priests, and over the Elders? and over all the people within the borders of the Stake, to the same extent precisely, in their sphere and calling, as the First Presidency over the Church. The presiding authority of a Stake is independent of that of all other Stakes, but is not independent of the presiding authority of the Church; notwithstanding the organization of a Stake is as perfect and complete as the organization of the entire Church, yet it would not be complete if it were not inseparably connected with the presiding authority of the Church. So, also, a Bishop cannot act independently of the presiding authority of the Stake. He is amenable to that authority in all things. He is responsible, in the discharge of his duties, to the presiding officers of the stake in which he is Bishop. He is not independent of him either in the management of his spiritual affairs or his temporal affairs. He is amenable to the presiding authority of that Stake as that presiding authority is amenable to the presiding authority of the Church. When the Presidency of a Stake counsel a Bishop with regard to temporal affairs, the Bishop should understand that it is their right to look into his affairs as a Bishop, to scrutinize his acts as such, and to investigate everything that he does as Bishop. They not only have the right to do this, but it is their duty to do it, as much as it is the duty of the general presiding authorities of the Church to look into the actions and conduct of the presiding authorities of the Stake, and the presiding authorities of the Stake have no right to question their authority to do this; neither has the Bishop any right to question the authority of the Presidency of the Stake to inquire into

his affairs and to look after his doings and see that they are right. A Bishop should feel proud to acknowledge the right of the Presidency of the Stake to enquire into his official acts, and not only that, he should feel proud that he has someone to rely upon, to ask counsel of, and to see that he does not go wrong. Now, as we have no literal descendants of Aaron in the Church, we have no Bishops acting without counselors. But as we are informed that a man who holds the office of a High Priest has authority to officiate in the lesser offices of the Priesthood, it is proper to choose a High Priest, or to choose an Elder and ordain him a High Priest, and ordain and set him apart to act as a Bishop in the Church, by reason of his authority as a High Priest; and he chooses two Counselors, and they act together as common judges, or as a common court, in the midst of Zion, to sit in judgment upon difficulties between brethren, and to judge between brethren with regard to their moral and religious duties, and to see that all wrongs are put right. Not only so, but it is their duty to look after the poor, and see that they are fed and clothed; to look after the fatherless, and see that they are provided for; to gather the tithings of the people, and to take care of those tithings, and to hold them subject to the orders of the Presiding Bishopric, or of him who presides over the Presiding Bishopric—the President of the Church. For remember, while we have two authorities apparently running along laterally in the Church, it must not be lost sight of that the greater always presides over the lesser, so that although the Presiding Bishopric has great authority in the Church, and is entrusted with the management of the temporal affairs of the Church, controlling the Bishops with regard to these matters, still the Presiding Bishopric is controlled by the Presidency of the Church, as are all the other Bishops. So it is in a Stake of Zion. The Bishops who are entrusted with the gathering of the tithings of the people and holding them subject to the orders of the Presiding Bishopric or the presiding authority of the Church, do so under the supervision and counsel of the Presidency of the Stakes in which they live. I want the Bishops to understand that it is the duty of the Presidents of Stakes to look after them and, if necessary, to see that they make their tithing haystacks and their wheat bins just right, so that the hay and wheat will not be wasted. They are placed to preside over you and to counsel you in regard to the management of your bishopric. When Bishops try a case, there may be an appeal from their judgment to the Presidency of the Stake and the High Council. They hold a supervisory power over your decisions, and they can reverse them if they see proper, or they can sustain them.

Thus you will find the order of the Priesthood that God has established, from the Deacon unto the presiding authority in the Church; all working in harmony one with the other; no clashing, no contention, but each one acting in his own place; each one's duty defined, and if each one will keep in his own sphere and attend to his own duty, there will be no trouble and no difficulty with regard to the rights

of priesthood or presidency. I have heard in my time of Bishops who felt that they were only amenable to the presiding Bishopric. If there is any Bishop here that is possessed of that erroneous idea, I want him to become dispossessed of it. Remember that you are subject to the counsel, direction and supervision of the Presidency of your Stake. And the Presidency of your Stake is amenable to the presiding authorities of the whole Church. We want you Bishops to say to the presiding authorities in your Stake: "We have so and so (describing the articles) on hand here. We have received so much. Here are the books containing our accounts, and they are all open to you, and we invite you to come and look after us and see that we attend to our duties right, and help us keep things straight if you can,"—for sometimes it is very difficult for Bishops to keep things straight; in fact, it is sometimes very difficult for men to keep themselves straight. Here is where the trouble lies. If you will show me a man who is really capable of keeping himself straight in every particular, I will show you a man, if he is a Bishop, that will be able to keep himself straight as a Bishop, and he will keep his Bishopric pretty straight too. So with the President of a Stake, and with a High Councilor, etc. But if you find a man that is not capable of keeping himself straight, then it is difficult indeed for him to keep his public affairs straight.

Brethren and sisters, I felt like referring briefly to this subject. A great deal may be said in relation to the authority and rights of the priesthood. It is the grand principle of government and of organization, by which the energies and forces of the people of God in all ages have been and will be directed. It is that principle by which God Almighty governs throughout all His universe. It is the principle by which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is governed, and by which the people, as individuals, should be guided and controlled in all their religious duties. It is a principle that must be honored by the members of the Church, because no man can magnify his calling as a member of this Church who does not feel in his soul to honor and respect the Priesthood which is held by his brethren. It is true our brethren are not perfect. None of us are perfect. But the Priesthood that we hold is perfect, because it is of God. It is the authority which God has revealed and restored to the children of men for their government and guidance in the building up of Zion and in the proclamation of the Gospel to the nations of the earth, until every son and daughter of Adam shall have the privilege of hearing the sound of the Gospel, and of being brought to the knowledge of the truth, not only upon this earth, but in the spirit world. The millions and millions that have lived upon this earth and have passed away without the knowledge of the Gospel here, will have to be taught them there, by virtue of the authority of this holy priesthood that you and I hold. The Church of God will be organized among them by the authority of this priesthood; and all that is or will be done for the salvation of the human family in this