

further. It is by taking up little odd texts that mistakes are often made and incorrect ideas conveyed. We must take the whole thing to ascertain what is intended, and rightly divine the word of truth.

"The Presidency of the High Priesthood, after the order of Melchisedek, have a right to officiate in all the offices in the church."

Now, will you show me an office, or calling, or duty, or responsibility, temporal or spiritual, that does not come under this statement? From this I think this Presidency have something to do with the Bishops and temporal things as well as with the Melchisedek Priesthood and spiritual things, and with all things pertaining to the interests and welfare of Zion. That is the way I understand these matters. I could enter very elaborately into these questions, but I do not purpose to do so, there not being time. But this is the position they occupy.

"High Priests, after the order of the Melchisedek Priesthood, have a right to officiate in their own standing, under the direction of the Presidency, in administering spiritual things; and also in the office of an Elder, Priest (of the Levitical order), Teacher, Deacon and member," etc.

This shows really, in as few words as the matter could be conveyed, to your understanding, the way that God has appointed for the governing of those affairs in His Church and Kingdom, without entering elaborately into detail.

When we have a Stake organization, as you have here, the Presidency of the Stake presides over all Bishops, High Councils, and all authorities of the Stake. The several Bishops preside over their respective wards and manage their affairs, under the direction of the Stake Presidency, who in their office and calling are responsible to the First Presidency of the Church. The Bishops are also under the direction of Presiding Bishop Hunter in all affairs connected with the temporal interests of the Church. And Bishop Hunter is under the direction of the First Presidency, the Aaronic Priesthood being an appendage to the Melchisedek Priesthood. It is, however, the special duty of the Aaronic Priesthood to attend to temporal matters; but then the First Presidency presides over all Bishops, all Presidents, all authorities, and lastly God presides over all.

Now we are sometimes fond, that is, some of us are, of talking about our authority. It is a thing I care very little about. I tell you what I want to do if I can: I want to know the will of God so that I may do it; and I do not want to dictate or domineer or exercise arbitrary control. Then again, all men ought to be under proper control to the presidency and Priesthood presiding over them. If I were a Bishop I should want to know what the President of my Stake desired, and I should confer with him; and if there was anything in which Bishop Hunter was interested, I should want to know his mind.

I will read a little further with regard to this subject of Priesthood:

"How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints. 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."

Now, I wish you to take particular notice of this, you Elders, you High Priests, you Seventies, and you Priests, Teachers and Deacons, and all men holding the Priesthood: "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 cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness; and not upon any other principle. And when anybody steps aside from that and acts upon a principle of unrighteousness, the result will be as is stated in the context, namely: '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 authority of that

man." That is the result of wrongdoing; that is the result of perverting the authority that God has conferred upon us to our personal ends and to gratify our own ambition. "Behold here he is aware, he is left unto himself to kick against the pricks, to persecute the Saints, and to fight against God." Can they thwart the purposes of God? No. They are as harmless as babies. He that sits in the heavens laughs at them, and all men holding the Priesthood of the Son of God care nothing about their fulminations and the efforts they make to hinder the progress of truth in the earth, for all they can do, we know, will be overruled for our good. They are going the downward road that leads to death, and by and by they will have their reward. We would like to see it otherwise, but we cannot, that is one of the things they have to see to themselves; it belongs to us to be true to God and to our Priesthood, and all will be well with us.

Again, we quote "We have learned 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 dominion. Hence many are called, but few are chosen. No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by 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 betimes 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. Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God, and the doctrine of the Priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy sceptre an unchanging sceptre of righteousness and truth, and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it

shall flow unto thee for ever and ever."

What a beautiful state of things God presents to us! Shall we try to live it? or shall we take our own way and pursue our own course? These things are beautiful when we reflect upon them. We all know they are true, and they are principles which recommend themselves to our hearts. Let us try then and live them.

There are other orders of the Priesthood; we have Elders, and they have their duties to perform, which I do not propose to talk about now. And we have our Priests, Teachers and Deacons, all of whom hold important positions, and all should seek to magnify their calling. And what should they do? I will tell you a circumstance that took place with me upwards of 40 years ago. I was living in Canada at the time, and was a traveling Elder. I presided over a number of the churches in that district of country. A difficulty existed in a branch of the Church, and steps were taken to have the matter brought before me for settlement. I thought very seriously about it, and thought it a very insignificant affair. Because we ought to soar above such things, and walk on a higher plane, for we are the children of God and should be willing to suffer wrong rather than do wrong; to yield a good deal to our brethren for the sake of peace and quietness, and to secure and promote good feelings among the Saints. At that time I did not have the experience I now have, and yet I do not know that I could do anything better than I did then. Before going to the trial I bowed before the Lord and sought wisdom from him to conduct the affair aright, for I had the welfare of the people at heart. When we had assembled I opened the meeting with prayer, and then called upon a number of those present to pray; they did so and the Spirit of God rested upon us. I could perceive that a good feeling existed in the hearts of those who had come to present their grievances, and I told them to bring forward their case. But they said they had not anything to bring forward. The feelings and spirit they had been in possession of had left them, the Spirit of God had obliterated these feelings out of their hearts, and they

knew it was right for them to forgive one another.

You Priests, Teachers and Deacons, seek unto the Lord, and he will bless you. And you, my brethren, when the Teachers visit you, do not think that you are High Priests and that they are only Teachers hardly worthy of your attention. They are your Teachers, and you should reverence them. And if you expect to be honored in your calling, you must honor them in theirs. When the Teachers come to visit me I am pleased to see them; and I call together the members of my family that may be in the house at the time, to hear what they have to say to us. And I tell them to talk freely and plainly to us, to myself, my wives and children; in other words, to do their duty as Teachers, and then I will help them to carry out their instructions. This is how I feel towards our Teachers. The eye cannot say to the ear, we have no need of thee; neither the head to the feet, I have no need of thee, for if one of the members suffer all the other members suffer with it; and if one member rejoice, all the other members partake of the same feeling. Consequently I feel in duty bound to attend to these things.

We have here our Relief Societies, and they have done a good work. And people are desirous to know something of these organizations. I was in Nauvoo at the time the Relief Society was organized by the Prophet Joseph Smith, and I was present on the occasion. At a late meeting of the Society held in Salt Lake City I was present, and I read from a record called the Book of the Law of the Lord, the minutes of that meeting. At that meeting the Prophet called Sister Emma to be an elect lady. That means that she was called to a certain work; and that was in fulfillment of a certain revelation concerning her. She was elected to preside over the Relief Society, and she was ordained to expound the Scriptures. In compliance with Bro. Joseph's request I set her apart, and also ordained Sister Whitney, wife of Bishop Newel K. Whitney, and Sister Cleveland, wife of Judge Cleveland, to be her counselors. Some of the sisters have thought that these sisters mentioned were, in this ordination, ordained to the priesthood. And for the information of all inter-

ested in this subject I will say, it is not the calling of these sisters to hold the Priesthood, only in connection with their husbands; they being one with their husbands. Sister Emma was elected to expound the Scriptures, and to preside over the Relief Society; then Sisters Whitney and Cleveland were ordained to the same office, and I think Sister Eliza R. Snow to be secretary. A short time ago I attended a meeting in Salt Lake City, where Sister Snow and Sister Whitney were set apart. I happened to be the only member of the Twelve in town at the time, the other members of the Quorum being unavoidably absent. I went to this meeting and set apart Sister Whitney and Sister Snow who were two of those I set apart some 40 years ago; in Nauvoo. And after I had done so, they reminded me of the coincidence. At this meeting, however, Sister Snow was set apart to preside over the Relief Societies in the land of Zion, and Sister Whitney her counselor, with Sister Zina D. Young her other counselor. I speak of this for the information of the Sisters, although I presume they may have read of it in their paper, the *Exponent*.

With regard to those Societies, I will say, they have done a good work and are a great assistance to our Bishops, as well as being peculiarly adapted to console, bless, and encourage those of their sisters who need their care, and also to visit the sick, as well as to counsel and instruct the younger women in the things pertaining to their calling as children and Saints of the Most High. I am happy to say that we have a great many honorable and noble women engaged in these labors of love, and the Lord blesses them in their labors, and I bless them in the name of the Lord. And I say to our sisters, continue to be diligent and faithful in seeking the wellbeing and happiness of your sex, instruct and train your own daughters in the fear of God, and teach your sisters to do likewise, that we may be the blessed of the Lord and our offspring with us.

Our young people's Improvement Associations are very creditable institutions, and the fruits of the labors of those engaged in this work are already manifesting themselves. I feel in my heart to say, God bless

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