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FAITHFULNESS IN THE PRIESTHOOD.

Discourse delivered at the Utah Stake Conference, Provo, Sunday Morning, January 14, 1894, by

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I desire an interest in the prayers of the Latter-day Saints while I attempt to speak, for without that and the presence of the Holy Spirit it would be impossible for me to edify you, or to be edified myself. I love to look upon the faces of the Latter-day Saints gathered together in the worship of the Lord. I feel that we are in the way of instruction and that the Lord is pleased with us when we meet together to worship Him and to receive His counsel; and that these gatherings may be profitable to us it is important that we meet together with prayerful hearts, with a spirit of humility, and with our hearts ready to receive instruction from the Lord. To take care of the Latter-day Saints and fully instruct them, publicly and privately, furnishes employment to a host of men—men who are endowed with authority from the Lord to officiate, to teach, and to set examples before the people. Those who speak publicly are few compared with those who visit among the people and teach them their duties in their families.

While listening last evening to instructions given by Elder B. H. Roberts to the Priesthood, I was reminded of the last circular issued by President Young and his counselors, in 1876, which ordered that men should not be taken into the quorums of the Melchisedec Priesthood only as they were needed, that time was to be given when the quorums of the Aaronic Priesthood should be filled up, and that young men should be instructed while associated with those quorums in their duties as Deacons, as Teachers, and as Priests. Latterly the door has been opened, and brethren have been taken very numerous into the High Priests' quorums from the Seventies' quorums, into the Seventies from the Elders, and into the Elders from the quorums of the Aaronic Priesthood. In some instances it has appeared that there has been a measure of pressure used to hurry the young brethren along from the quorums of the lesser Priesthood into the Elders' quorums, so that the Elders' quorums there should be men to choose from to fill up the quorums of Seventies; and in order that there might be ample room in the quorums of Seventies to take the brethren from the

Elders' quorums, numbers of brethren, especially the older ones, have been taken into the High Priests' quorums. It appears to me that it will be well for us to go a little more slowly in this regard, and to give the quorums of the Aaronic Priesthood opportunity to be full and the brethren to be so thoroughly experienced and drilled in their duties that when they are promoted they will be ripe; for I fear that brethren are being taken into the quorums of the Melchisedec Priesthood who are not ripe. Immature Deacons are made Teachers; immature Teachers are taken into the Priests' quorums, and immature Priests into the quorums of the Elders.

The custom that has obtained among us for so many years to make use of the High Priests, Seventies and Elders to serve in the capacity of Priests and Teachers is quite proper, and yet I have felt that it has been carried to the extreme. The duties of Priests and Teachers have been too generally attended to by men bearing the Melchisedec Priesthood. I have felt that the Bishops could take a little more pains to see to it that with every experienced brother there should be a Priest or a Teacher to visit from house to house, performing the duties that belong to those offices in the Aaronic Priesthood. Of course, those bearing the Melchisedec Priesthood are competent to officiate in all those positions; but there is a right and a propriety in regard to this that should be more carefully considered than in the past. The Deacons are entitled to have employment; so are the Teachers and the Priests; and I believe that they are not only entitled to that employment, but that it is for the good of the Church and for the benefit of the quorums of the Melchisedec Priesthood that the young men should have more extensive experience and practice in their callings before they are called into the Melchisedec Priesthood. Perhaps in many instances Bishops have been thoughtful and careful in regard to this matter; but I believe there could still be improvement, even with those who have done the very best that they felt they could do, by seeing to it that no man is called to be an Elder until he is worthy, until he understands something in regard to the Priesthood he holds and discharges the duties connected with that Priesthood. We have become so numerous and the quorums of the Melchisedec Priesthood are so well supplied at present that I believe we can be more careful in the future and let the duties belonging to the Aaronic Priesthood be performed more generally by that Priesthood. I believe that it is better that young men should be left as Priests and Teachers, if they are inactive, than to make them Elders, or

Seventies, or High Priests. I do not see why a Priest should be promoted to the office of an Elder until he is a worthy Priest and has learned his duty as a Priest. I see no reason why a Teacher should be made a Priest until he has magnified the office of a Teacher.

I think we have come to that time in the experience and development of the Church when it is not necessary to crowd brethren into the Melchisedec Priesthood until they are thoroughly prepared and schooled as is intended in the organizations of the Priesthood. Let young men start at the first round in the ladder—at the office of a Deacon. Give them employment in this office. I believe that in this Stake, particularly in Provo, the Deacons have been pretty well supplied with employment. If you are doing as you did a few years ago, at every house on the morning of the fast day there would appear two Deacons to collect the fast offerings of the people. Their presence reminded the people of fast day. That was one good thing the Deacons did; for the people are likely to forget sometimes that it is fast day. The young men received the fast offerings and took them to the Bishop. In this way the people were stirred up and were made to remember their duties. In all these requirements of the Gospel there is a blessing to which the people are entitled, and every rule or arrangement that can be adopted in a ward whereby the attention of the people will be drawn at the proper time to their worshiping meetings, their fast meetings, their tithings and offerings, etc., is a benefit to the Latter-day Saints. We are naturally forgetful, and we ought to take every step we can to have the people reminded of their duties. That is one reason we meet together on the Sabbath day—that we may be reminded of our duties, that our memories may be stirred up, that we shall not be allowed to forget the obligations that we are under to the Lord, that we may receive the word of the Lord that is to be given on the Sabbath day, and that we may partake of the Sacrament. What a great improvement it would be if the people could be so reminded of the sacramental meetings that all the Latter-day Saints should meet together to partake of the Sacrament!

There are many ways in which Deacons may be employed among the people. They can be engaged in the house of worship, and in cutting wood and waiting upon the poor, the fatherless, the widow, and the families of missionaries. There is an abundance of employment for Deacons. Then there is plenty of employment for every Teacher and every Priest that can be had in the wards; and yet there is room to mix up with them a number of experienced