

President, John Taylor, used to tell of the Prophet Joseph appointing him to write a constitution for the Church, and that they finally repented their inability to do so satisfactorily to themselves; upon which Joseph remarked that he knew they could not, for said he, "Ye are the constitution," referring to the living Priesthood.

Suppose there could not be found a living thing written for our guidance, would a living Priesthood be then sufficient? Most certainly it would. When Joseph commenced his mission, it was necessary that God should teach him everything, even to the smallest details in regard to the Gospel and the Priesthood; and why? Because there was not one to be found upon the earth who was possessed of the knowledge, neither was there one who could rightly interpret the Scriptures, even the plainest parts of them. How many thousands are there who can testify that the first time in their lives that they understood the meaning, even of the plainest passages, was when a Latter-day Saint Elder explained them? This proves the truth of the saying, "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." The Book of Mormon contains the letter of the Prophet Joseph, and was written by inspiration and preserved by God, that it might go forth among the remnants of the land in the last days. But will that book alone convert the people and lead them to embrace the religion of their fathers? Never. It is not itself a seed letter; but when its principles are explained by a man who has the inspiration of the Almighty, it becomes a seed letter at once possessed of life, for itself it is to them like the Bible was to us, a sealed book. Hence the truth of another saying, "How can they hear without a preacher, and how can we preach except he be sent?" Our revelations also need the spirit of revelation to enable us to interpret them correctly.

There is no question that from the earliest periods

THE MORE IMPORTANT TEACHINGS

God's servants at least have been not only written but carefully preserved, and whenever read have been highly appreciated. What Latter-day Saint is there that does not take delight in reading that portion of the Book of Mormon which treats upon the Gospel, and what person is there whose faith is not strengthened by such perusal? The recorded sayings of Jesus we read and re-read, and we prize them as precious gems, as we also do the sayings of Joseph Smith and others; and could we have the privilege to read the teachings and instructions of Father Adam, Noah, Melchisedec and others who held the keys of eternal life, and who ministered to the people in those early ages, we should value them as beyond price, and yet they are really not essential to our salvation, but a living Priesthood is; for without its ministrations in word, in doctrine and in ordinance, we will not be prepared to enter into the presence of the Father and the Son.

That which He reveals to us He expects us to retain, and there is no more sure way than recording it. Joseph had this in view when speaking of neglect in this particular, for as we are already quoted, he said; "And now we cannot bear record to the Church and to the world of the great and glorious manifestations which have been made to us with that degree of power and authority we otherwise would." Job appreciated the value of recorded words for he at one time exclaimed: "Oh! that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book; that they were given with an iron pen and laid in the rock for ever." He felt the great importance of the subject upon which he was speaking, namely, the redemption of the body, through the atonement and resurrection of the Redeemer of the world.

In regard to the revealing of other principles than those already made known, it may be said that we have so far received but a small portion of that which God has in store for His people, and the promises are made in several revelations that other things will yet be revealed. The Lord, in speaking upon the

SUBJECT OF THE DEAD,

September 1st, 1842, said:

For I am about to restore many things to the earth pertaining to the Priesthood, said the Lord of hosts.

In the prayer and prophecies (Sec. 12) it is said:

God shall give unto you (the Saints) knowledge by His Holy Spirit, yea by the amiable gift of the Holy Ghost, that has not been revealed since the world was, until now;

Which our forefathers have waited with anxious expectation to be revealed in the last times which their minds were pointed to by the angels as held in reserve for the fullness of their glory.

A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many Gods, they shall be manifest. All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And also if there be bounds set to the heavens, or to the seas; or to the dry land; or to the sun, moon or stars.

All the times of their revolutions; all the appointed days, months and years and all the days of their days, months and years, and all their glories, laws and statutes shall be revealed in the days of the dispensation of the fullness of times.

According to that which was ordained in the midst of the council of the Eternal God with all other Gods before this world was, that should be reserved unto the finishing of the end thereof when every man shall

enter into His eternal presence and into His immortal rest.

This certainly is a promise of an eternity of revelation yet to come. In the revelation upon celestial marriage the Lord says, (verse 66):

And now as pertaining to this law; verily, verily, I say unto you, I will reveal more unto you hereafter, therefore let this suffice for the present.

Had we neglected attending to ordinances for the dead or building Temples for this purpose, could we have expected the Lord would reveal anything further upon this subject? Or if we neglect to observe that part of the law pertaining to celestial marriage, which we now have given to us, we will look in vain for any further knowledge as pertaining to this higher law though God has promised to reveal it.

We will now say a few words upon the subject of succession to the Priesthood in our own lineage or blood. A man who has been chosen by God and is faithful, has the right and privilege to be represented in the Priesthood by those of his own begetting, although they may not occupy the same identical position in the Priesthood that he himself has held. It must be remembered however that Priesthood itself is

NOT INHERENT, but is bestowed by God upon those who are worthy; for Priesthood is "without father, without mother, without descent." It is also "without beginning of days or end of years." But the right to the Priesthood is inherent in a certain lineage. This right, Abraham pleaded before the Lord, and yet he would have pleaded in vain had he been unworthy of it.

In the vision that was given to Joseph and Oliver in the Kirtland Temple, at the time of its dedication, in the spring of 1838, Joseph says:

After this, Elias appeared and committed the dispensation of the Gospel to Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed.

Some years afterwards, January 19, 1841, the Lord, in speaking concerning Joseph in particular and also his posterity, uses the following peculiar language:

For this anointing have I put upon his head, that his blessing shall be put upon the head of his posterity after him. And as I said unto Abraham concerning the kindreds of the earth, even so I say unto my servant Joseph: In thee and thy seed shall the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

Neither of these revelations declare that all of their or his posterity shall succeed to these blessings, or that the first born shall be the immediate successor, for merit must determine the position they will occupy; for while we say the individual is eligible by virtue of his birth, that eligibility is jeopardized through lack of merit, and the birthright may be forfeited as in the case of Cain, Esau, or Reuben, and many others. Neither does it follow that any of the immediate generation succeeding will receive the blessing.

Many generations had passed away before the peculiar blessing Jacob pronounced upon Joseph had a fulfillment; yet the keys of power he then received by promise, as pertaining to Priesthood and otherwise, were and are retained by him, and will never pass to another; for his sons alone, though many generations removed, and long periods of time may elapse, will always represent their father. Therefore, we conclude that because Joseph Smith is not represented by any one of his sons who immediately succeed him, and although nearly forty-seven years have passed away since this word was spoken, yet it is no proof that the word of the Lord in this particular will not have a fulfillment; for it most assuredly will, even to the very letter.

We are able to gauge the promises made by our Father within the

NARROW COMPASS

of our own short lives, and try to crowd them within that limit; not always realizing that the period of our lives many times multiplied is only a very short space. Apostle Parley P. Pratt stated that it was promised him that he should build temples in Scotland. Parley himself is gone behind the veil, but that promise will be fulfilled by some of his posterity performing the work, and thus the word of the Lord will be verified.

The seed of Joseph was scattered among the nations centuries ago, and they have seemingly mingled promiscuously, and have intermarried with the children of Japheth for ages, and although metaphysical science itself cannot explain how and in what manner that blood has been preserved, yet the Lord has revealed to us that it is this peculiar seed or blood that He is gathering to Zion to become saviors there, in fulfillment of the promises made to ancient Joseph, as well as to his father Jacob, as also to Isaac and Abraham, to whom the promises were first made. Further, there are thousands beside Joseph and Oliver who have had sealed upon them the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and consequently can claim for their posterity the same blessings; and every one of the seed of Joseph that is faithful is lawfully entitled to the blessings of Joseph.

In regard to our children the Prophet Joseph said:

When a seal is put upon a father and mother, it secures their posterity so that they cannot be lost, but will be saved by virtue of the covenant of their father and mother.

Not only has the Priesthood been confined to a certain lineage, but the blessing of earthly possessions also. Although I do not believe the record to be complete in regard to Noah's

blessing and prophecy upon his three sons, yet the intimation is very strong that to Shem would belong the right to earthly possessions; for while Japheth was promised enlargement, still he was to "dwell in the tents of Shem," whereas Canaan, the son of Ham, was not only made the servant of Shem but of Japheth also, and thus became a

SERVANT OF SERVANTS,

and consequently could not be the possessor of any part of the land. Abraham being of the lineage of Shem, was chosen of God to receive this blessing, as well as the Priesthood, and was told at one time to look northward, southward, eastward and westward as far as his eye could see, and was bidden to walk through the land in the length and breadth of it, "For," says the Lord, "I will give it unto thee." This was afterwards confirmed by covenant.

Jacob, when blessing Joseph after saying, "Joseph is a fruitful bough, whose branches run over the wall," remarked:

The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors (Isaac and Abraham) unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. They shall be upon the head of Joseph, etc.

It is revealed to us that this blessing refers to North and South America. Whether (as some claim) Jacob obtained this blessing at the time he wrestled with the angel when he said, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me," and at the same time also that his thigh was put out of joint, is immaterial to our purpose; enough for us to know is, that Jacob did receive this blessing, and conferred it upon his son Joseph. Besides this, Joseph had a claim with his brethren upon a portion of the land of Canaan, which he received, and which is described in the Book of Joshua, sixteenth chapter. Nor is this all; for at the time Jacob was blessing the sons of Joseph he turned to Joseph and said:

Moreover I have given thee the one portion above thy brethren which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

The seed of Abraham and of Joseph may be dispossessed of their inheritances for centuries of time together, and titles thereto may be held in fee simple by the children of Japheth, but as sure as the Lord God liveth, so sure will they come into possession again, and dwell in their own lands.

It seems that in the occupancy of the Western Continent by the children of Lehi, who were a branch of the house of Joseph, although in areas the land of America was vastly in excess of that upon the eastern continent, yet it was not parcelled out or divided at any time, only by common consent or by the right of priority of occupancy, except during those times that the people wandered away from the true order of heaven; then the right thereto was often established by conquest. For nearly one hundred and seventy years after Christ appeared to them they had

ALL THINGS IN COMMON, and although they had become exceedingly numerous and had "spread themselves all over the land," yet the record says "there were no contentions among them," during this entire period; consequently none in regard to proprietary rights. But I am wandering again from my subject proper.

The Priesthood after the order of Melchisedec is essentially a Priesthood of Presidency, or in other words, of rule or government; and its powers of Presidency or rule are largely determined by its right to ordain and organize. To say that a man is ordained to any one of the offices in the Melchisedec Priesthood does not imply that he holds the entire keys of the Priesthood, unless we except the Presidency of the High Priesthood and the Twelve Apostles. It is said of this authority in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 107: v. 9:

The Presidency of the High Priesthood after the order of Melchisedec have a right to officiate in all the offices of the Church.

Why is this? Because they have the power to ordain individuals to all these offices, hence the authority of every office is incorporated in them; for they could not confer an authority which they do not themselves possess. The authority of a High Priest is confined to his own calling or standing, and the offices of Elder, Priest, Teacher and Deacon:

And they have a right to officiate in all these offices when there are no higher authorities present. (see verses 10 and 12 in same section.)

The word *higher* in this connection necessarily implies that a man who is ordained to the office of High Priest is not the equal of one who is ordained an Apostle.

Again, because the revelation says, "The authority of an Elder comes under the Priesthood of Melchisedec," we need not infer from this that a man thus ordained has all the Priesthood belonging to this order. In the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 84, v. 23, we read:

And again, the offices of Elder and Bishop are necessary appendages belonging unto the High Priesthood.

The Prophet Joseph said in the same letter we have already quoted from, April 17, 1833:

It is the High Priest's duty to be better qualified to teach principles and doctrines than the Elder, for the office of an Elder is

AN APPENDAGE

to the High Priesthood. See Hist. of Joseph Smith.

We all know that the meaning of the word *appendage* is something added to a principal, or a greater than itself.

Further, if a Seventy is equal to one of the Twelve, why were the offices di-

vided and their organizations made different? To make the decisions of the two bodies of equal validity it requires fifty-eight more Seventies than it does Apostles. Thus in this regard, twelve men are made equal to seventy, and these Twelve control the labors of all the Seventies, and will continue to do so even should they number thrice seventy times seventy or more. And although Seventies preside over Seventies, and can ordain individuals to this office, still the Twelve have the right to dictate such ordination. The philosophy of the numbers necessary to constitute the quorums or councils of Priesthood will yet be revealed and made plain.

In reference to the offices in the Aaronic Priesthood the same rule holds good. When Joseph and Oliver were ordained by John the Baptist they received from him all there was of the Aaronic Priesthood, as far as any one outside of the immediate lineage of Aaron could receive; but to say that a person receives the fullness of this Priesthood when he is ordained to the office of Deacon would be to say that he could exercise the functions of a Priest by simple appointment only, without any further ordination. The argument used by some that a Deacon only requires to be set apart to act in the office of Teacher or Priest seems to me to be altogether untenable ground, for the revelation says, Sec. 84, verse 30:

And again the offices of Teacher and Deacon are necessary appendages to the Lesser Priesthood.

The seed of Aaron is the legitimate heirs to the Bishopric, which is the presidency of the lesser Priesthood, and because we are without any of that lineage to act in this office, an emergency arises and we must go higher and not lower for that supply, which is found in the High Priest, who has no need to be ordained to any more Priesthood, for the office of High Priest has embodied within it the powers of the Bishopric, which is not the case with the Deacon or Teacher, for to create either of these a Priest, even, would require an ordination to a higher office than either of them hold. Thus it can easily be seen that a Deacon is simply a Deacon and nothing more, while

A HIGH PRIEST

is also an Elder, Priest, Teacher and Deacon; or, as the revelation says, can act in all of these offices by virtue of his higher Priesthood. The greatest power a Deacon can exercise, is that of President over the quorum to which he may belong, which is composed of twelve members.

To show the superiority of the authority of the First Presidency or head, we will say that while a High Priest has all the Priesthood necessary to act in the calling of a Bishop, yet he is not authorized to assume the functions of the Bishopric unless "he is called, set apart and ordained unto this power by the Presidency of the Melchisedec Priesthood;" for although he may possess the right by virtue of his ordination, yet the right to use this authority will only be valid when called into exercise by a higher power than itself.

Paul beautifully illustrates this subject by comparing it to the various parts of the body and asks: "Shall the head say to the feet, I have no need of thee?" While each individual member forms a very important part of the same body; yet are the functions and powers of each part different, the one from the other. And to use them for other purposes than those for which they were ordained would not only produce confusion but disaster.

To say that all the qualities of the head is possessed by the feet would be preposterous in the extreme. The governing or will power is in the head, and from this superior member issues all dictation in regard to the movements of every other member of this complete body. Each member is employed to perform its own particular duty, and is supported by every other member in a body possessing a healthy equilibrium. A ready response is given to the will of the head unless sickness and consequent debility exists in one or more of its parts, and the sympathy felt is beautifully illustrated in the saying, "If the head is sick the whole heart is faint." It may be claimed that the same elementary principles exist in the feet as in the head. Granted; but only a portion of them. While I might ask if it would be contrary to sound philosophy to say, that the head contains within itself every elementary principle of the entire body? Chemical analysis and scientific research may not furnish evidence sufficient to justify such an assertion, but we are not to be confined to the meagre researches of science for evidence (seeing they have as yet only scanned the surface) in our contemplation of those higher principles that pertain to eternity and eternal things.

While the head has a right to the exercise of all the powers and functions of the body, yet the wisdom of government is shown in the employment of every part of the body, and to leave any part inactive would tend to the enfeebling of that part, and it is only when a necessity exists that the head exercises the functions of any of the other members.

We have shown that the

POWERS OF THE PRIESTHOOD

cannot be assumed but must be received before they can be exercised, and its gradation is determined by its powers of office; each office having its powers clearly defined. Seeing then, that the authority of a Priest has embodied within it that of Teacher and Deacon, he can act in these offices when occasion requires. The High

Priest also can act in any office below himself; while the Apostleship has embodied within it everything there is of Priesthood and can act in any place upon necessary occasions. Thus it can be seen, we can descend by virtue of the powers we possess but in order to ascend other powers must be bestowed, and to possess these we must be ordained thereto. This principle might be extended, and we might show the line of communication from the head to all parts of the body, and how harmonious are the workings of the entire structure; but we wish now to come to other considerations.

An organized Stake of Zion possesses a certain degree of completeness within itself, and, viewed in the abstract, might be said to have a separate existence; whereas it is only a part of the grand whole. So with organized wards, or quorums of Priesthood. In speaking of a degree of completeness it might be interesting to note a few details. A Stake of Zion fully organized and appointed has within itself everything necessary to the exercise of all the powers of which it is possessed; but it must be borne in mind that its powers are only local. A Stake might have its Presidency, its High Council, a quorum of High Priests and one or more of Elders, and still would be incomplete without a Bishopric to attend to its temporal matters, and that Bishopric would be incomplete without a quorum of Priests, Teachers and Deacons.

Every member of the Church, no matter what Priesthood he holds, is amenable to the authorities where he resides for his moral conduct, and while the Stake is powerless to dictate the First Presidency, Apostles or Seventies in regard to the duties of their respective callings, yet they have the right to make enquiries through the Teachers in regard to their faithfulness in performing the duties of their respective callings.

We have said that the

EXTENT OF JURISDICTION

is in a large degree proportionate to the power to ordain and organize. In the Book of Doc. and Cov., sec. 20, ver. 67, we read:

That every President of the High Priesthood (or presiding Elder) Bishop, High Councilor and High Priest is to be ordained by the concurrence of a High Council or general conference.

This revelation was given nearly four years before a High Council was organized, but is a strong indication of the power it would possess when organized.

On September 24, 1834, it was decided by the High Council in Kirtland that "hereafter High Priests should be ordained in the High Council." This was six months after the High Council in Kirtland was organized. If a Stake of Zion through its High Council has the power to ordain High Priests and their organization as a quorum is recognized as belonging to the Stake, then its jurisdiction extends to and over them in directing them in the exercise of their Priesthood, or to deal with them in case of transgression, as also in regard to the Elder, Priest, Teacher or Deacon. Nor is this all, for although the Stake authorities do not ordain Seventies, and cannot dictate their labors when abroad, yet while remaining at home, every member of this numerous body is subject to the authorities of the Stake in which he resides, and in case of transgression may be dealt with for his fellow-ship.

The High Council was considered a very important body in the early days of the Church. The Prophet Joseph published the following in the *Messenger and Advocate*, in the June number, 1835:

That according to the order of the Kingdom, begun in the last days to prepare men for the rest of the Lord; the Elders in Zion or in her immediate region, have no authority or right to meddle with her spiritual affairs, or hold councils for the expulsion of members in her unorganized condition. The High Council has been expressly organized to administer in all her spiritual affairs and the Bishop and his council are set over her temporal matters.

Joseph, in writing to several of the members of the High Council in Zion, from Kirtland, August 16, 1834, said:

I shall now proceed to give you such counsel as the Spirit of the Lord may dictate.

What follows is

CERTAINLY REVELATION.

You will recollect that your business must be done by your High Council. You will recollect that the first Elders are to receive their endowments in Kirtland before their redemption of Zion. You will recollect that your High Council will have power to say who of the first Elders among the children of Zion are accounted worthy, etc.

This council was presided over by David Whitmer. This same High Council, while sitting in council in Clay County, July 31, 1834, took the Priesthood from Samuel Brown for ordaining Sylvester Hulet a High Priest, and declared the ordination null and void.

From these quotations, and many others that might be given, it appears that nearly all important business was transacted through this body in those early days, and I do not know of any organization that now exists which supplants them in the duties of their calling today, or that their importance is at all lessened by the Church's growth, but to the contrary.

Although the Presidency of the Church has the right to dictate a High Council in regard to what extent it shall exercise its powers, it certainly appears to me that the time of the High Council should be occu-

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