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## DISCOURSE

Delivered at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Morning, April 14, 1896, by:

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

The highest calling the Lord ever called any human being to, in any age of the world, has been to receive the Holy Priesthood, with its keys and powers, and to be called to go forth to the inhabitants of the earth and teach them the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to qualify and prepare them for a part in the first resurrection and to go back into the presence of God, their Creator, to dwell in glory worlds without end. The Lord bestowed that blessing, that Priesthood and that power in the beginning of creation. Father Adam was called of God and ordained to the fullness of the Melchisedek Priesthood—ordained to the highest office and gift of God to man on the earth. Adam bestowed that blessing upon seven of his sons—Seth, Enos, Jared, Canaan, Mahalaleel, Enoch and Methuselah. They were all ordained High Priests by their father Adam, and possessed the privilege and the right to understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to give it to the human family, so that they might qualify and prepare themselves for eternal life. In tracing the history of the dealings of God with men from that day to this, we find the Lord has in various dispensations and times given unto the sons of men that blessing. Israel had it in the beginning, from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob down, and until Moses, who traveled with the children of Israel forty years in the wilderness. They had the gifts and graces of that Priesthood bestowed upon them, and they had the privilege of magnifying their callings and preparing themselves for eternal life. But Israel would not accept the Melchisedek Priesthood, and therefore it was taken from them, and the Lesser Priesthood was conferred upon them while they traveled in the wilderness. It is not necessary for me to spend time in tracing this Priesthood through the six thousand years that have past and gone; but it has been manifest in every age and dispensation when God has had prophets and apostles on the earth. Jesus Christ came into the world in the meridian of time. He was the Great High Priest to Israel. He was the Son of God, the Savior of the world. He chose His Apostles, He organized His Church. He bestowed upon these

Apostles all the gifts and graces belonging to the Apostleship. In that dispensation it seems that they were called to lay down their lives for the word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ. The Savior himself was put to death. The Apostles were all, with one exception, put to death in their day and time, until finally the Priesthood was taken home to God, and remained there for a length of time. But my views are that whenever the inhabitants of the earth were prepared for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of the Priesthood, it has been bestowed upon them.

In the days of the Savior and His Apostles, John the Revelator, while upon the Isle of Patmos, gave an outline of great events which were to transpire in the last dispensation of the fulness of times. Other Prophets and Apostles, who spoke as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost, left on the pages of history a record of what the Lord would do in the last dispensation. Among the great events that the Revelator saw was the one described in the 14th chapter of his Revelation, and which is often quoted by our elders, because it is very applicable.

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.

If this revelation had not been fulfilled, neither you nor I would be here today, this Tabernacle would not be erected, this city would be still part of the Great American Desert, as we found it; but in the fulfillment of the revelations of God, these things have been done and some of us have lived to see them. The angel of God did visit Joseph Smith, the Prophet of God, who was raised up by the power of God as a prophet, seer and revelator, and who organized the Church of Jesus Christ in the earth. From that day until this the work has progressed and the Gospel has been preached. The Holy Ghost has been with the people. The Lord Almighty has set His hand to carry out the great programme—to establish the Zion of God in the earth and to prepare the people for the coming of the Son of Man.

These are my views with regard to the calling of men in this dispensation. Gold and silver may pass away; houses and lands may perish; all temporal matters will pass away; but the Priesthood never, salvation never, the kingdom of God never, and prophecy will never fall unfulfilled. We have had Apostles now for upwards of sixty years. Many have died and gone to the other side of the veil; and those upon whom God be-

stowed the glory and power of the organization of the Church have sealed their testimony with their blood, as the ancient Apostles did. They have gone home to receive their reward; but that organization has remained; the Holy Priesthood has been given to the sons of men and has remained upon their heads, and will remain upon the heads of this people until the coming of the Son of Man. Therefore, I say to the Latter-day Saints, we are in this organization today. I do not pretend to say exactly the number that we have in the Priesthood; but we have from fifteen to twenty thousand Elders in this Church; we have many various organizations of the Priesthood, and churches are organized throughout the world as far as we have had an opportunity. I have been called, these Apostles have, many of the Elders have to go to the nations of the earth and the islands of the sea to preach the Gospel to our fellow men. What greater calling can any man have on the face of the earth than to hold in his hands power and authority to go forth and administer in the ordinances of salvation? Do we prize these things in their fullness? I do not think we do. Nevertheless, so far we have been enabled to maintain our position, and to go forth and fulfill our missions as far as we have had time and opportunity. Certainly there has been nothing in this work that I have had greater consolation in than in preaching the Gospel to my fellow men and in administering unto them the ordinances of the house of God, both for the living and the dead. I may say the same with regard to my brethren who are called to perform those ordinances.

There was something said yesterday by the brethren with regard to our sons and our missionaries abroad. I will say for myself—and when I say it for myself I think I speak for a great many others—there is no joy that I have ever had that has been greater than that which has come to me in having sons receive the Holy Priesthood and go forth and administer among the nations of the earth the ordinances of life and salvation. It is a glorious gift to the sons of men. It is what men have not enjoyed before us for the last eighteen hundred years almost. Then should we not prize these things? Yes, we should. The Lord, in the dispensation of His providences, has given to us an army of sons and daughters, and our sons are called to go to the nations of the earth. We want to instill into their minds the importance of these blessings to the inhabitants of the earth and the saving of souls from sin. You give unto any soul the principles of life and salvation and administer these ordinances to him, and you become an instrument in the hands of God in the salvation of that soul.