

## ARDUOUS LABORS OF PRESIDING PRIESTHOOD.

Address Delivered at General Conference  
Of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, October 5, 1903, by  
**ELDER RODGER CLAWSON**

The Sin of Idleness—Arduous Duties of First Presidency—The Twelve, Seven Presidents of Stakes, Presiding Bishopric and Other Quorums of Priesthood—A Strenuous Life.

Brethren and sisters, I trust that I shall be able to make you hear. I have rejoiced exceedingly in the spirit and teachings of this conference. We have had a rich outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and we are indeed a blessed people.

While sitting here, the thought occurred to me that the system and order of the Priesthood in this Church is so perfect, there is no need for any of us to waste time; and it would be a shame for a man in this Church, holding any portion of the holy Priesthood, to say he had nothing to do. It is a mistaken idea for any man to entertain, for there is plenty to do. I remember, reading in one of the revelations, a passage that bears upon this point. You will find it in Section 107 of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and these are the closing words of the revelation:

"Wherefore now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence. If that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved, shall not be counted worthy to stand."

In another revelation—Section 63—these words occur:

"And the inhabitants of Zion, also, shall remember their labors, inasmuch as they are appointed to labor, in all faithfulness; for the idler shall be had in remembrance before the Lord."

Again, in Section 75:

"Let every man be diligent in all things. And the idler shall not have place in the Church, except he repents and mends his ways."

From these passages, we can see that idleness is a positive sin, and that those who indulge in this spirit, to the neglect of their duties, shall be found unworthy of fellowship in the Church.

Brethren and sisters, if I can have the freedom of the Spirit, I would like to make a brief report concerning some of the general authorities of the Church. I think the Saints are justified in looking to the general authorities for an example. If the head is sick, the body will also be sick; but if the head is wide awake, the body will be full of light. This is true of the Church in all ages of the world.

### THE FIRST PRESIDENCY.

First, I would like to say a word about the First Presidency of the Church. We have them with us today. They are in good health and form. We have heard their voices. I think I can truthfully say there are no three men in the Church who are busier, more industrious or whose time is more occupied than the Presidency. There is a great weight of responsibility resting

upon them. They are called to stand at the head of the Church, and direct matters pertaining to fifty-one stakes of Zion and fourteen missions. These brethren have to consider matters of moment that are submitted to them from the stakes of Zion. Many written communications of great importance are received by them, which require the most thoughtful consideration. They are in session almost daily, giving their attention to these matters. In addition to the very large correspondence which they have to answer, many of the officers of the stakes come in person and seek interviews with the Presidency of the Church. They must be seen; it is their right to be seen; they come for counsel on matters of moment and interest to the Latter-day Saints. Furthermore, many strangers call at the president's office, anxious to meet the president and his counselors, and to shake hands with them. The reputation of this people has gone abroad to the world, and many eminent people, in passing through, stop in Zion, being anxious to see those who preside over this peculiar people. And let me say to you, brethren and sisters, the stranger within our gates who desires an interview is never denied. The Presidency are very happy to consider, to meet the president and his counselors, and to shake hands with them. The reputation of this people has gone abroad to the world, and many eminent people, in passing through, stop in Zion, being anxious to see those who preside over this peculiar people.

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### LABORS OF THE APOSTLES.

Now we come to consider the labors of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Let me speak briefly in relation to the quorum, which stands next to the Presidency. The quorum of the Twelve Apostles meets regularly once a week with the Presidency. They meet at a quorum every quarter, for three days. To the members of the quorum, these meetings are of the very highest importance. The brethren come together in order to pray, bear testimony and take into consideration such matters as may be brought before them. Wherever duty calls, the Twelve must go. They are willing and anxious to visit the Saints in Stake conferences, or to go into the world. They hold themselves in readiness to respond at a moment's notice to the calls of the Presidency of the Church. When they return from such visits, they must render an account of their stewardship. The labors of each week must be reported to the Presidency. In this way the Presidency of the Church are made familiar with conditions in Zion. Let me say, there is not a stake in all Zion that escapes notice. There is not a president of a Stake nor a counselor and, in a general way, I may say, there is not a Bishop but who comes under the notice of the Presidency of the Church through these reports. We want the brethren in the various stakes to understand that their labors are appreciated, and that their faithfulness is known. And when things are all right, oh how grand and beautiful it is! How pleased the Twelve are to report favorable conditions in the stakes of Zion! When anything is wrong, when there is a lack of faithfulness upon the part of any holding the Priesthood in the stakes of Zion, it

is known; and known only to be corrected. We would like the people to understand that the Priesthood is mindful of them. We know your faithfulness; and where there is indifference, we are aware of it. Although existing evils may not be corrected at once, let me say to you that generally they are known and discussed in the councils of the Holy Priesthood. The Twelve esteem it as binding upon them, when in the city, to be present at their meetings. They regard it as one of their highest duties; they feel they must be there, unless perchance there is sickness or death in the family, or they are sent elsewhere by the Presidency. That is how they feel in relation to their quorum meetings. That is how we want the brethren of the Priesthood throughout the Church to feel, in relation to their respective quorum meetings. We rejoice in our labors. I testify that there is a spirit of oneness, and of love, in the quorum of the Twelve, and existing also between them and the Presidency of the Church, such as you will hardly find among any other men upon earth. A love for one another that almost exceeds the love of a man for his wife. It is the love of the Priesthood—the love of God.

### PRESIDENTS OF THE SEVENTIES.

Next to the Twelve Apostles are the First Seven Presidents of the Seventies. Of what a heavy weight of responsibility rests upon these seven men! They are called to preside over 143 quorums of Seventies—ten thousand men! Suppose they were lined up in the Tabernacle yard in one body, what an army of the Lord it would be! These seven presidents are called to look after the interests of this great body of Seventies, to counsel, to direct, to warn them against the spirit of neglect and indifference, in the quorum of the Seventies, and to have them any time for idleness? Have they any time to waste? No, indeed! These men meet together regularly once a week, that is, what a heavy weight of responsibility rests upon these seven men! They are called to preside over 143 quorums of Seventies, which are scattered throughout the Church, from Canada in the north to Mexico in the south. Then, they are constantly visiting the quorums, organizing and reorganizing. They have some serious difficulties to meet in this work, because, when, in some instances, they get a right good man to fill an office and do the work, he is called to another position in the Church, and then they must select some other man in the quorum to meet the requirements. It needs constant watchfulness upon their part to keep the members active in their quorum duties. In addition to this, the seven presidents of Seventies labor under the direction of the Twelve Apostles, and hold themselves in constant readiness to respond to every call. They are always on hand; we know where to find them. They go with the Twelve into the stakes of Zion, or wherever duty calls, in a spirit of cheerfulness and willingness. These brethren are faithful to their duty.

### PRESIDING BISHOPRIC.

Then, we have the Presiding Bishopric of the Church. They are called to a great and heavy responsibility. Three men who look after the temporal interests of Zion and supervise the tithing donated by the people. The principle of tithing is an important one. One of the speakers said today, if the members in some of the other Christian denominations pay tithing, who will take care of it? Where is the prophet to direct how the tithing shall be used and handled for the Lord? It belongs to the Lord, and not to the people; it must go into the storehouse of the Lord, and where is the servant of God authorized to direct its proper use? Here are the bishops called to this sacred duty, under the Presidency of the Church, and who are held to strict accountability for their stewardship. As the 600, and more, Bishops of the Church must report to them, so they must report to the Pres-

idency of the Church. It is a heavy duty that rests upon these brethren, and they are in session—I was going to say day and night, but every day they consult together, and many important questions come up before them. They have many things to look after, which necessitates their going into the different stakes and correcting errors that may arise. I bear testimony that never in the history of the Church, so far as I know, has the tithing of the people been so carefully looked after and accounted for, cent for cent, as it is today. The Latter-day Saints need have no anxiety upon this point. The tithing is taken care of scrupulously, under the direction of the First Presidency, and this according to the revelation and commandment. It entails great anxiety and labor upon these three men, and they cannot escape it, in fact, they cheerfully sustain the responsibility. Through the blessing of the Lord, they successfully perform this duty. If it were not for His blessing, they could not bear up under the pressure.

### A STRENUOUS LIFE.

Some people have said to me, "Oh, what a lovely time you Apostles have! You are traveling here and there, and enjoy yourselves and have a delightful time." Yes, yes, a very delightful time. (?) If the Apostles have the spirit of their calling resting upon them, it is delightful, it is happiness and joy to them; but if the spirit of the Apostleship did not rest upon them, it would be a very strenuous duty. The Apostles are away from their families about two-thirds of the time, and are seldom at home on the Sabbath day. Others can go to the house of worship with wives and children, and have the children under their supervision; it is not so with the Apostles, they are usually absent in the stakes of Zion. With them it is a constant change—change of diet, change of lodging, change of surroundings, which would make it a very disagreeable and strenuous life to lead, were it not for the sustaining power of the spirit of their calling. So it is with the Seven Presidents of Seventies; and so, I apprehend, it is with the Bishopric. Doubtless the presiding Bishopric have a great deal of joy and satisfaction in their labors, but it is not without sacrifice. The Bishopric is upon them; but if they were without that spirit, their position would be very undesirable. And so it is with all the Bishops, and all the presiding authorities.

In conclusion, I wish to say that the presidents of stakes are desired to meet regularly every week, to counsel, and devise plans for the benefit of those over whom they preside. We expect them to hold these weekly meetings without fail, and to give attention to the purposes of them. We also desire the Bishops of wards and their counselors to meet regularly once a week, with the same faithfulness as is shown by the presiding authorities. No Bishopric should let a week pass without coming together, to enquire into the conditions that prevail in the ward, and to correct any evils that may exist. These meetings also bring them into greater harmony, and they become better acquainted with one another. It is necessary that the Bishop and his counselors should understand each other thoroughly, that they may labor untiringly for the benefit and blessing of their people. So with the High Council; and so with the presidency of quorums. We want the leaders to be alive and wide awake, and faithful to duty in all things. May God bless you and all Israel; and, above all things, may He bless the priesthood, in my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

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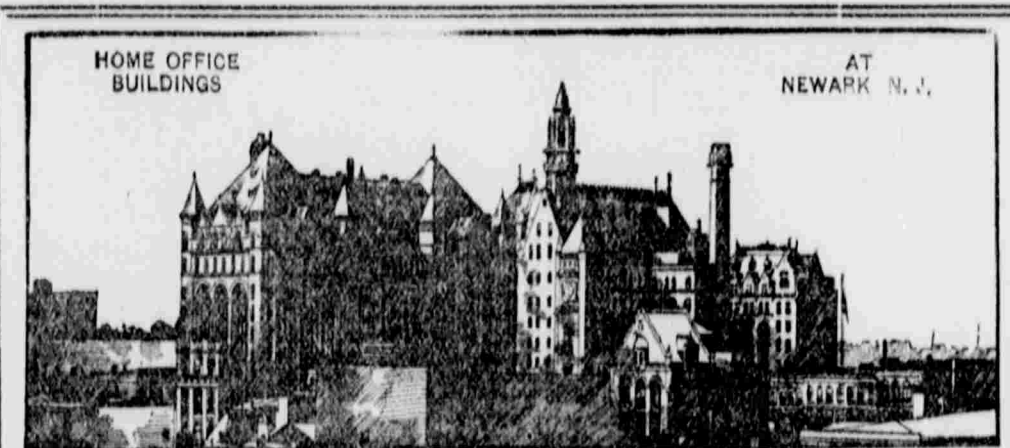
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