

DESERET NEWS:

WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

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HIGH COUNCILS.

ALLUSIONS are frequently made in the public prints to the "Mormon High Council," as if it were some mysterious tribunal armed with terrible powers and clothed with dreaded authority. Some explanations in regard to this matter may be of benefit to persons unfamiliar with our Church government, and will do no harm to the Latter-day Saints, many of whom are not as thoroughly acquainted as they might be with the order of the Priesthood, as revealed through the Prophet Joseph many years ago and published in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants.

In every properly organized Stake of Zion there is a High Council. A Stake of Zion is an organization composed of a number of contiguous Wards, each of which is under the watchcare of a Bishop. The Stake is directed by a President and two Counselors. The High Council is composed of twelve High Priests, selected and set apart for this purpose, and sustained in that position by the people of the Stake for which they act, at the regular quarterly conference, at which all members, male and female have an equal vote. In its deliberations the High Council is presided over by the Presidency of the Stake. In the absence of his Counselors the President can preside, alone. Should any of the High Councilors be absent, if seven or more are present the places of the absentees can be temporarily filled by other High Priests, selected by the voice of the Council.

The duty of these Councils is to adjudicate upon important cases of difficulty which may arise among the members of the Church in the Stakes to which they belong. Cases of lesser importance are to be taken before the Bishops, who, with their Counselors, each form a lower court, appeals from which can be taken to the High Councils. Appeals from the latter can be taken to the Presidency of the Church, but not from one High Council to another, as each High Council stands on an equal footing, as to authority and power, with any other standing High Council.

In trying any case presented, six Councilors sit on one side of the Council room and six on the other, facing each other, with the Presidency at the head, a clerk also being at hand. From one half of the Council speakers act for the accuser, and from the other half those for the accused. In simple cases one speaker on each side is sufficient; in difficult cases two on each side being required, but in no case more than six speakers are permitted. The Councilors take turns as speakers by rotation.

A case is presented by a written accusation, which is read by the clerk, when the accused may enter his plea. The evidence is then presented and witnesses heard; the counter evidence and witnesses follow; next the Councilors on each side speak for or against the case, and the accuser and accused then have the privilege of speaking personally. Legal technicalities are not considered; facts, justice and equity being desired, and the Councilors being required to contend for truth and righteousness and avoid partiality and personal favor. The speakers for the accuser are not required to lean toward his view of the case; neither are those for the accused expected to defend him by taking advantage of anything wrong to screen or unduly assist him. Pettifoggery is not in order. The Council is not a court of law but of equity; and light is sought for, so that the case may be seen as it is in truth, and as viewed by God and angels.

After all the evidences are in and the speakers and principals have been heard, the President gives his decision, calling upon the Council to sustain it. If they do so by their unanimous or majority vote, it stands. If any Councilor perceives an error in the decision the case can be reviewed, and if additional light is presented, showing a necessity

for a change in the decision, it can be altered accordingly, otherwise it remains as enunciated.

The High Council has power to enforce its decrees, which must be made in all righteousness, meekness, patience, forbearance and justice, by excommunication of the offender from the Church, but claims no right or power to inflict any physical or material punishment or penalty.

None of the members or presidents of these Councils receive pay for their services, nor any fees from parties to suits before them. Their services are entirely gratuitous. These Councils are of vast benefit to the Latter-day Saints. They save the expense, acrimony, strife, and dissatisfaction that attend all law suits before secular courts. They offer the best of opportunities that can be afforded for the thorough investigation and arbitration of cases in dispute. They are composed of men who are disinterested and unbiased, and, acting in the fear of God as His servants, they have the highest motives to render a just judgment. It is rare that their decisions are rejected, for the general sentiment is, that a conclusion arrived at by a body of disinterested men like those of which these Councils are composed, ought to be acquiesced in by all persons immediately concerned.

When it is considered that every High Council trial involves the absence from business of fifteen men, besides the parties to the suit and their witnesses, it will be clearly perceived that trivial and unimportant cases should never be brought before such a tribunal.

The secret and mysterious nature and power of High Councils is, like a great many other popular notions of "Mormon" polity, a mere figment of a disordered imagination. They form the most incorruptible, inexpensive, equitable and satisfactory courts or boards of arbitration in the world, and their constitution, authority, procedure, influence and effect afford one very important evidence of the Divine origin of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

TELEPHONIC IMPROVEMENTS.

THE discovery of the telephone, by which sounds can be transmitted to a distance, is one of the most important developments of the age. To sit in one's own domicile and hear a grand concert performed in an opera house or music hall several miles away, is something that our forefathers never dreamed of as an earthly possibility. But this appears to be one of the actual achievements of science, and improvements upon the original instrument are coming forth in rapid succession.

Conversations are now carried on by means of the telephone, threatening to supersede the local use of the electric telegraph, and the latest discovery in this connection promises much greater efficiency, and will aid in making telephony a still more formidable rival of telegraphy.

An experiment, tried a few days ago in New York, demonstrated the fact that a current of one telephone can be divided into at least six separate smaller currents. A concert played in the central office was heard distinctly in six branch offices with which connections had been made.

It is not improbable that the time is approaching when friends in opposite hemispheres will be able to converse audibly, through cablephones laid beneath the sea. The discovery of the electric telegraph was one of the greatest disclosures of this period of revelation and development. But telephonic communication is a still further manifestation of the forces of nature, and is the harbinger of still further "inventions," which are and will be brought forth by the inspiration of the Great Creator, who will cause all these things to co-operate for the accomplishment of His Divine purposes, in the elevation of the human race and the redemption of the earth on which they dwell.

Diamond cutting, which used to be a business principally monopolized by the Jews at Amsterdam, is now being successfully followed by young women at Boston.

INDIAN CANDOR AND WHITE DUPLICITY.

THE "Sitting Bull Commission" has turned out a miserable failure. According to the latest dispatches, which will be found in another column, the Indian warrior refuses the overtures of peace offered to him and his command by the United States Government.

The attitude of the Sioux chief and his companions, is a caustic comment on the white man's trustworthiness. Dread of treachery was the strongest feeling manifested by the "untutored savages" throughout the interview, which was arranged with extreme difficulty, except the contempt expressed in Sitting Bull's declaration that the Americans were "thieves and liars."

Whatever may be said against the cruelty and craft and dishonesty and demoniac deeds of the Indian when roused to hostility, it cannot be truthfully denied that the rapacity, falsehood and treachery of the white man, have invariably been the primal cause of the red man's rage and his march upon the war-path.

The history of the Black Hills' settlement is a case in point, and shows the reason why Sitting Bull is now a fugitive in Canada, and why he talks with such bitterness of American duplicity and dishonesty. If the region now settled by gold seekers was not the red man's country, why did the Government send its troops to prevent the intrusion of prospectors, and to remove them by armed force?

A virtual acknowledgment of the Indian's rights was openly given. An attempt was then made to buy the country of the recognized owners. But the price offered was not accepted by the Indians and their demands were not acceded to by the Government. Then the gold hunters were permitted to invade and take possession of the very land which was not purchased, and the acknowledged owners of the soil, upon resenting the robbery, were pounced upon by the armies of the Government, hunted down or driven from their property, and their successes are called massacres, while the triumphs of the white invaders are hailed as victories.

Sitting Bull has ample cause for the distrust he exhibited, and, we are sorry to say, he and his associates and the tribes of the aborigines which are still left upon the land, have good reason for applying to their civilized conquerors those stinging epithets which Sitting Bull launched at the heads of the Commission to Canada.

WEBER STAKE CONFERENCE.

The regular Quarterly Conference of the Weber Stake of Zion convened on Saturday morning, October 20th, at 10 o'clock a.m., in the Tabernacle at Ogden City.

On the stand were President John Taylor, and of the Apostles, Elders F. D. Richards, Joseph F. Smith, and Daniel H. Wells; also Bishop Thomas Taylor, of this city; also Elders D. H. Peery, L. J. Herrick, and C. F. Middleton, of the presidency of the Weber Stake, and all the Bishops of the Wards, excepting two who were absent from home.

The meeting was called to order by President Peery.

The choir led by Professor M. Rugh with Prof. J. Fowler at the organ, sang the hymn

Arise! arise with joy survey
The glory of the latter day.

Elder David M. Stuart offered prayer, and the choir sang

God moves in a mysterious way.

The whole of the forenoon was devoted to hearing reports from the seventeen wards of which the Stake is composed, which were all represented. The reports as given by the Bishops, were exceedingly interesting and very encouraging, indicating the Stake to be in a good and improved condition. Since last Conference all the wards had been visited three times by the presidency of the Stake, who had completed the organization of the priesthood.

One of the marked features of the reports was the great good that had already resulted from organizing the Lesser Priesthood, the young men responding to the call they

received in such a manner as enkindled new life and spirit in the hearts of their parents and older members of the Church generally. Another was the growing interest that was being taken in the Sabbath Schools; but more particularly was this noticed in the reports of some of the wards where the Bishops and their counselors were regular attendants, and the parents delighted in accompanying their little ones, and rendered substantial aid. In one of the wards where money was scarce, the Bishop hit upon the idea of utilizing labor and turning it into available means for the benefit of its school. The sterner sex turned out, one and all, furnished seed potatoes, planted them and gathered the increase. This is commendable, and might, with much profit be tried elsewhere. A third was the praiseworthy labors of the Female Relief Societies, almost every ward priding itself in having one. The good they were doing in looking after the welfare of the needy, and sick, and the energy they manifested in gathering up wheat, was generally referred to. The reports also showed that the special attention of the bishops was being given to the education of the young, and in fostering and encouraging the Young Men's and Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations, and the general growth and improvement of the Saints in the faith and works of the Gospel.

Choir sang—

Hark, the song of jubilee.

Adjourned till 2 p.m.

Benediction by Elder L. F. Monch.

2 p.m.

The choir sang—

Come Holy Ghost our hearts inspire.

Bishop Thomas Taylor engaged in prayer, and the choir sang another hymn.

Counselor L. J. Herrick of the presidency of the Stake addressed the Saints. He stated that President, D. H. Peery and his counselors had made three visits through the county and succeeded in nearly completing the organization of the Stake. They realized great pleasure in their labors and thanked God for the success which had attended them.

The Female Relief Society, under the guidance of Sister Jane Richards was an important feature in the organization of the Stake and had met with great success. They were busy in laying up wheat and he advised the Elders to assist them in this laudable purpose.

President Wells occupied the remainder of the time, the subject of his discourse was the literal building up of the kingdom of God.

The statistical report of the Stake was read by Elder L. F. Monch, after which Elder Richard Ballantyne, Superintendent of Sabbath Schools gave his report, from which it appeared that 2,500 children were attending Sabbath Schools in the county. Great progress and improvement had been made, the jubilee concerts had given a great impetus to the cultivation of music, the administering of the sacrament had done much good, and the young people were generally interested.

Choir sang

How beautiful are their feet.

Adjourned till Sunday at 10 a.m.

Benediction by Elder Cyrus H. Wheelock.

Sunday, 10 a.m.

Choir sang

Sweet is the work.

Prayer by Elder R. F. Neslen.

Choir sang

Before Jehovah's glorious throne.

Elder C. W. Penrose then presented the General Authorities of the Church as sustained at the General Conference at Salt Lake City, on the 6th and 7th insts., who were unanimously sustained by this Conference. He also presented the authorities of the Weber Stake, who were all unanimously sustained as follows:

D. H. Peery, President of Weber Stake of Zion, with L. J. Herrick and C. F. Middleton as his Counselors.

As members of the High Council—Israel Canfield, I. N. Goodale, Thomas Doxey, Charles W. Penrose, Thomas Wallace, Joseph Stanford, E. N. Freeman, F. S. Richards, R. Ballantyne, D. M. Stuart, W. W. Burton, Joseph A. West.

Lorin Farr as President of the High Priests' Quorum.

ELDERS' QUORUMS.

Henry Crawshaw as President of the First Quorum with Thomas Myers and Austin C. Brown as his Counselors.

Thomas Morley as President of the Second Quorum, with H. B. Seaville and Joseph T. Johnson as his Counselors.

Richard Jones as president of the Third Quorum, with James Martin and Lorenzo Dabell as his Counselors.

Thomas Wilson as President of the Fourth Quorum, with John Manning and John England as his Counselors.

Levi A. Cox as President of the Fifth Quorum, with Wheatly Gibson and Charles Buck as his Counselors.

Jens Petersen as President of the Sixth Quorum, with John Farrell and George Hills as his Counselors.

BISHOPS.

First Ward, Ogden City, F. A. Brown, with W. H. Pidcock and B. C. Critchlow as his Counselors; Second Ward, Ogden City, Robert McQuarrie with Samuel Eggleston and James Burch as his Counselors; Third Ward Ogden City, Winslow Farr with Barnard White and John Hastings as his Counselors; Fourth Ward, Ogden City, N. C. Flyglare with Edwin Stratford and Winthrop Farley as his Counselors.

North Ogden Ward, Amos Maycock, with Benjamin Cazler and Nathaniel Montgomery as his Counselors.

Huntsville Ward, F. A. Hammond, with William Halls and W. C. Mortenson as his Counselors.

Eden Ward, Josiah M. Ferrin, with Peter Johnson and Enoch Burns as his Counselors.

Harrisville Ward, P. G. Taylor, with William C. Rawson and Dudley Chase as his Counselors.

Plain City Ward, L. W. Shurtliff, with John Spiers and P. C. Green as his Counselors.

Slatersville Ward, John A. Allred, with John McKnight and S. W. Perry as his Counselors.

Marrion's Ward, James Ritchie, with James Burton and H. H. Tracey as his Counselors.

Mound Fort Ward, David Moore, with James Taylor and Gustave Levedahl as his Counselors.

Lynn Ward, D. F. Thomas, with Wm. B. Hutchins and Rasmus Christofferson as his Counselors.

West Weber Ward, John I. Hart, with James F. Hunter and Andrew G. Bowman as his Counselors.

Hooperville Ward, Gilbert Belknap, with Charles Parker and John Flinders as his Counselors.

Riverdale Ward, Sanford Bingham, with John C. Thompson and William Stimpson as his Counselors.

Eastern District, Ira N. Spaulding, President.

PRESTES QUORUMS.

The Bishop and his Counselors of the 2nd Ward as the Presidency of the First Quorum of Priests; of the 2nd Ward as the Presidency of the Second Quorum; of Harrisville as the Presidency of the Third Quorum; of Hooperville as the Presidency of the Fourth Quorum; of Huntsville as the Presidency of the Fifth Quorum; of Slatersville as the Presidency of the 6th Quorum.

TEACHER'S QUORUMS.

First Ward, Ogden City—John M. Browning, President; Wallace Boyle, and Benjamin P. Critchlow his counselors.

Second Ward, Ogden City, David Doxey, Pres.; John G. Ellis, First Counselor; (second not elected.)

Third Ward not given.

Fourth Ward, Ogden City, Wm. W. Fife, President; Jesse G. Stratford and Parley T. Wright, Counselors.

North Ogden, Thomas Brown, President, Thomas Budge and W. H. Crandall, Counselors.

Huntsville Ward, Andrew G. Jensen, President, Edward H. Anderson and O. D. Allen, Counselors.

Eden Ward, Thomas H. Ballantyne, President, Thaddeus M. Ferrin and John Fackrell, Counselors.

Harrisville Ward, Wm. Gegrard, President, Newel Taylor and Joseph Brown, Counselors.

Plain City Ward—Joseph Geddes, President; George Evans and James Carver, Counselors.

Slatersville Ward—Henry Bartholomew, President; James Slater, First Counselor (second not selected).

West Weber Ward—George Elsworth, President; Wm. C. Hunter and Wm. Thiford, Counselors.

Hooperville Ward—Samuel Fowler, Jr., President; Joseph Arave and Oliver Belknap, Counselors.