

ELDER RUDGER CLAWSON.

The Priesthood of the Lord and its power and authority—Impartiality of God in bestowing the priesthood—The number who hold the Priesthood in the Church—Those who are worthy and magnify their callings will receive the blessings—Courses of study for the priesthood—Benefits of these studies open to all—Invitation to join the classes—Testimony.

My brethren and sisters: I am in full accord with the spirit of this conference, with the counsels and testimony of our President this morning, and of his brethren who have spoken. Their words have been very precious to me, and I rejoice in them.

The Holy Being whom we have gathered in to worship this afternoon is no respecter of persons. This he has declared with his own voice, speaking through Joseph Smith to the people, in words something like the following:

“Now therefore, be ye strong from henceforth. Fear not, for the kingdom is yours. And for your salvation, I give you a commandment, for I have heard your prayers, and the poor have complained before me, and the rich have I made, and all flesh is mine, and I am no respecter of persons.”

In view of the vast multitude of God's children who dwell upon the earth, this is a very remarkable statement, and the fact that God is absolutely impartial is not more clearly shown, I think, in any scripture than in the glorious Priesthood which we have received. The priesthood referred to is composed of two great heads or divisions. The one is called the Melchizedek, or Higher Priesthood, and the

other the Aaronic or Lesser Priesthood, but, as I understand it, it is all one priesthood, the lesser growing out of the greater. Now, the scope and authority of the priesthood is most clearly defined in a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in March, 1835, in Section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants, in these very direct and impressive words:

“The power and authority of the Higher or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the Church—

“To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven—to have the heavens opened unto them—to commune with the general assembly and Church of the first born, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.

“The power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic Priesthood, is to hold the keys of the ministering of angels, and to administer in outward ordinances, the letter of the gospel—the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, agreeable to the covenants and commandments.”

Now, we very well know that in these two great priesthoods there are various offices or callings, as for instance, in the Higher Priesthood, we have the offices of apostle, high priest, seventy, and elder; and in the Lesser Priesthood, that of bishop, priest, teacher, and deacon; and thus we see that the Lord has provided these various offices for the benefit and blessing of the members of his Church.

My brethren and sisters, it is every man's privilege in our Church to receive through his worthiness, the priesthood, and I might add it is his privilege by right divine because the priesthood of God comes with the gospel and belongs to the Church of God. We very well know,

too, that there are means of growth and advancement in the priesthood, which is conferred upon men in an orderly way. First, we know that upon the young men of Israel, those who make themselves worthy, is conferred the office of deacon, which is the first step in the priesthood. When a young man honors this calling, magnifies the office and shows himself in every way worthy, he may then be permitted to receive the office of teacher, and from teacher to priest; and usually when he has received and magnified the office of a priest he will have reached his majority. He is then ready, through his experience, and by his faithfulness in the Lesser Priesthood, to receive the High Priesthood. The office of elder is conferred upon him, then the office of seventy, and then the great and glorious office of a high priest.

Thus, in time, every young man in Israel, as he advances in life, has the opportunity to receive a fulness of the priesthood. Such is truly the case, my brethren and sisters—and I say sisters, because I take it that the sisters of the Church are equally interested with the brethren, in the priesthood, for they are to receive their blessings and exaltation and glory through the priesthood held by their fathers and husbands. God has so ordained it. Therefore, as a Church, we are interested in this vital subject.

Now, I don't know whether we fully realize and have entered into the spirit of the priesthood. I do not know whether, in mortality, we can fully comprehend it, but this I do know, that it is a great and glorious doctrine. Some further light, I may say great light, is thrown upon this important subject in one of the revelations of God to his

prophet, and mark you, some great and glorious truths have come to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith, truths that were entirely unknown to the world in our time, but they have come to us and we are familiar with them. I tell you it is good to be reminded of these things. I refer to section 84 in the Doctrine and Covenants, beginning with the thirty-third verse. I invite your close attention to these words. I would not attempt to repeat them, but I will read them carefully from the text:

"For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two Priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies;

"They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God;

"And also all they who receive this Priesthood receiveth me, saith the Lord;

"For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;

"And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;

"And he that receiveth my Father, receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him;

"And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the Priesthood.

"Therefore, all those who receive the Priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved:

"But whoso breaketh this covenant, after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come."

You get some idea, by brethren and sisters, from this, how very important, how extremely sacred is the Holy Priesthood, which is nothing more nor less than divine authority committed unto man, and

in the foregoing declaration is shown the absolute impartiality of our Father in heaven, for he says: "Whoso," (meaning any man and every man), "is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling," will enter into the possession of all things, for he will become a joint heir with Jesus Christ, the Lord, in such possession. Now, I ask you, what more could a faithful high priest receive than the promise of this blessing? Could he receive any more if he were an apostle? Could he receive any more if he were a counselor in the Presidency of the Church? Could he receive anything more if he were the President of the Church, than a promise which gives to him a joint heirship in all things? No, he could not. And so it is with the faithful seventy, and so with the faithful elder in the Church.

There is no need for envy. There is no need for overweening ambition. There is no need to reach out and try to grasp that to which we are not entitled. The essential thing is that every man should see to it, that he obtains the High Priesthood. If he advances no further than the office of an elder but is faithful in the magnifying of his calling, he will enter into his glory and exaltation and will receive the fulness of which the record speaks.

And does this not show clearly, beautifully, that God indeed is no respecter of persons? And as we heard in the prayer that was offered this afternoon, God has made us equal. Oh, I delight in this principle of equality in the Church, which is invariably determined by the principle of faithfulness, of worthiness. Nothing will be with-

held from the man who is worthy and no blessing will be withheld from the woman who is faithful and true.

Now, brethren and sisters, I call your attention to the fact—and I think it is in harmony with the text and with what I have said—that we have in the Church today a great army of priesthood: 11,835 high priests; 10,497 seventies; 30,017 elders; 9,387 priests; 11,429 teachers; 23,623 deacons, making a total of 96,788 who bear the authority of the Holy Priesthood.

Thus we see how this divine authority is distributed to the members of the Church. This responsibility reaches down to every faithful man. He is expected, he is required to carry responsibility, and to exercise in some degree divine authority. It does not all rest upon the President of the Church, nor does it rest wholly upon the First Presidency. It does not rest altogether upon the twelve apostles, or the general authorities. It rests down upon the Church of Christ throughout all the stakes. Everywhere you will meet this divine authority. I will tell you, brethren and sisters, wherever you do meet it in the stakes of Zion, or wards of Zion, or in the branches of the Church, it would be well for you to honor that authority, and not seek to override it, or go above it or beyond it unnecessarily. Let every man respect the authority of those who preside over him, no matter where he is, because it is connected with this great and glorious priesthood of which I have spoken.

Let me remind you for a moment of the language of the revelation, which says that whoso succeeds in attaining to these two priesthoods and is faithful in magnifying his

calling, will receive the blessing. In order that the men of the priesthood might become worthy of it, and worthy of the blessing and the exaltation that follow, it has pleased the Lord to inspire his servants of the First Presidency to appoint a committee to arrange courses of study for the priesthood. The committee is composed of four members of the Council of the Twelve, three members of the First Council of Seventy, the Presiding Bishopric, two presidents of stakes, and five others. These brethren have been laboring in this line for about nine years. They have sought with due diligence, from time to time, to prepare manuals, or outlines, for the study of the priesthood, to be used by this great body of men, nearly one hundred thousand, that they might be more fully instructed in their duty, and in the glorious principles of the gospel. I feel that this is and has been a very great responsibility resting upon the committee.

To give you some idea as to the manuals that have been prepared, I will just name a few: For the High Priesthood, manuals have been prepared on "Church Organization," "Divine Authority of the Book of Mormon," "History of the Gospel," "Duties and Principles from the Doctrine and Covenants," "Principles of the Gospel," "Atonement," "Articles of Faith," "First and Second volumes of *Church History*," "Divine Imminence," "Gospel Themes," "Rational Theology," and "Jesus the Christ." And for the Lesser Priesthood: "Restoration of the Gospel," "Church History," "Old Testament History," "Divine Mission of the Savior," "The Book of Mormon," "First Steps in Church Government," "The Apostolic Age," "The Latter-day Proph-

et," "What the Priest should Know and Do," "Experiences from the Lives of early Church Leaders and Members," and "Jesus the Christ."

I submit to you, my brethren and sisters, whether or not these are important subjects worthy of the attention and study of the priesthood. That is the purpose of it, and I point out to you that the opportunity is open to every man in this Church to secure the benefit of these courses of study. He is invited by the authorities of the Church into these classes, urged to go into them and to study and master these subjects, thereby fitting and qualifying him, so far as possible, under the Spirit of the Lord, to magnify the priesthood. Yet out of this vast army of priesthood, while there are many faithful, active men, diligent and studious, there are also others who are careless and indifferent, and who neglect the opportunity that is before them; but, mark you, brethren and sisters, any man who neglects his privileges and opportunities, is the loser. He is not advancing, he is not growing in faith and knowledge and good works as he should do.

We urge the brethren of the priesthood to give this subject their careful, thoughtful and most prayerful attention. We ask you, brethren and sisters, in the name of the authorities of the Church, who have sanctioned the movement, to take up this work and persuade those who are careless and indifferent to be a little more faithful and studious than heretofore.

I bear testimony to you, in conclusion, that this is the Church and kingdom of God. I know it is—I have always known it. I testify to you that our leaders, the Prophets—and it is a glorious galaxy of men

—six great leaders who have presided over the Church up to this day—I testify to you that I do positively know that they are true prophets of God, men of power, men of authority, men of counsel; and we would do well to give heed to their words and to follow their lead. There is safety in it. I know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, that Jesus is the Christ, and that he atoned for the sins of the world upon Mount Calvary. This is my testimony, and I bear it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

PATRIARCH HYRUM G. SMITH.

I am very grateful, my brethren and sisters, for this privilege of again raising my voice in the midst of the Latter-day Saints; and I can testify that the Lord has blessed us during the last six months. He has blessed both the authorities and the members of the Church, and I for one feel to acknowledge his hand in the blessings that have come to us; personally, for those that have come to me. I am very grateful to be here today, to hear the testimonies and the instructions that have been given in this conference, and I fully endorse them. My heart goes out in love and gratitude to our President. My heart also goes out to him in prayer and in blessing, that he may live yet a goodly number of years with us, to bless us, and to teach us, and to guide us in the ways of the Lord. I know through my experience in the Church, and visiting among the people, that he has the prayers of the people, both young and old, and I join with them in praying for his life and mission, that he may live to lead and bless

us yet a goodly number of years, and enjoy the blessings of God all his days.

When President Penrose was speaking concerning the mothers having to part with their dear boys, who have gone into the army, or who are preparing to go, a little passage of modern scripture, in the Doctrine and Covenants, came to my mind, and if I may have the Spirit of the Lord, as it has dictated what has already been said in this conference, I should like to remind the good mothers of this passage for their comfort. It is found in the 101st section of the Doctrine and Covenants, commencing at the 77th verse.

“According to the laws and constitution of the people which I have suffered to be established, and should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles,

“That every man may act in doctrine and principles pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto them, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.

“Therefore it is not right that any man should be in bondage one to another.

“And for this purpose have I established the constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose, and redeemed the land by the shedding of blood.”

Now, my object in reading this is by way of comfort to us as a people, and particularly to the fathers and mothers of the boys and men who may engage or who may go to prepare to engage in this great conflict. I look upon it as being a mis-