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the ways in which, some at least, might be approached, one would be from the point of view entirely of leading them to blessings, not to pointing out the punishments. For instance, the Word of Wisdom. Lead them to see the blessing which sobriety brings, the giving up of things which the Word of Wisdom denies. That is the point. We are not enjoying the blessings we might enjoy by righteous living. It is not a question of somebody imposing punishments upon us.

And so through the whole realm of our activities.

Now one thing stood out tonight, I thought, in that picture: Here was a bishopric, finally shaken into a realization of their duties, but the bishopric did not undertake to do it all alone; they immediately called in help. You know, it takes more than three good men as a bishopric to make a good ward. Three good men may build a good ward, but they cannot do it all by themselves, and so with a presidency of a stake, so with a presidency of a quorum, and so with every group of leaders in the Church. They cannot do the service alone. They must have the help of every man and woman who serves under their direction.

And that brings me back to my theme song—this question of unity. We shall never, brethren, get to the place that the Lord expects us to go and marked out for us to get to, save we shall work together in unison. We cannot each one go out by himself, along his own lines, live his own life, so to speak,

and have this Church reach the destiny which it will reach if we do cooperate.

And I repeat to you what I have said time and time and time again in these Priesthood meetings, and pardon the repetition, but I think there is still room for some to hearken to the suggestion: We must work together as one. We must follow our leaders and if we do I say again, there are no limits to the things which, in righteousness, we may accomplish. Every man living as he should, cooperating as he should, brings into the ward or into the quorum a power against evil that cannot be attained in any other way.

Now, brethren, I should like to urge you to take to heart the lesson which this picture has taught us tonight. Remember the splendid instruction given us by the Presiding Bishop and rally around our leaders, let them tell us what to do and how to do it, and then so doing, we shall build up in our quorums, in our ward, in our stake, in the Church, a power for good, for righteousness which Satan cannot tear down and he is on the look-out all the time, all the time, day and night. Perhaps all of us, each of us, can think of some way in which we might help our presiding officers and to build up the unity, the standing together which is so essential to this Church.

May the Lord give us this spirit of unity, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

President Stephen L Richards of the First Presidency will now address us.

PRESIDENT STEPHEN L RICHARDS

First Counselor in the First Presidency

MY BRETHREN: With the impressive presentation which we have witnessed here in this building tonight, I wish that all assembled who are privileged by special wire to hear this service might have seen it also.

With President Clark's remarks as something of a background and justification, I would like to say a few words to the priesthood upon a subject which has been weighing upon my mind for quite a period of time. I would like to speak briefly on the subject of justice and mercy. The Gospel of Jesus Christ

is founded on law, salutary, righteous, benevolent law, established for the salvation and the blessing of humanity. For every law given, there is a penalty for its infraction. I know of no scripture where this is more plainly stated than by the Prophet Alma: "Now, how could a man repent except he should sin? How could he sin if there was no law? How could there be a law save there was a punishment?" (Alma 42:17.) The Savior himself declared that he came to fulfill the law, not to do away with it, but with the law he brought the principle of mercy to temper its enforcement, and to bring hope and encouragement to offenders for forgiveness through repentance.

I presume it has always been a nice question, and a perplexing one, to determine when the demands of justice are satisfied and the principle of mercy takes over. To assist in the determination of this issue, we have available to us again the words of Alma: "For behold, justice exerciseth all his demands, and also mercy claimeth all which is her own; and thus, none but the *truly* penitent are saved. What, do ye suppose that mercy can rob justice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so, God would cease to be God." (Alma 42:24-25.)

Now the Church of Christ is commissioned with the authority to interpret the law and pass judgment on infractions thereof. This is a heavy responsibility, one which many officers of the Church would forego, if they could justify themselves in so doing. In civil government it is not uncommon to hear references to the majesty of the law, by which is contemplated, we may assume, not only its supremacy and binding force, but also the deference and respect which should be shown for it, and the obligation to sustain its sovereign power. Certainly this applies with greater force and extended meaning to the majesty of divine law. It is God's law. It must be supported and it must be enforced to win salvation and the respect of those within the Kingdom and those without.

For the maintenance of the law of the Lord, judges have been set up in his Kingdom, tribunals established, and guiding principles laid down for the administration of justice. Bishops of Wards have been designated common judges in Israel, and they, with their counselors, have been delegated with authority to deal with cases properly coming under their jurisdiction. Appellate courts, culminating in the First Presidency of the Church, have likewise been designated by revelation having both appellate and original jurisdiction.

With this as a premise, I ask first the question, How can the priesthood and ecclesiastical authority of the Church best discharge the responsibility so committed to it. Do not "the judges in Israel" have a compelling obligation to deal with all cases of infraction against the law, mercifully but justly? What good to the Church, what real benefit to erring members, can come from ignoring this obligation and, as we sometimes say, winking at and "white-washing" the offenders? Can the judges thus help in setting people on the way to repentance and forgiveness?

What is repentance, and when does it become operative in the attainment of forgiveness? We all know the answer. Repentance consists first in a godly sorrow. Note the term "godly sorrow," which the scriptures tell us "worketh repentance to salvation . . . but the sorrow of the world worketh death." (II Cor. 7:10.) This godly sorrow is something more than admission after being discovered in sin, and the judges in Zion will do well not to confuse the two. Next after godly sorrow comes confession, which is prompted by the inward sorrow and the earnest desire for relief from the suffering entailed by acute realization of wrong-doing of which we saw an impressive illustration tonight. To whom should confession be made? To the Lord, of course, whose law has been violated. To the aggrieved person or persons, as an essential in making due

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retribution if that is necessary. And then certainly to the Lord's representative, his appointed judge in Israel, under whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction the offender lives and holds membership in the Kingdom.

Is the offender justified in by-passing his immediate Church authority and judge, and going to those who do not know him so well to make his confession? Almost universally, I think the answer should be No, for the local tribunals are in position to know the individual, his history and environs far better than those who have not had close contact with him, and in consequence the local authorities have a background which will enable them to pass judgment with more justice, and also mercy, than might be reasonably expected from any other source. It follows that it is the order of the Church for confessions to be made to the Bishop, which entails heavy and exacting responsibilities on the part of the Bishop, the first of which is that every confession should be received and held in the utmost confidence. A Bishop who violates such a sacred confidence is himself guilty of an offense before God and the Church. Where it becomes necessary to take counselors into his confidence, as it frequently does, and where it is necessary to organize tribunals, the Bishop should inform the confessor, and if possible obtain his permission so to do.

Why is confession essential? First, because the Lord has commanded it, and secondly, because the offender cannot live and participate in the Kingdom of God, to receive the blessings therefrom, with a lie in his heart.

Now the confessed offender is not left without hope, for he can obtain forgiveness by following the course outlined, and by forsaking sins comparable to that committed, as well as all other sin, and living before the Church and the Lord in such manner as to win approbation of both. The offender who has brought stigma and affront to the ward, the stake or the mission should seek the forgiveness of those he has thus offended. That may be had at

times through the presiding authorities of the various divisions of the Church. At other times it may be appropriate and quite necessary to make amends for public offenses and seek forgiveness before organizations of the people. The judges of Israel will determine this matter. And if the judges in the missions, the wards and the stakes need counsel in the matter, they know where to get it.

How may the judges of Israel determine when repentance is adequate? Surely this determination must rest with the inspired discernment and discretion of the judges. No specification of time required can be definitely made, but one caution may be wisely observed. That caution is for a sufficient time to elapse to permit a period of probation for the one seeking forgiveness. This probation serves a double purpose: First, and perhaps most important, it enables the offender to determine for himself whether he has been able to so master himself as to trust himself in the face of ever-recurring temptation; and secondly, to enable the judges to make a more reliable appraisal of the genuineness of repentance and worthiness for restored confidence.

Now I well recognize that the most serious aspects of this whole matter relate to personalities involved. I think I have never been moved to greater compassion than that arising out of sympathy for the innocent victims of a sin committed by a son or a daughter, a father or a mother. I am sure that the officers of the Church will always be susceptible to feelings of deep pity for those who have fallen from the path of righteousness and for their families. And the question will continually arise in the future, as it has done throughout the past, how far such considerations shall deter the judges of Israel from merciful, kind, but just adjudication of offenses against the laws of God. Long ago I have taken the position, with which I think my brethren accord, that *every case of infraction* and I speak now of those infractions violative of the laws of God which involve moral turpitude,

every infraction *against the laws of God should be dealt with*. I do not say how. I leave that to the inspired wisdom of the judges. Knowingly permitting a serious infraction of divine law to pass unnoticed is no kindness to the offender. He will never gain forgiveness except on the terms the Lord has prescribed, and which I have tried to outline.

And I ask you as a final question, How can we ever hope to maintain the dignity of the Church and the majesty of the law of the Lord without exercising disciplinary action through the tribunals which the Lord has set up. So I think I am justified in calling upon the Bishoprics, the High Councils, the Stake Presidencies, the Mission Presidencies, and the officers of quorums to be watchmen on the towers of Zion, to guard and forewarn the people against the incursion of sin, to teach in plainness and without equivocation the law of the Lord, to uphold the law, and righteously and mercifully enforce it for the blessing of our membership in the Church and all mankind.

Now I hope, my brethren, that I do

not seem too exacting in what I have laid before you. I believe that it is but a kindness to our brethren and our sisters throughout the Kingdom of the Lord to make them understand these principles which he has laid down, and I believe that if we exercise the great priesthood which has been given to us in the manner in which we should exercise it, we shall accomplish for those who offend, as well as for the Church, a great service. And I ask the Lord to bless us in this great power of the Holy Priesthood, to which tribute has been paid here tonight. It is the power of God; it is the direct delegation of his authority for the administration of his work, and he has selected his servant who stands at the head of this Kingdom to represent him, and I know that as we follow his direction and counsel and his example, we will win for ourselves his confidence and we will win the confidence of the Lord, and the blessings which will make us happy.

May the Lord bless you, my brethren, I humbly ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY



WE HAVE several notes here that should be considered by presiding officers in stakes and wards, in addition to those already mentioned in the message given by the Bishopric and by the counselors in the Presidency.

One of these I will mention. The others we can carry over. Will the presidencies of stakes at your quarterly conference please present to the visiting General Authorities any problems which you have that are current, or might be current within a few days or weeks. Let the Brethren who are on the ground consider these problems with you. It may be the reorganization of a bishopric, the appointment of high councilmen, or the reorganization of a high council. Not infrequently we find before us correspondence from stakes in which

quarterly conference was held just the week before our Thursday meeting, problems which should have been taken up with the visiting Brethren.

If you will follow that little suggestion it will expedite matters in the Presidency's office, which are accumulating.

As I contemplate the vast audience of Priesthood tonight, assembled in the various places named at the opening of the meeting, and realize the potency and power of this great body of men, I am overwhelmed. As I sat in the audience and listened to the message given so impressively by the Bishopric, and so successfully by the men and women who produced that film, I felt my feelings swell within my breast as to the possibility of the good that will be done, and can be done, by these fifteen or twenty or twenty-five thou-