

UNITY.

BY THE STAKE PRESIDENT

ISSUED IN THE INTEREST OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE INDEPENDENCE STAKE

INDEPENDENCE, MO., SEPTEMBER 5, 1914

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of faith." Ephesians 4, verses 11-13.

"Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty and act in the office in which he has been appointed in all DILIGENCE. He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand." D. and C. 104, verse 44.

INTRODUCTION.

In looking over the work of the various Quorums of the Stake it is discernable that a need of definite aims in work are necessary; a regular time for meetings, and subjects discussed suited to the needs of the priesthood to qualify them for work among the membership and the world.

The writer is of the opinion that special as well as general subjects should be arranged for the Quorums.

General Subjects.—

To be such as Church organization; Principles of the Gospel; Theory, etc.

Special.—

Dealing with the duties of the various classes of officers. How to perform their specific work.

For these reasons it has been thought advisable to suggest plans and programs for work, that while not perfect, will be a step in the direction of an improvement over the past.

The Priesthood being a God-called body of men to perform a special work for mankind it follows that they must know the work they are to perform.

This clearly set forth in the mind. The next thing of importance is, to be prepared or qualified to do the work. Can we by pursuing a certain course of study become qualified for all time? Are the laws which govern so fixed that once learned, no further learning is necessary, only to go forward in the performance of the work?

We do not so understand it. The immeasurable length to which a human mind may go in its operations with its ability to combine, adjust and readjust thought and action, necessarily keeps it alert, if it is to familiarize itself with its arts and wonder-

ful powers, especially so, since it is susceptible to spiritual influences, that about which little is or can be known, except by constant diligence in thought and deed.

Admitting this to be true, we are prepared to accept the need of some kind of provision for our education, so that, no matter in what condition we may be found, we shall (having a preparation) be equipped to perform our part.

Part of this provision is in Quorum organization. The calling of all men together who are to do the same class of service to enable them to be expert and efficient in service.

To say they are unnecessary is to reflect upon the wisdom of God who tells us he gave these, and the keys thereof, for helps, and for governments for the work of the ministry, and perfecting of the saints. See D. and C. Sec. 107:46.

To neglect these educational opportunities is to dishonor our calling and lack a measure of efficiency always in demand.

How then shall we occupy our time in these meetings? What shall we study? Who should decide for us the class of information best calculated to make us efficient? The law points out to us the class of information in Section 85, paragraph 21; also Section 104, paragraphs 38 to 41. But how shall it be arranged and who shall get out the line of study and procedure?

This may be answered by recognizing the Presidents of the Quorums as Teachers as stated in the law. See D. and C. 104, par. 38. They are to teach the members of the Quorum their duties, etc.

Or the Presidency of the Quorum be appointed to provide studies or programs thus placing the responsibilities of the character of the work to be done upon those who are approved as a Presidency over you; for undoubtedly the responsibility for Quorum instruction rests upon its President or Presidency.

However it is the writer's opinion that he must exercise himself and suggest what may prove beneficial in this regard.

Concerning the class of information that should be sought for we are informed in Section 85, par. 21. Theory, principle, doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things

that pertain unto the Kingdom of God, that is expedient for us to understand; of things both in heaven, earth, under the earth; things of the past, present, and things which are to come to pass. Things which are at home and abroad. Wars and perplexities of nations. Judgments which are upon the land. Knowledge of countries and kingdoms, that we may be prepared in all things.

Again, we are to seek this by "fasting and prayer," by "study and by faith," out of the "best" books, and directly from above. Therefore we are not left in doubt as to the source of our information. However, there needs to be a proper classification of books; books rightly judged to be the best.

At the last General Conference at the meetings for the Eldership many kinds of books were named to us best calculated to enlighten us upon such subjects.

Upon How to Preach on Homiletics, and Comparative Religions.

One, how to carry our religion effectively home to the brain and hearts of mankind.

The other, a diagnosis of the religious world enabling us to understand the varied conditions of the human mind so as to be well able to intelligently treat with it.

This is within the scope of the field of study open to us.

Many works have been written upon these two subjects. This impresses us with the immensity of the field of research open to us since the subjects upon which we are to inform ourselves are many and since most of the local ministry for the most part have to work daily for the sustenance of the body. It necessarily reveals to us the need of considering that which is important and of practical value.

The Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants; General Conference Resolutions, Rules of Order, give us information that is vital, particularly the first three named. These treat upon all valuable principles of spiritual life and must not be neglected. So they are of primary importance and should claim our attention first.

Hence as a Priesthood we cannot afford to be drawn away to the numerous philosophies and attractive works of men. If so, we are unprepared by way of comparison to determine their relative values. But in connection therewith we could with safety consider the views and interpretations of men thereon. Let us consider the local man and his field for service.

FIRST, he may preach.

SECOND, he may become a visiting officer; a presiding officer; a counsellor, a prosecutor, or a member of a court. In preaching he

should know of the needs of those he is addressing and be prepared to supply them.

The same will apply to all other services; adaptability to the needs; preparation to meet all conditions.

High Priests, Apostles, Patriarchs, Elders and Priests are called to preach.

Teachers and Deacons may do so. See General Conference Resolutions.

This then could be made a subject for the consideration of all.

High Priests, Apostles and Elders are called to preside, others may do so as occasion requires. Hence all may study the subject of presiding.

Pastors, Priests and Teachers are made visiting officers. These then may study proper methods of visiting, as well as class of information to be treated upon. Priests one kind of visiting. Teachers another kind.

Bishops, Elders and High Priests are constituted Courts at times. These could study Court procedure.

Teachers and Deacons are called upon to treat with unruly members and have to appear before Courts of Trial. These must know something of Court procedure, hence the subject applicable to Elders Courts and those who sit upon them could be studied by these officers.

Patriarchs impart spiritual food. Pastors likewise. On these lines subjects could be studied together. Patriarchs could study separately on subjects pertaining to blessings, associations with branch officers in labor, etc.

Leaving out Apostles and Seventies, they being general missionaries, and moving most of their time of service; but all other officers may meet in Quorum capacity regularly and be benefitted.

In the study of the doctrine and principles of faith all may study on the same lines and at the same time, in regard "theory" also.

Concerning the study relative to foreign lands, that could be left for some time in the future since the idea is intended as we understand the revelation that the travelling ministry might be prepared to meet conditions there. While it may be studied with profit by the local ministry, yet other studies should be given precedence.

Character building is the most important of all work; consequently to those who are admitted into the Kingdom the class of food which builds it up is the most valuable.

Treatment of the membership under all circumstances and conditions. The aims of associate bodies of consecrated people. What communities can do. What to be done with

our surplus in money or products of any kind. Who are to be trusted with these surpluses. What can we expect as a benefit by this trust?

What educational facilities may we hope for?

How much of time to be used in preparation for work?

Under whose direction should the helpless or dependants labor if able?

What opportunities for labor should be furnished?

What proportion of our increase should go to the Bishop?

How should the sick be cared for?

What compensation should laborers in the Kingdom of God receive?

What facilities should they have?

These and a multitude of questions on temporal as well as spiritual and educational lines that may employ our time in study throughout our entire lives, and be far from the limit of knowledge possible. But getting what we do, since we can, we are better prepared to serve than if not having it at all. Hence no excuse for not getting what we can because we can not get it all.

We suggest as a beginning of study applicable to all, Elder John W. Rushton's article in the Herald on preaching. Read it over; make out written comments.

That an introduction to the consideration of this article may be made by the President of the Quorum and be followed, by

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Questions to be asked of the President or Teacher to be answered by himself or by others whom he may request. Let the consideration be had till the Quorum decides to leave it by vote. Reading paragraph by paragraph, considering each separately will produce good results.

CONCERNING PROCEDURE.

We have a line of instruction intended for the Priesthood when gathered for instruction found in Sec. 85, par. 37. "Let one speak at a time and let all listen to his saying that all may be edified of all, and that every one may have an equal priviledge."

However, some one should lead, and this one is said to be the President or teacher, (See Doc. and Cov. 104:40), who is to sit in council with the Elders, and to teach them according to the covenants. Sec. 85, par. 39, tells us that the Teacher in the School of the Prophets is to be in a place in the House of God that the congregation may hear his words as he delivers them carefully and distinctly and not with loud speech; indicating clearly that he is to be the chief instructor while all have a right to teach, as said

in the law, Sec. 85: "Teach ye one another words of wisdom."

But it is reasonable to suppose that the Teacher should teach or provide one to take his place, or perhaps he may ask the Quorum to provide one which I believe would be inadvisable.

From the above we regard the President the chief instructor.

Second one, is the privilege of every member to be heard at least once upon any subject before it. According to the rule sent out by the Presidency of the Church.

It is advised that after the subject has been duly stated, the teacher should call one, the one next to him to speak, and so, until all who wish to speak may do so.

In order that equality of privilege be had, it would be well to have the speakers speak according to the order of their enrollment, and marked as they speak, until the roll is called, and if desired to continue the subject, that their names be called again as before, and marked, and if the subject be discontinued before all have spoken, the one following the last speaker upon any subject should be called upon first at the next meeting.

LESSON STUDY.

Read Elbert A. Smith's article on preaching, as found in Saints' Herald of Feb. 21, 1912, and John W. Rushton's in the preacher's number, March 25, 1914.

What is a Sermon?

J. W. Rushton tells us it is a point of contact between earth and heaven. The point where humanity is fused with Divinity.

QUERY: How can we reach this conclusion? Is that a safe position to take? How does he reach that conclusion?

What is the Proper Effect of a Sermon?

J. W. Rushton impresses the thought upon the mind that it is to cause to be seen the vision of human frailties and failures and soul-felt poverty, lifted up to God to be charged with the glory of the divine in the preacher himself, and in seeing this vision the people veil themselves in humility, the soul of affliction is lifted upon the crest of hope; the mind confused in the tumults of conflicting interests, and weary in the increasing struggle against forces which make for the ruin of the nobility of character is caught in the strong tide that makes for righteousness. The aged, the middle aged, and the youth is given light, and strength, and transported into an illumined idealism.

Have we properly represented him, if not in what way? And if this represents his view are we in agreement with him? Are there still better thoughts given by him in this regard? What are our personal views?

How Can We Produce this Result?

He tells us the consecrated power of mind, tongue, and heart. The preacher to reveal and make attractive the subject under consideration, **keeping himself in the background**, less and less of man, and more and more of God, is the secret of genius in the preacher.

How is it possible for a man to keep himself in the back ground?

Read what Elbert Smith has to say on this point and the poetry selected by him.

In what way may a man make himself more conspicuous than his subject?

What Must the Preacher Possess to be Effective?

He informs us he must be rich in imagination, must have a warm and living sympathy, must identify himself literally with the people among whom he labors, must enter into deep and prayerful meditation; must be a burden bearer, that from under the pressure of the burdens of the congregation, the purest and the best must be expressed from his consciousness; selfishness must be removed, and his soul must swell with holy love for all.

What other important thoughts has he advanced upon this phase of the subject? Are there others, and what are they?

How is the Sermon Made?

By having access to an infinite variety of influences. By possessing the feelings and the dignity of a priest, prophet, seer and king. By possessing the powers of penetrative discernment of principle. By possessing the development brought about by the sacrifice of self, for the sake of principle and the common good. By learning the art of reading with unerring instinct, human life, being capable of delicately dividing between the real and superficial. By carrying the sorrows, and the needs of the people to God, and returning with succor and suitable food for them.

Do we think of still other contributing factors? Do we regard as necessary those presented, and how may we set about to get these qualifications and facilities?

What has Bro. Rushton stated as the vital quality? what does he compare the preacher to, and who the master? Has natural endowment of mind anything to do with a preacher's effectiveness or can all the essential qualities be developed? What does he think about preachers—are there exceptions? What is your opinion about his classification of preachers? You will notice he places Paul in one class, Peter in another, and so on. Is he correct in your judgment?

To answer these questions it will be necessary to thoughtfully read Isaiah, the writings of Paul, of Peter, of John the beloved, of James as well as the Master himself, as written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Of what value is a proper knowledge of language, and with what care should a preacher select his words. What does Bro. Rushton say on this point?

What should be done, if after deliberate thinking, some excellent thought should come and then be forgotten?

Is a preacher justified in expecting to have a succession of brilliant and eloquent thoughts come to him without painstaking study of men, their writings, and prayer? And is it necessary for effective preaching that a preacher be eloquent?

Bro. Rushton indicates three ways of preaching. One by casting himself upon the current of psychic or inspirational power which comes from God, or the occasion.

Another courageously and carefully thinks out his message, and commits the thoughts on paper, weaves them into a symmetrical whole, and commits them to memory.

Third, if he cannot commit them to memory, ar-

range them in the form of notes, or even in the form of an essay, and read the sermon with the same passion which was in his soul when preparing it.

What do you think of this?

What about manners in the pulpit, dress, tone of voice, etc.

Let us read what has been referred to and there is reason to think that we shall come to our priesthood meeting with something to say worth listening to. This can be done by trying inside of two weeks by half hours reading each day.

MONOPOLY OF TIME.

The presidency of the Church has suggested that no limit be placed upon speakers, that the regulating of this be placed in the hands of the president of the meeting.

Long speeches are usually a bore to everyone, except possibly the speaker himself, who sometimes expresses the feeling that he has not been treated fairly. It never seems to occur to him that others have anything of importance to say, and are keenly desirous to express themselves. It has occurred that those who have made a study of the principles of equality, and have ardently advocated the same have eagerly pressed themselves upon the unwilling ears taking a large share of the time to be divided among all, thus violating the principle for which they stand. This has gone on in some instances till many of those present have excused themselves rather than be bored. This spirit is manifested in most all kinds of meetings, and the observant ones have wondered if it be a mental defect, or a preponderating element of egotism, which assumes that the most valuable time of a meeting is that occupied by themselves.

CROSSFIRING.

Again they have advised, that there should be no crossfiring of speakers. This is indulged in sometimes by those who desire to be examples to others, but being over anxious they have trespassed, discomforting some and humiliating themselves. Each should try and state what he has to say so that if differing from others that by comparison it will be seen if it be superior to others to be such without any praises from its author, just as judgment is passed upon pianos of different makes, plates, knives, forks, engines, bread, melons, apples, etc.

It is desired that a space be preserved in this paper for Quorum news. Also a space for questions and answers. It is further suggested that a reporter for each quorum be selected to send in news not less than one week before the date of its publication. Also a place for criticism over the critic's name, the publication of which to be left to the discretion of the editor.

It is further suggested that an effort be made to have a general meeting of the priesthood at least once a year; in the nature of a priesthood institute, at which time some one of the general church officers be requested to come and give us instructions.

Will we have another issue of this paper? To continue it, it will cost about \$7.50 an issue.

Short articles may appear from time to time pertinent to our needs. Addresses of Quorum officers called for.