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Nauvoo, Illinois

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HC 7:366-367

At a meeting of the Seventies Council, Brigham Young arose and said:

When men have come into our midst who were as corrupt as the devil himself, many have supposed it would have been better to have cut their throats with a feather and exposed their sink of corruption, and let them go to hell where they belonged, than to have borne with them as Brother Joseph Smith did; but this course would meet with a conflicting argument.  To stop a man in his career would be taking away his agency.  Cain was permitted to live, peradventure, he might repent of his wickedness, and redeem a portion of his time, and thereby obtain a glory and salvation, though not a full salvation; and this is the reason that Brother Joseph bore so long with Jackson and others, that peradventure they might, notwithstanding they had been guilty of murder and robbery, come to the waters of baptism through repentance, and redeem a part of their allotted time.  If they were cut off from the earth they might with propriety come up in the day of judgment and say we took away their agency, which if we had let alone, they would have repented of their sins and redeemed a part of their time.  The presidents of seventies should be men of wisdom and know how to save men instead of destroying them; for example let a hot-headed president stand at the head of a quorum and let some of the members of his quorum be overtaken in a fault, it would make no difference how small or great the offense might be, the first steps that would be taken (instead of going in a private manner, as a prudent reflecting president should and teach the guilty the law of redemption, bind up the breach and thereby save a soul from ruin) would be to have the offense made public--have the accused arraigned before the quorum in order to ferret out the crime, thus increasing the wound, especially if it should be an interruption between a man and his wife; the offense having become public, confidence is lost, not only in the accused, but the parties concerned lose confidence in each other, their reputation sinks, consequently despair rushes into the troubled soul, who is thus rashly treated and he or they suppose they have not a friend on earth, consequently imagine it is useless for them to try to redeem their former standing, and in fact instances have been known of individuals under like circumstances giving up to intoxication and finally become the most miserable dissipated and abandoned wretches on earth; whereas, had wisdom been used, the soul might have been reclaimed and saved by casting the mantle of charity around them and thereby covering up a multitude of sins.  This is what is meant by the mantle of charity that Paul speaks of [covering a multitude of sins].

We should be charitable, liberal, patient and forbearing with each other and above all never blast each others' characters, rather hide each others faults with the mantle of charity; for when but few know your faults they seem but few, but expose them and they become multitudes.