

arose before that conference and pleaded for Sidney Rigdon, and asked that he might have one more chance to regain the confidence of the Saints and of the Prophet. He related the sufferings of this man from the commencement of the work. He depicted the scenes through which he had passed in Missouri, his sufferings for the truth. All these things appealed to the sympathies of the Latter-day Saints, and, notwithstanding all the efforts of Joseph to be rid of this unfaithful counselor, the Church fastened him upon the Prophet. Yet after all this was done for his encouragement, after his friend Hyrum Smith had stood by him and pleaded his cause with success, he forsook his post of duty. Instead of remaining in Nauvoo, which he was requested to do both by the solicitation of friends and the voice of God Himself, he went to Pittsburg. After the death of the two Prophets he came back to Nauvoo, and knowing the Saints were acquainted with his unfaithfulness, he feared to come out boldly and advocate his direct right to the Presidency, but he tried to come in at a side door, and asked to be appointed guardian over the Church, to build it up to the Prophet Joseph. He avoided the two Apostles who were there—Elders Richards and Taylor—and called secret meetings and endeavored to lay plans that would lead to the gratification of his own vain ambition.

In the midst of his plotting, however, the quorum of the Twelve began to return; and it may be well, on this occasion, to call attention to a few manifestations of the Spirit of God that indicated very clearly the right of the second General Quorum or Council of the Church to take the responsibility of Presidency over the Church after the first quorum was destroyed.

As Parley P. Pratt was making his way on foot over the prairies of Illinois towards Nauvoo, sad, sick at heart and bowed down in sorrow in consequence of the great calamity which had befallen the Saints in the death of their leaders, and pondering in his mind upon whom now devolved the responsibility of presiding over the Church, he testifies that the following was given to him by inspiration. "Lift up your head and rejoice, for behold! It is well with My servants, Joseph and Hyrum. My servant Joseph still holds the keys of My Kingdom in this dispensation, and he shall stand in due time on the earth, in the flesh, and fulfil that to which he is appointed. Go and say unto My people in Nauvoo that they shall continue to pursue their daily duties and take care of themselves, and make no movement in Church government to reorganize or alter anything until the return of the remainder of the quorum of the Twelve; but exhort them that they continue to build up the House of the Lord, which I have commanded them to build in Nauvoo." (Aut. P. P. P., page 371).

In order that he might not be mistaken in that inspiration, he asked that a repetition of it might be given him, and his prayer was answered. Parley Pratt followed these instructions, and when he arrived at Nauvoo he found his fellow Apostles—Elders Richards and Taylor—moving in the lines which had been indicated by the voice of the Spirit to him.

President Young, at the time the Prophet was killed, was in the State of New Hampshire in company with Orson Pratt. They received the news of the Prophet's death at Peterboro'. "The first thing I thought of," says President Young, "was whether Joseph had taken the keys of the Kingdom with him from the earth. Brother Orson Pratt sat on my left; we were leaning back in our chairs. Bringing my hand down on my knee, I said, 'The keys of the Kingdom are right here with the Church.'" (Tullidge's life of B. Young.)

To the same great truth we have a living witness present, one whose word is held in high esteem by the Latter-day Saints—and justly so, for he has been in our midst for over half a century, a faithful witness for God, and we know that his word is true and may be relied upon—I refer to President Wilford Woodruff.

President Brigham Young, writing to Orson Spencer, who had charge of the British mission, in giving him an account of the organization of the First Presidency at Winter Quarters, in 1834, said:

"About a year before Joseph's death he told the Twelve: 'There is not one key or power to be bestowed upon this Church to lead the people into the Celestial Gate, but I have given you, showed you and talked it over with you; the Kingdom is set up, and you have the perfect pattern, and you can go and build up the Kingdom, and go in at the Celestial Gate, taking your train with you.'"—*Mill. Star* Vol. 10, page 115.)

Only a few days ago, in conversation with Brother Woodruff upon this subject, he made practically the same statement to me, and it occurs to me now. I do not know how Brother Woodruff feels about it, but it occurs to me that with so many of the youth of Israel before us here to-night, if he should so choose it would be an excellent opportunity to bear that testimony in the presence of us all.

President Woodruff—I will at the close of your remarks.

When the Twelve all arrived, a conference of the Saints at Nauvoo was called, and Sidney Rigdon was given full opportunity to lay his claims before the Church. There was no limit set to the time that he should occupy. He was there for the purpose of laying his claims before the people, he had full opportunity, and his reputation for eloquence and logic would lead us to believe that he presented his case in the strongest possible light. But it fell lifeless upon the assembled multitude.

This was in the forenoon, as I remember it. In the afternoon, the meeting was continued and President Brigham Young addressed the congregation. In the course of his remarks he gave the Saints to understand that if they wanted Sidney Rigdon to be their leader, they could have him. I read to you from his speech:

"The first position I take in behalf of the Twelve and the people is, to ask a few questions. I ask the Latter-day Saints, do you, as individuals, at this time, want to choose a prophet or a guardian? Inasmuch as our Prophet and Patriarch are taken from our midst, do you want some one to guard,

to guide and lead you through this world into the Kingdom of God, or not? All who want some person to be a guardian, or a prophet, a spokesman, or something else, signify it by raising the right hand."

Not one hand was raised. Further on in his remarks he said:

"If the people want Brother Rigdon to lead them, they may have him; but, I say unto you, the Twelve have the keys of the Kingdom of God in all the world. * * * * *

They stand next to Joseph, and are as the First Presidency of the Church."

In making that statement to the Church President Young was in strict harmony with the revelations to which I have alluded here, wherein it is stated that the quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitute a quorum equal in authority and in power to the First Presidency of the Church; and as further stated in the testimony of Brigham Young when Joseph Smith had about a year before his death conferred upon them all the keys, all the authority, all the powers that he himself possessed, and they had full right and power to lead the Church and take their train with them into the Celestial Kingdom.

Furthermore, the Spirit of God bore record to the Church on that occasion that the mantle of the Prophet Joseph—the power and authority that he was possessed of were resting upon Brigham Young. The deceased Prophet's spirit was clearly reflected upon his utterances. A remarkable circumstance occurred on that occasion. Brigham Young was transfigured before the people, not only in voice but in appearance. President George Q. Cannon, who was present on that occasion, says:

"If Joseph had risen from the dead and again spoken in their hearing, the effect could not have been more startling than it was to many present at that meeting; it was the voice of Joseph himself; and not only was it the voice of Joseph which was heard, but it seemed in the eyes of the people as if it were the very person of Joseph which stood before them. A more wonderful and miraculous event than was wrought that day in the presence of that congregation we never heard of." (Tullidge's Life of B. Y., page 115.)

From the journal of a man who wrote it down at the time I read the following:

"Brigham Young said: 'I will tell you who your leaders or guardians will be. The Twelve—I at their head.' This was with a voice like the voice of the Prophet Joseph. I thought it was his, and so did thousands who heard it. This was very satisfactory to the people, and a vote was taken to sustain the Twelve in their office, which, with a few dissenting voices, was passed." (Journal of William C. Staines.)

Sidney Rigdon's claims to the presidency were disposed of then, by the Church rejecting him; and here let me call your attention to a statement of the things necessary to constitute a man a President of the Church. It is not sufficient for him to be nominated for that office; no, not even though the voice of God should indicate who the man is to be. Although that were done, something else is necessary in order to make that man the President of the Church. It is stated here (Doc-