

# DESERET NEWS:

## WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

WEDNESDAY, - SEPT. 12, 1877

### EPISTLE

#### OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES AND COUNSELORS TO THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN ALL THE WORLD.

BELOVED SAINTS:

A time of mourning has fallen upon Zion, and it is with feelings of profound sadness that we address this epistle unto you. Our beloved brother, guide and counselor, our prophet, seer and revelator, President Brigham Young, has been taken from our midst by death. Surrounded by his family and friends, and in his own house and in the city of which, under the Lord, he was the founder, his spirit peacefully passed from this mortal existence into that state of rest prepared for the righteous. Though harassed and bitterly persecuted, especially of late years, his enemies were not permitted to take his life. He has not been called by the Lord to die a martyr's death; yet his entire life has proved his willingness to endure even that ordeal, if it had been the good pleasure of the Lord to require it of him. He has shrunk from no issue, and has been willing to risk liberty and life at the call of duty, even when his friends trembled for his safety.

At a ripe old age, in the quiet of his own home, he has passed to his rest. This is a consolation to us who survive him. Nothing that has occurred to us since we came to these valleys has touched the hearts of the Saints like this sad event. He not only has been the President of the Church, but a father to the people. Their welfare and prosperity, their preservation from evil, and their advancement in everything holy and pure has always been the uppermost thought and desire of his heart. In his love and devotion to the work of God he has never wavered. During the thirty-three years that he has presided over the Church, since the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph, his knees have never trembled, his hands have never shook; he has never faltered or quailed. However threatening the surroundings or prospects may have been, he has never been dismayed; but at those times he has exhibited such serene confidence and faith, and uttered such words of encouragement, as to comfort and sustain all the people and to call forth their love and admiration. The Lord, however, not only blessed him with valor, but He endowed him with great wisdom. His counsels, when obeyed, have been attended with salvation, and as an organizer and administrator he has no superior. Of this the people of the entire Church are his witnesses, and our Territory, as well as the many settlements in the adjacent Territories, are his monuments. He always had the counsel of the Lord and none ever sought it from him in vain.

Beloved Saints: We have been greatly favored of the Lord in being permitted to live in this dispensation and in having been led by two such men as the prophets Joseph and Brigham. Of Joseph, the prophet and seer of the Lord, it has been truthfully said, that at his death, he had done more (save Jesus only,) for the development of the principles of life and the salvation of men in this world, for the space of time in which he was on earth than any other man that ever lived upon it. The prophet Brigham has proved himself worthy to be his successor.

His labors the Lord has crowned with most remarkable success, his words he has honored and fulfilled, and those who have obeyed his counsel he has blessed and upheld. The time will yet come when

his presidency over the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be pointed to as an epoch of wonderful events. In the providence of the Lord, however, he has been taken from us. Great efforts in prayer have been made, and constant administration of the gospel ordinance for the sick, to still keep him here; but the Lord has ordered otherwise. We must here acknowledge that it is the Lord to whom he was indebted for the wisdom and intelligence displayed by him. The bestowal of these gifts manifests the care and supervision which He exercises over His people; for these blessings are all the gift of God, and all emanate from Him. The Prophets Joseph Smith and Brigham Young have been, and now are, in His hands as His instruments in doing His work, and so are we. We have the same consolation, however, in this our time of grief and deep affliction, that the Prophet Brigham had upon hearing of the cruel martyrdom of the prophets Joseph and Hyrum—"the keys of the kingdom are still right here with the Church." Joseph may be martyred, Brigham may die, so far as this life is concerned; but our Heavenly Father still lives, the holy priesthood and apostleship, which He restored to the earth, still remain to guide and govern, and to administer ordinances to the Church which He has established. Our beloved brother Brigham Young has gone from us to join the prophet Joseph and the host of the holy and the pure who are behind the veil; but we do not therefore lose the benefit of his labors. He is now in a position to do more for that work which he loved so well, and for which he labored so ardently, than he could possibly do in the flesh; and that work will roll onward with increased power and accelerated speed.

The President of the Church having been taken from us by death, the Church is now placed in the same position that it was at the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph—there is no quorum of First Presidency. Speaking in Kirtland upon the relationship of the First Presidency to the Twelve Apostles, the Prophet Joseph said (*Millennial Star*, Vol. XV., page 595), "the Twelve are not subject to any other than the First Presidency, viz.: myself, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams, who are now my counselors (and where I am not there is no First Presidency over the Twelve.)" After the death of the prophet Joseph, President Young, in speaking to the Saints, said: "For the first time in the kingdom of God, the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, chosen by revelation, in this last dispensation of the gospel for the winding up scene, present themselves before the Saints to stand in their lot according to appointment." \* \* \* "Here are the Twelve, appointed by the finger of God, who hold the keys of the priesthood and the authority to set in order and regulate the church in all the world. Here is Elder Amasa Lyman and Elder Sidney Rigdon; they were counselors in the First Presidency, and they are counselors to the Twelve still, if they keep their places; but if either wishes to act as 'spokesman' for the Prophet Joseph, he must go behind the veil where Joseph is." *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 5, page 637.

Once more the necessity for the Twelve Apostles to step forward and take the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has arisen. The same spirit which rested upon the prophet Joseph before his martyrdom, in instructing the Twelve Apostles as to their duties and responsibilities and the necessity of their bearing off the kingdom, has rested upon the Prophet Brigham during this past spring and summer. He released all of the Twelve who were presiding over Stakes, from those duties, selected others to fill those positions, and taught the Church that the Twelve Apostles were called by their priesthood to act in a wider and more extended sphere than to be presidents of stakes. All his teachings and counsels plainly indicated that there would be an increase of responsibility and jurisdiction resting upon them, and that they would be held to a stricter accountability than they had been. We can now understand and attach an importance and significance to these teachings and counsels which we could not at the time they were given.

On Tuesday last, September 4th, the two counselors of President Young and ten of the Twelve Apostles,—two of the Twelve, Brothers Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, being absent in England,—held a meeting, and waited upon the Lord. With humble, contrite and saddened hearts we earnestly sought to learn His mind and will concerning us and His Church. The Lord blessed us with the spirit of union and condescended to reveal to us what steps we should take. Elder John Taylor, the senior Apostle, and who has acted as the President of the Twelve, was unanimously sustained in that position. With the same unanimity also it was voted that the quorum of the Twelve Apostles is the presiding quorum and authority in the Church.

These things are so plainly indicated by the revelations and in the past history of the Church that they could not be ignored, either by the Twelve Apostles or by the President's Counselors. Hence, again, as a similar course was adopted on the death of the Prophet Joseph, the two Counselors of President Young—Presidents John W. Young and Daniel H. Wells—were unanimously sustained as one with, counselors to and associated in action with the Twelve Apostles.

To facilitate the transaction of business, it was voted unanimously that, for the present, President John Taylor be assisted by Brothers John W. Young, Daniel H. Wells, and George Q. Cannon in attending to business connected with the Temples, the public works, and other Church affairs of a financial character.

Inquiries have arisen respecting the brethren who have been employed by the various quorums to work on the Temple. Upon this subject we desire to say that it is not intended in making the change that has been suggested—for the pay of the brethren to come through the Bishops instead of the quorums—to release those who have subscribed through the quorums; but only to put it in another shape. It is expected that the members of the quorums will still continue to do what they have heretofore done; but the pay they have to make will be made to the Bishops of their respective Wards, who should, as early as possible, ascertain from the various members of quorums in their Wards that which each one has been paying, and collect the same, so that they may be prepared by this means to meet the payments to the hands who are employed as they come due. We hope that, instead of slackening in our efforts to push the Temples forward, there will be an increase of zeal and energy on the part of all, from the Apostles, through all the ranks of the priesthood, to the youngest member of the Church.

The Bishops in all the Stakes of Zion should make arrangements to have a meeting of the lesser priesthood in their Wards once every week. These meetings they should attend personally with their counselors, so as to give necessary instruction and counsel, and also that they may learn the true condition of the flock over which they are called to preside. At 11 o'clock a. m. on the first Saturday in every month there should be held in each Stake a general priesthood meeting of all the officers of the church. These meetings should be held at the place in each Stake most convenient for this purpose; and full reports of the condition of the various Wards should be made to these meetings by the Bishops. Instruction and counsel can then be given that will have the effect to produce concert of action in all matters of a public character in the different Stakes, and that will result in the spread of the principles of the gospel among the people and the more perfect development of the Church.

That there may be a correct understanding among all the Stakes of Zion respecting the time for holding the quarterly conferences in the different Stakes, and the Presidents be enabled to make preparations therefor, we have deemed it best to make the following appointments for the conferences during the next half year. It will be seen that in most instances they will be held in two Stakes upon the same days. This is unavoidable, in consequence of the great number of Stakes.

Salt Lake Stake, Oct. 6, 1877—Jan. 5 and 6, 1878.

Davis and Utah Stakes, Oct. 13 and 14, 1877—Jan. 12 and 13, 1878.  
Weber and Juab Stakes, Oct. 20 and 21, 1877—Jan. 19 and 20, 1878.  
Tooele and Box Elder Stakes, Oct. 27 and 28, 1877—Jan. 26 and 27, 1878.  
Wasatch and Cache Stakes, Nov. 3 and 4, 1877—Feb. 2 and 3, 1878.  
Summit and Bear Lake Stakes, Nov. 10 and 11, 1877—Feb. 9 and 10, 1878.  
Morgan and Sanpete Stakes, Nov. 17 and 18, 1877—Feb. 16 and 17, 1878.  
Sevier and Millard Stakes, Nov. 24 and 25, 1877—Feb. 23 and 24, 1878.  
Panguitch and Beaver Stakes, Dec. 1 and 2, 1877—March 2 and 3, 1878.  
Kanab and Iron Stakes, Dec. 8 and 9, 1877—March 9 and 10, 1878.  
St. George Stake, Dec. 15 and 16, 1877—March 16 and 17, 1878.

As the time for holding our General Semi-annual Conference is approaching, it is very desirable that complete reports be prepared by those officers whose duty it is to make reports. The circular, issued recently by the First Presidency, explains the necessity for and character of these reports. Blank forms have also been prepared, and have been published, by the DESERET NEWS, for reports of Bishops and Presidents of Stakes. Immediate steps should be taken by the Bishops of the various Wards, and by others who are presiding over branches, to obtain full reports upon all the points included in the blank forms. These, when completed, should be sent to the Presidents of Stakes, who should, from these reports, draw up their reports, including as complete a financial exhibit as practicable, and either forward or bring them to the Conference in this city. Before President Young's sickness, he arranged for the monthly Priesthood meeting of the Salt Lake Stake of Zion to be held in the New Tabernacle on Wednesday the 3rd of October. General meetings will be held on the 4th and 5th, to which all the priesthood and Saints are invited, preparatory to the General Semi-annual Conference, which will commence on Saturday, the 6th of October.

And now, brethren and sisters, we exhort you to arouse yourselves and seek unto the Lord in fervent faith and prayer. We know that our Father in heaven is a God of revelation. He is ready and willing to pour out His blessings and gifts upon those who seek unto him for them. We need them as individuals and as a people to qualify us for the duties which devolve upon us. We should remember and carry into practical effect the counsels and instructions we have so liberally received from our departed President. He has gone from us; but the flock is not left without a shepherd. Latter-day Saints should so live that they will know the voice of the true shepherd, and not be deceived by pretenders. This is the privilege of every member of the Church, and the Latter-day Saint who does not live so as to have the revelations of Jesus constantly with him, stands in great danger of being deceived and falling away. We have before us the building up and the redeeming of Zion. This can only be done by the aid of the Lord. All the signs which the Lord promised to send in the last days are making their appearance. They show that the day of the Lord is near. A great work has to be done, and there is but little time in which to accomplish it; great diligence is, therefore, required. Let us, then, go to with our might and build the Temples of the Most High and accomplish every other labor devolving upon us. Let us not slacken our diligence, or give way to doubt, unbelief or hardness of heart; but be strong in the Lord, and cry unto him unceasingly to give us the power to build up his Zion on the earth and to help establish a reign of righteousness, peace and truth.

Our prayers are offered continually in behalf of all the officers and Saints composing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that the Lord will pour out upon them the spirit of consolation, and that He will endow them with the revelations of the Lord Jesus so bountifully that every one will understand his duty and be prompt in the fulfillment thereof. Let us build each other up in the most holy faith, cultivating love, meekness, lowliness of heart, charity, patience and long-suffering, bearing with each other's faults, and yet

avoiding the very appearance of evil, so that others, seeing our good works, may be led to glorify God.

We remain your brethren in the new and everlasting covenant,

JOHN TAYLOR,  
WILFORD WOODRUFF,  
ORSON HYDE,  
CHARLES C. RICH,  
LORENZO SNOW,  
ERASTUS SNOW,  
FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS,  
GEORGE Q. CANNON,  
BRIGHAM YOUNG,  
ALBERT CARRINGTON,  
JOHN W. YOUNG,  
DANIEL H. WELLS.

"Joseph conferred upon our heads all the keys and powers belonging to the Apostleship which he himself held before he was taken away, and no man or set of men can get between Joseph and the Twelve in this world or in the world to come."  
—President Young's discourse in Nauvoo.

### ON TRIAL.

"The Mormon system will be put on trial for its existence with the death of Brigham Young."

The above, from the *Omaha Herald*, expresses a sentiment entertained by a very large number of people in both hemispheres. The popular idea is that the whole "Mormon Church" is comprehended in its head, and that with the removal of its leader the body must fall to pieces. But there is no subject so much talked about and at the same time so little understood, as this, so called, "Mormon question."

The opinions now entertained and very generally expressed by the press of the country, prevailed at the time of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Indeed, those who planned, desired or consented to the death of the great Prophet and Seer of the nineteenth century, excused themselves for the murderous spirit which they cherished, by the argument that the death of the leader was the death of the system, and that his removal would dispose of the "Mormon question," and scatter the "Mormon" people forever.

But history has demonstrated their error. As in former times, the blood of the martyrs proved the "seed of the church," and "Mormonism" flourished and extended, took deeper root and bore riper fruits than ever before. Great emergencies bring forth great men. The man for the times came to the front, with its necessities. The Church, deprived of its earthly head, showed that it possessed a vigorous vitality. The body remained, and that body is deathless. It was alive in all its existing parts, and so constituted that it could evolve a guiding, directing power from its own organism and inherent forces.

Its enemies were amazed, confounded, defeated. They thought Joseph Smith was the Church, but they found that a Higher Power than a mortal leader had breathed into it the breath of life, and placed beyond the reach of man the weapons to destroy it. Joseph passed behind the veil, and the Twelve Apostles, forming, according to the revelations, "a quorum equal in authority and power to the three presidents" standing at the head, moved forward in their place and calling, fully competent to lead the Church, and carry out the programme laid down by the Prophet who had been taken away by the hand of assassination.

In due time, as the President of that Quorum, our late lamented leader moved up into the leadership of the Church with two Counselors, in accordance with the revelation which says:

"Of necessity there are presidents, or presiding officers, growing out of, or appointed of or from among those who are ordained to the several offices in these two priesthoods.

Of the Melchisedek Priesthood three presiding high priests, chosen by the body, appointed and ordained unto that office, and upheld by the confidence, faith and prayer of the Church, form a quorum of the presidency of the Church."

There was no schism, no dissolution. The Church moved on to perform its mission in the earth, and at the expulsion from Nauvoo, which threatened to scatter its