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SOURCE:     Addresses/BY  
            T&S 5:647-649  
  
  
At the trial of Sidney Rigdon  (first address)  
  
am  
      I will call the attention of the congregation to the subject which is designed to be laid before you to-day.  But I will first make a request that the police will attend to the instructions given them by the Mayor this morning, and that is, to see that there is perfect order on the outside of the congregation.  We are not afraid of disturbance here, but there is generally some disposed to talk on the outside, which prevents those from hearing who are near them, and we wish all to hear what is said from the stand.

      I have frequently thought lately of Paul's words when he said "much every way," "some for Paul, some for Appollos, some for Cephus and some for Christ;" and I believe there are a great many here for Christ.  I will make the application of Paul's words to us:  "Much every way," Some for Joseph and Hyrum, the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, the Temple and Joseph's measures; and some for Lyman Wight, some for James Emmett and some for Sidney Rigdon, and I suppose some for the Twelve.

      The business of the day will result in this thing:  all those who are for Joseph and Hyrum, the Book of Mormon, book of Doctrine and Covenants, the Temple and Joseph's measures, and for the Twelve; they being one party; will be called upon to manifest their principles openly and boldly. Then we wish all who are of the opposite parties to enjoy the same liberty, and to be as decided and bold, and to show their principles as boldly, and be as decided as they are in their secret meetings and private councils. If they are for Sidney Rigdon; and believe he is the man to be the first president and the leader of this people, we wish them to manifest it as freely as they do in other places; because this will form another party.

      We want all those who are for Lyman Wight and his measures, to show themselves openly and boldly; and all those for James Emmett and his measures, to show themselves.-- We wish them to withdraw to day without fear and to be as bold here as they are in other places.  They may as well show themselves boldly, for I know where they live, and I know their names:  I can point them out if necessary.  Those who wish to tarry and build up the city and build the Temple, and carry out the measures and revelations of our martyred prophet, we wish to know who they are.  Now all those who decline going either way, but secretly slander the character of Joseph Smith and the Twelve, my fellowship will be withdrawn from them without any further ceremony.  If there are not more than ten men who hang on to the truth, and to Joseph and the Temple, and are willing to do right in all things, let me be one of that number.  If there should be but ten left, and their lives should be threatened; threatened with destruction by mobs, the Temple not be built, &c., because they are determined to do right, let me be one that is martyred for the truth.  I have travelled these many years in the midst of poverty and tribulation, and that too with blood in my shoes, month after month, to sustain and to preach this gospel and build up this kingdom; and God forbid that I should now turn round and seek to destroy that which I have been laboring to build up.

      It is written in the book of Doctrine and Covenants, that the president can be tried before a bishop and twelve high priests, or the high council of the church.  There are many present this morning who were present at the organization of that quorum in Kirtland.  We have here before us this morning, the high council, and bishop Whitney at their head, and we will try Sidney Rigdon before this council and let them take an action on his case this morning; and then we will present it to the church, and let the church also take an action upon it.  I am willing that you should know that my feelings for Sidney Rigdon as a man, as a private citizen, are of the best kind.  I have loved that man and always had the very best feelings for him; I have stood in defence of his life and his house in Kirtland, and have lain on the floor, night after night, and week after week, to defend him.  There are those who are following Sidney for whom my heart is grieved, I esteem them as good citizens.  But when it touches the salvation of the people, I am the man that walks to the line.

      I am informed that elder Rigdon is sick; I am also informed that he and his party have had a council this morning, and have concluded not to say any thing in their own defence, thinking that would be best for them. I have no idea that elder Rigdon is any more sick than I am:  any how, we have a right to try his case, for he had sufficient notice to prepare himself if he had been disposed.  We gave him notice last Tuesday evening, and had it published in the Neighbor, and was he sick he could have sent us word to have the case deferred.  I heard elder Rigdon's discourse last Sunday, myself; I heard him pour blessings upon this people in an unbounded degree; I heard him encourage the building up of this city and the Temple; he said he was one with us, and left his blessing upon the congregation. The congregation says to him:  "go in peace." I said upon the back of his statements, you see that brother Rigdon is with us.  I have not seen that brother Rigdon has been with us since he returned from Pittsburgh; I have known that he was not with us in spirit, but I took him at his word.  The spirit reveals many things which it would not do to tell the public, until it can be proved.  But to come to the point.  On Tuesday last, I heard that elder Rigdon had a meeting the night previous, and had ordained men to be prophets, priests and kings.  I concluded to go and see elder Rigdon, and asked elder Hyde to go with me.  We went into his house, and after the usual compliments, I set down directly opposite him, and took hold of his hand.  I looked him right in the face and asked him if he had a meeting last night, here, in which men were ordained to be prophets, priests and kings?  He replied no, we had no meeting here; had we brother Soby?

      "Well, did you have a meeting any where, brother Rigdon, in which men were ordained to be prophets, priests and kings?"

      "Well, I don't know; did we have a meeting last night, brother Soby?  Yes, I believe there was one last night; wasn't (sic) there brother Soby, up at your house?"

      I saw the disposition of elder Rigdon to conceal the truth and equivocate, and I determined to know the whole secret. I said to him again, "Elder Rigdon, did you not ordain these men at that meeting last night?"

      He replied, "yes, I suppose I did."  
      I then asked brother Rigdon, by what authority he ordained prophets, priests and kings? With a very significant air he replied "oh, I know all about that!"  I will not attempt to describe the feelings I had, nor the look of his countenance, but he equivocated very much.  He said there was no meeting here last night, and then finally said, I believe there was a meeting at brother Soby's.  I questioned him till he acknowledged that they ordained men to be prophets, priests and kings.

      I then asked brother Rigdon; "do you not think, really, that you hold keys and authority above any man, or set of men in this church, even the Twelve?"

Says he, "I never taught any such doctrine, did I, brother Soby?"  
      Says I, "brother Rigdon, tell me the truth, do you not think so?"  
      He replied, "Yes I do."  
      Says I, "that tells the whole story.  Brother Joseph never undertook such important business as you are engaged in, without consulting his brethren, and especially the Twelve, if they were present." I felt delicate in asking elder Rigdon these questions, but I knew it was my duty to find out the secret of the whole matter.  To evade answering the questions put to him, he finally said don't crowd upon my feelings too much; my feelings are tender, and I don't wish to be crowded.  I then proposed to him, that myself and the brethren of the Twelve would call in the evening and converse with him further on the subject, to which he agreed.  In the evening eight of the Twelve together with bishop Whitney, went to elder Rigdon's and conversed a-while; and finding matters as before stated, we concluded we would go over to Dr. Richards' and there council together what was best to do on the subject.  In our council we deemed it necessary to demand his license, and say to him he could not hold it any longer, unless he retracted from his present course and repent of his wickedness. A committee of three was chosen, who went over and demanded his license, but he refused to give it up, at the same time saying, "I did not receive it from you, neither shall I give it up to you." On the strength of this, we published a notice in the Neighbor that there would be an action on his case before the church to-day.

      We have now the quorum before us, before which he will be tried, with the oldest bishop at their head; and I shall leave the subject for the brethren to take it up, and it is left for us to decide whether we are Latter Day Saints or not.

      President Young said further that the Twelve are to be regarded as witnesses in this trial, and not judges.  We present ourselves before the High Council as witnesses, and we are prepared to bring other testimony forward if necessary.  There may be some who will say that this is not a fair trial, because the opposite party are not here.  They have had sufficient notice and time to make their objections, and if they don't appear to make their defence it will prove to me that they are guilty. Elder Rigdon has not conducted himself like a man of God, he has not conducted like a prophet of God, nor a counsellor to the first president, since he came here.  We prefer these charges against him, and the High Council will be obliged to act.