

# Sidney Rigdon's Plea to the Saints

## Transcription of Thomas Bullock's Shorthand Notes from the August 8, 1844, Morning Meeting

*Transcribed and Introduced by  
LaJean Purcell Carruth and Robin Scott Jensen*

At meetings held on August 8, 1844, Sidney Rigdon and Brigham Young each asserted their claims to succeed Joseph Smith as leader of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These meetings proved a central event in the 1844 succession crisis following the deaths of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum. Of the many sources consulted to reconstruct the events of August 8, 1844, one crucial source has heretofore been unavailable to scholars. Thomas Bullock, the clerk for the Church Historian's Office, recorded notes of the morning meeting, including speeches by Rigdon and Young, in Taylor shorthand.<sup>1</sup> Until recently, Bullock's notes have not been deciphered and transcribed. What follows is the transcription of this source and an introduction to establish the context.<sup>2</sup> A detailed description of the transcription process immediately precedes the transcription.

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1. Thomas Bullock's shorthand notes of the morning meeting are archived in the Historian's Office General Church Minutes, CR 100 318, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as CHL). The document is also available in *Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), vol. 1, DVD 18.

2. While labeled "Minutes" on the manuscript itself, the source is more properly a report of Rigdon's oral sermon.

## Events in Nauvoo after the Martyrdom

Following the death of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum on June 27, 1844, word quickly spread through national and Church networks. Many missionaries sent throughout the United States to campaign for Joseph Smith's presidential bid learned of their leader's fate through the unsympathetic voice of newspapers. Most prominent among these missionaries were most members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as well as the longest-standing member of the First Presidency, Sidney Rigdon. Only two of the members of the Twelve—Willard Richards and John Taylor—had remained in Nauvoo, and both were with the Smith brothers in Carthage Jail on that fateful day in June. About a month and a half before his death, Joseph Smith instructed Rigdon to move to Pennsylvania, in part to act as his running mate for the presidency. Upon hearing of his associate's death, Rigdon rushed back to Nauvoo, arriving on August 3, 1844, to comfort a bereaved people. Though Rigdon had been a trusted confidant and counselor to Smith for much of the Church's existence, the two had recently grown distant.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, the rocky relationship that had at times existed between Smith and the Quorum of the Twelve through much of the later part of the 1830s had smoothed over, and the quorum, with Brigham Young as its head, enjoyed a close association with Smith in the years before his death.<sup>4</sup>

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3. Joseph Smith had called Sidney Rigdon's loyalty into question at an October 1843 conference. Smith expressed dissatisfaction with Rigdon's management of the post office, collusion with former First Presidency member and anti-Mormon John C. Bennett and several key Missourians, and "endeavoring to defraud the innocent." Smith also criticized Rigdon's role as counselor, "not having received any material benefit from his labors or counsels since their escape from Missouri" in 1839. Rigdon and others defended his character and offered evidence to his faithfulness, causing Smith to express an "entire willingness to have elder Sidney Rigdon retain his station, provided he would magnify his office, and walk and conduct himself in all honesty, righteousness, and integrity." "Minutes of a Special Conference," *Times and Seasons* 4 (September 15, 1843 [*sic*; actually published October 14, 1843]): 330.

4. The most detailed overview of this period and of Rigdon's involvement is Ronald W. Walker, "Six Days in August: Brigham Young and the Succession Crisis of 1844," in *A Firm Foundation: Church Organization and Administration*, ed. David J. Whittaker and Arnold K. Garr (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 2011): 161–96. For a history of the relationship between Joseph Smith and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, see Ronald K. Esplin, "The Emergence of Brigham Young and the Twelve to

Events immediately following Joseph Smith's death—often termed the succession crisis—are often simplified by historians who focus solely on the actions or motivations of the competitors who wished to fill Smith's role. The vacuum of leadership in the summer of 1844 created a complicated power setting in Nauvoo. For instance, Emma Smith, Joseph's widow, sought the help of William Clayton to manage outstanding financial considerations pressing upon Smith's personal finances. Clayton complained in his diary of the several individuals who attempted to place themselves as trustee-in-trust over the Church.<sup>5</sup> Some individuals looked to Samuel Smith, one of the two last surviving brothers of the Smith family, to step into some leadership function.<sup>6</sup> Samuel, however, died on July 30, 1844. William Marks, stake president of Nauvoo, also sought to understand what would become of the leadership structure of the Church and sympathized with Emma Smith and Rigdon.<sup>7</sup>

When Rigdon returned to Nauvoo on August 3, he found many looking to him for counsel, comfort, and direction. Rigdon's immediate actions in Nauvoo signaled his apparent desire to quickly fill the leadership void. His actions also spoke to the necessity of not alienating himself from influential individuals or groups, including the Quorum of the Twelve. The day after his arrival in Nauvoo, he preached a Sabbath sermon to the Saints, still mourning the loss of their fallen prophet and patriarch. Perhaps anticipating the Church's transition to new leadership, Rigdon preached his sermon using the scripture "my ways are not as your ways."<sup>8</sup> He related to the Saints "a vision which the Lord had shown him concerning the situation of the Church and said there

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Mormon Leadership, 1830–1841" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1981; Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2006).

5. See the several journal entries from William Clayton, Journal, mid-July 1844, as published in George D. Smith, ed. *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 139. See also James B. Allen, *No Toil nor Labor Fear: The Story of William Clayton* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 157–59. For more on the financial concern of Emma, see Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 200–202.

6. Clayton, Journal, July 12, 1844, as quoted in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 138.

7. See Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2002).

8. The text comes from Isaiah 55:8: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."

must be a Guardian appointed to build the Church up to Joseph as he has begun it.”<sup>9</sup> That evening, stake president William Marks appointed a meeting later that week where Rigdon would propose his concept of the future leadership of the Church, including a vote on Rigdon’s guardianship proposal.<sup>10</sup> Some, including Willard Richards, one of the Apostles, wondered whether the meeting should not wait for “the Elders” to return, including Brigham Young and the Twelve, who were en route to Nauvoo.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, Rigdon, who “was some distance from his family & wanted to know if this people had any thing for him to do,” acted quickly.<sup>12</sup> He originally wished the meeting to be scheduled for Tuesday, August 6, but even sympathetic Marks must have felt the haste unwarranted and postponed the meeting until Thursday, August 8.<sup>13</sup> William Phelps asked Rigdon “why he [Rigdon] was so much disposed to hurry matters.”<sup>14</sup>

The following day, Monday, August 5, 1844, a council met at John Taylor’s home. This Monday morning meeting provided the first chance for four members of the Quorum of the Twelve then in Nauvoo—Parley P. Pratt, who had arrived in Nauvoo on July 10; George A. Smith, who had arrived in the city on July 28; Willard Richards; and John Taylor—to discuss matters, including the Thursday meeting, with Rigdon.<sup>15</sup> According to Richards, Rigdon softened his plans and “said he [Rigdon] did not expect the people to choose a guardian on Thursday—but have a prayer meeting—but he wanted to se[e] the brethren have a season of prayer, & interchange of thought— & feeling &c.—and warm up Each others hearts.”<sup>16</sup> Whether Rigdon had truly backed away from his previously stated purpose for the meeting is unknown, but he recognized the need to approach the matter with the finesse necessary to maintain his position within the Church.

Those impatient for the remainder of the Twelve’s arrival had to wait only a little longer. When news of the martyrdom reached members of the Quorum of the Twelve who had been preaching in the eastern

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9. Clayton, Journal, August 4, 1844, as quoted in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 140.

10. Clayton, Journal, August 4, 1844, as quoted in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 140; Willard Richards, Diary, August 4, 1844, CHL.

11. Richards, Diary, August 4, 1844.

12. Richards, Diary, August 4, 1844.

13. Richards, Diary, August 4, 1844.

14. Clayton, Journal, August 6, 1844, as quoted in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 140.

15. Richards, Diary, July 10, July 28, August 5, 1844.

16. Richards, Diary, August 5, 1844.

cities of New England and New York, quorum president Brigham Young assembled quorum members who were in close proximity and left for Nauvoo. At 8 o'clock in the evening on Tuesday, August 6, Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, Lyman Wight, and Wilford Woodruff arrived in Nauvoo. Meetings the next day occupied much of the leaders' attention as Rigdon made his case to various Church leaders, including the Apostles, in Nauvoo the day before he preached his sermon. A council convened at the Seventies Hall at 4 o'clock in the afternoon of August 7, consisting of the Quorum of the Twelve, the Nauvoo high council, the Nauvoo stake president, and Rigdon. Rigdon spoke of a continuation of the vision he and Joseph Smith had received over a decade earlier.<sup>17</sup> The vision showed him that "this Church must be built up to Joseph and that all the blessings we receive must come through Joseph."<sup>18</sup> Willard Richards reported Rigdon saying that "Joseph sustains the same relation to this kingdom as he had ever done.—no man could be the successor of Joseph. [The] Kingdom [is] to be built up to Jesus Christ through Joseph."<sup>19</sup> Rigdon felt that "every Quorum should stand as they had stood"<sup>20</sup> and believed that "the people could please themselves whether they accepted him or not."<sup>21</sup> Young's rejoinder echoed that language. Young told the assembly that "he did not care who lead the Church if God said so . . . but he must know that God said so."<sup>22</sup> Young argued that they "must have the voice of the church in conference."<sup>23</sup> He called for such a conference on Tuesday the 13th, which allowed for enough time to notify some of the closer branches.

The following day, August 8, the Saints gathered in the Nauvoo grove at the appointed time for the prayer meeting. Whereas the discussion points of the previous day's meeting were well documented in several diaries, information about the morning meeting was not. For years, historians have looked to the sparse diary entries to reconstruct that

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17. "Not an open vision, but rather a continuation of the one mentioned in the Book of Covenants." Clayton, Journal, August 7, 1844, as quoted in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 141. On February 16, 1832, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon recorded a vision they jointly shared of the afterlife. This document was later canonized as section 76 of the Church's Doctrine and Covenants.

18. Clayton, Journal, August 7, 1844, as quoted in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 141.

19. Richards, Diary, August 7, 1844.

20. Richards, Diary, August 7, 1844.

21. Clayton, Journal, August 7, 1844, as quoted in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 141.

22. Clayton, Journal, August 7, 1844, as quoted in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 141.

23. Richards, Diary, August 7, 1844.

morning's meeting, along with reminiscences of Church members who later supported the Twelve. Due to the dearth of records, some later-reconstructed accounts confused the number of meetings and when they were held. Willard Richards, one of the Apostles, recorded a short entry for the morning of August 8, 1844: "Sidney Rigdon Preached in the A.M." Fellow quorum member Wilford Woodruff recorded that day that "their [*sic*] was a meeting appointed at the grove for the Church to come together for prayer But in consequence of some excitement among the People and a dispositions by some spirits to try to divide the Church, it was thought best to attend to the business of the Church in the afternoon that was to be attended to on Tuesday."<sup>24</sup> Clayton's normally detailed journal failed to even mention the morning sermon by Rigdon. As early as a year later, the morning meeting and the afternoon meeting became conflated in accounts of the day's events.<sup>25</sup>

Rigdon's actions that day, however, as well as his later actions, influenced the way participants remembered the events. The morning meeting set up the more famous afternoon meeting where Young and other members of the Twelve presented their own view of future leadership within the Church. The vast majority of the Church members in attendance voted to accept the Quorum of the Twelve as leaders of the Church. Rigdon did not ask that his name be submitted for vote and committed himself to fully support the decision of the Church by following the Twelve.<sup>26</sup> The Church meeting voted to support Rigdon as counselor to the Twelve. Less than a month later, however, Rigdon was disfellowshipped from the Church by the Twelve for actions they considered rebellious and disharmonious to the order of the Church.<sup>27</sup> Due in part

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24. Wilford Woodruff, Journal, August 8, 1844, CHL.

25. Orson Hyde, for instance, conflated Rigdon's effort to win over the Saints (in the morning) with Brigham Young's "laying open the true principles on which the church was to act" and the vote of support for the Twelve by the Church (in the afternoon). See Orson Hyde, *Speech of Elder Orson Hyde, Delivered before the High Priest's Quorum, in Nauvoo* (Liverpool, 1845), 13–14.

26. See notes of the afternoon speeches by Brigham Young, Amasa Lyman, W. W. Phelps, and Parley P. Pratt in "Special Meeting," *Times and Seasons* 5 (September 2, 1844): 637–38.

27. The Twelve disfellowshipped Rigdon on September 1, 1844, and cut him off from the Church on September 8. See "Notice," *Times and Seasons* 5 (September 2, 1844): 639; "Trial of Elder Rigdon," *Times and Seasons* 5 (September 15, 1844), 647–55; and "Continuation of Elder Rigdon's Trial," *Times and Seasons* 5 (October 1, 1844), 660–67.

to these later activities, Rigdon became increasingly marginalized and vilified in the narrative surrounding the death of Smith and the Twelve's assumption of authority over the Church. For instance, Orson Hyde observed to a gathering of high priests in Nauvoo that "Mr. Rigdon professes to be the true shepherd, and the Twelve Apostles are regarded by him as wolves. . . . The wolf will run away when he hears the shepherd's voice, just as Mr. Rigdon ran away to Pittsburgh when the voice of the Twelve proclaimed his true character."<sup>28</sup> A late-nineteenth-century published biography of Jacob Hamblin recounting the August 8 meeting stated that Brigham Young entered the meeting and took control, telling the Church, "'I will manage this voting for Elder Rigdon. He does not preside here. This child' (meaning himself) 'will manage this flock for a season.'"<sup>29</sup>

Brigham Young's own memories of the morning sermon indicate that he was actually not present at the beginning of the meeting. Reminiscing in 1865, Young made the point that he was "a good hand to keep dogs out of the flock." He continued by recalling his thought when he saw Rigdon on the wagon: "My good fellow if I don't hunt you until you are out of this flock of sheep I am mistaken."<sup>30</sup> Young's antagonism to Rigdon in his memory likely reflects the difficulty the Twelve had with Rigdon as well as Young's understanding of the resulting events. In a council meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve a little over three years after the event, Young recalled that following the death of Joseph, the Twelve were duty-bound to do what they did: "The 12 had to step forward to lead the church & I felt then as now . . . when duty prompts me I mean to do it let consequences be what they may."<sup>31</sup> On another occasion, Young, reminiscing with members of the Quorum of the Twelve in 1860, spoke of his purpose and drive at the meeting: "When I preached on the stand there [with] Sidney before me I knew [then]

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28. Hyde, *Speech of Elder Orson Hyde*, 14.

29. James A. Little, *Jacob Hamblin: A Narrative of His Personal Experience, as a Frontiersman, Missionary to the Indians and Explorer* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1881), 20.

30. Brigham Young, Sermon, September 23, 1865, at Beaver, Utah, in Papers of George D. Watt, CHL, transcribed from George D. Watt's Pitman shorthand notes by LaJean Purcell Carruth.

31. Thomas Bullock, Minutes of meeting, December 5, 1847, CHL; abbreviated words expanded in this quote.

there [must] be a First Presidency as well as now,” meaning he knew that the First Presidency needed to be reconstituted.<sup>32</sup>

### **Value and Limitations of the Document**

As a result of the later vilification and marginalization, firsthand reports of Rigdon’s activities, thoughts, and private and public proclamations are paramount in understanding Rigdon’s actions in August 1844. The shorthand sermon featured below provides the critical primary source of Rigdon’s effort to assume leadership and the authority under which he acted. The report also shows the way he presented himself to the Church, sharing the important and eventful fourteen-year history he had with the Church. Documents such as this provide the snapshot needed to capture events at times confused by later (mis)interpretation. But the sermon below should not be seen as a straightforward or uncomplicated source. For unknown reasons (perhaps due to the weather?), Bullock had difficulty in capturing this sermon.<sup>33</sup> Deciphering this shorthand proved more problematic than his other sermon notes from July through August 1844. While all sermons in Taylor shorthand reported by Bullock are difficult to read, his notes for Rigdon’s morning sermon present a significant challenge. Due to the fragmentary nature of Bullock’s shorthand notes and the difficulty in transcribing what he did record, the transcript contains only part of what happened that morning. Still, they are the only known notes to have been taken during the meeting itself, and the best extant record of what actually occurred there.

### **Overview of the Document**

Rigdon’s sermon illustrates an attempt to balance support of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and place himself as one to hold influence over the Church. He was careful to argue that Joseph established the Church and its structure and that although their prophet was dead, the Church still had the authority the Lord bestowed upon the Church through Smith.

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32. Minutes, April 4, 1860, Papers of George D. Watt, CHL, transcribed from George D. Watt’s Pitman shorthand notes by LaJean Purcell Carruth.

33. Those of the Church in attendance at the prayer meeting were met with inclement weather—particularly windy conditions.



The mob who killed Joseph had “no power to take away the authority.”<sup>34</sup> In fact, according to Rigdon, the Smiths maintained a semblance of their authority, since they “ever on have their priesthood and will hold it to all eternity.” Rigdon spoke of the potential of the Church, being “one grand kingdom. . . . To put an end to strifes and bloodshed and war.” Though robbed of their leader, “he conferred every power that was necessary to carry [the kingdom] on and place it precisely on the tenets that Jehovah had given him.”

Rigdon expected Joseph's influence from beyond the grave. “I view [Joseph] as sitting in heaven with . . . power to make himself known to any one.” The work Joseph undertook was incomplete, waiting for the Saints to finish the work. And the authority to do so, according to Rigdon, “is in the church.” Rigdon fully supported these authorities as they existed before Joseph's death. “I have the fullest belief . . . that every man will stand in his own place and stand in his own calling.” Speaking of the tension with non-Mormon neighbors in Hancock County, Illinois, Rigdon offered a promise that the mobs “have not the power nor the means to” destroy Nauvoo. Rigdon's promise of peace “for a season” came with his final summary of his position: “I should be a spokesman for our prophet who has been taken from us.” What is known is that Young accelerated the decision. Young instructed the gathered Saints to decide that afternoon. He did not urge them to choose who would take Joseph's place, for “he keeps it himself.” Young wished to curtail the “spirit [of] who shall be greatest in our midst.” But Young continued the unifying language preached by Rigdon: he wished “Brother Rigdon [to] come and take his seat at our right hand . . . and we can do the business in 5 minutes.”

### The Shorthand

Thomas Bullock captured Rigdon's sermon in a shorthand system published by Samuel Taylor in his 1786 book *A Universal System of Stenography, or Short-Hand Writing*.<sup>35</sup> Taylor shorthand is a phonetic shorthand: words are written according to their sounds, not according to conventional orthography. A shorthand symbol represents one or possibly two

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34. All quotes come from the sermon below, with some of the unclear wording simplified.

35. Samuel Taylor, *An Essay Intended to Establish a Standard for an Universal System of Stenography* (London: n.p., 1786). This book has been scanned by

related consonant sounds (f and v, g and j, k and q); some sounds written by two letters in conventional English orthography have a distinct symbol (ch, sh, th, ious). Single letters are also used to represent words, prefixes, and suffixes.

In Taylor shorthand, a writer may use a dot in order to indicate the presence of a vowel, but this is optional. There is no means for identifying vowels: the dot only indicates the presence of a vowel, which at times includes *w* and *y*. This lack of vowels makes it virtually impossible at times to differentiate between two or more possible words. For example, the symbol *fr* or *vr* could represent *fear*, *for*, *every*, *fire*, *very*, *ever*, *over*, *fir*, *fur*, *fore*, *far*, *fairy*, *vary*, *ferry*, *fiery*, *furry*, *fair*, *four*, *fare*, *free*, *fry*, *fray*, *veer*, *afar*, *affair*, *afore*, or *offer*. The symbol *n* could represent *no*, *any*, *in*, *on*, *know*, *nigh*, *an*, or *new*. In some cases context offers significant clues, but often it does not, and sometimes several words are equally possible. Punctuation is implied by spaces between characters; these spaces are preserved here.

Several early Latter-day Saints, including Wilford Woodruff, Willard Richards, William Clayton, and Thomas Bullock, wrote in Taylor shorthand, though their use of it appears to have been limited largely to occasional words or phrases. The earliest Mormon sermons recorded in Taylor shorthand—or any shorthand system—are those given in Nauvoo shortly after Joseph Smith’s death. The afternoon meeting of August 8 was also recorded by Bullock—in longhand rather than shorthand.<sup>36</sup>

As Taylor shorthand captured only the consonants, the editors have supplied the vowels to the transcription below. When the reading is unclear, a presumed word is in brackets with a question mark; when no word can be properly surmised, the actual shorthand sounds have been provided in brackets. The rare instance Bullock used longhand is transcribed in bold typeface. Bullock used lengthy spaces to indicate ends of

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and is available at Google books, [http://books.google.com/books?id=7hEIAA AAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=o#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=7hEIAA AAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=o#v=onepage&q&f=false).

36. Thomas Bullock’s notes of the afternoon meeting are archived in the Historian’s Office General Church Minutes, CR 100 318, CHL; also available in *Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, vol. 1, DVD 18, and at [https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE534383&pds\\_handle=205201411173212755486036785659128](https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE534383&pds_handle=205201411173212755486036785659128). His revised version is at [https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE532802&pds\\_handle=205201411173212755486036785659128](https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE532802&pds_handle=205201411173212755486036785659128).

thoughts, and this transcription has preserved these spaces. Line breaks, which may have indicated ends of thoughts, are also preserved with a “[”.

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Thursday August 8th 1844 10 oclock A.M. choir sang an hymn 106 page<sup>37</sup> = prayer by Sam<sup>l</sup> James<sup>38</sup> choir again sang an hymn page 36<sup>39</sup> | President [William] Marks Elder Rigdon wants to have a platform made on the opposite side in order to make the people hear better = a stand was made for him and<sup>40</sup> he would [thrs?] wind [—?]<sup>41</sup> | [blank line]

<Elder><sup>42</sup> President Rigdon = I understand I would<sup>43</sup> not make the congregation hear I have not strength of voice to make all hear but I will do the best I can in view of what has took place | I [can] not recollect of being in the presence of so large an assembly as this under the late circumstance it has always been at all previous times that those who raised this last dispensation | have always been present through whom this plan of salvation but they is passed away and [in] our earthly meetings we shall see them no more they are at late taken | from the earth and to act in the same relation that they always stood without the fear of any with the power of position where they of the world can not harm them any late engaged in the | building of the kingdom to lay the foundation of the church in the last days and was always the same since the foundation of the world began the same relation to heaven to the church | in all its respect

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37. The hymn on page 106 of the 1841 LDS hymnbook is “The Lord my pasture shall prepare.” Emma Smith, ed., *A Collection of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* [Nauvoo, Ill., 1841], 106–7.

38. Samuel James, born in 1814, was baptized into the Church and served several months on the Kirtland high council. After Joseph Smith’s death, he followed Sidney Rigdon, where he eventually served as a member of Rigdon’s First Presidency. He moved to Ohio, where he died in 1876. “Samuel James,” on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/person/samuel-james> (accessed January 2014); *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Lamoni, Iowa, 1904), 8.

39. The first stanza of hymn number 26, found on page 36 of the 1841 edition of the LDS hymnbook, reads: “Praise ye the Lord! ’tis good to raise / Your hearts and voices in his praise / His nature and his works invite / To make this duty our delight.” Emma Smith, *Collection of Sacred Hymns*, 36–37.

40. Symbol written as longhand C is identified at top of page as symbol for *and*. Used throughout.

41. Nonstandard shorthand character; possibly *d* vowel vowel *d*.

42. Word is above line; it appears to have been wiped out.

43. Bullock originally wrote *wl*, will, then added a *d* to change the word to *wd*, would.

of authorities the same in time as in eternity when he begins to work he [had/head/ahead?] is beyond all and the gates of hell can not prevail against it though they | may destroy bodies they have no power to take away the authority they<sup>44</sup> did all they could do and that was to destroy the body and they<sup>45</sup> are now carrying on the same work | all the men that have been slain<sup>46</sup> though they have been slain crucified<sup>47</sup> and though the enemies have done all they they ever on have their priesthood and will hold it to all eternity | the [—?]<sup>48</sup> keys and authorities and the kingdom that is built up here will continue the same to all eternity it was on this principle that Jehovah built up [the] kingdom to himself | [it] is no more nor less than one grand kingdom and when the purpose of Lord shall be consummated and the guardians and power of the kingdom shall be given to the saints | and it will make one grand kingdom and it will be done the same in eternity in the same glory and power and might for ever and ever in relation to this being | one kingdom with those who are gone above for now their kingdom will be [above/beyond?]<sup>49</sup> for this is the last kingdom that will bring about the last things of these last days | and it is designed to establish the end and to put an end to strifes and bloodshed and war and all things and to make one grand wall out of the wall and **the** | watchmen on the walls will be all from generation to generation and all to be in peace this is the design and order of things and must and will continue | until that purpose is accomplished when I look over these things<sup>50</sup> notwithstanding the contemplation is melancholy in the extreme there is this prospect [before?] us that what | the Lord is determined to bring about the present enemy will have no power to prevent it and the reason is that the revelation that is given [remainder of line blank] | he<sup>51</sup> was raised up to bring this thing forth to establish it in full [and] to confer all the authorities that is necessary whether he him[self] [is] here or whether he goes away [remainder of line blank] | they [have/had?] [any?] power could [of/it/have?] that thing that is [—/tn?] [it/t/d/r?] [tst/dst?] have [late/let/lt/ld?] he conferred

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44. Meaning enemies to Joseph Smith.

45. Meaning Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

46. A short space follows *slain*; this space may or may not be intentional.

47. Written *krsfd*.

48. Word appears to be crossed out.

49. Word written over.

50. Possible space after *things*.

51. This appears to imply Joseph Smith.

every power that was necessary to carry it on and placed it precisely on the [stands/tenets?]<sup>52</sup> | that Jehovah had given him what I understand then [is] that all that power necessary to carry it on has been put upon their heads and power where e'er he has placed | power there let it rest let that quorum<sup>53</sup> of men act in their place I do not care what body of men he has given that authority to carry it on among | [men/one?] I one I can't point out any [—/r?]<sup>54</sup> if I were to try I know nothing I had seen nothing in the revelations but would [leave?] standing in order the principles | are made known in their force [—?]<sup>55</sup> and place I view him as sitting in heaven with the [fr/vr?] and with power to make himself known to any one | he may choose to make himself known I do not see any particle of alteration and all seems to be in unison of opinions that it is left in that | very place that Jehovah intended it to be left and is left in the proper place for the people to push it forward on as far as it is necessary to put it on | a [restoration?]<sup>56</sup> is complete all the authority is in the church every other thing is ready [so?]<sup>57</sup> I thank Jehovah in my heart that I have full countenance in the | authorities of this church to carry it on and I have the fullest belief that there is [in any/any in?] this church that every man will stand in his own place and stand | in his own calling<sup>58</sup> before Jehovah [such?] one remains [action?]<sup>59</sup> is that will be seen in this church and all other powers will pass away [remainder of line blank] | in relation to all business we act conspicuously in this church that their life is in their hands and they act with their understanding and I believe that | the next bullet that will be shot will reach my heart<sup>60</sup> I have<sup>61</sup> you are my friends that the enemy could accomplish the work I do | not know but that they might have laid this place waste I do not suppose that they could destroy it they have not the power nor the means to carry it on | there is no power that

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52. Initial *s* may be a stray ink mark.

53. While this could imply the Quorum of the Twelve, Rigdon may have other quorums in mind.

54. Short symbol; does not appear to be a word. Likely an implied deletion.

55. Word written over; illegible.

56. Written *stntn/stntion/strtion*.

57. *S* written over illegible shorthand.

58. *K* written over wiped out *l*.

59. Written *ktn* or *ktion*.

60. Underlined in original.

61. Possible space after *have*.

can do it [I?] [fear/for?]<sup>62</sup> if they have power to shed much blood to [dst/destroy?] the lives of many people and [ink blot] drive<sup>63</sup> them from | their homes yet it will have to roll on if they have to flee from their homes for their lives [y/yes?] there will be power to carry it<sup>64</sup> on<sup>65</sup> | in relation to the [rmns?] manner in this kingdom every man is disposed to stand in his own place and calling in his authority | [three words crossed out; illegible] if I say to the 12 I have no<sup>66</sup> power to carry out their thinkings I would<sup>67</sup> decide result there is not too much power whenever he<sup>68</sup> has | given power he has placed it in the right place and will carry out the plan I have this faith this morning I believe it in the [pd?] of | my [head?] [power/there?] is that must remain in the authorities in this church there seems to be but one view in them I heard the 12 yesterday | and their views were [shtl/mstl/mostly] [m?]<sup>69</sup> with<sup>70</sup> and that there was perfect harmony in that call there is no harmony of feeling and can't exist anywhere else | I have [lm/William?] have unbounded confidence in this people that what this people ask for in the name of J[esus] that it has been granted asking for any wisdom or any | thing else that Jehovah would give them the right spirit and they would possess and enjoy it [remainder of line blank; end of page]

my [mouth?] is not tickling but I may become weak and may not able to make much effort so that the church may understand clearly

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62. *Fr* written over illegible shorthand, or vice versa.

63. *Drv* written over *dv*.

64. Meaning church, kingdom, work, etc.

65. Tensions between Mormons and their non-Mormon neighbors, which had led to the violent death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, would continue after their death, resulting in the expulsion of the Mormons from Nauvoo in 1846. Sidney Rigdon was speaking to a concern still felt by inhabitants of Nauvoo. The editors of the *Times and Seasons* spoke to these same concerns when they published several letters and reports of meetings speaking to the desire Mormons had for peace. "To the People of the State of Illinois," *Times and Seasons* 5 (July 1, 1844): 564–67.

66. Written *n*; no vowels are given. Word could also be read *any*.

67. Word could possibly be read *might*. First character could be *m* or *w*; second character is clearly *d*.

68. Referring to Joseph Smith or God?

69. Character likely indicates a strong terminal vowel on previous word; it could also be a small *m* inserted between words on either side; as such, it could be read *me*, *my*, or *many*, or could be the suffix *-ment*.

70. [M?] *with* could also be read *my way*.



what I | understand in this matter      the grand object in that address  
 and I have [—?] summed it up in a few words      but I have not much  
 [strength?] to tell | oh it is my faith and my belief about it that there is no  
 power to compel      I do believe that this church shall exist here that the  
 [—?]71 to | plot will cease      there may be some loom in the outskirts  
 but they will not have power to come in and destroy here      I believe  
 it any way | I say it for the comforting of the saints      I do72 it without  
 fear      that they73 will have rest for a season any way74 so that they  
 may enjoy | peace      I say it's my faith      all that I have said      I do  
 believe that we can come and go in [quiet?] at least for a season and that  
 the Lord | will grant us that peace for a season      I [do] not believe that  
 Satan has power to [them?] in his power [—?]      I believe that there is  
 too much power for any | such course      I do believe that Satan can't  
 do it      there is another meeting for [ngt/next?] Tuesday and I say for  
 [my?] satisfaction and being far from my | family75      the thing that I  
 am going to say is      I present it as an individual where I might act in  
 my calling of my own will I should be | a spokesman for our prophet76  
 who has been taken from us      I present to assembly for myself      I  
 understand the policy to be this      this [house?] is | bound to establish  
 for forever and thing that has been established in their full extent of their  
 ministry and power      that this is the [purest?]77 way of | [doing?]78 it  
 in the same way as it was established      and to sustain it in the same  
 way as it was begun      I do not seek any | action upon it79      but I  
 offer it for my own satisfaction [remainder of line blank]

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71. Written *tsn/fsn/vsn/trn/frn*.

72. *D* written over wiped-out *f* or *v*; the difference is the direction of the line.

73. Meaning the Saints.

74. Written over illegible shorthand symbol, which may be wiped out.

75. Orson Hyde recalled a year later, "Mr. Marks observed, that Mr. Rigdon wished the meeting called on Tuesday, to attend to the choosing of a guardian, as his domestic or family concerns were left in such a condition as to require his immediate return." Hyde, *Speech of Elder Orson Hyde*, 13.

76. Written *pr*.

77. Written *prs*.

78. Word written over illegible shorthand; another possible reading is *offer*.

79. Meaning that Rigdon is not calling for a vote on this motion but simply presenting it to the people.

Pres Young<sup>80</sup> If I can make the people hear I want their attention a few moments be perfectly still [—?]<sup>81</sup> you can't hear [remainder of line blank] | in the first place I have not asked any man or woman for their following I feel much better than a shiprat I can refrain from | weeping I have not I rise to set to this congregation that there [is] a spirit of being in a hurry to transact business here [where?] are any | laboring under a mistake I am sorry [—?]<sup>82</sup> that the [LLS/LDS?] should be in a hurry and as there has been a meeting called for this day to [choose?] | for themselves an agent not knowing what has been [—?] we have [—?] a meeting for next T[uesday] I wanted to sit and weep 30 days before [the/a?] priesthood do business | but there is a spirit who shall be greatest in our midst and it will be foiled by that Jehovah and all things will be made right [remainder of line blank] | we are surrounded by enemies come [tkr?] this afternoon at 2 and there will [be] no meeting on T[uesday]. It is not the feelings of my | brethren<sup>83</sup> in the name of the people<sup>84</sup> I say we will have a meeting [—?]<sup>85</sup> 2 a show of hands<sup>86</sup> my private feelings | must always bend for public good the [kmstrts/kmdrds] [must?] be in that [ltr/letter/later] for the general good of all and in regard to the [question?] | with poor J[oseph] S[mith] has been in a hurry I know now for myself [—?]<sup>87</sup> and I wish I would hear from every E[lder] H[igh] P[riest]<sup>88</sup> and all [—?]<sup>89</sup> I want to know where | every brother<sup>90</sup> is sister whether they will submit to the organization it is [illegible] a plan the [question?] is asked who will take J[oseph's] place | he keeps it himself let every man stand in his own place and all will be peace

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80. This transcription improves the earlier transcription, also by LaJean Purcell Carruth, in summer 1997, of this same excerpted sermon of Brigham Young, published in John W. Welch, ed., *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 478–80.

81. Unidentified vowel; possible intent is *or*.

82. Unidentified vowel; could possibly be the terminal *y* on *sorry*.

83. Meaning the Twelve do not wish to meet so soon, but, as explained, Young will acquiesce to the will of the people.

84. Meaning by order or desire of the people, a meeting will be held.

85. Unidentified vowel; possibly *a*, representing @, *at*.

86. Young possibly asked for a vote from the people.

87. Unidentified vowel.

88. Perhaps there is a period after the E.

89. Unidentified vowel.

90. Written *br*.

and harmony = gather together all men | and there we can transact  
 business right and when we can get all things right we can tell  
 you all about it I want to know what | is in them I will [now?]  
 want every man in his [trntl/trntion?] awake up at his post and all things  
 will be right [remainder of line blank] | I will say to our brethren the  
 H[igh]C[ouncil] take their seats by themselves PM<sup>91</sup> take his  
 seat here in this seat it will be proper | and right for every man be  
 in his place Br[other] R[igdon] come and take his seat at our right  
 hand then other H[igh] C[ouncil] **then the L.B.**<sup>92</sup> | the other persons  
 in their place this will be the right way [—?]<sup>93</sup> resolves  
 and we can do the business in 5 minutes and then [—?]<sup>94</sup> | [you?] as  
 well as we are we are not going to act against [each?] other and every  
 man and woman will say **Amen** so must it be [end of document]

[Notation on side of paper by Bullock:] **August 8. 1844**  
**Minutes of meeting a.m.**

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91. Apparently President Marks.

92. Possibly *lower brethren*.

93. Words are on the fold of the page; worn and illegible.

94. Words are on the fold of the page; worn and illegible.