

during his lifetime can bear testimony to this. Other elders were comparatively lost sight of; they were merely looked upon as satellites. He was the great object of suspicion. His name was the watchword of the foes of the Kingdom of God; and mobs banded themselves together in unholy compacts, in order that they might bring to pass his overthrow and shed his blood, imagining that, if they could only kill him, this work, which men call "Mormonism," would crumble to pieces, because there would not be cohesiveness enough in the system to hold it together after the mastermind had disappeared. But no sooner did he pass away than all this hatred, all the derision, animosity, calumny and slander, which had been directed to Joseph, was transferred to Brigham Young, and he was made the object of vituperation, and the target at which every wicked man should shoot. His deeds and character were paraded abroad, and everything pertaining to him was canvassed and held up, in many instances, to public scorn and ridicule. Such has continued to be the case from the days of the Prophet Joseph up to the present time.

There were others during Joseph's day, who professed to have the authority which he possessed, or, as they said, which he had once possessed. At one time, in the early days of the Church, there was a number of elders among whom were some of the Twelve Apostles and one or two of the First Presidency, who banded themselves together and declared that Joseph was a fallen prophet, that he *had* taught correct doctrines, that he had been the instrument in the hands of God, of revealing the truth and of bringing forth the Book of Mormon, restoring the holy Priesthood and of organizing the Church; but that he had fallen. The doctrines

which he had first taught were correct, they said, and the position which he first assumed was acceptable in the sight of God; but through some cause, he had strayed from the path and had become a fallen prophet. Said they, "We now have the right and the authority which he once had. We have the right to organize the Saints, to build up the Church and carry out the work of which Joseph was the founder, but which, through transgression, he has forfeited the right to lead."

There was one peculiarity, however, connected with these pretenders, which distinguished their course from that pursued by Joseph. Instead of being the subject of all the evil remarks, all the calumny, all the hatred, slander, blood-thirstiness and denunciations applied to the Prophet Joseph, singular to state, when you take into consideration the pretensions of those men, the wicked hailed them as brethren, consorted with them, became very brotherly, very fraternal, and looked upon them as very good, clever fellows. But the hatred towards Joseph did not diminish, in fact their conduct only tended to increase it and to make his life and his every deed more odious in their estimation, and in the estimation of those to whom they published his deeds. This was also a peculiarity which attended all who aimed to lead the Church without having the authority so to do.

At Joseph's death a crop of these pretenders sprang up. There was Sidney Rigdon, who contended that he had the right to lead the people. The Church was fourteen years of age, he said, and it had the right to choose a guardian, to lead the people, and conduct its affairs as its President, and he would be that guardian. James J. Strang also aimed at the same object. He had angels, he said,