

His children the plan or plans which He had concerning the earth upon which we dwell. Lucifer had a plan to present to God. He wanted the salvation of all the human family, and to be the instrument of effecting their redemption in his own way, and for this labor he was to receive the glory. But Jesus, the Beloved, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, desired that the will of God should be done, and that the glory should be given unto the Father himself. The plan of Jesus was received; the plan of Lucifer was rejected. He rebelled in heaven, and drew after him a third part of the hosts of heaven, and they were cast down to earth because of that rebellion. It was impossible for them to dwell in the presence of God possessing the spirit which filled them.

So it has been in the Church. A spirit of dissension will bring disaster to those who encourage it. You remember by reading the history of the days of Kirtland, how half of the Twelve Apostles turned upon the Prophet of God, and so filled were they with the spirit of Satan that if they could have had their way he would have been slain at the hands of those who had been his friends and who had been in the closest communion with him. But through the mercy of God his life was spared. They were not permitted to work out their evil designs, and the Prophet lived, until he could seal his testimony with his blood at the hands of those who had rejected his testimony. But those who were in rebellion, those who had sought to disrupt the Church and to break the influence of the Prophet of God, had fallen on the "stone" and had been shattered to pieces, and they went down to destruction, having lost the Spirit of God. Some of them afterwards returned and made full atonement, as far as it was possible for them to do, for the wrongs which they had committed; but others never returned.

These examples, and numerous others which might be cited, should be a constant warning to Latter-day Saints to not permit any spirit to take possession of their hearts that is apt to lead them in the ways of unrighteousness. If they diverge from the path which God has marked out for them to follow, they will certainly lose the spirit of the Gospel. The Holy Ghost, which gives them a testimony of the truth of God, will depart from them, and they will go into darkness and down to destruction, unless they repent. We should seek not only to remove any spirit of this kind from our own hearts, but also from the hearts of those who are around us. If we are called to preside in any capacity in the midst of the people, our constant effort should be to overcome any spirit which is likely to divide the people in regard to spiritual matters. And we certainly cannot indulge in fault-finding, in backbiting, in slandering, in opposition to the dictates of those whom God has called to act as our guides, without losing in a measure the spirit of the holy religion which we have received. Now, I do not refer so much to things of a temporal character. There are certain things connected with our daily lives upon which God has given no revelation; He has given no direct word to His people for their guidance in these

matters, and they must be left therein to the exercise of their own judgment and the wisdom which He has poured out upon them, or which He will give to them when they seek wisdom at His hands. But I refer to the spiritual things, to the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints concerning which there are debates, discussions, quibblings and question among the Latter-day Saints. Upon these points we cannot afford to be divided, to be in opposition one to another; for the Lord, in establishing this perfect plan of salvation of which He has made us the recipients, instituted a way in His Church by which we can receive from Him at any time the counsel of His will, and upon any matter concerning which there is dispute. He has instituted an authority in His Church for the settlement of such disputes. In regard to the cardinal principles of the Gospel there is no question. We understand faith to be the first principle of revealed religion. We understand repentance to be necessary for the salvation of the children of men. We know that baptism is essential to salvation. We know that the laying on of hands is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Church. We also know that union is as necessary to the Latter-day Saints in its place as faith, repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands are essential in their places. But there are frequently other things arising in our experience concerning which the word of the Lord is not sufficiently clear to ease our minds and to place them at rest in considering these matters. How shall we receive light upon them? If these principles concern ourselves individually, or our families, if we stand at the head of families we can appeal to God for guidance; we can ask for His Spirit to enlighten our minds and give us the revelation of His will concerning that point on which there are doubts in our minds. And if we seek Him in the proper manner, He will give to us the revelations of His will upon that matter. If it were not so, how would it be with our Elders who go abroad to the nations of the earth and among people opposed to them, and who desire frequently their destruction? If they were left without this spirit of revelation which God gives to His children who seek Him in the proper manner, how would it be with them under such circumstances? Sad indeed would be their condition! We might then with fearful hearts send our Elders out to the nations of the earth to preach this Gospel. But knowing that our Father is all-powerful, that He is omnipotent and omnipresent, we can send out these young men, inexperienced though they may be, to any part of the earth, knowing that when they are in trouble they can seek God, and that He will be near to hear and answer their prayers. Our experience in the past sixty years has fully verified the promise that He made unto His children hundreds of years ago, that those who sought Him should receive wisdom at His hands.

But how is it with regard to the affairs of a ward? For instance, if there is a division among the Priesthood of a ward, who is to receive the counsel necessary to produce harmony and to establish peace among the members of that ward? Who, but the Bishop, who stands at the head of that ward? Who but the father of

that ward? Who but the man upon whom God has bestowed the Priesthood, not only of Aaron, but of Melchisedec? Who but this man can interpose between factions of the Saints, and by the word of God which he speaks to the people re-establish harmony and union among them. The Bishop has this right. If he does not exercise it, he is not living up to his calling. He, too, in regard to the affairs of a Stake. Suppose there are differences existing between wards in the Stake, or between organizations which belong to the Stake, the President of the Stake—as the authority and the right to seek for the Spirit of God—the spirit of revelation—to guide him in the course which he should take. Of course these Presidents of Stakes and Bishops have access to the higher authorities of the Church, and they can seek counsel from them. But this should not suffice; they should also have the testimony of the Spirit of God, to tell them that the counsel which they receive from time to time is the very counsel which God Himself would give were He here in person. Some presidents of stakes are so far distant from the headquarters of the Church that they do not have access at all times to the Presidency, and perhaps time would not permit them to write for the counsel which they desire; then they have the privilege to go to the Lord and receive direct revelation from Him, through the Spirit of God, as to what course they shall take. So with every quorum and organization in the Church. The Twelve Apostles have a quorum superior to them, to whom they can appeal for counsel and for guidance when they are in a quandary as to which course they shall take or which path they shall follow. The Presidency of the Church is that quorum. At the head of that quorum is the man who represents the Lord upon the earth, and who is His mouthpiece. And beyond him, we can appeal to our Father and God, and if we seek Him in the proper way His Spirit will be poured out upon us to direct us as to what we shall do and say.

Brethren and sisters, you know that this is the order. You know that this is the way to settle disputes concerning doctrine and all matters of a spiritual nature. And you must not permit, if you desire to retain the Spirit of Christ, temporal affairs to intervene between you and your brethren and sisters. If you have differences of opinion in regard to the management of any affairs connected with your daily lives, you must not allow them to divide you in spirit, to array you one against another, to cause you to find fault with your neighbor, and to condemn him because perchance his ideas are not the same as yours. You must allow the Lord to judge between you in all your affairs, whether they be spiritual or temporal. We must seek to know the will of God, and then earnestly carry it out, having respect to the feelings of all with whom we labor and among whom we associate. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." This is true in regard to our temporal affairs as well as our spiritual affairs. We