

gave me drink; I was naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and in prison and ye visited me." "Lord," they answer, "when did we see thee hungry, thirsty, naked, sick and in prison and did these things unto thee?" The Lord replies, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." Then will He turn to those upon His left hand and say, "Depart from me ye cursed, ye workers of iniquity; for I was hungry and ye fed me not; I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink; I was naked and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison and ye visited me not." Then, they, anxious for an excuse will protest, "Lord, when did we neglect and fail to do these things unto thee?" "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these, my servants, ye did it not unto me." Now, that tells just as plainly as it can be told, the power and authority which are vested in men who bear the Holy Priesthood, who have been chosen from the foundation of the world, as the ambassadors of God on earth, and come to represent Him in the midst of mankind. And as the world treats them it treats Him who sent them. We cannot consistently say to the forerunner, "Thou art an impostor, begone," or crucify him, or stone him, or trample on him, and yet throw open our arms and welcome Him whom he foreruns. Whatsoever we do to a servant of God, be he an Apostle or a Deacon, we do it unto the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is what Priesthood means.

Now the Lord has been sending His servants to this earth from the beginning, and it has happened just as was told in the parable of the lord and the vineyard. The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain lord who placed his vineyard in the hands of his servants and made them stewards over all that he possessed, and then took his journey into a far country. By-and-by, thinking it time that he should reap some of the harvest, some of the results of the working of his vineyard over which he had placed these stewards, he sends unto them one of his servants, and they beat him and maltreat him and send him away bruised and bleeding. Again, the lord sends another servant, and they stone him and trample on him, and treat him in like manner. Again and again he sends, pleading with them to give the lord his own, and they abuse all whom he sends. Then the lord says: "I will send my son; surely they will respect

him; they will see in him my image, and they will receive him as they would receive me." But they take him, the son, the heir to the estate, and put him to death. Then the lord comes in his vengeance and calls those unrighteous stewards to account, and casts them into outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. In this little parable is told the history of the world in a nutshell. The people of this world, the great and the mighty ones, have said in effect: "We will steal this vineyard. We will evilly entreat the servants of our Lord, and if the heir comes to claim his own we will put him to death, and then we will have his inheritance for our own." That is precisely the attitude in which this proud generation stands today. They have shut God out from their counsels, they have barred Him out from participation in human affairs, and have said: "We are masters here. We will take this inheritance, and if God himself comes we will treat Him as a usurper and an invader." But God will come nevertheless, and He will call to an account men and nations to whom He has given this stewardship, and of whom He will demand a strict reckoning. Blessed is he who has improved upon the talents which have been given him, be they one or two, or five; but woe unto him who hides his talent in the earth, thinking, because his talent is only one, only a small one, that God will require of him no account. God is in the small things as well as in the great. Of those to whom much has been given much will be required, while from those to whom little has been given, but little will be required. Men and nations stand upon this plane. They are stewards for time; and the nation that misuses its power and the individual who abuses his gifts and privileges, and fails to use his time, his talents, his opportunities, his possessions, for the glory of God and the welfare of his fellowmen will be made to answer at the bar of eternal judgment, where a just Judge will sit upon his case, and demand of him a due return for all that he was entrusted with.

There are reasons why God has chosen certain men to bear His Holy Priesthood. Abraham gives one reason, for God showed unto him the mysteries of His kingdom. Said he, "Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was, and among all these

there were many of the noble and great ones. And God saw these souls that they were good, and He stood in the midst of them and He said, 'These I will make my rulers;' for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good. And he said unto me, 'Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.'" Now does anyone suppose that any power, earthly or infernal, could have prevented Abraham becoming the "father of the faithful"—the head of the house of Israel? Could any mortal power have hindered him from fulfilling his destiny? He came to earth with the blessing and the ordination of Almighty God upon his head—for Abraham was a high-priest after the order of Melchisedeck—he was a prophet of the Most High. And Joseph Smith says that all the prophets held the Melchisedeck priesthood and were ordained under the hands of God himself. Could anyone have prevented Jeremiah from being a prophet, when God said unto him "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations?" Could any human being have hindered, when God had placed upon these men his own hands and ordained them, before the world was, for their great mission? We must not think that prophets and apostles and great men are accidents; we must not think they are children of chance; we must not suppose that the times produce such men; but it is God who produces the time, and then sends the man into it whom he has fore-ordained.

This is predestination; this is fore-ordination; and while it does not destroy human agency, right of choice, individual volition, the power to do right or wrong, it is set and fixed by a decree that is irrevocable, except by transgression on the part of the individual. You may throw a prophet into a dungeon, you may hang him upon a tree; he is still a prophet and a servant of the Most High. You may spit upon him; the world may trample him under their feet; they cannot take from him his Priesthood; they cannot take from him his calling which the Almighty placed upon his head before this world was. All the free agency there is, all the volition there is, all the right of choice and election is circumscribed within the sphere in which man finds himself. There is no mounting up to heaven to blot out