

these influences exist around us, tempting the unwary and having influence upon those who are weak in their faith concerning the divinity of the work of God and the authority of the Holy Priesthood.

Then, again, there are influences at work which deny the authority of the Holy Priesthood, asserting that it is contrary to man's liberty; that it is in opposition to the principle of liberty to pay any special respect to the utterances of the bearers of the Priesthood of the Son of God. This is becoming somewhat common. There is a fear in the minds of many that some influence of an improper kind, and which they do not want, will operate upon the minds of the Latter-day Saints, because they believe that God has appointed a Priesthood in His Church, and that He has given authority to that Priesthood. The effort seems to be to destroy, if possible, the influence of the Priesthood, and to show how dangerous a power it would be if it were allowed to be exercised as it is supposed that the Latter-day Saints believe it should be exercised.

All these things are operating at the present time in our midst, as well as in the earth, the evident object being to destroy, if possible, the work of God and to deceive the people, so that they will not receive the doctrines of the Son of God. Of course, if men can be taught to believe that miracles can be wrought by some power that they can obtain without submitting to the ordinances of the Gospel, that weakens the influence of the Gospel. If you say to mankind, "You must believe in Jesus Christ, you must repent of your sins, you must put away evil far from you, you must deny yourselves, and bring your appetites and passions into subjection to the Gospel of Christ, in order to receive the Holy Ghost and the power which accompanies it; and if at the same time they are taught, through some other agency, that it is not necessary to repent of sin, to forego the gratification of lust and to put away evil, can you not see how it weakens the influence of the Gospel, and how cunning a plan it is to destroy the children of men? So in relation to these other things of which I have spoken. When men and women found that they could receive communication from the spirit world through some other agency than the Gospel, of course they seized hold of that. They did not want revelation and communication from God when it had to be obtained by self-denial and by a strict compliance with the laws of God. But when the bars were thrown down and they were told that, no matter what they were—drunkards, whoremongers, or sinful in every respect—they could obtain spiritual communication, then the whole world, speaking generally, ran after this false doctrine and these pernicious practices, because they could obtain these without any regard to purity of conduct or of life. Satan has taken these methods to destroy the children of men. Men say, 'Oh, there is no devil.' They deny the existence of that being. But you Latter-day Saints who have received the Gospel, do you not know, by your personal experience, that there is a being of this kind, though your eyes may never have beheld him? Certainly you do. You know it by these evidences that I have mentioned; but you know it better perhaps by personal experience. When you joined the Church in your native

lands, you know the storm of opposition that raged against you. You saw the effect of Satan's influence; and you have seen it ever since. We have constant evidence of the existence of this power in the falsehoods and misrepresentations that have been indulged in, and the murderous spirit that has been manifested against the people of God. If the world were to open their eyes, they would behold before them the evidences of these two great powers—the power of God and the power of Satan. Satan has inspired men with murderous hate and with the spirit of falsehood. He has done this from the beginning. Jesus, in speaking of Satan, said he was a liar and a murderer from the beginning. And those who follow him receive the same spirit. We have seen it manifested. It has cost the best blood of this nineteenth century. It is this spirit that has stirred up hatred and animosity against us, through which all manner of persecutions have been visited upon the Latter-day Saints. It has cost human suffering to an indescribable extent in our generation. It has cost human life beyond computation. Men, women and children have died through the sufferings that have been entailed upon them through this inhuman spirit which Satan has disseminated among the children of men. It would require the pen and the tongue of an angel to describe the sufferings that have been entailed upon the people of God through this power of Satan. God alone knows the anguished hearts, the pain and the sorrow which it has caused. Virtue has been trampled under foot. Truth has been maligned and vilified, until it has been made to appear of the blackest character. All this has been done through the influence of which I speak. Satan has reigned in the earth; he has built up a great power in the earth; and he is determined that he will maintain his dominion in this earth. He and those associated with him are bent on destroying the work of God and wresting from the hands of Jehovah the authority that belongs to Him. This is his determined purpose, and he has sought to accomplish it from the time when man was placed upon the earth until the present. Under his influence, blood has flown in torrents.

He is the father of contention and of strife, and he seeks to destroy the children of men. He is determined to destroy the work of our Father, and to bring us into subjection to him. The great contest that is going on in these last days is a contest for the control and supremacy of this earth, Satan being determined that he will maintain his control, and the Lord having spoken and said that the day is at hand when the earth shall be redeemed from the power and dominion of Satan, and wickedness shall be swept from its face. We are engaged, my brethren and sisters, in this great contest. We have been told repeatedly that God has reserved in the heavens choice spirits to come forth in this last dispensation, because of the greatness and the magnitude of the work to be accomplished. Of course, among the spirits of men, as we have proved in our mortal existence, there are differences of degree. It has required apparently the most valiant men and women to come forth in the last days for reasons which ought to be plain to those who reflect. This is not a short-lived dispensation; it is to go on increasing in power and volume until it

shall fill the whole earth, and the earth be redeemed and sanctified. And, of course, it requires great valor, great obedience, and great gifts in order to accomplish the end that is to be attained under the promises of God. The Lord has permitted spirits to be born among the various races of mankind that are fitted and qualified to accomplish this great work. He has called His servants as fishers and as hunters to go forth to the various nations of the earth, and hunt and gather out therefrom those spirits who shall be drawn to the Gospel. The Gospel has been like a magnet among the nations. It has drawn to it the pure, the meek, the lowly. Thousands can testify that when they heard the servants of God proclaim the message which they wore, that God had again spoken from the heavens, that the everlasting Gospel was restored and that the authority to administer its ordinances had been given unto men, they embraced the message with all their hearts. The only fear that they entertained was that it was almost too good to be true. The Elders who have gone forth know how this has been. They have found these men and women just as fishers and hunters find the object of their toil and search. They have drawn these people together, and the power of God has been poured out as never before. No human being has ever witnessed, nor mortal pen has ever written, anything like this work. Never has there been such a work as this in which we are engaged. Never has the power of God been poured out so universally upon the people of every land and clime as it has been in our day. Under its influence the people have been impelled to gather into one place, there to worship God, to keep His commandments, to build up His kingdom and to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

My brethren and sisters, are you not impressed with the greatness of the undertaking that God has assigned unto us? Are you not impressed with the necessity of faithfulness to this work? Are you not impressed with the importance of upholding the authority which God has restored to the earth? True, He has chosen the weak things of the world; but it is no evidence of the inferiority of their standing before God. The lowliness of their birth, the lowliness of their surroundings and of their connections is no proof that they are inferior in the sight of God. The Son of God was born in a stable, cradled in a manger. Who among the sons of men had such lowly surroundings as this glorious Being? One of the Godhead, the Son of the Eternal Father, the Redeemer of the world! Think of it, born in a stable, cradled in a manger! And who were His associates? They were fishermen—of the most despised occupation in the land, and yet, who were they? Jesus said to them,

"Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

That was to be the dignity that they should attain unto. They should sit as judges of the house of Israel. And Paul told the Saints in his day.

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"

It is a blessing to us that our fathers