

think it folly, blasphemy, nonsense, and trusting in man. I shall not, therefore, borrow my text from either of the foregoing; but from a distinguished outsider, that thereby I may pay a proper tribute of respect unto that department of God's dependent creatures.

In the last General Epistle of Franklin Pierce, Chief Apostle of the United States of America, written to his brethren of the Senate and House of Representatives in General Conference assembled, first clause of the first verse, you will find these remarkable words recorded:

"The past has been an eventful year, and will hereafter be referred to as a marked epoch in the history of the world. While we have been happily preserved from the calamities of war, our domestic prosperity has not been entirely uninterrupted. The crops, in portions of the country, have been nearly cut off. Disease has prevailed to a greater extent than usual; and the sacrifice of human life through casualties by sea and land is without parallel."

When we consider that the author of these words was chosen by the sovereign will of the American people to preside over the destinies of our common country, that he was duly set apart for that station, and regularly installed in power, it is but reasonable to suppose that his words are prompted by the conviction and faith of the nation; and he can hardly be expected to give utterance to an incorrect idea, *if the faith of the nation be correct*. He, therefore, being the head and eye of the Republic, discovered that the land declined to produce in its usual strength, that disease had marked out its increased number of victims with unerring precision, and that sea and land had conspired against the lives of the thousands that float on the former, and the millions that walk on the latter.

Why this increase of Providential manifestations in the form of scourges and chastisements? Is it because the nation has reformed and grown better? Is it because the true God is more correctly and devoutly worshipped? Or is it because the present is an age not so enlightened and scientific; and hence, not so well qualified to guard against the casualties and ills of life as former and more enlightened ages? Or is it because the Prophets of God have been cruelly and treacherously slain, and their brethren and friends banished by violent hands, from their homes, into an untried and wilderness country, where it was hoped and believed, by many, that savage ferocity would terminate our existence as a people?

When the Latter-day Saints fled before the fiery blast of persecution's bitter hate, they left, it is true, their goods and their homes as a prize, rich with curses, to those whose guilty hearts and bloody hands rendered them legitimate heirs to their ill-gotten gain. We brought but little with us when we fled; yet we took what the nation can never regain until they punish those murderers according to their own laws, chastise the guilty coadjutors in deeds of cruelty and rapine, and compensate the sufferers for the losses which they so unjustly sustained. We brought away with us from the nation that suffered us to be cast out, the goodwill and blessing of our God, even the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. That blessing and goodwill cannot return until we return and carry them.

Allow me, in this place, to give you a legal opinion. None of you entertain a doubt but that your claims and titles to the lands sold, under duress, in Missouri and Illinois, are as good and valid now in the eyes of God as they ever were; but I tell you that they are just as good and safe to you at this very moment, in the eye of the