

accord to determine to be Saints indeed—to live our religion every moment by serving our God and keeping his commandments? How can a man keep the commandments of God and suffer himself to be dishonest, to be deceitful, to steal, and take the advantage of his neighbor in every possible way, and lie to him to gain a dollar? A man cannot both be a Saint and be dishonest. No doubt the dispositions of the parents have some influence in laying the foundation of the character of the child, morally and physically; and God, in one of his revelations to Joseph Smith, has said, “But behold, I say unto you, that little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world through mine Only Begotten; Wherefore, they cannot sin, for power is not given to Satan to tempt little children, until they begin to become accountable before me; For it is given unto them even as I will, according to mine own pleasure, that great things may be required at the hands of their parents.” And Jesus said, “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

How do people become dishonest? By, in the first place, yielding to temptation, and suffering the spirit which is in them to become contaminated by the power of the evil one. Men become confirmed drunkards by nourishing a depraved appetite for spirituous liquor, and thus they become slaves to a destructive habit.

If men by their organizations were compelled to steal, to murder, and do a thousand other evils, they could not be held accountable, and the agency of man would be destroyed. Satan tempts men to evil, and they have power to resist the temptation. The more sin is cultivated, the stronger it grows, until it binds down men with strong chains.

Satan whispers in the ears of those

who list to obey him, “Lie a little, deceive a little, take the advantage of your neighbor a little, drink whiskey a little: it will not harm you”—leading them along, as it were, with silken cords, until he binds them with his strong chains, and readily leads them down to destruction.

Do you inquire whom I mean? I mean those who are guilty. Are there any of this character here? Yes; I see some of them now. Are they to be seen disgracing themselves in the public streets? Yes: you may go down into “Whiskey Street,” and you can see them every day. How does it appear in the eyes of good men and in the eyes of God and angels, when they see those professing to be Saints and Elders in Israel, holding the Priesthood of God, drinking whiskey and swaggering with those who hate God and his people, who, if they had the power, would kill President Young, and me, and Daniel, and any of our friends who are determined to uphold and sustain righteousness?

The scene that occurred down that street on Christmas day is still fresh in our minds. O heavens! What a celebration of the day on which Christ the Savior of the world was born! O horrible example! For men professing to be Saints and friends of God, with murder in their hearts, to thirst for each other’s blood! The duty of the Seventies and Elders of this Church is plainly defined. I would separate all such unprofitable branches from the vine, and let them wither and be burned. I say unto you Seventies—ye authorities of the Church of God, You are not doing your duty if you do not do this.

President Young has cried unto you loud and long, ye Elders of Israel; and he has shaken his garments, and the responsibility is upon you. It seems as though you cannot prune the vineyard, in the righteousness of your