

very great extent, the perpetuity of our homes, and of the institution which God has given us. God has entrusted to this people His Gospel. He has placed in His church the oracles of the holy priesthood. He has given unto us the labor of upbuilding His Zion on the earth, and it is for us, if we expect to receive the reward that He has promised, to fulfill that trust faithfully, let the consequences be what they may.

Already the establishment of this work has cost the best blood of this generation. Already a prophet, a patriarch, apostles and numerous Saints have laid down their lives to establish the work with which we are connected. It is for us to decide during this Conference whether that blood has been shed in vain; whether the sufferings, trials, difficulties and hardships, our exodus from the lands which we formerly occupied and inhabited, our pilgrimage to this country, our sufferings since we came here, the labors we have expended in rearing this city and in extending civilization throughout this Territory—I say it is for us to decide today and during this Conference whether or not all this has been in vain; and whether we will build up His kingdom according to His divine commandment, or divide our strength and energy, and the talents with which He has endowed us in building up a system or systems that are opposed to this work. It is for us to decide whether we will submit to the jurisdiction of the holy priesthood, or whether we will renounce that jurisdiction and our allegiance to God. These are the questions which present themselves before us today. They are important questions, and should be decided carefully and understandingly.

I look upon the position which we occupy today as, in some respects, a

critical one. Not that I anticipate any danger, or have any fears that we are going to be overthrown, if the people will only be true to themselves and their God. I know, as I know that I live and am speaking to you today, that this is the work of God. I know that He has promised that it shall stand forever, and that it shall break in pieces everything that is opposed to it. But I also know that in order for it to accomplish this great work, and for us to share in all its benefit and blessings, we individually must be faithful to it, for the blessings which are promised to us are made conditionally. If we prove recreant to the trust that God has given to us, others will be raised in our places to take the great work in their hands, and carry it forward to its full consummation.

I look upon the present time, as I have said, as a critical one. I feel that if we do not listen to the counsels that are given to us, God has a scourge in store for the Latter-day Saints. I feel in every fiber of my body, in every nerve of my system that this is a turning point with the Latter-day Saints, and that there is required of us today, a decision upon this subject. We have now, for a long period, done as we pleased. We have gone here or there, and done to a certain extent to suit ourselves, regardless of God, the counsels of His servants or the interests of His kingdom, and regardless of everything save our own general interests. The consequence is that there is growing up in our midst a power that menaces us with utter destruction and overthrow. We are told—openly and without disguise, that when the railroad is completed there will be such a flood of so-called “civilization” brought in here that every vestige of us, our church, and institutions shall be completely obliterated. When