

ous times and under various circumstances, been told by those with whom I have conversed and who have taken some interest in the work with which we are identified, that so long as we were a primitive people and were simple in our habits, so long as we did not have a great deal of wealth in our midst we should probably continue to prosper and increase and bring forth and manifest in our lives the virtues which I described as having an existence among us. Men have told me—"O yes, Mr. Cannon, the picture you draw of the manner of life of your people is very delightful; it is delightful to find a people exhibiting such qualities as you describe as existing among, or possessed by, your people; but you are a new people, a new sect or denomination; but wait awhile, wait until you have grown in wealth, importance, numbers and power, and then we shall see whether your system possesses elements superior to the systems with which we are acquainted and which have preceded yours." Men who have reflected, who have read and made themselves acquainted with the histories of other peoples, know full well that when once wealth increases in the midst of a people, when class distinctions make their appearance, when education is promoted and aspired after by certain classes which other classes cannot reach; when refinement, the refinement of education and culture, has its effects, creating distinctions among a people who originally were primitive, and luxurious habits come in to foster these differences, then the strength of former communities has disappeared, and nations which have been noted as possessing the strength and the union of iron, have fallen into decay and have lost their power and have been broken into fragments and have eventually disappeared.

Judging us by the light of this kind of experience many have made predictions which you have probably seen in the papers thousands of times, that there were causes operating in the midst of the Mormon community that would work out its disintegration and eventually bring about its utter overthrow and downfall, or at least bring about an assimilation between it and the systems by which it was surrounded.

There is one thing, however, that is not taken into account in measuring us, and that is that God has laid the foundation of this work. Men do not recognize that, but they recognize other causes and other influences that are apparent to them and with which they are familiar. We have consoled ourselves, in listening to these predictions, with the reflection that we are the people of God, that God has made promises unto this people, that he has said that this work shall stand forever, and shall not be given into the hands of another people. These predictions, therefore, have not had any discouraging effect upon us. But, with all our confidence, we must not lose sight of the fact that God works by means. If we are to withstand the encroachments of the evil one we must, on our part, do that which will fortify us against his encroachments, we must take steps to render us impregnable to his assaults. We are not the first people to engage in such a work as this. Others have made repeated attempts to establish the kingdom of God on the earth. One by one the prophets fell, one by one they became victims to the power of the evil one and to the assaults of the wicked. The Son of God himself fell a martyr to this fell spirit; his apostles one by one, although they endeavored in their day and generation to establish this order of