

Covenants. We have here a clear and plain prediction, in the form of a parable, that was recorded upon plates of gold, almost 600 years before Christ, in relation to the great work in which we, as the servants of the Lord, and the Latter-day Saints, are engaged. Perhaps there may be some persons, numbered among this community, who may have a feeling something like this; "that we are not living according to the law that is given in the Doctrine and Covenants, in all respects." And they have drawn the conclusion, that perhaps the Lord would forsake us in consequence of our not carrying out the laws so clearly defined and explained in that record. These things were clearly set forth before the people, this forenoon, in regard to wherein we have not entered into all the fulness and perfection of that order of things. But the question is, can we do much better, under the present circumstances? This is a great question to be considered. And in the consideration of it, we have to enquire into a number of other things, such as can we lay aside the present order of things that is not consistent with the Doctrine and Covenants; and can we begin anew here in these valleys, and carry out the law of the Lord in all its perfection? I do not know but what there may be a bare possibility of our doing it; but whether the Lord requires this at our hands under the present circumstances is another thing. We are very imperfect, and yet we try to do right. We want to keep the commandments of the Lord; we desire to be members of his Church; we desire to have his Holy Spirit resting upon us, and we desire to be guided by it. We wish to know what the counsel of the servants of God is concerning us; and yet,

hardly know which way to turn. We see a united order established in one place, according to one principle; we go to another part of the land, and we find an order established on a little different principle; and we hear of another, all differing somewhat. And so on until we visit nearly all the settlements of these mountains. And as was stated this forenoon, they differ as do the elders themselves in their views.

Now what has the Lord said in this parable of the vineyard? "And they did keep the root and the top thereof equal." In what respect were they made equal? The next part of that same sentence declares that they were made equal "according to the strength thereof." Now there is a great deal expressed in those few words. They were not made equal all at once, as the inhabitants of a celestial world are, without any improvements being introduced; but they were to keep the root and the top of the great tree equal, *according to the strength thereof*; that is according to the condition and circumstances in which the people are placed. Now I consider, that notwithstanding all our deviations from the perfect law that God has given, notwithstanding the condition of things pointed out so clearly in the Doctrine and Covenants in regard to holding stewardships and inheritances, and giving an account of those stewardships and inheritances, according to the perfect order—I consider we are doing pretty well, in a great many respects. We have progressed; we have made improvements; we are in a more united condition than we were 45 years ago. Hence there has been an improvement among the Latter-day Saints; and this improvement has been for the better; it has been pointing all the time towards equal-