

ascertain how we stand as Elders in Israel before the Lord, so that if need be we may renew our diligence and faithfulness, and increase our good works.

There is no doubt, speaking of the people as a whole, that we are greatly improving in the sight of God. But although this is undoubtedly the case, I am convinced there are persons among us endowed with spiritual gifts and susceptible of cultivation, that could be exercised, if they chose, to a far greater extent than they are, and who could move much faster in the ways of holiness and get much nearer to the Lord. But the spirit which attends the things of this world is operating upon them to that extent that they do not increase those spiritual powers and blessings; they do not place themselves in that close relationship to the Lord that it is their privilege, as men holding the holy Priesthood, called and chosen to perform a special work in the midst of mankind. As it was with Peter and the rest of the Apostles in the days of their gloom, when the Master, the Savior of the world, hung upon the cross, their hope and prospects sunk in darkness, having lost the real spirit of the mission to which they had been called, in their despair, they said, Let us go a fishing; let us return to our nets, to our former business. So it is with some in our day. There are men among us upon whom the Spirit of the Almighty once rested mightily, whose intentions were once as good and pure as those of angels, and who made covenants with God that they would serve Him and keep His commandments under every and all circumstances; and many of such were ready and willing to leave their wives and children to go or come as the case

might be in the interest of the cause they had espoused. But how is it now with some of those Elders? They do not feel so today. Their affections are set upon the things of this world which the Lord has enabled them to acquire, that they wait now until they are called, and in many instances when called, they obey more out of a desire to retain their standing and position, than a real heartfelt love of the labor to which they may have been called.

This is the condition of all men, no matter how well they start out, who allow their thoughts and affections to run after the world and its ways, and it is a plain and indisputable proof that when this is the case with men they love the world more than they love the Lord and His work upon the earth. Having received the light of the everlasting Gospel, and partaken of the good things of the kingdom, and being of the seed of Israel and heirs to great and glorious promises, we should labor with fidelity and diligence to accomplish what God has designed to do through us; we should be men and women of faith and power as well as good works, and when we discover ourselves careless or indifferent in the least, it should be sufficient for us to know it in order to mend our ways and return to the path of duty.

When our friends are stricken down by sickness and disease, or when our little ones are in the agonies of pain and death, there should be Elders in our midst who have educated themselves so thoroughly in developing the gifts of the Spirit within them, and in whom the Saints have such perfect confidence, that they would always be sought after instead of doctors. There are men among us who possess the gift