

conspire to overthrow them. We need not marvel that even in this boasted land of freedom and liberty, statesmen, rulers and judges should place the iron heel of oppression upon the Latter-day Saints, and seek by every way in their power to bring evil upon them, to discourage them, to hedge up their way, and to destroy them. They must needs do these things. They must needs harden their hearts against the Lord and against His commandments. They must needs do many things that are wicked in His sight and oppressive to His people, in order that God may judge them, and that they fill up the cup of their iniquity. And it must needs be that the Saints, too, should be tried in all things even as Abraham was tried when he was commanded to offer up his only son. It must needs be that when the Gospel found us in our scattered condition mid the nations of the earth, and we yielded obedience to it, that we should be despised of our fellow creatures, that we should be reviled, so that we should feel it a pleasure to leave our fatherland, the graves of our ancestors, the home of our youth and childhood, and gather to Zion. Were it not for these two things that are working in the earth we should not be gathered together; we should not be willing to do it; we should love the home of our ancestors and the country that gave us birth. But because of the persecutions and hatred of the wicked we are weaned from them. As the Savior said on a certain occasion:

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword.

“For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

“And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”

At first thought it would seem a strange idea that the Prince of Peace, whose birth was announced by angels to the shepherds saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”—I say, at first thought it would seem strange that the Prince of Peace so announced should say:

“I come not to send peace, but a sword * * * I am come to set a man at variance against his father, etc. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”

But it is all easily explained by our experience and observation, and by considering His teachings and the effects thereof and the words of the Apostle concerning the preaching of the Gospel being a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. We go out into the Gentile world, and we find a great variety of religious opinions and many different religious sects. We find Catholics, Protestants, and various denominations and sects of Protestantism. They are all laboring together in the same field, preaching different doctrines and items of faith, and all professing to be the religion of Christ. All their teachers profess to be preachers of the Gospel, and their followers all profess to be Christians, and yet there is not power enough in all the doctrines and systems that they are teaching and establishing to produce a separation between the righteous and the wicked. They all continue to harmonize together—at least so far that they all count each other Christians, and it is very difficult to distinguish the Christian from the infidel, unless it be that the Christian is the worst. But not so when the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached. It always did produce a separation between the righteous and the wicked.