

had better reasons, or more of them, to be strong and confident in God their living Head, than they have this morning. We need to know and realize that our trust is in Him and not in man, for woe! to him that putteth his trust in man and maketh flesh his arm. God has undertaken to perform a work in the earth which is going to astonish the world, and which will give to His name honor, and glory, power and dominion. Now, all these things that occur—I need not go into any enumeration of them, because in all of your different settlements circumstances and conditions are more or less varied—it has been the studied plan of our adversaries to spread snares for our feet throughout the land; and it need not be wondered at, of course, that they who stand highest in authority should be the objects more particularly of their wicked designs.

Take a look at this thing rationally and in a commonsense view for a moment. The forest trees that are shaken with the wind sometimes almost seem as if they would be uprooted by it, and blown over. By this operation the soil is wonderfully loosened about the roots. By this storm the strength of a tree is tested, and the trunk and the branches of it, as to whether they bear proper relation to each other and derive that support that sustains every part in its natural position. It is also very natural that in that grove, as the wind passes over it, the tallest trees are really the most tried part of it, for the wind and storm will dash and blow upon them, while the smaller ones that are protected by each other, scarcely feel it, perhaps. Then you need not wonder if some of the tallest trees do not happen to be here today. We will, however, remember our brethren who are

absent, and pray for them; we will ask the Lord to bless and protect them, to strengthen and fill them with the wisdom of the Holy Ghost continually, that the joy and comfort of the truth and of the holy Gospel shall be theirs, and that they shall be preserved from the hands of their enemies.

We who are gathered together, instead of entertaining ill feeling of cultivating malicious designs towards our enemies, will ask the Lord to strengthen us and to qualify us not only for what is upon us now, but for what is before us; for we do not know what there may be for us in the purposes of Jehovah. All this may be necessary and profitable to give us an experience that we should pass through trials, that may tend to our improvement and qualification, enable us in our different positions to better magnify our callings, and to bear off His Kingdom in the last days as He requires.

There are times and seasons when the hoary frosts of winter not only prevent the trees from showing forth their foliage, from developing any bloom, but cause them to cast their fruit to the earth, scarcely giving indications of life. It may not be wondered at then, if through the storms and blasts of adversity which come upon the Church from time to time that its members are not spreading forth and reaching out their branches, or that the foliage shows no such immediate prospects of fruit, as we might, under more favorable sunshine and with more beautiful weather, expect. While this adverse season is on and the leaves perhaps have blown to the ground, and all presents the appearance of barrenness and death itself, the sap is at work down in the roots. Do you understand this? Gardeners and nurserymen especially will