

she gave her rich dresses away, others would commit the same sin that she would commit in wearing them; so she destroyed them.

To return to the Elders of Israel. An Elder visits a Branch, and, unless he is on his guard, he will begin to complain that the Presiding Elder of the Branch is not as he is, does not understand as he does, and does not conceive of the Gospel as he does. He will find himself saying to the members of the Branch—"You are in the dark; you need teaching; you ought to have a smart Elder here—a man of understanding—to teach you." "Well, brother, will you stay and teach us?" Perhaps, through persuasion, he will stop, and what will he do? Break that Branch to pieces, and destroy their faith, if possible. Why? "You are not as I am!" Elders, look to this, and think of it. We wish you to reap some benefit from your experience.

When I rise here and tell you things that pertain to other nations and generations, and when others teach you things that pertain to other people, it does not profit you as much as it does for us to understand ourselves. Wherever we go, wherever our lot is cast, whoever we associate with, let the Elders have the principles of truth within them to prompt heavenly and holy desires to do good. Is it wisdom for each Elder to strive to mold and fashion all others precisely according to himself in all the views and notions he possesses? Is this the way? No, it is not. It is wisdom for the Elders of Israel to know how to treat others according to the ability they possess, and to treat their families according to the ability they possess. In visiting neighborhoods, you will find persons intelligent upon some points, and upon other points they may be ignorant. They may be very well informed upon certain principles per-

taining to divinity, and upon others be ignorant. Their dispositions are also different from yours and others you associate with. What will you make of them? Good people—Saints, so far as in your power.

We are very apt, through our traditions, former associations, and notion of things and ideas, to attribute every act of man and every manifestation of mankind to an invisible source—the good or the evil. God is the author of all good; and yet, if you rightly understood yourselves, you would not directly attribute every good act you perform to our Father in heaven, nor to his Son Jesus Christ, nor to the Holy Ghost; neither would you attribute every evil act of a man or woman to the Devil or his spirits or influences; for man is organized by his Creator to act perfectly independently of all influences there are above or beneath. Those influences are always attending him, and are ready to dictate and direct—to lead him into truth or to lead him to destruction. But is he always guided by those influences in every act? He is not. It is ordained of God that we should act independently in and of ourselves, and the good is present when we need it. If we will ask for it, it is with us. If we yield to temptation, the evil is present, and nigh enough to lead every son and daughter of Adam to destruction, if they give way to it. But it is the design of the Almighty that we should act independently. Then, when you see a person endowed by the Holy Ghost, you need not expect him to look and act precisely as you do. Their religious sentiments will be alike, for the Holy Ghost does not introduce foolish traditions and the varied unwise notions that the inhabitants of the earth have.

A man will say, "If I believed that such a man or woman was a Saint, I should despair of all good." Why?