

beginning to the present time—we find it in our own history, we find it in the histories contained in the Bible, the New Testament, and the Book of Mormon, that where circumstances arose or events transpired of a peculiar nature, it required the action of men and women to accomplish certain duties that were devolving upon them in the interest and the salvation of the people, or for a class of people, or perhaps for certain individuals, we find this in tracing the history of God's dealings with the human family. Now to my mind there is something very singular in the history of a certain people connected with the events related in the Book of Esther. There was a people at this time scattered throughout the provinces of the Medes and Persians, Ahasuerus being then king of Persia and Media. This people were the people of God, they had been acknowledged of God as his people for several centuries, commencing with Abraham; but in consequence of their dissipation and transgression, and because they sought to worship other Gods, he scattered them throughout those 127 provinces, and they were in captivity. But in consequence of a certain feeling that was gotten up, a feeling of hatred and a determination to destroy this people, they were placed in very imminent jeopardy. A decree had been passed by the king that on a certain day they should all be destroyed, and there was weeping and wailing from one end of the kingdom to the other. But it appears—as it will, and has appeared in our history in the past—that the Lord had concealed his plan for the deliverance of his people. It was for the purpose of destroying Mordecai that the decree was established. Haman, who was the author of the difficul-

ties, had determined in his mind that he would destroy Mordecai, but disdained to execute his vengeance on Mordecai alone, therefore desired to make a sweeping arrangement which would include the destruction of all his people scattered throughout the provinces, and Haman succeeded in influencing the king to accomplish this business. He had informed the king that this was a people who had laws that were different from the laws of any other people, and that they were actually in some instances living in disobedience to his laws, that disobedience consisting in not worshipping the false gods that were worshipped in those days. He succeeded in blinding the mind of the king to that extent that he was given the privilege of accomplishing the destruction of thousands and tens of thousands of this people, the people of God. On account of this, Mordecai, we are told, rent his clothes and put on sackcloth and sat in ashes; and finally he conceived the idea that the salvation of this people was in Queen Esther, his niece. So he sent her word to the effect that it was her business to take a course to accomplish this object. But she sent back word when she received this communication that it was a very difficult matter for her to get an audience with the king, because according to the law it was death for any person to go into the inner court and ask anything of the king uncalled, and if she went in it would be at the risk of her life. The answer to this was that if she felt that under the circumstances she could not risk all she possessed, then should their deliverance arise from another source, but she and her father's house should be destroyed. Esther took all these things into consideration,