

ever the voice of the people of God, and the authorities that God has placed in His Church, whom He has ordained—whenever they lift up their hands against a man to cut him off from the Church, to withdraw from him the authority of the Priesthood that he has exercised, in every instance without a single exception, from the beginning of this Church until today, God has most signally and wonderfully manifested His approval of their acts and has withdrawn from that man (whosoever he may be, however great and mighty he may have been in the Church), His power and His blessing. It was so with Oliver Cowdery, the companion of Joseph, the man who received with him the Priesthood, upon whose head John the Baptist laid his hands, and upon whose head, also, the Apostles Peter, James and John laid their hands. These glorious blessings and favors that God gave to him did not prevent his falling into sin. When he did fall into sin and the Church and the Priesthood united in lifting their hands to cut him off from the Church, and take from him the Priesthood and the authority that he had so powerfully exercised and which God had favored him with so much, God recognized the action. Other men fell, also. Six of the original twelve fell into transgression. They were men of ability, men of talent. Some of them were greatly favored. Lyman Johnson had wonderful manifestations given unto him; but when he fell into transgression and the Church with the Priesthood united in lifting up their hands against him the power and authority that had distinguished him before was withdrawn and he became as other men. And so with all of them. So with Sidney Rigdon, that mighty man,

that eloquent man, that spokesman for the Prophet Joseph, of whom the Book of Mormon had spoken for hundreds, yes, it may be said for thousands of years before his birth. He also, when the Priesthood and Church in Nauvoo lifted up their hands against him, fell like Lucifer, who once was a mighty angel in the presence of God, and exercised great authority; like Lucifer he fell, and the authority and power that had attended him were withdrawn, and he became like unto other men. This has been the case in every instance. Can you point out an exception? Look at them wherever you see them, the men that have held the Priesthood, who were bright and influential and powerful, whom God blessed, whose administrations God sealed when they were in the possession of that authority, exercising it in purity and in singleness of purpose—when this was the case He was with them; but when they went into transgression and fell and the Priesthood was taken from them, they became weak, and their strength was gone. They are marked among the people wherever you see them. Thus showing that God in these last days confirms the promise that He made unto His servants, that whatsoever they bound on earth should be bound in heaven, and that whatsoever they loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven.

It is by the exercise of this power in our midst that we are preserved. God has given it unto us. It is true He has placed this authority and power, it may be said, in earthen vessels. He has chosen weak men, fallible men, men who are subject to all the failings and weaknesses of human nature. But, nevertheless, it is the authority of God. It is the authority by which He has built up His Church in all ages. It is the