

riages are born sometimes five months and even less after marriage. This is an evidence of something very wrong. And this is not all. We cannot tell what is done in secret. This is made public, because the evidence of sin comes to light and cannot be concealed without the commission of more hideous crime. And this among a people such as we are! It is a disgrace to us. Yet much of it is due to our neglect. Fathers and mothers do not pay that attention to their children, to their habits and their associations, that they should do. If they watched them with care, and enquired of them where they went and with whom they associated, and threw safeguards around them, such things would not happen. There are conditions of society, even among other nations, where such things are very uncommon, because of the habits of the people. Fathers and mothers guard their daughters with the greatest circumspection and vigilance. France is one of those nations. Although France is said to be a corrupt nation, the daughters of the people are watched and their association with the other sex is guarded so that nothing of this kind scarcely ever happens. But with us there is too much familiarity between the sexes. It is wrong; it leads to bad results. The commission of sin makes lives of unhappiness. No woman can forget the trespass of her husband, and no man can ever forget his own sin. It is painful through life for them to think about. We should, as a people, guard against these things. All sorts of evils are introducing themselves. We have men here with whom a woman can no more be trusted than she could be in the den of a wolf—and men of respectable appearance, and who act as though they might be gentlemen. Parents would be as safe in trusting a daughter to a wild beast as to one of them. This class of men prey upon the other sex, and have brought themselves to think that it is neither sinful nor wrong. They destroy virtue wherever they can, and take pride in it. They do not believe there need be any virtue among men, and all women whom they can induce to comply with their wishes they view as their lawful prey. And these people come among us, and consort with us! Our young men, too, consort with them, and some of them take lessons from them. We have heard lately of an occurrence of this character that has stirred our souls to the very center.

When will these things end? When God visits the wicked with His judgments, as He will do. Then these practices and the wicked and the knowledge of their wickedness, will be destroyed. Then, I hope, the filthy details and the exact forms and methods of these abominations will be kept secret, as the Prophet Alma counseled his son Helaman concerning the secret oaths and covenants of the Jaredites, that had come down from the days of Master Mahan, of whom we read in the new translation, and who was the head of that secret organization that banded themselves together to commit murders and works of darkness. Alma said to Helaman:

"Therefore ye shall keep these secret plans of their oaths and their covenants from this people, and only their wickedness, and their murders, and their abominations, shall ye make known unto them; and ye shall teach them to abhor such wickedness, and abominations, and murders; and ye shall also teach them, that these people were destroyed on account of their wickedness, and abominations, and their murders."

So, I trust, it will be with us. The knowledge of the wicked and their destruction will be preserved in our midst; but the abomination and the wickedness itself will be concealed from human knowledge, so that wickedness may be abolished in the earth, and the reign of righteousness be ushered in.

My brethren and sisters, in talking in this strain I am not indulging in any theory. I do not wish to deal in the least exaggeration concerning conditions that exist. My duties have called me to mingle with the world considerably; but I have avoided knowledge of things that were open to me if I had chosen to look at them or to enquire about them. Notwithstanding this, it has been impossible for me to avoid knowing considerable about many wicked practices, and how little of sin is attached to them by the people of the world. It is this that is the fearful feature in society. Men may seduce; men may be guilty of villainess; men may get disreputable names for their association with the other sex; and yet society will receive them and condone their offenses; in fact, it has seemed to me sometimes as though men of this character, with a certain class of women, were more attractive than pure, modest, diffident men. They seem to think more of them because of the fame they have achieved in their conquests of virtue. But a poor girl that falls in such a way, she is trampled in the dust and becomes a lost soul! And her own sex, while admiring the seducer and receiving him into their society, will frequently be the most fierce and vehement in their denunciations of their poor sister who has fallen by the wiles and seductive influences of the man. Now, all this is wrong. Yet this feeling is among us to some extent, also. Men ought to be held, and I believe the Lord does hold them in such cases, to a far stricter accountability than he does women. The woman has her own passions to contend against; but when she has the man's importunities added to these, shall not the woman be viewed with mercy, and be looked upon differently to that vile creature who, possessed of strength and power, adds his importunities to her weakness and overcomes her, and makes her the victim of his unholy lust? I say, Yes, Yes! Such men will be damned; and if there is any deeper damnation than another, they will be consigned to it.

Now, if we want our generations to live in the earth, and to have them go down through the thousand years; if we want to have representatives among the children of men during that happy period, we have to lay the foundation for that now. As we have been told during this Conference, the day of the Lord cometh; it is near at hand; and if we and our children live, it will be because we try to be pure. No generation from this time forth can live for any length of time unless they are pure; for God has said it, and His word does not return unfulfilled. Even now you can see how this Church is being cleansed as we go along. Look at the families that we have known in the Church, and see how they are being thinned out, just as though we were passing through a sifting machine. And when we see how few of those whom we have known have clung to the iron rod and maintained their faith, we are led to ask, who then can be saved? Then how many families there are who, after the death of the father and mother, are not numbered among the Saints of God! This is a cleansing process which is going on, and it will continue to go on more and more, because we are advancing. The Lord will hold us to a stricter accountability than He ever has done, because we have more

light, and because of the near approach of the end. The end does approach, and the Lord Jesus will come in the clouds of heaven, as has been predicted, and He will reign on the earth, and over a pure people. His people will be cleansed and made pure by the destruction of the wicked and the preservation of the righteous. That is the reason every wise man and woman observes the Word of Wisdom. They want to live and be preserved when these calamities and judgments shall sweep through the earth. We ought not to have to preach it for a minute among a people such as we are. Every man and woman should be determined to keep that Word, that they may have the blessing, that they and their children may live and not be killed with pestilence and sickness. Such persons will desire every child of theirs to avoid violating the counsel of God in these things. They will also say, besides observing the Word of Wisdom: "I want to pay my tithing. I expect there will be a burning some day, and I want to be preserved when the day of burning comes. I want to keep the law that will bring the fulfillment of the promises of God." Should not we here in this year 1897, live in this way?

Many have supposed that by this time the Lord would have come in His glory. He has not yet come in that manner. But He is coming, and His coming is near at hand. Therefore, we should each endeavor to live so that we shall be prepared for His coming; we should prepare the way by keeping His commandments and living so that Satan will be bound, so far as we and our families are concerned. It is incumbent upon us that we should live this way; for the Lord will not. I can assure you (I speak having knowledge upon this point), always bear with us. Elders cannot wear themselves out as they have done in the past, and as they are still doing, in preaching the word of God to this people, and the Lord not hold this people accountable for their disobedience, if they reject that word. The Lord will have a pure people. He will have a people whose hearts are changed.

Some religious societies, you know, believe altogether in faith as the only essential to salvation. On the other hand, I have heard some of our Elders go to the other extreme and almost look upon work as being all that is necessary, because of the saying of James. But the word of God which we have teaches us that we must be born again, and our hearts must be changed, and every evil desire crushed out. Our whole natures should be changed by the operations of the Spirit of God and the principles of the Gospel. I think it was Brother Cowley who spoke concerning some apostates whom they found while laboring in the mission field in Missouri. When they belonged to the Church they had not received and enjoyed the Spirit of God. There are some probably here today who have never had their hearts changed, never had new desires, never been converted from their old desires, and the "old man" is with them still. There have been people whom, probably, we have all known, who would cheat, and lie, and get drunk, and do other evil things, just as much as if they never had been brought into the Church of Christ. Are these the children of God? No; God does not own such people. When men and women join the Church in sincerity, they repent of their sins, and they have new desires. The desire to do evil is taken from them. The Spirit of God will not dwell in a man that has evil desires and does not try to quench them. We as a people should seek to be converted in this respect, if we have not been. If we are as wicked and have as wicked inclinations