

wife and his children will follow his example. God has said that those who will observe this counsel shall have wisdom given to them, even great treasures of wisdom. And these are the men we want—men of wisdom. And will you have wisdom if you take this course? Just as sure as God has said so; for His word will not fail. And those who observe the Word of Wisdom will be distinguished among this people because of the wisdom that God will give them. God will give them the blessings that He has promised, and He will preserve them. When you go as Elders to administer in a family that observe these words of God, you will have faith to lay hands on the sick and to ask the blessings of God in their behalf, and to heal them through the power of God; whereas if they are living in violation of these words, the faith of the Elders and of the persons themselves will be weakened, and they will not have enough to claim the promises that God has made. This la grippe and other diseases that are going through the country are merely precursors of the pestilences that will yet sweep through the nations of the earth, and we are required to stand in holy places that we may escape these destructions; and God has given unto us these counsels that we may be fortified, so to speak, against these scourges. You know what they did in Israel. The Lord commanded them, through Moses, to sprinkle blood on the lintels of their doors. They did this, and the destroying angel passed them by and did not slay the firstborn of any of the Hebrews; but every firstborn of the Egyptians was slain. In the museum at Berlin, I believe, there is a record in stone, found in Egypt, which establishes the fact in the minds of Egyptologists that the King of Egypt himself lost his firstborn on some occasion, and it is made plain, they think, that it was when the destroying angel passed over Egypt. Not a Hebrew lost his firstborn, because they observed the necessary requirement. God has, in His revelation to us, used this fact to bring home to us the importance of this counsel and what blessings will follow the observance of it. Therefore, we should have faith in God in these matters, believe that which He says, and claim the promises. Not that we can altogether escape death, for death is in the world; but we may escape these pestilences and judgments that are going forth among the nations of the earth. Already it seems as though the elements had been let loose with a violence that has not been known for generations. Read the accounts of the floods, the fires, the earthquakes, the tempests and the awful destruction that has come upon the people in various places. God has predicted this through the mouths of His holy prophets, and He has commanded us to gather out from the nations of the earth. He has given unto the people a wonderful spirit of gathering. He has done this for the express purpose of separating us from the wicked world and preserving a righteous seed in the earth, that when the judgments of God go forth there shall be some that will be spared. But how few there are out of those that have received the truth who have maintained their integrity and kept the faith! It is sad to think how large a number of people who

once knew the Gospel have fallen away from it, and are not sharers now in its blessings. You men of middle age can think of your former acquaintances and can recall the families that you knew in your early life—the friends probably of your youth—and where are they now? Some have gone here and there. Some have died out of the Church. Others have lost the faith and gone no one knows where. It is a sad thing to contemplate how many have received the Gospel who have lost the Spirit of God and become aliens to the covenant, having no name or place, nor their children among the people of God. Why is this, brethren and sisters? Is it because God has withdrawn His blessings and power from them out of caprice? Is it because they were predestined to lose the faith? Do you think there was any fatality about this, and that these people could not help doing what they have done? Why, no; it is as plain as the light that shines through these windows that that is not the case. It is because they themselves have laid the foundation for apostasy. They have grieved the Spirit of God and caused its withdrawal from them.

Now, if we who are here today do not prove faithful and retain the Spirit of God, we shall be to blame, and not God. We cannot blame the Presidency of the Stake, nor the High Council, nor the Bishop, nor the Presidency of the Church, nor the Twelve; for we ourselves will be individually responsible for that which we have brought upon ourselves. How is the Spirit of God grieved? Why, in various ways. But there is one fruitful cause, and I wish to call the attention of the young men of Parowan Stake to it. The Lord has given in two revelations His express word concerning a sin that is fruitful in apostasy. He declares that any man that will look upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, unless he repent; and I want to say to you young men that as sure as you live God will fulfil that word. If you look upon a woman to lust after her, you will deny the faith, unless you repent, and that sorely. You cannot indulge in this dreadful sin without grieving the Spirit of God and causing its withdrawal from you. And if we cannot look upon a woman to lust after her without grieving the Spirit of God and being in danger of losing the faith, how much more serious would it be if any of us should act towards one of the other sex in an improper manner. I say to you, in the name of the Lord, there is no more fruitful cause of apostasy than this, and you had better be warned; for God has spoken with the greatest plainness on this. The thought of doing anything that would cause me to apostatize from this Church is the most horrible that ever entered into my heart. It has filled me with a dread that my language is unable to express; and if I thought there was anything that I would do which would lead to such a dreadful result as that, I would fly from it with all my might. The Lord does love purity and chastity, in women and in men. Why should our sisters, or our daughters, or our wives, be required to be more pure than we are? Are we not subject to the same laws? Do we not expect to receive the same

exaltation? Certainly. Then why should a man think that he can do a thing with impunity which his wife cannot do? When he thinks that he deceives himself. Yet this is the growing sin of the world. Men indulge in these passions and think they are justified in it, until virtue is almost unknown among our sex. Under such conditions, of course, the other sex become the victims of lust, and are preyed upon by libertines. It is this that is bringing destruction upon the nations of the earth. And it would destroy the Latter-day Saints if they gave way to it. God will have a pure people. He will have a virtuous people. He will have a holy people. He will have a people in whose tabernacles the Spirit of God will dwell; and it will not dwell in unholy tabernacles. The whole history of our people is a proof of this. Oliver Cowdery, who stood side by side with Joseph, who was ordained by an angel from heaven, who was the second Elder in the Church, who beheld the Son of God himself, who saw many wonderful things, and was blessed of God as was Joseph—this man whom one would think would have stood if any man in the flesh ever could, indulged in sin. Joseph warned him against that which he did, but he persisted in it, and the result was his priesthood was taken from him, and the crown that he would have had was given to another. Hyrum Smith received the blessings that Oliver Cowdery had had bestowed upon him, and which he had forfeited by his impure conduct. Ought not this to be a warning to all of us? What man is there in the flesh who can calculate upon being secure from committing sin if he could not? This is the fate also of other men who received great gifts from God. Apostle Lyman Johnson had great manifestations. Angels ministered unto him, and he was the first man in this generation to be chosen one of the Twelve Apostles. Yet he apostatized, denied the faith, and became an enemy to the Kingdom of God. These are illustrations of the truth of what God has said, and our history is full of such illustrations. You see men of great promise—I have watched them in my life—all at once wither up, lose their power. They lose the life that was in them. What is the cause? Why, they have committed sin. They have probably gone on missions, committed themselves while there, and come back destitute of the Spirit of God. They are milestones, so to speak, on the road, to show how fast the Church has traveled and left them standing. Do you not know of numbers of such cases in your experience? I am sure you do.

There is only one way, brethren and sisters, to be safe and to obtain salvation in the presence of God, and that is in keeping the commandments of God, in being pure in our hearts as God is pure, to be like angels. It should be our aim to get a knowledge of godliness as fast as we can; to know what godliness consists of, and then endeavor to make our lives conform to it. I ask myself, Is there anything that my brethren—the most favored of them—are doing that I do not do? Then I want to do what they do. I want to be like them. And I ask myself, Is there anything that my Savior does, or