

various terms from one or three months up to years. They have gone there willingly, as martyrs to this oriciple, making a protest that the heavens and the earth should bear record of, that they were conscientious in espousing this principle, and that it was not for sensual indulgence, because if sensual indulgence had been the object we could have obtained it without such sacrifices as were involved in obedience to this law—without going to prison, without sustaining wives and children, without the obloquy that has been heaped upon us because of this action of ours. If licentious motives had prompted us, we could have secured the results in a cheaper way and in a way more in consonance with universal custom throughout our own land and all Christendom. But the sacrifices that we have made in this respect bear testimony to the heavens and to the earth that we have been sincere and conscientious in all that we have done, and that we have not been prompted by a desire to use women for lustful purposes, but to save them, to make them honorable, and to leave no margin of women in our society to become a prey to lust, so that every woman in our land should have the opportunity of becoming a virtuous wife and an honored mother, loved and respected by her offspring and by all her associates.

If no other result has attended what may be termed our obstinacy, these results are, at least, upon record, and they never can be blotted out. The imprisonment of these men, the sufferings—the untold, unwritten, yea, the unmentionable, it may be said, sufferings—of wives and children, they are recorded in heaven and are known to men upon the earth, and they form a chapter that will never be blotted out.

Latter-day Saints, there has been nothing lost in the five years that have just passed. We have lost no credit. There has been no honor sacrificed. We can look God in the face—that is, if we are permitted to do so, so far as this is concerned, we can; we can look the holy angels in the face; we can look mankind in the face, without a blush, or without feeling that we have done anything unworthy of our manhood or of our professions and the faith that God has given unto us. This all of us can do; and if no other result has followed what may be called our obstinacy, than these which I now describe they are grand enough to pay us for all that we have gone through.

But the time has come when, in the providence of God, it seemed necessary that something should be done to meet the requirements of the country, to meet the demands that have been made upon us, and to save the people. President Woodruff and others of us have been appealed to hundreds of times, I might say;—I can say for myself, that I have been appealed to many scores of times to get out something, and to announce something. Some of our leading brethren have said: "Inasmuch as we have

ceased to give permission for plural marriages to be solemnized, why cannot we have the benefit of that? Why cannot we tell the world it, so as to have the benefit of it? Our enemies are alleging constantly that we still practise this in secret, and that we are dishonest and guilty of evasion. Now, if we have really put a stop to granting permissions to men to take more wives than one, why should not the world know it and we have the advantage of it?" These remarks have been made to us repeatedly. But at no time has the Spirit seemed to indicate that this should be done. We have waited for the Lord to move in the matter; and on the 24th of September, President Woodruff made up his mind that he would write something, and he had the spirit of it. He had prayed about it and had besought God repeatedly to show him what to do. At that time the Spirit came upon him, and the document that has been read in your hearing was the result. I know that it was right, much as it has gone against the grain with me in many respects, because many of you know the contest we have had upon this point. But when God speaks, and when God makes known His mind and will, I hope that I and all Latter-day Saints will bow in submission to it. When that document was prepared it was submitted. But, as is said in this motion that has been made, President Woodruff is the only man upon the earth who holds the keys of the sealing power. These Apostles all around me have all the same authority that he has. We are all ordained with the same ordination. We all have had the same keys and the same powers bestowed upon us. But there is an order in the Church of God, and that order is that there is only one man at a time on the earth who holds the keys of sealing, and that man is the President of the Church, now Wilford Woodruff. Therefore, he signed that document himself. Some have wondered and said, "Why didn't his Counselors sign? Why didn't others sign?" Well, I give you the reason—because he is the only man on the earth that has this right, and he exercised it, and he did this with the approval of all of us to whom the matter was submitted, after he had made up his mind, and we sustained it; for we had made it a subject of prayer also, that God would direct us.

There never was a time in this Church when I believe the leading men of this Church have endeavored to live nearer to God, because they have seen the path in which we walked environed with difficulties, beset with all manner of snares, and we have had the responsibility resting upon us of your salvation, to a certain extent. God has chosen us, not we ourselves, to be the shepherds of His flock. We have not sought this responsibility. You know Wilford Woodruff too well to believe that he would seek such an office as he now fills. I trust you know the rest of us sufficiently to believe the same concerning

us. I have shrunk from the Apostleship. I have shrunk from being a member of the First Presidency. I felt that if I could get my salvation in any other way, I prayed God that He would give it to me, after He revealed to me that I would be an Apostle, when I was comparatively a child; and I have had that feeling ever since. These Apostles, all of them, feel the responsibility which rests upon them as leaders of the people, God having made us, in His providence, your shepherds. We feel that the flock is in our charge, and if any harm befall this flock through us, we will have to answer for it in the day of the Lord Jesus; we shall have to stand and render an account of that which has been entrusted to us; and if we are faithless, and careless, and do not live so as to have the word of God continually with us and know His mind and will, then our condemnation will be sure and certain, and we cannot escape it. But you are our witnesses as to whether God is with us or not, as well as the Holy Ghost. You have received, and it is your privilege to receive, the testimony of Jesus Christ as to whether these men who stand at your head are the servants of God, whom God has chosen, and through whom God gives instructions to His people. You know it, because the testimony of the Spirit is with you, and the Spirit of God burns in your bosoms when you hear the word of God declared by these servants, and there is a testimony living in your hearts concerning it.

Now, realizing the full responsibility of this, this action has been taken. Will it try many of the Saints? Perhaps it will; and perhaps it will try those who have not obeyed this law as much as any others in the Church. But all that we can say to you is that which we repeatedly say to you—go unto God yourselves, if you are tried over this and cannot see its purpose; go to your secret chambers and ask God and plead with Him, in the name of Jesus, to give you a testimony as He has given it to us, and I promise you that you will not come away empty, nor dissatisfied; you will have a testimony, and light will be poured out upon you, and you will see things that perhaps you cannot see and understand at the present time.

I pray God to bless all of you, my brethren and sisters; to fill you with His Holy Spirit; to keep you in the path of exaltation which He has marked out for us; to be with us on the right hand and on the left in our future as He has been in the past.

Before I sit down I wish to call attention to one remarkable thing, and it may be an evidence to you that the devil is not pleased with what we have done. It is seldom I have seen so many lies, and such flagrant, outrageous lies told about the Latter-day Saints as I have quite recently. I have not time to read the papers, but I have happened to pick up two or three papers and glance at them, and the most infernal (pardon me for using that