

am pleased once more to have the opportunity of meeting with the Latter-day Saints in this building. I rejoice in the testimony of the Gospel which I possess, and take pleasure in listening from time to time to the testimonies borne and the counsels and instructions given by those who speak to the people. There is nothing in this life so dear to me as the testimony of the Gospel of Christ. There is no desire that I have which is as strong as the hope that my mind may never become darkened, that I may never depart from the path of truth and become an alien to the principles which we, as Latter-day Saints, have espoused.

No man among this people can grow and increase in the light and testimony of the Spirit of God and in the power and ability to do good unless he is humble in his heart and ready and willing at all times to seek for the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. Next to the committing of sin there is no more fruitful cause of apostasy among the Latter-day Saints than the getting into that position when we put our trust in the arm of flesh. I firmly believe that one of the greatest benefits that accrues to us through prayer is that of keeping us humble in our hearts; that no man who honestly bows down every day of his life and supplicates God in sincerity for the light of His Holy Spirit to guide him, will ever become proud and haughty. On the contrary, his heart will become filled with meekness, humility and childlike simplicity.

It is because of this oneness of purpose and action amongst the Latter-day Saints at large that the accusation is made against them that they are priest-bidden and have no mind of their own. No doubt the same complaints were made of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His followers because they were one in spirit, in the testimony of the Gospel, and in laboring for the spread of that Gospel upon the earth. You find the same desires and the same feelings animating the hearts of the Latter-day Saints, no matter from what part of the world they have come—the same love and fellowship existing in their hearts for each other. The people mingle together, they become united; there is a love and fellowship existing between the man from England and the native man of the Sandwich Islands which nothing but the selfsame testimony and a true knowledge and light of that Gospel which makes us brothers and sisters could possibly effect.

It is a surprise to me that any intelligent man can make a claim against the Latter-day Saints that they are an ignorant and deluded people, without minds of their own—that they are led and directed by men who are cunning and shrewd, and who preside over them because of the advantages which they (the leaders) hope to gain. It seems to me that if any man of candid mind would examine into the history of the Latter-day Saints, converse with those of the Church of God who had embraced the Gospel in

foreign lands, and bore their testimonies as to the sacrifices which they were called upon to make when they accepted that Gospel, he would find them to be the most independent people on the face of the earth. Go where you will, that is the testimony they have—that the moment they embraced the Gospel their friends and associates, and in many cases their own fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters turned toward them the cold shoulder, and even treated them with contempt and scorn—cast them out as a thing of evil.

What did these men and women do? They asserted their manhood and womanhood, and showed that they were possessed of force of character, that they had the courage of their convictions. Than this there is no greater courage. Many more men are possessed of physical courage than of the moral courage to dare to do right and express their opinions, whether popular or unpopular. Go where you will, from one end of this nation to the other, seek for the men with moral courage in the halls of Congress, in the legislatures, throughout the various States of the Union, and what do you find? Men almost without number voting time and time again against their honest convictions because they fear they might not be returned to office.

How different is the case of the Latter-day Saints. Instead of, in many instances, caring for affluence and wealth, keeping to family and friends, and the comforts of this life, they gathered to Utah and suffered hardships, poverty, and privations, because of the testimony they had received. Jesus tells us that if we are not willing and ready to leave father and mother, our houses and lands, and follow him, we are not worthy of the Gospel. The Latter-day Saints by their acts, by their history, have shown to the world that they have an independence of character and the manhood and womanhood to follow their convictions, to leave behind them family and friends, all those things which are near and dear to the human heart, and gather to these mountains for the purpose of keeping the commandments of God.

Do the Elders of Israel when they go out into the world to preach the Gospel hold out flattering inducements to those whom they meet to become Latter-day Saints? No. On the contrary, they tell them that if they embrace the Gospel they may expect that their friends and associates will turn against them, and that their names will be cast out as evil. That is the kind of promise they make to them.

The Prophet Joseph Smith has been called an impostor. Well, if he was, he took a very peculiar course in order to get the people to follow him. He told them that they would be persecuted, that they would be driven from city to city, from county to county, from State to State, and that finally they would be driven out from the confines of the United States, to come to these mountains, and be a great people. Men do not generally start

out to deceive others by promising them any such inheritance as this, of trouble, sorrow and affliction. If a man is an impostor he usually tries to hold out inducements to get people to follow him. It is said that Joseph Smith was not a true prophet. I have just quoted one prophecy of his which has been fulfilled to the very letter, and in addition to that he predicted the day would come when the whole of the United States would be arrayed against the Latter-day Saints. This seemed a very strange statement to make, and one which no doubt almost everybody laughed at—that in this the greatest of all nations, and the one in which the greatest liberty prevailed, a nation where it is one of the fundamental laws that there shall be no interference with religion, such a thing should take place. Has it been fulfilled? Yes. Take up the daily newspapers and you find the heading in large, bold type "The United States of America versus the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

But no amount of privation, of driving from place to place, of pain and hardship, of crossing rivers in the dead of winter, of making time after time homes in which they hoped to dwell and yet being driven from them, could daunt the Latter-day Saints in their onward progress, in their hope of attaining that perfection and knowledge which would eventually lead them back into the presence of God. Let a man travel from one end of this Territory to the other, let him go into Canada, into Mexico, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, or, in fact, any other place where the Latter-day Saints are located, and he will find a kind, benevolent and temperate people. He will find no paupers, and where the Latter-day Saints alone are situated in any county he will discover no drinking saloons, no houses of ill-fame, no gambling. Peace and plenty will be found reigning among them.

It has been said that the Elders of the Mormon Church not only lead in ecclesiastical matters but control all the civil and political affairs of the people. It has been asserted against the Latter-day Saints that no man can obtain a political office of any kind except he be chosen by the leaders of the Church. Many persons say, "We have no objection to your religion, but it is the mingling of your religion and your politics, the mixing of your civil government with your religious government that we are opposed to. We think that by so doing you threaten the welfare of the State, and that your actions are contrary and in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of liberty and freedom upon which this government stands at the present time."

These claims are made against us because there are none of the Latter-day Saints who have arrived at manhood and have been married but who have received—provided they are married properly in the temple or one of the houses of God—the Higher Priesthood. We