

salvation of His children. Blessed are they who can retain sufficient faith and can stand in such close communion with the Eternal Father that they may be prepared for the changes which will come to this people—greater perhaps and more abundant than any we have seen during the sixty-three years of the existence of this Church. We have learned much during this period. The trials which today we are able to surmount would a few years ago have led many away from the truth. We reflect upon the incidents connected with the early history of the Church and we are sometimes astonished at the trivial things which have led people into apostasy. We wonder how it was possible for men with such brilliant gifts and with so many testimonials as the early Elders received, to turn away from the truth because of the things which they had to meet. But we must remember that the Church was in its infancy. Men and women were unaccustomed to trials. They were not so familiar with the providences of God as we today are, and the slightest occurrence had its effect upon the community. Men and women apostatized, I believe, more readily and more easily in the early days than at the present time. Just as children are unable to endure the fatigue and the exertions which are easy for mature men and women to endure and to perform, so it was in the Church in the spiritual things of the Kingdom of God. As we overcome one difficulty, as we are successful in surmounting one obstacle, it prepares us for a greater one, which it is necessary for us to meet in order that we may be tried in all things, and thus become prepared for the glorious destiny which God has marked out for His people.

This day has brought many reflections to my mind. It seems to me it is a day when our hearts should be melted within us in gratitude to God for the numerous blessings which we have received at His hands; a day when our hearts should be softened one towards another; when there should be no hard feelings existing among the Latter-day Saints, nor towards those who do not belong to their faith; when there should be indeed upon earth, peace and good will, so that in the heart of every soul the praise may ascend unto God, glory to God in the highest, for a son is born unto man; a Messiah has come to the earth and brought redemption to the human family. It seems to me that this is a time when all past animosities should be buried, every feeling that is not Christ-like should be removed, and the example which our Savior set us should be so firmly impressed upon our hearts that it will constrain us in the future to seek the service of our fellowmen; to seek to do them good, instead of harm; that if we have wronged a brother or a sister in the past, it may come up before us this day and inspire in our hearts a feeling of repentance for that wrong, and a determination upon our part that we will, to the extent of our power, make good the wrong which we have done. If we have taken that from our fellowman which did not belong to us, that the Spirit of God may move upon our hearts to such an extent that we will be willing not only to restore the thing which we have taken, but fourfold in

value; and that we will, if it takes everything that we possess on the earth, or if it humbles us in the dust before our fellowmen, atone here upon the earth for the sins which we have committed; that when the day comes that the voice shall go forth that we are to go hence and meet our Father to give an account for the deeds done in the body, we shall have made atonement on earth as far as it lay in our power for the sins which we have committed. Then we can appear before our Maker feeling that His mercy will be extended towards us for those weaknesses and imperfections to which all flesh is heir. This day should cause us to reflect upon our situation, and the place we occupy in the hearts of our fellowmen. Have we wronged them? Have we given them offense? Have we placed ourselves in a position that they can justly attack us? Have we misused the Priesthood which God has given us? Have we exercised unrighteous dominion over our fellowmen? If so, this day, of all others, which is celebrated as the birthday of our Savior, should move upon our hearts to consider our position and amend our ways, that the future may find us more strictly following the path which God has marked out for His servants to pursue.

This glorious Gospel has made of us one family. It has brought the high man down into a humble position. It has brought the exalted man who have received its teachings down and put him on a level with the poor man who has had scarcely sufficient food to keep soul and body together. It has made of us a common brotherhood. We are the children of God. We know that He is our Father; and though there may exist among men a difference of degree, a difference of position, a difference of wealth, yet in the Church and in the sight of God we are equal, we are one, we are brothers and sisters. We cannot afford, therefore, in view of these things, to deal unjustly one with another, to offend each other, to create divisions among us, or to have our hearts set one against another. Our power will be weakened if we do so. It seems to me that if there is any testimony necessary to convince the world that a reformation has commenced such as has never occurred in the earth, it is the fact that this Gospel of the kingdom is being preached to the poor among men. When the disciples of John went to learn if Jesus was indeed the Christ, the word was sent back, as evidence that He was, that the poor among men had the Gospel preached unto them. Oh, if it were not for this Gospel of the Son of God how terrible would be the condition of the poor in the earth today! When we look abroad and see the oppression that exists in the world among those who know not Christ, and a feeling that men who possess wealth are to add thereto regardless of the suffering which it entails upon their fellowmen; when we see the hand of oppression laid heavily upon those who are in distress, where can we turn for hope, or find peace and joy, except in this Gospel of the Son of God, which teaches us that it is necessary for men to impart of their substance unto the poor and needy, that there may be no suffering among the children of God? Does it not lift up our hearts and fill them with

praise and thanksgiving to the great Creator, who has devised such a plan for the temporal salvation as well as the eternal exaltation of His children?

And as no standard of wealth has been set up by which men are measured who enter this Church, so, too, no standard of education is necessary for a person to enter into the fold of Christ. The ignorant, the unlearned, the unlettered, are as welcome to the Church and to the fellowship of the Spirit of God as are the most wise among men. Yet the Gospel teaches us that we cannot be saved in ignorance; that we cannot remain an ignorant people and receive exaltation. But it is a fact that as soon as a person joins this Church and receives the truth, immediately a spirit takes possession of him to advance and progress in knowledge and understanding. Joseph Smith, though, as we often say, an unlettered youth, became one of the most learned among his fellows, because the Gospel which God revealed to him taught him that advancement was necessary. Nor did he confine himself to the spiritual things, as we call them, but he devoted his time and applied his talents to the acquisition of that knowledge which is esteemed among the people of the world. So it is with every true Latter-day Saint. The Gospel inspires us to continued exertion in the acquirement of knowledge, and especially of that knowledge of God which teaches men not only of things which pertain to the eternal world, but also of things which pertain to our earthly existence—knowledge of astronomy, of art, of science, and of everything which will benefit and bless and make happy the people of the world. The Gospel also teaches us to have love for our fellowmen; not to curse them, but to bless them. How was it with our Lord and Master? We read that upon one occasion, when he found men desecrating the House of his Father, he took a scourge and drove them therefrom. But it was not so when they attacked Him, when they sought His destruction, when he was betrayed by a kins. It was not then that He exhibited anger and passion. It was only in defense of His Father and His Father's house, and not when He himself was oppressed, beaten and crucified. So it should be with the Latter-day Saints. Firm they should be in the defense of truth and of the work of God; firm in defending the character of their brethren and sisters and in protecting the reputation of the servants of the Lord; diligent in seeking the counsel of God, and then carrying it out, and not administering abuse to the people of the earth. Why, if we were allowed to judge, I am afraid that we would show a spirit of intolerance which ill becomes the Saints of God; and therefore I am thankful that things have happened in the midst of the Latter-day Saints whereby they are brought in contact with the world, and that they are made to suffer, to some extent, that they may learn charity and love for their fellowmen, and be possessed of the spirit of longsuffering and humility. We read in the Doctrine and Covenants that to us the duty is given to forgive all men; but to the Lord it is reserved to forgive whom He will. The world will be saved. They will receive