

Church. But are members of the Church required to accept these and bow in humble submission to them regardless of their own feelings or their own knowledge? No, no. No one in this Church is left in such a position as this, if he or she is faithful. No more equality can be imagined in this respect than is to be found in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Gospel lifts the poorest, the humblest, the most obscure, and places him on the level with the most intelligent, the most exalted man in the Church. In that every man and every woman is exhorted and pleaded with to seek to God for himself and for herself, that he and she may know (it is not confined to one sex, but applies to both sexes) whether that is the word of God or not. This Church would fall to pieces like a bundle of kindling wood when the string that binds it is cut, if it were governed upon any other principle than this. The strength, the perpetuity and the success of this Church is attributable to the fact that every member in the Church has as much right to know concerning these things as the man who stands at our head. It is not confined to one man or to three men, or to twelve or fifteen men; it is not confined to any single body; but it is as extensive as the Church itself. It is as free as the air we breathe to every one who will seek for it. It is this, I say, that constitutes the strength of the Church. The Spirit of God is poured out upon the people and they are exhorted and pleaded with continually to seek to know for themselves individually that this is true. It is an easy thing to govern the Latter-day Saints when they are living as they should do.

Thirty-nine years ago (a good many of you who are here today were not here then) the Prophet of God said it was the will of God that the people should abandon Salt Lake City and county and these northern settlements. It looked as though there was a mob coming upon us—a mob in the guise of government troops. The most infamous lies had been told concerning us, until a war fever was worked up throughout the Nation, and there being at the seat of government men who were indulging in secret plans for the overthrow of the government—some of them standing near the President himself—the opportunity was seized to send troops to this country. These troops were coming, as they announced on the way, with the intention of doing dreadful and unmentionable things, and especially to the women, the newspapers having created a public opinion that justified every outrage. We could not meet them; we had not the strength even if it had been prudent to do so; but after they had been kept out until the nation could know the truth, until men of thought throughout the land could see the serious step that was being taken and the stigma that would inevitably fall upon the escutcheon of the United States, to show that we were in earnest and that we were resolved that we would not stand and be destroyed, the word of God came to the Latter-day Saints to abandon their homes in this city and county, and in the northern counties, and to take their flight, if you choose to call it so, to the south. The whole people responded. It had not been eleven years since we had come in here, the first of us, as seekers for a home. The memory of the sufferings the people had endured was fresh in every mind. Nearly every one knew the painful consequences, the hardships and the privations that would result from abandoning their homes and launching once more into the wilderness to find a new place of residence. The expul-

sion from Illinois, the weary, tollsome and dreadful march across the then territory of Iowa, and through the Indian country up to this point, lived vividly in the memory of all. But the word went forth to burn every house, to destroy every fruit tree, to make the land what it was when we came here. Preparations to this end were made. All entered into it without hesitation, without murmuring. Kindling wood was provided in the houses; the axes were ready to cut down the trees to make the land as desolate as we found it.

How was this done? Was this state of feeling brought about by coercion? No. The army of the United States was within reach, and any man that wanted could walk out and claim its protection—protection that would only have been too gladly given under the circumstances. But the spirit of God rested down upon the people. They had a testimony for themselves that it was the right thing to do. They left their homes, they traveled by every kind of conveyance. I remember myself passing families who were dragging handcarts through the storm (it was a very stormy period at the time), and my sympathies and pity were moved to the deepest extent. But there was no murmuring. This whole valley and every settlement in the north was abandoned, and, as I have said, preparations were made for the destruction of our property. These homes that had cost so much toil, that had been built by such sacrifices, and which we loved because of the associations connected with them, were to be destroyed! When we built them we expected we would live here for generations. When the trees were planted it was hoped that the children and the grandchildren would eat the fruit thereof. This was not an ephemeral settlement; it was not a settlement for a day, or for a year, or for a decade; it was a settlement for all time. But notwithstanding these feelings and these hopes, this spirit to leave the homes which had cost the severe toil of years rested down upon the people as a whole, and without murmuring, without any disposition to refuse, the whole body moved out and marched to the south. And it was only by the merest accident, it might be said, that the destruction of the city was averted. The man was on his horse (and we had horsemen in those days who could ride from Provo to this city in four hours) ready to carry the word to this city to burn the houses, when President Young said, "Stop." He reflected awhile and then said, "Don't go now." It was by those few words at that critical moment that the burning of this country was stopped.

Then the word came that the administration had sent commissioners here to treat with the people. There had been a public opinion aroused in certain quarters that showed the President and his cabinet the gravity of the situation and the dreadful consequences which would follow if the policy that had been adopted should be persevered in. And, strange to say—it would be strange, if we were not so familiar with it—many of the men who incited that expedition, the men also who were the leading men in the troops, who commanded the expedition, in a few short months were fighting against the flag of the Union. They had stigmatized us as rebels. It was told that the judges had been expelled from the Territory, that the Territorial library and the court records had all been destroyed, and that a reign of terror existed here, which was utterly false. These stories had been circulated with great ingenuity and diligence, the purpose being to inflame the public mind and to justify the administration in these extreme

measures that were proposed. When rebellion came, we, the people of Utah, were in the Union; we honored the flag, and we showed our devotion to the principles of the government. Our conduct stood out in bright contrast with the conduct of many who at that time expected to scourge us.

I cite this to show how this people have been governed. What other community upon the face of the earth could be moved upon by such influence to do what they did? There was no appeal made to the people, only for them to seek to God to know concerning what they should do, and in every house throughout this land knees were bent and supplications were offered to the God of heaven to give them light, and to enable them, if it was necessary, to make the sacrifice involving such costly, and, it may be said, such dreadful consequences to them—consequences which they could well realize, having so recently had experience in that sort of thing. They were not children, but they were people of experience, and had all the knowledge concerning the consequences of such a step that was necessary to enable them to judge calmly and considerately. Yet, as I have said, the Spirit of God moved upon them to do it and they did it. We had, however, the satisfaction afterwards of coming back and inhabiting our houses and lands, and eating the fruit of the trees, all of which we had offered as willingly as Abraham offered Isaac. There was no more willingness on the part of Father Abraham to offer his son Isaac at the command of God than there was on the part of the Latter-day Saints to offer this sacrifice, this burnt offering to the Lord, of all that they had, except that which they could carry in their wagons. They were willing to make this sacrifice for His sake and for the sake of the Gospel He had revealed.

Now, this is the faith that the Latter-day Saints have. It is, I might say, a new faith: at least it is new in our age. Such faith in God has not been known among men for centuries. Of course, patriots have made sacrifices in many lands. Men have been willing to make great sacrifices for the cause of liberty. I do not mean to speak disparagingly in the least of these. But I speak of this incident in our history because it is so different from others. We were prompted by the love of God and the love of that truth which we believed He had revealed, and of which we were the witnesses, and when the voice of God came through His servants the Saints were willing to make that sacrifice, or any other the Lord might ask.

Now, I believe that the Lord accepted that offering. I believe that the Lord has blessed this people because of their action at that time, and that He has blessed those men and women, and He will bless their children after them. I know He will bless the land to which He led us, and in which we rejoice so much, but which we were so willing to abandon at His command. When we came here we hoped that here was a resting place after the trials and persecutions of the past. Some of the people had been driven, or had to abandon their homes five or six different times. They came here fleeing from that persecution, as they hoped, beyond the reach of their persecutors. They hoped they would not be followed to this place, which was so desolate and so forbidding; that they would not be envied that which they possessed here, and that men would not come to drive them from their homes because they wanted their possessions. They felt that there would not be such temptations as these in this land, and therefore it was unexpected to be called upon to move out and leave the land which they had be-