

which they have withstood these persecutions, remaining solid notwithstanding the attempts that have been made to break them up, have been a standing advertisement to the nations of the earth.

I cannot contemplate all these events without being profoundly impressed with the testimonies which God is giving to the inhabitants of the earth. He is going to leave them without excuse. Destruction will not come upon them without warning. They will not be able to say when the judgments of God fall upon them, "If I had known concerning these things I would have hearkened; but I have had no warning." But very few, if any, will be able to say this, because this Gospel, this people, and their movements have all been advertised to the ends of the earth. There is no other people or system that has received such wide advertisement as we have or as the Gospel has which we believe in. Let me turn to a revelation that was given sixty-six years ago this coming September, and previous to the gathering. The Latter-day Saints were then living in Fayette, Seneca county, New York, the place where the Church was organized. It must be remembered also that at this time there were but very few in the Church. I have heard Brother Parley P. Pratt describe the situation of the Church at that time, for it was about that time that he joined the Church. He explained to me the impression which he made upon the Prophet Joseph and Oliver Cowdery and the other Elders when he preached to them at Fayette, Seneca county, New York, after his baptism. Parley P. Pratt was an associate of Alexander Campbell and Sidney Rigdon in the State of Ohio. He had left New York and gone to Ohio and joined the Reformed Baptists. He was a searcher after truth, a man singularly gifted in expounding the scriptures, a man who could explain the scriptures with great simplicity and power. He was led by a spirit that he could not understand to leave Ohio and go back to the State of New York—his native state; and while on the canal the Spirit of the Lord (for he believed in the Spirit of the Lord, although he had not heard anything about the revelation of the Gospel in its purity) manifested to him to leave the canal boat on which he was traveling, and let his wife go on to her home. He stopped there and commenced preaching in the neighborhood. While preaching he heard about the Book of Mormon, and about it having been translated from golden plates, and he followed this information up until he reached Fayette, where he found a little handful of Latter-day Saints. After his baptism, confirmation and ordination he preached to the Saints. Joseph listened to him, as well as the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon and the few that had joined the Church; and Brother Parley told me that neither Joseph nor Oliver knew until they heard him preach the amount of testimony and evidence there was in the Bible to sustain the work of God and to show that such a work would be established in the last days. You who knew Parley know how lucidly and clearly and forcibly he could expound the scriptures, and he did on that occasion, and they were delighted to hear what evidences God had left on record in the Bible to sustain the work that was then started. Now, they knew nothing about the gathering, or that there was such a principle revealed in the Bible;

at least, I do not suppose they did from what Parley said to me. Yet here we have just about that time, when there were probably not fifty members in the Church, this revelation given in which the Lord says:

And ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect, for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts;

Wherefore the decree hath gone forth from the Father, that they shall be gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land, to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked;

For the hour is nigh, and the day soon at hand when the earth is ripe: and all the proud, and they that do wickedly, shall be as stubble, and I will burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that wickedness shall not be upon the earth;

For the hour is nigh, and that which was spoken by mine apostles must be fulfilled; for as they spoke so shall it come to pass.

This is one of many revelations that I might read if time would permit, showing that the Lord, through the Prophet Joseph, has revealed with great plainness that destructions of various kinds shall take place, in fulfillment of prophecy, and that there were men living then that should not pass away until they should see these things.

Now, you have been gathered, as the Lord Jesus Christ said should be the case. The decree of the Father has been fulfilled in part. It may be astonishing to us; but when we recognize the fact that the Lord gave this decree, you need not wonder that your hearts burned within you, after hearing the Gospel, with a desire to leave your native land and gather with the Saints of God in the place which He has designated. You need not wonder at it, I say, because this was the decree of the Eternal Father. And the object of that decree is very plainly stated, "to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked." I do not expect that the Latter-day Saints are going to escape all these things. I expect that they may receive some of these scourges. But God has taught us principles by which we may escape, and if we do not escape some of us may have ourselves and our own disobedience to blame.

My brethren and sisters, we should take these things to heart. For sixty-six years now God has been calling in a most extraordinary manner upon the inhabitants of the earth to repent. Thousands of Elders have gone forth without purse and scrip, lifting up their voices as best they could, testifying to the nations of the earth that God had given them a message of salvation, warning them of the judgments and calamities that are about to be poured out upon the ungodly, telling them that the days were nigh at hand when all the terrible predictions that have been made by the prophets concerning the last days were to be fulfilled, calling upon them to repent and forsake their sins, to believe in Jesus, repent of their sins, obtain by baptism a remission of their sins, and receive the Holy Ghost to lead and guide them. I say for sixty-six years we have been doing this; and in the meantime the blood of prophets has been shed, the blood of the righteous has been spilled, as a testimony—that is, they have died bearing testimony that their words were true. The Saints have been driven from place to place, suffering great persecutions, enduring great trials, privations

and hardships, all in testimony of the truth of the message that they had received from God, and that they had been commanded to proclaim to the inhabitants of the earth. And do you think that all this is forgotten by the Lord? Do you think that all these revelations that have been given on this important subject have been given with no purpose? If you do, you deceive yourselves. We should prepare ourselves for these events. We should repent of our sins and turn to the Lord with a full purpose of heart, and put away everything that is evil from our midst, that we, as the Lord has said, may stand in holy places while His judgments shall go forth, and be not destroyed.

There is one thing more I want to say before I sit down. I wonder how many parents there are who teach their children constantly to pray to God that they may be kept from losing the faith. When I hear as I do sometimes, of the children of men and women whom I have known, and who have been faithful to the Gospel and have zealously kept the commandments of God, that they have no faith, or perhaps only one has, I am saddened to the heart. I feel to mourn exceedingly when I hear any such thing about any family with which I have been familiar, or, in fact, any family whose parents have been faithful in the Church. When I think of the sufferings of men, when I think of that which they have passed through for the sake of the Gospel, and then think that with all their labors there is not a man of their generation to stand bearing the Priesthood before the Lord, I feel that a terrible calamity has befallen that household. Yet those who are familiar with the families of the Church for many years back may recall perhaps scores of families of their acquaintance who have not a representative living among the people to stand for them in the Church of Christ. I think this is a pitiable thing, and something which should be guarded against by all of us. I would look upon it as a terrible calamity to be left without a representative in the Church of Christ. It has been my constant prayer that God would preserve my descendants as long as time should last, and that I might have men bearing the Priesthood to represent me in every generation as long as the generations of men existed upon the face of the earth. I would like, if God would hear me, to have this prayer answered. But I must do my part towards sowing the seeds of truth, and taking a course to implant in their hearts a love for the kingdom of God, teaching them to value their standing in the Church more than they value their lives, or a thousand lives if they had them to give. For if the Gospel be what we believe and testify it to be, what is there that compares in value with a standing in this Church? Is there anything on the earth? No. Everything fades into utter insignificance compared with a standing in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I feel, therefore, that every man and woman should strive with the utmost of their ability to preserve their children in the faith; they should take pains to have them attend the Sabbath schools, the Mutual Improvement Associations, and should bring to bear every other agency that is accessible to make their children feel the value of that religion which has cost them so much.

The greatest promise, it seems, that God could give to Abraham was that his seed should be as the stars for multitude