

allow themselves to be controlled by any influence that does not appeal to their judgment and to their conception of right. It is not necessary for people to surrender their agency or their judgment in order to be united.

The spirit of God is the cause of union. Let one man have the Spirit of God in America and another have it at the Antipodes, and if they were brought together they would see alike on the same principles. They would not differ, but they would be one. This is the characteristic that attends the preaching of the Gospel by the Latter-day Saints. It is this that makes the work a marvelous work and a wonder, just as the prophet said it would be. It is a marvelous work. It is contrary to all human experience outside of this Church, to see people dwelling together as the Latter-day Saints have done and do in these valleys. It is phenomenal in its character, because nowhere else can you see an exhibition of it. Men say all manner of things concerning it because of its strangeness, it being so different from anything else that is known. Men attempt to philosophize upon it. They try to explain the reason for it, and have recourse to all manner of views, as erroneous as they possibly can be, concerning the causes that produce these results that we see throughout these valleys, ignoring entirely the true cause and denying the possibility that God is in this movement, and that His Spirit produces these results. Yet this is the only clear and sufficient reason. It is the only one by which all this can be accounted for. Human power could not have done what has been done among the Latter-day Saints. It was beyond the power of human wisdom; it was beyond the limit of human power. It required a divine power to work out these grand results. For contemptible as the Latter-day Saints may be in the eyes of some, despised as they may be, this power that has brought this congregation together and that has gathered these people from the remotest parts of the earth is a grand power; it is a power that is beyond that of man. Man in no instance, in and of himself, has ever been able to accomplish anything comparable with it. And to say that there is no God in this, it would require more faith on my part to believe that than it does to believe that God is in this movement. I can account for it when I go to God. I can account for all the results I witness when I go to Him, because He can accomplish these. And is it not godlike to unite people's hearts, to make them one, to create a love within them that they never had before, to draw them together by bands stronger than death, and to unite them with indissoluble ties? It certainly is; and there is nothing short of the power of God that could accomplish this.

As I have said, we are the freest people upon the face of the earth. We have heard this afternoon concerning the officers of this church having authority, and how the people should listen to them. This is all very well in its place. But does any man who occupies this stand [the stand of the First Presidency] have the right to teach the people doctrines and they be required to receive them, independent of their own investigation and exam-

ination? Certainly not. The great characteristic of this Gospel is that every human being who embraces it has the right to know for himself concerning its divinity. It is distinguished in this respect from all the systems of men. The constant appeal that is given to the members of this Church is, "You enquire for yourselves. You go to the Lord, the Fountain of all knowledge, and learn for yourselves concerning the truth of these things." This is the constant exhortation and teaching of the Elders when they go out on missions to preach the Gospel to the people. I would not baptize a man, I never did baptize one, without pleading with him, with all the energy of my soul, to ask God for himself that he might have a testimony from God that that which he was about to espouse was the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Individuals who would join the church upon somebody else's persuasions are of no value; for when the day of trial and perplexity should come, their faith would melt away and they would leave the body of the church. Wise Elders desire no such converts as these. Even among the heathens where they have gone, they have taught them that there was a Great Being—our Father in heaven—to whom they could appeal, and from whom they could receive communication for themselves and a testimony regarding the principles that were taught to them. This is the secret of the tenacity with which the Latter-day Saints cling to their faith. In the midst of imprisonment, in the midst of mobbings, when life has been apparently at stake, and when it has seemed as though to save life it would be necessary to deny the principles that they believed in—in that dread hour they have stood firm and have faced the consequences without blenching, because they knew for themselves that this was of God. They had obtained a testimony from Him in answer to their prayers. They had obeyed the form of doctrine that He had revealed, and the blessings that had been promised had followed their obedience. Therefore, no trial or affliction has been able to move the Latter-day Saints or to disturb them in their faith.

This is no delusion. This is not hoodwinking men and leading them blindly. This is not taking away man's agency. This is not a system of fraud or imposture. This is not blinding men's judgment, and deluding them by giving them sophistry and falsehood and appealing to their lower passions. Mormonism, as it is called, is nothing of this kind. It never was; it never will be. But it is just what I have attempted so feebly to describe to you—a system of salvation, in which men and women are taught to find out for themselves that it originated with the Father, and that it is the plan of salvation revealed for their redemption. Take this view of it, and then you can account for all that you see. You can account for the influence that men have among the Latter-day Saints. You can account for the cohesion of the Latter-day Saints and for their love. You can account for everything that you see among them that is so different from that which exists among other people. Take any other view of it, and a person is completely

at sea. It is incomprehensible, looking at it from any other standpoint. Familiar as I am with it, I cannot conceive of any way of accounting for it only the way that I have attempted to describe.

I am exceedingly thankful that the Lord has revealed Himself sufficiently plain to enable people to know that they can have an answer to their prayers and can have a testimony concerning the path that they walk in. I suppose there are hundreds in this congregation who, before they joined this Church, were apprehensive respecting their future, when they thought about their future. They were filled with uncertainty and doubt. They did not know what to do or where to go in order to have that uncertainty and doubt removed. There was division throughout all the religious world. Ministers of religion were quarreling as to points of doctrine and as to the plan of salvation. Every denomination had a different method which they taught to all who enquired as the method by which they should obtain salvation. In the midst of all this uncertainty, honest souls groped about, seeking here and there for the right path. There is but one path—"one faith, one Lord, one baptism," as the great Apostle said; and these honest souls in the various nations were groping for this path, enquiring of these professed leaders where it lay and how they could enter it, and each minister pointing out his path, his little track, as the right one. What were men and women to do under such circumstances? Filled with doubt and anxiety concerning their future, they did not know what to do. In the midst of this confusion and uncertainty a man appeared. He says: "I am a servant of God. God has restored the everlasting Gospel in its purity and power. He has restored the authority to administer the ordinances of that Gospel; and I promise you that if you will believe in Jesus, repent of your sins and be baptized for the remission of them, you shall receive the Holy Ghost, and you shall know for yourself that the doctrine which you have embraced is the doctrine of the Lamb of God." How many souls have been gladdened by that message! How many hearts have leaped with joy and thanksgiving! How many have thought, "It is too good to be true; all I fear is that it is not true." But believing him, they have believed in Jesus, they have repented of their sins, they have been baptized for the remission of them, they have received the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost; and what has been the result? Doubt has vanished; gloom has passed away; uncertainty has left them; every apprehension concerning their future has disappeared. Why? They have found the path they sought. They have entered it. It is the path that leads to eternal glory in the presence of God. They have left the little side tracks, the little footpaths and the byways, and they have entered upon the straight and narrow path which leadeth to life eternal, and they have received the testimony of the Son of God in the gift of the Holy Ghost that has been poured out upon them, witnessing unto them that that which they have done has been done in accordance with the will of God. Travel throughout these vales,