

amid all these circumstances He has ever been near unto us to hear and to answer our prayers, and to impart knowledge, and give unto us light, certainty, strength, and every gift necessary to enable us to endure patiently the difficulties and the trials and afflictions that we had to contend with.

This has been the blessing which has rested down upon us. It has been a great and a peculiar blessing. It is worth more to us than all the riches of the world. It is worth more to us than all worldly honor, and than all the popularity that man can have or give. Who is there that loves eternal truth, that loves God, that desires eternal salvation in the Kingdom of God, who would not give everything that he possesses on the earth, or that he can control, in order to have the blessings that God has so bountifully bestowed upon His people? Men have died for less truth than we have. Men have made immense sacrifices for principles not so valuable, not so heavenly, not so Godlike, as those which we have in such profusion. They have felt as though they would give everything they had in the world, and even sacrifice life itself, if they could have one communication from the eternal worlds, or one heavenly messenger descend and communicate to them the will of God, or have the Holy Ghost, with its gifts and blessings and graces, descend upon them. Men have prayed and entreated God to give unto them the Priesthood and the authority to administer unto their fellow-men, and they have made boundless sacrifices to obtain this authority. Allusion was made to Luther yesterday. What would Luther have given, with the spirit that he possessed and the desire that he had to reform the people, if he could have had the authority from God to administer in those holy ordinances which are necessary to salvation? As it was, he dared the whole world, it may be said. He took his life in his hands, and was willing to die even for the modicum of truth that he possessed. But how much stronger he would have felt, and how much more willing he would have been to have made these sacrifices, could he have had the blessings that God has placed within our reach!

In speaking in this strain I do not do it to foster your vanity or to make you think for one moment that you are better than other men and women. But in the providence of God, in the carrying out of His great purposes, it was not His will that the Priesthood should be communicated until these last days. It was withheld for reasons that were sufficient in the mind of Omnipotence. The earth had been drenched with the blood of Apostles and Prophets and righteous men. An exterminating war had been waged

against them, until every man who held the Priesthood had either been driven from the face of the earth or from association with mankind, and the Priesthood was taken back to God until the time should come when it should again be communicated. But these men and women who in ages past have so earnestly desired to receive the truth will not lose their reward. They will receive, in the time of the Lord, all the blessings they sought for. They will have the ministration of the everlasting Priesthood; they will receive that Priesthood; they will receive the ordinances of the Gospel; they will receive the salvation which they sought for. For God's work is not confined to this earthly state of existence; it extends throughout eternity. It is from eternity to eternity. And no son or daughter of God will ever be lost, excepting the sons of perdition. God will feel after them. The prayers which honest people have offered in sincerity will be treasured up, and, in the good time of the Lord, our ancestors, who died without these blessings, will receive them in their fulness and in the plenitude of their power.

But to us who have been born in this generation, and who have beheld this glorious day, these blessings are given. We are chosen, as it were, to be the saviors of men, to be the saviors of our ancestors, and the saviors of a world that is perishing in sin; not for any merit of ours that we know anything about, but because of the grace of God and of His ineffable kindness and mercy that He has shown unto us, and that He is still willing to extend unto us.

These being the circumstances that surround us, what a people we should be! How our hearts should swell with thanksgiving and gratitude to our God for that which He has done for us! Men, as I have said, have died for these principles. The Apostle Paul says they wandered in sheepskins and in goatskins, dwelling in caves and in dens of the earth. They were beheaded; they were sawn asunder; they were destroyed in various ways: their lives were hunted, and they perished. Yet they cling to the truth, preferring to be beheaded, preferring to be sawn asunder, preferring to dwell in caves and in dens of the earth, preferring to be clothed in sheepskins and goatskins, and to be hated of all men, than to deny the great truth which God had revealed unto them.

How is it with us? Contrast our circumstances with the circumstances of those to whom I refer. We are dressed in broadcloth and clad in the finest of clothing, the ladies especially. We have everything necessary for our comfort and convenience; houses that are elegant in their exteriors and in their furnishings; tables set with all the bounties of the earth: fruit, voge-

tables and meats, butter, milk and honey—all in abundance. These are the blessings that the Latter-day Saints enjoy, together with money in their pockets or at their command. No hardships such as I have described; persecution but very little, comparatively; no sawing asunder; no beheading; no having to run to caves and dwell there with our wives and children; but enjoying all these blessings which God in His wonderful kindness has bestowed upon us. And He asks us to give unto Him our hearts. He asks us not to worship these earthly things. He says to us, "Seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you." He says, "I want your hearts, I want your affections; I want your devotions; I want you to obey Me." These are the requests which our great Creator and beneficent Father makes of us. The great question before us today is, will we do this? Will we give unto the Lord, who has been so wonderfully kind to us, that which belongs to Him—the obedience which a child owes to his earthly father, and much more to his Eternal Father, his Creator, the Author of his being, the fountain of his blessings, the source of his strength and of his life?

Brethren and sisters, in view of all that God has done for us, how our hearts should swell with thanksgiving and praise! He has rewarded us a thousand-fold for all that we have done. Did an Elder ever go on a mission, without purse and scrip, without receiving his reward? What does he say when he comes back? "I never spent such a happy time in my life. My heart was filled with joy such as I never had. The peace and power of God were with me: The gifts of God rested upon me. The Holy Ghost was my companion. And though I had difficulties to contend with, I never was so happy as I was on that mission."

He received his reward as he went along. God was with him. Angels were around him. The Spirit of God burned in his heart. Is not this the testimony of all you Elders today? Certainly it is. I speak that which I know when I make this statement. When these Elders come back from their missions, they settle among their brethren and re-commence their labors in the various occupations in which they may be engaged. What then follows? You go throughout our settlements and strive to find who are the men who have gone on missions. They may have been gone for years, with very short intervals; but you endeavor to find them out by their poverty, if you can. Find out what distinction exists between them and their brethren who have not been on missions, and what is the result? Why, so far as your observation would ex-