

What is it that has preserved us? What is it that has kept us in the past from complete extermination? What is it that has kept our religion from being obliterated from among men? It has been the union of the people, because when they have cried unto God in the midst of their afflictions He has heard their prayer. He has not turned His ear away from them; He has not hidden His face when they have cried unto Him, and though their enemies have been as numerous almost as the leaves of the forest, still their conduct and their acts have been overruled for good. They have been controlled so that the people have been saved.

Look back if you will upon the measures which have been proposed against us—measure after measure introduced the originators of which have expected that they would become law and thus be the means of destroying the people of God. This has been the case now for very many years. Plan after plan, scheme after scheme, device after device has been framed for the express purpose of destroying these people called Latter-day Saints and of overthrowing this system. Is it not a miraculous thing that we are not destroyed; is it not one of the wonders of the world that today—withstanding all these measures, with the force of almost united public opinion to sustain them in every scheme, however atrocious—we live here as an organized community? To my mind it is marvelous; to my mind there has been a suspension of law seemingly such as constitutes a miracle; because judged by all natural causes, judged as men naturally judge matters of this kind, we would have been completely overwhelmed had there not been some extraordinary power extended to aid and deliver us. We have freedom today—a certain amount of it at least. We can worship God in this Tabernacle in peace, and yet how many have predicted that this would not be the case?

I have been assured hundreds of times, by men, too, of wisdom and discernment, that our overthrow was inevitable unless we conformed to the demands of public opinion and renounced all peculiarities of faith; that the world was arrayed against us, and that it was folly to suppose we could withstand these continued assaults upon us.

Now, let me ask you, my brethren and sisters, to what is this attributable? I say, and you say doubtless, it is the power of God; it has been the blessing of Almighty God upon us; it has been His overruling providence exerted in our behalf. But what has caused this? Why has He done this? It has been because the people have been humble, because they have been united, because their prayers have ascended unto the God of Sabaoth. He has not turned his ear against us, nor hidden his face in anger. But let us be divided, let us quarrel, let us seek to pull each other down, let us engage in division and strife, and then how long can we expect our God to be

merciful unto us? Do you imagine that He will bear with us continually if we do wrong? He has said that His Spirit shall not always strive with man. It has striven with us, it is still striving with us; and He has promised that when we draw near unto Him He will draw near unto us. I would look upon it as a most dreadful affliction if our Father should hide His face from us, and if when we called upon Him He should turn a deaf ear to our entreaties, our supplications and cries. It constitutes the great strength of this kingdom the fact that He does not turn away from us, but hears the united prayers of this people as they ascend from the habitations of the Latter-day Saints all over this land unto the God of heaven. Deprive us of that strength or power and we are as weak as water—we are as the dust of the earth. We should quail before our opponents and fall by the wayside. They would take our places. They would dispossess us; we should have to go forth again as wanderers and find a new spot, humble, dejected, beaten, stripped, humiliated in the presence of our Father in heaven and all our fellow beings.

Those of you who have passed through these scenes can now recall them. God deliver us from having to pass through them again, if it be His will. I would rather let my property go in any form that God should command than be driven with my family and brethren and sisters, as I have seen these Latter-day Saints driven before their enemies—to see our women and children homeless wanderers on the face of the earth—driven from the possessions which God has given unto us and made such a blessing to us in this land. There is scarcely anything I would not rather do that would not be dishonorable than see such a result. What have we to rely upon if the world is determined to destroy us? Can we rely upon the wisdom and strength that we possess, upon our principles, upon our wealth? Is there anything of which we are possessed that we can rely upon? There is nothing except the power of our great Creator. He alone can save us and preserve us, and do for us that which must be done to save us.

Let me ask you, my brethren and sisters, in all solemnity: Are you prepared for the evil consequences that will follow a disregard of the commandments of God—for the consequences that will follow division and strife, and the arraying of yourselves one against another? It is a serious question; therefore, before you do anything which is in violation of God's commands, think upon the consequences. You cannot do what many do because you have been taught, you have been warned, the word of God has been declared to you. You cannot plead ignorance, for you are not ignorant. You sin, if you sin at all, with your eyes open in those directions to which I have alluded.

Before I sit down I wish to say to you—and I speak all I have said to myself as well as to you—that we

should not break the commands of God, we should not violate the counsel of heaven, we should be careful in all our steps. Before we do anything—no matter what it may be: in purchasing or selling, or in any other act of our lives—we should be able to go to our God, ask Him to guide us aright and give us His blessing upon it. If we cannot do that, then we should not touch it, no matter how promising the undertaking might seem to be from a worldly standpoint no matter what the pecuniary or other results might be. If we thus act every day of our lives with sincerity of purpose, seeking unto God for light, knowledge, and guidance, He will save us, He will deliver us, and bestow upon us every blessing necessary for our happiness and growth and the accomplishment of His great purposes on the earth. I pray God to bless you all in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF.

I do not know that I can make this congregation hear me, but I would like to make a few remarks.

I will say that if this whole assembly could have their eyes opened to behold all the creations of God—the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea, and the fourteen hundred millions of people that inhabit this world, with every spear of grass and every flower—it is said you could find no two things alike. This has been represented many times by men concerning the creations of God. This eternal variety on the earth is no greater than that among the spirits who have dwelt in the presence of God in the eternal worlds and who have taken and will take tabernacles on this earth. This variety has also been manifest in all the revelations that have been given to us concerning the children of men or the creations of God. So great has this variety been that it seems Lucifer, the son of the morning, a personage who was great in the presence of God, rebelled against God and drew away with him one-third of the whole host of heaven. They deserted the Lord and followed Lucifer. And I do not know how many were "astride the fence" and did not know which way to go; but I presume there were a good many of them. This variety has remained with the spirits in heaven and on the earth. The Lord revealed this principle to Father Abraham. He showed unto him the spirits that dwelt with Him and told Abraham that many of those spirits were more noble than others, and said unto him: "These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good." He also said to Abraham, "Thou art one of them, thou wast chosen before thou wast born." And the Lord blessed Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Israel, who sprang from Jacob. They all received their patriarchal blessings, and every one of those blessings has been fulfilled to the very letter as fast as the time would permit. From that day until the present the Almighty has made use of the seed of Abraham,