

hand of mercy and benevolence in our sorrows, disappointments and afflictions. But if we take a spiritual view and look at things aright, it will not be so difficult to see the purposes of the Almighty even in our untoward surroundings and experiences. The ways of God are not as man's ways. He knows what is best for His children; and what experiences it is needful that they should pass through, and He ordains our greatest trials, as individuals and as a people, for our purification and development.

The Prophet Joseph told President John Taylor, soon after the latter joined the Church, that he had received the Spirit of Truth which, if he cultivated and heeded at all times, would always lead him aright. It might often prompt him to go contrary to his personal inclinations, but if he would listen to and obey it, and sacrifice his own desires, he would never go astray. I remember an incident in the history of one of our missionaries which illustrates this truth. Bishop Whitney here related how a "Mormon" Elder in early days, who had given out an appointment to preach in a certain place in the backwoods, was threatened with death by a burly ruffian if he attempted to fill the engagement. To emphasize his threat, the man, after the people had assembled, and before the Elder had arrived, walked to and fro before the meeting-house door with an ax on his shoulder, prepared to carry out his murderous design. But the Elder calmly and deliberately walked in while the fellow's back was turned, took his place in the pulpit, read a few verses from the Bible and preached his sermon as if nothing had happened, while his would-be assailant, amazed at the Elder's intrepidity, threw down his ax and departed, powerless to execute his threat. Here was an instance where human judgment would have prompted the Elder to forego his appointment, but which the voice of the Spirit bade him fulfill.

Many Elders might relate similar experiences. I remember reading of an incident in the life of President Woodruff. He was camped one stormy night under some trees, when the Spirit bade him arise and move his wagon away from them. He did so just in time to save himself, his wagon and team from being crushed by the falling of one of the trees stricken by lightning. Thus is proven the inestimable value of the Spirit of God, as a guide and moultor, far more reliable than the most excellent natural judgment. The most important thing for the Saints to do is to live so that they may have the Spirit of revelation and inspiration to direct them in all the affairs of their lives.

When Jonah was commanded to go to Nineveh and predict the city's destruction, he shrank from the undertaking. He probably remembered the fate of other Prophets sent forth to warn the wicked and was appalled at the danger of the prospect. But the Lord was resolved that Nineveh should be warned and

that Jonah should fill the mission to which he had been called. God in this did not tamper with Jonah's agency, as some might suppose. But He so overruled events as to induce Jonah, of his own volition, to prefer the path of duty to that of disobedience. Jonah took passage in a ship going in another direction, thinking perhaps he could hide himself in some remote corner of the earth where the all-seeing eye of God could not behold him. But a great storm arose which imperiled the ship and crew and passengers, until Jonah, feeling that the hand of God was pursuing him, and that he was the cause of the tempest, in his contrition asked to be thrown overboard, which was done, and a whale swallowed him. At the end of three days, Jonah, having probably concluded by that time that Nineveh would be quite as comfortable a place as the whale's belly, was rescued from his strange and perilous position and went forth and fulfilled the mission to which he had been called. His experience had converted him, and in it, we are taught, was given a type of the burial and resurrection of the Redeemer.

Thus a man may say: "I will do thus and so," or a nation may determine to carry out some plan, but God may overrule the efforts of that man or that nation so that they will produce an effect the very opposite of that which was intended. "Man proposes, but God disposes," and "There is a divinity which shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will."

Joseph the Prophet was told, as he lay imprisoned in Liberty Jail, that if the angry ocean should swallow him, or the earth open and take him in, or the very mouth of hell gape wide to engulf him no matter what terrors or pains or troubles he was called upon to endure—all would give him experience and would be for his good. Can we not put our trust in such a God, who can overrule all things for our salvation and welfare, turn our sorrows into joy, and out of our disappointments and seeming defeats bring forth success and victory? That God who gave His only begotten Son to be persecuted, spit upon, scourged and crucified; that Christ who not only laid His life but His reputation upon the altar of man's salvation. Yes, for He was crucified as an impostor, as a common criminal, dying with thieves. Now millions own Him as the Son of God, and give honor and praise to Him as the world's Redeemer. But at that time only a few believed Him to be indeed the Son of God. Peter was one of the few to whom the true character and mission of the Savior was revealed, and it was a great honor to be thus blessed of the Lord, for flesh and blood could not reveal Him, but only His Father in heaven.

No matter how our hopes may be blasted, our idols shattered, as individuals or as a people, God will perform His act. His strange act, and no flesh will glory in His presence. This is His work and it will triumph. But as

God is long-suffering, patient and forbearing; He expects His people to be likewise; to be broad, and liberal, charitable and philanthropic. Never since I can remember have I ever heard a servant of God utter a word against the principle of the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man; never have I been taught that I should return cursings with cursings, hatred for hatred, even to our bitterest foes. But to return good for evil, and though our enemies should come against us with sword and bayonet to destroy us, that we should meet them with the olive branch of peace, and trust in God to protect us, rather than resort to violence and blood-shed in our own defense.

In a day like this when our rights are being invaded, and trampled on, and the circle around us seems narrowing, it is more difficult, perhaps, to acknowledge the hand of God than it would be in other conditions. It is more difficult to confess His hand in hardship and privation than when we are dandled in the lap of ease and luxury. But in the midst of adversity we can give stronger proofs of our faith and integrity, and show a more heroic devotion to truth than in times of prosperity. With Job we can say: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Our hearts should be too broad, too noble to persecute those who persecute us, even if we had the power, which we yet will have. A time will come when we will have a grand opportunity to return good for evil, at a time, too, when we could return the opposite with impunity, if we felt so disposed; for some day Zion will be the head and not the foot. She will not always take terms, but will dictate them. And the sons of those who have persecuted her will come bending unto her; and they will not be spurned either, but will receive blessings at her hands.

Jesus, two thousand years ago, taught His disciples from the Mount of Olives: "Ye have heard it said that thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." We are told that when He had closed His sayings "they were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." No wonder they were astonished. For fifteen hundred years that nation had been taught the law which required an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth—the law of retaliation and vengeance, adapted no doubt to their capacity and condition. But Jesus instituted a higher law, one that appealed to the nobler instincts of their natures. He taught them to return good for evil. There may be those who think it folly to preach such doctrine as this, but it is God's word, and we cannot repudiate it. And if we cannot practice it just yet, we should at least