

spirit and retains it desires to live and to have his existence perpetuated, in order that he may contribute to the glorious consummation that is to be achieved on the earth by the power of God.

God having bestowed these blessings upon us, how thankful we should be that we live in an age like the present, when these wonderful things are being brought to pass. You would think that mankind, seeing such wonderful power revealed and in operation, would turn their attention to it and would not rest satisfied until they comprehended what it is that is working in this manner among this people and accomplishing such grand results. But, wonderful to state, the world look on and see all this, and yet they are blind to it and cannot perceive the power of God in it. They shut their eyes to it apparently; or, rather, they never had them opened to perceive the wonderful character of the great work God is doing. But the humble, the meek and the lowly, those who bow in submission before the Lord, have their eyes opened and they have their hearts prepared, so that they perceive that it is from God. They have a testimony from God that it is true, and that He is performing a great work—a work that He has predicted through the mouths of the holy prophets should be accomplished. Having these testimonies, how faithful a people we should be! How we should seek to be pure in our thoughts, in our words, and in our acts, so that we should not grieve this Holy Spirit, but that we should cherish it and have it grow within us until we shall be filled with it.

We cannot commit sin and retain this Spirit. That is an impossibility. Apostles have tried it; others who were men of God have tried it; but they have signally failed. They could not retain the Spirit of God and at the same time commit sin. We have the evidence brought home to us by the experience of upwards of sixty-five years that God's word in this respect is true. No man can hope to enjoy the favor and blessing of God who commits sin and does not repent of it. And it will be so unto the end of time. There are two things that are irreconcilable—sin and the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God will not tolerate sin. Therefore, if we hope to escape darkness and apostasy, we must refrain from sin. Of course, every human being is a sinner. No man or woman ever lived on this earth, excepting the Son of God, who was not a sinner. The Presidency of this Church, the Twelve Apostles, and all the prophets that ever lived upon this earth are and have been sinners. It is one of the consequences of the fall. We are subject to sin and temptation. But while this is the case, it is the privilege of every human being to live so that his sins will be forgiven and not be held against him. It should be the aim of all who desire to live in the enjoyment of the Spirit of God to try and retain that Spirit in its fulness; for when the Holy Ghost is with us, then God is with us; and when we are in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost we are in the fellowship of the Father and the Son. While I say we are sinners, I believe it is possible for us to live so as to have no sin held against us. We should have the spirit of repentance constantly in our hearts. Our hearts should be touched and softened by it, so that we will be mellowed under its influence,

and that we shall have such a horror of sin and such a desire for righteousness that when we become conscious that we have thought, or said, or done anything contrary to the mind and will of God, we will instantly bow down and acknowledge our sins before the Lord and repent of them with all our hearts and obtain forgiveness for them. If we sin against each other or offend each other, we should have the same disposition to go and ask forgiveness, that our brethren and sisters may still extend their fellowship to us. I often think of the remark of the Savior,

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

We may be careless about the feelings of our brethren and sisters; we may grieve them, and think it is a matter of no consequence, because they are obscure. If we hurt the feelings of a Bishop, or an Apostle, or some man holding high position, we may feel under obligation to make it right with such a man; but we may be indifferent to men who are obscure and apparently insignificant. Now, whoever indulges in this feeling and spirit makes a great mistake. I tell you, in the language of the Savior, the angels of even the most obscure among the children of God are constantly before the Father, or have access to Him; and we cannot offend one another, we cannot grieve one another, we cannot trample upon one another's rights or injure one another's feelings, in the least degree, without grieving the Spirit of God and placing ourselves in a position where we need to repent and confess our wrongdoing to that individual.

We should also be careful about this in our families. I would not offend one of my little children; I would not grieve him or trespass upon him without asking forgiveness. I have never done it intentionally; but if I have happened to do something of that kind, I would ask that child's forgiveness as carefully as if it were a grown man or woman. And so with the humblest of my brethren and sisters. I feel I am under obligation to ask forgiveness when I hurt anyone's feelings. I do not know that I do so intentionally, but if I should happen to do so unintentionally, it would be my duty to ask forgiveness, so that soul would not be grieved or offended. I feel that this is the way men should live with their wives, and wives with their husbands, and children with their parents. We should cultivate this feeling of respect and love for each other, and take a course to build each other up, and to foster that feeling of love that is so precious and which God in His mercy has given to us. If we do this, we can make our homes heaven on earth. We will have heaven in our own bosoms and in our own habitations; and our children will grow up under its influence, and the effect of it will be felt in the circle in which we move. The example that we set will have the effect to subdue others and to disarm them, and it will conquer that feeling of hatred and animosity and strife that Satan is seeking to engender in the midst of the Saints as well as in the world.

God has gathered us out, my brethren and sisters, from the nations of the earth to effect a great revolution in the earth. If any of you think that all we have to do is to join the Church and

come and live here just like our fathers and mothers lived, and be the same kind of people as were our fathers and mothers—live with the same traditions, the same narrowness of view, and the same want of progress—then the gathering has been of little benefit to us. The spirit of gathering has been given to us for a purpose—not merely to come here and live according to our old habits and ways, but to make us a new people; to take away our old hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh; take away the darkness that has enshrouded us and give unto us the light of truth, and to make us an entirely different people. God intends to accomplish through us a great work in the earth, and it should be the aim of every individual who joins this Church to contribute his or her part to this great change that the Lord is working out, and to hold himself and herself in readiness to carry out the counsels and instructions of the Spirit of God. We should all open our hearts to receive the teachings of the Spirit, and not be content without we have them. We should not be content to pass along like other people; but we should seek constantly to have more and more of the light of truth in our hearts and to have a broader comprehension of the character and purpose of this work that God has established. If every man will do this, it will be astonishing the progress that will be made by the Latter-day Saints. It is our duty to do it. God has called us to do it. He has brought us out from the nations of the earth for this express purpose. He has sent His servants to teach us, and they labor with us constantly. But the difficulty with some of us is that we allow their teachings—to use a familiar expression—to go in at one ear and out at the other. We hear them so often that they cease to have effect upon us. I am striving continually to overcome this; but I feel in myself the consequences of the fall, as we all do. We are here in a state of probation. There is a veil of darkness drawn between us and eternity. We are left to grope in this condition and to struggle with these surrounding circumstances. Our Father has had a purpose in this. He has not put us here to gratify a whim; He has put us here to accomplish an end, and that end is to give us the experience that we must have in order to fill the destiny that awaits us. He wants us to be like himself. He loves us just as all parents should love their children—supremely so. And He desires, in placing us here, that we should realize the object that He has in view in giving us this probation. He wants us to understand the power of Satan. It seems as though evil is as eternal as good, error as eternal as truth, and therefore He wants us to know this power. I do not know what the Father has in store for us to the full extent, but I suppose that evil will always exist, and though we shall be emancipated from the power and dominion of evil, it will be by keeping the commandments of God, and we shall understand in eternity that which we have learned in the flesh, and we shall know the dreadful effect of doing evil. This is the object that God has had in placing us here and leaving us to the exercise of our agency. The days of our probation are not many. We shall have but one probation. This is the opportunity for us to gain this experience, and we should make use of it carefully. We should not allow the day