

God our Eternal Father I am a member of His Church, and associated with this people, who are so despised because they are His people—these Latter-day Saints. It gives me the greatest of pleasure to think of this; and I often think when I am away from home what would be my reflections, and how would I feel if I were not associated with the Latter-day Saints, if I had no prospect before me for myself and for my family and for my friends, only the prospect that I behold before the world, and that they are looking forward to; it seems to me if that were the only hope I had, and if this were the only prospect before me, that I would have no enjoyment in life. I think that I would be a very miserable man, and that I—it seems to me—would have no desire for posterity. Because viewing the world as I view it from my standpoint, and viewing the future as I behold it, it would seem as though there were very little to live for. Now, in taking this view I may be, in some respects, a pessimist, that is I may look at the dark side; perhaps it is because of the contrast between the hopes I have as a Latter-day Saint, with the prospects that are so bright and beautiful before this church, and the character of those I see elsewhere. As far as this work is concerned I am an optimist, that is, I take the most hopeful and most cheerful view of affairs and of the future. Everything connected with this work and its future, and everything connected with its afflictions and its trials, brings hope, brings consolation, brings peace and joy to my heart; and I think how fortunate my children are to live in such an age, and to be so young, having such a glorious future before them. The only regret I have about the passage of time in my own case is, one's life is so short, and there is so much to do in establishing and building up this work. It almost makes one wish he could live forever to have the joy and satisfaction of contending with evil and seeking to establish righteousness and truth upon the earth, and bring to pass the glorious reign of peace which the Lord has promised, when Satan will be bound and have no more power to go forth to deceive the nations of the earth and to afflict the righteous. And every boy and every girl belonging to the Church ought to be filled with joy and thanksgiving that they are so young, and that they have such a future before them in connection with its future development. If any are to be envied at all it is the rising generation among the Latter-day Saints.

I have been absent a few weeks. I come back more deeply impressed, if possible, with the hollowness of affairs outside this work; more impressed than ever with the immensity of evil there is in the world, with the growth and development of everything that is opposed to God and to holiness. Wickedness is increasing to a most extraordinary extent, and righteousness and virtue and truth are fading out of existence, they may be said to exist only

in name. Not but what there are virtuous people, but they are so few that their influence for good is almost lost in the whirlpool of giddy life, and that love which men and women ought to have for their neighbors; that care, that brotherly affection and feeling which ought to exist between man and man, and that sisterly tenderness that ought to exist between all the daughters of God, is scarcely felt and scarcely to be found. And I have turned my eyes towards Zion, and notwithstanding our many faults—and they are numerous, for I am conscious of my own—and I know they belong to all of us—I turn my eyes and heart to Zion with feelings of inexpressible thanksgiving to God the Eternal Father that I am connected with such a people as the Latter-day Saints. I thank God that He has built up His Church, and that He permitted me to be born when it was built up; I thank Him for the restoration of that love from the heavens which was so fast departing from the earth—that love which binds us together, which causes our hearts to be united together; and that He has restored the everlasting Gospel in its fulness and in its purity with its primitive power, and with the gifts that accompanied it when upon the earth and taught by His disciples and Himself. And the influence of that Gospel and its fruits, which were disappearing so rapidly from the earth, are being brought to the surface among this people, and are being cultivated here, and are being developed here, and they are having a mighty influence on character here, in making men more like the pattern the Savior set. Elsewhere in the world you may look for those fruits in vain. As I have said concerning virtue itself, there are, no doubt, people who try to cultivate it; but they are lost in the great mass; their influence is comparatively unfelt; and thoughtful men, who are desirous to see a better day, mourn over the hopelessness of the prospect that presents itself before them and the poor results which attend their efforts to elevate their fellowmen and to make them better.

There are at the present time organizations being formed for the purpose of carrying out some of the views set forth in a novel lately written by a gentleman named Bellamy. The novel is called "Looking Backward." It has had an extraordinary effect in many quarters, and organizations have been formed in various places with the view of carrying out practically some of the views set forth therein. In thinking about this I was struck with a remark made to me many years ago by the late General Thos. L. Kane. General Kane in his early life, when secretary of the United States Legation at Paris, became deeply interested in the labors and efforts of Fourier and St. Simon and other French socialists and communists for the purpose of elevating the French and introducing a better order of society there, and they strove diligently for some time to carry out their reforms. General Kane had

been a close observer of these efforts and the results of them, and on one occasion, in speaking about such systems, he said: Mr. Cannon, I am satisfied of one thing, that it is impossible to have anything of that character effective, or that will result in any permanent good without religion. There must be religion, he said, and that must be appealed to, and its aid must be sought and rendered in or to make such schemes for the amelioration of the condition of men successful.

I have been greatly impressed of late with that thought, and I am sure it is true; and however desirable it may be, or however great the efforts put forth of the character to which I allude, they, I am sure, can result in no great success, or anything lasting and beneficial to mankind, unless religion, true religion, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, is associated with them. Its principles alone will save mankind; there is no other plan of salvation, either temporal or spiritual, than that which is found in the Gospel, and there is no salvation, temporal or spiritual, excepting that resulting from obedience to it. Its principles are from God; by its principles God is what He is today. By observance of its principles heaven is made heaven, and is peopled by beings who have obeyed the Gospel, and through their practical obedience to the Gospel have produced heaven, or rather made themselves fit to dwell in heaven. And through those glorious principles, which we have received to some extent at least, and through obedience to them, carrying them out practically in our lives, the children of men can be elevated into the region of God and angels, and heaven can be brought about, to a certain extent at least, upon the earth, thus fulfilling the prayer of the Savior when He commanded His disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." No man-made scheme, however cunningly and wisely arranged, can bring this state of things about. It is true something may be done to help men; men by combining can help each other; but to bring about perfection in this direction, to bring about results that will be perfectly satisfactory, recourse must be had to the principles of the everlasting Gospel; and through them alone, administered through the authority that He has restored, can the condition of mankind be truly ameliorated, or the human family be put in a condition such as men in their aspirations and dreams have yearned for. In this respect, my brethren and sisters, we have great advantages. We have no advantage in regard to a code of morals. I have heard beautiful discourses, as you no doubt have, upon moral principles. I have sat and wondered why the people were not better, having such grand moral truths taught to them. Eloquent men, men of large conception and extended views, men who have loved their fellow men, have discoursed most eloquently and learnedly upon the good effect of better moral living. I suppose that from every