

upon those who obeyed their words. The proposition was a clear one, and it was within the power of everyone who heard it to test it for themselves. As has often been said, heaven would not lend itself to any deception, would not bestow the gifts and blessings of the Gospel as they had been bestowed in ancient days unless men were really authorized of heaven to administer the ordinances unto the children of men.

The hold that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has taken upon the hearts of those who have embraced it in our day is due to the fact that the message was a true one, that the promises made were fulfilled, that those who obeyed had received a testimony according to the promise that had been given. If it had not been so these valleys would not now be peopled by Latter-day Saints—these settlements, extending north and south, east and west, would not have had an existence—this tabernacle would never have been built—this temple, so near its completion, would never have had a foundation-stone laid. But because the message was from heaven, and because heaven bestowed the gifts and blessings as the Elders had promised, therefore the Latter-day Saints have gathered together here; they have come from various lands, they have obeyed the voice of God, and have testified that through their obedience they have received the fulfillment of that promise.

It is this that has created this cohesion, this union, this identity of interests, this oneness in knitting the people together, and making them to a great extent of one heart and one mind. Now if there had been anything connected with this message that would have invited or enticed men to do evil, and to have strayed from righteousness, those who heard it would have had evidence that it was not of God, that God had not inspired those men to teach such doctrines. But who is there that has heard the Gospel of the Son of God preached now for these nearly sixty years has ever heard any sentiment, any doctrine that has enticed men to do evil, taught by a servant of God? On the contrary, the world can know for itself, and in this respect the world is left without excuse. At no time nor under any circumstances has error, sin and wickedness been taught by those who have held authority in this Church to teach the people.

Joseph Smith was killed by wicked men in a most cruel, heartless and dishonorable manner; but from the time that he first stood before the people and declared unto them the message which God had given unto him, up to the last hour of his life, no one ever heard proceeding from his mouth any doctrine, any principle, any counsel, or suggestion that was not of God and that did not invite men to do right and forsake sin. So it has been from that day until the present. It has been a constant characteristic of the teaching of the servants of God.

They have entreated the people, they have labored earnestly and unceasingly with them to do right, to serve God, to keep His commandments, to forsake sin. They have denounced, in unmistakable terms, everything that was iniquitous and wrong, and the people have been taught invariably that it is far better for them to suffer persecution for keeping the commandments of God than to do anything that would grieve the Spirit of God or cause it to be withdrawn from them.

These have been the constant teachings of this Church, and if we have been persecuted, it has not been for sin. If any of our people have had their blood shed, it is not because they have violated the commandments of God; it has not been because they were greater sinners than their fellows. If any of them have been sent to prison it has not been because they have done that which God has commanded should not be done; it has not been because of unrighteousness on their part, or flagrant wickedness. But it has been because they have striven according to the light and knowledge which they possessed, to do that which God required at their hands. In no instance has it been proved that the Latter-day Saints have gone in defiance of the Word of God contained in the Old and New Testaments. Our doctrines are before the world for them to investigate, for them, if they be wrong, to disprove. If we have been persecuted, then, it has not been for sin. There has been no new thing in the earth; for it would be a new thing if the wicked should be persecuted by the righteous. Such a thing has never occurred from the beginning of time.

Who ever heard of righteous men banding themselves together to persecute and punish the wicked? Invariably it has been the case that the righteous have been persecuted by the wicked, that laws have been trampled upon, that good order has been overthrown in order to reach and to punish righteous people. The Latter-day Saints have been driven from their homes in the States, their houses have been burned, their property destroyed, and they themselves have been driven out. Some of them have been murdered and others have fallen, through persecution, by the wayside; but it has not been because they were more wicked than other people. The laws were not trampled upon, the Constitution was not violated in order to punish wickedness that could not be punished by any other means. It has been because we have received and taught, as we believed, the everlasting Gospel—the Gospel of the Son of God.

My brethren and sisters, you ought to understand these things. But the question arises—It presents itself before me this afternoon—have you and are you living today so as to have this living testimony in your hearts concerning the work of God? Or have you indulged in or yielded to influences that are not of God? I suppose there is not one Latter-day Saint within this building today (who has not been born in

the Church,) who has journeyed from other lands, who has not come here because he or she has been impelled by faith in the Gospel as heard and espoused by them. Those who were born here have, of course, been brought up in the faith of their parents, but those who have come from afar have been prompted in their movements by the testimony that they received. It is a serious question for every one of us—Is that testimony burning within us, is it a living testimony in our hearts today as much as it was when we first reached here?

I hear of murmuring. This is a time of trial for the Latter-day Saints. We have now for upwards of four years been undergoing persecution—some have called it prosecution; but it has assumed a form of persecution in many instances. One class has been greatly tried; their faith has been greatly tested—women and children especially. They have had to undergo many afflictions, they have had to bear many sorrows. True, a good many of the people have not felt the burden of this persecution, or prosecution—choose which term you please—beyond the natural sympathy they had for their brethren and sisters in affliction. Doubtless many hearts have been filled with sympathy, and the people have sorrowed with a deep sorrow because of the sufferings of others. The question has frequently been propounded to me, "What is going to be the result of this? There is only one portion of the community feeling the burden of this affliction. Are they the only ones who will have trials and sorrows? Are they the only ones whose faith is going to be tested? Are we who have endeavored to keep what we believe has been the command of God to go through more than the rest?" Questions of this character have been put to me time and time again. But we know that the Latter-day Saints are all to be tested. If they attain to the same glory they will have to bear afflictions which will try them to the fullest extent. There will be no distinction in this respect. If we are so fortunate as to enter into the glory which God has prepared for His faithful children, we will all have to be tried as gold that has been purified through the furnace seven times, until all the dross of our natures, until all that is wrong and earthly and that is not of God will be cleansed from us. Our spirits have come from God, they will return to God, but our bodies are of the earth and therefore have to be purified and brought into subjection to law, until when we receive them in the morning of the first resurrection, our spirits re-united with our bodies, we can enter into the presence of our God and dwell there eternally. But if we have not been subject to the law, if we have violated the commands of God, if we have not walked before Him so as to be purified and sanctified through obedience, then we shall not partake of that glorious resurrection that has been promised unto the faithful.