

from the very beginning—one who years ago was a prisoner with the Prophet of God in the State of Missouri; others who were driven out from that State and from the State of Illinois, and who crossed these dreary plains without having any distinct idea as to where they were going, what kind of a land they would reach, or what sort of difficulties they would have to encounter. Of others who followed afterwards some dragged handcarts, some walked with weariness and sore affliction to reach this valley. Under all these circumstances I can ask with perfect confidence those who have had this experience, "Has your religion ever failed you in the hour of your deepest distress? Have you ever found it to be deficient in those blessings and in those powers which God has promised shall accompany His Gospel and rest upon those who obey it?"

The universal testimony, if opportunity were given for hearing it, would be, under no circumstances and at no time did our religion lack; but God gave us strength and grace according to the day, and poured out His Holy Spirit in the hour when strength was most needed. We can therefore now meet together rejoicing in the blessings that God has bestowed upon us. No matter how dark the clouds may be, no matter how forbidding the outlook may be to us, naturally speaking, we know that in trusting our God we have not trusted Him in vain; and we feel confident that He will continue to bestow strength and grace, peace and joy, and give unto us every good thing that may be necessary to comfort our hearts and sustain us in performing the labors that He may assign to us, or that may be required of us in passing through the difficulties which environ our path.

I well remember how the Saints sung praises to God and how joyful they were in their journey across the plains when they were first driven out and first came to this valley. I do not believe there was a happier people upon the face of the earth than the Latter-day Saints during the winter of 1847 and 1848, during the summer of 1848 and the succeeding winter, although at one time it seemed as though starvation was well-nigh inevitable. The crickets descended upon the crops and ate them off until it appeared as if there would not be enough grain left standing to sustain the lives of those who had tilled the earth and were depending upon the yield of the fields for their future sustenance. It seemed as though God was determined to test the faith of His people at that time. Although I was only a youth then, and had none of the cares of a family resting upon me, I well remember how I felt myself; but according to my observation I did not see among our older people any who had lost heart or felt that disaster awaited them. They were happy even under the circumstances in which they found themselves; they rejoiced exceedingly in the liberty which they had

here, in the freedom from oppression in the deliverance that God had wrought out. There was no necessity to watch the leading men in order to prevent them being kidnapped, there was no occasion to dread the approach of those who pretended to have writs against men of prominence. Doors were left unlocked, there were no thieves, everyone slept in perfect security; and such a thing as the loss of any article—although some of them were, to people thus situated, exceedingly valuable at that time—was not heard of in this valley. Yet provisions were scarce, men, women and infant children had to resort to various devices, in order to obtain food to sustain themselves. In the bottoms thistle roots were dug; when the spring opened, thistle tops were gathered, sagos were also dug for food, and many families never tasted bread for days and weeks together, the people living upon such roots as could be dug; and yet happiness reigned, peace prevailed, and the people rejoiced to an extent, I think, far greater than they do in their present comfortable position. I allude to this as an incident to illustrate what I have been saying—that under all circumstances God has fulfilled His promises in relation to the Latter-day Saints; and if you are not a happy people, if you do not rejoice every day of your lives, if you do not bow your knees filled with profound thanksgiving unto God our Eternal Father for the blessings that He has bestowed upon you, then you are recalcitrant to the principles which you profess and you show your unworthiness before the Lord in view of the great kindness, blessings and mercies which He has extended to you.

We have seen by the history of other peoples who have preceded us, that in days of prosperity, when the blessings of the earth were multiplied upon them, they stood in greater danger than they did in times of poverty. I believe that this is the case generally. When we have an abundance of everything that is necessary for our comfort and convenience we do not feel our dependence upon our God as we do under other circumstances. When times are pleasant, when there is no persecution, when there are no arrests made and no disposition to send the people to prison, or to commit other acts of infamy or outrage upon them, then there is not the same feeling of anxiety and the same desire to seek unto God and to beseech Him for His power to be extended to us that there would be or is when we are in peril. When in peril we feel that we must cleave unto God, that we must seek unto Him earnestly to receive His aid and deliverance.

No doubt these circumstances through which we have been called to pass during the last four years and a half or thereabouts have had a wise purpose, in the wisdom of God our Heavenly Father, in training this people, in giving them experience, in teaching them to feel after and to obtain from God the strength and the faith which they

should possess, so that they can pass through and endure trials and afflictions without murmuring.

We paid a visit last Sunday and during last week to Sunpete valley, and held a good many meetings with the Latter-day Saints there. We have held meetings, too, in other places and found that in some of them there is need for the people to be visited and preached to. In some instances we found a condition which was not pleasant to contemplate. Many things are practiced that are not creditable to Latter-day Saints; many sins are indulged in; and we have felt to call upon the people to repent of these evils and put them away. I do not know how the people of this valley and of this city feel. I have only a general idea of the situation; but I have no doubt, though you have had unusually good facilities comparatively in having within your borders and attending your meetings the leading men of the Church who are free—that there is among you great need for the preaching of the Word of God; I have no doubt that you need to be stirred up to diligence and to a heart-felt consideration of your lives.

I have read to you this afternoon the words of an inspired Prophet of God, telling us what the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is. I do not recall for the moment any chapter that has been written either in the Old or New Testament, in the Book of Mormon, or in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, which more plainly and pointedly describes the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the first principles thereof than this chapter.

The most of you, doubtless, have been baptized; you have repented of your sins, and been baptized for their remission. If you have been faithful you have received a fulfilment of the other promise—the bestowal of the Holy Ghost. This is the privilege of every son and daughter of God who enters into covenant with Him; but as this prophet says, he "heard a voice from the Father saying, Yea, the words of My Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved."

They are the ones who shall be saved—those who endure to the end, faithfully keeping the commandments of God; not those who run well for a season and then cease to run or endure, and yield to temptation and sin. They cannot be saved; better for them if they had never heard the Gospel; better for them if they had never, I was going to say, been born. Indeed, I think I might say it correctly.

It is an important question for us to ask ourselves this afternoon, are we in the possession of those gifts, blessings and powers which God has promised unto His faithful people? Are our lives such that we can go to the Father in the name of Jesus without any feeling of condemnation and ask Him for the blessings that we need, with the full assurance that He will hear and answer our prayer? Have we come here to partake of this Sacrament with our hearts aright before the Lord? Have we confessed our sins to our Father