

mony unto you that He has given you this mission. You have not done this simply because the Elders taught you that gathering was a principle of the Gospel. I do not suppose that one in one hundred of this congregation who has left his native land would have done so if it had depended upon the teachings of the Elders alone. But you know how this desire took possession of you, and how it burned within you like an unquenchable flame, animating your whole being and giving color to all your thoughts and desires, inspiring you with a distaste for everything outside of Zion. You become utterly dissatisfied with the conditions in which you have been born and brought up, and a longing desire seized you to go to Zion and live among the saints of God, to see the faces of the servants of God and to listen to their teachings. Those of you who have come from afar are all witnesses to this, and you know that which I state concerning this to be true to the very letter.

Now, why is it that you have received that spirit? Why is it that you have been moved upon in lands afar off to do as you have done? It is because the Lord has had a mission for you to perform. What is this mission? Was it to make farms? Was it to build houses? Was it to live the old life, and to carry out your old traditions? Or was there something else that the Lord had in view? Certainly, there was something else, or such extraordinary manifestations of power would not have been given. God designed that we should lead a new life, become a new people, and not like our fathers had been. For this purpose He revealed the Gospel in its purity, and He has poured out His Spirit upon us in great power, uniting our hearts and making us a peculiar people—a people that mankind look to and wonder at. It is indeed, as the Lord said it should be, a marvelous work and a wonder. The nations of the earth marvel at that which they see going on here.

Yet there are men and women who have had this Spirit, and who have had these gifts and blessings bestowed upon them, who question the work of God and who feel to doubt concerning it!

What mightier work could be done, what mightier evidence could God have given to the inhabitants of the earth than He has given to the Latter-day Saints concerning this being His work? Where in the history of our race can you find greater evidence of divine power? And can you doubt this is the work of God? I tell you that the men and the women that will doubt after receiving these evidences, God will condemn; in fact, they will condemn themselves. Where do you see a people like we are on the face of this broad earth? Nowhere. There is nothing to parallel this work.

The Lord having given unto us these testimonies, is going to hold us accountable for that which He has done for us, and our damnation will be deep if we take a course to bring condemnation upon us by our unbelief and hardness of heart, by our disunion and blindness, and murmuring against the Lord and the authority He has placed in the Church to guide it. The Lord does not trifle with men and women, nor is He a God to be trifled with. He has poured out His gifts upon us. He has blessed our land, and has delivered us from our enemies.

I thought while sitting here this afternoon of a scene that took place in this hall a few years ago, when I had to come here by stealth to meet with and talk to the Priesthood. I was impressed to come to the Conference for this purpose; but I had to come in disguise, lest our enemies should see me and get possession of me. How great the change which has taken place since then! By what power has it been done—by the power of man? No, it has been by the power of God, in fulfillment of His promises made to His people. It then seemed, to all human vision, as though liberty had gone from some of us while life should last. Thousands, and perhaps millions, thought the leaders of the Latter-day Saints were put in such a position at last that they would never be able to use any influence again, and that this "heresy" would perish. But what a change has been wrought! And I feel, for one, to praise God, and to say, "As for me and my house, with God's help we will serve the Lord. I will try to have my children keep His commandments. I will try to build up His Zion in the earth with all the power and energy I have, whatever the cost may be." What is life, unless it is accompanied with honor and with the preservation of the faith and these glorious promises that God has made? Die! Why, better die a thousand deaths than to lose the faith and to sacrifice the precious promises that God has sealed upon us! What is life compared with it? Nothing at all. There are many things worse than death. Of course, we cling to life. It is right that we should. But what is death compared with the loss of the Spirit of God and the withdrawal of the favor of God from us? When we were baptized we took upon us the name of Christ. I scarcely ever baptized an individual—and I have baptized hundreds—without asking them if they were not willing to lay down their lives for the cause of Christ. If they were not, I have urged them not to be hasty in going into the waters of baptism, because men and women ought to be prepared for all things when they enter into this Church.

The Lord will have a tried people; and if you can be tried in any way, you may depend upon it you will meet that trial. You cannot expect anything else, because of the greatness of the promises that He has made to us and the glory He holds out to us if we are faithful. What glory is this! Our Redeemer left the mansions above to come down and suffer as He did in order that He might be worthy of it. And if he could endure that which He did for the sake of that glory, shall not we, his brethren and sisters, be willing to endure these little trials and difficulties that we have to contend with? Or shall we in our pride and our high-mindedness, and in our determination to have our own way, forget the promises of God unto us and turn our backs upon all these things?

We should place a high value upon that which God has done for us. We should value this precious Spirit that He has given unto us, and not allow ourselves to be one minute without it, either sleeping or waking. Before we do anything we should ask ourselves whether that which we are about to do is such as God will approve of and seal with His blessing; and if there be any doubt about it, we should pause, and say, "This salvation and this glorious exaltation that God holds out to me is worth

more than anything else on earth, and I will not do anything that will endanger my salvation and the salvation of my family, but I will cling to the Spirit of the Lord and not grieve it."

My brethren and sisters, this is a solemn occasion. It ought to inspire solemn thoughts. We ought to be a solemn people, in view of our relationship to God and that which He has done for us. Allusion has been made to my lately deceased son. I would rather bury any child I have than that he or she should lose the faith. Much as I love my family—and I do love them—I would rather they should die than that they should lose the faith. I do not love anything in comparison with my love for God and for His work. I am thankful to the Lord that He has given me this love. It has been the joy of my existence. It has illumined all my life. Although I have had my trials and have gone through a great many scenes that were painful, I can truthfully say that my life has been an exceedingly happy one, because God has been my friend. And I know He always will be, if I will do that which is right and pleasing in His sight.

Inasmuch as allusion has been made to the death of my son, Abraham, I may be pardoned if I make a few remarks upon this subject. It is now less than four years since my son David died while on a mission in Germany. All who knew him know what he was. It seemed to me that he was perfection, as did my son Abraham also. When David was a little baby he was seized with mortal sickness. I went from the office one evening and found him very low, and all the family keenly anxious about him. I begged my wife to retire and let me sit up; but as I had been up a good deal, she insisted on my going to bed till midnight, and then I could sit up the remainder of the night, and if in the meantime there was any change she would have me awakened. Before midnight I was aroused and told that the child was dying. I found all the family weeping and the child dying. As I watched him he gasped, and to all human appearance was dead. My wife in deep anguish exclaimed, "Oh! George, do lay hands on him." I laid my hands upon him, and in the agony of my grief I besought the Lord to spare him to us. The Lord heard my prayer, and He breathed into him the breath of life; and that child was raised from the dead if any child ever was. Of course, he had to be nursed with the utmost care and solicitude, but he grew and lived to be a young man, and went on this mission to Germany. Some of you perhaps have an idea, from letters he wrote, concerning his mission. He was a boy of great promise. The Lord took him in the midst of his ministry. He died in the arms of one of his brothers, and his body was brought home. While his death was a great bereavement, I felt that the Lord prolonged that boy's life, and gave us the joy of having him for nearly twenty-one years afterwards; for he was a great joy to his mother while she lived, and to all the family. The Lord answered our prayers and prolonged his life for that length of time, and then in His providence called him home.

Abraham H. Cannon was taken with typhoid fever some ten or eleven years ago. I was on the "underground" at the time. Word came to me that if I wanted to see my son alive I would have