

The Mission of the Holy Ghost—Commissions of the Ancient and Modern Apostles—Unbelief, Division, Superstition and Fanaticism—Sincerity No Evidence of Truth, But Always Entitled to Respect—Marriage Commanded of God and Forbidden By Man—Moral Courage and Anti-“Mormon” Legislation—Righteous and Unrighteous Dominion—The Purity of the Elders of Israel—The Worship of Wealth and Its Poverty—Public opinion and Independence of Character—The Latter-Day Saints Never Destined to Be Slaves—Persecution and Its Consequences—Exhortation to Loyalty, Long-suffering, Kindness, Integrity and Righteousness

Discourse by Apostle Moses Thatcher, delivered at the General Conference, Saturday, April 8th, 1882.

I have been very happy in attending the meetings of this Conference. I have rejoiced in listening to the remarks of brethren who have spoken; and earnestly hope that I may be influenced and guided in the remarks I may make, by the same spirit and power which has actuated them. Realizing as I do, that God is working in the hearts of the Saints and is, at the same time, holding as in his hands the destiny of nations, I have seen no happier day than this. And, while proscriptive, *ex post facto* laws, abridging the liberties of the people have been, and others may hereafter be enacted by the lawmakers of the nation, still the honest and good, the meek and pure in heart rejoice in the Holy One of Israel, who while preserving their lips from uttering guile makes steadfast their feet in Zion, that they slip not.

I am not aware that we, as a people, have any policy marked out by which to meet the issues or overcome the annoyances which may be forced upon us, but with those who merit the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, all will be well. The sight of the eye, the hearing of the ear, the touch of the hand may each and all be deceived, but, the instructions of the spirit are in all things correct. The combined senses may misguide or fail, but he who happily secures the companionship of the Holy Spirit, walks in the ways of life and neither fears, becomes weary nor faints by the wayside. Christ as the author of human redemption—himself a willing sacrifice—comprehending by his divine nature, the fulness of this great truth, commanded his disciples to tarry at Jerusalem until endowed with power from on high —until he should send the Comforter whose mission it was to show them things to come, bring all things which he had taught to their remembrance and lead them into all truth.

They had listened to the words of life and light as the marvelous sermon on the Mount came from the divine lips of their Lord and Master: they had seen him touch the eyes of the blind, making them to see again, the ears of the deaf to hear, and had witnessed his power quicken into life, the decomposing body of the dead; they had traveled throughout the land of Judea with, and perhaps watched many weary nights to keep him from the injury of those who desired to harm him; they had eaten and drank with, and slept by him, listening by night and day to the inspired instructions; but, notwithstanding all the experience thus gained during years of unsurpassed opportunity for learning the truth as it was in him, they were not yet fully qualified and authorized to preach that perfect law of liberty—the Gospel of their Redeemer. Hence the command, “Tarry ye in the City of Jerusalem until ye be endowed with power from on high.”

The Comforter which came to them is the same that has come to us, and his mission then, as we have demonstrated it now to be, was to bring things to the remembrance, show things to come and lead into all truth. No man has authority to preach the Gospel and administer its ordinances without a commission from Jesus Christ; and the seal of such commission has always been, and always will be the gifts, blessings and endorsement of the Holy Ghost, which, not only leads to the form, but also to the power of godliness.

It is this that cheers the hearts of the Latter-day Saints, brings knowledge of things past, present, and to come, unites and makes them in their testimony, hopes and aspirations, distinct from all the world—a peculiar people.

The Elders of Israel acting under the authority of an endless Priesthood, bear the message of peace, of life and salvation to the inhabitants of a fallen world. Without money and without price they visit the ends of the earth and, while warning the wicked of the judgments to come, they urge the honest and good to gather, before the coming of the great and dreadful day when Babylon shall fall. Bearing a faithful testimony, they speak of that which they know and testify of that which they have experienced, saying, “do the will of the Father and you shall *know* whether the doctrine is true or false.” In this, their testimony differs from that of the ministers of all other religious denominations, and they not only speak as having authority, but they have it. Where, outside of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is there a man authorized to make the promise of the knowledge of God by revelation as the reward of obedience to the principles of the Gospel? Who, beside the Elders of this Church are commissioned to perform ordinances in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost through which, and by which, the Comforter comes to the obedient penitent, leading him into all truth and showing him things to come? Who, beside them are authorized by God, commissioned by Jesus and endorsed by the Holy Spirit to preach repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands, saying to the inhabitants of the earth, “believe in the doctrines of Jesus Christ, repent of all sins, be immersed in water for their remission and have hands laid upon you for the reception of the Holy Ghost, and you shall *know* these things to be true, for, through obedience to the law of life, comes the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy.”

Ask the members of the so-called Christian sects if their ministers come to them offering such a test of their authority to speak in the name of Him who descended beneath all things that he might arise above all things—ask them for the testimony of Him who led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men, what gifts they have to offer, what promises of godly knowledge they have to make? Ask them for the testimony of Jesus and to show the plan of salvation built upon the rock of revelation against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, and you will be made painfully to feel that they have none of these things. A form of godliness they may exhibit, but the *power*, they do not have.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.”

Such was the commission given to the Apostles anciently, and the gifts and blessings, some of which I have enumerated, following the believer whose faith led to works, were evidences of the authority of the Lord’s disciples who bore that commission. Their testimony being true and faithful, received the endorsement of the Holy Spirit.

Unlike ministers of the various Christian denominations the Elders of this Church claim no part of the commission given by the Lord to his ancient Apostles, but they do claim, and do have authority from Jesus Christ to preach his Gospel, and the signs that followed believers then follow them now, as thousands can testify. Most so-called Christians have long since discarded the idea of works, holding that salvation coming only by grace, belief alone, is essential.

Now, I hold that they have not only discarded all works, but belief as well. My reason for so doing is I think logical and conclusive. Jesus declared that certain signs should follow them that believe, but modern divines do not even pretend that any one of the signs enumerated follow those that accept their teachings. Therefore, relying upon the words of the Lord, we must, we are bound to conclude that they do not even *believe* the Gospel, or if they do the promise of Christ certainly fails. I am aware that such a conclusion gives a choice between but two horns of a disagreeable dilemma, but we had nothing to do in the arrangement of matters which have brought it about; we only speak of facts as they exist. Again, ask the ministers of any of the Protestant churches where they got their authority to preach? They will tell you not from the Roman Mother Church which claims Apostolic succession from Peter, but they will refer you I think, in most instances, to the words of Jesus already quoted, wherein he instructed

his disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, etc. They will tell you that here is where they get their authority, and they claim that commission is to them as well as to those to whom it was directly given. Let us submit the test and see how this claim stands. Those who anciently had the commission and authority were endorsed by the spirit and power of God which caused certain heavenly gifts and blessings to follow those who believed their testimony and teachings. Do any of those gifts and blessings follow the believers in the teachings of modern divines who claim the same authority and commission? No, not one. They the ministers themselves hold them nonessential, and hence done away. They are, indeed, done away so far as our Christian friends are concerned, and so is the authority and commission of their ministers done away, so far as the endorsement of their teaching by the Holy Ghost is concerned.

I desire here to bear my testimony that the gifts and blessings enumerated by the Savior as those that should follow believers, do follow in this day, the authoritative preaching and administration of the ordinances of the Gospel, and that the Elders of this Church are clothed with authority from God. It did not come from the Roman Mother Church, nor from any of her Protestant daughters, but was restored to earth in our day by Peter, James and John, to whom Jesus Himself gave it. In their charge it was authority that bore fruit as testimony of its efficacy and divine power; committed to the charge of God's servants it does likewise in this age among this people.

Lacking the revelations of the Holy Ghost, men and self-constituted ministers are not led into all truth but teach, instead thereof, opinions and vain imaginings. As an instance I refer to a sermon preached not long since by an eminent divine in the East for whose liberal views and outspoken advocacy of them in many respects I entertain admiration, for they have, in my opinion, a tendency to liberalize the ideas of some who otherwise would have inclined to religious bigotry or, on the other hand to infidelity. In seeking to illustrate how the various Christian sects were moving heavenward, this divine compared the kingdom of God to the city of Philadelphia, which has numerous railway connections leading from almost every direction but all centering in that city. Upon these numerous railways daily move many trains composed of numerous cars containing many people traveling from various directions on different roads, but all bound for the city of Philadelphia. Now this doctrine being broad and liberal would certainly commend itself to every thoughtful and charitable Christian did it not, when tested by the Master's perfect standard, reveal a defect—a fatal one too, which all who rely upon it must eventually find to their disappointment and sorrow. The doctrine however attractive, is absolutely untrue, for Jesus Himself has declared that there is *but* one way, "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way (not many ways like the roads leading to the city of Philadelphia), and few there be that find it."

Now why do eminent, educated, influential men, who have chosen the ministry as a profession, and who pretend to teach the Gospel to others advocate as doctrine ideas so diametrically opposed to the eternal truths advanced by Christ himself? The answer is simple, lacking the inspiration and revelations of the Holy Spirit—having no Comforter to lead them into all truth, bring things to their remembrance and show them things to come, they teach for doctrine the opinions of men. Being filled with worldly wisdom but not the power of God. "They divine for money and preach for hire." Again Christ prayed that his disciples might be one with Him as He was with the Father, and that all should believe the *words* of the disciples that they might be one with Him, as He was one with the Father. Are Christians claiming belief in those words, one? No, the various denominations are not only divided against each other, but in some instances are divided among themselves. During the late civil war, as was stated yesterday, members of the same church south of the Mason and Dixon line were praying for the destruction of their brethren of the same church north of it, while, on the other hand, those north were making a like petition to the same God against their brethren south of that line. According, however, to their own idea of God, He could hardly have heard and answered either party; for, having no body he could not hear, and having no passions he would have been indifferent, had he been able to hear.

Notwithstanding this, however, many, very many on both sides were destroyed and, as we believe, needlessly. Of one thing we may be certain, and that is the members of the various Christian denominations are not one. Therefore there is but one of two conclusions at which the reasoning and thoughtful can arrive. Either God has ceased to answer the prayer of His Son, or the various conflicting religious sects are not believers in the Gospel. And as they put great stress upon faith or belief, I have endeavored and think I have not failed to show that they

are not even true believers, for they are certainly not united and one with Christ as He is one with the Father, nor as His ancient disciples were one with Him.

In mentioning these matters, I have tried to do so in a respectful manner, having regard for the feelings of those who differ from us in religious affairs. There are many people in the world who do not believe as we do, but for whom I entertain a high personal regard; for according to the light they have, they are moral, honest and just, and are as devoted to what they believe to be right as we possibly can be. Thousands and hundreds of thousands of people in the world are just as sincere as we are; but to be sincere in a matter does not make that matter true.

While at the City of Mexico recently, I saw many exhibitions of religious devotion and sincerity. On certain feast days people there do strange things. I have seen women walk upon their knees three miles over rough stony roads, being rewarded at the end of their painful journey with a plaited crown of thorns placed upon their heads, while being carried upon the shoulders of strong men, amid the cheering multitude, who praised them for having accomplished what they believed to be a saintly, meritorious task. Again, I have seen ladies of refinement, wealth and influence trail their rich satin and velvet robes through the dirt and filth accumulated upon the floors of the great cathedral, for hours they would kneel in adoration before an image, while being jostled by ignorant, degraded, vermin-covered Indians, worshipping at the same shrine. On other occasions I have witnessed for weeks together the revelry of Catholic maskers who frequented the streets, theaters and balls, night and day. At some of those masked balls it was said scenes were enacted that were so immoral in their tendency that the general of the Mexican army issued orders prohibiting officers and men of the army from attending them. And yet, at the termination of the thirty days' dissipation, religious sincerity caused those poor, ignorant people to feel free from sin after confessing to their priests and receiving absolution for all their abominations and securing a great black mark in the form of a cross in their foreheads. Now, while these things, and many others which I have no time to mention, appeared very repugnant, immoral and debasing in their practice and tendency, yet I respected those people in their religious belief, customs and ceremonies as I desire to respect the people of other creeds so long as they do not infringe upon the rights and liberties of others. For God intends that all should be absolutely free in such matters. When Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden, the doctrine of free agency was fully established and endorsed by the Creator, for He there gave a conditional commandment, obedience to which was to perpetuate life, disobedience was to bring death, but the choice was left with the man and woman, and from that day to this he has intended that man should act upon his own agency; that he should be permitted to receive the truth, choosing the path that leads back to the presence of God and the knowledge that comes from above; or, on the other hand, to reject it, following in the path which leads to ruin and destruction.

In this great American government a man should be free to worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; he should be equally free to worship a mountain, a stream, the sun, moon, or anything or not to worship at all; so long as his practice and belief do not interfere with the inalienable rights guaranteed to man, so long should he be free.

From the time when God gave to man and woman their free agency in the Garden of Eden, making the law and defining the penalty for breaking that law, I can find nothing in the revelations that would bind or fetter the soul or the body of the children of men. There was, however, one unconditional command; it was given in the generation of the heavens, when God created man and woman in His own image; and that command still rests upon the fishes of the sea, upon the fowls of the air, upon the beasts of the field, and all beating throbbing nature naturally obeys the edict, "multiply and replenish the earth." This great unconditional, unrepealed law is still in force. The Roman Catholic church, as it has done heretofore, may issue edicts binding certain members of that church to celibacy, making the union of man and woman obnoxious, but that great command is nevertheless still binding. The Roman church and our own Government, in their blind efforts to defeat the purposes of God, may continue to forbid marriage, and thus fulfill ancient prophecy, but their efforts should not surprise us. Is there anything occurring in the midst of the Nation today that we have not anticipated? I have recently returned from the east, and I rejoice exceedingly in what I saw manifested there. Does God hold the members of Congress responsible for their acts as he does the Elders of this Church? No. They will be judged by the light they have and no more. They are, many of them, educated, and are men of influence, possessing, however, but little genuine moral courage. Notwithstanding the evident disregard for principle manifested by some of them touching affairs in which we are interested, I

confess that I lose confidence in them with the deepest regret, and find it most difficult to withdraw the faith formerly reposed in the lawmakers of our great nation. I still desire and hope to be able to continue praying for them and for the President and cabinet, that they may honor the positions to which the people have called them. We will uphold, sustain and pray for them at least until God rejects and condemns their works. There is salt in the nation yet. I try to comprehend the feelings of faithful Abraham when pleading for Sodom and Gomorrah; which, had they contained five righteous men, might have been spared.

Now, I think there are a great many more than five righteous men—righteous according to the light they have, in the United States; good men too, who, while they cannot see as we see, and while they cannot endorse our peculiar ideas in regard to the plan of human salvation, love liberty, cherish the memory of our forefathers, and regard the foundations of this great government so highly that they could not even under the pressure of public opinion, vote for a measure so radically wrong, a measure so thoroughly unconstitutional as every lawyer must know the Edmunds law to be. There were a few honorable members of Congress whose high regard for the labors and sacrifices of our forefathers precluded them from advocating that infamous measure which strikes with deep intent and a spirit born of hatred, at the very foundation upon which our government and the liberties of the people rest. Those honorable gentlemen, in opposing the bill, counted the cost by realizing that their course in the matter might offend their constituents, who by reason thereof, might retire them forever from the walks of public political life.

Now I must admit that it would have required nerve and genuine moral courage to enable members of the Republican party to vote against the passage of that bill when the party lash was being swung around them as I have never before seen a party lash used. To overcome the fear arising from the contemplated action of constituents at home, and the cut and the sting of the party leaders in Congress, required more courage than we could reasonably expect from members of the dominant party. Moral courage is a virtue possessed by few men in this gilded age in which ambition, rather than principle, too frequently is the moving cause which prompts to action. When, therefore, party leaders, sarcastic and unscrupulous, shake their fists under the noses of their timid followers, daring them to place themselves upon record as advocates of “Mormonism” by opposing measures intended for the bondage of “Mormons,” it is indeed difficult, and we ought not to expect weak men, under such circumstances, to do what is right.

I remember before going East, certain petitions to Congress were being circulated in the midst of the Latter-day Saints, which were afterwards, I understand, signed by about 65,000 people, and what was the prayer of those petitioners—did they ask Congress to endorse polygamy, or in the least manifest sympathy for the marital relations of the Latter-day Saints? No. The burden of the prayer of this community was to give us a trial before condemning us, to hear our cause before convicting and executing us; in other words, that an investigating committee be sent to the people of Utah to see them as they are; to come, if need be, into our homes and pry into every detail of our social relations, and then judge the tree by its fruits. If the children of the Latter-day Saints, as has been asserted, are frail in body and weak in intellect, we asked the statesmen of our land to come and demonstrate it for our benefit and their information, or send a competent and reliable commission to investigate the matter for them. If we are all immoral people—as we have been accused of being—we want the nation to say so through the mouths of honorable men. That is what we prayed for. Our petitions were not heard, I doubt if they were even read, and, yet, have we any feelings of enmity towards our nation because of it? I have not, not in the least. There is not a man, woman or child in all this broad land for whom I have one particle of hatred. Thank God for that. That is what my religion has taught me. And while I know that I am by no means perfect in keeping that higher law which Jesus gave, namely, *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*, I am trying to become so. That is a law of the Gospel which we must all eventually observe in spirit and practice. I am trying to pray for men who by night and day use their influence and every means in their power to crush out a people whom I love, and who are innocent before God of the vile slanders constantly heaped upon them. When we, as Saints of the Most High, shall have learned to love our enemies and pray for those who despitefully use us—shall have learned it so well, that prayerful humble practice impresses it upon the tablets of our hearts, from which every desire to oppress our fellow man has been eradicated, then, and not till then will the government rule, and dominion be given into the hands of this people.

Zion will be redeemed, God's kingdom bear sway and His people, under Christ Jesus our Lord, will rule when the law goes forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Much has been said about the domination of the "Mormon" Priesthood. In Europe, in the States of the Union, and even in Mexico it has been stated that "Mormons" are controlled like slaves, being obliged to yield obedience, right or wrong, to the behest of Church leaders. I bear my testimony that the statement is utterly untrue. No part of the Union possesses a freer and more independent people than these mountain valleys. Indeed I hesitate not to say that their equal in fearlessness of wrongful church, political or other influences cannot be found elsewhere. They neither crouch beneath public opinion nor cower before the pulpit and press. The names of prominent businessmen of Eastern cities, with whom for years our merchants have done business, appeared in the public prints as the vice-presidents of anti-"Mormon" meetings; thus making them seem to join in the raid against our people. When asked regarding the matter a number confessed that their names had been used without either their knowledge or consent. But they had not the moral courage necessary to stem the current of public opinion and run the risk of incurring the displeasure of the press by withdrawing their names; and, while disclaiming to me personally, any sympathy with the anti-"Mormon" raids, then so numerous in the East, they dare not publicly so express themselves. Now, while expressing sympathy for those who, under any circumstances, could be placed in such a position, I am bold to assert that nowhere in Utah among Latter-day Saints could such a thing be found. Such domination, ecclesiastical, political or social does not exist in Utah among the "Mormons;" possibly it may exist in the midst of those comprising their enemies, and known here as the "ring." Whatever may have been said or whatever may hereafter be asserted regarding the domination of the "Mormon" Priesthood, I know no people who regard more highly the individual rights of man or who are more willing to defend them than the people called "Mormons," who here, as elsewhere, have the moral courage to protect and defend their names while maintaining their individuality. I don't think they would hesitate to defend the oppressed whether Jew, Gentile or "Mormon," nor would they sacrifice in their lack of independence, principle or persons at the shrine of public opinion or popular prejudice. The "Mormon" Priesthood dominates the affairs of the "Mormon" people upon the principles of righteousness and equity. Outside of these it has neither power nor authority. I wish this were equally true with the religious, political and social organizations throughout the Union; but it is not, as I have already shown. When principle is sacrificed to prejudice there can be neither safety nor stability. Acting upon such a basis men become great in small things, but small in greater matters.

Did principle or a proper regard for the rights of man prevail in the Senate and House of our National Congress, pending the passage of the Edmunds law? It is true a number of honorable members in each branch recognized and protested against the passage of that unconstitutional and un-American measure, but how few, if any, comprehended the opportunity afforded a great statesmen to stem the current and by the force of patriotism and the power of right, rise above the waves of popular prejudice and, striking out of disguises stand proudly upon the solid foundations of constitutional law while victoriously battling for human freedom and the natural rights of man. Such an opportunity had made Webster, Clay or Sumner even greater than the great men we now esteem them. The thought of such as they were, the devotion to principle, liberty and right exhibited by Washington, Jefferson, Adams, and others in their struggles for human freedom, have made me proud to be an American citizen. But when I see sacred principles, for the establishment of which our fathers devoted property, honor and lives, trampled under foot by our national lawmakers, in order to answer the fanatical demands of religious bigots against a few thousand loyal citizens in Utah, I blush and almost wish I had been foreign born.

Aside from these drawbacks evidencing the degeneracy into which statesmen are falling, I have ever been proud of my citizenship. Of but one thing have I ever been prouder and that is of my allegiance to God and His laws, and a love for His kingdom and people. For these I have patiently, and almost uncomplainingly, endured the scorn and ridicule of many people in various countries. This I could never have endured, being naturally proud and perhaps oversensitive, had it not been for the comforting influence which accompanies a knowledge of truths revealed in our day.

During twenty-five years of experience in the Church, having been more or less in the missionary field since I was fifteen years of age, I have met thousands of people in Europe and America who thought of "Mormonism" and the

"Mormons" only with contempt, believing the system to be a fraud they thought of its advocates as wicked deceivers. Under other circumstances I have been thrown into contact with men and women who, while appearing chaste and fair without, were foul and corrupt within, but who nevertheless, would act as though the touch of a "Mormon" Elder was pollution. Hundreds of times I have been forced to notice the reluctance of men, themselves not averse to the destruction of chastity, to publicly appear in the company of Elders, whom I knew, would suffer their right hands to be burned from their bodies rather than look upon a woman with lust, much less seek to destroy virtue, or defile themselves with the unclean.

Whatever the world may think or say to the contrary, the Elders of this Church are the purest men on earth, and there are abundance of facts with which to substantiate the assertion. They are not all, perhaps, what they should be, but take them as a whole—consider their works, their sacrifices, trials and temptations, and in that virtue that comes of chaste thoughts, words and actions, they have no rivals in this world; for, as married men, they are true at home and abroad to their marital vows; as single men they are equally true to God and their covenants. With men of the world these things may be of but little moment, with us they are of vital importance, for upon the basis of sexual purity shall be perpetuated that which is noble, good and lovely.

The love of wealth, a desire for luxury, or an ambition for fame may move the world, and stir men to ceaseless activity; but for us and our children there is more happiness, peace and salvation in the quietness and purity of our simple homes, than can be found anywhere else.

In some of the Eastern States, especially in the larger cities, the evidences of increasing prosperity appear numerous. Trade and commerce, pushed by enterprise and capital, are accumulating wealth in the hands of the far-seeing and shrewd very rapidly, and the luxurious habits manifested in the erection and decoration of magnificent, palatial residences, is only equaled by the rich personal ornaments of their owners. To excel in these things the highest ambition of the worldly is excited to the utmost extent, and intelligent men and women too often sacrifice truth and honor in the mad strife for gain. Wealth, or the love of it, is fast becoming the God of the Christian world. To what extent their idolatrous worship produces happiness I am not aware, but am personally satisfied to cast my lot with the poor, despised people of Utah; who, having less of the things of this world, have more of the imperishable things of God. Possessing the keys of inspiration, we are able to draw upon the only true source of happiness, and our path, if we are faithful, will grow brighter and brighter, until the perfect day. Were we able to convince the rulers of nations of this fact, they would, I have no doubt, willingly forego all earthly hopes of worldly fame and the honors of men, and meekly receive that which has been so freely given to us. If God were to open the eyes of the Queen of England and the President of the United States, as He has opened our eyes, I think they would rejoice as we have rejoiced, with a boundless gladness. But they, like millions of others, having never been born of water, cannot even see, much less enter the kingdom of heaven. Could they do so and receive the manifestations and revelations, the companionship and instructions of the Holy Ghost, they would willingly exchange the honors and emoluments of their offices, for the persecution and slander to which all who live godly in Christ Jesus are subject.

They have their mission and work to perform; we have ours. We would gladly confer upon them and others a knowledge of that which we have received from God, if we could, but we cannot. The wealth of this world can neither purchase such knowledge, nor can the influence of the mighty and great ever become potent enough to secure it for themselves and convey it to others, except upon the simple conditions prescribed by the Master and to which we have yielded a willing obedience.

As this people have been obedient to God, so have they been loyal to the government. I desire to ask those composing this vast congregation, if you are a disloyal people you are frequently accused of being so. Do you not regard the Constitution of our nation with respect and veneration? Have you not taught your children that the Declaration of Independence is the highest bill of rights which man has ever bequeathed to man? Have you not held up to them for emulation the character of the father of his country, the great George Washington? When recently gazing upon his monument in Washington, D.C. which has been so many years in building, I asked myself the question: Is all this mass of polished marble being accumulated and put together with such accurate nicety and at such vast expense because George Washington was willing to float with the current of public opinion, right or

wrong, or is it because he had those noble sentiments which beat and throb in generous hearts for freedom? He, while possessing many ideas of the English aristocratic school, was no weather-cock to be turned by the passing breeze. How few men in the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, appear to have been close students of history. Had they been such they would have seen in the characters of Washington, Jefferson, and the Adams's something far different from that possessed by the average statesmen of our day. Close students of history should be able to sense the fact, that in emergencies when the waves of popular feeling run high, great men whose hearts beat for liberty and freedom come to the front but they do not float with the tide, nor are they swerved by prejudice or biased by public opinion.

Public opinion followed Jesus Christ into the garden of Gethsemane when, alone and unwatched by His Apostles, He prayed to the Father for strength to endure suffering which caused drops of blood to ooze from every pore of his agonized body. Public opinion followed him to the bench of the heathen judge who, being above the prejudices of the age, washed his hands of innocent blood and said: "I find no guilt in this man." But the self-righteous Jew—the hypocritical Scribe and Pharisee—cried out, "Crucify Him!" "Crucify Him!" "His blood be on us and our children." Public opinion has caused rivers of human blood to flow; sacrificing, it is said, sixty millions of lives during the reign of the inquisition. Who can think of the dark and cruel work of those days and years of religious superstition and bigotry without a shudder of horror?

In the museum at the City of Mexico I have gazed upon the mummied forms of men and women who lost their lives under the pressure of the religious public opinion that fed flames, and instituted racks, in that land.

Public opinion, backed by persecution, drove our fathers across the deep, and planted the Pilgrims upon Plymouth Rock, ready to perish if needs be for God and liberty. Had they been of the class predominating today in our National legislature, a free government on this land would have been unknown to the present generation. But they were noble, self-sacrificing men who, loving liberty better than life, could neither cringe to the dictates of kingly power nor bow to the behest of priestly authority. Hence, that conscience might be free and God worshipped accordingly, they braved the dangers of the sea in search of a land of freedom, a home for the oppressed. And here, upon the choice land of Joseph, still persecuted and hated, the survivors prospered and grew and became strong under the blessings of God, until their noble hearts and generous brains produced thoughts and actions that led to one of the grandest and most successful efforts, in the interest of human freedom, the world has ever known. How strange, how unreasonable it seems that the children of those noble ones, should ever become oppressors. Thus attesting the truthfulness of the saying: "The oppressed of today may become the oppressors of tomorrow."

Persecution, prompted by religious bigots, and urged forward by public opinion incited to deeds of violence, and sacrificed in a cool, premeditated and bloody manner the Prophet Joseph and the patriarch Hyrum Smith, at Carthage in the free and sovereign State of Illinois. Unappeased with the blood of martyrs, it devastated cities, villages and farms, pillaged homes, killed defenseless women and children, and finally drove us as a people into these mountains. I remember as a child, the pains and sorrows of those days of destitution when the aged and the young together walked weary miles with blistered feet in the hot sands that formed a part of the wilderness which stretched out between the so-called civilization and the place of peace and rest, so much desired by our people. Heat and cold, hunger and thirst, were each and all forgotten in the intense desire to be free from the cruel persecution of our enemies. We asked for neither riches nor fame, but around the camp fires at night the people were inspired with but one prayer during the weary days of that long journey—it was for peace and rest—freedom to worship God without being molested, without being persecuted by cruel, relentless enemies. For the enjoyment of these blessings we were willing to forego the comforts of life, associate with savages, and dig roots with which to keep body and soul together, as many of us had to do.

For a time we enjoyed comparative peace, but bitter prejudice manufactured and fostered by Christian divines and political demagogues, has followed us with malice unparalleled. Securing the support of public opinion it sent, in 1857, all army to Utah to despoil our people, while sedition ripened in the heart of the nation. In 1862 it culminated in a congressional enactment against a religious tenet, notwithstanding the positive and explicit prohibition of the Constitution which forbids Congress to pass any law "respecting the establishment of religion or preventing the

free exercise thereof," it urged and succeeded in passing the Poland law, under the provisions of which "Mormon" citizens were deprived of trial by an impartial jury of their peers, and by the decision of biased judges were not only subject to, but some of them actually were, tried by packed juries. At the demand of the clergy of the various religious denominations throughout the Union the Edmunds bill, substantially as it was drafted by clergymen and carpetbag officials here, became law; and without excuse or apology citizens in Utah are deprived of franchise, a sacred, blood bought right, without which no American can ever feel proud or properly exercise the liberties bequeathed by our fathers to their children.

Now what does it all mean? What can be the object of this unjust, inexcusable, unholy raid? Can it be possible that the dominant party holding the reins of government, desire to make of the people of Utah a race of slaves—fit subjects for fetters and chains? I hope not. But if such is the object would it not be well to transport us to the flats of the Mississippi River, to the swamps of Louisiana, where association with the black freedman might accustom us to the chains of slavery that now lie rusting in the blood of thousands that were brave and true—willing sacrifices at the shrine of human liberty and the equal rights of man.

There, perhaps, restraining bonds might fret and gall until the love for liberty and the rights of free men might be forgotten. Not so in these mountains. They are high and noble and grand. They are the mighty bulwarks of our God. The snows that drift upon their lofty peaks, the waters that leap down their steep sides and rush through their rugged gorges, are full of the harmony that accords with our love for freedom. The very air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the soil we walk upon, inspire the soul with thoughts and a love for liberty undreamed of in lands that produce oppressors. Loyal citizens of a great government, honest, frugal, just, charitable and obedient to constitutional law, we desire to continue while fulfilling our mission of peace on earth and good will to man, but while our surroundings remain unchanged and Nature's bulwarks stand, with the blessings of God we never can become slaves. Oppressions, frauds and wrongs we may for a time endure. We may as in the past be subjected to annoyances and to the petty tyranny of small tyrants, but we know in whom we trust, and we are not ignorant of what the final result will be. Traitors may arise and seek to trample upon the provisions of the Constitution, but right here in these mountains—on the backbone of the continent—will grow the men who will preserve intact that sacred inspired charter of human rights, under the just provisions of which millions will rejoice long after usurpers and traitors shall have been buried in oblivion. And right here in this connection I desire to repeat what I have said in public once before. In reviewing the tribulations through which the Saints have passed, and while contemplating the wrongs which they have endured at the hands of despoilers, I have felt and said, rather than be robbed as my father on several occasions was, on account of his religion, I would endeavor to have facts plainly submitted to the President of these United States, so that he might fully understand the situation, and then, before I would permit my possessions—the hard earnings of year's of toil—to go into the hands of those who covet our property, and who would rob us, as our fathers were robbed, I would deed it to, and make a present, if he would accept it, of all the property I have to the President and his successor in office forever, as a perpetual reminder, that here, in free America, whole communities of citizens have been plundered, persecuted and deprived of the peaceful possession of property without cause and without redress.

It is said "there are no persons in Utah who desire the property of the "Mormons" except upon the fair basis of purchase." I would be glad if this were true, for I wish to think well of all men, and especially of fellow citizens, but I fear recent movements and present indications will scarcely warrant belief in the statement, and if future developments of the plot of conspirators do not demonstrate that polygamy was the chosen pretext with which to excite and blind the public mind, while unscrupulous tricksters sought to transfer the revenues of the Territory and virtually the property of the majority of the people through increased and excessive taxation, to the control of the insignificant minority in this Territory, then I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet. The passage of the Edmunds bill and the means used to make it law, are but a part of the plot concocted in this city and endorsed by certain parties east against the rights and liberties of the people of Utah. The peculiar mathematical calculation by which Governor Murray succeeded in counting about 1,300 votes for a person almost unknown here, a greater number than over 18,000 cast for Hon. George Q. Cannon, the people's choice for Delegate to Congress, was but another part of the program, and one which has, thus far, deprived us of representation in the National Legislature, and rendered nugatory, to the majority in this Territory, the sacred right of franchise. The late President Garfield, in

a public State document, declared, in effect, that as a person who plotted against the life of the king in a monarchical government committed treason, so one who tampered with the ballot-box and thereby deprived the citizen of his right of franchise also committed treason. If this be sound doctrine and authoritatively enunciated, what crime has the Governor of Utah Territory committed? If the canvassing of those votes and the issuance of a certificate of election to a man who received only about one-fifteenth of the whole number, foreshadow the future action of our chief executive, what have the people of Utah to expect, by way of justice, from him? Being neither of, nor from among us—depending upon others for the tenure of his office and the amount and payment of his salary, we have, perhaps, no reason to expect sympathy or disinterested service, but we do have a right to expect unbiased justice in the administration of official duties.

No American citizen having the love of liberty and the rights of man at heart, can endorse the course pursued by the Governor in the Cannon-Campbell case. I cannot and never expect to. From childhood I have been taught to respect officials because of the dignity of their offices, and it may be possible to respect the office after having lost confidence in the man occupying it. As people, our regard for the Government ought perhaps to enable us to do this in the future, as in the past. Faithful, loyal citizens can afford to do it, and much more, if necessary.

But says one, "You are thought to be neither faithful nor loyal to the Government, and it is believed by many that you make secret covenants against it." In answer I have this to say: The brain that concocted and the heart that prompted such accusations were possessed by the wicked and cruel. We have proven our loyalty under circumstances most trying circumstances in which actions were more weighty than words, deeds than promises.

The patient, heroic endurance of the "Mormon" battalion while making their wondrous march of 2,030 miles, the planting of the Stars and Stripes on these mountains and in these valleys, then Mexican soil by their fathers, brothers, sisters and wives are historical facts, and so are the circumstances under which these things were done, historical facts establishing love for, and loyalty to our country that no honest man can ever question. As to making secret covenants against the Government, I never was requested to do it, and would have spurned the request and the person making it if I had been. As applied to this people the charge is false as those who make it. I think, however, I can understand why these false and unjust accusations are made. We have been treated from the beginning like an unloved child, when asking for bread we have been given a stone, for a fig we have been given a serpent. Now, who ever knew a father to be just to an unloved child? Or one unwilling to listen to the accusations of the favored against him? And here may be applied the saying "We can forgive those who injure us, but those we injure, never." And that is just the position we occupy. We have been injured, repeatedly injured, and those who have injured cannot forgive us. They hate us because they know they have wronged us. If statesmen and lawmakers disregard the Constitution by overriding and trampling on its provisions in their efforts to solve the "Mormon" problem, I hold the act to be no less treasonable than if performed by private citizens. I say treasonable because disregard for the Constitution by the nation's lawmakers, must ultimately result in their rejection by the people, or in the dissolution of the Government. Thus the charge of lawbreaking and disloyalty might more consistently come from, than against us. Of one thing we are certain: that which is a crime to an individual or a community cannot become a virtue in lawmakers, even though advocated as an expedient. George Washington, in his farewell address to the American people, foreseeing, perhaps, what might occur, uttered the following forcible sentiments: "If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed." Very different are these sentiments from those uttered not many years since by a prominent republican leader in the House of Representatives, who, when asked if he, as a lawyer, would state to the House that the measure introduced by him, and then under consideration by it, was in its provisions in harmony with the Constitution, answered with a sneer, "Why, any justice of the peace would tell the gentleman it is *not* constitutional, but it is a measure we want and one we shall pass, and by the time its constitutionality is tested, it will have accomplished the object we have in view." The same sentiments as those we have referred to were clearly and unhesitatingly uttered by members of Congress pending the final passage of the Edmunds bill. They show the drift of the party, perhaps the spirit of the times, in which the sentiments of Washington are below par. Other members, while not entertaining such views, lacked moral courage to oppose

them. Some of them came privately and confessed that the Edmunds bill was an infamous measure; but, said they, What can we do? Public sentiment is against your people, and we dare not defend you; if we do, our constituents will withdraw their support, and we shall be retired." The force of such reasoning we may not comprehend, but we do feel that we have no desire to have any man sacrifice himself or his prospects for us. We are used to oppressions, and with the help of God we can stand all the special *ex post facto* laws and bills of attainder which Congress may pass and the President approve, and we don't expect much sympathy or friendship from the outside either; for we have proven years ago that a man never has fewer friends than when he needs them most, nor more than when he needs them least. Does a knowledge of this fact tend to destroy our confidence in man? No, I think not, but it does tend, by showing how weak and unreliable man is, to increase our trust in God.

In asking for a commission of honorable gentlemen to visit Utah to investigate affairs before passing judgment upon us, we did express as I said before, a hope that we might be fairly tried before being convicted. The signers of these petitions knew, and their enemies here knew that the charges constantly heaped up against this people could be proven utterly false if a chance to do so were afforded. But that is just what certain parties did not want, fearing that a thorough investigation conducted by honorable men would defeat their plot against the people of Utah. I speak of these matters as I understand them. I am not and never have been radical, but have desired always to view things from an impartial standpoint.

Irrespective of creed or color, I think there is room in Utah for all who wish to locate in the Territory, and those who are here and others who may come hereafter, should be protected in the enjoyment of their rights, and should be free to exercise them so long as they do not infringe upon the rights of others. In these matters Gentile, Jew and Mormon should stand upon the same level. So far as I am concerned I would contend for, and if necessary defend the liberties of the one as soon as I would those of the other. Naturally I am inclined to be timid and am disposed to shrink from troubles rather than to court them believing it to be better to suffer wrong than to do wrong; but there are circumstances under which even the cowardly throw off their timidity, and fearlessly assert their rights. I am not able to say how patient, long-suffering and kind this people may prove under the oppressions which wicked plotters may bring upon them; but of one thing I am certain and that is, God will permit nothing to occur to our hurt. Nor will he, if we are faithful, permit the wicked to do anything that will not ultimately prove beneficial to those who love and obey Him. With the companionship of the Holy Spirit the doctrines of the Priesthood will distil upon our minds as the dews of heaven, and we have nothing to fear. The time may be near at hand when men's souls will be tried, but those possessing the inspiration of the Almighty, will hear the test as the faithful and true in other ages have done. Unaided by the power of God, we might be placed under circumstances that would cause us to fear and tremble and possibly plead for life at the sacrifice of allegiance to Him. Under the pressure of fear Peter denied his Lord and Master, but that transpired before he was "endowed with power from on high." From the day of Pentecost, when he received the Comforter, until his death no power on earth or beneath could have induced him to do such a thing. This fact is attested beyond doubt, by what we know of his life and labors subsequent to that awful night, when the powers of earth and hell seemed to prevail even over the Son of God.

Deprived of the sustaining powers of the Holy Spirit, the Latter-day Saints might yield to the fear of artillery, bullets and bayonets, so often recommended by Christian divines as the best means with which to solve the "Mormon" problem; but with that spirit such agencies become impotent. Confidence in God destroys fear, and a knowledge of the resurrection of the just, takes away the sting of death. The inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit have prompted the Presidency and Apostles of this Church to open meetinghouses and Tabernacles for ministers of various religious denominations to preach in while our Elders were being persecuted, hunted and sometimes whipped by members of these same denominations. The contrast between the treatment which we have given and that which we have received is very great. And if we have not under every circumstance "turned the other cheek to be smitten," we have at least tried to do good for evil. Without purse or scrip our Elders have faithfully sought to preach the Gospel in every Christian land; and while we, here in Utah, have extended courtesy and kindness to ministers of Christian denominations, many of our Elders have wandered like outcasts, sleeping under the hedges and in the woods with leaves as their only covering, like their Master, having no place other than that provided by nature, to lay their heads. Others when provided with places of rest have been called out and flayed with hickory withes. Poison has been administered in the food of some, and others have been killed.

How exactly similar this treatment is to that received by the Saints of old; and yet Christians appear to be utterly unable to learn a lesson from the parallel. To them nothing good can come out of Nazareth, and the kingdom of heaven they cannot see, for they have not been born again. The world loves its own, but it loved not the disciples of Jesus because he called them out of the world. On the same principle the world cannot love us. Let us realize this fact, and while being just to all men, let us live the religion of Jesus Christ, and trust in God. If we are pressed on all sides from without, it will tend to unite and make us all the more solid. Snow is soft and yielding, melting easily under the genial rays of the sun, but press it hard from every side and it congeals into a frozen mass, and in that state is capable of resisting mighty forces.

Pressure from without, as observed before, will tend to unite and make us better and stronger. Better because the spirit manifested towards us by the wicked, will cause us to lay aside the little envies and jealousies that may have existed among us. Stronger, because the hatred of our enemies will teach us to trust more fully in God. And in doing this we shall learn to follow the example of the faithful and true. A special law was passed for the sole purpose of entrapping the three Hebrew boys. It failed. When questioned by the wrathful king they could not say whether God would preserve or suffer them to perish, but they could say that "they would not fall down and worship the image which the king had made." No fault could be found with Daniel, so those who were jealous of his growing influence and power succeeded in securing the enactment of a special law which they knew he must violate or be false to his God. But Daniel was true to God, and with his face turned toward Jerusalem, prayed as before. How many Daniels or Hebrew boys we have among us I do not know. Lions' dens and heated caldrons, prisons and dungeon cells, the rack and the rope, have each and all been used to punish those unwilling to forsake God, or disobey His laws. They have their terrors, but the bloodstained pages of history attest that they have been failures when applied as means with which to change men's religion, violate conscience, or coerce the human mind. As it has been in the past, so it will be in the future; the faithful being inspired with the Holy Ghost, will set their hearts upon the redemption of Zion, and relying upon the promises, will turn their faces towards Jerusalem, pray as before, and follow Jesus Christ in life and death. Let the wicked rage and the adversary exert his power, the righteous will gain the victory, and when thrones are cast down the Saints shall prevail.

Let us maintain the Constitution of our country, and all laws enacted in conformity therewith, realizing that the destruction of the Constitution must lead to the ruin and destruction of the Union. Let us honor the rulers of the nation and uphold them, by faith and prayers as long as it is possible to do so. I desire to regard the President as an honorable man. As the chief executive of a great nation he should have the confidence and respect of the people. Should he select honorable, unbiased gentlemen for the Utah commission, as I have reason to hope he will, they can do much towards modifying the unjust law under which they must act, but whether such are appointed or not, we must continue to pray for our enemies and those that despitefully use us, until by and by we shall learn the lesson so well that when the little stone cut out of the mountains without hands shall roll forth, become a mighty mountain, fill the whole earth, and the Saints of the Most High have the rule and dominion they will never be disposed to oppression.

I pray for the peace and blessings of God to be with all Israel, and with the honest everywhere. Thousands are misguided and deceived by priests who preach for money and divine for hire; ministers who make merchandise of the souls of men. The mother of Harlots has "made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication," just as John the Revelator saw she would do, but among those nations are many honest, upright ones. For them I pray. In conclusion let me impress upon your minds the spirit of inspiration given through Joseph the Prophet, while incarcerated in Liberty Jail, while suffering the abuse of his enemies, and while being deprived of his liberty and the association of family and friends for the Gospel's sake, he says. "No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—

Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.

Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God, and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dew from heaven.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever."

May God enable us to learn these things, and to be true and faithful to Him, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.