

The Eternities Before the Saints—The Sublimity of the Gospel, Etc.

Discourse by President John Taylor, delivered in the Assembly Hall, Sunday Afternoon, Jan. 2nd, 1881.

I am pleased to have another opportunity of meeting with you on this the first Sabbath of the New Year; and I will add to all the faithful, ten thousand more of them. For we, as Latter-day Saints, do not consider that our existence ends with time, as we generally term it, but that it reaches into eternity. And that while we are here in a state of probation to fulfil the various duties devolving upon us, as Saints of the living God; while we come into the world and exist in it for a time and then leave it, we have hopes and aspirations beyond the grave, and anticipate that, as ages and cycles shall pass along and generation succeeds generation, if we are true to our trust and live our religion, keeping the commandments of God and fulfilling the various covenants devolving upon us to attend to, that we shall associate with the just in the eternities to come! Therefore we are living, and hoping, and expecting, and planning, and contriving and operating, for the accomplishment of this object. We do not look upon the affairs of this life as those alone in which humanity is interested. We have been taught differently by those who have had communication with the Lord, and to whom he has revealed his will. We have been taught differently by the holy priesthood that we have in our midst; we have been taught differently by the Holy Spirit which we have received in God's appointed way, according to his law; which spirit has enlightened our minds and given unto us an evidence and a testimony similar to that which we heard Brother Smith speak of that he knew this work to be of God. How did he know it? Through obedience to the law of God, by the reception of the Holy Ghost and through the union and communion that exists between God and his children upon the earth. This is a principle of certainty and testimony, and an evidence that we all have the privilege of enjoying for ourselves, and of knowing that God lives; of knowing that this is the Church of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God; and of knowing also that God lives and that he is our Father, and that we are his children; and of further knowing that, "when this earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved," we can feel like one of old, that "we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," waiting for us, and not for us only but for all who love the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Were it not for this hope, were it not for this spirit, were it not for this intelligence that has been communicated unto us by the light of revelation and by the manifestation of the Spirit of God, through the revelations of God to man in these the last days, by the opening of the heavens, by the administration of holy angels, and by the revelations of the will of God to man; were it not for this we should not have been here today, this congregation would not have been assembled here as they are; the Latter-day Saints would not have been in this territory; nor would they have been anywhere else; for it is because God has seen fit in the fullness of times, according to the testimony given by the holy prophets, who have prophesied since the world was, according to the designs and eternal purposes of God pertaining to the inhabitants of the earth—those who now live, those who have lived and those who will live; were it not for the purposes of God pertaining to these things, and the communications of his will to us, we could not be, as I before stated, in the position we now occupy. But God having designed to accomplish his work in the interests of the people of the world, in this day and age, in the interest of the myriads who have passed out of the world, in the interest of the living and the dead, he has commenced his work for the salvation, for the redemption and for the exaltation of the human family, and hence things are as we see them among us today.

When we talk about the theories of men, they are matters of very little importance; when we reflect upon their ideas or views, they are really unimportant, but when we talk about the law of God, the plates of Jehovah and his designs pertaining to the world in which we live and its inhabitants, and to the inhabitants that have lived, and to all humanity, then we touch upon a subject that is grand, noble and sublime; one that enters into the recesses of the heart and that touches every fiber, and that causes our hopes and aspirations to reach within the veil, where Christ our forerunner has gone, and we feel convinced that there is an eternal fitness in all the laws, in all the truths, in all the ordinances, and in everything that God has revealed for the salvation and exaltation of the human family. We are here, and how did we come here? What was it that brought us here? Some hardly know; and then there are a great many who do understand this thing very well. We are here because we listened to the eternal truths of the gospel, and that gospel could not have been known unless it had been revealed. For no men nor any set of men, today, understand those principles which are calculated to exalt men in the celestial kingdom of God, nor could they comprehend them unless God had revealed them. And when we hear of the folly, the raving and

ranting of ignorant men who know not God nor his laws, who would presume to dictate to Jehovah, who would teach something that they know nothing about; but being without revelation, are fitly represented in the Scriptures as "Knowing nothing but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed." For instance, we have our cattle, our sheep and other animals which we raise and provide food for and feed and fatten them. What for? For the knife. How could we do it if they knew what we were doing it for? I do not think they would get very fat. Still, one of the old prophets, in speaking of these men who are without revelation says, "They know nothing but what they know naturally as brute beasts." We certainly do not wish such men for our instructors.

Many men at the present day will tell us that they will believe nothing but what they can see with their eyes, handle with their hands and comprehend with their judgments. And what are they prepared for? I might here ask, What does man in reality know of God and of his laws, or of the proper fitness of things what does he know about that vitality that he himself is in possession of, or that which any other animal is in possession of? He knows nothing pertaining to it, nor can he impart it. When we talk about the wisdom of man, how far does it go? We learn a few of the laws of nature. Who gave these laws? Who originated or organized them? Who placed these eternal laws in nature? Who made the solar system, for instance, to move with that accuracy and punctuality according to exact rules and laws who made any portion of that system, gave it its original force or sustains it in its motion? Who planted in matter its exact and various laws? Can any of the learned and the wise of this day and age make anything of that kind or anything approaching to it? Who gives life and vitality to man? Does man give it? We are told that "there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth it understanding," but without that what are we, although our organization may be complete in all its parts, yet without the spirit the body is lifeless, motionless and inanimate. What are we? At best but little specks in motion moving about in the world? Puffed up, in many instances, with things we profess to know, when really we know nothing only as God communicates it, and can understand nothing only as he makes it manifest. Can all the philosophers of today make a grain of wheat and give vitality to it, much less a world? Or can they make a simple blade of grass? It is not a big thing to ask a wise man to do, especially those who desire to ignore God in his works, but can the wisest of our philosophers do it? No, nor can they discover the secrets of life, nor the impulses which act upon all nature in all the varied operations. Who governs the planetary system? The great God, the same who causes our earth as well as other systems to revolve upon their axes, and provides for them, and has measured and given them their times and seasons, and their laws. Who is it that causes the blood to flow through our veins? He that has given and does give intelligence to man. Can anybody point out any of those vital principles and show that they originated independently of God? No, they cannot. And so it is through all creation, no matter what you touch pertaining to nature. When man discovers a law of nature either in the mineral, the animal, the vegetable or any other kingdom, he will find that it is governed by strict eternal and unchangeable and undeviating laws. And when men discover that, what do they find out? Something which God has placed there, something that has always existed. We talk sometimes about the great discoveries we have made. We will refer to gas, for instance; some of us can remember very well when there was no such thing known among us as gas for lighting purposes. Who originated the elements of which it is composed? The great God; and that principle always existed. We speak about electricity and the uses to which it can be applied. Who originated that principle? "O, it was found out a few years ago and we found it very useful in communicating one with another; through its use we can send a message today from one part of the world to another, and can be in communication really with the world." Well, we think we have done something very remarkable, in discovering something of that kind, and it really is a great discovery; but then that principle always existed, ever since the world was framed; the only thing that we can boast of is that we have discovered a certain principle which we did not know of before; and there are ten thousand other principles beyond, which we have not yet discovered; but when we do discover them we shall find them to be the same eternal laws of God. I am reminded sometimes of a little infant. You look at the body; it comes into the world; it has its common faculties. By and by it makes a discovery, it finds out that it has a hand, and it looks at it as much as to say, It is a very curious thing, and it is a remarkable discovery that I have made. Why, it always had a hand, but the baby did not always know it.

It has been remarked here by Bro. Penrose that all things are governed by law. This is so whether in the material world, or whether—I was going to say—in the immaterial world, but we do not know of such a thing; I will say therefore, the spiritual world, if you please. We are very singularly constituted, forming a combination of body and

spirit. We learn a little about the bodies of men, but do we know about the spirits? We know from history of some things which have taken place in the past, but what do we know about things pertaining to the future? Who can comprehend God or his ways? One of old in speaking upon this subject says, "It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou understand?" There are some prominent features which God has revealed to us; and there are ten thousands of principles which he has not revealed. Those principles that he has revealed to us, like everything else pertaining to the works and the designs of God, bring a degree of certainty, assurance, intelligence and satisfaction that nothing earthly can impart. The Saints themselves, do not, in many instances, understand the "whys" and the "wherefores" pertaining to these matters. We are taught to obey certain laws; we are taught to repent of our sins, and to have hands laid upon our heads for the reception of the Holy Ghost. Here is a law that God has appointed, just the same as he has regulated these other systems of which I speak, and with which we are more or less familiar. We have electricity floating around us in every direction. In order to make it subserve our desires we have to use it according to certain laws. At present we have to string up wire properly connecting it and use a battery and a machine made for the purpose, in order to convey our thoughts to others at a distance; and without first paying due regard to these or other appliances that perhaps might be substituted, we could not communicate. When you comply with the law governing this matter, that is, when you erect the poles, string the wire, make your battery and have the machine and the circuit complete, you may then convey your thoughts correctly over the wire by the means of electricity to others at a distance. You know they have been correctly sent because you can receive your answer back; and if necessary, have the message you sent repeated. Now the same principle is true in regard to the other things. And do the persons who operate the telegraph machine always understand all about the philosophy of it? No, but very few of them comparatively. Yet they learn to operate while somebody else does the thinking and prepares the machine and appliances for them for the purpose of introducing this mode of communicating. Now then, look at the principle that looks to many very simple associated with that way which God has ordained and appointed for man to become acquainted with him, and to be introduced to him and to his laws. How is it? Why the elder goes forth to preach, and what is he told to preach? Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. Now these look to many as being very simple things, very simple; yet they are things which God has ordained, they are his laws, they were in former times, they are in this time. We cannot violate these and receive the blessings, and no other people can; I do not care who they are, they cannot do it. Let us go back to our experience. There are hundreds of you present who have received the spirit of the living God; how did you receive it? You say, an elder came along, and we heard him preach; he told me to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to repent of my sins, and that he was authorized to baptize me for the remission of my sins, and he told me that if I did this that hands should then be laid upon my head and I should receive the Holy Ghost. This is the doctrine you heard. Then you had faith in God; you repented of your sins, your follies and wickedness, and you covenanted to fear God and keep his commandments, and to observe his laws. The elder then went forth and led you into the water, and he said, "Being commissioned of Jesus Christ I baptize you for the remission of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." He then buried you in the water and raised and brought you out of it. After he did this, he laid his hands upon your head, and by the same authority he confirmed you a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

Now that is a very peculiar operation when you come to think upon it. Why is it thus? A man goes forth who has authority given him of Jesus Christ, he baptized you for the remission of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. There is something very peculiar about it. It looks very simple; but if that man had no such authority, then he was an impostor; and if the man or men who ordained that elder conferring on him this priesthood, had not the authority to do so, then he or they were impostors; and if God had not given revelation instructing Joseph Smith in relation to these things, how they were to be done, then Joseph Smith himself was an impostor, as well as the apostles and all men professing authority. These are self-evident facts. We as a people do not profess to have received any authority from any other source, from any man or set of men, or any church or any organization existing; and if God has not revealed it, then the whole thing is a falsehood and fiction, and there is nothing to it. Here is a picture [pointing to the ceiling] of the angel Moroni appearing unto Joseph Smith, revealing to him among other things the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. We have another here [pointing to John the Baptist conferring upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery the Aaronic priesthood], and

still another, representing Peter, James and John conferring upon Joseph Smith the Melchizedek priesthood. Very well. Are these things true? There are thousands of Latter-day Saints who will tell you they know it. We will come to these things by and by. But if these things were not so, then our faith is in vain, then we are dark and benighted as others are, then the things we believe in are a phantom and can avail us nothing, either pertaining to this world or the world to come; then the building of these temples amounts to nothing, if these things are a fiction, and everything we have done and are engaged in amounts to nothing. But if they are true, then there is nothing of so great importance to the world of mankind and to us, as the revelation of these truths to man in these last days, and pertaining also to our association therewith.

Now, when an elder lays his hands upon a man and confirms upon him the Holy Ghost, he tells him to receive it by virtue of the authority conferred upon him. What authority? Why God restored the authority of the holy priesthood by those who held the keys of that priesthood and who administer in time and in eternity, who hold that priesthood upon the earth, and who now hold it in the heavens. They came here to impart it to men, and did restore it to men. Very well, that being the case, man was again placed in communion with his God; not left any longer to guess and suppose and surmise and to think, but to *know*. For instance, I have myself been thousands of miles and hundreds of thousands to preach this Gospel; would I have gone if I had not known it to be true? No, I would not. There is nothing very pleasing in going forth to an unbelieving world to meet the errors and the prejudices of ages, and to oppose the false theories of men, to introduce the principles that are opposed and repudiated by the carnal mind, and by the corrupt everywhere; there is nothing very pleasant or inviting to be traduced and to have your name cast out as evil, no matter how honorable you may be, this has been the lot of the elders of this Church and is their lot today, by men who know not of what they speak, by men who are bigoted, superstitious and ignorant; men who comprehend not God nor his laws; but we know it, and I know the truths of which I speak, and bear testimony to it before you. If others do not know it, I cannot help it; I have obeyed the method appointed to receive these things, as you have had to do, to be initiated into the Church and kingdom, according to the laws which God has ordained. What I have done, then, all others in this Church have done; and the elders of Israel have been actuated by the same impulses, have obeyed the same doctrines and ordinances, and have administered the same ordinances to others. They are influenced by the same spirit, and they realized and knew for themselves of the things which they promulgated and taught. Is this confined to elders alone? No. To the apostles and presidents? No. To the seventies or high priests or elders, bishops, priests, teachers or deacons? No. This is a thing which pertains to all; all who are Latter-day Saints, all who have complied with the requirements and who have thus placed themselves in the condition to receive this knowledge; and you men who are before and around me today are witnesses of the truth of that which I say, because you yourselves did receive the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God which imparted to you a knowledge of the principles of the Gospel and placed you in communion with God your heavenly Father. And this Spirit has borne witness to our spirits as it has been said by one of old, "that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." We sometimes treat these things rather lightly, scarcely comprehending what we are doing; and I often think that our elders themselves hardly realize the significance of the situation they occupy when they say to him that believes, repents and is baptized, "Receive thou the Holy Ghost." Is there a thing of more importance that we can think of anywhere than this which so many of us treat so lightly. The idea of a man, human and fallible, pronouncing the reception of the Holy Ghost upon his fellow man, and his fellow receiving that heavenly treasure, is one of the greatest manifestations of the faithfulness of God, in sanctioning the acts of his elders that it is possible for us to conceive of. He has said that through these ordinances he would confer the Holy Ghost; he has also fulfilled it, as the thousands who hear me today can bear record. Here is the thing that operated upon you and which was the means of bringing you here to this place, from many of the nations of the earth.

Some people find fault with us about these things. I have said frequently to men that I cannot help my faith and I am sure you cannot help it; no man living can control my faith, for I have received a portion of the Spirit of the Lord and I know it; and if you have received a portion of that same Spirit you know it, and you cannot unknow it—it is impossible, you cannot unknow it, unless you sin against God and, as the apostle said, grieve the Spirit, by which you were sealed; then it withdraws from you, then you will not know much about it, no more than some do who take this course against us. The apostle said, "Grieve not the Spirit of God, by which you are sealed to the day of redemption;" do not grieve it, do not sin against God, do not violate his laws, do not corrupt yourselves; do not

corrupt your bodies, for are they not, as one has said, “the temples of the living God?” Do not allow your spirits to be contaminated and led astray from correct principles, but cleave unto God in all humility, fidelity, faithfulness; observing his laws and keeping his commandments. Why, then, let me ask, are you here? You are here because the elders of Israel visited the place where you lived in this nation, or in nations afar off, preaching the principles of the everlasting Gospel which had been restored; and you believed their testimony, and obeyed the Gospel, and received a knowledge of its divinity, and because of this you came here; and hence the elders, the apostles, the presidents, and all the various peoples and members being touched by the spark of that fire that dwells in the bosom of God, being enlightened by that Holy Spirit which is promised to those who obey his law, you left your homes, your friends, your associations, and came here to mingle with the Saints of the Most High, to unite with them and to assist in carrying out those purposes that God designs pertaining to the human family. Now in all this Joseph Smith and those associated with him—Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon and others—understood these principles; they commenced this work not of their own free will, and, yes, of their own free will, too; but they did not originate them. God originated them and they were instrumental in his hands in introducing them. These men having been ordained themselves, ordained others who went forth to proclaim that word of truth which they had received. And why did you come here? Because you received that testimony and believed it and obeyed it and received the Holy Ghost, and associated with those who believed the same principles. There was something that propelled you forward, you hardly knew why or how, but you were desirous to come to Zion. Why? Because you are living in the dispensation of the fulness of times, when God will gather together all things in one, and the keys of the gathering dispensation had been introduced; and because you had received of that spirit, and you never felt easy until you got here. Well, how was that? What operated upon you? The Spirit of God. Was it a something that was craving after wealth and position and power and aggrandizement, to have a great and honorable name? No, it was as you first were taught and as you afterwards comprehended, it was how to learn to save yourselves, to save your progenitors, to save your posterity; it was that you might obtain a knowledge of the laws of life, fulfil the measure of your creation, and that while you felt as a man among men upon the earth, you might, by and by, through obedience to pure principles, stand among the Gods as a God, in the eternal worlds, and be exalted through the power of the Gospel. This is why you came here, and are coming here, and being here, we brought our bodies with us. We have to eat and drink, we need clothing. The curse has not been removed from the earth yet, therefore we have “to eat our bread by the sweat of our brow.” We have to do in regard to these matters as others do; and being here, what then? Why a number of people make what may be termed a community. We are living on land, and that land, in a territorial capacity is part and parcel of the United States, and as a territory of the United States, we necessarily form an integral part of the United States; being men, and having bodies as other men, independent of our general feelings, thoughts, actions and sentiments, we have to live and move, to eat, to drink, to occupy farms, houses, cities, and lands; and to perform all the varied duties of citizens, associated with the body politic. What next? We have our religious duties to perform, and that is to fear God and to observe his laws.

What else? We build temples. What for? To administer the ordinances of God. What ordinances? Those that God has revealed, and those that the world know nothing about; and if they had the temples already built for them today they would not know any more what to do with them than that pitcher does; nor would we unless God had revealed it. Now we are going on quietly to attend to our duties, building our temples and administering in them. Here is Brother John L. Smith—how long Brother Smith have you been administering in the Temple at St. George? [Brother Smith: Four years, sir.] And for whom? For himself? Yes, a little, not much however, principally for others. For the welfare of whom? The living. Who else? Of the dead; that we may fulfil certain duties that God has called us to perform, to help in the accomplishment of his designs and purposes. And that as God has been pleased to restore to the earth the keys which Elijah held, who conferred his power upon others to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the fathers who existed upon the earth in generations gone past, and we who are now in existence and our children that are following after us, might be cemented and united together by eternal bonds which God has pointed out. That there might be an alliance and cooperation between those in the heavens and those on the earth; that there might be a welding, uniting, cementing principle; in which the priesthood in the heavens and on the earth are united, to carry out the great designs of our heavenly Father in the salvation and redemption of the living and the dead, and that we might

operate for them on the earth while they are operating for us in the heavens. For it is written, that "They without us cannot be made perfect," neither can we become perfect without them. We, then, are operating in our part and they in theirs; we on the earth, they in the heavens; and with God they are operating, and with Jesus Christ, who is the mediator of the new covenant, and with the ancient prophets and apostles of God, who lived before, who administered in time and in eternity, holding the everlasting priesthood, and who are all interested in the welfare of the world and the exaltation of man.

Well, now, what shall we do? Shall we go on with it? We will try to, the Lord being our helper. Some people say we are very wicked. Well, I do not think we are as good as we ought to be by a long way, but I do think we are very much better than they are. This is my opinion, with all our follies and all our weaknesses, and all our infirmities. And—well, I would not like to say what I know about them. God knows it. We will let that go. The Lord will judge men by their acts, and he will judge us and all others by our acts.

Now, we have a territorial form of government. I will come to that again. What shall we do? Observe the laws of men? I think that is a very easy thing to do. There is nothing very hard about that; if they will not interfere with us in religious matters, there is nothing very hard about keeping the laws of the land. Will we pay taxes? Yes. Will we be loyal to the government? Yes. Will we sustain all good, honorable men that are rulers? Yes, and pray God to inspire them with wisdom, that they may be led in the right path. Will we fight with them and quarrel with them, and say hard words about them and misrepresent them as they do us? No, we will not. It would try me very much sometimes to have to tell the plain and unpalatable truth about them, of things which, without falsehood, I can say, I know for myself. Still, will they try to interfere with us? Yes. Who? All kinds of foolish people, ignorant; narrow-minded, degraded, wallowing in iniquity and besmeared with corruption of every kind; and yet they talk to us about our impurities. They have reason to talk a little, but not much. We are not what we should be by a long way; we ought to be a great deal better than we are. I pray that God may enable us to be so.

Well, we do not interfere with them. Whose religion do we interfere with? Nobody's. I hope you do not, I know I do not; if they are satisfied with it, I am satisfied that they should have it. I believe in every man using the free exercise of his judgment and conscience, leaving the balance with God. I will tell people the truth; if they obey it, all right, if not, certainly I will not prosecute them or persecute them because of their views. But on the contrary, if anybody were to interfere in any way with the religious faith of anyone, I care not how foolish it might be, I would be among the first to stand forth in the defense of him whose rights were assailed; not because I believed in his religion at all; but because my sense of justice and equal rights would impel me to this action; for if I claim those rights myself I ought to respect them in others, holding as I do that it is the right of all men to believe in and worship as they please. And while there are thousands of highminded honorable men in this great nation who believe in and sustain the principles of freedom and equal rights, there are very many foolish, inconsiderate men who would recklessly tear down the temple of freedom erected by the fathers of this nation, and ruthlessly proscribe, prosecute and persecute all who cannot subscribe to their narrow erratic, unsupported ideas. But will you not conform to their ideas? No, I will not, the Lord being my helper, and then the people will not God being their helper. The Lord has revealed unto us the truth, and we know it, and we will stand by it and maintain it from this time forth, God being our helper; and all who believe in that say aye [the congregation said aye]. That is the feeling of the Latter-day Saints I know. But will we interfere with anybody? No! No! We will not. With their politics? Not much. For while we are interested in the welfare of the nation, we care very little about the present political issues. We think that a great and magnanimous nation, however, could well afford to let us alone, and would feel like endorsing General Grant's axiom, "Let us have peace." But then if people will interfere with us while we are pursuing the even tenor of our way, we will defend and protect ourselves from their assaults as best we may, and then we will commit them to God. We have not started this work, God commenced it, not us, and we are simply endeavoring to carry out his will and law. Will we do it? With the Lord's help we will. Will we fight against authority? No. Will we oppose the principles of this government? No. We will sustain them. But if people will act foolishly we cannot help it. If this nation can stand the results of the violation of constitutional principles, we can. If they tear down the bulwarks of freedom and with impunity trample under foot the rights of men we cannot help it. If it is our turn, today, to suffer wrong, it will be somebody else's tomorrow, national retrogressions are not often arrested. It behooves statesmen to pause in their career. The floodgates once opened who shall stay the torrent? We of all

men would save the ship of state and would say to these national patricides avaunt! But if they will act foolishly and continue to do so until they subvert the principles of liberty, and thus destroy one of the best governments ever instituted on earth, then if forsaken by all else, the elders of this Church will rally round the Constitution, lift up the standard of freedom, which is being trodden under foot and bedrabbled by demagogues, and proclaim liberty to the world; equal rights, liberty and equality; freedom of conscience and of worship to all men everywhere. That is not a prophecy of mine; it is a prophecy of Joseph Smith's, and I believe it very strongly. Will we oppose them? No. Let them go on in their own way and we will pray to God to turn the designs of wicked men, and if they will not repent and turn from their evil deeds, pray to him that they may be taken in their own trap, be caught in their own snare, and fall into the pit which they dig for us. Can you pray with a good conscience that this may befall them? Certainly. If men dig a pit for others they should not find fault if they fall into it themselves. And as sure as God lives they will do it, if they persevere in their iniquity, and as sure as we stand faithful to the principles of truth, God will stand by us, and the wrath of man will be made to praise him, and the remainder he will restrain; and they cannot help themselves. For both they and we are in the hands of God, and they can go no further than he permits them, neither can we. And we will try, as the friends of this nation and of humanity, to do right, and to sustain all correct principles, in the maintenance of justice and equal rights to all; cultivating peace, respecting law, sustaining our institutions, and praying that right, justice and equity may prevail throughout the land; and that the hands of all honorable men may be strengthened to preserve inviolable the God-given institutions of this great nation. Let us also try to fulfil all of our duties as fathers, and our duties as mothers, our duties as children and our duties as citizens of the United States, our duties as Presidents, our duties as Apostles, our duties as High Priests, our duties as Seventies, our duties as Elders and our duties as Priests, Teachers and Deacons, and our duties as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Let us humble ourselves before the Lord, live in the light of the Spirit of God, that the Holy Spirit which we have received may be in us "as a light that shines brighter and brighter until the perfect day." And if we are faithful, God will stand by Israel; he will preserve his elect; he will listen to our prayers: and we will go to work by his help to build up Zion and establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth; and we and our posterity will never cease doing it until the "kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ; and he shall rule forever and forever;" and then throughout the endless ages of eternity among the Gods in the eternal worlds we will join in singing, "Blessing, and glory, and honor, and power, and might, and majesty, and dominion, be ascribed to him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever." Even so. Amen.