

received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it. These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men. These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness. These are they who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fulness of the Father. Wherefore, they are bodies terrestrial, and not bodies celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun. These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.”

In opening this Conference it would be well for us individually to ask ourselves, Have we received the first principles of the Gospel of Christ, and have we continued in those principles which were first taught unto us; or is it necessary for us again to lay the foundation of repentance from dead works? It is very singular that when the principles of the Gospel, as I have stated them, were presented to the different sects, they were disposed to reject them and to persecute those who preached them in their fullness. Such, however, was the fact, and it is owing to this that the Latter-day Saints are now in the Great Basin of the Rocky Mountains, in the heart of the American continent, in the enjoyment of political and religious liberty and freedom, for which they have sacrificed more perhaps than any other people on the face of the earth. And we have the greatest reason of all people to be thankful to God for these blessings.

Then let us ask ourselves, Are we prepared for the great blessings which God has bestowed upon us? Are we living up to our callings and magnifying the same? Do we observe the duties which are imposed upon us by our holy religion? Or are we foolish enough, while recognizing its truth,

and professing to be Latter-day Saints, to treat it with carelessness and neglect, and failing to live up to our high and holy calling?

From the earliest days of the preaching of the Gospel by Joseph Smith men were tried and tempted and led astray by false spirits and doctrines of devils. We find at the commencement of Joseph’s mission that many who entered into covenant turned away, and some became very bitter enemies. It was necessary from the very beginning that there should be a sifting, for the Lord declared unto His people that He would sift them as with a sieve. This sifting had to continue, and hence every time the Latter-day Saints were driven, scattered, or otherwise persecuted, it caused those who could not abide in the faith to pass quietly away, or to make their wickedness manifest unto the church and unto the world. But while this was going on, the strength of Zion was increasing. It is said, and I presume correctly, that Oliver Cowdery remarked at one time to Joseph Smith, “If I should apostatize and leave the Church, the Church would be broken up.” The answer of the Prophet was, “What and who are you? This is the work of God, and if you turn against it and withdraw from it, it will still roll on and you will not be missed.” It was not long until Oliver turned away, but the work continued. God raised up men from obscurity to step forth and shoulder the burdens, and it was hardly known when and where he went. In about ten years he came back again, came before a local Conference at Mosquito Creek, Pottawatomie Co., Iowa, Oct., 1848, and acknowledged his faults. He bore testimony of the mission of the Prophet, Joseph Smith, and of the truth of the Book of Mormon; he exhorted the Saints to follow the