

heard preached by the Elders of this Church was that the world would grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Should we be surprised at its coming to pass? Another thing that I have heard from the beginning is, that people would persecute us, commencing with neighborhoods and villages, and then it would extend to cities and counties, and then to States, and then to the United States, and afterwards to the world. We have got about fifty millions of people on our backs now—and it is a pretty heavy load to carry, too; but the Lord will see us through. We are acting in the interests of humanity: we are proclaiming salvation to a fallen world, and in this we are carrying out the word and will of God made known and manifested directly to us. We are warning the people of their position, and we will continue to send forth our missionaries for this purpose until God says, it is enough. And if they persecute us in one city, we will do as Jesus told his disciples, we will flee to another, searching out the honest in heart. Persecution has been our lot from the beginning, and it has followed us to this day. I am reminded of a circumstance that occurred in Missouri, which I will mention to show the kind of feeling that Joseph Smith was possessed of. Some 25 years ago, in Far West, a mob—one of those semi-occasional occurrences—had come against us with evil intent, placing themselves in position to give us battle; and there were not more than about 200 of us in the place. We had one fellow who was taken with a fit of trembling in the knees, and he ordered our people to retreat. As soon as Joseph heard this sound, he exclaimed, “Retreat! Where in the name of God shall we retreat to?” He then led us out to

the prairie facing the mob and placed us in position; and the first thing we knew a flag of truce was seen coming towards us. The person bearing it said that some of their friends were among our people for whose safety they felt anxious. I rather think it was a case in which the wife was in the Church but not the husband, and the mob wished these parties to come out as they, he said, were going to destroy every man, woman and child in the place. But these folks had a little “sand” in them, as the boys say; they sent word back, that if that was the case they would die with their friends. Joseph Smith, our leader, then sent word back by this messenger, said he, “Tell your General to withdraw his troops or I will send them to hell.” I thought that was a pretty bold stand to take, as we only numbered about 200 to their 3,500; but they thought we were more numerous than we really were, it may be that our numbers were magnified in their eyes; but they took the hint and left; and we were not sorry. (Laughter.) The Lord, through simple means, is able to take care of and deliver His people, but they must put implicit faith and confidence in Him; and when they are crowded into a tight place they must not be afraid to make sacrifice for the sake of maintaining the truth, and all will be well with us whether living or dying, in time or in eternity.

Well, what shall we do? We will serve the Lord; we will live our religion; we will be true to our covenants, keep his commandments and be one, and we will sustain one another, and not sustain men among us who have it in their hearts to cut our throats; let them alone to pursue their own course, and let them draw their sustenance from