

difficult to secure. It is, however, comparatively easy to obtain a written character, as it is termed, a character that one can put in his pocket; and, indeed, according to my observation it is not infrequently the case that people are the bearers of written characters which their real and true character fails to attest. There are those among us who are recognized as members of this Church who take a vast amount of pains to be favorably known by those around them, but whose real character, or the inwardness so to speak, of such people, is veiled or disguised, being to all outward appearance reputable Latter-day Saints, but whose inward character, the character that is written indelibly upon their own hearts, would, if known, render them unfit for the association and fellowship of the people of God. Now this prayer that I have referred to—“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”—is very significant; it was a prayer that David in the principal course of his life could conscientiously and with a degree of confidence offer up to the Lord. But there were times when he would feel the faltering and quivering sensation of weakness in offering up a prayer of this kind.

I have reason to believe that many of the Latter-day Saints, during a great portion of their lives, could approach the Lord in all confidence and make this same prayer—“Search me, O God, and know my heart: And see if there be any wicked way in me;” but if we, as a people could live so as to be able at all times to bow before the Lord and offer up a prayer like this, what a delightful thing it would be, what

an attainment we should have acquired in righteousness and good works! To every person who has at heart the preparing of himself for the great change, that is the work of regeneration, I would recommend that he adopt this prayer of David, and see how near he can live according to the light that he has, so as to make it in all sincerity part of his devotions to God. Many fail in coming up to this standard of excellence because they do things in secret where mortal eye cannot penetrate, that has a direct tendency to alienate them from the Almighty, and to grieve away the Spirit of God. Such persons cannot, in their private closet use this prayer; they could not unless they had repented of their sins and repaired the wrong they may have committed, and determined to do better in the future than they had done in the past, and to establish a character before God that could be relied upon in the hour of trial, and that would fit them to associate with holy beings and with the Father himself when they shall have passed into the spirit world. In order to arrive at the state of perfection that David did when he poured out his soul to the Lord in the prayer that I have referred to, we must be true men and true women; we must have faith largely developed, and we must be worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost to aid us in the work of righteousness all the day long, to enable us to sacrifice our own will to the will of the Father, to battle against our fallen nature, and to do right for the love of doing right, keeping our eye single to the honor and glory of God. To do this there must be an inward feeling of the mind that is conscious of the responsibility that we are under, that recognizes the fact that