

value placed upon virtue that should be, and in many circles the virtue of man is derided. A man who claims to be virtuous, or who desires or seeks to be virtuous, finds himself alone, as it were, among his fellows. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we, in training our children, should lay deep and solid in their minds the importance of virtue. They should be taught that their whole lives as Latter-day Saints depend upon the cultivation and preservation of this principle; and that if they are guilty of wrong in this direction, unless there is sincere and heartfelt repentance before the Lord, He will undoubtedly withdraw His Holy Spirit from them and leave them to themselves to become a prey to those wicked influences that are seeking constantly to take possession of the hearts of the Saints of God.

Now, we can best do this in childhood; we can teach our children in childhood and in youth, and as they grow to manhood and to womanhood we can fortify them against those evils. It has been necessary, apparently—for the Spirit has seemed to indicate the necessity of this—that there should be greater strictness enforced among our people. There has been a growth of wrongdoing in many quarters that has been most painful to all those who have the welfare of the Saints of God at heart, and who desire the prosperity of Zion. Many cases have come to the knowledge of the First Presidency and of the Twelve and of other leading men wherein people have been compelled, in order to conceal their wrongdoing, to marry, and even then have failed to cover it up. Now, such a condition of things, if permitted to continue in our midst, unchecked, would be productive of the most terrible consequences. The Spirit of God would undoubt-

edly be so grieved that it would forsake not only those who are guilty of these acts, but it would withdraw itself from those who would suffer them to be done in our midst unchecked and unrebuked; and from the President of the Church down, throughout the entire ranks of the Priesthood, there would be a loss of the Spirit of God, a withdrawal of His gifts and blessing and His power, because of their not taking the proper measures to check and to expose their iniquity.

My brethren and sisters: I suppose you must be impressed, as I am, with this truth, that our only source of strength is, that we shall live so that the spirit and power and gifts of our religion and the favor of our God shall be extended unto us and be in our possession. There never was a more critical period in many respects in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ than that which we now witness. I never, in my recollection, or in reading the history of the Church have seen a time nor heard of a time when the adversary of God's Kingdom was more determined, apparently, to destroy the work of God than he is at the present time. On every hand there are the most persistent efforts made to check the growth of the Kingdom of God, and not only that, but to destroy this religion, the religion of Jesus Christ, and to throw obstacles in the pathway of its progress; and to actually deprive members of this Church of every right that men and women value—every political right, every civil right—to place us in bondage, and to make it odious in the eyes of mankind to be Latter-day Saints, or to have any faith in the religion that God has revealed to us, and of which we are so proud, and for which we are, as a rule, so thankful.