

less variety of changes and of circumstances, involving a good deal of comfort, pleasure, and happiness, with a corresponding amount of sorrow, affliction, and wretchedness?

Have we profited from it all? When we have supposed that the hand of chastisement was upon us, and we have been afflicted, has that affliction been to us a source of knowledge to benefit and to perfect us in our sphere of action? We were passing through this as a necessary school of experience. And when we have passed through it, has it left with us an increase to the store of our knowledge? Has it profited us to an extent that we have comprehended more of the truth that influences our Father in the heavens? And have we learned more of the principles which constitute our happiness and that will be the bliss and the glory of the saved and the sanctified? Has this been the case with us, or have we done as many others have—passed blindly through the school of experience, passed through the sufferings, endured the sorrow, and experienced the joy, the pleasure, and the happiness, and still are unenlightened—still are ignorant?

I believe we may, with profit to ourselves, look over our experience; and why? So long as we have been connected with the Church, if we have not been following, as Saints, in the path of our own making, in yielding obedience to the requirements of the work of God—if we have been obedient to the counsel that has been given—if we have acted up to the calls that have been made—if we have done these things, we have done them for this purpose, for our salvation, our deliverance, and for our improvement, that it might tend to increase our happiness and our comfort.

Under this view of the matter, should we today really conclude that

we have really been made sufferers, and that we have in reality been afflicted, and that we have really been made to participate in some wretchedness and misery, we cannot conclude that we have passed through these things for any other purpose than that we should have been brought to a comprehension of the truth by them.

If it was not our misery that prompted our Father in his dealings towards us—that gave character to his operations with us, then he had an object in view. He commenced with us to accomplish his own purposes, to bring about an increase of his own glory in our salvation. Well, when that increase shall be accomplished, we shall know that it was not our sorrow or our affliction that he sought: it was because he wished our salvation, that we were made to partake of the cup of suffering, that we should partake of sorrow before we could reach happiness and bliss as a reward for it.

Well, then, in what way should we look at what we have endured and at what we have suffered? Why, simply as lessons—as admonitions imparted to us for our benefit, for our profit, and for our learning, and that we might increase in knowledge, and this might produce an increase of the legitimate principles of happiness: and it was simply a conscientiousness that we were free from sin that led us to persevere in the pursuit of further happiness, by endeavoring to obtain a more extensive knowledge of the truth. It is for this, then, that we have endured all that we have endured. Have we regarded this in this light, while we have been passing through those scenes that have marked our history from the commencement of the work of God to the present moment?

It was said of the Saints anciently, that they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; and no doubt they did.