



*Even after the great manifestations in the Kirtland Temple, many Saints in Kirtland fell into apostasy.*



## Loving God More Than We Love the World

*“We have got to reach . . . a higher plane: we have got to love God more than we love the world.”*

### **From the Life of Lorenzo Snow**

Shortly after Lorenzo Snow was baptized and confirmed in Kirtland, Ohio, a number of Latter-day Saints, including some Church leaders, turned against the Prophet Joseph Smith. According to Lorenzo Snow, this apostasy was fueled by speculation, or, in other words, unusual business risks in hopes of getting rich quickly. Blinded by a desire for the temporary things of the world, people turned away from the eternal blessings of the gospel.

About 50 years later, President Snow, serving as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke to a group of Latter-day Saints in Logan, Utah. He told them about the adversity he had witnessed in Kirtland and warned them that they would soon experience similar trials. “There is rapidly coming something that will try you, perhaps as you have never been tried before,” he said. “All, however, that is necessary for us to do now is to see where our faults and weaknesses lie, if we have any. If we have been unfaithful in the past, let us renew our covenants with God and determine, by fasting and prayer, that we will get forgiveness of our sins, that the Spirit of the Almighty may rest upon us, that peradventure we may escape those powerful temptations that are approaching. The cloud is gathering in blackness. You see what were the results in Kirtland of this spirit of speculation. Therefore, take warning.”<sup>1</sup>

Because President Snow’s warning continues to apply to Latter-day Saints today, much of his sermon to the Saints in Logan is included in this chapter. He said, “Perhaps a few words in regard

to our condition at that time [in Kirtland] might prove of some service to us in the future—might give us some useful lessons.”<sup>2</sup> [See suggestion 1 on page 255.]

## **Teachings of Lorenzo Snow**

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**When people allow worldliness to pervade their minds and hearts, they turn their backs on eternal principles.**

I remember very clearly the troublous times which were experienced in Kirtland . . . , where the Prophet of God resided, where God Himself, even Jesus, the Son of God, appeared and showed Himself in His glory. He stood upon the breastwork of the pulpit of the Temple, built by commandment. There was under His feet a pavework of pure gold, in color like amber. His hair was white as the pure snow. His countenance shone as the sun in its strength. His voice was as the sound of rushing waters. [See D&C 110.] This wonderful manifestation was in the temple which had been reared to His honor. I was in Kirtland at that time, where we passed through scenes which, I sometimes think, we are now beginning to repeat. The circumstances which surrounded the Latter-day Saints at that time were of a peculiar nature; at least, the effects upon the people were of a peculiar character. . . . At that time a spirit of speculation pervaded the minds of the people of this nation. There were money speculations, bank speculations, speculations in lands, speculations in city lots, speculations in numerous other directions. That spirit of speculation rose out of the world, and swept over the hearts of the Saints like a mighty wave or rushing torrent, and many fell, and apostatized.<sup>3</sup>

Some of them [the Saints in Kirtland] began speculating; they forgot their religion, they forgot the principles that had been revealed to them, and many of them fell into the spirit of the times and were carried away with speculating. Difficulties arose—envy and strife—and the Lord, being displeased with them, brought destruction into their midst and they were broken to pieces as a settlement.<sup>4</sup>

Just previous to this great apostasy the Lord had poured out wonderful blessings upon the people. The gifts of the Gospel had been poured out to a remarkable extent—the riches of eternity.

Angels had visited them. The Son of God, as I before remarked, had talked with His servants. At the dedication of the Temple the blessings which the people received were marvelous. During that rich time of God's favors I, myself, attended the various meetings which were held in the Temple. We had prayer meetings, and testimony meetings, and such testimonies as the brethren and sisters could bear were wonderful. They prophesied, they spake in tongues, and had the interpretation of tongues to a remarkable degree. These blessings were almost universal upon the people in Kirtland. Their hearts were then devoted; they felt as though they could sacrifice anything they possessed. They felt that they were dwelling almost in the presence of God, and it was natural that they should have that feeling under such marvelous influences.

All these blessings, and many others that I have not time to enumerate, were enjoyed by the Latter-day Saints just previous to the time when this spirit of speculation began to pervade the hearts of the people. One would have imagined that after receiving these wonderful manifestations no temptation could have overthrown the Saints. But it did, and it scattered them, as it were, to the four winds.

Singular as it may appear, this spirit of speculation pervaded the quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the quorum of the Seven Presidents of Seventies; indeed, there was not a quorum in the Church but was more or less touched with this spirit of speculation. As that spirit increased, disunion followed. Brethren and sisters began to slander and quarrel one with the other, because their interests were not in harmony.

Will this be the case with the Latter-day Saints I am now addressing? I fear it is coming, but how far it will affect you it is not for me to say. You will have the experience, however; and perhaps it is very necessary that you should.

. . . One-half the quorum of the Apostles, in the days of Kirtland, fell beneath these evil influences. It was this speculation, this love of gold—the god of the world—which produced this doleful effect. And if it had this effect upon those who held the highest priesthood upon the earth, how would it affect us who, perhaps, have not had the intelligence, the information and the experience they possessed? . . .

Now, you are a good people. . . . God loves you. He delights in your righteousness, and He would not like to see the scenes enacted . . . that were in Kirtland. There is no need of it. We hold in our own hands the power to preserve ourselves from those things that divided the Saints in Kirtland and overthrew one-half of the Twelve. The Lord does not wish that, at this late day, these scenes should again be witnessed.<sup>5</sup>

The Latter-day Saints ought to be too far along in wisdom and intelligence to fall into snares of this character. It does not pay. It will pay no man to turn his back upon these glorious principles and those things which have been received from the eternal worlds—to turn our backs upon these things and mix up and devote ourselves to the beggarly things of the world. It will not pay us. Whatever temptation may come upon us or to which we are now exposed we should listen to the history of the past and not allow ourselves to be overcome, or we will much regret it.<sup>6</sup> [See suggestion 2 on page 255.]

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**We have covenanted to separate ourselves from  
worldliness and devote ourselves to the kingdom of God.**

The god of the world is the gold and the silver. The world worships this god. It is all-powerful to them, though they might not be willing to acknowledge it. Now, it is designed, in the providence of God, that the Latter-day Saints should show whether they have so far advanced in the knowledge, in the wisdom and in the power of God that they cannot be overcome by the god of the world. We must come to that point. We have also got to reach another standard, a higher plane: we have got to love God more than we love the world, more than we love gold or silver, and love our neighbor as ourselves.<sup>7</sup>

If we . . . fail to keep the covenants we have made, namely, to use our time, talent and ability for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God upon the earth, how can we reasonably expect to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection, identified with the great work of redemption? If we, in our manner, habits and deal[ings], imitate the . . . world, thereby identifying ourselves with the world, do you think, my brethren, that God will bestow upon us the blessings

we desire to inherit? I tell you no, he will not! . . . We must build ourselves up in the righteousness of heaven and plant in our hearts the righteousness of God. Said the Lord, through the prophet Jeremiah, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." [Jeremiah 31:33.] This is what the Lord is endeavoring to do, and this he will accomplish in us if we conform to his will.<sup>8</sup>

I thank God that in these times of corruption and wickedness in the world, we have holy and righteous men and women who can devote those superior talents which God has bestowed upon them to His praise and glory. And I might say further, that there are thousands of virtuous and honorable men and women, whom the Lord has gathered out from the nations, that are also willing to devote their time and talents to aid in accomplishing the work of God in the interest of His children.<sup>9</sup> [See suggestion 3 on page 255.]

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**We follow the Savior's example when we refuse to trade the glories of eternity for the riches of the world.**

You may expect . . . to encounter obstacles in the path of life, which will task to the uttermost your best resolutions, and some of you may be tempted to swerve from the path of truth and honor, and, like Esau, feel to relinquish the glories of eternity for a few passing moments of gratification and pleasure [see Genesis 25:29–34]; then . . . seize your opportunity to emulate the example of our Savior when offered the glory of this world, if he would stoop to an act of folly; he replied to his tempter, "*Get behind me, Satan!*" [See Luke 4:5–8.]<sup>10</sup>

I find in reflecting on life, that this world is short compared with eternity; that our intelligence, the divinity within us, has always existed, was never created, and will always exist through all eternity [see D&C 93:29]. In view of these facts, it becomes us as intelligent beings, to realize that this life closes in a few days, then comes the life which is eternal; and in proportion as we have kept commandments, we have the advantage of those who failed to make those improvements.<sup>11</sup>



*Like the rich young man who spoke with the Savior (see Matthew 19:16–22), some people today are tempted to turn away from those in need.*

The gospel binds together the hearts of all its adherents, it makes no difference, it knows no difference between the rich and the poor; we are all bound as one individual to perform the duties which devolve upon us. . . . Now let me ask the question, Who [does] possess anything, who can really and truly call any of this world's goods his own? I do not presume to, I am merely a steward over a very little, and unto God I am held accountable for its use and disposition. The Latter-day Saints have received the law of the gospel through the revelations of God, and it is so plainly written that all can understand. And if we understood and comprehended the position we assumed in subscribing to it when we entered into its covenant through baptism for the remission of sins, we must still be conscious of the fact that that law requires us to seek *first* the kingdom of God, and that our time, talent and ability must be held subservient to its interest [see Matthew 6:33; 3 Nephi 13:33]. If this were not so, how could we expect hereafter, when this earth shall have been made the dwelling place of God and his Son, to inherit eternal lives and to live and reign with him?

Who shall say that the rich, or those that possess many talents, have any better hope or prospect to inherit these blessings than the poor, or those who have but one talent? As I understand it, the man who works in the shop, whether as tailor, carpenter, shoemaker or in any other industrial department, and who lives according to the law of the Gospel, and is honest and faithful in his calling, that man is just as eligible to the receiving of these and all the blessings of the New and Everlasting Covenant as any other man; through his faithfulness he shall possess thrones, principalities and powers, his children becoming as numerous as the stars in the firmament or the sands on the sea shore. Who, I ask, has any greater prospect than this?<sup>12</sup> [See suggestions 3 and 4 below.]

## **Suggestions for Study and Teaching**

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Consider these ideas as you study the chapter or as you prepare to teach. For additional help, see pages v–vii.

1. Consider the account on pages 249–50. What is it about worldliness that leads people to forget their religion? How can we take care of our temporal needs without being overcome by worldliness?
2. Ponder the section beginning on page 250. How can our love for God help us avoid being overcome by worldliness?
3. President Snow taught that we have covenanted to “use our time, talent and ability for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God upon the earth” (page 252). Think about what you can do to keep this covenant.
4. Review the final section in the chapter. In what ways can the following truths help us keep our covenants? “This world is short compared with eternity.” No one can “really and truly call any of this world’s goods his own.”

*Related Scriptures:* Matthew 6:19–24; John 17:15; 1 John 2:15–17; Jacob 2:13–19; Mormon 8:35–39; D&C 38:39; 63:47–48; 104:13–18

*Teaching Help:* Discussions in small groups “give a large number of people the opportunity to participate in a lesson. Individuals who



are usually hesitant to participate might share ideas in small groups that they would not express in front of the entire group” (*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 161).

### Notes

1. *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, June 4, 1889, 4.
2. *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, June 4, 1889, 4.
3. *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, June 4, 1889, 4.
4. *Deseret News*, Apr. 11, 1888, 200; from a detailed paraphrase of a discourse Lorenzo Snow delivered in the April 1888 general conference.
5. *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, June 4, 1889, 4.
6. *Deseret News*, Apr. 11, 1888, 200.
7. *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, June 4, 1889, 4.
8. *Deseret News: Semi-Weekly*, Jan. 23, 1877, 1.
9. *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, June 4, 1889, 4.
10. In Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (1884), 486.
11. *Brigham City Bugler, Supplement*, Aug. 1, 1891, 2.
12. *Deseret News: Semi-Weekly*, Jan. 23, 1877, 1.