
Doctrine and Covenants 123 — Waste and Wear Out Our Lives

The closing portion of the Liberty Jail epistle written by Joseph Smith, Clay County, Missouri, March 1839 — counsel on the duty of the saints concerning their persecutors.

This final section of the Liberty Jail epistle turns from comfort to duty. Having received the Lord's peace (121) and the assurance of Christ's descent below all things (122), Joseph counsels the saints on what they must actively *do* about the injustices done to them: gather a careful, documented record of all the facts, sufferings, and abuses, and present them to the world and to the heads of government — not for revenge, but as a sacred duty, after which they can *stand still* and trust God to act.

From the Chapter's Architecture

Seventeen verses, a charge to act. The **duty to document** (vv. 1–6): gather the facts, statements, names, and publications; present them to the world and the government as the last effort before God arises. The **enemy named** (vv. 7–10): the inherited lies and creeds, the fetters of hell. The **duty to the pure in heart** (vv. 11–12): owed to the rising generation and to the many only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it. And the **call to faithful effort and trust** (vv. 13–17): waste and wear out our lives, a small helm steers a great ship, do all in our power and then stand still to see the salvation of God. The architecture moves from comfort (121–122) to action (123): grace does not cancel duty; having been comforted, the saints are charged to work — and then to trust.