

THE LEAVEN OF THE GOSPEL—THE SAINTS SHOULD DIVEST THEMSELVES OF OLD TRADITIONS—POLICY OF MAKING GOOD FARMS AND STORING UP GRAIN.

A Discourse by Elder George A. Smith, Delivered in the Bowery, Great Salt Lake City, April 6, 1856.

It certainly is enough to try the nerves of the strongest man and the lungs of a giant, to rise and address such an immense assemblage as is here this morning, especially with the reflection that they are expecting to listen to and be edified with what I may be able to say.

When I reflect that yesterday I saw the Saints coming in from the south, and some of them on foot, both men and women, bringing their children some fifty miles in their arms, as many did, to get here and attend this Conference, and consider that such labor is to be requited by the instruction and intelligence which they will receive, and then undertake to address an assembly under these circumstances, I feel the necessity for the faith of the Saints to be exercised in my behalf, to enable me to speak for the instruction and edification of so vast an assemblage.

When I was about twenty-one years old I went on a mission, in company with Elder Don C. Smith, the youngest brother of the Prophet Joseph, through the States of Kentucky and Tennessee. When he rose to preach he wished to see a pretty good sized assembly, and to talk at least a couple of hours; when it was my turn to speak, some thirty minutes, perhaps, was as much time as I would wish to occupy. We occasionally had a small assembly, then Don would say, "Come, George A., you are good at preaching

a picayune sermon; suppose you try this time."

It would seem to-day as though a picayune sermon would not answer the purpose, if the size of the congregation is the scale in which the discourse should be weighed.

It is said, in one of the parables, that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened."

In 1830, on the 6th day of April, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized with only six members. Joseph, in one of his letters in relation to Alexander Campbell, in December 1835, said that "the three measures of meal might be compared to the three witnesses who were called upon to testify of the Book of Mormon, and who selected and ordained twelve Apostles to go forth and be special witnesses to all the world."

Whether the application was really intended to be laid down as a rule I will not say, but it is very evident that when Joseph Smith laid the foundation of this kingdom he commenced depositing the leaven of truth, and that that leaven has continued to increase up to 1856, when an assemblage of the Saints, who are here as representatives of this people, is crowded out of such a spacious building as the Tabernacle, and obliged to assemble in this large Bowery, also densely filled.

It shows that the leaven is operating, and I may say gives fair and conclusive ground upon which to expect that the whole lump will eventually be leavened.

The condition of our Territory, the nature of our soil, the peculiarities of our climate, appear as if designed expressly by the Almighty for the fulfilment of this prophesy, and the upbuilding of the kingdom of heaven in the last days.

It matters not what corner of the earth men come from, unless they possess the spirit of the leaven of truth, they will remain but a short time in these mountains before they begin to consider it the wrong place, for the leaven is working, they cannot quite endure the climate and the peculiarities of the country, or something of the kind, and off they go.

On account of our altitude we are most advantageously situated for the drainage of the filth, scum, and corruption, when it accumulates to a certain extent, for it flows off in different directions, thus leaving the people of the kingdom remaining as it were alone.

Could any one have supposed that, when the proclamation of the Gospel was commenced twenty-six years ago, the people who would receive that testimony would be knocking for admittance into the national confederacy as an independent State?

Had it then been predicted, prophesied, or proclaimed to the world, that such would be the case, the very strangeness of the matter, the difficulty of the task, the unheard-of idea, would have been so great an apparent absurdity that men, who would have believed it, would have been considered greater fools than those were deemed who received the testimony of the Prophet concerning the ministry of angels.

We stand here to-day a great and mighty people, the servants of the

Most High God, and almost every single circumstance, which has occurred from that time to this, has had a tendency to condense us together, to unite us more and more, and to place us in circumstances and situations to spread forth the curtains of Zion, to enlarge her habitations, to lengthen her cords and strengthen her Stakes, and to make the place of the feet of the Saints glorious.

Such, then, is the present aspect of affairs. Much has been done, and much now remains for us to do. The great work has only just commenced. When we entered into this Church we began our education, and it frequently happens that two or three years, and perhaps more, have to be spent in unlearning what we had learned amiss.

The human mind is wonderfully susceptible and tenacious of traditions, and whatever may have been our traditions, it is an extremely difficult task for us, as human beings, to dispense with our traditions at once. They will hang about us, we will retain them, more or less, hence it often happens that, when you baptize a sectarian preacher into this Church, and a great many of them have been so baptized, in a little time his foolish traditions will become so apparent as to make him despise himself.

For this cause scores of them have turned away and joined the mob to destroy the Saints, rather than be stripped of their traditions, which they had so long hugged to their bosoms, and considered of so much value.

A portion of the persecutions which followed this people in their early history have been influenced, to a considerable extent, by the corruptions of those who professed to be in the midst of the Saints, who had been baptized and lived with the Saints, but finally, when their corrupt practices and traditions were about to be exposed, would turn away and join

the enemies of this people, and seek their destruction with greater malice, seemingly, than those who had never joined us.

We ought to make profitable lessons for ourselves from observations of the past. I know, brethren, that we have our traditions on a great many subjects. Take a man, for instance, who has been a lawyer, or a magistrate, in the States, or in England, one who has read Blackstone, Kent, and a few other law books, and undertake to explain to him a simple mode of administering justice, one that can be plainly understood by all the people, and I do not care how much education or "Mormonism" he has, the very moment the simplicity of administering justice is laid before him it comes in contact with his traditions, and he will quibble about the meaning and placing of words, the mode of spelling, or the tail of a comma, and continue so to do, perhaps, during his whole life, without ever learning that matters brought before us ought to be dealt with according to the nature of the case and the circumstances, without going back a thousand years for precedents to govern us.

Take a man who has been educated a sectarian minister, he has certain grave ideas imprinted on his mind, he must pray in a certain form, and perhaps use a certain tone of voice when he offers up his prayer, and however much he may believe the Gospel of the last days, he will constantly be at a loss to know whether he is governed in some things by the principles of truth, or whether in reality he is not following some of the whims or traditions of his early education.

You may apply the same rule in farming. Take a man from the Western States, place him on some of our farming lands and tell him, "Here are twenty acres of land, and it is all you can properly farm, unless you have more help than yourself. Now

fence and cultivate it, and you can make an abundant living." He would be apt to say, "You must be mad; bless you, I need 160 acres, I can cultivate that much at least. I have always done so, and I will not have anything to do with such a little patch."

I have seen many engage in farming here, and have known them to work four or five years without having the first acre secured by a good fence, and without cultivating the ground in a manner suited to the soil and climate. Why? Traditions interfere, they have been traditionated to run over a great quantity of ground, and to not half cultivate it, until farms are almost entirely exhausted.

Incorrect traditions, though long followed, have to be surrendered, and we have to build up Zion. The plan of Zion contemplates that the earth, the gardens, and fields of Zion, be beautiful and cultivated in the best possible manner. Our traditions have got to yield to that plan, circumstances will bring us to that point, and eventually we shall be under the necessity of learning and adopting the plan of beautifying and cultivating every foot of the soil of Zion in the best possible manner.

When the Saints become instructed, when this people become united as they should be, when they learn things as they should learn them, they will not be subject to the constant and unpleasant annoyances to which they have been subject.

Many think there is no necessity of doing anything more than to throw a little seed in the ground and plough it under, that then they are sure of a crop. They often farm without fences, sow their seed without properly preparing the land and attending to it, and then trust in God for the balance.

Others think it irreligious to speak upon temporal subjects on the Sabbath day, that it is a violation of the day

to talk concerning our business transactions on the Sabbath.

If I understand the order of building up the kingdom, it is a spiritual work, on every occasion, to give proper instructions necessary for the good of the kingdom. Very small matters lead sometimes to great results.

There are many here, as religious as this congregation looks, who have not got a good fence around their farms, yet they will kneel down in the morning, perhaps, to offer a prayer. By the time they have got one knee fairly to the floor, peradventure somebody thunders away at the door and cries out, "Neighbor, there are twenty head of cattle in your wheat; they have been there all night, and are there now."

The man of no fence is roused up, and instead of praying he is apt to think, "Damn it," and to start off to get the cattle out and put them into the stray pen.

Perhaps another neighbor has not been quite as wide awake in the morning, and had prepared no place in which to secure his cattle: he is about ready to say his prayers when his ears are saluted with, "Neighbor, all your cattle are in the stray pen, and \$100 damage is to pay."

Thus you must see that some temporal arrangements are necessary, to enable men to enjoy that quiet which would be desirable in attempting to worship our Heavenly Father.

You may think that these small matters amount to but little, but sometimes it happens that out of a small matter grows something exceedingly great. For instance, while the Saints were living in Far West, there were two sisters wishing to make cheese, and, neither of them possessing the requisite number of cows, they agreed to exchange milk.

The wife of Thomas B. Marsh, who was then President of the Twelve Apostles, and sister Harris concluded

they would exchange milk, in order to make a little larger cheese than they otherwise could. To be sure to have justice done, it was agreed that they should not save the strippings, but that the milk and strippings should all go together. Small matters to talk about here, to be sure, two women's exchanging milk to make cheese.

Mrs. Harris, it appeared, was faithful to the agreement and carried to Mrs. Marsh the milk and strippings, but Mrs. Marsh, wishing to make some extra good cheese, saved a pint of strippings from each cow and sent Mrs. Harris the milk without the strippings.

Finally it leaked out that Mrs. Marsh had saved strippings, and it became a matter to be settled by the Teachers. They began to examine the matter, and it was proved that Mrs. Marsh had saved the strippings, and consequently had wronged Mrs. Harris out of that amount.

An appeal was taken from the Teacher to the Bishop, and a regular Church trial was had. President Marsh did not consider that the Bishop had done him and his lady justice, for they decided that the strippings were wrongfully saved, and that the woman had violated her covenant.

Marsh immediately took an appeal to the High Council, who investigated the question with much patience, and I assure you they were a grave body. Marsh being extremely anxious to maintain the character of his wife, as he was the President of the Twelve Apostles, and a great man in Israel, made a desperate defence, but the High Council finally confirmed the Bishop's decision.

Marsh, not being satisfied, took an appeal to the First Presidency of the Church, and Joseph and his Counselors had to sit upon the case, and they approved the decision of the High Council.

This little affair, you will observe,

kicked up a considerable breeze, and Thomas B. Marsh then declared that he would sustain the character of his wife, even if he had to go to hell for it.

The then President of the Twelve Apostles, the man who should have been the first to do justice and cause reparation to be made for wrong, committed by any member of his family, took that position, and what next? He went before a magistrate and swore that the "Mormons" were hostile towards the State of Missouri.

That affidavit brought from the government of Missouri an exterminating order, which drove some 15,000 Saints from their homes and habitations, and some thousands perished through suffering the exposure consequent on this state of affairs.

Do you understand what trouble was consequent to the dispute about a pint of strippings? Do you understand that the want of fences around gardens, fields, and yards, in town and country, allowing cattle to get into mischief and into the stray pen, may end in some serious result? That the corroding influence of such circumstances may be brought to bear upon us, in such a way that we may lose the Spirit of the Almighty and become hostile to the people? And if we should not bring about as mighty results as the pint of strippings, yet we might bring entire destruction to ourselves. If you wish to enjoy your religion and the Spirit of the Almighty, you must make your calculations to avoid annoyances, as much as possible. When brother Brigham was anxious to have men take ten acres of land each and fence it, many thought that he was behind the times. The result is, from the time I came into the Valleys, in 1849, to the present, I never have been to the big field south of this City, or around or through it when it was fenced, and if any other man has seen it fenced, he

has seen it at some time when I did not. The reason of this is, and has been, either we undertake to accomplish more than we can do, or neglect to do our duty in many respects.

In travelling through the other settlements you find similar difficulties. I do know that there has been more quarrelling, fault finding, and complaining, throughout the settlements south of this County, in consequence of bad fences, in consequence of men neglecting to fence their fields and secure their crops, than from almost any other source of annoyance.

People have undertaken to fence far more land than they have ever tried to cultivate as it should be.

Brother Kimball requested me to preach on matters of policy, and I have come to the conclusion that the best policy is to undertake to cultivate a little land, and to fence and cultivate it as it should be, and to only keep as many cattle as we can take care of, and keep from destroying our neighbors crops. In that way I believe we will be able to avoid a good many annoyances, and to adopt a great deal better policy than we now have in those respects. In the City of Provo, there has been more grain destroyed, every year since I first went there, than has been saved, and the main cause has been the want of proper fences.

In the commencement of new settlements, we have generally committed an error in undertaking to fence too large a field. When we first established the settlement of Parowan, in Iron County, the brethren got together in a general council, and took into consideration the propriety of fencing a field. I recommended that they should fence 640 acres with a heavy, substantial fence, and cultivate it like a garden; and when that was done, then they might increase their possessions. There was not half a dozen men, out of the hundreds who

were there, who came with me, who agreed with me. I was told that I was no farmer, though they would admit that I had a little experience in preaching.

It was urged that my advice, if adopted, would be equivalent to ruining the settlement, consequently, to avoid a general murmuring throughout the camp, it was concluded to fence in 6,000 acres.

We have worked at that job from that day to this, and have not yet had an acre of land securely fenced. They have now come to the conclusion to adopt the identical plan suggested at first, and to fence in a section of land to begin with.

There has been a constant complaint about selling the land for fencing, quarrelling here and there about cattle doing mischief, and they have become thoroughly converted to the doctrine I recommended. Experience had to teach them the lesson, though it was not so much experience with me, for my father taught me that a man could not raise a crop with any certainty unless he first fenced his land, and it was considered one of the most ridiculous things a man could be guilty of, in a new country, to plant a crop and let the cattle destroy it for want of a fence. Some settlements have made tolerably good fences, but as a general thing the poles are stretched too long for their size, the points sag down, and should a cow or an ox happen to pass by such an apology for a fence, and understand that it was designed to keep out animals, they would be insulted, and, were it not against the law to fight a duel, you might expect such cow or ox to give you a challenge for such gross insult. The inhabitants of this County, perhaps, know better how their fences look than I do. I am going to advise my brethren, the farmers, if they have more land than they can fence, to sell, rent, or throw it out to

the commons, and secure one acre at least, and from that to ten, or as much as they can actually enclose as it should be, and then cultivate it in good style. Do not haul off the straw to burn, but save it all, and all the manure you can produce. In this way Zion can be made to blossom as a rose, and the beauty of Zion will begin to shine forth like the morning, and if the brethren have not learned by experience that this is the course to pursue, by that time they will learn it. I presume a great many have become satisfied that it would be better to avoid many of these annoyances.

There has been some grumbling, in many of the settlements, that the Indians destroy the crops, that they go through the fences and let their horses into the fields. It has been in my way, frequently, to look at these fields, and, as a general thing, there was no fence there, or, if a fence at all, not such an one as would induce any person to go round it. The leaving of bars, the throwing down of fences have been as often through the carelessness and neglect of white men as of Indians.

On one occasion last season, I heard a tremendous complaint brought up in meeting, that the Indians had done great damage by throwing their fences down and turning their horses into the fields, but before the meeting was dismissed it was made apparent that the Indians only traveled the path made by the white man, and were actually more careful than many white men, for they had been seen to take down the fence and put it up again, when white men would take it down and leave it so, or break it by driving over. I recommend, as a system of economy, that we commence from the year 1856 to avoid these errors, these blunders, that we may escape the results flowing from them.

There is another thing that I think by this time has become understood

throughout the Territory, and that is, that we live in a cold northern latitude, at a high altitude, and that we are liable to have very cold winters. There have been several severe winters already. In the winter of 1849-50, many of the animals belonging to the United States' troops perished in Cache Valley. Many have supposed that our cattle were going to live without being fed; that they would run on the range and fat all the winter, as in Central America; this supposition must have been this winter pretty fully exploded. A system of true policy and domestic economy would indicate, then, that we must collect and preserve feed for our animals, and prepare barns and stables to shelter those necessary to be kept for immediate use.

At last Spring's Conference, the brethren came in their carriages by hundreds and thousands; I now see numbers of the same persons footing it to this Conference with sore feet, walking 50 or 100 miles. What has become of their horses? They are so poor they cannot get up alone, or are out on the range, as there was nothing to feed them with. Let us take a valuable lesson from this circumstance, and make suitable provision for our stock.

So many coming to this Conference on foot, called to mind some of the history of my early days. I have traveled some thirty thousand miles on foot, and a great portion of that distance with a valise on my back, without purse or scrip, to preach the Gospel, and I understand something about sore feet. But I must say, when I saw brother Graves and his wife walking fifty miles to attend Conference, and carrying a child, that I thought they were indeed anxious to hear instructions. Says sister Graves, "I came all the way here from England to hear brother Brigham, I have not yet had a chance, and I am now

determined to hear him." I will prophesy that the time will come when they, through faith and perseverance, will come to Conference in their carriage.

Good domestic policy requires us to be careful in providing such comforts and necessaries as we can produce within ourselves. If we let our sheep perish our clothing will be scanty, or we shall be forced into the stores to support distant producers. If we let our cattle die we shall not only lack beef, but our home made leather will be missing. In short, the difficulties and wrongs which may grow out of such carelessness are numerous. It should by all means be our policy to produce every article, which we can, within ourselves.

These sentiments are strictly within the scope of my religion, and those comforts and conveniences, which we are constantly in need from day to day, are necessary to enable us to perform the duties God requires at our hands. One of those duties is, to take a course that will enable us to enjoy the blessings and comforts of life, that we may preserve our health and strength to labor for the upbuilding and spread of the kingdom of God.

Much is said in the world, and considerable excitement raised on the subject of "women's rights." Complaint is made that the rights of women are taken away, that they have not the privilege of working out doors like men, have not a chance of voting at elections, of holding commissions in the army and navy, or of being elected to honorable offices in government. Whether "women's rights conventions" will terminate as did the lady's rebellion in Hungary, in almost universal war, is not now for me to say. But I will say to our "Mormon" sisters that they have the best prospect of having their rights, of enjoying the privilege of a healthful

share of our out door labor, of cultivating the gardens and of aiding in the management of business, of any women at present on the earth, for every Conference calls for a considerable number of missionaries, who are sent forth to preach the Gospel, and to perform other duties in relation to the upbuilding of the kingdom in the last days. This operation leaves many wives and daughters at home, frequently not under the most favorable pecuniary circumstances, and the result is that it calls into requisition their economy, brings out their energies, educates them in matters of business, and, I think, enables them to exercise, as long as they probably may wish to, those avocations and duties which custom has assigned to men, but which are so earnestly sought for by the "women's rights conventions."

If any of our ladies are really anxious for the privilege of cultivating the earth and producing the necessaries of life, they most certainly have a fair field to labor in; and if any lack this privilege, and will let that fact be known, their husbands can be advantageously sent forth to preach the Gospel.

The various policies now agitating the world, indicate the crazy state of its society, all split up into parties; and law, and agitation appear to be the general order of the day. Our women, who feel proud to exert their talent in sustaining and administering to the wants of those around them, while their husbands are abroad gathering the Saints or preaching the fullness of the Gospel, merit a constant prayer that the Lord will guide, direct and counsel them, and enable them to fulfil the duties of their several callings, to the end that their husbands may feel at ease while abroad fulfilling their duties, that the anxiety which would naturally rest upon their minds, in relation to affairs at home, may be entirely removed, that they

may devote their whole faith and energy in the spread of the Gospel among the different nations whither they may be called to travel.

Many of us have, formerly, been very anxious to be made partakers of the privilege of civilizing the Indians, but now we have become exceedingly annoyed with the loose conduct of some few of them, and may have felt a blood-thirsty disposition towards them. The Lord has placed us in a position through which we are brought in contact with them, and requires us to use all reasonable exertion to reclaim the fallen remnants of Israel. We are not to be discouraged if we have to labor much to reclaim them, and should not thirst for their blood, nor suffer ourselves to be led into a feeling to shed their blood, but should cultivate a strong desire to ameliorate their condition, in every instance where it is possible so to do. Reflect how long the Lord has borne with us and our many follies, and learn to labor long and patiently with the children of the forests, that we may, peradventure bring them, or their children, to the knowledge of their fathers, for it is written that the remnants of them shall be saved. After the remnants of Israel shall be gathered in, not many generations shall pass away before they shall become a white and delightsome people. Then we may, perhaps, look back with regret at our present impatience, and at the disposition of some to destroy that race. God created them, and wickedness and corruption have degraded them to their present condition, but according to the education they have had, the code of morals they have learned, they are more moral and virtuous than many of the white men in the world.

It is said that men will be judged according to their works, based upon the knowledge they have been privileged to possess. Now, I believe that

many of the Indians residing in these mountains have done better, according to their opportunities and knowledge, than have some of us. We have had far superior advantages, and of course better conduct and a more perfect walk ought to be expected from us. I have frequently observed the feelings of our brethren towards the Indians, and it takes but very little to rouse in some a disposition to kill and destroy them. Of all the policies that is the worst, for it is much easier, cheaper, and in every way better to feed than to fight them. Aside from that view, in one case you are not guilty of shedding blood, but in the other you bring their blood upon your heads, provided it is not shed justifiably. Occasions may occur, perhaps, when it is necessary to fight them, but they might be far more rare if the brethren would always strictly fulfil their duties.

The history of the settlement of most if not all new States has been fraught, chequered, blooded, with the perpetration of cruelties to the Indians. These should learn us a profitable and valuable lesson, and all the brethren should cultivate a disposition to conciliate under all circumstances, and to avoid, so far as possible, every cause of offence between us and these scattered remnants of Jacob. I have always endeavoured to exercise a pacific policy, and still believe it to be the best. The past has proven that a few Indians can conceal themselves in the mountains, and keep a settlement in a state of constant alarm for years. And how has it been even in a level country? The Florida war cost the government of the United States thousands of lives, some twenty millions of dollars, and lasted many years, and after all they purchased a peace, when they could not otherwise reach Sam Jones and his party. Billy Bowlegs, when passing through the gallery of portraits in New York City, recogni-

zed the likenesses of Generals Scott and Taylor, and said, "I licked both those generals in the Florida war."

Peace had to be bought and presents made, which could have been much easier done at the beginning, and thus have avoided the difficulties and consequent expense and loss of life. I hope our brethren will always be courteous, and take a course to avoid the occurrence of any difficulty in this Territory.

I will return to the subjects of home products. We are so situated that we cannot profitably transport our grain to a market outside our borders, nor in case of scarcity easily bring grain here; for these reasons prudence would dictate us to make timely and suitable provisions for storing all surplus, that in case of famine, or great scarcity, we might have a supply of bread.

The Emperor of China has a policy for the preservation of the people of his empire, something like this: he receives one-fifth of all the grain produced, and stores it up against a day of scarcity. That country is so well provided with canals, that in case grain is cut off in any portion of the empire, breadstuff can be easily furnished to the people. And even in case of a general famine, the immense population could be sustained, for some years, from the Imperial stores which have accumulated.

We, as well as others, should learn to store our provisions when there is plenty, that we may be prepared against a time of need. The First Presidency, from time to time, since we came here, have taught that it was necessary for us to provide against the day of famine and great trouble, and that it was not only necessary for us to provide for ourselves, but also for the thousands and millions who are flocking to these mountains, for shelter from the calamities that are fast falling upon the world. A goodly share

of the human race are now in extreme destitution, and those who are not in very straightened circumstances manifest great wrath towards each other, and war and cruelty are the consequent results. Millions and millions of funds are diverted from the industrial channels and invested in the operations of war, leaving multitudes of people in a state of utmost destitution.

The grain ports of Russia have been closed for a long time, the war question continues to grow still more complete, and as the perplexity increases multitudes more are deprived of necessary food. These derangements are constantly increasing, and will increase; and the time is not far distant when millions of people will fly to these Valleys as the only peaceful, plentiful place of refuge. Then it becomes the Saints to store up food for themselves, and for the hosts who will come here for sustenance and protection, for as the Lord lives they will flow here by thousands and millions, and seek bread and protection at the hands of this people.

I lately asked one of the brethren why he had not built a house; said he, "I thought we might be driven away from here, and I should lose my labour." You can understand what I think about being driven, for I calculate that the Lord has got His children into the mountains where He can handle them at His pleasure, and He is perfectly willing that we should stay here and will not suffer our enemies to drive us, unless we rebel against Him, and I do not presume that we shall do that. We are so nicely situated that when a man gets uneasy, or feels like leaving, he can travel over the rim of the Basin and disappear in the far off regions of gold and plenty, where the comforts of life abound, and that is all he cares about.

When a man apostatizes from this Church, rejects the authorities of the Priesthood and rebels against the

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principles of the Gospel, he cares no more for anything spiritual, or what pertains to pure religion, than the wild bull of the plains. All he cares about is to satisfy his appetites, gratify his lusts and be filled with the good things of the earth. I have heard numbers of such persons say, "From this day on I care nothing about religion: it is only for myself, my family, and the things we can get, that I care about." When a man begins to think that brother Brigham is stringent in his measures, and to feel that there is not room enough, that he cannot get enough land, the next thing is he will be seen drunk in San Bernardino, or somewhere else, although he did not go there with the intent to get drunk, but that is the natural result of losing the Spirit of the Almighty. It actually does seem that the Lord has placed us in the most complete position for getting rid of all such characters, and occasional seasons of scarcity, occasional dry years, occasional visits of grasshoppers, and an occasional severe winter, produce constant annoyance in the minds of those who wish to get into a paradise in a hurry. If those who are disposed to complain will but reflect a little, they will understand that we are actually situated in the best country in the world.

Do any of you recollect when you used to have the ague THIRTEEN months in the year? Do you recollect of ever calling upon an Elder to lay hands on the sick, and of his beginning to shake while he was attending to the ordinances? Can you not recollect that at times, in Nauvoo, there would not be a house without two or three sick persons in it a great portion of the year? And when a heavy person died there, do you not remember that it was as much as we could do to get enough men round the coffin to lift it, because we all were so used up with the ague, and were so very sickly? Is it so now? are nine out of ten of the

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brethren sick here? Do you go to your houses and find a couple shaking on one bed, another in a fever, and a child on the floor unable to get up, and perhaps not one in the family able to get another a drink of water? You can remember such scenes in our former locations, but you are now in a country where these things are comparatively unknown. Do you recollect the time, when in the midst of agues, that the only nourishment many could give the sick was a coarse corn dodger? Corn was often not worth more than twelve cents a bushel, but you could not always get out to carry it to mill; and when you could, you often found the mill so constructed that it would grind two kernels into one, and such was the nourishment for the sick.

Every night the sickly season was talked of, and that sickly season lasted all that part of the year in which we wanted to be at work raising bread. And when you went to meeting, and looked round upon the congregation, you saw an assemblage of pale countenances; and often saw numbers of them starting off before the close of the meeting, because they were unable to stay any longer, and looking as though they would fall down and never be able to rise again. But I now challenge the world to produce a healthier looking congregation than this.

I have heard some say that they were bothered to get provisions, but if there is a fatter, heartier looking congregation in the world I do not know where it is, and challenge the world to produce one. Some have been asking me what I was going to say, at Washington, about our present scarcity, and I gave them to understand that I should tell them that I was about the only person in the Territory but what had plenty to eat, and that the people had thought best to send me away, for fear I would get too lean. The health which has been enjoyed

by this people, since they have been in the mountains, exceeds all bounds of previous belief. Through exposure in crossing the Plains, and during our persecutions, has resulted a great portion of the small amount of disease that has appeared among the community. Notwithstanding all these circumstances—the health and the manifold blessings conferred upon us—some have been discontented. I have known men come here so poor that they had to beg the first meal of victuals, and by working three or four years become independently rich, but still they alleged that the country was so hard that they could not live in it, and that they must leave because they had to pay so many taxes, and because so many difficulties surrounded them. I have seen those same men laying on the banks of the Mississippi shaking with the ague, and begging me to administer to their wants, and I suppose they think they will be pretty happy if they can only get back there again. These facts display the weakness of human nature; indicate that our feelings are liable to fluctuate, that our memories are often short and our dispositions uneasy,

These tabernacles must be dissolved, but it is our duty to exercise our talents to the best advantage, and to perform the most good in our power, that we may rightly fulfil the end of our creation, benefit our fellow men, and be prepared for the next state of existence. Let us then be careful not to defile ourselves or corrupt our way before the Lord, not to have our integrity tarnished, but live in humility and in righteousness all our days.

Of all men upon the face of the earth, we are the most favoured; we have the fulness of the everlasting Gospel, the keys of revelation and exaltation, the privilege of making our own rules and regulations, and are not opposed by anybody. No king, prince, potentate, or dominion, has rightful

authority to crush and oppress us. We breathe the free air, we have the best looking men and handsomest women, and if they envy us our position, well they may, for they are a poor, narrow-minded, pinch-backed race of men, who chain themselves down to the law of monogamy, and live all their days under the dominion of one wife. They ought to be ashamed of such conduct, and the still fouler channel which flows from their practices; and it is not to be wondered at that they should envy those who so much better understand the social relations.

I have offered these remarks, on the subject of policy, in rather a rambling manner, something like the parson, who was told that he did not speak to his text, "Very well," says he, "scattering shots hit the most birds." May the Lord bless us all, and prepare us to enter His kingdom. Amen.

THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE—
BENEFIT OF THE USEFUL SCIENCES, ETC.

A Discourse by Elder Orson Pratt, Delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, February 10, 1856.

Being requested to speak to the people this morning, I cheerfully rise for that purpose, ever esteeming it a great privilege to address the Saints upon the important principles connected with our salvation.

I esteem the privilege of proclaiming salvation above any privilege that may be named. The subject of salvation is one of far greater importance than any other subject which can or does interest the human family; although, apparently, we might suppose that the accumulation of the comforts of this life was the one that most interests mankind, judging from the actions of men.

Why this is so I cannot tell, unless they think that they can thus lengthen out their lives, and by this means have the advantage of their neighbors.

It is very seldom that we ever hear of the people of this land perishing for want of the comforts of this life,

and I doubt very much whether they would if they were not so much interested as they appear to be in respect to riches.

Not that I would discard the command given soon after the fall—for man to till the earth and earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; not that I discard the idea of being industrious, of laboring to procure food and raiment, of beautifying our habitations and inheritances, but these are only temporary considerations, items of a secondary moment.

To secure to ourselves eternal life and future salvation is a subject of so much more importance than all other subjects combined, that it certainly ought to be foremost in our minds and conversation.

If our hearts were supremely placed upon this subject we should converse most about those things that pertain to salvation, instead of being all the time fearful that we were going to