Forming a State Constitution—Raising Agricultural Products—True Riches

Remarks by President Brigham Young, made in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, April 8, 1862.

I wish to inform all the inhabitants of the Territory of Utah, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female, black and white, red, copper-colored, and yellow, that, in organizing a State Government, we shall not infringe in the least upon the Constitution of our country, upon any principle contained in the Declaration of Independence, nor upon any constitutional law that has been enacted by the Congress of the United States. Will this step bring upon us the disapprobation of the Government of the United States? That is not for me to say; it will be as God may direct.

As the kingdom of God rises and advances upon the earth, so will the power of Satan increase to impede its progress until God shall purge that power from the earth, and so give the Saints the victory, that they can bear off his kingdom triumphantly in spite of the powers of Satan and wicked men. But so far as the power of Satan extends, just so far will be seen his operations to overthrow all righteousness. There is nothing that would so soon weaken my hope and discourage me as to see this people in full fellowship with the world, and receive no more persecution from them because they are one with them. In such an event, we might bid farewell to the Holy Priesthood with all its blessings, privileges and aids to exaltations, principalities, and powers in the eternities of the Gods.

I can say with confidence, if we will live so as to enjoy the revelations of the Lord Jesus Christ to ourselves day by day, overcoming every passion, feeling and desire that has been sown in our nature through the fall, overcoming all that is contrary to the law of Heaven and the principles of salvation that is purchased by Jesus Christ for us, which is the plan God has devised to exalt the human family to immortality and eternal lives, if we will let that Spirit and power of God reign within us; we shall never be afflicted more than we can bear, and that is as far as I can promise.

We have seen the power and wisdom that have been displayed by our enemies since we have been in these mountains, which has all amounted to but little toward accomplishing what they desired. No more will be accomplished than has been.

Brother Orson Pratt’s remarks on the powers of the Congress of the United States are strictly correct. It is well known that the Congress of the United States has no power granted in the Constitution to organize a Territorial Government, and every power that is not named in the Constitution for Congress to act upon is reserved to the people. But Congress assumes powers that does not belong to it, and if it continues to do so, soon the last vestige of the free, independent, Republican and Democratic Government we have enjoyed will be merged in a military despotism, if there is anything left.

Our Government is at present engaged in an expensive war. It has been supposed that the South would soon be subjugated, that they would yield the point and submit. They will not, and the war has scarcely commenced.

The slave States do not as yet appear to be whipped or conquered. Both North and South are in the hands of the Lord, and so are we.

Let us from this time strive more diligently to overcome our own evil passions. We may talk about Priesthood, about power and authority, about blessings and exaltations, about the kingdom of God upon the earth, about gathering the house of Israel, about redeeming Zion and enjoying its fulness, about preparing for the coming of the Son of Man and enjoying celestial glory with him, but all this is vain if we do not sanctify our– selves before God, and sanctify the Lord our God in our hearts. We wish you fully to comprehend this; and when you go from this Conference, we do not wish to hear of contentions. And as soon as Elders have wisdom sufficient to magnify their calling and Priesthood, we will give to every Branch, no matter how small the Ward, both a Bishop and a President.

It is our privilege and duty to sanctify our own hearts. Perhaps I have as much acknowledgment to make as

anybody for sometimes suffering my feelings to be a little ruffled. I cannot say that I felt entirely free from vexations at remarks made, by one of the speakers this morning, upon the impurity of seeds in our Territory. Notwithstanding so much has been said upon that subject, there does not seem to be care enough in the heads of Israel to provide even for themselves, to say nothing about setting a proper example to the people. If it were left to such men, there never would be a grain of pure sugar cane seed in the country. Where is your care for Israel? You will preach the spiritual things of the kingdom, and let your bodies and the bodies of the people go into the grave. Before you preach to a starving man to arise and be baptized, first carry him some bread and wine; first unlock his prison house and let him go free. Is there a Bishop in this Territory that knows whether there is a particle of pure cabbage seed in the Territory, or in his Ward? Whether there is a bushel of pure buckwheat, or California barley? Whether there is a peck of clean, pure flaxseed, &c. Bishops, how much flaxseed is going to be sown in your respective Wards this season? "Don't know." How much wheat, oats, and barley? "Don't know. I have a little speculation on hand, and I wish to provide for my own family, for the convenience and comfort of my own household, for this I esteem to be my first duty."

There was a Bishop in Far West, who, as Trustee-in-Trust, held the property of the Church; no other man had the means he had to help the poor Saints. I tried to get my voice to his ears for days, and could not. At last I accosted him and said—"Bishop, what are you going to do toward helping the poor Saints out of the State of Missouri, as we agreed?" He was irritated in a moment. I supposed that he thought it was none of my business, but I knew that it was, and calculated to attend to it. He did not speak good naturedly, although naturally a mild-tempered man. At last he said, "I am going to take my family and leave the State, and the people may take care of themselves." Many of our Bishops feel like that; they will plant their potatoes, take care of their calves and themselves, and the people may go to the devil for ought they care.

I, perhaps, ought not to find fault about such things; but why not my brethren of the Twelve take an interest in such matters, and not leave everything of that kind for me and my Counselors to attend to?

I ask the Agricultural and Manufacturing Society of this Territory, if they have one ounce of pure cabbage seed on hand, or know who has. It is doubtful whether an affirmative answer could be given to this question. But if you have a few excellent peaches, or a basket of choice apples to give them to eat, they will be as proud as a little boy with a new top, and boast long and loud about what nice things we have in this Territory. I cannot complain of the vigilance of the tasting committee, but what do they do for the benefit of the people? To eat the people's fruit and praise them for raising it, calling them "beloved brethren, and won't you bring us in a little more next fall?" &c., may be well enough, but what does this Society do? What do the Twelve and the First Presidency do in teaching this people to sustain themselves? We all take care of ourselves, do we not? Is that all? No. There is not a thing my eye is not upon, that will enhance the welfare of this people. Who imported the first carding machine to this country, and the only good ones that have been brought here? Who imported the nail machines, the paper machine, steam engines and other valuable machinery? I use everything I can rake and scrape together for the interest of this people. I only need a little food and a small amount of clothing, and as for the rest the people are welcome to it.

I wish the other brethren to look after the welfare of the people, as well as myself. I do not wish to again hear any of the leaders of Israel complain that there is not any pure sugarcane seed, flaxseed, cotton seed, &c., in the country, but I wish them to be fully informed as to where pure seeds of all kinds can be had, and as to what is going on among the people in every part of each Ward or district; and then I want to inform the Bishops, and direct their tongues to speak and their hands to act. I wish this particularly to apply to those who preside where the First Presidency do not go.

The Agricultural Society ought to make arrangements to have and keep on hand the best varieties of all kinds of garden seeds, the best varieties of fruits, of grain, and every useful product of the soil, that all may be able to procure the purest and best seeds, scions, fruit and shade trees, shrubbery, &c. Brother T. W. Ellerbeck and a few others have done considerable in introducing several valuable varieties of fruits and seeds.

Brother Lorenzo Snow says that the Lord will bless my brethren and sisters. He says that all the mules in the

Territory cannot haul away the gold that is concealed in these mountains. Riches do not consist of gold and silver. It may be said that with them we can buy all the comforts we need for the body. That may be so under certain circumstances; still gold and silver are merely a convenient means of exchange. Earthly riches are concealed in the elements God has given to man, and the essence of wealth is power to organize from these elements every comfort and convenience of life for our sustenance here, and for eternal existence hereafter. The possession of all the gold and silver in the world would not satisfy the cravings of the immortal soul of man. The gift of the Holy Spirit of the Lord alone can produce a good, wholesome, contented mind. Instead of looking for gold and silver, look to the heavens and try to learn wisdom until you can organize the native elements for your benefit; then, and not until then, will you begin to possess the true riches. All the riches, wealth, glory and happiness that we shall ever possess in heaven will be possessed on and around this earth when it is brought up into the presence of God in a sanctified and glorified state; and the sanctified ones who enter through the gate and pass the sentinel into the New Jerusalem, and into the presence of the Father and the Son, are the ones who will inherit the new heavens and the new earth in the presence of God, for here is the eternity, the glory and the power. When we possess all things, it will be when we possess power to organize the native elements that fill the immensity of space, bringing forth and organizing, bringing forth and organizing, again and again, dealing out the providence of God, dictating, guiding, and directing the kingdoms that will be made forever and forever. This is eternal riches—it is eternal life.

"What, did Jesus mean, when he said, Lay up treasures in heaven, &c. What mortal ever went there to lay up treasures? Is there an apartment, a business house there, a Dr. and Cr. account, &c.?" Ask the Lord yourselves, what he meant by that expression, and if you have the Spirit of Christ, you will find out the truth. I think that the Savior referred particularly to laying up in pure and sanctified bodies, holy principles that belong to the heavens, until we are brought back into the presence of the Father, and we, with the earth upon which we stand, are cleansed and sanctified beyond the power of Satan.

I will now say that we wish to go on with the Temple this year; we shall also send out teams to bring home the poor, send Missionaries to the nations, &c., &c. If the hearts of this people are right, if they are filled with faith in God; if they act with an eye single to his glory and the building up of his kingdom on the earth, they will lock up their teams, secure their seed grain and farming utensils, will look and live for rain, for water in abundance to irrigate their lands, for sunshine, for day and night and everything, that will give us a fruitful season this coming summer. What will you do with the increase of your fields? Will you strew it to strangers? Some complain at the hand of Jehovah for giving them wheat. I have heard it said, "It is a curse to us; it annoys me to see so much wheat." There never has been a land, from the days of Adam until now, that has been blessed more than this land has been blessed by our Father in heaven; and it will still be blessed more and more, if we are faithful and humble, and thankful to God for the wheat and the corn, the oats, the fruit, the vegetables, the cattle, and everything he bestows upon us, and try to use them for the building up of his kingdom on the earth.

There will be no lack of teams for doing our work, if we will go to with our mights to bring the poor Saints here and to build this Temple. There will be teams to bring us the rock from the quarries; and let the young men come and learn to cut stone. I wish to hurry the building of the Temple, for I would like to have it completed before we are called to more important duties.

God bless the righteous. Amen.