

The Mighty Mission of the Saints—God’s Dealings With the World in Ancient and Modern Times—God’s Authorship of Creation and Right to Rule—Man’s Agency, the Gospel and the Gathering—Its Attempted Suppression, Contrasted Statesmanship—The Mother of Harlots and Her Daughters—The Political Situation in Utah—The Rights of Man, the Supporters and Subverters of Law and Order—Religious Intolerance and Political Injustice—The Latter-day Saints the Future Saviors of America—The Edmunds Act and Its Unjust Operation—Reverend Falsifiers and Their Dupes—Exhortation to the Priesthood and the People

Discourse by President John Taylor, delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, October 8, 1882.

We have had a very interesting Conference, and a great many thoughts, ideas and reflections have been presented to the people in a clear and pointed manner, and I have been pleased to see the unanimity and harmony that have existed in our midst. And while I attempt to speak to you I shall ask an interest in your prayers that I may be strengthened to perform the labor. It is difficult for a people to understand and to retain everything that may be said in a Conference like this, where there are so many subjects dwelt upon and so many principles enunciated; but it is a great blessing for us that we are situated as we are, and that we possess the intelligence which has been communicated from time to time. Many great and precious principles having been revealed unto us, it becomes necessary for us to try to comprehend them, that we may understand the position we occupy before God, before the world in which we live, and before the intelligences that exist behind the veil in the eternal worlds. We have a great and important mission committed unto us, and it is for us to seek to comprehend that mission and fulfill the various duties and responsibilities devolving upon us. The Lord has given unto us a form of government, an organization, priesthood and authority to enable us to perform these several duties, and he has certain plans, purposes and designs to accomplish pertaining to us, pertaining to this nation, to other nations, and to the world in which we live—pertaining to those who have lived and are now in another state of existence, and also pertaining to those who shall yet live.

The time in which we live is denominated in Scripture “the dispensation of the fullness of times,” wherein it is said God will gather together all things in one, whether they be things in the earth or things in the heavens. This dispensation embraces all other dispensations, all principles and powers, rights, privileges, immunities and developments that have existed among men in the various ages that are past. This globe did not originate with man, nor was it constructed, designed or manipulated by him, nor were any of its organisms, sentient or inanimate; for we are told that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and all that in them is: nor did this dispensation with which we are associated, nor have any of the dispensations associated with the works, plans or designs of the Almighty originated with man. After man had fallen, and it became necessary that he be driven from the garden, it needed the interposition of the Almighty, for as is said in the Book of Job, it was necessary to “deliver his soul from the pit; I have found a ransom.” That ransom was the Only Begotten Son of God who offered himself in the beginning to meet the demands of justice, to carry out the purposes of the Almighty, and to be a Savior and Redeemer to man. Adam was perfectly helpless in this respect, and it needed the direct interposition of the Almighty for the accomplishment of this object. In the patriarchal, or antediluvian age, when men were put in possession of any hope, any intelligence, any knowledge, or any revelation pertaining to God, these things did not originate with man, they came from the Lord and were given by inspiration; and when on account of the wickedness and corruption of mankind the old world had to be destroyed, a way was provided for a small remnant to be spared. By whom? By man? No. God dictated it. The Prophets prophesied about it. They taught the antediluvians as the people of this day are being taught, they warned them of the impending ruin that would overwhelm them, of the prison house to which they would go, and of the wrath and indignation of Heaven which

would be poured out upon the peoples of the earth. It came to pass as they had declared. But God provided a way for the perpetuation of the human family. It was foretold to Methuselah that his seed should be preserved to perpetuate the human family upon the earth, and it was so. Noah, who was one of his descendants, fulfilled that decree.

Again, in later ages when the children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt, they did not originate the method of their own deliverance, or point out the way for its accomplishment. They were in a state of bondage and vassalage. God raised them up a Moses, revealed His will to him, set him apart for this mission, told him what to do, and after some little difficulties arising from human weaknesses were removed, Moses was accepted, and the Lord became his instructor, and pointed out in all instances the course that he should pursue, and in what manner the children of Israel were to be delivered, and He, the Holy One of Israel, gave them His law and ordinances, and revealed unto them His will, and stood by and sustained, guided and directed them. This salvation did not come from the people, it did not originate with them, they owed it all to God, the source of all truth, all light, all intelligence, all power and blessings. The time at length arrived that the Son of God was to come. Neither the Scribes and Pharisees, the High Priests and Sadducees, nor any of the sects and parties of the day comprehended the things that were about to transpire, and had nothing to do with bringing them to pass. His advent was announced to His mother by an angel, and His birth was heralded to shepherds by an angelic host, and the wise men of the East were led by his star to Bethlehem of Judea, where they found the infant Savior, whom they recognized as the Messiah, and to whom they brought presents of gold, frankincense and myrrh; and whom they worshipped.

It is said in speaking of the Son of God, that he did not come to do His own will, nor to carry out His own purposes, nor to fulfill any particular plan of his own, but he came to do the will of his Father who sent him. Jesus in selecting his disciples, took one man here and another there—a tax gatherer, a fisherman, and others who it was thought were the most unlikely of any men to carry out the purposes of God. He left the great men out of the question, that is the High Priests and the popular and pious of all classes, and he selected his own laborers to perform his own work; and he subsequently told them, You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and set you apart unto this mission. When a message had to be proclaimed to the world in these last days the agents were chosen on the same principle. There was any amount of teachers of divinity, any amount of professors of theology, any amount of reverend, and right reverend fathers and all classes of religious men and religious teachers; but God did not recognize them. He chose a young uneducated man and inspired him with the spirit of revelation, and placed upon him a mission and required him to perform it; and he was obedient to that requirement. I speak of this to show that we none of us had anything to do with the introduction of this work, but that, as in all other dispensations in the various ages of the world, God was the originator of everything that tended to develop a knowledge of Himself and of his plans and purposes; to unfold the past, to develop the present, and to make manifest the future.

To whom are we indebted for this book, called the Bible. We are told that holy men of old spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. And from whence did they receive that Holy Ghost? Not of man, nor by man, but by the revelations of God, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We sometimes feel to exalt ourselves a little in the position that we occupy pertaining to the Priesthood, pertaining to our organization, and pertaining to ordinances, etc. What have we to glory in? Nothing. None of us knew anything until it was revealed. None of us could comprehend any of these principles only as they have been made manifest. But by obedience to the Gospel we have received the Holy Ghost, and that Spirit takes of the things of God, and shows them to us. We have received this and hence have been baptized into one baptism, and all partaken of the selfsame Spirit, as Paul expressed it, "dividing to every man severally as he will." The question arises, What is the object of this? It is that the world should be visited from time to time and communications made to the human family. Because light cleaves to light, truth cleaves to truth, intelligence cleaves to intelligence; and as we are all made in the image of God, and as God is the God and Father of the spirits of all flesh, it is His right, it is His prerogative to communicate with the human family. We are told that there is a spirit in man and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth it understanding. God having made the earth, made the people to inhabit it, and made all things that exist therein, has a right to dictate, has a right to make known His will, has a right to communicate with whom he will and control matters as he sees proper: it belongs to him by right; and he has seen proper in these last days to restore His Gospel to the earth, and, as I said before, intelligence cleaves to intelligence. We read in the Scriptures concerning

man being a son of God. We read in the Scriptures about men becoming the adopted sons of God through obedience to the Gospel. Hence it is said: "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." By what means? Through the atonement of Jesus Christ and by the medium of the Gospel, which has been introduced in different ages for that purpose. God having felt disposed to reveal the Gospel in these last days, has given the same principles and powers, the same light, revelation and intelligence that he did in former ages, for the accomplishment of the same work, and for the fulfillment of his purposes relating to the human family who are his children. Hence we occupy a very peculiar position in relation to God, in relation to the earth in which we live and the people thereof in relation to both to the living and to the dead.

It is proper for us to comprehend the position that we occupy. We sometimes arrive at curious conclusions pertaining to the wickedness of the world, and a variety of other things associated therewith. And permit me to say here, that we had no more to do with the peoples of the world, or the placing of them in the position they occupy, than we had in restoring the Gospel. We find ourselves a few people mixed up with the world. We find too that when the word of God is made manifest and the revelations of God are developed, that many things as they exist amongst mankind are out of order. There is a great amount of priestcraft, idolatry, corruption, oppression, tyranny, murder, bloodshed, covetousness, licentiousness, and every kind of iniquity that can be conceived of; and that is more clearly made manifest to us because the Lord has been teaching us through the Prophets, and inspiring us with other feelings, and given unto us to comprehend things more clearly than others do. But what have we to do with the people of the world? We complain sometimes that they do not treat us exactly right. Well, they do not in all respects, and I do not think this is very difficult to understand. But there is nothing new about that, God has revealed unto us His law, and they do not comprehend it, neither do they want to; nor did the antediluvians. They were very wicked, very corrupt and very depraved, very immoral and very dishonest; but that was a matter between them and the Lord, and he dealt with them; and it is his business to deal with the nations of the earth at the present time and not ours further than we are directed by him. What is the mission that we have to perform to this nation? It is to preach the Gospel. That is one thing. That was the mission given to the disciples of Jesus in his day: Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned. This mission is being carried out in the fact of our sending representatives of this latter-day work to all the civilized nations that will receive our missionaries. But we are not placed here to control people; we are not placed here to use any improper influence over the minds or consciences of men. It is not for us to attempt to do what Mahomet did—to say that there was but one God, and Mahomet was his prophet, and by force compel all others to acknowledge it. To attempt to do that would be to attempt to interfere with the agency of man; and anything of that kind is altogether foreign to the character and spirit of our mission. We preach the Gospel to the people, and it is for them to receive or reject as they may choose. We have done this to a great extent. Many of you Elders who are before and around me—and there are some thousands—have been engaged preaching this Gospel, but none of you ever used coercion, none of you ever attempted to force any man to obey the message you had to declare. If you did, you did not understand your calling. And when you have been among the different nations preaching this Gospel, have you sought to interfere with their governments or with their laws, or endeavored to stir up commotion or rebellion or trouble of any kind? No. I am at the defiance of the world to prove any such statement. That does not belong to our faith. When the Elders are sent forth, they go as servants of God with a message from the Lord, to unfold the Scriptures, and to bear testimony of the things that they themselves are witnesses of; and to administer the ordinances of the Gospel to all those who believe on their words. This is the position that we occupy in these matters. And what else do we do? We gather the people together; and they no sooner receive this Gospel than they are anxious to gather with the people of God. Why? Because the Scriptures say that they would? Because the Scriptures say, "gather my people, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice?" No, but because they have obeyed the Gospel and received the Holy Ghost, and that Holy Ghost has instructed them pertaining to these matters, as it instructed the prophets in former times that such an event would transpire. The people have gathered together, and you could not keep them back if you were to try to. They have been trying. You know that Mr. Evarts wrote communications to the European ministers requesting them to use their influence by way of putting a stop to the "Mormon" emigration. It is rather a sorry comment upon the government of this nation, that boasts of being "the land of the free, the home of the brave,

and the asylum for the oppressed," and that a little over a hundred years ago the chief complaint against the nation from whence the colonists came, was the lack of religious toleration; to think that they should so far forget their original condition as to call upon what they term the effete monarchies of Europe to assist them in suppressing religious liberty and controlling human freedom. And when this subject was brought before Mr. Gladstone, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, a short time ago by some pragmatist zealot in the British Parliament, calling his attention to the request of the American Secretary, he very distinctly told him that "he was unable to interfere with the operations of the Mormons in England, as he presumed their converts went with them willingly." Thus while the American government is trying to exert force and to interfere with religious matters and bind the consciences of men, the British government pleads for and guarantees to its subjects religious and social liberty. I am told that Mr. Evarts is a great-grandson of Roger Sherman, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. I should not have thought that that gentleman would have so soon forgotten the position occupied by his ancestor. But it seems that such is the fact, nevertheless.

I repeat, our mission is to preach the Gospel, and then to gather the people who embrace it. And why? That there might be a nucleus formed, a people gathered who would be under the inspiration of the Almighty, and who would be willing to listen to the voice of God, a people who would receive and obey His word when it was made known to them. And this people in their gathered condition are called Zion, or the pure in heart. I wish we were pure in heart; that is, I wish we were more so than we are. And this is something that we all need to reflect upon, to consider the pit from whence we were dug, and the rock from whence we were hewn. I have heard people say, they were born in sin, and cradled in iniquity. It is probably very true. Many of us have been rocked in these cradles, and we have been nurtured amidst infamies, and we have been surrounded by and enveloped in evils of all kinds. We talk sometimes about Babylon—"Come out of her O my people, that ye partake not of her sins, nor receive of her plagues." We need not say too much about those people, for we came out from them ourselves; and it would not be becoming on our part to speak badly about our former status. That reminds me of a conversation I had some years ago with some Protestants who were abusing the Catholics. I reminded them of the fact that they descended from them. They were calling the Catholic Church the Mother of Harlots. Well, said I, if that be true, she has brought forth a scurvy offspring. History certainly informs us that the Protestants came out from the Catholics, and therefore, if the Catholic Church is the mother, they certainly must be the daughters, and one would think there should be some affinity between them. It is not considered proper for persons to rail against their mother.

It is well for us to comprehend our position with regard to the nation. Being gathered together, as a people, we have assumed a political status, for we not only brought our religion and our spirits with us, but our bodies also; and by thus being gathered in this land we become naturally an integral part of the United States. We have received by the act of the government of the United States a territorial form of government, in which we are authorized to perform certain functions of a political nature, and to enjoy, as do all other Territories, the free and full rights of American citizens therein, and thus have become a part of the body politic of these United States, with all the rights, privileges and immunities pertaining thereto, as exercised and enjoyed by all American citizens throughout this broad land; and these are guaranteed unto us in the Constitution of the United States and by the Congress of the United States, in an instrument denominated the Organic Act. And I will say this much for the United States; with all her faults and infirmities, I do not believe there is a nation upon the face of the earth today, where we could have as much liberty as we here enjoy and that is precious little, God knows. We are told sometimes that we live under popular government, and that the voice of the people rules. It used to, but who rules now? Well, no matter, we have got to make the best we can of it. We have a territorial form of government, with a governor appointed by the administration. I was going to say, God save the mark. We have judges and other officers; and we have a nominal legislature that makes our laws, but those laws can be vetoed by one man. There is a great deal of absolutism about it. But these are the circumstances in which we are placed; and I suppose it is thought by a great many that we ought to consider it a great privilege to be allowed to live. We do think so, but we are not indebted to any officials for it; they did not give us our life, neither did this government. There are certain principles that are inherent in man, that belong to man, and that were enunciated in an early day, before the United States government was formed, and they are principles that rightfully belong to all men everywhere. They are described in the Declaration of Independence as inalienable rights, one of which is that men have a right to live; another is that they have a right to pursue happiness; and another is that they have a right to be free and no

man has authority to deprive them of those God-given rights, and none but tyrants would do it. These principles I say, are inalienable in man; they belong to him; they existed before any constitutions were framed or any laws made. Men have in various ages striven to strip their fellow men of these rights, and dispossess them of them. And hence the wars, the bloodshed and carnage that have spread over the earth. We therefore are not indebted to the United States for these rights; we were free as men born into the world, having the right to do as we please, to act as we please, as long as we do not transgress constitutional law nor violate the rights of others.

Being organized, then, into a government such as it is—that is, the name of a government, the name of a legislature, the name of a free people—being organized as we are, what next? We are necessarily obliged to look after our affairs as men, our political affairs. Our mission to the world is a mission of peace, the Gospel proclaims peace on earth and good will to man. Then, being organized in a governmental capacity, we have certain rights. They profess to give them to us, but they don't. They try to deprive us of them while professing to impart them. I might enter into a long line of argument here; no matter, I am merely speaking upon some general principles. What then is our duty here, say as a people—leaving religion out of the question altogether? As men and as American citizens, we have the right to all the privileges, and immunities, protection and rights of every kind that any men in these United States have, and no honorable man or men would seek to deprive us of them. When we talk about rights, these are the rights, as I understand them, that we possess in this nation. Is it proper, therefore, for us, as men and as citizens of the United States to look after our rights? I think it is. Do we want to violate law? No, we do not, although we know many of these laws are wrong, corrupt and unconstitutional. We have no right to find fault with others about their religion. We preach the Gospel; they receive or reject it as they please. If we have found the benefit of embracing it, let us be thankful; but we will not interfere with them in their religion. Are they Methodists? They can worship as they please—Presbyterians, Catholics, Baptists, or any other “ists” can worship as they please, that is none of our business, that is a matter between them and their God. But when they interfere with our rights as citizens of the United States, it becomes our business to look after our liberties.

As religionists we call upon them, as a duty committed to us, as we aver, by the Almighty. Our mission is to call upon this nation and all nations to repent of their sins, of their lasciviousness, adulteries, fornications, murders, blasphemies and of all dishonest and corrupt practices. But in this we use no force; having laid these matters before them, they have their free will to receive or reject. As religionists they may proclaim us bigamists or polygamists or what they please, that is their business, and they must answer for their own acts; as politicians or statesmen they must at least give us the benefit of the Constitution and laws; these, as a portion of the body politic, we contend for as part of our political rights. We do not claim, nor profess, nor desire to interfere with any man's religion or conscience. We have nothing to do with their religion, nor they with ours. Religious faith or belief is not a political factor. The Constitution has debarred its introduction into the arena of politics; and every officer of the United States has pledged himself under a solemn oath to abide by and sustain that Instrument, and not one of them can interfere with it without a violation of his oath.

What have we done in defense of our liberties? I have heard several people say that we are inclined to be aggressive. I think we are not aggressive, but some of the laws are very aggressive. We have a grand jury organized of some fifteen men. How many of them are Latter-day Saints? Two, I think. So I suppose there is one-tenth of the citizens of this Territory loyal, patriotic and honorable, and the rest are considered to be unpatriotic, disloyal, etc. But we ought at least to be tried before we are condemned; that is the law as I understand it. Now this one-tenth of loyal, good and virtuous people get thirteen men empanelled, and the nine-tenths get but two to represent them. But unfortunately for these loyal and patriotic people, carefully prepared statistics show that this ten percent of population supplies eighty percent of the criminals. How is it in other things? There is considerable said about offices and officers. Where is there a man appointed from among the people to hold any office in the gift of the national government? To use the words of a thoughtful non-“Mormon” observer, —though the ‘Gentiles’ constitute only ten percent of the population, yet from this small minority are taken the incumbents of nearly every position of influence and emolument. They have the governor, with absolute veto power, secretary, judges, marshals, prosecuting attorney, land register, recorder, surveyor-general, clerks of the courts, commissioners, principal post office mail contractors, postal agents, revenue assessors and collectors, superintendent of Indian affairs, Indian agencies, Indian supplies, army contractors, etc.”

According to the common usages of men, we have at least a reasonable right to our proper proportion, but it is evident we do not have it. And then our educational interests are interfered with by these very men who state how ignorant we are. For instance, the Legislature of Utah appropriated the means of the people to help build a university. Who was to furnish the means? The people of this territory. Who said they should not do it? The Governor, and through his action the appropriation was vetoed. These are some of the things we have to contend with. On the other hand, laws are enacted inimical to the interests of this people. And then His Excellency goes to work and appoints a set of officers contrary to the law of the land; goes beyond the act of Congress and appoints officers to fill nearly every office in the Territory, vacant or not, as the case may be. I am not going to enter into the details of it, but we have generally found that there were people in those offices; that they had a right there, and that the law provided that they should hold over until their successors were elected and qualified. I believe the law so reads; indeed, I am told that the law not only reads so, but that the Governor's commissions to many of these officers also reads so, and hence his present action is violative of his own commission.

These are some of the things we have to contend with. Do we wish to fight the government of the United States? No. What shall we do? Stand up for the rights granted to us by the laws and constitution of the United States as American citizens. We have *ex post facto* laws, religious inquisitorial laws, we have laws which smack strongly of bills of attainder, and we have test oaths presented, all of which and many others are unconstitutional and are violative of our constitutional rights. I have the opinion of some of the best jurists of the nation to the effect that all these things are a violation of law, and that men have no business to be subjected to such infamies, nor become their own accusers. An eminent jurist speaking of this queried how this kind of thing would apply in Washington, where miscegenation has prevailed to so great an extent. Suppose some of those who practiced this thing were placed under such a law, how would it operate with them? Why several members of Congress have said that if the Edmunds law had been made applicable to adulterers, and men had to become their own accusers, it would unseat three fourths of the members of Congress. *Ex post facto* laws have been passed, which are clearly unconstitutional, and it is for us to test them in the courts, and we mean to do it; for although as religionists we go as messengers of peace to the nations, yet as American citizens we mean to contend for our rights, inch by inch, legally and constitutionally, God being our helper.

Another thing God expects us to do, and that is to maintain the principle of human rights. I have felt sorrowful in watching the action of Congress towards us—sorrowful, not only on our own account, but on theirs. We fear no evil arising from those things, for we are anxiously performing our duty before God. But we owe it to ourselves as men, we owe it to our families, our children, and to posterity; we owe it to the lovers of freedom in this land, of which there are thousands, yea, millions, who despise acts of oppression and tyranny; we owe it to all liberty-loving men, to stand up for human rights and protect human freedom, and in the name of God we will do it, and let all the congregation say Amen. (The immense congregation responded, Amen.)

Joseph, the despised of his father's house became their deliverer. Moses, the foundling and outcast of Egypt, became the deliverer and lawgiver of Israel. Jesus, the despised Nazarene, introduced principles that revolutionized the moral ideas and ethics of the world. And it may not be among the improbabilities, that the prophecies of Joseph Smith may be fulfilled and that the calumniated and despised Mormons may yet become the protectors of the Constitution and the guardians of religious liberty and human freedom in these United States.

Now these are some of my feelings upon some of these points. And I will proceed a little further and say that I do not blame many men for entertaining the sentiments which they do towards us. There is a feeling and desire to see fair play and honesty deep down in the hearts of millions of the people of these United States, who ardently desire to see justice equally and honorably administered to all people within the nation. That was manifested very clearly during the passage of the Edmunds bill, and while many of those venerable Senators and honorable members of the House could not conscientiously with their limited information and the false statements made by our enemies sustain Polygamy, yet, to their honor be it spoken, they endeavored to maintain human rights, free toleration and religious liberty, and the rights of man without distinction of party throughout the realm. We honor, appreciate and respect such men as honorable representatives of the founders of this nation, and of the thousands who today embrace similar opinions. It is the debauched, the corrupt, the violators of principles and law and desecrators of

the sacred principles of liberty, it is their pernicious practices which are striking at the foundation of the institutions of this country and which are demoralizing and destroying the nation, and there are thousands of high-minded and honorable men today who, on account of trickery, hypocrisy, dishonesty and crime stand aloof from the filthy pool of politics. They have seen honor, truth, integrity and virtue trampled under foot, they have seen corruption and crime like a repulsive octopus pushing its Briarean arms into every department of State; they have seen corruption and crime like a deadly simoom permeating every department of the body politic, and debauching and corrupting the nation, and they have shrunk from the disgusting contact; how far they can reconcile this with their ideas of patriotism it is for these aggressors to say. It is not the honorable and upright, the men of virtue and integrity that we would proclaim against; it is the vicious, the untruthful, the calumniators, the corrupt and debauched, the stirrers up of sedition and strife, and the enemies of law, order, virtue, righteousness, justice, human liberty and the rights of man to whom our remarks would apply.

Again, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, and all classes have come among us, and who has interfered with them? Has anybody interfered with their worship? No. Has any violence of any kind been offered them? No, you cannot find it. We are at their defiance to show any such thing here. What have we done? We have fostered them, as has been referred to; we have treated them courteously and kindly and gentlemanly as honorable people ought to do. What have they done? Combined together to publish some of the most abominable falsehoods that were ever circulated with regard to any community. Now, this becomes rather a serious matter. Talk about love for these people! I would do them good. If they were hungry I would feed them; if they were naked I would clothe them; if they were sick I would administer to them; but if they lied about me and about this people I would tell them they were liars and defamers; I do not care how pious they are, or how much religion they have got, I would tell them the naked truth in relation to these matters.

They are the avowed advocates of moral reform, profess to be shocked at our moral obliquity and complain of us as being licentious and corrupt. Even every prominent Christian minister in this city joined in a protest against customs inculcated in the Scriptures by the Almighty, and practiced by Abraham, Jacob, David, and hosts of the most venerated and honorable men that ever lived, practices which they aver are lascivious and corrupt; and these same ministers issued a circular calling upon their fellow ministers and brother Christians throughout the United States to petition Congress for legislation which should stop, as they claim, the "foul system of polygamy," and hypocritically inserted, to blind the eyes of those not familiar with Utah matters, a request for legislation for the suppression of "adultery, seduction, lewd and lascivious cohabitation and kindred offenses," that they might "be punishable as in the States and other Territories of the Union;" and political demagogues joined with them in the crusade.

Predicated upon these solicitations scores of petitions were forwarded to Congress to this effect. They obtained their legislation and in their frantic Christian zeal to stamp out polygamy, a Bible institution, Congress, under this priestly influence so far forgot the inalienable rights of man, constitutional guarantees and forms of jurisprudence, as to disfranchise nine-tenths of this community for the alleged crime of the one-tenth, and that too, without trial; thus making the innocent suffer for the alleged acts of the guilty. And today an infamous, expurgatory test oath is introduced, at variance with all precedents in this nation, which as stated by Judge Black, is altogether "odious, unjust and unconstitutional," which "reverses those rules of evidence which lie at the foundation of civil liberty," and is a flagrant, violent and direct attack upon the inherent rights of man. Thus in their intemperate, religious zeal making a direct onslaught upon the bulwarks of republican institutions, jeopardizing the safety of the state, and thoughtlessly, recklessly and inconsiderately ignoring every just principle; assailing the fundamental doctrines of political and religious freedom; and exerting all their energies in attacking a phantom to tear down the pillars of state and to destroy the Temple of Liberty, though they themselves, as a Samson, perish in the ruins.

What is the moral effect? This same test-oath, while it assails a Scriptural usage practiced by the most renowned, revered and honorable men of antiquity, who are denominated men of righteousness and the friends of God, protects and sustains the degraded, corrupt and licentious who are supposed to be good Christians and not polygamists.

A very honorable, upright and virtuous gentleman, whom no one will accuse of immorality or vice—the respected

ex-mayor of this city, who has filled that office with dignity and honor for the last six years, has a son who was appointed registrar for the Fifth Precinct in this city; this son had the painful and humiliating duty to perform of refusing to register his father's name, because many years ago he had had more than one wife, but who, through death, was for some time without a wife at all, and has lately married one wife; and yet this young man had to perform the disgusting task, according to the provisions of said test-oath, of registering a notorious keeper of a bagnio, and many of her harlot associates. Another circumstance occurred of a gentleman who came to be registered, but thought it would be impracticable for him to take the test-oath. More honorable than many of his pious associates, he suggested that he did not know that he could take the prescribed oath, for he not only had a wife, but kept a mistress, but on examination he found the oath exempted all those who might engage in illicit intercourse, provided the association was not, as expressed in the oath, "in the marriage relation." On discovering this, he observed, "I can take that oath, for I am only married to one;" and he was accepted. Another young man in this city, whilst having the test oath read to him, said he could not take it, as he could not swear that he had not cohabited with more than one woman; but when the reading was continued and the words "in the marriage relation" sounded in his ears, he said, "I can go that," and was duly sworn.

Thus these moral and religious reformers and teachers, these professors of high moral ideas, these inveighers against a scriptural practice professedly because it is immoral, have introduced safeguards to protect the libertine, the voluptuary and the harlot, whilst they have made criminals of those who have been observing a law instituted by the Almighty. Perhaps it would be considered too severe to call these "reverend gentlemen" and those "venerable seigneurs" who occupy honorable positions in Congress by the harsh name of hypocrites, yet it is very humiliating to the sensitive and virtuous to contemplate the result of their ill-timed and intemperate acts, for they have thus made themselves, while professing purity, the advocates and abettors of vice, licentiousness, immorality and crime.

I wish here to apologize a little for the people of the United States, for I think sometimes we carry the thing too far in relation to them. Here are men supposed—would be in any other community—to be honorable men, reverend men that are teachers of religion, combining against us. And because they are considered honorable men, people say, why there is the Reverend Mr. So and So and So and So, they have requested us to send petitions to Congress, to do this and that because of the wickedness and abominations of this people, and their misrepresentations and falsehoods have been circulated in the religious magazines and in the political papers, until the people abroad hardly know what to think. Many of them think we are a very infamous people; they think we are a great deal more corrupt than they are, and that we need not be. And they go to work to legislate to correct our morals. Now, with thousands of papers circulating these falsehoods, and these falsehoods coming from supposed religious and honorable men, is it any wonder that the people should be deceived with regard to us. I read today an account of an attempt to drive our Elders from some of their fields of labor. What for? Because they are "Mormons." They are so wicked and so corrupt, and all because the papers and reverend ministers said so and so; and thus thousands of honorable men are deceived; but many of them, when they come to a knowledge of the truth, will rejoice in it. I want, then, to stand in defense of many of the people of the United States who are thus deceived. It is said in the scriptures that the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood. We have certainly had floods of falsehoods, originating, many of them, with these pious people. Do we want much association with these people? I think not. If they circulate falsehoods about us, can we respect them very much? I think not. We cannot hold communion with people who are corrupt, low and degraded. We were down in the sloughs a little while ago ourselves; we have come out from among them and know what they are. We know the infamies which exist there, the licentiousness, the corruption, the social evil, adulteries, fornication, sodomy, child murder, and every kind of infamy. And they come here and want to teach our children these things. We have got to be careful how we guard our homes, our firesides, our wives, our sons and our daughters, from their association. We don't want these practices insidiously introduced among us. We want to preserve our purity, our virtue, our honor, and our integrity.

The time is hastening on, and I shall have to stop. I wish to make some further remarks, and would have liked to have talked some time longer. But what shall we do? I will tell you what I will try to do. I will try and humble myself before the Lord and seek for his blessing, and say as one of old said: "Search me, Oh God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." I have

talked with my counselors in the same way, and they are of the same mind. We have talked with the Twelve about these things, and they are of the same mind. Now, we call upon all you Seventies, High Priests and Elders, you Bishops, Priests, Teachers and Deacons individually and in your quorum capacity, upon the heads of families, upon the various organizations in the Church, upon all the Saints who profess to revere His name, to humble yourselves before God, to lay aside your covetousness and your evils of every kind. And when you have done so, you that meet together for prayers in your holy places, call upon God for guidance, direction and deliverance, and he will hear your prayers and deliver you, and your enemies shall have no power over you, for God is on the side of Israel, and he will preserve his people. No power can stay the progress of this work, for it is onward, onward, onward, and will be, until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ, and until every creature in heaven and in the earth and under the earth shall be heard to exclaim, Blessings and glory and honor and power and might and majesty and dominion be ascribed to Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever.

We will leave the wicked in the hands of God: He will deal with them in his own way. We are told that the wicked shall slay the wicked; and one thing that I am sorry over in this nation is this: that they are striking at the tree of liberty and trying to fetter humanity and bring men into bondage, they are laying the axe at the root of this government, and unless they speedily turn round and repent and follow the principles they have sworn to sustain—the principles contained in the Constitution of the United States—they will be overthrown, they will be split up and divided, be disintegrated and become weak as water; for the Lord will handle them in his own way. I say these things in sorrow; but as sure as God lives unless there is a change of policy these things will most assuredly take place.

Let us be pure, let us be virtuous, let us be honorable, let us maintain our integrity, let us do good to all men, and tell the truth always, and treat everybody right, no matter their profession or creed, and love our religion and keep the commandments of God, and it shall be well with Zion in time and throughout eternity.

God bless you. God bless all the Latter-day Saints. God bless all rulers and all men everywhere in responsible situations who seek to do right and to preserve law and justice and equity, and to maintain the rights of all men, and let his wrath and indignation rest upon the perverters of justice and those who seek to bind down the human conscience and enslave their fellow men. God bless you and lead you in the paths of life, in the name of Jesus. Amen.