

of His Saints, imploring His blessing upon it, that its barrenness might be turned into fruitfulness, and that the rewards of His people might be sure. And whithersoever their footsteps were turned, to the north or the south, to the east or the west, the prayer and faith of an afflicted and devoted people ascended up to heaven for the God of the land to sanctify it, and hallow the elements and make the country fruitful.

The art of irrigation was unknown on the North American continent at that time—at least among European settlers in the United States. There was no part of the United States which at that time relied upon artificial irrigation in all the arid regions of America. The system of irrigation adopted in Utah has measurably been copied by California, Colorado, Arizona, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana, although some of the best features of our system of irrigation have been neglected in these surrounding States and Territories; canal and irrigation companies have there been allowed to organize and monopolize the streams and make the farmers tributary to them, taxpayers for use of the fluid which God sends down from heaven—that is, they have not united the interest of the farmer, the land owner, with the canal owners as we have done in Utah, but they have made the water rather personal property than an attach of the realty, compelling the farmer to rent or buy water for their lands. Herein Utah sets an example in this arid region to the rest of the world, and the future history of this great interior country will award all due honor to the wise legislation of Utah, and the wise counsels of her leaders, and deprecate the folly of the surrounding States and Territories in not following their example in this

respect. But the Lord has blessed the labors of the people of Utah in diverting the mountain streams over the arid plains, and opening farms, orchards and vineyards, and building villages, towns and cities, organizing governments, and establishing a commonwealth. That the early history of the Latter-day Saints fitted its leaders for governing, for organizing and controlling society, and molding it for the best interest of the whole, will be admitted by the impartial historian of future ages, when the religious bigotry of the hour shall have spent its fury, and the stupid, blind ignorance of demagogues shall have been lost and drowned in the common sense of the people. Yet, our eastern neighbors in Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, and the Atlantic States, sanctioned in their inmost hearts the murder of the Prophets, and the persecution and expulsion of the Saints, though some of them lifted up their voices against it, but the voices so lifted were “like angels’ visits, few and far between,” and powerless to turn the popular current or stem the tide that flowed, like the waters which the serpent cast out of his mouth after the apocalyptic woman that fled from the face of the serpent into the wilderness. The Lord had a place prepared for His Church in the wilderness, in the Great American Desert, where she would be preserved from the face of the serpent for a season.

I well remember those early years, as do many who are here before me today, though their numbers are fast becoming very visibly less. We remember the time when the first State government was organized in these mountains. It was simultaneous with the organization of a State government on the Pacific coast under the title of the State of Califor-