

SELF-GOVERNMENT—CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES—CHURCH GOVERNMENT, ETC.

A DISCOURSE BY ELDER ORSON HYDE, DELIVERED IN THE TABERNACLE, GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, JANUARY 3, 1858.

REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.

Brethren and sisters, it has fallen to my lot this morning to speak unto you a short time as I may be led by the Spirit of the Lord our God. It is very natural for me, when I arise to address a congregation, to speak pretty energetically and pretty loudly also. This you all know that are acquainted with me and that have heard me speak. I like to hear an energetic speaker; but one who speaks very loud is apt to injure himself. When I have spoken too loudly, I have done injustice to myself and probably to the congregation. I shall endeavor, the Lord being my helper, to modulate my voice according to the Spirit of God that I may have when speaking, and not go beyond it, neither fall short. At the same time, I do not want my mind so trammelled as brother Parley P. Pratt's once was, when dancing was first introduced into Nauvoo among the Saints. I observed brother Parley standing in the figure, and he was making no motion particularly, only up and down. Says I, "Brother Parley, why don't you move forward?" Says he, "When I think which way I am going, I forget the step; and when I think of the step, I forget which way to go."

I desire that I may watch myself, that while I may be thinking what to say, I may not allow my voice to range unchecked or uncontrolled; and while I may seek to govern my voice, I hope

not to be forgetful of matter for your edification.

The principle of government among the Saints is the most important principle that there is for us to understand. If we apply it to individual capacity, it is the most important to us as individuals, not only in the government of the hand and arm, which are greater members than the tongue, but in the government of the tongue also. The tongue, though a very small member, is of all importance, which we readily concede. And if we can govern the tongue, we may be considered qualified to rule; for the tongue, though a small member, sets on fire the course of nature, and is too often set on fire of hell.

It is the tongue that causes the evils that exist in the world; it is the tongue that sets nations at war; it is the tongue that causes broils in the domestic circle; it is the tongue that causes the fire of animosity and ill-will to burn in our midst. If we can succeed in governing the tongue according to the mind and will of God, we have got peace in our families, peace in our neighborhoods, peace in our community, and, what is more than all, we have peace with our God; for he that offendeth not in word, the same is a perfect man. Show me a perfect man that does not have peace with his God, and you will show me something I never saw