Great Salt Lake City, March 31st, 1854.

Dear brother James

In reflecting upon the situation of those brethren who are abroad upon missions, and realizing from experience many of their feelings, it occurred to my mind that a few lines from Utah might be a benefit, comfort, and consolation to you in your labors.

With the exception of the Indian disturbances of last season, the different settlements have enjoyed the health, union, and prosperity usual to them previous to your departure, and of course the snows of winter have kept the Indians pretty closely confined since last Fall. What the course of those few who were hostile will be when the snows leave the mountains is yet uncertain; however, that will depend upon the faith and obedience of the saints, and the will of the Lord concerning us. Aware that it is good policy to be ready for any event, the inhabitants of the different settlements have been building forts, and preparing for the safety of themselves, and property in case any serious outbreak should occur on the part of our red neighbors. Last fall the citizens of this city commenced an earth wall, designed to surround it, and it is expected that the wall and its ditch will be completed this Spring. The wall around the Temple Block is nearly up on three sides, and there is much material on the ground for the fourth, and when the weather settles we shall commence vigorous operations for erecting the Temple, and anticipate not being obliged to slacken our efforts until it is completed, that the saints may enjoy the fulness of the blessings pertaining to the ordinances of salvation, both for the living and the dead.

We do not expect to form many new settlements until next Fall, if even then, though bros. Parley P. Pratt, J. D. Lee and others will build up Harmony, some 20 miles south of Cedar City, and make a post on the Rio Virgin some 30 or 40 miles still further south, with a view to raise Cotton, Indigo, Sugar Cane, &c. Strange as it may appear several in the different settlements, & more especially in the southern, are preparing to leave for California, after all their prayers for deliverance from the yoke, and abominations of the gentiles, and after basking in all the privileges that their faith could secure, and the goodness, <&> mercies of the Lord could in wisdom bestow upon them in these rich and peaceful valleys. All such do not appear to have profited much, if any, by the rough, and hardbought experience of the past, nor to have understood the designs and providences of the Almighty. To all such I feel to say "go in welcome, we are far better off without, than with you," for I had rather be associated with the faith, prayers, and good works of one righteous man to accomplish the will of the Lord, than to have the kind aid afforded by thousands, who are half hearted in the cause, and ready to say good Lord or good devil as the case may be, and who have their thoughts and affections centered more upon the things of time and sense than upon the glory of God, and their eternal exaltation.

On the 11th inst, about 9. A. M. our beloved brother Willard Richards quietly left his fleshly tabernacle, that it might rest awhile, and has gone behind the vail to labor still more effectually for Zion than his flesh cloyed powers could permit him to do here.

Further items of news you will gather from the brethren who go out on missions this season, and from the papers, but there is one fact more which I wish you to fully understand, realise and profit by, and that is, that you was sent upon your mission as a faithful and good saint, to proclaim the Gospel to the children of men for their salvation, and with my faith and prayers, that you might perform a good work, and with my confidence that you would return with unspotted garments. Now bro. James I wish you to remember this and let no thoughts to the contrary trouble you in the least for they are of an evil source purposely designed to thwart your good purposes, and hinder your progress.

So far as I know, your family and friends are well, though they doubtless keep you more minutely informed as to their circumstances.

Ever pleased to hear of your welfare, and success in well doing, and praying that the blessings of Heaven may rest upon you in your mission, I Remain as ever

Your brother in the Covenant

Elder James Pace Brigham Young

care of Saml. W. Richards

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