

## REMARKS

BY

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DELIVERED

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REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

Religious liberty guaranteed by the Constitution—Not mere freedom of belief—Belief needs no protection of law—The free exercise of religion required—Where the line should be drawn—Natural rights must be protected—Danger of special legislation—Object of the gathering of the Saints—Establishment of God's kingdom—Literal fulfillment of prophecy—Restoration of the Christian Church—Authority of the Priesthood—Lack of Divine Authority in Christendom and Heathendom alike—Proofs of the Divine Mission of the Latter-day Saints—Plural Marriage a religious institution—A Bible doctrine—Constitutional right to practice it—God will give us the victory.

I HAVE been pleased in listening to the remarks of Brother Caine who has just returned from Washington; glad to hear that his heart with ours is turned toward the truth, and that his desire, in common with ours, is to build up the Kingdom of God in the earth, and contend for the rights which belong to us as American citizens. Some people seem to imagine because we have embraced a doctrine which is not popular in the world, because we have embraced a faith which is contrary to the generally received notions in regard to religion, that we ought to have no rights whatever as citizens of our common country. We do not look upon the matter in that light. We consider that we have the right under the Constitution of the United States to believe anything which seems right to us, and not only to believe it, but to carry it out in our practice, so far as we can do so without interfering with the rights of other people. The first Amendment to the Constitution of the United States says: "Congress shall pass no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." We understand that Amendment as it is written. We do not wish to interpret it, or give to it any meaning other than the plain language conveys. The language is, "That Congress shall pass no law respecting an establishment of religion." With the establishment of religion, then, Congress has nothing to do. Congress cannot set up a religion, nor can it pass any law respecting an establishment of religion—that is, to prevent its free exercise. There are some people in these latter times who interpret that Amendment to mean that people may believe what they please, but it carries with it no freedom of practice. People may believe what seems right to them, but they must not carry it out if it happens to be contrary to the views of the great majority. Now, it appears to me that that is a very narrow interpretation of the meaning of that Amendment to the Constitution. It appears to us, as it must to the great bulk of the people of the country—the sovereign people—that without any constitutional amendment, or the passage of any law, people everywhere are of themselves free to believe. We do not think a law can interfere with belief even if one were passed for the purpose of interfering with it. A man's belief cannot be controlled by any Act of Congress or of Parliament. No edict of a government or any other law-making body can interfere with my freedom of belief. When a proposition is placed before my mind, and I reflect upon it, and it appears to be correct, my mind receives it and I believe it. Sometimes persons believe in spite of themselves. Sometimes a man will believe a thing in spite of his own desires not to believe. Then this faith cannot be controlled by any person outside of the man himself, and sometimes he cannot control it himself. No edict or law, or any power of man on the earth can alter a man's belief, or prevent him from believing. A law can be enacted to prevent the carrying of that belief into practice; but it cannot interfere with belief, and it needs no amendment to the Constitution, no enactment of Congress or of any law-making body on earth, to protect a man in mere belief. Then it is clear to us that the intention was, that a man should have not only the right to believe, but that he should be protected in the free exercise of that belief. As the language states, Congress is not to pass any law respecting an establishment of religion, nor prohibit the free exercise thereof. What is the exercise of belief in religion? Why, it is certain acts men perform prompted by their belief, prompted by their religion. Suppose a man believes it is right to be baptized in water—buried in water for the remission of sins—how can he evidence his belief in that principle? He can only do it in the way specified by the Apostle James. He says: "Show me thy faith without thy works and I will show thee my faith by my works." "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead." That is the only way in which faith can be truly shown—by works. If I believe that baptism is right I evidence my belief by being baptized, and if I am not baptized it either shows that my faith is very weak or that it does not exist; that I have not the courage of my faith, or else that I do not believe at all.

Now, we consider that we have a perfect right under the Constitution of our country to believe what seems right to us and then to carry it out. "Well," someone may say, "do you think there should be no restriction to this? Are people to be protected in any kind of religion they may have? Suppose a man were to come here from India who believed it a religious duty, under some circumstances, to strangle a man, would he have the right under the Constitution of the United States, to strangle? Again there are people who believe it is right, in India, to burn a widow on the funeral pile, that her spirit may be sent to keep company with her husband in the other world. Would that person, or those persons have the right, under the Constitution of the United States, to carry out their belief in this country?" We say no. We say that the Thug has no right here to practice his faith. We say the Suttee could not be established in this country. "Why not? You believe it is right under some circumstances for a man to have more wives than one, and that those who thus believe are protected by the Constitution in the practice of their religion. Why should not those who believe it right to strangle, or to burn widows, have the right to practice their religion under the Constitution of the United States?" The dividing line is very simple, as truth generally is. It is very easy to be drawn. It is to be drawn in consonance with the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, and with the principles that underlie our government. In the Declaration of Independence it is laid down that there are certain rights that cannot be alienated, that are natural, that are inherent, that are not imparted by governments; they do not belong to politics, but they are inherent in the individual—the right to life, the right to liberty, the right to property, and the right to the pursuit of happiness. These rights are inalienable. They belong to every individual. They are not conferred by law. They belong to us. They are born in us. They belong to every person who breathes the breath of life. Then, an act of any individual or any government which infringes upon these natural rights is wrong in and of itself. If any individual interferes with the rights of his fellow men he may be restrained by the secular law. The right to life, and to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness, and to property belong to all individuals alike. One body of people professing one faith must not interfere with the rights of any other body of people professing another faith. The Latter-day Saints, as well as the Latter-day sinners, the Methodist as well as the Catholic, the Jew as well as the Gentile—all people alike in this great country must be protected equally in these natural rights which belong to them.

Here, then, is where the line must be drawn. Anything that persons profess to do under the name of religion which interferes with the rights of others is wrong, and the secular law may step in and protect the citizens and restrain or punish those people who attempt to do this under the plea of religion. If I do anything which interferes with the life, the liberty, the happiness, or the property of my neighbor, the law has a right to step in and protect my neighbor and restrain me. But if my religion—that which I believe to be true, and which I try to carry out as a part of my faith—does not interfere with human rights, does not infringe in any degree upon the rights of my fellow man neither Congress, nor any other law-making power on the face of the earth, has the right to interfere with me under the Constitution of the country. I have a right to the exercise of my religion so long as it does not infringe upon the rights of other people. There is where we draw the line, and we think it is the right place. And we are standing up, not only for our own rights in this respect, but for the rights of all people upon the face of this land. As has been said by Brother Caine this afternoon, in passing certain enactments which infringe upon our religious liberties, the Congress of the United States is doing something that will come back upon the very individuals who have been trying to establish this principle or to enact these laws. Because, we may be the society or body aimed at to-day, and to-morrow another sect or party or body may be aimed at by the same enactments which are passed against us and perhaps will hold good in both directions. It is a poor rule that only works one way. It may be found convenient to-day to single out the "Mormons," because they are unpopular, for special legislation; but in a little time some other religious body in this country may have the same inimical legislation applied to them, to bear down upon them with greater weight than it does upon us. You cannot violate a principle of truth without receiving very bad consequences. Those who attempt to do that will be sure to reap the fruit of their labors at some time or other. And when the Congress of the United States commences to move away the foundation stones of the system that the fathers of this nation built up, they are working on very dangerous ground, and the consequences thereof will not be confined to the few people against whom these measures are made. It is the duty of every patriot, of every man who loves his country, and of every woman who loves her country, to do their part in preventing the passage of such enactments as these, and in vindicating the principles and doctrines which enter into the Constitution of our beloved country. So we are standing up not only for our own rights, but

for the rights of others, and this is one of the duties enjoined upon us by our Heavenly Father.

We have been brought from the various parts of the earth into these mountain valleys that we may establish a system of religion which has been revealed from heaven, which our Heavenly Father has committed to us. We have not taken this religion from any of the sacred books that are in existence; we have not concocted this system from the Bible, or from any other religious work; but it has been revealed to us in our own day and time. God has broken the silence of ages. That same God that spoke to the prophets of old, whose record we have in the Old Testament, and who sent His Son Jesus Christ in the meridian of time to die for the sins of the world—that same God that inspired the Apostles of Jesus Christ in their great works has Himself spoken from heaven in our own day, and angels have come down from the courts of glory with a message of life and salvation for the inhabitants of the earth. This Church, this system, this organization to which we belong has not been set up by the wisdom of man, but has been set up by the power of God, by the command of the Almighty, and has been sustained by him up to the present time. All the efforts which are made to break it down will only tend to build it up. Every law the United States may pass with the intent to disintegrate this work, to divide the people, to crush the power that exists in the midst of the Latter-day Saints, will only tend to consolidate the people, to bind them closer together, to make their faith more intense, their convictions more certain, and to make their determination more persistent. That will be the effect. God is working with this people and has worked with them from the beginning. And this, as we have heard this afternoon, is not a mere matter of faith. We have seen so many proofs of an over-ruling power, and manifestations of special providence, as a people and as individuals, in answer to our prayers, that we know that God lives, that God answers prayer, that God Almighty is with the Latter-day Saints while they keep His commandments and do His will, and that He will over-rule for good all the evil which is intended against us.

This work is established for the purpose of bringing about His designs in regard to this earth upon which we live. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. The cattle on a thousand hills are His. The silver and the gold belong to Him, and the life of all mankind is in His hands. He is Lord over all, blessed forever, and it is His right to rule and regulate and control all things on the face of this globe. Jesus Christ His beloved Son has been here. He dwelt on the earth for a time and performed the work allotted to Him, by which he obtained all power and sits at the right hand of the Father; and the time is coming when He will stand on the earth, establish His government and dominion, extending it from pole to pole and from shore to shore, and the kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdom of our God and His Christ; not in some figurative, mystical, spiritual sense, but really and truly as a matter of fact. The Savior, as foretold by the prophets, came upon the earth literally and truly. He was hung upon the cross, and His spirit left His body. He was laid in the tomb, but He was raised again from the dead, not in a spiritual sense, or some mythical sense, but really and truly His body was raised from the dead. In that body He appeared to His disciples, and went up from their gaze, saying that in like manner he would descend again. And His promises are that when He shall come the second time it shall not be as the babe of Bethlehem, despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; nor to be persecuted by His own, but that He shall come in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of His Father David and reign and rule from the rivers to the end of the earth, so that all nations, kindreds, tongues and people shall serve and obey Him. Now, we look for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we expect it just as much as when the sun goes down we expect it to rise above the hill tops in the morning. And when He comes we expect it will be Himself—Jesus of Nazareth, our Elder Brother, the first born of God in the spirit world, the Only Begotten of God in the flesh. We expect that He will come and reign over the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, and we expect that all kingdoms, all governments, and all institutions that men have set up will be broken down, and as Nebuchadnezzar saw them in the vision which Daniel interpreted, they will become as the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and be swept away and no place found for them upon the face of the whole earth; because the Kingdom of God and of His Christ will prevail everywhere, and it will cover the earth. For it is the kingdom that was spoken of by the Prophets, and we are told that "the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens"—that is over all the earth, is it not?—shall be His kingdom and shall "be given into the hands of the people of the Saints of the Most High, and their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom." Now, we expect the fulfillment of all these things, and when they come to pass they will occur just as they are written, like other prophecies have been accomplished. When Isaiah prophesied that "a virgin should conceive and bear a son" and that they should "call His name Immanuel," the prophet meant what he said, and it came to pass and all the predictions in regard to the second coming, as it is called, the second advent of the Messiah, and the establishment of God's Kingdom and government on the earth, will be fulfilled exactly as the prophets have predicted. There is no need to mystify, nor to spiritualize, nor to explain them, they will come to pass word for word; for "heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the word of God shall pass away, it shall all be fulfilled.

Now, this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to which we belong is established by the Almighty for the express purpose of opening the way for the accomplishment of this great work. In this Church is the germ of that kingdom that Daniel saw. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, set up by the power of God, by the authority of the Most High, is exactly the same Church that Jesus Christ built up—that is, the same in all its essential principles; the same organization, the same kind of officers, the same doctrines, the same in its spirit, the same in its ordinances, the same in the power that attends those ordinances, doctrines, principles and commandments as were revealed to the ancient Church. It is governed just exactly in the same way that the church which Jesus Christ established when He was upon the earth was governed. Every principle which was taught by the ancient Apostles in their time is taught by the latter-day Apostles in their time. And the Apostles in our day have the same authority or Priesthood, as it is called, that the Apostles had in their time whom Jesus ordained; because those that held the keys of that apostleship in the earth in former times have come down to the earth, literally and truly, and ordained men to the same authority and apostleship which they held while living in the flesh. That is how the apostleship has been restored. That authority exists in this Church, and it will never be taken away again. That which is called by the Latter-day Saints the Priesthood, is the authority given of God to men to act in His name, so that what they do by His authority and in the way that He has appointed on the earth shall be acknowledged in heaven—that which they seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven, and that which they loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. It must be done as God directs, according to the revelation of His will. But this authority, this right, this power from God exists in this Church, as it existed in the ancient Church, because it has been actually restored by the very men who held the keys of it. And really, after all, it is that that the world is fighting. All these plans and schemes, all that legislation and these influences that are brought to bear on this Church, upon this system called by the world "Mormonism," is brought to bear in consequence of the restoration of that power and that authority. It is the authority of the kingdom. It is here to stay. It is here to prevail. First it will preach the Gospel of the kingdom as a witness to all nations; it will then gather together the elect of God from the four quarters of the earth; it will build temples to the name of the Most High God in which men can administer in ordinances that pertain to the salvation of the living and the redemption of the dead. It will accomplish all that has been predicted by the prophets concerning the Latter-day Kingdom.

Now, this is the kind of work in which we are engaged. It has been introduced by the Almighty to bring about all those grand events that we read about in the writings of the old prophets that have not yet been fulfilled; there are a great many things contained in the Old Testament that people pay little attention to now-a-days. They have an idea of things coming to pass in some spiritual fashion, or some mythical, mystical kind of way; they don't know exactly how; and it is the business of certain men, who are hired to preach the Gospel, to make mysterious explanations of passages of Scripture, which they manage to cover up, and succeed in confusing the people more than before the expounding was attempted. Nevertheless, all those predictions that refer to events that are to take place in the earth in the latter days will all come to pass as they are written, and this work, this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, this thing called "Mormonism" has been introduced by the Almighty for the express purpose of bringing these things about; that is why it is universally opposed. All these different sects of modern Christendom are like the sects of heathendom, without communication from the eternal world. They receive no revelation from God. Their ministers have no authority except that which they obtain from their congregations. Many of them do not pretend to have any other, when you press them closely. They preach those tenets which the people believe and which are acceptable to the people—each minister of each sect preaching that which the members desire to hear. All these different sects contain many good people who are trying to do right, trying to serve God, and a great many others that are hypocrites. But as sects, as societies, as churches, they are not authorized of God. You can trace them all to their origin, and find that that origin is human in its nature. They have not come from God, they have come from men, some of them good men, perhaps. Men have met together and formulated creeds and organized societies, and these societies have grown and spread abroad, and after a while have become orthodox in

the earth. At first they were persecuted and opposed, but as they grew in wealth as well as in numbers they made a name and a noise and became a power in the earth, and are recognized and understood as orthodox sects. But there is not one of them ordained of God. They are not set up by divine command, and their ministers have not been divinely authorized to preach the Gospel, nor to administer in the things of the Kingdom. There may be and no doubt are men among them preaching that which they believe to be true. But a man's belief is not authority. A man may believe a thing to be right, but that does not give him authority to represent God in that matter. A man may believe it is right to sprinkle a babe and call that baptism. But even supposing it is right—though it is not—the fact that he believes it is right would not give him the authority to administer, because he does it "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," and he has no right to take these names upon his lips in vain, and he does take them upon his lips in vain unless he has been authorized to use these names. No man has any more right to use the name of Deity in the administration of an ordinance, without authority, than a common citizen, without authority, has the right to use the name and pretend to be the representative of the Government of the United States, or of Great Britain, or of Germany; not a bit. But men seem to think because God does not interfere, that they have a right to do a great many things that he never commanded and do them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Now, as I said just now, the authority to administer in the things of God's Church has been restored in the way that I have told you. That is why we claim the right in this Church to administer these ordinances, and that is why we lay down the broad assertion that outside of this Church there is no authority in the world to administer in the name of the Lord. If there is such authority, let those who claim to have it show their credentials and prove where they obtained their authority from. Now, in this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints not only is this authority restored, and those same doctrines, principles and ordinances which were had in the early Christian Church also restored, but accompanying these are the same spirit and gifts and manifestations and power that existed in the ancient Church. And here is one of the great proofs of the truth of that which I have advanced to you: Wherever the servants of God connected with this Church and holding this authority go into the world—and they go out without purse or scrip and administer: there are no salaried preachers in this Church—wherever they go and proclaim this Gospel they tell the people that if they will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and repent of their sins, and be baptized for the remission of sins, they shall receive the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands; and that this Holy Ghost that shall be given to them is the same spirit exactly in its manifestations, in its power, that the Apostles conferred upon the people by the laying on of hands in the early Christian Church, and that rested down upon the old prophets by which they wrote the things called scripture: the same spirit that Jesus Christ had without measure; that spirit that He gave to His Apostles when He breathed upon them and said: "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Receive ye the Holy Ghost; that same spirit that was upon them on the day of Pentecost: that spirit which manifested itself to the Church in Corinth by the gift of tongues, interpretations, visions, dreams, healings, and miracles, and all those signs which Jesus Christ promised to them that believed. These are manifest in the midst of the Latter-day Saints; this spirit, this power, is revealed to them and communicated to them. Not merely to the Presidency and the Twelve Apostles, and other leading Elders, but to each individual, to every person who believes and repents and is baptized, and upon whom the hands are laid of those having authority from God to administer in His name. Now, these men might claim this authority and be impostors; for the world has been full of impostors, and there are plenty of them now-a-days—religious impostors; these men might claim to have this authority, but they could not communicate this power, the Holy Ghost. But wherever people receive this doctrine, and obey it in the spirit of it, their testimony is, in every land, in every corner of the earth, whenever the servants of God have penetrated, that they have received for themselves by revelation, by the Holy Ghost from on high, a testimony that this work is the work of God, and that these men are His servants. That is why they are here. That is why they are gathered in these valleys of the mountains. They are here because they have received the truth and a knowledge of it, because they have received the ordinances of the Church and obtained the power that accompanies them; because God has witnessed to them individually that He has spoken from the heavens, and that the time has come for the building up of the latter-day Kingdom and the establishment of God's dominion in all the earth, and they are called to help in the work; not only the Apostles and Priesthood but all the members of the Church are called to take a part in the work. And here we are, in these mountain valleys,