

written in this book have come from God, for the benefit of mankind. But we do not believe that we ought to try to force these things upon anybody:

"We believe that religion is instituted of God, and that men are amenable to Him, and to Him only, for the exercise of it, unless their religious opinions prompt them to infringe upon the rights and liberties of others. But we do not believe that human law has a right to interfere in prescribing rules of worship to bind the consciences of men, nor dictate forms for public or private devotion; that the civil magistrate should restrain crime, but never control conscience; punish guilt but never suppress the freedom of the soul.

"We believe that all religious societies have a right to deal with their members for disorderly conduct, according to the rules and regulations of such societies, provided that such dealings be for fellowship and good standing. But we do not believe that any religious society has authority to try men on the right of property or life, to take from them this world's goods, or to put them in jeopardy of either life or limb, neither to inflict any physical punishment upon them. They can only excommunicate from their society, and withdraw from them their fellowship."—Section cxxxiv: 4, 10.

I read this that our friends present may have an idea of what we think we may do, and what we ought not to do; and to show that if those who belong to our Church transgress the rules of the Church, they can be dealt with for their fellowship, and for that only. We do not believe that we have any right to deprive them of property. We do not believe that we have a right to punish them physically. We do not believe that we have a right to inflict any penalty upon them, except it be in relation to their fellowship. They can be suspended from fellowship, or they can be excommunicated for transgression, and that is the end of our power in this Church concerning them. That is what we believe. That is what we practice.

Now then, while we claim the right to do all these things for ourselves, because in it we infringe upon the rights of no others, we also extend this privilege to everybody else. And we do not think it right for any government, or any society, or any institution to interfere with that full freedom and liberty which the Lord has given to His creatures. We believe that governments have a right to punish crime, we believe that they have a right to say what is crime. We also believe in the rights of citizens to contest before the courts of their country every point of difference that they may have with the law-making power. But we believe that governments, societies and institutions should not try to interfere with religious freedom. We believe in religious liberty in the fullest sense of the word; not in license, not in breaking the laws of our country, not in doing that which is essentially evil; but only in doing that which is good. And as to the right of belief, we believe that is of itself free to everybody. We do not believe that governments can interfere with that if they try. So when the Constitution of the United States, in its first amendment, says: "Congress shall pass no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," we think it means just what it says;

that it does not simply mean the right of people to believe what seems right to them. People talk about believing what they please. People cannot do that. They cannot believe what they please. I believe some things that don't please me until I get to understand them aright. I disbelieve some things that would please me, only I find out they are wrong. It is not what pleases me, or what suits me, but that which seems to be right in my eyes that I believe. It is true, we can close our eyes to the truth. We can shut up the windows of our souls, as we do sometimes the windows in our houses, and pull down the blinds to shut out the glorious sunlight, for fear of spoiling the carpet; but if we let the sunlight in—let the light of the sun of righteousness penetrate our souls, we can see and understand that which is true and that which is right. It is by closing our eyes, by loving darkness rather than light, that we bring ourselves under condemnation. But as a rule people believe that which seems right to them. We accord that right to everybody. We are struggling for that ourselves. And in all that we have done to battle for the rights of freedom in religion, we have had as much in view the rights of our friends who are not of our faith as our own rights. I can say this conscientiously for the leaders of the Latter-day Saints. I am acquainted with them. I know their opinions and views in regard to this matter. Our desire is that all men should be free. Liberty should prevail everywhere. There is no bondage in this Church. There is no oppression in this Church. People are not here, and are not kept here, by the power of man. They are here, as I have told you, because they have received the truth, and the truth has set them free. They have turned their backs on their native lands, they have left the graves of their fathers, they have forsaken their relatives and their kindred in distant countries and have come up here, as the Prophet Micah saw they would in the last days, into the tops of the mountains, where the house of the Lord is being reared in the latter days, that they might learn of Him:

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

And many nations shall come, and, say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

They have come here in that spirit, and they are exercising freedom of conscience as far as they are permitted to do so. And they do not think any power has a right to infringe upon their property any more than they have a right to interfere with and invade the property of others. In our efforts to maintain our religious rights and privileges, we are also battling for the rights of other; and we are just as anxious for the rights of our neighbors to worship as they see right, as for ourselves in the way that we see right. The line of demarcation between religious liberty and the law—for all things must be governed by law—is

this: When any man or society or organization attempts to infringe upon the rights and liberties of others, then we believe that the secular law may step in and restrain them, so that there may be liberty for all, not favors for a few. We do not believe that it is right to establish a national church. We do not believe it is the right of the church to dominate the State. We believe the two institutions are separate. At the same time we believe that a man's conscience, regulated by his religion, ought to govern him in all the affairs of life, secular and religious. We do not believe it is right to do anything that is wrong. We believe that the spirit of God should be with us in all that we do, to guide us in all our affairs; that we should carry the Spirit of God into the workshop, into the office, into the field, into the kitchen, into the dining room, on the mountain top or in the valley, on land or on the sea, on the surface of the earth or down in its bowels; wherever we go we believe that the Holy Spirit should be in our hearts, to guide and direct us in all that we do and say, that we may be sanctified unto God in our bodies and our spirits, which are His; and this spirit should affect us in every affair of life. At the same time the machinery of religion and the machinery of the State should be kept separate and apart, and it has been so in these valleys. I want to say this to correct ideas that have gone abroad concerning this matter.

When we were a Territorial government, under the auspices of our leaders, we never established anything that would infringe upon the religious rights of others. The religion of the Church and the machinery of the State were kept apart. They are so today. If Utah were one of the States of the Union, Church and State would be separate and distinct, just as much as they are anywhere. While we believe that the men who stand at the head of our Church are inspired of God, called of God, appointed and ordained to minister to us for the Lord, we do not believe that they should occupy the place of the State, or that the religion that we hold should be established as a State religion. Freedom to all men, freedom to all sects, freedom to all parties, is our motto! As one of our deceased Apostles has it, in a hymn that we have in our hymn book:

Freedom, peace and full salvation
Are the blessings guaranteed—
Liberty to every nation,
Every tongue and every creed!

I bear testimony to you that I know this Church is the Church of Jesus Christ; that it has been built up by the power of God; that God Almighty has revealed it; that Jesus Christ, His Son, has manifested Himself, and that this Church is His Church, because He has built it up, and He guides and directs and controls it, through His servants who stand at the head of the Church. They are but men. We do not worship any man. We do not worship Joseph Smith, as some people imagine; but we look upon him as a very great Prophet, and we have reasons for this. We believe that God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son appeared to him, and opened to him this last dispensation—the dispensation of the fullness of times." We believe that Peter, James