

that the Lord sent forth His angel to reveal the truths of heaven as in times past, even as in ancient days. This should have been hailed as the greatest blessing which could have been bestowed upon any nation, kindred, tongue, or people. It should have been received with hearts of gratitude and gladness, praise and thanksgiving.

But as it was in the days of our Savior, so was it in the advent of this new dispensation. It was not in accordance with the notions, traditions, and preconceived ideas of the American people. The messenger did not come to an eminent divine of any of the so-called *orthodoxy*, he did not adopt their interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. The Lord did not come with the armies of heaven, in power and great glory, nor send His messengers panoplied with aught else than the truth of heaven, to communicate to the meek, the lowly, the youth of humble origin, the sincere enquirer after the knowledge of God. But He did send His angel to this same obscure person, Joseph Smith, Jun., who afterwards became a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, and informed him that he should not join any of the religious sects of the day, for they were all wrong; that they were following the precepts of men instead of the Lord Jesus; that He had a work for him to perform, inasmuch as he should prove faithful before Him.

No sooner was this made known, and published abroad, and people began to listen and obey the heavenly summons, than opposition began to rage, and the people, even in this favored land, began to persecute their neighbors and friends for entertaining religious opinions differing from their own.

I pause now to ask, had not Joseph Smith a right to promulgate and establish a different, a new religion and form of worship in this government?

Everyone must admit he had. This right was always held sacred, for upon it was based the religious liberty of every citizen of the Republic. It was a privilege held sacred in the bosom of every class of people; no Judge dared invade its holy precincts. No Legislator nor Governor ventured to obstruct the free exercise thereof. How then should it be esteemed an object worthy of persecution that Joseph Smith, the man called of God to perform a work in restoring the Gospel of salvation unto the children of men, and his followers, true believers in his divine mission, should attempt to exercise the same privilege held sacred by all others, of every name, nature, and description, and equally so by them? Why should he and his followers be debarred the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of their consciences? Legally they cannot, and I will further state, that legally they have not. No! Whenever the iron hand of oppression and persecution has fallen upon this people, our opposers have broken their own laws, set at defiance and trampled under foot every principle of equal rights, justice, and liberty found written in that rich legacy of our fathers, THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

Whenever popular fury has been directed against us, no power in the government has been found potent enough to afford protection, and what is still more astonishing, honorable enough to yield redress, nor has any effort succeeded in bringing to justice those individuals who had perpetrated such fearful crimes. No! The *murderer*, the *assassin*, the *midday plunderer*, and *highway robber* roam unmolested, and mingle unquestioned in the society of the rulers of the land; they pass and repass as current coin, producing no jar in the sensibilities of refinement, no odium in the atmosphere in which they move.