

things that they should speak about when it became their duty to preach the truth. This congregation is very largely composed of people who profess the same religious doctrines as those which I have myself embraced, adhered to and advocate. There are others, however in the congregation who are unacquainted with the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and who perhaps are more or less anxious to obtain some understanding of the nature and character of the work which is represented among and by this people. Heretofore they have been dependent upon popular report, which has been, in almost every instance, erroneous upon this subject, for we have been greatly misrepresented in all the world. There is one particular point that I wish to direct the minds of this audience to regarding the work, and in doing so, I wish to point out a popular error which exists in the understanding of many people in reference to us. There is a prevailing opinion, based on false representations regarding the Church which I have the honor to be identified with, that there exists among the people called Latter-day Saints, a species of serfdom or bondage, or that one or more men rule over the people with a high hand—a species of despotism. I wish to state here that my personal experience in this Church for half of the time which I have spent in this life, informs my judgment that such is not the case, that the Latter-day Saints are a free people, and the system which they have adopted—which they understand to be of divine origin—is calculated in its character to make them free. The reason why it makes them free is because that the greatest bondage which can exist among the human

family is the result of doing that which is wrong, which is contrary to the laws of God, and to the laws of righteousness, that should exist between man and man. I do not wish to say that this Church or this people as a whole are entirely free from evil. It would be very wrong to assert this, to do so would be stepping beyond the bounds of truth and consistency, for we are in a state of imperfection, and where imperfection exists there necessarily follow departures from the strict line of righteousness. But there is one feature connected with this Church that is glorious, and it is this: that so far as the laws of this Church are concerned, there are none who are exempt from them, they are applicable to all, from those who hold the highest positions in this Church to the humblest member therein; all must subscribe to them. There is, however, an organization—an order in this Church which we recognize and which we sustain. This feature extends to this beautiful principle in the Church—which is the highest form of what might be termed the democratic principle—that all the main measures pertaining to this work, in order to be valid in the sight of heaven, and to be in accordance with the strict law of this Church, must have the consent of the people before it becomes binding upon the people, from whatsoever source it may emanate. In order to show you that this is the case, I will refer the congregation to what we esteem as the law and the testimony. We have a book here which is called the Book of Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, containing the revelations of Jesus Christ through the Prophet Joseph Smith, who was raised up specially by the Almighty, according to our