

**RELIGIOUS LIBERTY GUARANTEED BY THE
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RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION—A BIBLE
DOCTRINE—CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO PRACTICE IT.**

REMARKS BY ELDER CHARLES W. PENROSE, DELIVERED IN THE TABERNACLE, SALT
LAKE CITY, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 26, 1884.

REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

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 to 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 to 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