

I ask you, friends, how is this? Are not our religious sentiments as sacred to us as to any other portion of the community? And should it not be the duty, as well as the pride, of every American citizen to extend that provision of the CONSTITUTION to us which he claims for himself? And is not that sacred instrument invaded and broken as much in debarring and excluding this people from its privileges, rights, and blessings, as it would be if your rights and privileges were thus invaded? No, gentlemen, we have broken no laws, our Glorious CONSTITUTION guarantees unto us all that we claim. Under its broad folds, in its obvious meaning and intents, we are safe, and can always rejoice in peace. All that we have ever claimed, or wish to, on the part of the government, is the just administration of the powers and privileges of the National Compact.

It is not our acts, neither our intentions that the people or the Government are afraid or complain of, but their own evil surmisings concerning us.

In our first settlement in Missouri, it was said by our enemies that we intended to tamper with the slaves, not that we had any idea of the kind, for such a thing never entered our minds. We knew that the children of Ham were to be the *"servant of servants,"* and no power under heaven could hinder it, so long as the Lord should permit them to welter under the curse, and those were known to be our religious views concerning them. Yet, the misrepresentation of our enemies found willing ears in those prejudiced against us, and we were driven from our homes in consequence of the fears of the people, and the prejudice which had been raised against us in consequence thereof.

Again, in Missouri, in the early part of our history, the fears of the

people and Government were aroused, because *they, not we,* said that it was our intention to tamper with the Indians, therefore we must not be allowed to exist in their vicinity; and again the alarm was sounded, and we were driven from our homes, plundered, mobbed, some killed, and all this not for any crime which we had committed, but for fear we might commit one.

Again; it was industriously circulated that we were going to declare our *"Independence,"* not that we had, or intended to do so absurd a thing; yet anything, no matter how absurd, seemed sufficient excuse to startle the fears of the community, and they began to drive, plunder, rob, burn our houses, and lay waste our fields, and this was called, *"Mormon disturbances,"* and the aid of the Government was invoked to quell *"Mormon insurrection," "Mormon troubles,"* and *"Turbulent Mormons."* And although it was found necessary, as they state, to drive us from Missouri and the frontiers, to prevent us from tampering with the slaves and Indians, yet it was found equally necessary, ten years afterwards, when we were a hundred to one at that time, to drive us from Nauvoo into the very midst of the Indians, as unworthy of any other society.

Fears of what we might do with the Indians had by this time subsided, and fears of something else that we might hereafter do, if left to remain in peace, and a desire to plunder, accomplished our exodus from Illinois. Perhaps, however, in this last case our enemies might have entertained some fears that, if we were permitted to remain unmolested, the bloodthirsty assassins who killed our beloved Prophet and Patriarch, Joseph and Hyrum, who were inhumanly massacred while reposing under the pledged faith of the State for their protection and safety, might not be