

THE RIGHTS OF MORMONISM.

A DISCOURSE BY ELDER JOHN TAYLOR, DELIVERED IN THE BOWERY, GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, AUGUST 30, 1857.

REPORTED BY G. D. WATT, J. V. LONG.

I did not expect to be called upon to address you this afternoon; but I always feel ready to speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, whenever I am called upon.

Brother Kimball said he would like to hear me say something about the RIGHTS of "Mormonism." The rights of "Mormonism" are so varied and extensive, that it would be very difficult to speak of them all in one discourse. We have the right to live. That is "Mormonism." We have the right to eat and drink, and to pursue that course that we may think proper, so long as we do not interfere with other persons' rights. We have a right to live free and unmolested; and there is no law, human or divine, that rightfully has a right, if you please, to interfere with us. We have a right to think, and we have a right, after we have thought, to express our thoughts, and to write them, and to publish them. We possess as many rights and as much liberty in relation to this as any other persons; and there is no law, human or divine, that can rightfully rob us of those liberties or trample upon our rights. We have a right to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience; and no man, legally, in this land, has a right to interfere with us for so doing. We have a right to believe in and practice as we please in relation to matrimony. We have a right to choose whether we will have one wife or twenty; and there is no law of the land that can legally interfere with us;

neither is there a man that I have met with, that professed to be a man at all, that can say that we are acting illegally. We have a right to secure the favor of God, and we have rights as the citizens of the kingdom of God. We have rights upon earth, and we have rights in heaven; we have rights that affect us and our posterity and progenitors, worlds without end; and they are rights that no man can interfere with. We have a right to our own Governor, as brother Kimball says; we have a right to our own Judges; we have a right to make our own laws and to regulate our own affairs.

These are some of the rights that belong to us; but when you come to talk about rights, they are so various, complicated, and extensive, that it is difficult, without reflection, to enumerate them. They exist with us here and all around us, and they are rights that affect us, our progenitors, and posterity, worlds without end. But in regard to some of the things with which we are more intimately connected, we have our individual, our social, and political rights, so far as existing here as a people is concerned. I do not know but that you will think that I am for sticking to my text pretty well: however, I will try, as well as I can, to do justice to it.

If we look at the very foundation of government, we may enquire, How were governments formed? Who organized them? And whence did they obtain their power? It is a subject for deep thought and reflection, and