

fore God and man. For God proposes to deal with His Church as a whole, and as a whole to hold them responsible to work the works of righteousness and to defend the faith of the everlasting gospel committed to them, and to purify and sanctify the whole Church and see that evil is put away from our midst, whether it be in the family circle or private walks of life, or in its high officials and those who minister in public capacities; in like manner he requires of them to see that all our organizations and municipalities are in a wholesome condition, and are administered with integrity and uprightness before God and the people. And as mouthpieces of the Almighty and as watchmen upon the walls of Zion, God requires of us his servants, the Apostles, the Elders, the Presidents of Stakes, and the Bishops everywhere, not only to minister in their several callings in a church capacity, but also to instruct officers of every kind entrusted with the municipal affairs of life, that they may be found faithful in magnifying the law and discharging the trust reposed in them in secular affairs as well as ecclesiastical; for civil organizations and powers of civil government are also appointed and ordained of heaven for the welfare of mankind, for the protection of all flesh. And those children of men who may not accept the doctrines of Christ and the priesthood, its administrations, counsels and decisions in the secular affairs of life; yet if they are disposed to obey good, wholesome rules of society in their civil capacity, as such are entitled to protection. And it is more especially for the benefit of this class of mankind that civil governments are established among men and recognized in heaven. It was with this view that Paul, in his epistle to the ancient Saints, told

them that they should respect and honor the civil law, and governors in their places, and judges and officers in their condition of life, whose duty it is to preserve order and maintain peace and protect the rights and privileges of all alike, religious or irreligious, believer or unbeliever, saint or sinner; for religion with all its accompaniments and everything pertaining to it is a matter of conscience between man and his Maker, and for the exercise of which he is held alone responsible to his God and unto his co-religionists, who place themselves under its guidance and control. But the civil power extends its protection to all alike. One of the great evils that has afflicted mankind has been the bigotry of religious priests, and the blind superstition of religious zealots, who seem to have lost sight of this principle, the government of our Heavenly Father over his children, that in his efforts to exalt his children he has never resorted to force or attempted in any wise to coerce the human mind. The light of truth, like the glorious light of the sun, shines unobstructed, free to all; and all are at liberty to draw a veil over their faces if they choose, or shut themselves up in a dungeon and lock out the rays of the sun, or they may walk out in the sunlight, open their windows and let it into their dwellings; so is the free light of heaven imparted to all the sons of men. The Lord has reserved to himself, however, the right to call unto judgment all his children for the manner in which they make use of the opportunities and privileges afforded them. "This is the condemnation," says the Savior, "that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." So many people walk in darkness at