

Now, it becomes a question for us to decide whether we shall observe the laws of God or the commands of men. If I had to answer I would answer as I did before the court. When I made that answer this question had not then been decided by the Supreme Court of the United States. Since then they have sanctioned that law, hence we are placed in a position a good deal like the Christians were in the days of Rome, and the Christians now assume the position of the then heathen.

What shall we do? Shall we trust in God or in the arm of flesh? Shall we give up our religion and our God and be governed by the practices that exist in the nation which are contrary to the laws of God? All who are in favor of abiding by the laws of God hold up their right hand (The congregation voted unanimously). We find the same feeling throughout the Territory.

We wish no disrespect to the government, for after all I do not suppose we could get any better treatment from any other Christian nation than we do from our own, but this is not saying much for them. It is a poor thing when so great and magnanimous a nation cannot afford to allow 200,000 people to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

But have we resisted anything else? No. Have I? No. Have you? I presume not. I expect these kind of things—the opposition and corruption of men and the world, under the instigation of the devil, who is the enemy of the Saints. What then? Do I expect to give up my religion to the devil? I think not. What shall we do then? Shall we abuse the people of the United States? No. Shall we abuse the President of the United States? No.

Yet I am sorry that he is not a little more magnanimous, I am sorry he does not possess a little more of these feelings that actuated the founders of this government; I am not sorry for the Saints, for it is quite necessary that we should have to pass through a variety of things in order that, like ancient Saints, we may be made perfect through suffering. “For it became him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” “He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Shall we forsake the institutions of this country because of the acts of those men? No, we will cleave to them and sustain them. Shall we deprive other men of their political rights? No, we will not. Shall we deprive any man of his social rights? No, we will not. Shall we deprive any men of their religious rights? No, we will not. They may do as they please in Washington and other places; but we will do right towards all men. Our motto is, Freedom, Liberty and Rights of Conscience to all people; as Brother Parley P. Pratt has it in one of his poems:

“Indian, Muslim, Greek or Jew,
Freedom’s banner waves for you.”

This is the kind of feeling we entertain in regard to this subject. We all have faults, and perhaps this government is one of the best governments we could have in the world; and we will sustain it. And then, we will contend for our rights legally, properly, orderly and constitutionally. And then, we will watch those miserable hounds that come sneaking into our midst, and tell them to leave; we do not want a lot of dogs among us. Honorable and decent men, men that will do