

forces no man to heaven. He places before him life and death, light and darkness, truth and error, and having before him all these principles, he is at liberty to worship God and believe what he chooses. He alone is responsible to God for his actions. Now, when I read the history of the world in days which are past, when I note the illiberal spirit which was manifested, and the blood which has been shed upon the earth—for the earth has been deluged with blood, under what is termed holy wars, under the garb of holy religion—I look upon it as the most ungodly and unrighteous thing that was ever committed upon the earth. I look upon what is taking place today in the same way. I marvel sometimes when I see the spirit of our nation and the feelings of the sects of today toward Utah and the Latter-day Saints. Have we ever stood in the path of any man, sect or people with regard to their religion? No, we have not. We have been willing at all times that men should preach their doctrines and believe them, unmolested by us, and I would say, to express my own feelings, that if a man believed he had to climb a cottonwood tree three times a day, for salvation, I would never hinder him. No, this liberty, this freedom, especially under the American Government of all nations under heaven, ought to become universal. No man or set of men should attempt to hinder their neighbors from enjoying their religion. And while I say this, and while we grant all men this right and privilege, as we have done here in this city, this Tabernacle and various other buildings having been opened to the clergymen of the day, we have been perfectly willing, after we have heard all they have had to say, to accept any truth they might have that we are not in possession

of. If there is a man in this world who has one truth which I have not got, I am willing to exchange all the errors I have got for that truth. But we as a people claim the same right we grant to others. We claim the right to worship God unmolested by our fellow men. The laws of God, the decrees of God, the oracles of God, as well as laws of our country and the constitution of our government grant this right to the human family—yes, even to the “Mormons,” as we are called, to the Latter-day Saints as well as every other class.

Then, why this tremendous furor among the sects of the day with regard to these “Mormons” and their religion? The trouble is the world do not know anything about our religion, they do not know what we believe in, and if anybody forms an idea from what they hear abroad, they hear anything but the truth. I have been amused sometimes—I have of late—in reading the speeches delivered by gentlemen—clergymen at that—who profess to have lived in Utah, and to understand this people. One gentleman who professes to be acquainted here delivered a speech in Rochester, before a missionary society, in which he stated that “there were in Utah 620,486 young persons in the Mormon district, and it was the youthful element that missionaries were working on.” Well, now, how does this gentleman make out 620,486 young people out of 140,000? I do not know by what process of mathematics, or by what rule he arrives at this question. That gentleman knew just as well when he made that assertion that it was false as I know. Our population is only about 140,000. Mr. Conyer, who had lived here some six years, stated “that there were 40,000 scholars in the mission, and he wanted assistance to