

the beginning of the world. And whenever there has been a people who have listened to the voice of God, they have been made free, and oppression has been a stranger to them. The careful student of the Bible will at once perceive that everything which God sought to establish among his people, tended to freedom and the enjoyment of the common rights of humanity. Never did ancient Israel enjoy as free and happy a government as under the reign of the judges, from the time Moses led them out of Egyptian bondage until they clamored for a king. For 430 years they triumphed over their foes, and they dwelt in peace and unity, and love and freedom existed, and every tribe was a commonwealth managing its own local affairs, while they all sustained a central power which counseled and directed them; and their rulers were judges inspired of God, were prophets, seers and revelators, who judged in righteousness, and exercised no control over the liberties and consciences of men. The same principle is observed in reading the history of the American continent. The Book of Mormon is replete with testimony in this direction. And during the palmy days of the Nephites there was no king among them; and that long and happy period that preceded the coming of the Savior, and for hundreds of years that followed during the reign of the judges among the Nephites, liberty and freedom and happiness prevailed. And although they had at one time in accordance with their pronounced and persistent desire, a king—King Benjamin and King Mosiah—yet, these were kings more in name than in fact; they were only patriarchs or fathers among their people, and the term they apply to them might

quietly have a tendency to cause them to augment power to themselves and to exercise oppressive jurisdiction over the people, and foreseeing this King Mosiah beseeched the people to abolish the office, and establish and maintain free government, and elect their chief judge or governor by the voice of the people. He reasoned and explained to them the dangers which would result to them by having a ruler who was not elected by the people. When Israel began to fall into darkness and transgression, in the days of Samuel, and they clamored for a king to lead them to war and thus be like the Gentile nations around them, it grieved Samuel the Seer to his heart; and he besought the people to desist from their determination, and he warned them of the dangers that would follow, telling them that it would lead to oppression and tyranny, and that taxes would be levied and heavy burdens would be laid upon the people grievous to be borne, and that it would finally lead to war, bloodshed and bondage. But they would not listen. And when the prophet inquired of the Lord what he should do, he answered and said to Samuel: “Hearken unto the voice of the people in all they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.”

Furthermore, the Book of Mormon tells that God will cause a free government to be established upon this land in the latter days, and inasmuch as the people will serve the Lord they shall forever be a free people. And in the Doctrine and Covenants is contained a revelation which was given to the Latter-day Saints in the early history of the Church, commanding us to uphold