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✓ WHERE IS THE RIGHT OF INTERFERENCE?

Some time ago we wrote and published a series of articles on plurality of wives, defending the principle on Scriptural, reasonable, moral, social, physiological and constitutional grounds. We did so for the purpose of, in part, refreshing the public mind on some of the arguments which have been before the world for several years, of defining to an extent the grounds on which we differ from most people in this country on the subject of marital polity, and to elicit if possible something other than empty and assumptive denunciations of a practice commanded by the Almighty, sustained by Scripture, fortified by sound reason and good sense, and practiced by the best men who ever lived on the earth.

The manner in which Utah, her people and their views and institutions are talked of and treated, were it not for the bitter results that so often follow the evoking of evil passions, would be almost too ridiculous for contempt to notice. But the future that may be in the hands of individuals who aspire to and in a degree receive power and influence, and yet in the wildness of bigotry and illiberal prejudice can so abuse every principle of right and freedom as some would do, is anything but encouraging to those who give them the brief opportunity of position and place.

There are some very grave errors committed by a great many when treating of or referring to the "Mormons." They start with the assumption that we must be wrong because we differ in opinion and practice from many of our neighbors. Wisdom would suggest the propriety of proving where the wrong exists rather than assuming its existence in a certain place and with a particular people. It would be more in consonance with the professed enlightenment and liberality of the age to show by sound reason and strong argument where we are in error, instead of indulging so freely in baseless assertions.

If plurality of wives is contrary to the law of God, to true happiness, physiological excellence or the object of man's existence, show us how it is so. Open the bible so extensively circulated through the land and point out wherein the principle is there condemned. If it is contrary to any command of God, tell us which command and where it is to be found. Try the force of reason and the power of argument on us. We are seeking after truth; we are very anxious to obtain a knowledge of it; we are open to conviction where we are wrong; but we do think that it indicates a bad cause based on a poor foundation when those most bitterly opposed to us can find nothing better than denunciations to hurl at us, and sophistical platitudes, which are not even propounded as arguments, to urge against our principles and faith.

There are plenty of learned men, profound logicians, close reasoners, well versed in jurisprudence and in the scriptures throughout the nation. Would it not be wise and well for them to try the power of their abilities, deep researches and logical arguments in showing us our error? It might save much

trouble; for if they would convert us to another way of thinking, most assuredly we would act on our convictions; and if they should be converted to our way of thinking, their influence might save the nation from much evil and the attempt to perpetrate great wrongs.

There is a good deal said at times about the "twin relic" of slavery having been abolished, and of plurality of wives being about to be dealt with in a similar manner. The arguments against the existence of slavery presented many cogent points which have no bearing directly or indirectly on plurality of wives, while we have been unable, after continued search, to meet with anything in the shape of argument against the latter. Slavery is involuntary servitude. It involves coercion and the employment of physical force to make and keep one human being the bondsman of another. One party in the nation, taking the position that "all men are born free and equal" and recognizing Africans and those of African descent as "men," declared that involuntary servitude should no longer exist—that no man should be the servant of another, who was not so of his own free choice. This is the whole of the slavery question in a nut shell.

But with regard to plurality of wives what coercion is used? what power employed to enforce it? The parties are all consenting parties, free agents, who knowingly and understandingly enter into an agreement with each other, which they have the inalienable right to make and the power to break whenever they are dissatisfied with it. All that has been said of the servitude of women in Utah is manifestly and directly false. They are free to refuse, and free to accept; it is when the marital relationship is entered into that its purity is guarded with jealous care so long as that bond of union remains intact, which is done everywhere that purity is in the least degree respected and the sanctity of marriage recognized.

It may be said that a moral influence is employed to sustain plurality of wives. This is correct; for we believe the principle to be of heavenly origin, revealed by God to man, and requiring to be obeyed. What point, what principle, what dogma is not sought to be sustained by moral influence? Every party and every sect exercise all the moral influence they can to sustain and strengthen their views. It is when moral suasion is laid aside and physical force is resorted to, for the purpose of enforcing a principle, that wrong makes its appearance. This is where the inception of the late rebellion was a crime, for it arrayed armed men in open hostility to the Government and struck the blow which precipitated the nation into civil war.

The freedom of speech and of the press is another inalienable right, which cannot be taken from any portion of the nation without a violation of the Constitution. This right we exercise, and by it we defend every principle that has been revealed to us. But while our marriage relationship involves no coercion, and is based upon the agreement of willingly contracting parties, who have the most indubitable right to make such a contract, we contend that it is not the business nor right of any man nor any set of men to interfere with it, and try to compel them to adopt a different course of action. If it involved the robbing of a human being of any right, any privilege, or any principle of freedom, then there would be grounds for such interference; but politicians, or Congress, might as justly say what we must eat, where we must pray, how many horses we must own, or whether we must do any or all of these, as say to a woman who she must not marry, or to a man whom he shall not make his wife.

The age may be against the principle,

but it would be well for statesmen and public men to find out if the age is correct. They have not assumed to say who a man may enter into an agreement with to hold illicit intercourse, nor whether his attentions shall be confined to one or more of the opposite sex, no matter how corrupt they may be,—it might be too hard upon themselves; then what right have they, moral or constitutional, to interfere in the making of social compacts between the sexes, where the intercourse is circumscribed by conditions which demand purity and recognize chastity?

✓ WHOSE BUSINESS IS IT?

Being in an inquiring mood we feel like asking a few questions and making some remarks in connection with them.

In view of the tolerably wide-spread feeling that has been worked up against us as a community, we necessarily have some reflections in common with all who are interested in this matter. It is alleged that we differ very much from the rest of the world in our views, opinions and faith. If this is a crime we have yet to learn how it becomes one. If we do differ from the rest of mankind in those matters, whose fault is it? Not ours, for if they will only think as we do and believe as we do there will be no difference whatever, so far as that extends. True, the majority is with them; but have not the minority a perfect right to hold views that are not accepted by the majority? It is not the first time in the world that the minority have been in the right and the majority in the wrong. In fact it is the rule and not the exception for it to be so. When the Savior was fulfilling his mission on the earth, and after his death, himself and followers were very much in the minority, and they entertained opinions and held a faith very different to the rest of mankind, for which the enlightened (!) politicians, statesmen and priests of their times persecuted them to the death. So it has been in almost every age, before and since; yet truth, or its representatives struggle on against superior numbers, confident that a time will come when those who believe it will be largely in the majority.

But, we ask, Whose business is it if we do differ from others, or if others differ from us in thought, opinion and faith, so long as we do not in a single iota seek to infringe upon the rights of any created being? We would like some intelligent mind to step into the vanguard of opposition, with a correct appreciation of the task undertaken, and enlighten us on this point. We confess to being obtuse enough not to see it at present. We think we have a perfect right to think, to think as we please, and to render our actions consonant with those thoughts, so long as they are within the limits of our inalienable and constitutional rights.

Again; it is well known that we are remarkably united in this community, and that we have no sort of relish for the contentions, jarrings and bitter animosities so common in what is with unconscious irony called the civilized world. Does this unity hurt anybody, that they should feel so annoyed about it? If we choose to think alike and act in concert on matters pertaining to individual or the public good, whose business is that? Why should people get excited over it, and work themselves into a frenzy because we will not be so disunited and as socially miserable as they are themselves? Are they afraid we will hurt them, or that we will try to do so? They need not be. Our object is to do good, and not evil. Our union has ever been used for beneficial purposes, to subserve the public interest and the good of mankind. Witness the sending of a vast number of teams to the frontiers the present and past seasons, for the purpose of helping the poor

to this Territory, where they can find opportunities for bettering their condition in life such as would never have been within their reach if this help had not been afforded them. Please do not worry nor fret about our unity, but try to imitate it. Then you will be so busy in seeking after permanent blessings yourselves, and so happy in their enjoyment, that you will have neither time nor inclination to envy us the possession of ours.

Again; a great deal is said about the "one-man-power" existing in Utah. Please tell us the name of the man in public life who would not seek to possess the influence which our leaders enjoy among this people, if he could get it. Who is he? and where does he live? Men seek for power and influence; but they are not willing to abide the conditions by which they are to be obtained. He who would gain true power, pure and lasting, must live in the hearts of the people. That is where the influence of our leaders has its basis. Through years of trial, experience, suffering and prosperity, we have proved their goodness and wisdom, and have found that they have been fathers to the people; and hence their influence. If you who rail about it, while you desire it, would obtain such influence, pursue a similar course, and the hearts of all good men and women will turn to you as surely as the needle does to the pole.

If we love those men, whose business is that? Must our affections and feelings be controlled? If twice a-year in mass meeting assembled we voluntarily sustain them in their positions by unanimous vote, whose business is that? Have we not the right to say who shall take the lead in our ecclesiastical affairs? And should we not have the right to say who ought to govern us? It is the majority throughout this nation that says who shall hold the reins of power and government in the republic; and our leaders hold their places by the free votes of the whole. Does this interfere with anybody's rights or privileges? Who is wronged by our so doing? When you who talk of the "one-man power" in Utah refer to it, be honest, if you can, (?) and say that the people unitedly sustain their leaders, and do so because they know their worth and because they wish to have good men hold such positions of responsibility among them.

These are a few of our thoughts and questions, which may suffice for the present.

HOME ITEMS.

SABBATH MEETINGS. Elder F. D. Richards alluded to the peace we enjoy; not that which the world look upon as peace, who think they enjoy that blessing if they are not in a state of active war no matter how deep the feelings of animosity may be that exist among them; but a unanimity of sentiment and action such as can be found nowhere else, and which is the result of obedience to the gospel. He looked forward to the time when the blessings enjoyed by the Saints here will be extended over the earth. Referred to the mission on which he was about starting; and expressed his desires to be wherever the Lord required him and to do all the good in his power.

Pres. D. H. Wells spoke of his recent visit to the settlements south; corrected the idea that men had gone from this part of the Territory to fight the Indians; the object of their going being to assist those who are living there to protect themselves and place themselves in a state of security. He gave much valuable instruction with regard to traveling in the mountains or places where hostile Indians might probably be, reprehending the practice of single persons or small parties of two or three traveling in such places, especially when not properly armed. Said he looked upon the present Indian difficulties as a means of learning the people a lesson, by which he trusted they would profit, to abide the counsel given to them.

Pres. H. C. Kimball spoke on the principle of unity and its opposite; showing that the unity of the gospel leads people to gather together that they may share communion with each other; and as men and women depart from the truth and the spirit of the gospel, they encourage feelings which destroy that desire of being together. He exhorted the Saints to increased righteousness.

Afternoon.

Elder Geo. A. Smith delivered a very interest-