

DESERET NEWS.

WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

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AFRICA FOR THE AFRICANS.

OF late years the condition of the negro has been a source of much platform and newspaper talk, and the question, "what is to be done with him?" has become a matter of serious consideration. It is a settled fact that in no portion of this nation, except the comparatively few South Atlantic and Gulf States, can the colored race hope to thrive. The general indolence of the African is proverbial, and, except in such regions where nature freely furnishes almost all the necessities of life, a negro population of the lower and common grade is regarded as a worthless and even dangerous portion of society. Under the rule of slavery, where their labor was directed by more skillful managers, the soil was cultivated at a pecuniary profit. The harsh and brutal methods adopted by the slaveholders to get the work out of the human beings whom they treated worse than dogs, have been vividly described in scores of books, and slavery, as a "relic of barbarism" has been stamped out of existence in this nation. Since the close of the war, however, the south has gradually been sinking in the scale of prosperity, until her impoverished lands barely raise sufficient crops to furnish a living to the agriculturist. The negroes, content with little, collect in the cities where they are not needed, and, like idle men the world over, are generally prepared for any deeds of evil. Republican journals, with evident relish and considerable truth, tell sad stories of the abuse and intimidation of the black man by the white. Democratic papers speak of the negro race as being led in a body to the polls and casting a solid vote as directed by some shrewd and designing politician. The races, it thus appears, cannot agree, and it is probable that the enmity now existing and the evils complained of will increase unless measures are taken to change the relative position of the whites and blacks in some way.

Within the last year a great excitement has prevailed among the colored people of the south over a migration of the race to a land northwest of their present homes. The Kansas exodus has accomplished certain results, but not such as its originators designed. The pitiable race have left their homes cheerless and uncomfortable as they may have been, for an unknown and inhospitable land, a region too cold for them, a place where hard work will be required to obtain food, and whose inhabitants as a rule are opposed to the immigration. Appeals for aid for the poor blacks have been earnest and frequent, and the money donated by charitable persons has been expended in persuading more of the dissatisfied people to start out west. Those who are in the new country will undergo a great amount of suffering during the coming winter, and their experience will doubtless serve as a warning to their more deliberate brethren who have still clung to the Sunny South.

A wiser plan for the improvement of the condition of the negroes was inaugurated some years ago. An association calling itself the American Colonization Society of Washington, D. C., conceived the idea of furnishing a quantity of land in Liberia, Africa, to each colored man, and of advancing the requisite passage money and sufficient means to get a start with. Of course the recipient of these favors was bound by certain stipulations to pay for his land and the means loaned him, but the terms were so easy and the prospect for the settlers so bright, that a general rush to the new republic was expected. Many have availed themselves of the opportunity offered to better their condition and have been successful in their management. But the great mass of the race are so shiftless and indifferent that heretofore they have seemed to care little what becomes of them tomorrow if they get enough for to-

day. There are now, however, several thousand applications for passage to Liberia enrolled on the books of the society, and it is said that the desire to share in the prosperity of "their republic" is becoming widespread. Commissioners sent to examine that country, and letters from acquaintances and relations there to leading colored citizens in the south, all give glowing accounts of its fertile soil, numerous rivers, sugar and coffee lands, mineral resources and political privileges, and these, of course present attractions to enterprising freedmen, who there see sure promise of pecuniary gain, freedom from race prejudice, homesteads and a nationality. Each settler landed costs the society about \$100, half of which is for the passage and the other half for his support for six months after reaching the colony. Each unmarried adult gets ten acres of land, and every family twenty-five acres, which in the favored climate and with common industry can be made to yield a comfortable living to the colonist. The form of government is republican, easy to understand, and the advantages offered are such as ought to induce a general immigration of the race. That is their mother country, and there, wisely governed and properly trained, they could raise up an intelligent posterity and establish a republican empire exclusively their own.

WIVES AND CONCUBINES.

IN the attacks made by intemperate people upon celestial marriage, we frequently hear the word "concubine" applied to designate a plural wife. The term is thus used in an offensive manner. It is thrown out as an epithet. It is intended as a reproach. The meaning attached to it is base. The title is supposed to belong not to a wife but to "a kept mistress," a woman with whom a man has improper relations. As there seems to be a great lack of understanding in regard to the signification of this word, we will offer a few explanations that our friends may know its proper application.

We read of wives and concubines in the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. The ancient patriarchs were permitted to have both wives and concubines. Some of the best men who ever lived on the earth had family relations of this character. We find nothing in the Bible which condemns the practice of taking either wives or concubines. On the contrary great blessings were pronounced by the Almighty upon the men who entered into these relations, upon their wives and concubines, and upon the offspring of both. The Book of Mormon speaks of the Lord being displeased with David and Solomon for their actions in these matters, but this is fully explained in the revelation on celestial marriage, which shows that the sin of those men was in taking women, as wives or concubines, outside of the holy order of matrimony ordained of God. They received them "not of the Lord," and in that they broke the law and violated the everlasting covenant and therefore their acts in this respect were "an abomination" unto the Lord. The transgression was not in the fact that they had wives or concubines, but consisted in contracting these alliances for the gratification of carnal desire, and without the sanction of the sacred sealing power and authority of God which they were under the deepest obligations to respect.

A concubine in ancient times could not, therefore, be a person holding a vile position. God cannot look upon sin "with the least degree of allowance." Yet He declared that Abraham's household kept "the way of the Lord" and that great patriarch, "the father of the faithful and the friend of God" had concubines as well as wives. Now it should be distinctly understood that the law of plural wives never countenanced illicit intercourse between the sexes, either in former or in latter days. Where polygamy has been practiced the severest penalties have been imposed upon any such relations outside of marriage. Concubinage was not prostitution. It was a recognized condition of family life regulated by the law of God. It was a form of matrimonial connex-

ion adapted to circumstances formerly existing. A concubine in ancient Israel was an inferior wife. She was not a "kept mistress," a creature to minister to man's lust and be cast off at will. She was a married woman. Her children were legitimate. They received their portion of the inheritance at the father's decease. They were not shut out of the congregation of the Lord as bastards were, nor debarred from any of the blessings of the covenant. The concubine was counted an inferior wife, because she was not "a free woman" when taken in marriage by her husband.

To make this clear to our readers we refer them to the cases of Hagar, Abraham's second wife, to Keturah, his third, who is also called a concubine, and to Jacob's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. They were hand-maidens, bond-women, servants owned by their mistress who gave them in marriage to their husbands. Those ladies who are designated as the wives of the patriarchs were free-born, of the pure blood, belonging to the lineage of the priesthood, and the distinction of wives and concubines was rather one of race, condition or class than of matrimonial relation. Concubines were wives, but of an inferior caste to those who were denominated wives, because of "previous condition of servitude." A close examination of the Scriptures will make this plain to every one who takes the trouble to investigate.

In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there is no such thing as a concubine. The revelation, by authority of which plural marriages are contracted, makes no provision for concubinage. There are no bond-women in the Church. All are made free by the Gospel, which is the "perfect law of liberty." Every woman sealed to a man by the holy ordinance of celestial marriage is his wife, one just as much so as another, with no difference or invidious distinction; and the children who are the offspring of such unions are all heirs to the covenant and the priesthood, and entitled to the care, blessing and provision which a father should bestow. A plural wife is not a concubine. No one has a right to call her such. And in doing so those who use the word display their ignorance of the lingual meaning of the word, and of the customs of the ancient people among whom concubinage was practiced, honorably, righteously, in the fear of God, and with the best of motives.

Search the Scriptures, learn the truth, and when you use peculiar words be sure that you understand their signification. And let all the world know of a surety that God's holy order of celestial marriage is designed not to minister to man's carnality, but to exalt, bless and benefit both sexes, and raise up a righteous seed to the God of Israel.

A FEW WORDS TO THE SAINTS.

FROM missionaries returning from their fields of labor, and from numerous other sources, we are continually reminded of an important subject which, though having been frequently spoken and written upon, cannot be too firmly impressed upon the minds of the Latter-day Saints dwelling in Zion. We refer to the duties devolving upon them in relation to their fellow-creatures of the outside world, and particularly their brethren and sisters, who, though having embraced the gospel in various parts of the earth, have not yet been permitted to gather to the bosom of the Church.

We do not allude this time to persons indebted to the Perpetual Emigration Fund, partly because many are coming forward and discharging their obligations in that quarter, and because it should require no monitor, excepting conscience, to teach honest people that they should pay their honest debts. But there are many other errors of omission having more claim to be considered the results of forgetfulness, and therefore constituting legitimate subjects for a friendly reminder. It needs but a retrospective glance for the Latter-day Saint, who has once been a dweller in Babylon, to appreciate the feelings of those who

are now undergoing what he formerly experienced as the disciple of an unpopular creed, surrounded on all sides by the enemies of the Truth and by people who had no sympathy with him or his opinions. If he will permit his mind to travel back to those times, he will be confronted by many of his own thoughts and emotions, while in the same trying circumstances. Does he remember when he only saw the light of Zion shining from afar, how eagerly he received and cherished every little memento, every comforting word, written or spoken, which emanated from the home of the Saints, and how he longed, prayed and wept for the time to hasten when he might join his fellow worshippers in the valleys of the mountains, and with them, work for the glory of, and sing praises to the God of Israel? Does he recollect with what joy he welcomed the coming of a servant of the Lord to his house or neighborhood, listened to his words, and felt blessed in being able to contribute to supply his needs and further, in the slightest way, the cause for which he was then willing to lay down his life? And does he ever think how dear and precious the things, that now he esteems but lightly, were regarded by him in those times. How a book, tract, newspaper, or anything that came from "the Valley," containing the words of life and salvation or any other items of interest, was treasured as a sacred relic, almost as a message from Paradise? Those who do remember these things, will then be able to sense the feelings of their friends who yet remain prisoners in unfriendly lands, experiencing like emotions, surrounded by similar circumstances, and looking forward with tearful hope to an eventual deliverance from Babylon. And having recalled the scenes of the past, will not every honest heart beat with a charitable desire to do something to comfort the hearts, and ameliorate the condition of these who are yet the outcast of Israel and the children of exile? Or has prosperity—the blessings of God, given to his children to use in deeds of wisdom and love, so blunted and deadened the generous impulses of the soul, that selfishness and personal ambition are the ruling sensations of the mind and the guides to all its actions?

"But what can we do?" some will say, "we only receive small salaries and have our own families to keep. We are not able to contribute means for the sustenance and support of others, or the assistance of those who desire to come to Utah." Was this a portion of your thoughts, friend, when you thankfully received means from the very ones who now need your aid, with which to gather to the land of Zion? Were there no deprivations, no self denials, no sacrifices on the part of those who divided their last crust with you, and deprived themselves and families of the necessities of life, to provide means and facilities for your comfort and accommodation? Supposing you really are so placed that you cannot afford to send pecuniary assistance to your brethren and sisters, could you not mail them a book, a newspaper or write them occasionally a few words of cheer and encouragement? A kind word often does wonders. A cheering message, under some circumstances, bears with it more happiness than untold riches could produce. "Why do not the Saints here write to their brethren and sisters abroad?" is a question we hear from almost every Elder who returns from a mission. It would not only administer consolation to the Saints themselves to send them a newspaper or book occasionally, but it would allay much prejudice in the minds of others who chanced to read them, thereby preaching the gospel to unbelievers, and at the same time refuting the wicked slanders and false representations that are industriously sent abroad and circulated to the detriment of the people of God. If the Saints were as much interested in defending their own characters as their enemies are in traducing them, we would hear less of mobbings and murders inflicted upon the missionaries and their friends, while traveling in the outside world. These persecutions are the results of ignorant prejudice, instigated by the evil minded and executed by the blind instruments of their cunning and iniquity. Ignorance can only be dissipated by truth and this is in the possession of the Lat-

ter-day Saints. It is expedient, therefore, that they attend to matters so easy of accomplishment and so certain and gratifying in their results. But expedience is not the only thing to be considered. It is a solemn duty resting upon the Saints to feel for and act for the good of others. God expects it of them just as certainly as He expects their prayers to Him for assistance. If He has prospered a portion of His children, it is that they might be able to bless others, thereby acting as His agents in the distribution of gifts and deeds of charity; and the measure they mete out to others, whether good or evil, whether of generosity or neglect, will surely be measured unto them again. There is no better way for a person to manifest a love for God, than by loving his fellow-man, nor can he neglect one without slighting the other. Either will bring its recompense in the Lord's own time.

There are many, no doubt, so situated that they find but little time to write letters; let all due allowance be made for them; but there are very few who have not time to fold a paper in a wrapper and mail it to absent friends, and very few who are so poor that they could not spare a dollar now and then, and send it to the relief of the poor elders traveling without purse or scrip, from house to house and from city to city, relying for succor upon God and the charity of a cold and heartless world. It is well enough to say and to think that the Lord will take care of his servants. He undoubtedly will, but he will also take care of those who do what they can to help Him in the good work, and just as certainly will he fail to bless those who forget to bless others. Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you, is a motto the Saints of God should carry in their hearts, for it is indeed a Golden Rule, and a portion of that godlike attribute which droppeth like the gentle rain from heaven, and blesses equally them that give and them that partake.

A GROWING EVIL.

THE American Consul at Sheffield in describing the habits of the English workingmen in the district where he resides, doubtless portrays with entire accuracy the habits of the workingmen of most English cities. Certain it is that the distress in that country is greatly aggravated by the wretched habits of drinking which prevail among the people. The Consul says:

"A bold recklessness as to earning and spending prevails among the Sheffield workingmen. Many a man who can easily earn his \$14 to \$19 a week will be satisfied with earning half that sum, or just enough to provide him with his food, beer and sporting, allowing his wife but a mere pittance of his wages for herself and children. Large numbers, who might make themselves independent, make no provision for the future, except to pay into their club a shilling or two a week, which assures them, if not in arrears, some aid in case of sickness. This method of insurance, good in itself, seems to operate here to paralyze the desire to save. One thing, however, seems evident, that, notwithstanding the great depression in the manufacturing interests of Sheffield, there would be but little destitution among the working people but for their drinking habits. Any one walking these streets will see at once where the earnings of the workingmen go, and in many cases the earnings of the working women also, for there is in this town a far greater population of women employed in the heavier kinds of labor than will be found in the cities of the United States, excepting it may be the great cotton manufacturing centers. This fact is to be considered in estimating the amount of earnings that go to the support of families, such earnings being larger than might at first appear. Were the same properly used, there would be comparatively little suffering or poverty."

In the Sheffield district it is estimated that each workingman loses one day of each week through drink. This is a loss of time equal to a loss of one-sixth of the productive power of the district—a serious draw back to the prosperity of that section. But of other places besides Sheffield the same report can be made. Most of the evils with