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## THE RIGHT OF OPINION.

It is no bar to naturalization if an applicant believes a law of the United States to be wrong or impolitic, so long as he does not violate the law but is willing to obey it while it exists. It is the right of every citizen to dissent from any public measure, whether it has been materialized into law or not, to work against its adoption while it is a theory, and to operate for its repeal after it has become a legal fact. This government does not make war upon opinions. The law does not punish or seek to control beliefs. They are left free to every soul under the sun.

We mention these indisputable facts, because the attempt has been made, during the past few days, to confuse applicants for naturalization on the matter of their belief in relation to the polygamy question. Questions have been allowed which ought not to be put to any man before a court. And they have been piled with cunning and rapidity, to embarrass the inexperienced for the purpose of preventing members of the People's Party from acquiring the right to vote.

The object of the anti-polygamy laws is to suppress and prevent, so far as possible, the practice of what has been known here as plural marriage, and the relations growing out of it. Congress has not engaged in the new business of proselytism. It assumes no power over men's thoughts or opinions, or even their freedom of expression concerning those opinions. No man is debarred from voting because of his belief on any subject. On the contrary, the Edmunds law says specifically that a citizen shall not be excluded from the polls "on account of any opinion such person may entertain on the subject of bigamy or polygamy." Thus Congress emphasizes a common and constitutional right, with which no person can lawfully interfere. If a voter cannot be lawfully excluded from the polls on account of his opinions on these subjects, neither

can an applicant for citizenship be denied naturalization on those grounds.

A man may conscientiously believe that it would not be morally wrong for some men to have more wives than one, if there was no law forbidding it, but seeing there is a law against it he would not practice bigamy or polygamy himself, and, if on a jury, would find a defendant guilty if the evidence showed he had broken the law. This would be entirely consistent. Also a man might agree, sincerely, that he would obey a law which he considered unjust and unwise. And while he kept his promise he could strive for its repeal and express freely his opinion as to its demerits, and no one could deny him any rights on that ground, or logically claim that his course was inconsistent either with his agreement or with sound reason. This will hold good in relation to any law of the land.

Will it be claimed that railroad companies which conform to the inter-state commerce law have no right to denounce it, to agitate for its repeal, to point out its injustice or its imperfections? If a man obeys the excise and customs regulations, may he not believe them to be harmful and outrageous and say so freely, and yet be a good citizen? Even so a man may firmly determine not to violate the anti-polygamy laws and yet maintain that they ought never to have been enacted.

It is a flagrant violation of the spirit and letter of the Constitution and institutions of this free land when any individual is denied the rights and privileges of citizenship for his abstract belief. No lawyer ought to attempt any such outrage, no court ought to permit it. Petty-fogging for political purposes is a disgrace to anyone who resorts to such a low-lived practice. And it will pay members of the bar much better, in the long run, to preserve the dignity of their profession than stoop to petty tricks for a special purpose.

If an alien has not shown by his past conduct and will not pledge himself to prove by future actions that he is "attached to the Constitution of the United States and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the same," let him be rejected when he applies for naturalization. But, in view of that Constitution, of the laws of Congress and of the rulings of the Supreme Court of the United States, let not a man's religious belief or abstract

opinion be a subject of discussion in a court, or made the sole reason for rejecting his application to be admitted as a citizen. There are days and years yet to come, and when right triumphs, as it will, only those who respect the right will themselves be respected.

## "THE OTHER CHEEK."

It is the height of impudence, or the depth of cowardice, may be both, for a dastardly assailant when chastised for repeated assaults upon an adversary, to whine out that the object of his violence has "none of the spirit of turning the other cheek when the first one has been smitten." This is the complaint about us presented by the mendacious scribe who has made it his daily business to void his venom against the DESERET NEWS.

How many times is any one expected to submit to personal or other assaults from a vindictive and unscrupulous enemy, without turning upon him something more than "the other cheek?" Is a believer in the Christian creed never to defend himself against an adversary? Are there no limits to endurance and silent submission? Is it contrary to Christian principles, after both cheeks have been smitten, and smeared time and again by a creature who counted on non-retaliation, to cudgel him with vigor and hold him up to scorn and detestation? We think not.

We do not so understand the precepts of the Great Teacher. We admire both sides of His character and both features of His examples. He was the Christ just as much when He wielded the "scourge of thongs" as when He was "led as a lamb to the slaughter," and His words were quite as much inspired when He advised each of His disciples who had not a sword to "sell his coat and buy one," as when He propounded the doctrine of turning "the other cheek."

There is an old adage about "patience ceasing to be a virtue." When a coward strikes at a peaceable person, repeatedly, expecting that he will bear it without resentment and even turn the other cheek to be buffeted, he may be surprised at a change of action but has no reason to complain if he gets a good drubbing. And when a purveyor of falsehood counts on the forbearance of an adversary, because he has kept silent during constant misrepresentation, it displays considerable "cheek" to