

WHITHER ARE WE DRIFTING?

In 1844, the Prophet Joseph Smith promulgated to the world his views on government, and especially on the policy that should be pursued by the government of the United States. Had his suggestions been adopted, our country would have been saved the miseries of civil war, avoided the danger of centralization and despotism, and laid the foundation for permanent prosperity.

Nearly parallel with the views of the Prophet in enlightened philanthropy, are those of the writer of an article "On the Future Government of America," from *Appleton's Journal*, published in No. 38, current volume, *DESERET NEWS*. At this time these views, although shared by many, seem Utopian, from the fact that their practical realization would require too many negations of human ambition. Judging by the past, it would be impossible to find a people, traditioned in modern Christianity, who could sufficiently distinguish between liberty and license, between despotism and ample executive powers to restrain evil and reward good, to so nicely balance the relations of society, that all might have the privilege of working out their greatest good untrammelled by legal enactments.

The religious and political organizations of men, thus far, have only been a series of experiments, and those experiments a series of failures. Our own country, with its early promise of a brilliant future for the cause of human freedom, will probably be no exception.

The great minds of the past, who have developed human progress and shaped the destinies of nations, as well as those of the present generation, I think, have failed to fully recognize the importance of the religious element in man's nature, as a basis on which to build the superstructure of society. Systems of ethics, untrammelled by extraneous force, mould the internal policy of nations, modify the rules of international law, the relative condition of the sexes, and determine the penalties of crime and the decisions of civil jurisprudence.

No free government can be permanent under the antagonisms of Christianity, and these are scarcely paralleled in the history of Pagan religions. We may consider one great cause of the stability and longevity of Pagan Rome to have been her traditional policy of avoiding these antagonisms. I fancy a better apology may be found for her persecution of Christians than for Christians persecuting each other. Her policy was broad enough for the toleration of all polytheistic religions, but the advent of the Gospel was like a flash of light in the midst of universal darkness. It dazzled mankind by its brilliancy, and could not be comprehended. It was an innovation on the received opinions of ages, that threatened their very existence. There was no precedent in Roman policy by which it could be judged. If Christ came to the house of his friends and they failed to receive him, is it a matter of surprise that Pagans should reject that which came in direct contact with all their preconceived religious ideas?

"Christianity" absorbed Paganism by adopting many of its tenets and ceremonies, and Pagan intolerance retires to the shade in view of the bitter animosities of Christians towards each other. With the record of the peaceful mission of Jesus in one hand they have often been ready with the other to apply the torch to the possessions or persons of those who differed from them in religious opinions.

The fires of burning Christians may have helped to consume the funeral pile of Roman greatness, but her Pagan virtues and the light of the gospel disappeared in the darkness of apostate Christianity, and under its supremacy the peoples, who made up Roman civilization, became so recreant to the common duties of humanity that, in the economy of nature, it became necessary for barbarian hordes from the plains of Scythia, the banks of the Volga and the Don, to cleanse this vast cesspool of some of its impurities, and redeem the degenerate blood of effete nationalities with the vigor of the shepherds of Asia.

Thus an extensive polytheistic system, which had become politically gigantic, and guided the leading energies of a hemisphere for centuries, was resolved into numerous antagonistic religious sects,

strongly imbued with the intolerant spirit which characterized the Pagan persecutions of Christianity. They claimed the Savior as the head of their broken hierarchy and ignored the principles he taught. They abjured Paganism, believed in the potency of charms, and adored the supposed relics of saints and martyrs. They claimed to know something of the attributes of God, while their ideas of Deity were moulded by the tenets of heathen philosophy. On this sandy foundation, of intolerant and ever changing creedism, is established the superstructure of modern civilization. While the Pagan institutions of Greece and Rome are apparently disappearing in the mists of ages, those of modern Christianity, established on their ruins, are crumbling with decay.

Theoretical differences on the character of our Savior, the nature of the eucharist, &c., have caused the devastation of provinces, the desolation of cities, and filled the cup of suffering to overflowing to millions.

As it has sometimes been difficult for the obtuse intellects of the heathen to discern the superior virtues of Christianity, the most effectual means of their conversion were found to be the instruments of torture and death. Under the cruel lash of Christian servitude, they have been taught to worship the cross as the emblem of the sufferings and death of a merciful Savior.

From the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in the 4th century, until the recent absorption of the temporal domain of the Pope in a united Italy, where the power existed, a difference of religious opinions was ever a ready excuse for aggression and conquest.

The power of the Romish priesthood was based on the ignorance and superstition of the people, and was excessively aggressive on the rights of potentates and princes, and a grinding, crushing weight on the masses. It dictated the policy of governments, the domestic relations, the forms of religious worship, and presumed to ignore man's free agency by claiming the right to dictate the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Extremes in human affairs generally force reaction. Rulers and people became alike ready for change, for revolution. Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and their co-workers were the instruments of a wise prodigee of the Holy Office no longer stifled the cries of despairing victims, and the incense of human sacrifices to fanatical cruelty no longer polluted the air; persecution assumed somewhat milder forms; and the way was opened for the growth of religious and political freedom.

Mary and Elizabeth, queens of England, are usually considered prominent representatives of Roman Catholic bigotry and Protestant enlightenment; but there was not so much difference in their principles as in their policy. The former persecuted Protestants for their religious opinions, the latter for their political ones. Taking a wider range of historical facts, the motives which actuated the Jews in accomplishing the death of our Savior, the Pagans in persecuting the early Christians, the Roman Catholics in burning Protestant reformers, and a Christian mob in murdering Joseph and Hyrum Smith in Carthage jail, were about the same. It was the antagonism of bigotry and intolerance against the free agency God has given to man.

The operations of that tool of the inquisition, Simon de Montfort, against the Albigenes in the 14th century, and those of Gen. Clarke against the Latter-day Saints in Missouri, five centuries after, are sufficiently parallel to indicate the progress Christianity has made. They prove that in the 19th century, we are more indebted to the broken condition of Christianity, and the experiences of history, for more general religious freedom, than to any favorable change in the spirit of professing religionists.

If with the recorded experiences of Pagan civilization and enlightened Christianity to profit by, it has taken twenty-three centuries for mankind to progress in the principles of free government, from the ostracising assemblies of the Athenians, where the rights and liberties of the citizen were subject to the caprice of the rabble, to the constitutional government of the United States, with the blessings it guarantees neutralized by the growing corruptions of its citizens, what great progress has been made? If this last great effort, to lay broad

and deep the foundations of free institutions, is proving a failure, where are our hopes for the future?

If the public interests are bartered for gold, if the liberties of the citizen are betrayed by base and venal judges, if the assassin buys off the just penalties of the law, if venality is the rule and high minded patriotism the exception, that which has made our country appear comely and desirable to the oppressed of other nations is departing, and we must look to some other source for institutions broad and comprehensive enough for the religious and political regeneration of mankind. If, after the brilliant light of sectarian Christianity has illuminated the nations for fifteen centuries, these are the results of its benign influence, it is time to throw aside its jarring, intolerant traditions, and the notions of right and wrong derived from our barbarian ancestors and reconstruct society on the principles enunciated by the Great Lawgiver himself, amidst the thunderings of Sinai, and interpreted by the Mosaic law, and the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

With the issues of life defiled, debased to the lowest purposes, with starving millions eking out a base existence by the side of inordinate wealth, where is our hope, after "Christianity" has failed, except in Divine revelation, for the wisdom to so organize the interests of society, and give such just and proper relation to the diversified abilities of men, and to labor and capital, that all may have ample scope for the exercise of their energies, that honest toil may be sufficiently rewarded, and the helpless poor never cry for bread.

Before mankind can start out on the high road of permanent improvement, they must adopt a religious system, whose leading article of faith shall be, that all men are free agents in working out their temporal and spiritual redemption; with a charity broad enough to look upon wealth only as a means of doing good, with a philanthropy comprehensive enough to instruct the ignorant and wayward, and to restrain the wicked and perverse; with organized wisdom sufficient to successfully oppose tyranny and degradation, and which will manifest to the world a constant growth in moral worth and material advancement.

While the reward of crime should be meted out to the transgressor, justice should be tempered by a wise and judicious consideration of the education, circumstances and motives of the criminal.

The Prophet Joseph Smith gave us the key to human progress. When asked by an intelligent stranger how he managed his people so easily, he replied, "I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves." The practice of true principles will insure the continuous growth and improvement of any people; and this is the test of the value of the underlying principles of all social systems.

Religious intolerance will surely result in political despotism, and social corruption will as certainly undermine a government and destroy a people; hence the necessity of a thorough change in the domestic relations. The Pagan monogamy of ancient Rome, with all its degrading tendencies, must be thrown aside, and the sexual relations be based on the patriarchal principles taught by Him who has the wisdom and the right to instruct his sons and daughters.

The issues of life must be controlled exclusively for the production of healthy and virtuous populations, without which no good government can be perpetuated. To accomplish this, religious faith, custom and inexorable public opinion must combine to confine the sexes to the legitimate object of their desires, and also to give ample opportunity for women to gratify the purer instincts of their nature, in the relations of wife and mother.

In this age of rapid and easy communication and exchange of ideas, the inherent evils of old decaying systems are quickly developing their fruits. The old landmarks of social intercourse are disappearing. Men, from a sense of insecurity, are cutting loose from their former moorings, and endeavoring to settle down in the indifference of skepticism, or, with increasing unrest, are vainly searching into the supernatural for something on which to found their hopes of the future.

There is an intensity of action, in the intermingling of antagonistic races, customs, religious ideas

and interests which bespeaks a future of universal commotion, and of wide spread revolutions.

The natural results of the past, the tendencies of the present, and the revelations of ancient and modern prophecy, all indicate a fearful breaking up of the foundations of society. Whether an age or centuries transpire before this is consummated, as sure as cause and effect succeed each other, it must come, and when it comes, like a purifying fire, it will relieve the earth of its burden of wickedness.

JAMES A. LITTLE.

BRITISH PROSPERITY.

An exchange gathers the following, concerning the financial condition of England, from a recent speech by Sir William (Vernon?) Harcourt, Solicitor General—

"There is one thing we know, and that is, that the revenue of the current year has exceeded all expectation. It is simply magnificent. [Cheers.] You know that in April last £3,000,000 of taxes were remitted by the present government. We are now at the end of the third quarter of the financial year, and we know pretty nearly what to expect. Every prediction which Mr. Gladstone made in the great speech which he delivered on the 1st of May of this year has been much more than fulfilled. [Cheers.] We have just got the accounts for the first three-quarters of the financial year. We have taken off £3,000,000 of taxes, yet the revenue, including the £800,000 of postoffice money, is better by £300,000 than it was this time last year before the taxes were taken off. [Cheers.] Mr. Lowe estimated that he would lose on customs, excise, and stamps together £1,400,000. Instead of losing that sum he had gained upon them about £1,000,000 in the first nine months, and probably will gain something more in the last quarter of the year—[cheers]—and there is no reason to believe that his estimates of the other items of revenue will fall much, if at all, below the mark. The revenue of last year was £28,000,000. This year's revenue is just as good. There will be a certain, though probably not a very great, less on the balance of the last quarter, due to the reduction of the income tax; but the revenue will not fall so far short of that of last year as some people have supposed. Such are the amusing results of those reductions of taxation which, by increasing the prosperity of the people, always fill the exchequer. [Cheers.] Some people ask in alarm, 'If you go on taking off million after million of taxes, what will become of the revenue, and what will happen to the debt?' I will tell you. The revenue will increase and the debt will be diminished. [Cheers.] Since 1863, ten years ago, we have remitted £23,000,000 of taxes, and we have paid off some £40,000,000 of debt; and yet in 1873 the revenue is £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 greater than it was in 1863. [Hear, hear.] It is like the Hydrostatic Paradox—till you understand it, it appears incredible. [Hear, hear.]"

WASHINGTON NOTES.

It has been stated by a New York paper that it was probable General Bristow, of Kentucky, would be appointed to the Vienna mission in place of Jay, who is expected to resign. Well informed persons say that Attorney General Williams is much more likely to be appointed to this mission, and that General Bristow will become Attorney General, agreeably to the intention of the President some time since.—*Cleveland Herald*.

There is quite a controversy just now between the admirers of Miss Schurz, Miss Comings, Miss Fenton, Miss Hoar, Miss Conkling and Miss Etheridge—I believe I have given all the names—as to which is the most attractive. Were accomplishment and sound sense to bear off the palm, I think they would all be eclipsed by a young lady from Massachusetts.—"Perley" in *Boston Journal*.

The importance of careful Congressional punctuation was strongly illustrated yesterday at the meeting of the ways and means committee, where it was shown that a comma in one place was worth \$2,000,000. In the tariff bill which went into effect August 1, 1872, it will be remembered that the free

list was extended by the addition of several hundred articles. Among the number added was "fruit plants, tropical and semi-tropical," for the purpose of propagation and cultivation. In engrossing the bill, or in the process of copying it for official printing, a comma was inserted after "fruit," and all fruit was there by placed upon the free list. The customs officers, however, not noticing the change, continued to collect duties on fruit until the error was discovered. The ways and means committee have agreed to report a bill to remove the comma, in accordance with the intent of the law of 1872. The amount of tax illegally collected is not far from \$2,000,000.—*Washington Star*, Jan. 29.

PIOCHE NOTES.

From the *Record* of Jan. 30—

From Mr. Pike, who arrived from Salt Lake yesterday, we learn that Mr. James Connolly had been found and conveyed to Fillmore, with his hands and feet frozen, but to what extent is not known. Mr. C. was still suffering from a deranged mind.

From gentlemen in Pioche, who have known Mr. John C. James for many years, we learn that he was a native of Ohio. He came to the Pacific coast in 1849 or '50, and 1855 or '56 he represented Sierra county in the California Assembly. He was among the first adventurers who came across the Sierra Nevada Mountains and settled in the Carson Valley. While all the territory which now comprises the State of Nevada was known as the Carson country and belonged to Utah Territory, Mr. James was elected a member of the Utah Territorial House of Representatives, and was the first Gentile who ever sat in the Utah legislature. After the adjournment of the legislature he returned to Carson, and has resided principally at that place and Virginia City ever since. He served as Assemblyman in the Legislature of this State during the session of '65-6. His surviving relatives are a mother, who a short time ago came to this coast on a visit and is stopping at Los Angeles, and four brothers, one of whom is I. E. James, the well known civil engineer, another brother is W. H. James, ex-Governor of Nebraska. The other two brothers are Alfred and Walter, the first of whom is Register of Los Angeles county and the other Surveyor of Kern county. He was a man of genial disposition and fine social qualities, a warm-hearted friend, and was highly esteemed by all who knew him.

The general dissatisfaction with the Ingalls brothers in connection with Indian affairs in Southern Utah and Nevada has taken such shape as to induce our citizens to make a direct appeal to the authorities at Washington for redress. The following petition, with the names of citizens appended, has been handed us for publication:

"PIOCHE, Nev. Jan. 27, 1874.

"The undersigned citizens of Lincoln county, State of Nevada, would most respectfully petition for a change of management in the Indian affairs of this district. We believe that a change in this agency would give general satisfaction and security to the ranchers and settlers in Southern Utah and Nevada, and would tend to pacify the Indians in this Indian agency district, who are greatly dissatisfied with their treatment by the present incumbent. For which we will ever pray.

"D. A. Fuiks, Chairman of County Commissioners; C. R. Carden, R. McAlpin, E. Hamilton, A. S. Thompson, Wm. W. Bishop, J. C. Johnston, G. M. Sabin, P. Holland, Horace D. Beene, Wilson & Solomon, J. W. Seibert, Coschina & Guistin, W. H. Dolman, James Clancy, R. H. Breakey, O. P. Sherwood, Frank J. Wyatt, Deseret Telegraph Company, A. D. Jones, Benj. G. Maynard, G. G. Berry, Geo. F. Rives, John C. Lynch, J. M. Parler, J. R. Clark, C. M. Davis, John Reeder, S. C. Barnes, J. Wagner, Henry Woodruff, Henry Schaffer, John Cassidy, J. S. Pitzer, F. Cleveland, J. B. Van Hagen, W. H. Knerr, Frank Wheeler & Co., Geo. W. Arnold, J. J. Halpin & Co., M. D. Halpin, A. J. Blair, Steel & Wilson, Charles Noakes, F. C. Nichols, Jacobs & Sultan, F. Kasten, R. M. Bourne, Thomas Wallace, J. Cohn & Bro., M. Marks, Benjamin Cohn, H. Michael, Benj. Leatz, C. Thompson, Smith Gray and G. W. Birdsall."