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PLURALITY OF WIVES—THE BIBLE IN EVIDENCE.

In the outcry that has been and is being made against plurality of wives, by a certain class throughout the nation, we have sought carefully but in vain for something in the shape of argument from those opposing the doctrine. Instead of that, invective and abuse have been the weapons used, with a large amount of baseless assumptions,—sure evidences of a defective cause; for if the position taken by the opponents of the doctrine was tenable upon reasonable and scriptural grounds, it would be stoutly defended by reason, argument and scripture, as they neither lack talent, education, nor polemical ability.

Every one who has read the Bible and believes it, must admit, as beyond controversy, that plurality of wives was practiced by the ancients to whom God communicated His oracles,—by those to whom He revealed Himself, and on whom His choicest blessings were bestowed. The only question at issue is, Did Jehovah simply permit it, or did He sanction, approve and require it? Yet on these points the scripture is exceedingly clear. In the case of Abraham, called by Christians to this day "the father of the faithful," we find that after he had two wives the Lord expressly says, "I know him, that he will command his children and they shall keep the way of the Lord;" Gen. 18, 19. Here the Almighty emphatically sanctions and approves it, expressing the utmost confidence in a man whom He visited, while that man had, at the time, two wives living with him, and to whom He then and there revealed Himself and promised the greatest of blessings. No word of reproof, of condemnation or correction is uttered, but direct approbation of his whole course; and in Gen. 21, 13, God declares "of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed;" while through Isaac, the son of this man with two wives was all the nations of the earth to be blessed. Abraham further added to his family by increasing the number of his wives, yet Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, places him high among the worthies of exceeding faith whom the Saints of God should pattern after.

We have not space for many examples, which are as numerous in the sacred book as the luminous constellations of heaven in the Milky Way, but will let a few plain and pertinent ones on each point suffice. In Deut. 25, 5, the living brother of a man deceased, is commanded to take as wife the widow of his deceased brother, whether he be married or not; and as the issue of such union would not be called his, but his brother's, by the great primal command of Jehovah he was required to perpetuate his own name and seed upon the earth; therefore, in that act of legislation does the Lord absolutely require, under certain contingencies, the taking of a plurality of wives, and gives it as a command. Again, the seducer of a virgin is required to make her his wife, "he may not put her away all his days;" Deut. 22, 29; the penalty for not making her his wife, when the case was adjudged, being simply death, Deut. 22, 12. If a married man were thus

guilty, he is by that act of Divine legislation required, *under pain of death*, to take a plurality of wives. In Exodus 21, 10, and in Deut. 21, 15, direct acts of Divine legislation are recorded regarding the domestic affairs of those who have more than one wife living at the same time; so do a great number of other passages of Scripture directly bear testimony that the Lord legalized, sanctioned and approved of the principle.

It is said that plurality of wives is adulterous; that the children of all but the first wife are bastards. It is recorded in Exodus 20, 14, that God, in the midst of thunderings and lightnings, from Mount Sinai, said "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" yet, at the same time, in giving the same series of commandments He also said, "If he take him another wife, her food, her raiment and her duty of marriage shall he not diminish," referring to the one he had before taking the second. What, condemn adultery and brand it as a crime, and in the same breath sanction it and legislate for its perpetuation! What sort of a Being does Christendom invest with the awful attributes of the Almighty? Is it one whose senseless mutability would disgrace the most changeable politician ever foisted into legislative dignity by election trickery! It cannot be He who said, "I am God, I change not!" The same God, through His servant Nathan, the prophet, said to David, the "man after His own heart," I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom," ii Sam. 12, 8; he having before that a plurality of wives, when God raised him to the throne of Israel. Would an All-wise Being so far encourage and approve that which He had condemned, and declared death the fitting penalty for, as to give wives into the bosom of David, if a plurality of wives were adulterous? If it were adultery then would the issue be bastard, forbidden to enter into the congregation of the Lord to the tenth generation, yet we find the children of men who had a plurality of wives, born to them by other than the first wife, taking lead in the affairs of the ancient people of God, officiating as priests, called to be prophets, as was Samuel, and, in the case of Solomon, chosen to build the holy temple, and blessed directly by the Lord to such an extent as to have his name carried down through long centuries of time, the honored of Heaven, blessed with wisdom above other men. Clearly, then, among the ancient people of God plurality of wives was practiced, sanctioned and required by the Lord, was not a breach of the seventh commandment, and the issue springing from it was legitimate.

It is further urged that it is forbidden under the gospel dispensation. Where? We find nothing to answer in this objection, for there is nothing advanced in support of it but assertion. It has been said that the law given to Moses was done away. The law was fulfilled by Jesus, not destroyed, nor abrogated. The decalogue, though not renewed, is accepted as being in force to-day by all Christendom, as much so as when it was thundered from Mount Sinai. It will be in force for all time. The principles enunciated in the ten commandments are eternal in their nature, had an existence, in fact, from the dawning of time, and will continue that existence as long as time endures. So with marriage. The legitimacy of that ordinance dates from the existence of opposite sexes of the human family, and the laws which governed it then are in force in all ages among those who serve God, unless the Great Law-giver pleases to change or repeal them.

The law of rites and ceremonies was given to the Jews "as a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ;" but the mind

of Jehovah concerning marriage was revealed when men lived under a gospel dispensation, and before they had so far wandered from God as to require a schoolmaster to bring them back again to Him. Plurality of wives was known, practiced and approved of God during the gospel dispensation previous to the days of Moses, and when that which was added because of transgression was lifted away, the same principles, governing and perpetuating life eternally, which had been in part rejected, were those by which the people of God were to be governed.

But in the days of the Savior there must have been men who had more than one wife living, for the command which required a man to take his brother's widow to wife still existed, yet the Lord Jesus nowhere utters the first syllable condemnatory of it, though he speaks in unsparing terms against the adulteries of the day and reprehends their divorces, which Moses allowed because of the hardness of their hearts. Furthermore, but one of the Apostles expresses himself on the subject, and while nowhere condemning it, his words in one place are a direct confirmation that plurality of wives was practiced and allowed in his own days. Paul limits a bishop and a deacon to one wife, the reason for which is obvious. Living under the monogamic law of pagan Rome, and being men brought before the people, he deemed it wise that they should so far conform to the usage of their times and the laws under which they lived, following out his avowed policy of "being all things to all men that he might win souls." But the fact of his feeling it necessary to place such restriction on these officers, is proof that the doctrine of plurality of wives was acted upon by the early Christians who looked back to a Redeemer that had come, as by those Christians who lived under the gospel law in patriarchal times, and who, like Job, looked forward to a coming Redeemer.

Such is, in part, the Bible testimony on this subject; very briefly noticed, indeed, but yet so plain that it is beyond successful contradiction. The law of nature revealed in the works of the Creator is sustained by the written law revealed in His word. Now, you who, while sitting steeped in corruption, rail against the unvirtuous practices of the "Mormons," and profess a deep faith and reverence for the Bible, meet its plain statements as best you may. "To the law and to the testimony;" bring forth your strong reasoning and convince us of our error from the source whence we have drawn our arguments. Let your weapons be powerful reasoning, plain quotation, direct testimony; they will be more in consonance with the boasted enlightenment of the nineteenth century, than the cannon and bayonets with which you threaten to exterminate conscientious believers for obeying a commandment of God, which you find yourselves unable to meet in fair and open argument. Or, if you will pursue the course you are now traveling, be consistent,—avow your disbelief in the Bible, proclaim your infidelity to God, stigmatize those who are seated on thrones in the celestial kingdom as adulterers, declare the Son of God a descendant of adulterers and a scion of bastardy, throw the decalogue aside, the morality and purity of the Bible to the "Mormons," and establish for yourselves a god of gold with prostitution as its high priestess.

These you must do to be consistent; or you must humble yourselves before God, own His power and wisdom, and His right to legislate in all that concerns mankind, and repentingly accept the revelations contained in that book which you have professedly adopted as a rule of faith.

MR. GOULD'S TESTIMONY.

The Hon. James Gould, in delivering the annual address to the Homeopathic Society at Albany, N. Y., Feb. 13, said he wished to bring to the notice of physicians the terrible increase of the crime of abortion among the women of America. Respectable married women, he said, who had no shame to conceal, resorted as much to this disgusting and criminal practice as their erring sisters, who had at least an incentive desire to avoid the scorn which would inevitably meet them did they not take some measures to hide their guilt. In one village through which he passed lay three women, who had recently died through having abortion procured. In one house a mother and daughter died from the same cause. Many women, he stated, in good society, perform the operation on themselves, in many instances being taught by physicians. He urged that every influence should be brought to bear to remedy this great evil.—[N. Y. Sun.]

Is not this waxing "worse and worse," as foretold? Or is it only a legitimate result of modern so-called "regeneration?"

We do not like to print such disgusting facts, but the keeping our readers advised upon significant "signs of the times" compels an occasional publication of increasing wickedness, as in the instance testified of by the Hon. James Gould. Such instances are by no means printed as any proof that 'Mormonism' is consequently true, for Christendom, as most emphatically do we, deplore such awful corruption. But such instances do prove that, so long as any community, sect, or nation "changes the laws, transgresses the ordinances and breaks the everlasting covenant," cleaves to man-made priesthoods, and not only rejects the revelations of Heaven, but strives to prevent their observance by others, they must, of necessity, "wax worse and worse."

BUTTERFIELD'S OVERLAND DISPATCH.

We are compelled to state that the above named Dispatch managed very badly last year in its freighting to Utah, leaving much freight at Bridger and Denver, and some clear back at the starting point at Atchison, on the Missouri. And that is not all; for, upon inquiring, we cannot learn that any steps are being taken to forward it on, at this late date, before the time of high waters.

Without soon delivering at least the freight at Bridger and Denver, and indemnifying their employers for past losses, we do not clearly see how they can well ask for future patronage. Hurry in the last year's freight, and satisfy the reasonable demands of those you have caused disappointment and loss, or give way to those who will fulfill their engagements, even though it be at a money sacrifice as penalty for failures.

PLURALITY OF WIVES—FURTHER SUSTAINING EVIDENCE.

The length of the article on plurality of wives in our SEMI-WEEKLY, March 11, and leading in this number, compelled us to close the arguments drawn from the New Testament rather abruptly.

The view expressed there of Paul's injunction, concerning a bishop and a deacon being each the husband of one wife, was taken because it is the only view on which opponents of the doctrine could hope to base anything in the shape of an argument. Yet looking at it from the stand point there expressed, it sustains the doctrine. There is, however, still another view, more in consonance with the whole tenor of Scripture and the principles of church government. Bishops and deacons were officers having cognisance of temporal things among the Saints, and being required to advise, counsel and regulate in temporal matters; hence they needed experience in family government and domestic affairs;—see, Acts, VI; 1 Tim. III. The legitimate conclusion is that unmarried men were not so well qualified for these offices, lacking the requisite experience; and therefore Paul thought it best that a man who was appointed to the office of a bishop or a deacon should be the husband of, at least, one wife. This, we consider the correct view, and one that is amply sustained in the New Testament; while both views unquestionably prove that