

liberties, rights and immunities, guaranteed to us by the Constitution; and no matter what action may be taken by mobocratic influence, by excited and unreasonable men, or by inimical legislation, we shall contend inch by inch for our freedom and rights, as well as the freedom and rights of all American citizens and of all mankind. As a people or community, we can abide our time, but I will say to you Latter-day Saints that there is nothing of which you have been despoiled by oppressive acts or mobocratic rule, but that you will again possess, or your children after you. Your rights in Ohio, your rights in Jackson, Clay, Caldwell and Davis counties in Missouri, will yet be restored to you. Your possessions, of which you have been fraudulently despoiled in Missouri and Illinois, you will again possess, and that without force, or fraud or violence. The Lord has a way of His own in regulating such matters. We are told the wicked shall slay the wicked; He has a way of His own of "emptying the earth of the inhabitants thereof." A terrible day of reckoning is approaching the nations of the earth; the Lord is coming out of His hiding place to vex the inhabitants thereof; and the destroyer of the Gentiles, as prophesied of, is already on his way. Already the monarchs of the earth are trembling from conspiracies among their own people; already has one Czar of Russia been destroyed and another holds his life by a very uncertain tenure through the perpetual threats and machinations of an inflated populace; already have the Emperor of Germany, the King of Italy, the Queen of England, the King of Spain, the Sultan of Turkey, and many others of the honorable and noble rulers of the earth had their lives jeopardized by the attacks of regicides; already have two of the Presidents of this Republic been laid low by the hands of the assassin; and the spirit of insubordination, misrule, lynching and mobocracy of every kind is beginning to ride rampant through the land; already combinations are being entered into which are very ominous for the future prosperity, welfare and happiness of this great Republic. The volcanic fires of a disordered and anarchical element are beginning to manifest themselves and exhibit the internal forces that are at work among the turbulent and unthinking masses of the people. Congress will soon have something else to do than to proscribe and persecute an innocent, law-abiding and patriotic people. Of all bodies in the world, they can least afford to remove the bulwarks that bind society together in this nation, to recklessly trample upon human freedom and rights, and to rend and destroy that great Palladium of human rights—the Constitution of the United States. Ere long they will need all its protecting influence to save this nation from misrule, anarchy and mobocratic influence. They can ill afford to be the foremost in tampering with human rights and human freedom, or in tearing down the bulwarks of safety and protection which that sacred instrument has guaranteed. It is lamentable to see the various disordered and disorganized elements seeking to overthrow the greatest and best government in existence on the earth. Congress can ill afford to set a pattern of violation of that Constitution which it has sworn to support. The internal fires of revolution are already smouldering in this nation, and they need but a spark to set them in a flame. Already are agencies at work in the land calculated to subvert and overthrow every principle of rule and government; already is corruption of every kind prevailing in high places and permeating all society; already are we, as a nation, departing from our God and corrupting ourselves with malfeasance, dishonor and a lack of public integrity and good faith; already are licentiousness and debauchery corrupting, undermining and destroying society; already are we interfering with the laws of nature and stopping the functions of life, and have become the slayers of our own offspring, and employ human butchers in the shape of physicians to assist in this diabolical and murderous work. The sins of this nation, the licentiousness, the debauchery, the murders are entering into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and I tell you now, from the tops of these mountains, as a humble servant of the living God, that unless these crimes and infamies are stopped, this nation will be overthrown, and its glory,

power, dominion and wealth will fade away like the dews of a summer morning. I also say to other nations of the earth that unless they repent of their crimes, their iniquities and abominations, their thrones will be overturned, their kingdoms and governments overthrown and their lands made desolate. This is not only my saying, but it is the saying of those ancient prophets which they themselves profess to believe; for God will speedily have a controversy with the nations of the earth, and, as I stated before, the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way to overthrow governments, to destroy dynasties, to lay waste thrones, kingdoms and empires, to spread abroad anarchy and desolation, and to cause war, famine and bloodshed to overspread the earth.

Besides the preaching of the Gospel, we have another mission, namely, the perpetuation of the free agency of man and the maintenance of liberty, freedom and the rights of man. There are certain principles that belong to humanity outside of the Constitution, outside of the laws, outside of all the enactments and plans of man, among which is the right to live; God gave us the right and not man; no government gave it to us, and no government has a right to take it away from us. We have a right to liberty—that was a right that God gave to all men; and if there has been oppression, fraud or tyranny in the earth, it has been the result of the wickedness and corruptions of men, and has always been opposed to God and the principles of truth, righteousness, virtue and all principles that are calculated to elevate mankind. The Declaration of Independence states that men are in possession of certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This belongs to us; it belongs to all humanity. I wish, and the worst wish I have for the United States, is that they could have liberality enough to give to all men equal rights, and, while they profess to have delivered the black slaves, that they strike off the fetters of the white men of the south, who have been ground under the heel of sectional injustice, and let them feel that we are all brothers in one great nation, and deliver all people from tyranny and oppression of every kind, and proclaim, as they did at the first, liberty throughout the land and to all people. That is the worst wish I have for them. And when I see them take another course I feel sorry for it. I would like if I had time to talk a little upon constitutional rights; I would like a little to discuss the unconstitutionality of that Edmunds bill; but it was ably done by many senators of the United States and by others in the House of Representatives. Very ably done; and I honor the men who maintain such sentiments. It is true that most of them apologized and said that they were as much opposed to polygamy as anybody. Well, that is a matter of their own; they have a right to their opinions as much as I have a right to my opinion. Would I deprive them of that right? No, I would not. I preach the Gospel to the world. What is it? Force, tyranny and oppression? No; it is all free grace and it is all free will. Is anybody coerced? Did anybody coerce you, Latter-day Saints? Are any of you forced to continue Latter-day Saints if you do not want to? If you think you are, you are all absolved to-day. We know of no such principle as coercion; it is a matter of choice. The principle that I spoke of before—that is, men receive the Holy Ghost within themselves, is the cementing, binding, uniting power that exists among the Latter-day Saints. What right have I to expect that members of the House of Representatives or the people of the United States should advocate polygamy? They would not understand it. Nor would it be reasonable for us to expect it at their hands; but what I admired in those Senators and Members was their fealty to the government, to the Constitution and the maintenance of the freedom and the inalienable rights of man, of every color, creed and profession.

I will relate a little conversation that I had with President Hayes, when he was here, on the subject of polygamy. I said to him, we are not generally understood by the people of the world, by the outsiders; and I can look with very great leniency upon the action of members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the governors, and others who have expressed strong indignation

against this principle. From your standpoint, you think we are a corrupt people; you think it is a part or portion of the thing you call the social evil, that permeates all classes of society, and is sapping the foundation of the life of so many throughout the land. You think that we are trying to introduce something that is encouraging licentiousness and other kindred evils among the people, and to legalize these things by legislative enactment and otherwise, and trying to popularize and make legal those infamies. I continued, that is a false view to take of the subject. Mr. President, I have always abhorred such practices from the time I was quite young; when I have seen men act the part of Lotharios, deceiving the fair sex and despoiling them of their virtue, and then seeing those men received into society and their victims disgraced, ostracised and esteemed as pariahs and outcasts, I could not help sympathizing with a woman that was seduced. I looked upon the man who seduced her as a villain; I do so to-day. Said I, when Joseph Smith first made known the revelation concerning plural marriage and of having more wives than one, it made my flesh crawl; but, Mr. President, I received such evidence and testimony pertaining to this matter, scriptural and otherwise, which it was impossible for me as an honest man to resist, and believing it to be right I obeyed it and practised it. I have not time now to enter into all the details; but in regard to those honorable gentlemen in the Senate who maintained the principle of constitutional rights and who declare, as I declare to-day, that that instrument which was then gotten up was unconstitutional in several particulars, I could not expect them to advocate my religion; it is not their business, but is mine and yours. They can take what religion they please; we do not wish to force our religion nor our marital relations upon them, nor have we ever done it, nor could we do it if we wished, for this principle is connected with the Saints alone, and pertains to eternity as well as time, and is known to us by the appellation of "celestial marriage." It does not belong to them, nor does it pertain to all of our own people. None but the more pure, virtuous, honorable and upright are permitted to enter into these associations. Now I speak to the Latter-day Saints, who are acquainted with what I say. If I state untruths, tell me, and I will consider you my friends, and the friends of this community. Should we preach the doctrine of plurality of wives to the people of the United States? No; you know very well that it is only for honorable men and women, virtuous men and women, honest men and women who can be vouched for by those who preside over them and whom they recognize as their Presidents; it is only such people as these that can be admitted to participate in this ordinance. You know it, I know it, you Presidents of States know it and the people know it. There are any number of people in this Territory who are good people in many respects, but who cannot come up to that standard. That is the position we occupy in relation to this principle.

If the United States were to ask us, if we could give to them the same ordinance, we would say, No; no, we cannot. Why can you not? Because it is a religious ordinance, as I have stated; because it connects men and women together for time and for eternity; because it associates people of this world in the next; because it makes provision for our marital associations in the other world, and that while we have our wives here we expect to have them in eternity; and we believe in that doctrine that reaches beyond time into eternity. Others make their marital relations to end in death; their covenants last only till death does them part. Ours take hold of eternity, they enter into the eternal state of existence, and contemplate an eternal union of the sexes worlds without end.

We believe in the resurrection of the dead and the life in the world to come; and not only in the resurrection of the male, but also of the female. We believe also in eternal unions, union on earth and in heaven. And as the heavens declare the glory of God, and the stellar universes roll on according to eternal laws implanted in them by the Deity, and perform their revolutions through successive ages, so will man progress and increase—himself, his wives, his children—through the

eternities to come. Who is injured by this faith? Cannot a great and magnanimous nation afford the privilege to enjoy these principles without passing bills of pains and penalties for the belief and enunciation of such divine, ennobling and Godlike principles?

Man is a dual being, possessed of body and spirit, made in the image of God, and connected with Him and with eternity. He is a God in embryo and will live and progress throughout the eternal ages, if obedient to the laws of the Godhead, as the Gods progress throughout the eternal ages. Is it a thing incredible in this generation that God shall raise the dead? Is it a thing incredible that the finest and most exalted ties and sympathies of humanity, sanctified by family relations—pure undefiled love, should continue in the resurrection?

We have no fault to find with our government. We deem it the best in the world. But we have reason to deplore its maladministration, and I call upon our legislators, our governors and president to pause in their career and not to tamper with the rights and liberties of American citizens, nor wantonly tear down the bulwarks of American and human liberty. God has given to us glorious institutions; let us preserve them intact and not pander to the vices, passions and fanaticism of a depraved public opinion.

Cannot the enlightenment, civilization and statesmanship of the nineteenth century in this great American nation find a more worthy object than to fetter human thought, to enslave its own citizens, to force chains for the suppression of human progress, to bind in Cimmerian darkness the noblest aspirations of the human soul, to tear down the pillars of the temple of liberty, to inaugurate a system of serfdom and oppression, and to copy after Egypt, Russia and the late practices of this nation in enslaving and brutalizing humanity, tearing to pieces that great palladium of human rights, the Constitution of the United States? Can they afford to do this? If there are supposed wrongs, can they not find a legal and constitutional way of correcting these wrongs? Surely the tearing down of the bulwarks, the very temple of freedom, will not aid them in the solution of this, to them, vexed question, or if they tear away the strongholds of society, they themselves will perish in the ruins.

But with regard to those not of us I will tell you what I believe about the matter. I believe it would be much better for them to have even polygamy in their state of existence than this corroding, corrupting, demoralizing and damning evil that prevails in their midst. We look upon it that polygamy is the normal condition of man; but that has nothing to do with Mormon plurality of wives, or what is termed "celestial marriage." I would state also, that when we speak of its being the normal condition, it has so existed throughout all ages. And when we talk about polygamy, I have read the speeches of men in Congress when speaking about the Mormon position, telling us that the British in India put down suttee, which is the burning of widows on the funeral pile of their husbands; casting children into the Ganges, etc.—that the British put that down by force of law. But the British, if my memory serves me right, have about two hundred millions of polygamists under their jurisdiction, and they can afford to treat them right and to give them the protection of law; but our free government cannot. And when we talk about the suttee, that is the destruction of life; while polygamy means the propagation of human life. One tends to destruction and death, the other to the propagation of life. I will guarantee to-day, without fear of contradiction, that there is more of the suttee in the United States to-day pertaining to infants than there ever was in India among the same number of population. It has become unfashionable in the east for women to have large families. I have heard remarks like this: one lady was asked, How many children have you? One or two. Is that all? What do you take me for, do you think I am a cow? Why no, you are not a cow, for cows do not murder their offspring. What a terrible tale is here told! What a horrible state of affairs is here exhibited. And I am told that some of these iniquities are being introduced here. I tell you, in the name of God, if you do we will be after you. I am told of physicians

who are acting as they do in the east—as the butchers of infants. Let us look after these things, you Bishops, and if you do find it out, bring them up. As God lives we will not permit such infamies in our midst; you will not commence your fashionable murders here. And I will say now, Wo to this nation and to the nations of Europe, or any people among any nation, that sanctions these things. Have you not read that no "murderer hath eternal life abiding in him?" What shall be thought of those unnatural monsters, the slayers of their own offspring? This revolting, unnatural, damnable vice may be fashionable, but God will require this crime at their hands. Wo to men and to women that are licentious and corrupt, depraved and debauched, and especially wo, tenfold wo, to the murderers of helpless innocence. I tell you this in the name of the Lord. If these things are not stopped, God will arise and shake the nations of the earth and root out their infamies.

Now then what shall we do? We do not wish to place ourselves in a state of antagonism, nor to act defiantly, towards this Government. We will fulfil the letter, so far as practicable, of that unjust, inhuman, oppressive and unconstitutional law, so far as we can without violating principle; but we cannot sacrifice every principle of human right at the behest of corrupt, unreasoning and unprincipled men; we cannot violate the highest and noblest principles of human nature and make pariahs and outcasts of high-minded, virtuous and honorable women, nor sacrifice at the shrine of popular clamor the highest and noblest principles of humanity!

We shall abide all constitutional law, as we always have done; but while we are Godfearing and law-abiding, and respect all honorable men and officers, we are no craven serfs, and have not learned to lick the feet of oppressors, nor to bow in base submission to unreasoning clamor. We will contend, inch by inch, legally and constitutionally, for our rights as American citizens, and for the universal rights of universal man. We stand proudly erect in the consciousness of our rights as American citizens, and plant ourselves firmly on the sacred guarantees of the Constitution; and that instrument, while it defines the powers and privileges of the President, Congress and the judiciary, also directly provides that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively or to the people."

I have heard it boasted by British statesmen, that as soon as a slave planted his foot on British soil, his fetters were broken and he was a free man. It is the proud boast of Americans that her flag floats for all; and while Congress claims the right of dominion and legislation over territories, with that same right is associated the right of manhood, freedom and American citizenship. We need have no fears, no trembling in our knees, about these attempts to deprive us of our God-given and constitutional liberties. God will take care of His people, if we will only do right. I am thankful to say that you are doing pretty nearly as well as you know how. There are many things among us that are wrong, many things that are foolish, but generally you are seeking to fear God and keep His commandments. Now treat your wives right, but do not subject yourselves to the infamous provisions of the Edmunds act more than you can help, avoid all harsh expressions and improper actions, act carefully and prudently in all your social relations. Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. A gentleman in Washington told another, who related it to me, in answer to the question, what will the "Mormons" do with their wives and children when this bill passes? he was told: Turn them out in the streets as we do our harlots. I say in the name of God we will not do any such thing, and let all Israel say Amen. [The vast congregation, amounting to from 12,000 to 14,000 persons, responded Amen.] We will stand by our covenants, and the Constitution will bear us out in it. Among other things, that instrument says that Congress shall make no law impairing the validity of contracts. You have contracted to be united with your wives in time and eternity, and it would not do for us to break a constitutional law, would it? [Laughter.] Others may do it, but we cannot. We cannot lay aside our honor, we cannot lay