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TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

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PLURALITY OF WIVES—THE ANTI-POLYGAMY ACT.

We have given proof in this series of articles that plurality of wives is a principle sanctioned and sustained by the Bible; that God commanded it; that it was practiced by the ancient patriarchs before the Mosaic dispensation, under the direct sanction and in the actual personal presence of Jehovah; that it was continued through the Mosaic dispensation until the coming of the Savior; and that it was practiced in early apostolic times after the opening of the Christian dispensation. We have shown that it is in conformity with the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants, both of which we receive as sacred writings. We have printed the Revelation which enjoins it upon us as a direct and Divine command. We have proved that morally and physiologically it tends to elevate the race, when practiced in righteousness; and that socially it would redeem mankind from the awful social leprosy with which the nations of Christendom are smitten. We have shown that it is a part of our religion,—as much so as any doctrine of our faith; and it cannot but be admitted that constitutionally we have not only the most perfect right to practice all the principles of our religion unmolested, but that, by the provisions of the Constitution, the government of our country is bound to protect all its citizens in the full enjoyment of that right, "Mormons" as well as others, since no one of our principles interferes in the most remote degree with the rights of any other living soul on the earth.

Plurality of wives, then, as a principle is Scripturally, morally, socially and physiologically correct; and as a part of our religious faith we have as indefeasible a right to marry two or ten wives as the Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist or Quaker has to marry one, or the Shaker to marry none, when such is his faith. Yet the Legislative Council of the nation, in Congress assembled, enacted a law entitled "An act to punish and prevent the practice of Polygamy in the Territories," and especially in the Territory of Utah, legislating for plurality of wives as for a crime, and leaving us the alternative of disobeying God, denying our faith, bastardizing our children by such legitimate alliances and making shipwreck of our salvation, or disobeying an unconstitutional stretch of the law-making department. That act was passed and approved in 1862, more than nine years after the Revelation which made the principle a Divine injunction upon us was published in the city of Washington, and when it was well known that it was incorporated in our faith as a part of our religion. That act charges the Lawgiver of all the earth as accessory to and commanding a crime.

But a crime is not simply that which a written statute denominates such. It is the perpetration of a wrong against an individual, a community or a state; which the law-making department recognizes as such, and for which it provides whatever penalty it may deem proportionate to the extent and nature of the wrong and the injury that has been inflicted by its perpetration. Legislatures are not infallible, and least of all are they apt to be free from error where matters of faith and conscience in religion are concerned. It has been no uncommon thing in the history of the world for law makers to declare certain religious principles and practices crimes, which are now by universal voice exonerated from any such imputation. If we are not mistaken there stands upon the English statute books to-day an unrepealed act of Parliament, passed in the reign of Edward VI, which makes it a crime punishable by death to give shelter to or to feed a foreign Roman Catholic priest. The act has fallen into desuetude, but it was unrepealed a few years ago. This terrible thing of religious bigotry and intolerance actually in that instance stigmatized as a crime the commonest act of hospitality, and in cases where those against whom the statute was directed would look upon it in the light of a religious duty. We might cite many cases to show where legislatures had pronounced certain acts criminal, which more liberal views and other times not only exonerated from such grave charge, but declared them the very opposite.

Apart from the incorrect assumption of legislative enactment, plurality of wives can in no way nor manner be justly declared a crime. But the act in question is of itself a novelty in jurisprudence, and a serious error in ethics. It declares honorable marriage, which God has sanctioned and commanded, a crime; while it passes over promiscuous and sinful intercourse, which Heaven and nature condemn in the most unmistakeable manner, as a matter unworthy of notice. It declares by implication that a man may keep as many mistresses as he pleases, have children by them, live with them openly or covertly, and the law will pass him by without adjudging him guilty of wrong; but if he calls them wives it will condemn him guilty of a crime and punish him with fine and imprisonment. If this is not placing a premium on corruption, throwing protection around licentiousness, and instigating to depravity we fail to see its force or intent.

But this act goes farther; it legalizes plurality of wives while it declares the practice a crime. As the Constitution prohibits Congress from passing an *ex poste facto* law, all marriages consummated prior to its passage were perfectly legal. Here we have the strange anamoly of plural marriages being at once legal and illegal, justifiable and criminal. In all places where contracted ideas have compelled monogamy by law, a second marriage is considered spurious and no ceremony; but this act stultifies itself, and declares that at one time our marriages were perfectly valid, which, as marriage with us is a religious ceremony, is the admission that it was, and is, a part of our religious faith and cannot constitutionally be interfered with.

This places the authors and defenders of the act on two horns of a dilemma, neither of which they can get off. The law is an *ex poste facto* one, which the Constitution forbids, inasmuch as years previously it was publicly known that the practice against which the act was levelled was incorporated in our religious and social polity; and beyond that, it was known that many nations of the earth practiced it, whose inhabitants were guaranteed by the Constitution full liberty to come and make this continent their home and enjoy the most perfect freedom that would not infringe upon the rights of their fellow citizens. Against their coming here with their plural wives the Constitution opposed no objections, merely giving to the majority of each State the right to frame their own State Constitution, so that it did not conflict with the Constitution of the United States, and their representatives in legislative assembly the right to enact their own constitutional laws. Thus if the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of New York chose to legalize polygamy, it would become the law of that State, and Congress would not interfere with it, for the Constitution confers no such power upon them. It is an *ex poste facto* law then, not only because we practiced the principle years before it was passed, but because the principle was practiced before the Constitution was framed, if not in this nation in other nations whose inhabitants were freely invited, as were the people of all lands, to make their home on this great country. If a plurality of wives had been legalized in in any one of the thirteen States that signed the original compact of federation, its right to do so would have been undisputed, on the principle that the right of the majority to decide on their own local and domestic affairs shall be unquestioned, so long as no wrong is perpetrated against any citizen.

We presume that even to-day Congress would not assume to pass a law compelling a person of African descent not to enter into an engagement with another, white or black, to serve him during his natural life. Congress could not do so without robbing that colored person of his lately acquired liberty to enter into an agreement or dispose of himself as a free agent. Yet it says it will prevent men and women from entering into the dearest and holiest compact of which the world has any conception, and confine the affections within bounds prescribed by law, or only allow their gratification in a corrupt and licentious manner.

The other horn of the dilemma is, that this act in recognizing the existence and validity of plurality of wives admits that it is a part of our religion; consequently, the act is directly opposed to that Constitutional provision which declares that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibit the free exercise thereof."

We are willing to leave the matter here, satisfied that the honor and good name of Congress demand the repeal of an act as absurd as that famous one of King Edward's time to which allusion has been made.

In closing we would say, that we and our enemies with all the inhabitants of the earth are in the hands of a just God, who will control and overrule all things for the accomplishment of His own wise purposes. And we would recommend to this and all other nations the caution of one of old, "Take heed what ye do, lest ye be found fighting against God," when they seek by force of power to crush the truth which He has revealed. Either this work is of man and will die of itself, or it is of God and will stand forever. The latter we are assured of, and cheerfully leave the result in the hands of the Almighty.

OPENING OF CALLVILLE WAREHOUSE.

We were called upon by Mr. Henry F. Dibble last week, on his way to Callville, head of navigation on the Colorado, to open business at that place as Agent for Mr. R. G. Sneath, a leading merchant of San Francisco, who has a cargo of Groceries, Provisions, Clothing, etc., which left on the 27th ult., and may be expected at Callville about the 1st of June.

The stone warehouse at that place will be occupied for Mr. Sneath's business,—and the commercial facilities so long desired by a large section of country—comprising numerous intervening settlements of industrious and energetic inhabitants between this city and Callville—will now be afforded,

We thoroughly coincide in the favorable opinion expressed by President B. Young and citizens of our city regarding this enterprise, and bespeak for it the success which should result from arrangements promising to be so mutually advantageous to all parties.

When roads from Callville to the settlements on the Muddy, St. George, &c., are located on the best routes and put in good condition, which will doubtless be done as speedily as practicable, parties in this city may also find this new route advantageous for the importation of many articles.

THE NATION'S LEGACY AND TRUST.

The people of this nation, and their delegated representatives, have a trust reposed in them the magnitude of which it is difficult, if not impossible, to overestimate. It would be no stretch of imagination, nor exaggeration of the simple truth, to say that the liberty of the world had been placed within their power.

Republics have fallen into the grasp of ambitious and designing men, with whom personal aggrandizement took precedence over the public weal; autocracies have been tyrannical or humane according to the whim or personal character of the despots who governed; monarchies have maintained the "right divine" of a few to lord it over the many; but in this nation the budding flower of fresh grown freedom and true liberty gave promise of blooming with a beauty and fragrance that would never fade. Yet while the names of the fathers of our country are venerated and respected, their successors seem to be forgetting, if they have not already forgotten, that the liberty and freedom bequeathed to the nation by those great men, is but a legacy, a trust reposed, for the use of which they will have to render an account at the tribunal of posterity and the bar of God.

They do not act as if the glorious career of the nation was the result of that which our fathers purchased with their best blood and bequeathed to their children; but as if they, themselves, were the authors of the nation's glory, and had a right to act their pleasure with the fruits of their own labors. They do to-day that which the great statesmen who gave us our Constitution, and laid the foundation of our national greatness, would not dare to have done in their day. They could not have dared to do it; for their strong sense of right and their clear conception of that policy necessary to maintain the nation's growth and increasing prosperity would not have permitted them to do so.

They bequeathed to the nation in trust, and as a glorious heritage, principles which if honestly adhered to and faithfully administered would have met the wants of the nation under all circumstances. This nation can never grow so unwieldly, nor extend its dominions so wide, that those principles would not meet its wants as a nation. But one of the greatest curses that ever afflicted any people, a cause of the decadence of some of the mightiest powers that have ever borne sway on the earth, is class legislation. And in this country, under a Constitution which guarantees the fullest liberty to every citizen, a people inhabiting a Territory, which with unexampled perseverance and unparalled industry they have wrested from the desert wilderness, are made the subjects and objects of class legislation on *ex parte* statements and slanders the most vile and untrue. Do the statesmen of the nation forget that in striking at our liberties they are striking at their own? That if the trust reposed in them is betrayed, when the "Mormons" are the subject of consideration, there may "arise another Pharoah who knew not Joseph?" That the growth of parties or sects, antagonistic to them, may throw into the councils of the nation a majority opposed to them, who, following their example and giving the Constitution a wide interpretation,