

than the despotism even which exists in the old countries, because it would bring about anarchy and confusion; it would bring about a condition of things wherein the strong would oppress the weak even to a greater extent than they do at present, and surely there is no need for that.

Then, it might be asked, if you Latter-day Saints have so great a regard for law, for existing regulations to rule and govern society, why is it that you make exceptions to this rule? Why is it that there is, at least, one law that you are not willing to conform to?—referring to the law that was passed in 1862, for the suppression of our system of marriage. The reason is this—that we regard the Constitution of our country as sacred, and the will of our Heavenly Father as supreme. That sacred instrument—the Constitution of this land—says that a man and woman in the practice of their religion shall not be interfered with, that Congress shall have no power to make such interference as that proposed by the law to which I have made allusion. But it might be said in regard to this that it is a law nevertheless because it has passed the Congress of the United States and been sustained by the Supreme Court of the United States. Nevertheless—I now speak for myself—I lay it down as a proposition that any law that infringes upon my religious rights cannot be a constitutional law, if all the courts in the world should decide that it is of that character. But it may be said—and it is said frequently—that our system of marriage—the same system of marriage that obtained among the ancients who held direct communication with the Almighty—is not a part of religion. But I state, so far as I am individually concerned, that

I hope never to get into the position where any man or class on the face of this earth shall prescribe to me what shall or shall not be my religion, for the moment that such a condition is admitted, then farewell to religious liberty. It becomes as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, having no basis in reality. But it is sometimes said that our system of marriage is obnoxious to the ruling sentiment of the country, and especially to those whose crafts are in danger, and who are professors of other religions. Then on the same principle, if we were in the majority would it be right for us to use coercive means to put down in the religions of others what might be obnoxious to our system? It is a poor rule that will not work both ways. But it seems to me somewhat remarkable that people who are living perhaps thousands of miles away from this part of the country, should have such powerful visual organs that they can gaze and see something that needs correcting among the people called Latter-day Saints, when there is sufficient perhaps within a radius of half a mile of their own dwelling places which would require their attention in correcting for the rest of their lives. But whenever a man travels in this country or any other, we shall find a large proportion of the people who are liberal in regard to this community, and who think that they should not be interfered with in their institutions, and instead of getting up all this *furor* and excitement in reference to what is called the “Mormon Problem,” the sensible part of the community particularly are willing that the “Mormons” should be left to the solution of that problem themselves, and we assert that, with the help of God, we are able to accomplish that work and