

will extend to the whole human family the precious boon of liberty, and will make this land in reality an asylum for the oppressed of all nations. But we have come to a time when Congress has undertaken to dictate our ethics, to declare what we may or may not accept as tenets of religion. This is a right or power that is not conveyed in the Constitution; but on the contrary, Congress is expressly prohibited from making any law establishing any form of religion or preventing the free exercise thereof; this right of worshiping God according to the dictates of one's own conscience is the right of every American citizen.

Aside from what may be pronounced legal, there is an equity side of the court to which all Godfearing people have recourse. One principle of which the courts of the nation seem to have taken no consideration, but which the Latter-day Saints cannot afford to pass unnoticed, is this: Wherein it is given in the Constitution that the States shall make no law to impair the obligation of contracts. I wish to ask the people, not in the legal sense, but in the sense of equity, of righteousness and eternal truth, if the marriage relation is not to all intents and purposes a contract? Do we not enter into a covenant, a contract, an agreement with our wives. Yes; not only a contract, an agreement of a civil nature, as it is regarded in the world, but our contracts are of a higher order, of a more sacred nature extending as they do in perpetuity from time into eternity. Now, if it is a violation of States rights to pass a law impairing the obligation of contracts in common financial matters, is it not a graver and more serious violation of the Constitution to pass a law impairing the obligation of

contracts as between man and wife? It is laid down by the most eminent law writers of our country that properly maintained marital relationship is the true basis of all human society; it needs the solemn covenants of husband and wife to be taken into account, and then what follows? The reasons why contracts and faith in them should not be violated is because of vested rights that accrue under those contracts; and have you any vested rights, my brethren and sisters, under the contracts that you have made with your wives and husbands, have you not acquired under those covenants and contracts the most precious of vested rights—those of sons and daughters given you in the flesh? These are possessory rights, the value of which bear no comparison with anything that can be called goods or chattels. We look upon the increase of our families, as the foundation of our eternal dominion, we cannot but look upon any hand impairing the obligation of these contracts as striking at the very root of our prosperity. Our children are our vested rights growing out of these holy relations, rights not only of a temporal but of an eternal, and finally immortal character, and of the highest possible consideration.

I apprehend while I talk upon this subject, that it is very improbable that the courts of the world would regard these matters in any such light, but they are matters which pertain to the laws of the living God before whose court we shall all appear and our rights be vindicated; those who have undertaken to deprive us of these rights will also appear and on such a writ of errors as will bring them effectually within the jurisdiction of the court.