

tion of Providence for the accomplishing of the great end in view to encourage and stimulate them to multiply and replenish the earth, and take upon themselves the cares, labors, anxieties and responsibilities attending the rearing of families. And among the many different views entertained in Christendom concerning the commerce of the sexes we might say, there exists every variety of belief and practice growing out of these beliefs. We have in Christian America a religious sect—not very numerous to be sure—who held the union of the sexes to be sinful in any form whatever. This sect I hardly need say is the Shaking Quakers; and to become a member of their society—a person already married would be required to dissolve his marriage relationship; a husband and wife joining that society would be required to do the same, and to abstain from each other forever afterwards, all connection with the sexes being strictly forbidden as an evil that may be tolerated in the carnal world, but not among those who desire to appear pure and holy before the Lord. This first commandment referred to, as having been given to father Adam and mother Eve, was in the days of their purity, before their transgressions, when they were worthy to converse with God face to face; this being the case, if there was no other reason, what philosophy can condemn that command or a proper and just effort to keep it? There is no reason, to my mind, to condemn it, when regulated by law, as an act of impurity; to do so would be a direct reflection upon the wisdom and purity of God Himself.

Of course, this is the general view taken of it by Christian nations, as shown in their acts and in their laws regulating it. Although the

Roman Catholic Church prohibits intercourse with the sexes to sacred orders, they being, according to the rites of the church forbidden to marry. And however much some may doubt the iniquity of their holy vows, it is a matter too well known to call in question. The more general sentiment of Christians recognizes the purity and uprightness of marriage of a man to one woman; and they quote the following words of the Apostle Paul to testify to it, “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” But the majority of modern Christians consider that for a man to marry more than one wife while she lives and is his wife is sin. Now I will undertake to say respecting the two conditions of marriage, single and plural, that where the duties and obligations are the same, and the husband is equally honorable, just and virtuous, faithful and true to his wives and children, that there is not necessarily any greater impurity existing between such a man and his plural family, than between a man and his single family; that there is not necessarily a defilement of the marriage bed, that there is not necessarily defilement of the body or spirit. When the institution of marriage is founded in religious sentiment and is confirmed by the enduring love of husband, wives and children and the responsibilities attending that relationship, as we find it in many of the ancient worthies, there is not necessarily any defilement in plural marriage. There was not necessarily defilement in father Abraham and other ancient patriarchs and prophets who took to themselves a second or a third or a fourth wife, any more than there was in those who confined themselves to one wife. Nor have