

Law, Commerce and Religion

Eliphalet Kimball

1862

Mr. Editor:—Law, Commerce, and Religion, are the causes of the wrongs, vices, and consequent sufferings which have always prevailed in civilized nations. Natural law, or the healing power of Nature, would regulate society as it does the human body.—The mind of man is his body. Artificial law is a poison which deranges the course of Nature, and is sure to disorder society. The stillness of legal despotism is disorder. Artificial government turns morality upside down, and keeps it so by force. It protects a class of bad men in wronging others, but is no benefit to honest men. Under established laws and forms of government, its full development is impossible.

Artificial law creates Commerce. Commerce makes rich men. The rich make the class of suffering poor, as a natural consequence. Commerce, and merchants, cause luxury, love of show, avarice, speculation, selfishness, dishonesty;—then comes aristocracy, and next monarchy. Our commerce with Europe is fast bringing society in the United States into the same condition with that in Europe. Monarchy in the United States is near. Law, Commerce, and Religion, make leading men. The leading men have ruined the United States, and made the nation not worth saving. Every rich man, every man who lives in showy style, is a curse to this country. Commerce was and is the cause of negro slavery. The nations which have most commerce are most unprincipled; for instance, England and the United States. It is pretended that Commerce promotes peace, civilization, and fraternity. The contrary is true. Commerce was at the bottom of the piratical wars of England in India, and China, and others the world over. Commercial avarice caused the great national crime committed by the United States against Japan, in forcing her to open her ports. The ruin of the Japanese dates from the visit of Commodore Perry to their shores. According to all accounts, Japan excels all other civilized nations in the condition and character of its inhabitants. It is comparatively the country of justice and equal rights, of plainness, mediocrity, and comfort. The people are correspondingly virtuous. For the last two hundred years, they have not had a war. The cause of their better state of society is, they have no commerce nor religion. They are a nation of Atheists. They were shocked at being told that the Americans believe in a God. The Japanese have only the social wrongs and faults of character which spring from law. The frequent civil wars in Mexico are owing, not to faults of character of the people, but to their unequal condition, caused by law. The land of Mexico is in the hands of a few men, and of the Church. The leading men, and the Church, are at the bottom of the civil wars in that country. The inability of the French to maintain a republican government, is owing to the inequality of the people, caused, by Law, Commerce, and Religion, and not to faults of national character. Commerce

has hastened the degeneracy of the American republic. The leading men have corrupted society, and the government. The elections are controlled by money. The important offices are mostly filled by unworthy men. The powerful influence of mercantile wealth is brought to bear on Congressional legislation, to encourage Commerce for the gratification of avarice, and thus in effect increase prevailing wrongs. The American government made no open war on China, but their minister and war vessels sneakingly accompanied the British expedition, to assist indirectly its piratical operations, and profit by its victories. Just wars are sometimes prevented by commercial selfishness. Commercial influence makes unjust wars, and disgraceful peace, according to which brings most money.

Religion is the resource of bad minds. It springs from ignorance, and want of reason, and is false in every particular. False principles cannot be otherwise than injurious to society. Religion and goodness are entirely different and separate. A person may be good without religion, or religious without goodness. Of course, he is not by nature a good man, who does right only from religious motives. All murderers, when in prison, and on the gallows, make known their belief in religion. The same want of reason and goodness that makes them commit murder, makes them believe in religion. Bad men are the strongest believers in the necessity of law and of future punishment. They think that all mankind, like themselves, are governed by nothing better than fear. Such men are the Christians. The followers of Jesus Christ are not good by nature. A follower is an imitator. The imitator is different by nature from the person imitated. Of course, those who imitate Christ do not resemble him in natural character. Those who are born good have to imitate nobody. They act out themselves. Priests declare that the world is governed by a God, and religion is necessary to keep people in order. At the same time they profess to believe that human law is necessary. Kings and aristocrats affirm that human government is indispensable, and at the same time they profess to believe that religion is necessary for society. To assert the need of divine law, and of human law also, proves a want of confidence in either. Both have been abundantly tried together, and found wanting. A God would have not right to create people, without asking their leave, nor govern them without their consent. The clergy are mostly aristocrats and monarchists. Kings and priests strengthen each other. The clergy preach the Divine appointment of kinds, and submission to the powers that be, under penalty of eternal damnation. They are rewarded with a union of Church and State.

Nothing is easier than to have this world a good one, if people had reason enough to see the truth, and would apply it. Abolish all artificial law, and let Nature take its course. Destruction is the word! Destroy the shallow and ruinous contrivances of men, and equality, virtue, justice, and comfort, would be the condition of the world. The laws of Nature would prevent extreme wealth in one class, and its natural consequence, suffering poverty, in another. Aristocracy would be impossible. An aristocrat is never a worthy man—he is ignoble. A government of the aristocracy is atrociously unprincipled and selfish.—In opposition to the rights of man, it sticks at no crime nor cruelty. Napoleon, the noblest man in the world, was entirely free of aristocracy, and despised it in others. No person can rightfully own land. Every person has a right to cultivate what he needs. Of course, there would be no quarrelling about land, if nobody owned it. Fishermen never quarrel about unclaimed water. Under natural law, the few wrongs that would be committed, would be attended to by the people of the neighborhood. Punishment would be more sure than now. The law ought to be made for the occasion, and not before the crime is committed, as circumstance make a difference in cases.—The right government of society would naturally correspond with the government of the Universe. The Universe is eternal, and, therefore, without beginning. It

is boundless, and, therefore, has no place for a Creator to begin at, and no place to leave off.—It governs itself. Organization, fitness, life, mind, and growth, are but the inevitable effect of natural law. With reference to the works of Nature, design and chance are but the nonsense of fools. The earth and planets are obliged by natural law to revolve with regularity. It would take a God of great strength to stop them or turn them from their natural course.—If there is no God-law, of course there ought to be no man-law. Human law is unnecessary and injurious, so of course would be God-law. If there is a king of heaven, so ought there to be kinds of earth. Under artificial, established laws, and forms of government, many deliberate acts of injustice go unpunished, and many rightful things are punished.

It is only by anarchy and violence that a great accumulation of social wrongs can be removed. Anarchy is a good word. It means, “without a head.” Violence is the healing power of Nature applied to society. The violence which would follow from the abolishment of law, would be proportion to the number and magnitude of the wrongs that needed removal. There ought always to be anarchy, but there would be no violence where there were no wrongs.—Japan needs but little violence. Great Britain needs much. Nothing but violence could have accomplished the great French Revolution, the most beneficent and glorious even of modern times. Law and Religion are responsible for whatever was wrong in it.—Mob law is the right law. Mobs assemble to do justice, to punish bad men whom the law does not reach, and to remove wrongs. There is more reason and justice in a large number of men than in a small number, more in a mob than in a Senate, House of Representatives, judges, or juries. The government of a State, or nation, is a mob, the government of the majority is a mob, and they are the only mobs that ought to be put down. If mankind are not good enough to live without law, they are not good enough to vote for law-makers. Beasts and savages are not fools enough to believe in religion and law, and are good enough to live right without them. Christian and civilized men appear to consider themselves inferior in goodness to savages and beasts. In an uncorrupted state of society, mankind are inclined to do right.—If they were naturally inclined to evil, they would not make laws to prevent it. The fact that laws are made, proves that law is unnecessary.

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Eliphalet Kimball
Law, Commerce and Religion
1862

[https://www.libertarian-labyrinth.org/anarchist-beginnings/
eliphalet-kimball-law-commerce-and-religion-1862/](https://www.libertarian-labyrinth.org/anarchist-beginnings/eliphalet-kimball-law-commerce-and-religion-1862/)

theanarchistlibrary.org