

DESERET NEWS:

WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY
THE DESERET NEWS COMPANY.

CHARLES W. PENROSE, EDITOR.

WEDNESDAY, - JULY 6, 1881.

A COOL PROPOSITION.

THE attitude of the Latter-day Saints on the conflict between the law of God and the law of 1862 gives some people very great concern. It is a question of principles, an issue of ethics, a clashing of dogmas. They want to enlarge it into a personal war and push it to a conflict of forces in which the weaker must go to the wall. Nothing less than the might of the sword, or the power of criminal penalties will suit them as a solution of the difficulty, which they magnify and distort out of all due proportions.

The position is simply this: God has given a law to this Church governing the marital relation, and under its provisions, men, regulated by certain restrictions, may marry more wives than one. Congress has passed a statute declaring the ceremony governing this plural family relation a crime, and providing certain punishments to be inflicted on those men who are parties to it. The Church, under Divine direction, establishes a religious ordinance; Congress, under sectarian pressure, frames an Act to suppress or prohibit it.

What course are the members of the Church to pursue under these circumstances? Each one must act for himself. He can obey the law of God and ignore the law of the land, or ignore the law of God for fear of the law of the land. Supposing he chooses the former course. He must then be ready to suffer the penalty of the human law should he be convicted of breaking it. On the other hand, if he prefers to violate the dictates of his conscience in order to submit to a human law, he must stand ready to accept the consequences as Eternal Justice may determine. It is a question of individual conscience and volition and of strictly personal results.

It is claimed that the law of the land is disregarded, and that it is frequently broken. Without admitting or denying this assertion—for we are not prepared to do either, of our own knowledge—it appears to us that there is no need for the terrible uproar that some persons are making about it. Most of those who affect to be so scandalized about it are guilty of deeds that can scarcely be named in public, and their pretended horror at the infraction of a law framed for the suppression of a religious ceremony, is all a sham. If any married man has the temerity to marry another wife, the whole business of asserting the supremacy of the congressional law belongs to the officers of the law. The man must be indicted, tried and convicted upon proper evidence before he can be lawfully punished. Let the law take its course as in the prosecution of other offences and there is no necessity for wrath and indignation, cheap piety, canting "resolutions," newspaper nonsense, clerical collections, or bombast and tumult.

But it is objected, the proofs of the offence are difficult to obtain, and the officers of the law are at a loss how to enforce the law. What then? Is it right to step over the bounds of other laws, to establish methods that violate the rules of jurisprudence, to proceed in a lawless manner to vindicate one simple statute? We think not. That is to establish a vast and positive evil in order to cope with a smaller and disputed evil, made so by Act of Congress.

These perplexed individuals, who are in a state of continual unrest because they think some of the "Mormons" marry more wives, and because those who have plural families do not cast them all off but one; want to know why these "Mormons" do not come out openly and acknowledge that they have broken the law and save the officers the trouble of procuring the proof. They point to the martyrs of old who were burned at the stake, broken on the

wheel, or torn to pieces by wild beasts, and who confessed their faith before all, and ask us to emulate their example. We have frequently heard remarks of this character from Federal officers and others who trouble themselves considerably on this matter.

Now in the first place the Latter-day Saints are not anxious for martyrdom. They are not posing as sufferers for the truth. They are not aching for distinction of this sort. If it becomes necessary for them to endure affliction of any kind in the maintenance of the cause which they have embraced, their past history proves that they will not shrink from the ordeal. But they are not such idiots as to court trouble and plead for punishment. It is their business to do what is right in their own eyes and then put up with the consequences as best they may. It is the business of those who are appointed and paid for the prosecution of the law, to use due diligence in obtaining evidence of its infraction and then in securing its enforcement. If after attending to this to the best of their ability they find themselves unable to procure conviction, let them do as in other cases and make no unreasonable and unnecessary fuss about it.

Those martyrs who in olden times laid down their lives for the principles which they advocated, were not in the habit, as far as we are aware, of seeking to be roasted, or hankering after thumbscrews, or inviting the application of the rack. They proclaimed their faith, as we do, in the face of a hostile and disputing world. We have no more hesitation than they in declaring and expounding our belief, our dissent from the decision of the Supreme Court, our firm conviction that the law of 1862 is unconstitutional and unjust, and that we have not changed our belief in the least as to the divine authority of the revelation and the ordinance of marriage based upon it, against which that law was specially enacted. But we do not propose to aid in the enforcement of a law which we regard simply as persecution stirred up by sectaries, nor to undertake the business of officials engaged and paid for that work.

The assurance of these persons is really refreshing. They constitute themselves special champions of one special statute—there is no officer created by law or commissioned by the Government solely to enforce the law of '62—but concentrating their energies on that one point and failing, they have the cool impudence to ask the people whom they desire to bring within the toils, to convict themselves. What for? Just to gratify our bitterest enemies. To put our heads in a noose that they may pull the string. To invite fines and court imprisonment. To make fees for attorneys and furnish money whereby further proceedings may be waged against our people and our cause. To take bread out of the mouths of our families and feed the cormorants who seek to prey upon us. When we do this, it will be because common sense has left us and we are rushing towards self-destruction.

It is urged that the spectacle of a large number of men voluntarily submitting to the penalties of the law, would be an evidence of sincerity which would be convincing to the world, and would arouse a feeling of admiration and respect that would make our enemies magnanimous. We have no care about the opinion of the world; we do not live for its approbation. If we have not proven our sincerity by a thousand and one acts of suffering and self-sacrifice from the days of Missouri to the present hour, then nothing that we could perform or endure would be sufficient. And as to the magnanimity of our foes, talk of the tenderness of tigers, prate of the soft hearts of wolves, dwell on the benevolence of the jackal and the mercy of the hyena. Our experience has demonstrated that it is simply infatuation to trust to any such sentiments on the part of bitter opponents of the system vulgarly called "Mormonism."

Our course is clear. We have no warfare to wage. The conflict is not ours. We did not make the law on celestial marriage; we had no voice in the statute against it. Let those who want to inaugurate a crusade engage in the fight at their own peril. The Lord and them for it. Let those who fear the human law refrain from obeying the divine law, and let those who choose to regard God rather than man, take their own risk. And then

those whose duty it is to enforce the laws of the land have the right in a lawful manner to proceed towards the conviction of offenders. But there is no need for any hue and cry nor special measures to secure this end, and certainly it would be worse than folly for the Latter-day Saints to step forward, lay their heads on the judicial block and request to be decapitated. "Offenses must needs come, but woe unto them by whom they come."

OUR CELESTIAL VISITOR.

THE comet now visible in this city from evening till morning, erroneously supposed by some to be two different bodies, is creating quite a stir in the public mind. The celestial visitor has come rather unexpectedly. It is a sort of stray creature, unbranded by the star-gazers and not numbered in astronomical lists. Its presence at the time of the long talked of perihelia will be viewed by many with terror. The prognostications of dire effects upon our globe by the peculiar relative positions of several planets, the Shiptonian prediction of the end of the world this year, and the rumors and anticipations that have agitated the public mind, will all be strengthened by the coming of the comet and the sight of its shining train in the sky.

But cometary influence has never yet been determined to be harmful to the earth or disturbing to any of the planets. Speculations have been indulged in concerning the probable effects of contact with the nucleus, but they are based upon no satisfactory data, and the misty substance of the tail is so extremely attenuated that there are no grounds for alarm in regard to its influence upon our globe. Stars may be seen shining as brightly when the comet's train comes between them and the earth as if nothing was intervening, though its thickness may be many millions of miles.

It is supposed by some astronomers that this comet, although appearing so unexpectedly, is that known as Encke's, discovered in 1818, whose period is but 1,204 days, and that being slightly diminished, has led to the hypothesis that the space within our solar system is occupied by a resisting medium of great rarity. The presence of the comet at this juncture is thought by those who believe it to be Encke's, to be occasioned by the influence of the planets in perihelia.

It is considered, however, by some scientific observers that comets have a meteorological effect. Prof. Mansill, whose theory of planetary meteorology has been referred to in this paper, states that the presence of comets under certain planetary conditions is favorable to crops, especially "about the times when they pass their perihelia and perigees. They raise the atmospheric temperature of our globe "while they are in the rapid actions of changing their elements and motions." Coggie's comet it is said had this effect in 1874, and Brorsen's the same in 1879. It is certain that the atmospheric temperature is raised just now, and the effects here on vegetation are very favorable, where sufficient moisture can be supplied by irrigation.

The probable results of the gravitation of a comet into the sun have been talked of, and neither the movement nor the alleged effect—a vast accession of solar heat—appears to us irrational. The Scriptures speak of the time when the heat of the sun shall be "as the heat of seven days," when men shall "blaspheme God because of the heat and of the pain," and it is also declared that "the earth and the works therein shall be burned up." Professor Proctor when speaking of the comet which was visible in Australia in 1880, said:

"Views respecting it, not by fanciful theorists, but by mathematicians of eminence by no means prone to adopt wild and startling ideas, suggest the possibility, nay, even some degree of probability that this comet may bring danger to the solar system. Like the comet of 1840, it passed within about 190,000 miles from the solar surface, and on a path similar to that pursued by the comet of 1843, while in the neighborhood of the sun. The comet of 1830, is in fact, identical with that of 1843, but its period is diminishing rapidly, so that at an early date it may fall into the sun, with this alarming immediate result—that all the higher forms of life, at

least, will be destroyed off the surface of the earth. * * * Without saying that I consider there is absolute danger of such an outburst in the case of our own sun when the comet of 1843 shall be absorbed by him (a result which will, in my opinion, most certainly take place), I will go so far as to express my belief that if ever the day is to come "when the heavens shall dissolve with fervent heat," the cause of the catastrophe will be the downfall of some great comet on the sun. * * It is certain that if at any time a great comet, falling directly upon the sun, should, by the swift rush of its meteoric components, excite the flame of the sun to a lustre far exceeding that with which he at present shines, the sudden access of lustre and of heat will prove destructive to every living creature, or at any rate to all the higher forms of life upon this earth. And though in a few days the sun might resume his ordinary lustre, and no longer glow with abnormal heat, he would pour his rays on a family of worlds in which not one of the higher form either of vegetable or animal life would remain in existence. * * Such, indeed, was the nature of the change which affected these-called "new star" in the Northern Crown in 1866. For a day or two it shone out with several hundred times its usual lustre, and doubtless it poured forth during those days several hundred times its usual heat. Then gradually its fires cooled, its lustre diminished, and after a few weeks had passed it shone as it had done before for hundreds of years, with the lustre of a ninth magnitude star only."

But the Latter-day Saints should be able to view with perfect equanimity the "signs in the heavens and on earth," the deductions of science, or the forebodings and marvels of the superstitious. The time has not come for the great catastrophes "of the end." There are things to be done which must precede the grand consummation. It is the mission of this people to aid in effecting them. We must do our part, the Lord will perform His. And while trouble and distress and fear and terror overspread the earth, we may "stand in holy places and not be moved."

THE INDIAN FIGHT IN CASTLE VALLEY.

By letter which appears in this issue of the NEWS, it seems that the Indian troubles reported by telegraph as occurring in Castle Valley, proved fatal to some of our people in the new settlements of that region, which was lately organized as Emery County. It is not long since a bloody Indian war was imminent from the conduct of some cattle men in that vicinity. They were not "Mormons" and there were no "Mormon" settlements then in Castle Valley. Those stock men killed some Navajos without provocation, and it was through the services of Jacob Hamblin, the well known "Mormon" interpreter, that the uprising was averted.

This new difficulty started with Colorado cattlemen and the Indians, and our "boys" who lost their lives in the conflict, fell while assisting the Coloradans against the red skins. This ought to silence the absurd slanders about the "Mormons" encouraging the Indians to commit depredations. It is to the interest of all our people, especially in the frontier settlements, to keep the red men at peace. It is part of our policy, and a feature of our religion to deal justly with the natives, and at the same time to teach them industry and the evils of idleness, bloodshed, stealing and every kind of vice. "Mormon" influence with the Indians has always been salutary, and when occasion demanded, the lessons we have taught to them of "Mormon" power to chastise as well as instruct, has had its due weight with the savages.

There is one thing that ought to be considered in connection with the tragedy in Emery County. A malicious and ridiculous proclamation from a Utah Governor prohibits the mustering of any militia, the bearing of arms or the customary local drills in any part of this Territory. This has left the outskirts of Utah unprotected. Even the assistance which our Castle Valley people rendered the Colorado boys was unlawful, if that proclamation is valid. They had no right to muster and defend themselves against

the savages without an order from the Executive away in Salt Lake, who knows as much about their condition as he does of the constitution of the present comet or the requirements of the man in the moon.

There should be, in all the border settlements at least, an efficient militia, as provided for in the Statutes of the Territory and authorized by the Constitution and laws of the United States. Self-protection demands this, and the official who would dare to prevent it would soon find himself on the retired list as well as in the catalogue of disgraced fools. The safety of families exposed to the depredations of hostile bands, whether incited to war by the encroachments of lawless whites or otherwise, cries aloud for the organization of able-bodied men in companies properly drilled, armed and equipped and ready for any emergency, and in our eyes the old proclamations, issued by a dipsomaniac Governor, and an inflated temporary Executive, are, in the light of these important considerations, the veriest trumpery and bald dash, unworthy of a moment's serious consideration. The lives and property of the people must be protected, let him who dares attempt to stand in the way.

A DEED THAT WILL SHOCK THE WORLD.

MAN proposes but God disposes. Last night the arrangements were perfected for the grand celebration of the 105th anniversary of national independence in Liberty Park. The sub-committees' reports were eminently satisfactory, and it was supposed that nothing would bar the way to one of the largest and most glorious celebrations of the kind ever enjoyed in this Territory. But morning came and brought the startling and lamentable tidings of the attempted assassination of President Garfield. With the news came the conviction that the rejoicings of the season were at an end. Then the Chief Magistrate lay at the point of death, and whether he recovered or in the Providence of God should pass from this mortal sphere, would ill become the people to engage in feasting and joy while the head of the nation, lying prone, perhaps in the struggle of dissolution.

The Chairman of the General Committee, Hon. Geo. Q. Cannon, by special call, summoned the committee, who met at President Taylor's office, when the following was adopted and ordered to be put once in circulation:

"At a special meeting of members of the General Committee called after the reception of the news of the wounding of General Garfield, President of the United States, it was decided that in view of the peril in which the life of the Nation's Chief Executive placed by the act of an assassin, the proposed celebration of Independence Day by the Citizens of Lake City, at Liberty Park, abandoned, and that public notice of this effect be given to citizens and committees engaged in making preparations for the celebration of Independence Day and for the proposed amusements and general rejoicings arranged for the occasion.

On behalf of the General Committee,

GEORGE Q. CANNON,
Chairman.

President John Taylor being present endorsed the movement of the General Committee, and feeling deeply moved by the sad event of the hour arose and made the following remarks:

President John Taylor said:—relation to the startling news we have heard concerning the attempted assassination of President Garfield, whether it arises from private animosity or personal feelings of revenge, or whether it originates from a political clique, it is one of those things that all right people will lament. President Garfield stands at the head of a great and mighty nation of which we form an integral part, and a thing that tends to disturb the government of a nation like this is deplored, because anything of the kind tends to disturb the public mind, to startle the feelings of humanity, to shake the common course of events, to make insecure the proper, efficient administration of our affairs. Were it a private matter