

THE ADMISSION OF UTAH

Editor Deseret News.—Dear Sir,—As the question of Utah's admission into the Union will again be brought before Congress at an early date, allow me, as a citizen of the Territory, to advocate through your popular columns, her claims to State sovereignty.

The repudiation of Utah, on account of the practice of polygamy, by her citizens, is most unjust and unwarranted, and without precedent in the history of the Republic. When dispassionately viewed, this action of the National Council must receive the censure of the American people. Every citizen knows, or ought to know, that the admission of a State is strictly a Constitutional question. Hence, we may inquire at once, is the proposed State government of Utah republican? Has she sufficient strength and population to maintain the machinery of a State organization? Let the facts in the case answer. The proposed constitution of the State of Deseret, provides that every male citizen over the age of twenty-one, shall be allowed to vote, regardless of race or color. This is certainly republican enough; the Constitution of the General Government is not more so. As to her ability to maintain a separate government, it need only be stated that there are several States in the Union, that have a less population than Utah.

Polygamy in Utah, to which reference has been made, is not merely a social question, it is something more: it is a fundamental principle in the "Mormon" religion. The "Mormons" were led to the practice of polygamy through a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and it is made, by this revelation and commandment, the duty of every elder whose circumstances will allow of it, to become a polygamist. Hence, it is a part and portion of their religion, and as such, beyond the reach of the legislation of Congress; for the Constitution expressly forbids that body to make any law, "respecting the establishment of religion." But, say American statesmen, "polygamy is a crime." It cannot be so proved; the Bible justifies it, and certainly, it is higher authority than modern politicians. The most eminent servants of God that ever lived,—prophets and high priests, who talked with the Almighty, and received commandments from Him, were in the constant practice of it. Isaiah, the most celebrated of ancient prophets, foretold the birth, crucifixion and resurrection of the Messiah, and the subversion and captivity of the Jewish nation, declares that in the latter times, when men shall have been reduced in numbers by war, seven women will cleave to one man.

It has been argued that if polygamy is exempt from legislation in Congress, on religious grounds, that the Hindoo might upon the same plea, claim the prerogative of performing the rites of the worship of Juggernaut, and immolate the widow upon the "funeral pile," or his own body beneath the wheels of the idol. This, Congress would legitimately restrain, as being criminal. The law of God says: "Thou shalt not kill." No man will argue that what is criminal shall be protected under the cloak of religion. No one will deny that, when the framers of the Constitution guaranteed protection to religion, that they meant to protect those doctrines and tenets as are not sanctioned by the Bible. They understood the Bible to be the standard, and whatever is in harmony with it, they evidently intended should enjoy exemption from the domination of Congress. They had seen the bad results of political authority attempting to control religious questions, and very wisely forestalled any action of that kind by Congress. The "Mormons" do not ask protection for what is criminal, nor toleration for what is idolatrous, but they do demand, that what is sanctioned by the Bible, shall be left alone.

Let us suppose that in obedience to the requirements of Congress, the "Mormons" strike out the doctrine of polygamy from their faith; what then will be the character of their church? It would then be the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, established by Joseph Smith, and modified by the Congress of the United States. Would this be Constitutional? Statesmen seem to think so; the "Mormons" think differently, and consequently, object to the proposed amendment to their faith. This is certainly carrying matters a little too far; it is too barefaced. Every one can see that Congress is astray on the question of polygamy, and is indeed solely by religious prejudice. As far as the National legislature is concerned in this matter, it may be stated thus: if Senators and Representatives do not like the "Mormon" church, they need not join it; if they consider polygamy immoral and unsanctioned by Christian usage, they need not practice it; but they have no right to interfere with it, as a legislative body.

Hence, it is clearly evident, that it is no part of the duty of Congress, to make laws for religious bodies, nor change those already established. If Congressmen do not understand their duty, in the matter of admitting a State into the Union, some school-boy should inform them. His instruction would probably be as follows: "Simply institute an inquiry in regard to the character of the proposed State government; if the constitution is republican, it becomes your duty to admit the applicant—provided there is sufficient population to maintain a State organization; if the government is not republican, it is your duty to reject it." Mr. Editor, if it would not be monopolizing too much of your space, the writer would be much pleased to notice one or two arguments used by the Hon. Souyer Colfax, in his late speech at the Townsend House, while visiting your city. Referring to the admission of Utah, he held this extraordinary view of the subject: "The Mormons, and the balance of the nation, are two people, having different views and ideas; one must come to the others terms, which shall yield, the Mormons or the Nation?" Here is plainly manifest, a disposition to host with the popular current. With such a man as this, might be right. Faceless to the majority, which he is, it is not surprising that he should say such things. Such men have their price. Which shall yield? It is not a question of yielding; it is one of coming into the Constitution, and the parties at variance are the "Mormons" and Congress. Which will have to come to the Constitution? We answer, the party which has forsaken it.

Why attempt to throw dust in the wind? Every body can see the subterfuge. If Mr. Colfax wished to discuss the subject, why did he not do it like a candid-minded man, and prove that it would be unconstitutional for Congress to admit Utah with her institution of marriage? or, if such position can not be maintained, why not freely tell the citizens of this Territory, that, under the broad liberal provisions of the Constitution, they are entitled to a State government? (To be Continued.)

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