

POLYGAMY — A SERIOUS SUBJECT BEFORE THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Of late years the "Mormon" press and pulpit have been almost entirely silent on the subject of "patriarchal marriage"—or polygamy. We do not now propose to disturb that silence from any necessity—the "institution" is an established fact, immovable, and no human effort can make it other than it is—that sacred and holy relationship of life, ordained of the Great Creator for the sons and daughters of Adam, in carrying out those purposes and plans matured from before the foundation of this world, in seeking the highest attainment of salvation, and the perpetuity of eternal lives. With all this we are satisfied, abundantly so, and care not to offer again an argument on the subject. We only refer to it now, more as an item of the world's news than otherwise, and as such interesting, no doubt, to many of our readers: and, it might be, not without instruction to some of our Congressmen, who, according to telegraphic reports, are somewhat exercised at the present time over that "vexed question"—that is, if the gentlemen to whom we refer have soul enough left in them to receive light and instruction from any quarter. Of that, however, we know nothing and care less, and letting that suffice for introductory, we come to polygamy considered by a Bishop of the Church of England.

As an institution, the Church of England has been pre-eminently industrious in the missionary business; at times, in its zeal, forcibly recalling to those who have not shared its faith, that remarkable stricture of an ancient missionary society, that would "traverse sea and land to make one proselyte, and afterwards make him tenfold more" etc., etc. Of that class of missionaries, the Church of England has unquestionably had a very large number who have, with the aid of presents and annuities been very successful in "turning Ethiopia to the Lord," and accomplishing great things on "India's coral strands;" but freed from the general trammels of expected preferments, some few in the missionary ranks have dared to look at facts and have published some very unpalatable truths to the Church at home.

A Mr. Allen, missionary to India, published, a few years ago, a very readable volume of his travels in the East, in which he related, with interesting minuteness the difficulty he and his fellow-laborers had experienced in teaching a monogamic faith from the Bible. However little the missionaries might have studied the "Sacred Volume" at home, while having intercourse and Christian relationship with their own kin and countrymen, with whom "church-going" was fashionable, and rituals and homilies went unchallenged, their position was somewhat changed in confronting men of another country and faith. It requires an honesty and sincerity of soul—which all men do not seem to possess—to flatly avow that they had learned Biblical, historical facts in "heathendom;" but there has been the school. Allen acknowledged it, for which, of course, he has been soundly snubbed. Another candidate for martyrdom appears in no less a personage than "The Right Rev. J. W. Colenso, D.D., Bishop of Natal, a gentleman enjoying a reputation and position in the church, to entitle him to a very patient hearing on the grievances of missionaries, in dealing with that same "vexed question," the "twin relic."

The Bishop, like missionary Allen, has no idea of taking rank with ancient patriarchs—it would be expecting too much of him, he, therefore, contents himself with a "letter to His Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury, upon the question of the proper treatment of cases of Polygamy, as found already existing in converts from heathenism," in which there are many very serious admissions, "for which," says a reviewer of the letter, "the Mormon church will be very much obliged to him, whatever may be thought of his labors by our own convocation."

The reviewer, though professedly freed from any alarm himself, is not quite so certain that the devotees of the Anglican church will receive with the same calm the Bishop's defence of Polygamy "on the ground of religion and humanity." In fact, the effort made to disguise alarm, exhibits that a storm is brewing around the mitred head of the Bishop of Natal; but, in that hour of trial, we are assured that "he will not be driven from his

positions by the mere cry of danger to morality, danger to the household affections and the like." "He is," further adds the reviewer, "prepared, we dare say, to hear it said that he is worse than Brigham Young, and that his proper place would be in a Mormon pulpit."

From what we have before us of the Bishop's letter, we apprehend that the reverend gentleman's sentiments would never have seen ink and paper, but for the fact that the missionary board of the Anglican Church has been brought to a stand still in their labors by the obstinacy of the "heathens," who, though willing enough at times to listen to a missionary's recital of gospel injunctions, and probably, nothing averse to occasionally joining them in a little psalm singing, yet are exceedingly cautious about modern innovations. This is the stumbling block to the progress of the Church, and the obstacle has to be removed by nothing less than the full admission that Polygamy is a scriptural institution, and that the past efforts of the missionaries to break up the domestic institutions of their converts, have been as irreligious as they have been abortive and absurd. The dedication of such a letter to the highest personage of the great Church of England, by a mitred brother, himself in full fellowship, on such a subject, calmly avowing the impracticability of further forcing unscriptural monogamy upon converts is a great step in the nineteenth century.

The practical difficulties of putting away the "other wives" are very great. With piquant curiosity he asks, "which of his wives shall be put away? Shall he keep the first wife, or the prettiest wife, or the best beloved wife?" Feeling the embarrassment of giving instruction to the converts, the Bishop gives the "various plans" adopted by missionaries "for deciding who shall be kept, and who rejected"—every one about as diverse from the other as Christian teaching generally is; and altogether about the most amusing reading that we have had for a long time, if we could only shake off from our minds the humiliating fact that those ignorant and heartless missionaries assumed the calling of heralds of salvation to a people that knew no better. After wading through the contradictions of his brethren, it is some satisfaction to arrive at "the Bishop's own plan," which "is to let the convert keep his wives," and to see that he now earnestly "wishes to obtain for this practice the general sanction of the English Church." In claiming the attention of the archbishop and the church to the examination of this very important subject, the bishop states that he "has been occupied with it for nearly twenty years," that he "had pondered much upon the matter, and sought information upon it from various quarters—from the Scriptures and ancient fathers of the church," etc., etc., and "the conviction deepened within him more and more that the practices of his brethren were 'unwarranted by the scriptures, unsanctioned by apostolic example or authority, condemned by common reason and sense of right, and altogether unjustifiable.'" On the Scriptural sanction of polygamy, he says:

"I find, however, that, under the Old Dispensation, polygamy was practised by eminently pious men, who, while continuing in that state, were singularly blessed of the Almighty, without a single word of reproof, or intimation of God's displeasure being addressed to them on account of it. From this circumstance, and the additional fact, that passages occur in the Mosaic Law, expressly recognizing the existence of polygamy, and that not a word is found in the law or the prophets, denouncing or in any way condemning it, I am led to conclude that, though not in accordance with the mind and will of the Creator, it was yet suffered by him to endure for a season, and is not to be regarded by us as being, in all cases and under all circumstances, (that is, without reference to the knowledge of his will, possessed by the persons who practice it,) sinful and displeasing in his sight. I am confirmed in this view by finding that, whereas the Mosaic Law punished adultery with death, no punishment of any kind is assigned in it to the polygamist; and polygamy is only noticed in the law, to correct certain evils connected with it. I conclude, therefore, that polygamy was not considered to be adultery, in the case of the Jews."

"When David received for the first time the great promise of the Messiah, he too was a polygamist, and had long been so. For two chapters before the above promises recorded, we are told that David took him many wives and concubines out of Jerusalem; and two chapters again before that, we have given the names of six wives, whom he had married previously to these,—two of them during his sojourn in the wilderness, when he had daily close communion with God, and wrote so

many of the sweetest of the songs of Zion. Again, we have, at least, two passages in the Mosaic Law, which expressly recognize polygamy as freely permitted among the people of Israel. Thus we read, 'If he take him another wife, her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage shall he not diminish;' and 'If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated, and if the first-born son be hers that was hated; then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved first-born, before the son of the hated, which is indeed the first-born.' And these passages occur side by side with others which denounce most severely the sin of adultery, and punish it with death."

Ransacking the New Testament, and pondering over the early Christian writings, the Bishop avows equal embarrassment in sustaining the past course of the missionaries. With regard to the teachings of Christ, he says:

"The Jews in our Lord's time, were in theory, at least, decided polygamists, though it may be doubted whether many of them were actually living with more wives than one at the same time. It is certain, then, that the practice of polygamy was recognized as perfectly right and lawful by those to whom our Lord addressed his discourses. And yet, if it was very common, it is strange that we have no direct reference to it in any part of the New Testament, except in the controverted passage, of which I will speak presently. We know that Herod the Great had nine wives at one time. And it can scarcely be doubted that among the richer Jews would be found some who lived in like manner, with two or more wives at once, as their own law and customs permitted. In later days, it is true, polygamy was strictly forbidden, and expressly among the Jews, by the laws of the Roman Empire. But there was nothing now to prevent it. And though, doubtless, the great body of those who attended on our Lord's ministry were the poor, who were content with one wife from necessity as much as from choice, yet he not unfrequently addressed the wealthier classes, the Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees, some of whom, it can scarcely be doubted, were then living in the actual practice of polygamy! How remarkable it is that we do not find a single word of censure passed by him on this practice!"

In the writings of the Apostles, the Bishop tells us there is "not a single direct reference made to the practice of polygamy (though it was certainly allowed among the Jews, and probably among other Orientals, as the Arabians, with whom the missionaries of the church came in contact in those days), unless it be 1 Tim. iii. 2, and Tit. i. 6, where the rule is laid down, that a bishop (presbyter) or deacon must be the 'husband of one wife.'" Nor were the Fathers more explicit as to the doctrine or practices of the early Christians. The Bishop adds: "I have not been able to meet with a single passage, in the writings of the ancient fathers of the church, to throw light upon this question."

Had we had more space and time we would have extended this notice, for there is much in the Bishop's letter that is interesting, and some quotations that might be made are very readable, we must, however, take the suggestions of "enough of copy," and conclude with a slight allusion to the philosophy of the reviewer who seems to have studied ancient prophecy but slightly, or he could have said more on the question of population. He thinks, however, that "a half million more females than males in England" may have something to do with "that singular outbreak of the Anglo-Saxon race towards the practice of a multiplicity of wives." He says:

"Nature, we see, will always accommodate herself to actual facts. A twig will bend a rock, and a weak woman's yearning will rend the most solid institutions. Against all counsels, all proprieties, we see the female tide set in towards Great Salt Lake. Under the new circumstances woman makes herself a new law. In the newspapers of this morning, accounts appear of a Mormon party having left London the other day for Liverpool and Salt Lake City. Two-thirds of this party are said to be women. It is impossible, we should say, to assert that this tendency of British women towards the domestic institutions of Utah is the result of profligacy. Ignorance may be the cause in part. But there are some who begin to see in it the probable operation of a general law. Is it the effect of a surplus half-million? Is Nature trying in this strange manner to accommodate herself to facts?"

In justice to the Bishop, we should add, that he is particularly careful to have it understood that he is "not a practical polygamist," and is opposed to the institution in the nineteenth century among Christians. While he walks in the leading strings of Christ and the Apostles, he is remarkably sound on that question, when he is Bishop Colenso at na-

he furnishes an admirable illustration of "no man knoweth the things of God, but by the Spirit of God."

Emigration to the Pacific.

The people of California are anticipating a larger emigration from the Atlantic slope to that State, this season, than has crossed the plains in any year since the treasure-seeking multitude have sought other locations for the realization of their golden dreams. It is believed that from twenty to thirty thousand, at least, will be added to the population of California by the overland emigration, besides those who will go thither by the Isthmus, and the emigration that way is reported greater than for many years past, some nine thousand having arrived in San Francisco by water from the 1st of January to the 25th of May, a large portion of whom, however, it is admitted, were on their way to the goldfields of the North. The overland emigration is expected to be of another class, composed chiefly of farmers with their families fleeing from the noise and clamor of war in the States to a land of peace and safety, assuming that the Pacific Coast, in that respect, is all that could be desired.

The calculations as to the number of emigrants, from the Western States who will cross the continent, by land, this summer, are based upon the reports that have been made by those residing in Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and other non-seceding States in communications to friends in California, expressing their determination, with that of others in their vicinage, to leave the lands of their present inheritances, and go to the other side of the continent, where they expect to enjoy more peace and have a better market than the Western States have had since the great outlet for their products, the Mississippi, has been closed up by the operations of the war, of which they see not the end.

The expectations of the Californians in respect to the overland emigration will in all probability be realized in a great measure, perhaps to the full extent of their anticipations, as there are unquestionably thousands in the east who would sacrifice all that they possess if they could thereby deliver themselves from the difficulties which now surround them, and who verily believe that by fleeing to the western sea, they can find a land where war with its horrors will never come. The arrival here of the advance of the overland emigration may be expected shortly.

Sorrowful and Fatal Casualty.

We are informed, by letter from a friend, that on the first day of May, Silas Holman, son of James S. Holman, of Fountaingreen, Sanpete county, came to a fearful death, in the following manner: Together with two others, he was riding horseback about a mile from his father's house, where the colt, a two-year old, shied, and at the same time, jumping, threw the rider from his balance, which he could not regain, but fell, one foot still fast in the stirrup. In this manner he was dragged some hundred rods before his foot became disengaged, in which period he was alternately dragged on the ground, and thrown through the air by the speed of the frightened animal. When taken up he was insensible, and died before arriving home.

The parents and relatives are grief-stricken at this sudden and heart-rending calamity. His remains were interred at Santaquin on the 3d inst. Deceased was fifteen years old, of exemplary conduct, and highly respected.

More Concerning the Flood.

The waters from the mountains are still on the increase, and it will be fortunate if all the bridges across the principal streams in Great Salt Lake Valley, with the exception of the lower Jordan bridge, be not swept away before the flood shall subside. The damage that has been sustained by the public and by individuals, thus far, has been immense, and the prospects are that there will be much more done, as it is probable that the waters will continue to rise till about the 20th instant, and perhaps till a later period as there is an abundance of snow yet on the Wasatch mountains.

FINE WEATHER.—The weather has been most delightful since the late showers, and the crops, not under water, are assuming a more healthful appearance.