

Miscellaneous.

[From the *Millennial Star*.]

CONGRESS AND POLYGAMY.

The *Times* and other English papers consider "Mormondom," as they term it, "in great peril;" they are jubilant over the idea of the approaching downfall of "Mormonism" in Utah. They inform the public, with exulting joy, that Congress is about to pass laws against the "Mormon" religion, and crush out their religious faith by Congressional enactments and heavy penalties. Christendom is enlightened with these choice bits of information; she greedily swallows these delicious morsels, and longs to see one of the American Territories deprived of all her domestic and religious rights, to behold her broken up, despoiled, plundered, robbed, and her citizens driven from their hard-earned homes, to die of starvation in the dens and caves of the mountains, or perish by the hands of savage hordes.

What harm have we done to the Christian world, that you so earnestly desire our destruction? for which of our good deeds do you desire to martyr a hundred thousand men, women and children? What Bible doctrine or Bible institution have we been guilty of believing and practicing, that is so extremely offensive to you? We have taught you faith in Christ; we have taught you to repent and reform from all evil; we have pointed out baptism as a sacred ordinance; we have preached the necessity of being born of the Spirit; we believe and practice the Lord's supper; we exhort all men and women to live honestly, soberly, virtuously, prayerfully before God and all men; we believe in all the commands, sayings, ordinances, and blessings of the glorious gospel of the Son of God; we believe in the ministry of angels, inspired visions and dreams, prophesyings and new revelations; we believe in the utmost purity and virtue among the sexes; we believe in the Bible order of domestic institutions; we believe in the Divine ordinance of marriage—in the Bible institution of either polygamy or monogamy; and finally we believe in everything that is good, and in nothing that is evil or criminal. For which all of these good things do Christians desire a whole people to be crushed and refused an existence on earth? We pause—we wait for an answer. The reply comes from the four quarters of Christendom, saying, "We do not wish to persecute you for any good work, nor destroy you for any good institution; but because you believe and practice plural marriage: this is all Christians believe to be a crime; and you should be punished for your crimes."

We inquire, by what right do you call polygamy a crime? Neither the Old nor the New Testament has intimated it to be criminal or even sinful; neither God nor angels, Patriarchs nor Prophets, Revelators nor Apostles, Jews nor early Christians, have made it criminal; but on the contrary, God himself instituted and commanded the practice; gave laws regulating the same, protecting the legal rights of wives, and the legal rights of their respective children; God himself gave wives to the Prophet David, whose Psalms you sing; God himself chose Abraham as "the father of the faithful," conversed with him, sent His angels to eat and drink with him, made him His intimate friend, and sent angels to converse with his wives. Jacob with his four wives laid the foundation of the twelve tribes, and enjoyed all the blessings of his grandfather Abraham. These holy polygamic families, Jesus said were in the kingdom of God, and that many should come from the east, west, north and south, and sit down with them in that kingdom. These patriarchal polygamists were not living in a dark age; but Paul says, they had the gospel preached to them, even the same gospel taught in the Apostles' days, by which the heathen were blessed. The families of these inspired polygamist Prophets were represented by Paul, as model families—as perfect patterns after which Christian families should copy; indeed, Christian families were all adopted into these polygamic families, and became the seed of Abraham and of Israel by such adoption, and the legal heirs to all the promises made to these holy polygamists.

Paul says, "That the man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord;" hence, mar-

riage was very essential to the perfection of the two sexes. And Paul considered it so very important, that he gave instructions to Timothy that both Bishops and Deacons must each have at least one wife before they were to be entrusted with those sacred offices. Unmarried or single men were unfitted for the duties of the office, and none were to be appointed, till they became "the husband of one wife," thus learning by actual experience how to rule their own households, before the household of faith was committed to their charge.

Before David was exalted to the throne of Israel, God gave him many wives, and wrought special miracles by his hand, and he was pronounced to be a man after God's own heart; his prophecies and Psalms were referred to and quoted by the Son of God and his Apostles. God himself, therefore, not only sanctioned, but did actually give to David his wives.

If polygamy be a crime, would the Lord have been guilty of giving to David something that would render him a criminal? If such institution be a crime, would the Lord have expressly commanded the surviving brother to marry all of his deceased brothers' widows? If plural marriage be a crime, would he have ordained and issued a law to the great nation of Israel, commanding them, under the most dreadful curse, to carry out such family relationships from generation to generation?

Christ came, not to destroy the law of Moses, but to fulfil it. This had reference to the carnal commandments—the ceremonial law of offerings and sacrifices; but he did not come to do away the ten commandments, nor justice, nor righteousness, nor faith, nor repentance, nor to break up family relations, nor to dissolve polygamous marriages, nor to denounce the Jews for keeping the same. He did not require that portion of the Jews, who were compelled by their law to be polygamists, to break up and dissolve their marriage relations in order to enter the Christian Church. Marriage was considered of more force, than the fluctuating, every-day trifles of life. It was a permanent institution, involving the welfare of thousands of Jewish polygamists and their families. Plural marriage, like faith, repentance, prayer, &c., is of that nature, that if it is right under one dispensation, it is right under all others; its relations are the same under Christianity as under the Mosaic or Patriarchal dispensation. It was not a type or shadow of things to come, like the ceremonial law, to be fulfilled in Christ, and done away. The polygamic Jew, embracing the Gospel under the preaching of Jesus, owed the same duties to his wives and children, in the Christian Church, as in the Jewish Church. His union with the Christian Church did not require him to turn his polygamic children and wives out of doors, and cleave to one only.

Marriage, under divine authority, is believed by the Latter-day Saints in Utah, to be as sacred now as in all former dispensations, whether such marriages are monogamic or polygamic. A divinely authorized marriage, celebrated by the ordinance of heaven, and administered by those called and authorized of God, always was considered, under every dispensation, as a duty enjoined upon both sexes, to fulfil in a legal manner, the great divine law of the multiplication of our species. Without this, the sexes do not fulfil the purpose of their creation; without this, they live in open defiance to the first great law given to man. Wilful neglect or disobedience to this divine command, will receive its punishment in the great future state to which we are all hastening. Marriage, like baptism and the Lord's supper, has a bearing upon our future exaltation and happiness. He that keeps the law is certainly more justified, than he who heedlessly or wilfully disregards it; and if more justified, his reward in heaven must be greater.

Marriage, therefore, is a matter of conscience with all true Saints; its bearings upon eternity are of such a nature, that they dare not neglect this divine institution.

But what do Congress, in free America, propose to do? they propose to take away this divine religious right from the whole Territory of Utah; to deprive all marriageable persons of the religious right of being united by their own ministers. Gentile officers and ministers who never pretend to any divine authority, must officiate in this divine ordinance. Why not also appoint Gen-

tile officials to baptise all who wish to join any denomination, in the Territory? Why do not Congress send Gentile officials to minister the sacrament, to confirm the Churches, to ordain ecclesiastical ministers, and take special charge of all the religious denominations in Utah? Why do they not enact Congressional laws to punish all Jews in Utah who may be found practicing circumcision, or any other ordinance or institution in the Old Testament? If a great fundamental institution of the Bible is to be prohibited, under heavy penalties of fine and imprisonment, why not Congress point out by law, how much of the Bible may be introduced into Utah? A religious creed, enacted by Congress, and enforced by Congressional officers, would be so republican in form, so Constitutional in its nature, so agreeable to American institutions, so palatable to all religious sects in that free country, that the whole nation would be in ecstasies. An American Congressional Church could lock arms with the English Parliamentary Church, and travel along to heaven in the same road. If Articles of Religion could be adopted by Congress, and enforced upon all the American Territories, and upon all the future States, admitted into the Union, under the same severe penalties proposed for one of her Territories, what a vast amount of contention, about religious tenets, would be done away. All denominations would be compelled to merge into one. America then would have a church established by law, and could assert that high position now enjoyed by Austria and Spain. No doubt there would be some stubborn rebellious subjects, affected with the old leaven of freedom, and a free church; but such heretics could easily be got rid of. If ten thousand dollars fine and three years of imprisonment, did not compel them to quit practicing that portion of the Bible so obnoxious to Congress, grand and petit juries could be abolished, or selected after the form of the old Spanish and Austrian inquisition; the rack, the gibbet, the fiery stake, the pistol, breech-loader and cannon, would soon annihilate all religions, except the one great Union Congressional Church. Consciences, formed by Congress, would introduce, at once, a Congressional millennium.

Polygamy among the Latter-day Saints is considered a divine law, is a fundamental religious principle with them, and is practiced by them as a matter of conscience, the same as baptism, the Lord's supper, confirmation, ordination, prayer, or any other Bible institution or ordinance. It is considered essential, as bearing upon a future state; it is considered obligatory, as a Bible order for family arrangements, as a divine institution re-established by new revelation. The Saints in Utah could not relinquish this part of their religion, without sacrificing the whole divine code; to deny our religion in one fundamental part, would be equivalent to the denial of the whole. "He that offends in one point," says Jesus, "is guilty of the whole;" that is, if he is guilty of rejecting any one divine revelation, he will be condemned the same as if he had rejected all revealed religion. Congress know that this is our faith, our conscience, our religion; they know that the practice of any Bible doctrine, either of the Old or the New dispensation, is not criminal. The Jew, by virtue of the religious freedom guaranteed in the American Constitution, can circumcise his children, offer the blood of bulls, goats, and lambs upon the altar, re-establish the whole ceremonial code, and family order of his ancestors, without committing crime. A law that makes any Bible institution criminal, is wholly unconstitutional, is an abridgment of the liberty of conscience, is destructive of all the natural, inalienable, and religious rights of man. Congress is limited by the Constitution, which expressly declares that no law shall be made respecting the establishment of religion, or infringing upon the rights thereof.

The Bible condemns many practices as criminal. No people can be permitted, under the pretence of religion, to commit acts, condemned by the Bible as crimes, such as offering human sacrifices, burning widows upon the funeral pile of their deceased husbands, causing children, in idolatrous worship, to pass through the fire, &c. All these things are recognized by the Bible as crimes, and should be punished as such, whether practiced in the name of religion or otherwise. But to punish American citizens, for practicing that which is recognized

by the Bible as a divine institution, which was practiced by holy Prophets, Patriarchs, and righteous men of old, which was approbated and regulated by the divine law,—is a stretch of Legislative power, destructive of the whole fabric of free American institutions, and strikes a death-blow to the very vitals of all religions, founded upon the freedom of conscience. All denominations alike are in danger; for a Legislative power which can abridge one sect can abridge another; a power that can suppress the practice of one part of the Bible, can suppress any other part,—can, indeed, suppress the whole, and make a Bible religion criminal, and punish and imprison all who shall be found reading the same. Are Americans prepared to see all these religious rights wrested from her citizens, and vested in a law-making department? Is it for this, that they have poured out their blood upon American soil, and fought the oppressors of their country? If this be the doom of the sons of freedom, the proud monarchies of the East will exultingly rejoice, while all the heavens will weep over the untold miseries in reserve for the Western World.

O. P.

Correspondence.

WASHINGTON, March 4.

EDITOR DESERET NEWS:

On the 27th ult. we reached Washington at 10 p.m., after a very pleasant car ride of 10 hours from New York, through a beautiful country and over a good road.

We immediately repaired to the Capitol, the two Houses of Congress being in session, where we met our Delegate, the Hon. W. H. Hooper. He was much pleased to see us, and at once gave us his courteous attention. Brigham Young, jr., had visited the Capitol before, but it being my first visit I felt much interested in walking through the rooms, and viewing the statues and historical paintings.

My first impression, on meeting br. Hooper, was that he looked unusually well for him, and I think so still; although he has had so much to see to in watching the interests of his constituents and canvassing for his friends to aid him in accomplishing measures relating to our welfare. He is indefatigable in his endeavors to benefit the people of Utah in every way possible. His continued and diligent application to the duties of his office, his gentlemanly deportment and urbanity of manners and his earnestness in stating facts relating to Utah and its people have won for us numerous friends in both Houses of Congress. He has made himself acquainted with every member in the House of Representatives, and with many in the Senate.

Among the leading men of the nation to whom we were introduced, I will name Gen. Grant and the President of the United States. We were introduced to the General at his quarters, and to the President at the White House. I do not remember ever being more favorably impressed with the appearance of a man of the world than I was with that of President Johnson, although he looked much care worn. He was very busy, and we only remained long enough to greet him and bid him farewell.

By the kindness of br. Hooper we were admitted to the floor of the House, where we were introduced to numerous Representatives and Generals. All the titles in the catalogue of titles seem to have merged into that of General. Brigham Young, Junr., was the lion of the occasion, and introductions to him were anxiously sought for. Almost every gentleman to whom we were introduced expressed astonishment at seeing such fine looking specimens of humanity from Utah; they did not expect to see anything that was not in a used-up condition, from the land of many wives.

Well, Mr. Watt, what is the probable population of your city?

20,000.

What is the probable adult population of the Territory?

100,000, and our children are almost innumerable.

Have you large fine buildings there? and what kind of building material have you?

We have some fine buildings in Utah; the walls of some are stone, of others brick, but as yet most of our dwelling-houses are built of adobies.

Does not the system of polygamy en-