

[COMMUNICATED.]
THE MARRIAGE QUESTION.

The plan of salvation is so broad and comprehensive that all human interests are identified with and controlled by its pervading spirit. No revelation worthy of Divinity could simply provide for the religious sentiment and action and incontinently overlook, neglect or ignore the varied attributes of man, and the great essentials of his well being upon the earth.

If you grant that the religious conceptions and religious truth constitute the base of the superstructure, the different floors, stories or departments of that building are equally important, as progress in duty and responsibility increases; it would be a libel on Divine wisdom to assume or assert that revelation was indispensable in one section, and valueless in the other; hence, after the revelation of the first principles of the Gospel by the Prophet Joseph Smith, it would have been incompatible with his claims and pretensions, with his mission and destiny, had he failed in endeavoring to throw light upon those human relationships, those customs, ordinances and covenants upon which society ultimately depends and rests!

Statesmen, philosophers, students in social economics, all agree that much of good or ill depends upon the ideas entertained in regard to the marriage covenant, its responsibility, its stability and its perpetuity; few indeed are they who believe in promiscuous intercourse. In irregular passion gratification, hence laws have been made to control and regulate the association of the sexes, and penalties are prescribed for shirkers and violators of legal regulation.

The religionist, of course, looks upon the relation as of Divine origin. To him marriage is ordained of God, dating back even to the beginning of time; organizations, religious and civil, have seconded this idea for ages by working together, ever asserting and maintaining the sacred character of so important, so essential a relation; one, which once formed, was not to be easily set aside by either church or state.

Modern infidelity and the modern craze for liberty have made inroads upon these conservative conclusions of the past; its religious or divine character has been disputed, the sanction of priest or minister has been looked upon as superfluous, and entry upon that relationship can be secured today by what is styled "a civil contract," one to be created or dissolved at pleasure by the contractors, as caprice or the whim of the moment might determine. The divorce courts of our nation testify to the slight hold so serious a compact has upon a large section of the population; while not a few deem the demands of law an infringement on personal liberty, and so private arrangement is looked upon as the only pre-requisite for that convenience which accepts of no responsibility, and carries out its program by avoiding increase, even at the expense of health and life—of body and soul!

So anomalous a condition could never escape the eye of Deity; or be excluded from any revelation which aimed at the deliverance of mankind from error, ignorance and death; consequently reason and philosophy could do no less than expect in a so-called "new dispensation," that correction, instruction, nay—commandment, should be among the first communications on this subject, so fully divorced from the original thought, intent and blessing of the great Supreme.

The later revelation in regard to "the eternity of marriage," was a gigantic step in advance of religious thought as found even in the "Mother Church," which pretends to apostolic succession, and its silence on this, forms a curious

commentary upon the asserted sealing or "binding and loosing" of its priesthood, when the erroneous conclusion was drawn from the uncomprehended statement of the Savior, that in the life to come "they neither marry nor are given in marriage."

It was easily manifest to the Prophet that as "sex is eternal," pro-creation must follow under better and higher conditions, the same as in the lower, though divested, no doubt, of all the evils which belong to the corruptive conditions and excesses culminating among men through disobedience from age to age.

This continuance of the marriage and family relation also involved by the actions of "the sealing power" of the Priesthood reaching behind the veil, the positive existence of plural marriage, that is where two or more have been consecutively allied to one man, and where living issue or otherwise has followed this relation sanctioned by this authority, and it needs but little reflection to conclude that a relation so approbated and necessarily existent on the other side cannot under proper regulation be so highly criminal and sinful in this probation.

If this sealing power is denied, if marriage is not a sacrament, if it is not a Divine institution to be regulated by Divine authority, if it is always and everywhere limited by death, then the logic fails; men are justified in legislation against a hitherto conceded religious tenet, and human wisdom may be superseded by suppressing an order as aged as the eternities, and co-eternal with the God.

It is well known that a tremendous pressure was brought years ago to bear upon hundreds of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for accepting these ideas of marriage; that it to say, its sacred character, its existence by virtue of Divine appointment, its regulation by revelation, and its continuance in the eternities; because "sex is eternal," and because of the authorized sealing of the Holy Priesthood, it is a necessity in unnumbered cases that its plural character must be eternal also, and that that order cannot possibly (or should not) be considered a flagrant crime on earth, which is sanctioned and approbated by being "eternal in the heavens."

Among those who then and now, bitterly sanctioned the persecutions, imprisonments and fines inflicted upon at least a well meaning (if erring) people was that faction of religious renegades called the Josephites, or the "Reorganized Church;" their leader, his right hand man and followers, denounced, ridiculed, and nearly hated those who claimed that the Prophet had by divine revelation given the Key to the marriage relation, in this broad and amplified sense; they applauded legislation for its suppression, they proclaimed to the nation and to the world, that Joseph never received this revelation, that it was a fabrication; they went further, when the proof was brought home to them, by assuming that their progenitor was "a fallen prophet," if he did so teach and act.

Now there is no quarrel here with Lamoni, no desire to restrict personal right or privilege under the law, none with this nation, none with public sentiment; there is no advocacy of a return to "the ancient practice," any more than there are regrets for past experiences; the overruling Providence of God will surely reward the sufferers. He will honor those who gave their lives to vindicate an eternal principle; if the suppression was violent, if it called for sacrifice, the responsibility is not on the believers or upholders of that system, it must rest wherever divine justice will place it; if there were unworthy men or women in that order,

there are thousands of the unworthy in monogamous marriage in this proud nation, and it will pay her statesmen to buttress by and in connection with legislation, that not yet quite extinguished faith in sacred marriage as ordained of God, for the perpetuation of the human race; if this is done, the sad tragedy of "Sodom and Gomorrah" will not need to be duplicated in this the most favored nation found beneath the sun!

HIRINI WHAANGA, THE MAORI CHIEF

The following, from the San Francisco Examiner of July 15, 1894, will be additionally interesting at this time in view of the fact that the First Presidency have called Elder Hirini Whaanga on a mission to New Zealand. He expects to leave with Elder Ezra T. Stevenson and other Elders about March 2nd, and a committee of earnest workers in the Eleventh ward are already preparing for a farewell reception.

During Brother Whaanga's residence in Salt Lake City, he and members of his family have been faithful workers in the Temple and his pleasant countenance and stately mien will be missed by the regular workers there.

The Examiner stated, on the date named, when the venerable Maori chief, arrived in San Francisco en route to his Utah home:

Among the arrivals on the Monday a day or so ago from the remote east coast of New Zealand was a strange looking old man, wearing a heavy beard, which was almost as white as snow. The white beard contrasting with a darkly bronzed face and deep iron gray hair, combined with the garments he wore, made him the observed of all observers.

The venerable man was Hirini Whaanga, a famous Maori chief, in whose veins was the blood of twenty generations of kings. Whaanga has for many years been among the most powerful of the Maori rulers. His tribe, some forty years ago, when he first took upon himself the authority of chief, populated the New Zealand coast in vast numbers. The remnant of his followers yet numbers over 400, and besides this, they own the land for 100 miles along the coast and stretching back into the interior indefinitely.

Yet the old chief has cast aside his crown and deserted his subjects, who, as warriors, whalers, farmers and stock-growers, had so often obeyed his behests, and is now going to Utah to settle. He has become a Mormon, and henceforth will have nothing more to do with war. His ambition for conquest among neighboring tribes, which was once his pride, is now his contempt. His greenstone war club and his spear have been cast aside along with the crown. He will have none of them. He is, as he says, a man of peace.

A lot of people came with the chief, including his wife, one other native woman, five or six bronzed children of different ages, and some Mormon Elders who have won the old man over to their belief. A rumor got abroad that the old chief had two wives with him, and was going to Utah with them in blissful ignorance of the Edmunds law. It offended the old chief greatly. He said the second woman was his "brother's" wife, and that he had no idea of coming to a new land and violating its laws; that, he said, was farthest from his thoughts.

Through the Rev. W. Gibson, one of the Elders who has been for five years laboring among the Maoris, and who acted as interpreter, Chief Whaanga told a story of great interest concerning himself and his tribe, and his expectations for the future. In the story many remarkable things relative to the customs of his tribe were brought out.