

EVENING NEWS.

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CHARLES W. PENROSE, EDITOR.

Wednesday, April 14, 1886

THE CHRISTIAN UNION AND
THE LADIES' MEMORIAL.

CERTAIN WOMEN of Utah have presented to the President and Congress a memorial, the full text of which we find in the DESERT NEWS.

They are Mormons in religious faith, and apparently believers in plural marriage. They declare that the law against the polygamists have been illegally enforced, and that they have been asked insulting questions and compelled to answer them, and have been asked to pay the penalty of refusal by confinement in the penitentiary; they charge Congress with the purpose of destroying the rights of the States in forcing their laws upon the people of Utah, and they give various specifications, with dates and names, in support of their charges. They also respectfully ask for a full investigation of the measures calculated to deprive the people of Utah of their rights of citizenship, and of the political rights and privileges of the people of Utah, and to bring our people into bondage and distress, until a commission, duly and specially authorized to make full inquiry into the affairs of this Territory, have investigated and reported. Our readers need no assurance that the Christian Union has no sympathy with polygamy or the rights claimed by polygamists to maintain plural marriages on American soil. If they want the doubtful luxury of Turkish harem life, they must go elsewhere to find it. We do not see a demand for the suspension of measures enforcing the law of the land for any purpose whatever. But the right to a full investigation is one which cannot be denied to any considerable body of citizens who believe themselves illegally and unjustly treated, and who ought not to wear a badge over their eyes if that is to prevent their from making inquiry into the truth, and the United States government would be stung in punishing those who are guilty of violating the law, and who are not to be punished for the same lawless violations in the execution, or under the pretense of executing, the National Law.

The foregoing is clipped from the latest number of the Christian Union. It expresses the views of many non-Mormons, who are becoming acquainted with the conditions of affairs in Utah. The facts set forth in the Ladies' Memorial to the President and Congress of the United States are indisputable. They are also inexcusable. They are not such as are required in the execution of the law, and must be suppressed, or the law may be desired. The outrages that have been perpetrated in Utah under the name of the law, are sufficient to cover the names of all who have executed it, and supported them with indelible infamy.

The Christian Union is not only a vigorous opponent of "Mormon" plural marriage, but is an advocate of legislative action to suppress the same. It is not out of any sympathy for the system that its editors condemn the methods employed in the execution of the law, but from the fact that the law is not being enforced, and that the mind when those methods come to be understood.

The Christian Union has to qualify its denunciation of the treatment of Utah, by remarks upon the polygamy question, lest it should be thought in sympathy with the practices in the remotest degree. But we wish to inform the Union that nobody in Utah wishes to establish anything like "the doubtful legacy of a Turkish harem," and that polygamy and "Mormon" marriage are as wide apart as the poles, and the conditions which permit of Asiatic harem do not exist in Utah. Those who talk of both in connection do not understand the matter, and are therefore not capable of passing judgment upon it.

The right claimed by the Latter-day Saints to maintain plural marriages cannot be dismissed in one short sentence, or in the opinion of any individual. The states of polygamy, under certain conditions, have been declared not criminal by the Supreme Court of the United States, and therefore it may be maintained on American soil. It is the opinion of the Christian Union, however, that the states of polygamy are quite as worthy of countenance as that bastard kind of polygamy known as concubinage, and which is maintained in America by many pious people with whom the Christian Union is in Church fellowship. It is very prevalent throughout the New England States and is tolerated in so-called "Christian" society in every part of the United States.

If the Union will read the memorial a little more carefully, it will find that "the suspension of measures to enforce the law of the land for any purpose whatever" is not asked for by the ladies who protest against the outrages of the law's minions. So that paper is not asked to "suspend" or "suspend" any such "demand." The "suspension" asked for is "of the measures calculated to deprive us of our political rights and privileges" etc. Bills have been introduced in Congress to deprive the women voters of the elective franchise, on a false and groundless pretext. Others still more unjust propose the disfranchisement of all persons, male and female, who belong to the "Mormon" Church. The name of the Church is not designated because that would be a little too glaring to suit some fastidious people. But it is described with sufficient clearness to render the operations of the proposed law exactly the same as though the Church was named in full.

The scheme to effect this is the work of scoundrels who support the outrages which the Christian Union cannot but condemn. The ladies ask that these measures be suspended until a full and impartial investigation is had. That paper can consistently second all that the ladies ask for. Indeed the closer remarks in the above excerpt are directly in line. All the ladies demand is that justice which the Union says "ought not to be denied to any considerable body of citizens who believe themselves illegally and unjustly treated. This, however, has been persistently denied to Utah. Congress has been guided more by the clamors of the clergy and the thoughtless howlings of uninformed people than by a comprehension of the facts and of the situation in Utah.

The Edmunds law, with its double-edged sentences cunningly framed to leave open to the interpretation of hostile courts, that which ought to be strictly defined in terms, was hurried through Congress by just pressure and without inquiry. Its intentionally ambiguous phrases have opened the way to many of the oppressions to which the people of Utah have been made subject. And the same craft has been at work to bring about still further mischief in the same direction. At every attempt to press the people of Utah into bondage, the majority of its citizens have pleaded for an investigation before action should be taken.

This is what the ladies ask for. But this is just what the enemies of Utah do not want to see attempted. They rely

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To substantiate their position in reference to the falsehood they claimed off upon the public abroad regarding the Saints, the statements of witnesses in cases of legislative investigation, etc., where "Mormons" were the defendants, were cited. The evidence, when it happened to favor the defense, was characterized as false and perjured. No matter who the victims might be—whether tender women or robust men—they were characterized as liars who were taught by the "Church to falsify. Such shameful abuse of witnesses coupled with such baseless charges against a religious organization, the essence of which is truth, have probably never been equalled since the days when the former-day Saints were persecuted legally and otherwise.

If it be granted that a few persons may have departed in some degree from the strict line of truth, in the hope of defending some loved relative and saving him from incarceration in a foul prison, such instances are individual affairs and would not be taken into account in passing upon the whole. Our position in this regard can be demonstrated beyond the reach of successful contradiction.

With few exceptions, convictions have been found by the packed juries in all portions of the Territory, and since the beginning of the anti-"Mormon" raid under the Edmunds act, inaugurated in October, 1884. Without any reference to those in Arizona and Idaho, and those who have been tried and imprisoned to date number sixteen-seven. Of these, forty-two entered the plea of not guilty, but only twenty had a regular trial, the balance—twenty-two—went upon the stand themselves, acknowledged having lived with their wives, and gave all the testimony necessary to a conviction. The remaining twenty-five had no trial in any shape, as they pleaded guilty to the indictment.

The twenty of those who plead "not guilty," and had regular trials for the most part, assumed that position merely to take advantage of every legal technicality within reach to insure acquittal, but also that the various points of law involved might for the benefit of others as well as themselves, be fully and fairly tested in the higher courts. Consequently a number of cases were appealed. To those who took that course the community are indebted, their attitude under legal accusation not only being a private but also a public necessity.

But it was alone among those twenty cases where any opportunity could be found for making the base and slanderous accusations that have been laid by a vile local press against individuals and in the same connection, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, whose foundation and superstructure is truth. In the first place individuals were accused of testifying falsely when their evidence did not aid the prosecution; then the odium of the alleged false evidence was laid upon the Church, villainously accused of teaching that it was no sin to lie when the safety of a Church member or interest was at stake. Then it may be asked: "Who taught the twenty-two, who taught themselves rather than have the members of their families dragged into Court and insulted by brow-beating, unscrupulous and unrefined prosecuting attorneys and judges? Was it the Church? Who was it that instructed those who pleaded guilty—twenty-five in number—'Was it the Church?'"

Taking the raid clear through from beginning to end, as a whole, looking at its cruel and unjust character, it will be found that the closest and fidelity with which its victims have clung to truth in every aspect under the most trying circumstances has but few parallels in history. There is no more truthful community to be found than the Latter-day Saints, the vile aspersions of their enemies and defamers to the contrary notwithstanding. It is their false accusers who hide themselves behind "the refuge of lies."

An instance of the kind of perjury in question is now under our eye, in the form of a dispatch sent from this city. It is dated the 9th inst. and appears in the San Francisco Chronicle, an extract is here with presented:

"Deputy Marshals Frank Smith and Charles W. Penrose, of the Utah Territory, were arrested this morning and taken to the penitentiary at San Francisco, where they are now being held for trial."

It is not necessary to say that this is just what the enemies of Utah do not want to see attempted. They rely