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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

WE DO not intend today to make an entire review of President Harrison's message to Congress, but merely to touch on his reference to Utah, which is the subject of greatest import to the people of this region.

As a whole the message is an able document, reaching the various points considered in a clear and comprehensive manner, and giving reasons for the conclusions arrived at which, if not always convincing, are at least worthy of reflection and are rational from the standpoint of the party that the President represents.

The principal topics discussed are the silver issue, the tariff bill, the reciprocity measure, the election law or "force" proposition, and the "Mormon" question. Of course these are all handled from a partisan position and treated with a view to the interests of Republicanism. The Utah part of the message is as follows:

"The increasing number and influence of the non-Mormon population in Utah are observed with satisfaction. The recent letter of Wilford Woodruff, president of the Mormon Church, in which he advises his people to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the laws of the land, has attracted wide attention, and it is hoped that its influence will be highly beneficial in restraining infractions of the laws of the United States. But the fact should not be overlooked that the doctrine or belief of the Church that polygamous marriages are rightful and supported by the divine revelation remains unchanged. President Woodruff does not renounce the doctrine, but refrains from teaching it, and advises against the practice of it because the law is against it. Now it is quite true that the law should not attempt to deal with the faith or belief of any one, but this is quite another thing; and the only safe thing is to deal with the Territory of Utah so that those who believe polygamy to be rightful shall not have the power to make it lawful."

There is little to find fault with in these remarks of the President's, unless the view that we think will be generally taken of the meaning of the last sentence is correct. It

would appear from it that something more than compliance with the laws is required of the "Mormon" people. It conveys the idea that the belief of citizens may form a proper ground for national legislation. It smacks of interference by the State with that which belongs to the Church. It apparently encroaches upon the perfect freedom of faith which is guaranteed to all people under our national system of government. And it looks as if doctrines may be attacked by the Government when practices are unobjectionable.

The demand that has been made upon the "Mormon" Church, its leaders and its people has been, all along, since the nation has attempted to interfere with them, "Comply with the laws; with your faith Congress has nothing to do; only signify your intention to recognize the law's supremacy in your practices, and you will be perfectly free to believe and worship as you will." This has been echoed by the press throughout the land, and the Latter-day Saints have been assured that there was no disposition to interfere with their creed. Some have said "you may believe it right to have as many wives as Solomon; so long as you do not marry them no fault will be found with you."

Now it seems that the only thing that can be alleged by the President against the "Mormons" is that they have not changed their belief. Whether his view of the fact be right or wrong, it is evident that this is a matter beyond executive, judicial or legislative control. Indeed it is often beyond the mere will of the individual. Faith does not come altogether by will. Sometimes it enters the soul against the will; at others it cannot be evolved no matter how much will and desire may be exercised. Faith and doctrine are properly beyond the domain of governmental authority. There is no national power which has any right in the premises. It is not any man's or any nation's business what people or churches believe so that the law is not violated. As the Supreme Court of the United States has declared, "It is time enough, for the rightful purposes of civil government, for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order."

The idea expressed in the President's message that what people may possibly do is a proper subject for legislating against them, will

strike most people whose minds are well-balanced as a tremendous stretch of governmental theory. If this means that the "Mormons" should be singled out for present legislative attack because of something they may do in the future, we consider his doctrine unsound in principle and likely to be very mischievous in practice.

Just what the President does mean is scarcely to be learned from his words. The closing sentence of the paragraph we have quoted is the least perspicuous in the whole message. If it simply means a safeguard of some kind against the future revival of the practice of polygamy in Utah, we presume the country will approve of his caution. But if it means that the people who have given so emphatic an expression of their submission to national law as the "Mormons" have recently given, and that too when, as he views it, their belief stood in their way, shall be deprived of any right, privilege or immunity, because their belief may at some time cause them to establish an obnoxious practice, then it is caution exaggerated into injustice and punishment before an offence is committed.

Congress will no doubt well consider this matter. Some members will construe the President's utterances on Utah as favorable to the passage of the disfranchisement bills now pending. Others, and we believe the most conservative members of either party, will not take this extreme view, but will receive it rather as precautionary advice to guide Congress when the future of Utah is taken into consideration, than as a recommendation to ignore the declaration concerning future plural marriages, and inflict penalties or disabilities upon a religious body because of a peculiar belief. We shall continue to hope that right and reason will prevail in Congress and not injustice and prejudice in dealing with this question, so briefly touched upon in the President's message.

The full text of the message will be found in the DESERET EVENING NEWS of December 1st and also in the DESERET SEMI-WEEKLY NEWS of December 2d.

THE death occurred yesterday afternoon at Pleasant Grove, of Mrs. Maggie Hays, daughter of Bishop J. Brown, and wife of William Hays. The deceased was in her 24th year and was greatly esteemed among a wide circle of friends.