

EDITORIALS.

"CHRISTIAN" ACCEPTANCE OF "MORMON" DOCTRINE.

What does Peter mean by the declaration that Christ preached to the spirits in prison? 1 Peter III, 19, 20.

That is a difficult question to answer. We, however, see no adequate reason for refusing to take the words in their plain and obvious sense, in which they are taken by the Apostles' Creed. Of course we do not cite that creed as an authority; nevertheless the fact that Peter's declaration was taken in this sense in the primitive church is established by that creed, the oldest of all the church symbols, and that fact is significant. So interpreted the declaration is that Christ did not complete his redemptive work on earth, but when he had finished his work here went to the place of the dead, and there proclaimed the gospel to those who had died without a knowledge of the promised Savior, and therefore had no opportunity to accept or reject him. Other interpretations have been proposed, but they are far-fetched and artificial.

We clip the above from the *Christian Union* of the 3rd instant. We must confess to an agreeable surprise. Taking the Scriptures "in their plain and obvious sense," is so rare among the "Christian" teachers of the day, that we take pleasure in giving the *Union* editors credit for the uncommon consistency. The simple meaning of passages like the above is usually explained away, or so "spiritualized" as to make it unintelligible to the average reader or hearer.

We do not remember ever hearing any person outside of the "Mormon" church teach as a literal fact the ministry of the Savior among the dead. The Latter-day Saints have received as much ridicule on their belief in the doctrine of preaching to and saving the dead who did not hear the gospel in the flesh, as upon any other tenet of their faith. Orthodox Christianity says, dogmatically, "the fate of man is fixed at death," and "as the tree falls so it lies." Or, as one of its popular hymns expresses it:

"There's no redemption in the grave
Nor pardon offered to the dead."

It is evident that the preaching of our Elders has done a great deal more than is generally recognized, towards the correction of religious opinion among vast multitudes of people who have never become connected with this Church. The doctrine of immediate revelation was scouted when Joseph Smith came with "the burden of the word of the Lord" for the generations of the nineteenth century. Now it is accepted by millions, although in rejecting his testimony they have laid themselves open to influences from the unseen world, which are leading them away from the "straight and narrow path" and blinding their eyes to the light that comes from God.

The doctrines of the literal gathering of Israel and the second advent of Christ; the gradation of eternal punishment according to the nature and extent of the sins committed; the distinction between the duration of the ever-existing punishment and the time which the guilty will suffer in that punishment, from which they will be released after paying "the uttermost farthing;" the final redemption of the race; and the restoration of the earth, after its purification, to its pristine glory as the habitation of immortal man; have been impressed upon the popular mind through the teachings of our missionaries, and the darkness on these points, resulting from the dogmas of a perverted Christianity, have been thereby measurably dissipated.

And now the "Mormon" doctrine of Christ's preaching of the gospel to departed spirits, is adopted by one of the most widely circulated religious journals of the land. But perhaps its editors, who are among the most popular preachers in Christendom, do not see the consequence of their reception and acknowledgment of this principle of our faith. If Jesus preached to the "spirits in prison" who had not heard of the promised Savior while in the flesh, does not justice demand that the millions who have died since his vicarious offering without hearing "the only name given under heaven whereby man can be saved," should receive

the same opportunities, that they may be "judged according to men in the flesh and live according to God in the spirit?" And if they hear the glad tidings of salvation in the regions of the departed, and Christ's declaration be accepted that "Except a man is born of the water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," will not the *Union* editors, as a consequence, also be compelled, logically to admit the "Mormon" doctrine of vicarious baptism for the dead.

If they want Scripture authority for this principle, they will find it in Paul's question to the Corinthians, in advocating the doctrine of a literal resurrection (which, by the by, the *Union* editors do not believe)—

"Else what shall they do, which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" 1 Cor. xv. 29.

And they must remember that "there is no adequate reason for refusing to take these words in their plain and obvious sense," any more than in the case of those which they have quoted.

Admitting the doctrine of baptism for the dead, which is a natural sequence of the doctrine of preaching the gospel to the dead, the material ordinances being impossible in the spiritual sphere and therefore can only be attended to by proxy in this, the question of authority to administer this rite and of how it is to be performed are next to be considered. And there, again, the *Union* editors and those who take their ground on this question gravitate right into "Mormonism." There is no Priest, Elder or Minister of any denomination who claims to have this authority or to know anything about the ordinance, except in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If anything can be done on earth for the benefit of those who have departed in ignorance of the only plan of salvation, this Church stands alone in the world as the repository of the plan and the possessor of the keys to its proper administration.

Herein is the power to seal on earth and it shall be sealed in heaven; to loose on earth and it shall be loosed in heaven. Herein is the key to unlock the door for "the deliverance of the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Herein does the doctrine of vicarious atonement and administration receive its complete development and exemplification, for the glory of God and the redemption of the whole human race, except the "sons of perdition," who wilfully sin against light and knowledge, and deny the Holy Ghost after having received it. Herein is joy, rejoicing and salvation for the myriads of the dead, who passed away without hearing of the Redeemer, and whose numbers are greater than the leaves of the forest or the blades of grass in all the meadows under the shining sun.

It is for them that the Saints are building Temples in the heights of the mountains. And while the world is scoffing at them and falsely accusing them of intolerance and bigotry, they are laboring with their might, and spending millions of dollars, in the great work of administering the ordinances in behalf of the dead, who are hearing the word of eternal life through the preaching of Joseph and Brigham, and other servants of God who have received the authority and priesthood of this ministry, and are following in the footsteps of Christ, the Captain of Salvation, in that mission to the spirits referred to by the Apostle Peter, and endorsed by the *Christian Union*.

God has revealed the plan, His angels have brought the authority, millions of the dead who were in spiritual darkness have come to the light, their voices are calling for the needful ordinances of the house of the Lord, and all "Christians," instead of opposing and maligning the people who are called to this important vocation, should join in the glorious work, and give thanks to the Eternal Father, who is the Author of this plan for the ultimate salvation of the family of Adam. Let the editors of the *Union* ponder these things in their hearts.

A Nebraska judge decided to give a horse thief another chance to reform. As the fellow left the neighborhood to begin a newer and better life he took along the Judge's horse to help him.

A BRUTAL AND HEATHENISH "DIVINE."

Dr. Witt Talmage is the name of a Brooklyn Reverend (?) He is almost as notorious as Beecher, but is of a different type. Talmage is a theological buffoon; one of the chief clowns in the modern religious arena. He attracts a large and fashionable congregation who feed on Sabbath sensations, in the same way that some people devour startling novels, and they enjoy the sanctified antics and pious comicalities of this pulpit mountebank, as more worldly people do the stale jokes and sparkled glitterings of the sawdust-perfumed circus. Roars of laughter follow his sallies of holy humor, and his flights of florid oratory are frequently cheered by applause.

Talmage once passed through Utah. On his return home, instead of handling the "Mormon" question as a clergyman would be expected to do, he could find little else to comment upon than the ugliness of the women whom he said he saw in our Tabernacle. According to his powerful logic, "Mormonism" must be bad because he couldn't see any pretty women—all that he seemed to be looking for—among those of its devotees whom he gazed upon in one of its houses of worship.

The death of our venerated President has given the Brooklyn divine another opportunity for an attack on the "Mormons," and a repetition of his unmanly and low-lived libel on the ladies of Utah. At a recent Friday evening meeting in his Tabernacle, he declared the life of Brigham Young was a crime, and said "The hoof of dishonor has left the Mormon women of Utah a herd of wild animals, lower than the sheep, or goats, or cows." Laughter and applause followed, from the kid-gloved and jeweled dames and dandies who listened to this harangue. An ex-"Mormon," writing to the *New York Sun*, severely criticizes Talmage's falsehoods, and we clip the annexed paragraph from the long and well written article on the subject—

"A Mormon meeting in the Salt Lake Tabernacle will not compare in appearance of silks and feathers with a Talmage meeting in Brooklyn, but I dare challenge Talmage to take 15,000 persons, taking them from every house around his tabernacle, and make the comparison between the two congregations, and if the Mormons, in point of honesty of purpose, purity of life, and fair square dealing, do not bear comparison with the Talmage 15,000 as the Mormon leader can take 15,000 persons from houses around his Tabernacle, I will agree to sit every Sunday under the afflicting voice of Talmage as long as I am in the State of New York."

We pass by the Brooklyn Tabernacle performer's ribaldry and come now to another and more serious part of his disgraceful discourse. Said he:

Now, my friends—now, at the death of the Mormon chieftain, is the time for the United States Government to strike. They are less organized than they have been, and less than they will be. If these Mormons will not submit to authority let so much of their rich lands be confiscated for the wants of the Government as will be sufficient for their subjugation. If the Government of the United States cannot stand the expense let Salt Lake City pay for it. (Applause.) Turn their vast Temple into an arsenal. Set Phil Sheridan after them. (Immense applause.) Give him enough troops and he will teach all Utah that forty wives is thirty-nine too many. I call upon the Church of Jesus Christ to pray for the overthrow of this iniquity. God grant that side by side with the doctrine of the brotherhood of man may be that of the sisterhood of woman.

There are sentiments for you, uttered by a Christian clergyman, a professed follower of the loving Savior, and a high-salaried teacher of "peace on earth and good will to all men." To conquer what he believes to be error, he would invoke the bayonet and the torch. To stamp out a religion which he cannot overturn by argument, he would slaughter its votaries, stifle

the voice of prayer with gunpowder, and quell the song of praise and the teachings of the sanctuary, by the rattling of rifles, the thunders of artillery and the horrid din of an armed host filled with the spirit of bloody war. And to cap the climax of his murderous onslaught, he recommends the old Missouri mobocratic policy of plunder and confiscation, the seizure of our property to pay the expenses of putting us to death. And all this for Christ's sake. Is he not a sweet and lovely Christian?

Talmage should have lived in the days of the *auto de fe*, the rack, the thumbscrew and the wheel; or have flourished at the time of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. How he would have rejoiced over the tortures of the heretics, and gloated over the gore of mutilated dissenters from his kind of Christianity. Now he can only rave for the delectation of a few unthoughtful fashion-worshippers, and his vaporings will really injure no one but himself.

As to "the sisterhood of woman," we point Talmage to the outcasts that flaunt their shame under the shadow of his Tabernacle. The thousands of poor fallen ones, sunk to the lowest depths of degradation within the sound of his hypocrite voice. The "Sisters," whose rags and poverty he would shrink from in disgust, as he passes by them in pride on his way to the pulpit, to prate of something he knows nothing about more than three thousand miles away. Let him look at home and see how much he and his frilled and feathered followers have done in the slums of Brooklyn and New York, towards the practice of the doctrine of the "sisterhood of woman."

There is no spot on earth where woman is loved, respected and cared for as a sex, more than in Utah, all that the Talmages and other modern gospel hirelings may say to the contrary, notwithstanding. And with all the trials and privations and tests of devotion to principle which the women of Utah have endured for the love of the truth, we speak advisedly in saying that not one in a hundred of them would change places with the soulless and scented creatures, who laughed at and applauded Talmage's brutal and heathenish attack on "Mormonism" and the "Mormons."

A PERVERSION OF THE PRESS.

A NOTICE of the arrival at New York of the steamship *Wisconsin*, has been going the rounds of the papers, and was telegraphed to the press on the Pacific Coast. It appeared originally in the *N. Y. Tribune*. There is nothing remarkable in the notice except a very grave error or misrepresentation which it contains on the "Mormon" marriage question. We quote from the article as follows:

"Upon being questioned as to their belief in polygamy, they scouted the idea, and said if polygamy was suggested by any one to the adherents of the Mormon faith in Europe, he would be excommunicated from the Church. The reason, one of the missionaries stated, why polygamy was practised in this country was because it was the command of Brigham Young, and although it was felt by many to be one of the errors of the institution of Mormonism, there had been no alternative except to obey Young's behests."

The whole of the above paragraph is grossly incorrect. The doctrine of this Church in regard to marriage has been explained and advocated by the missionaries who have been sent to Europe, and in the organ of the Church, the *Millennial Star*, during the past twenty-five years. Therefore the above assertion is absurd on its face. It is also untrue that polygamy is or was practised in this country merely at the command of Brigham Young, or that it is regarded by any true Latter-day Saint as "one of the errors of Mormonism." Plural marriage is practised as a divine ordinance, warranted and commanded by revelation. And that revelation did not originate with, nor come to the Church through President Brigham Young. It was given through the Prophet Joseph Smith. It has been stated that Brigham Young was its author, because he has publicly stated that while on his mission in England he saw that the doctrine was

true and scriptural. On the same rule of reasoning, hundreds of our Elders might be credited with originating it for they perceived its truth from reading the Bible, years before the revelation was authoritatively given to the Church. The perception of the principle was one thing, the command to practise it was another and different thing; and Brigham Young was not the channel through which that command was communicated.

It is to be deplored that press reporters, particularly when "interviewing" persons from whom they desire to obtain information, will draw so much upon their own imagination instead of giving the ungarbled statements of their victims.

In this case it is evident that the Elders alluded to endeavored to explain, that while abroad they had no right to practise plural marriage nor enter into any relations of this character. For it is a rule strictly urged upon them to obey the laws of any land in which their lot may be cast. And their business abroad is not to contract matrimonial alliances, but to preach the gospel and defend the truth.

As to the "errors of Mormonism," there are none in the system. Men may err and do evil, but what people call "Mormonism" is an embodiment of principles revealed from heaven, in which there is no error. The opinions of men, no matter how eminent in the Church, cannot properly be called "Mormonism;" they stand for what they are worth, but are not to be considered as the established and accepted doctrines of the Church. And plural marriage, being authorized and communicated by divine revelation, is not viewed as an error by any of the Elders of the Church, but is accepted as an integral portion of our faith. Its practice, however, is confined to this Territory, where alone it can be properly administered according to the plan and authority revealed.

We venture to say that no Elder of this Church ever uttered such nonsense as the *New York Tribune* reporter has put into the mouths of the returning missionaries who came home on the steamship *Wisconsin*.

IMPROVEMENT IN ARCHITECTURE.

ARE we called upon to build up Zion by erecting a class of buildings so inferior and disproportionate to their outer appearance, as to convince an observer that there can be no convenience or comfort in their interior, say nothing of beauty or symmetrical proportions? Not wishing to speak disparagingly of the homes built by the Latter-day Saints, but rather as a suggestion, we can truly say that in our travels throughout the world we have never found any place where building material is so wantonly thrown together without design or forethought as in Utah. Masses of adobies, stone or lumber are heaped together and called a house. Do those thus careless and regardless, realize that any dwelling or house erected out of taste and design, no matter if the best of material be used, will sooner or later be taken down and one such as will be an ornament in Zion, be erected in its stead?

There has been reasonable and pardonable excuse for the wholesale carelessness exhibited in years past, but can we say there is a justifiable reason at the present time? No, we cannot. How easy for each settlement to send, at a cost of forty or fifty dollars, and obtain building and architectural works sufficient to enable every ordinary carpenter to erect a neat, comfortable cottage, and even to build larger and more pretentious buildings! Each settlement and ward adopting this suggestion will find that five years will not pass before their locality will be esteemed as the most desirable locality for others to purchase and settle in. Why close our eyes to the necessity of improving our dwelling places? Because we are called Latter-day Saints are we required to live in defiance of all the improvements and taste developed by men of culture and science, who have passed years of study as to how a house should be formed from the rough material, how the warming and ventilation