

fasted and prayed, till they found faith, and their sick were healed.

Apostle Joseph F. Smith, said there is no principle belonging to the Gospel but that every member in the Church should have an abiding interest in. He spoke of our manner of voting, and the principle of tithing, also a few words upon the causes of apostasy and upon the witness that every honest man should have of the truth of this work, after having embraced it, which will never leave him if he continue faithful. He spoke at some length upon the law of celestial marriage, and upon the antagonism of the world to the work of God.

The half yearly statistical report of the Stake was read. The general authorities of the Church were presented before the conference by Pres. A. Hatch, all of whom were unanimously sustained, also the local authorities of the Stake were presented to the conference by the clerk, all of whom were sustained without dissent.

A very great amount of instruction was given and appreciated, and the choir, as they generally do, deserve great credit for their efforts to make agreeable music, which they did to the gratification of all assembled.

CHAS. SHELTON,
Clerk of Conference.

Meeting of the Sunday-School Union.

The monthly meeting of the Sunday School Union was held November 8th, in the 14th Ward Assembly Rooms, Assistant Superintendent Goddard presiding.

In the absence of the choir, the singing was done by the congregation. All the city wards except the 5th were represented.

Elder William Willes, on account of other duties, tendered his resignation as secretary of the Sunday schools of the Stake.

Superintendent Goddard referred to the many duties devolving upon Brother Willes as one of his assistants of this Stake, and therefore felt willing for him to present his resignation, which, on motion, was accepted, and Brother Geo. Manwaring was nominated and unanimously accepted by the meeting to fill his place.

The question of Sunday school officers exchanging visits with the officers of other schools came up and was talked over pro and con, by Elders Goddard, Willes, Evans, Richards and Williams, but, on motion, it was resolved to leave it an open question for the superintendent of each school to exercise his own discretion. After which Bros. Goddard and Willes sang one of their songs.

The question was asked whether the monthly meetings of the Sunday School teachers were regularly held in each Ward. It was ascertained by the reports of the Superintendents that those meetings had not been regularly kept up throughout the city, and Bro. Goddard strongly urged the desirability of having them held regularly, and as soon after the meeting of the Union as possible, so as to keep the teachers that were absent, posted with the general instructions imparted at the monthly Union meetings.

The First Ward Sunday School were appointed to furnish the singing for the next monthly meeting. The meeting then closed with singing the Doxology.

PRESBYTERIANS AND POLYGAMY.

SALT LAKE CITY,
Oct. 28, 1879.

Editors Deseret News:

It is an entirely erroneous idea that the prohibition of plurality of wives was a part of the polity of either the Mosiac or the Christian dispensation, as any one can find out by a close and candid study of the Bible and other books. The general prohibition policy in Christendom was entirely of pagan origin, having come from pagan Greece and pagan Rome, and was incorporated in the polity of the early churches as they assimilated to the corrupt condition of those two nations, being a part of the great Gnostic heresy. Forbidding to marry is sheer heresy. Those "Christians" who absolutely forbid marriage, or needlessly restrict it, are the real diabolical heretics, and their prohibitive doctrine in one of the "doctrines of devils."

Milton wrote a treatise on "Christian Doctrine," which was translated from the Latin by Charles R. Sumner, D. D., Lord Bishop of Winchester, said to have been by command of George IV, and published in London more than half a century ago. In that work the learned authorably defended plural marriage, and showed that it was an eminently Scriptural institution. The following are extracts from Milton's treatise—

"On what grounds, however, can a practice be considered dishonorable or shameful, which is prohibited to no one, even under the Gospel? For that dispensation annuls none of the merely civil regulations which existed previous to its introduction."

"Lastly, I argue as follows from Hebrews XIII, 4: Polygamy is either marriage, or fornication, or adultery; the Apostle recognizes no fourth state. Reverence for so many patriarchs who were polygamists will, I trust, deter anyone from considering it as fornication or adultery; for 'whoremongers and adulterers God will judge;' whereas the patriarchs were the objects of his especial favor, as he himself testifies. If, then, polygamy be marriage properly, so called, it is also lawful and honorable, according to the same apostle: 'Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled.'"

"It appears to me sufficiently established by the above arguments that polygamy is allowed by the law of God: lest, however, any doubt should remain, I will subjoin abundant examples of men whose holiness renders them fit patterns for imitation, and who are among the lights of our faith."

"Who can believe, either that so many men of the highest character should have sinned through ignorance for so many ages; or that their hearts should have been so hardened; or that God should have tolerated such conduct in his people? Let therefore the rule received among theologians have the same weight here as in other cases: 'The practice of the Saints is the best interpretation of the commandments.'"

Milton had a reason for writing his treatise on "Christian Doctrine." It appears that he, like the Latter-day Saints, had been evil spoken of and persecuted by the Presbyterians, because he had written a treatise on divorce, that did not please them. So that he could hardly think of them with respect, nor did his muse forget them. In his minor poem "on the new forcers of conscience," he addresses them in such terms as these:

"—whom sin ye envied, not abhor'd, * *
To force our consciences that Christ set free,
And ride us with a classic hierarchy. * *
Men, whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent,
Would have been held in high esteem by Paul,
Must now be named and printed Here-ticks. * *
But we do hope to find out all your tricks * *
When they shall read this clearly in your charge,
New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ large."

"The new forcers of conscience" meant the Presbyterians, who, like the Saratoga Presbyterian, conclave, advocated intolerance, while the Independents advocated toleration. Milton remembered his same pious enemies in one of his sonnets, in this way—

"I did but prompt the age to quit their cloys
By the known rules of ancient liberty,
When straight a barbarous noise environs me
Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes and dogs. * *
But this is got by casting pearls to hogs
That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
And still revolt when truth would set them free.
License they mean when they cry Liberty;
For who loves that must first be wise and good."

The reason for writing his "Christian Doctrine," Milton gives as follows:

"According to my judgment, therefore, neither my creed nor my hope of salvation could be safely trusted to such guides [persecuting Presbyterians and like religionists]; and yet it appeared highly requisite to possess some methodical tractate of Christian doctrine, or at least attempt such a disquisition as might be useful in establishing my faith or

assisting my memory. I deemed it therefore safest and most advisable to compile for myself, by my own labor and study, some original treatise which should be always at hand, derived solely from the word of God itself, and executed with all possible fidelity, seeing that I could have no wish to practise any imposition on myself in such a matter."

Viscount Amberly acknowledges that plurality of wives is countenanced by the Bible. In his essay on the "Latter-day Saints," he says:

"The Mormons appeal to the Bible in support of their views. Polygamy, they tell us, is * * * [a] form of matrimony established by God himself and towards which he evinced a marked approval. Thus, he visited Abraham, the husband of two wives, and found no fault with him. He never frowned upon Jacob for living with several wives. He reproved David for taking the wife of another man; but specially declared that he had given him all the wives of Saul, his master, thus clearly proving that it was adultery, and not polygamy, that had called down his anger. Moreover, Solomon, who succeeded him on the throne, was the son of Bathsheba, and was not therefore deemed illegitimate. In addition to these instances, the examples of the other patriarchs who practised polygamy and enjoyed the peculiar favor of Jehovah are invoked, and it is argued that the lineage of Christ himself would have been vitiated had that institution been unlawful. It is needless to multiply proofs of this description, for it will probably be admitted by most candid controversialists, that in the Bible there is nothing that indicates the sinfulness of polygamy, and much that tends to an opposite conclusion. Milton's opinion has been already mentioned. Now Milton compiled a treatise of divinity on the Mormon principle of following the guidance of Scripture alone, however far it might take him from received opinion. He was inevitably led to defend polygamy (on the very grounds which are now taken by the Saints), as an institution recommended by the example of patriarchs, and evidently honorable in the sight of God. Such an authority may induce us to pause before we reprobate the Mormons for holding this unpopular doctrine."

Dr. Mensor, in his *History of Marriage Among the Jews*, says—

"Polygamy was at that time allowed, and the Jewish patriarchs married more than one wife, and in some instances as many as four. Thus Abraham had two wives, Sarah and Hagar (Gen. xi, 29; xvi, 23); and Jacob had four wives, Leah, Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah."

"We have seen in the preceding chapter, that it was the duty of a brother to marry his deceased brother's wife, when he died childless, in order to raise children for his deceased brother by her. Now if it happened that the brother was already married to another wife, he was still bound to marry her also; for the duty of marrying his brother's widow when left without issue knew no distinction, whether the brother was married already or not, but the brother next in age to the deceased was always bound to marry his deceased brother's wife when his brother died childless."

"Again, if the brother of the deceased was not married already, he by marrying his deceased brother's wife did not accomplish the duty which God imposed upon mankind of regenerating the human race and multiplying it (Gen. i, 28), because the children he raised by her were not his, but were his deceased brother's. (Gen. xxxviii, 9); he was therefore bound to marry another wife besides his deceased brother's widow, in order to raise children for himself by her, and so fulfill the duty which God had imposed on all the human race, by commanding them 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.' (Gen. i, 28.)"

"We do not find any distinction made between the children of Jacob; and each received the last blessing from their father without difference. Each of the children of Jacob formed also a separate tribe in Israel, and each tribe was of equal importance; and in after times when the land of Canaan was divided amongst the children of Israel, the division of the territory was made with equal justice to each tribe—no tribe had any preference shown it. The handmaid, also, having become the wife of her master, became, as his wife, of

some authority in the house, though her authority was always inferior to that of her mistress."

"Besides the plurality of married wives, they also had concubines. A concubine was a woman appointed to a man as a wife, but she was not legally married to him according to the custom of that time; in other words, a concubine * * * was a wife of inferior rank to the married ones; * * * wherefore the children of the wives * * * had a portion in the inheritance of their father, as we have already stated; but the children of the concubine had none. They were inferior to the other children, as their mother was inferior to other wives. Yet the father, when giving over his property to his heir, which he generally did in his lifetime, when he had other children by concubines, in order to avoid contention, gave them presents before he sent them away. Thus we read, 'And Abraham gave all that was his to Isaac. And to the children of the concubines which Abraham had, Abraham gave presents, and sent them away from his son Isaac, while he was still alive.' * * * Bilhah and Zilpah, the wives of Jacob, were not concubines, they were his legal wives; * * * wherefore their children had an equal share in the inheritance of Jacob with the children of Leah and Rachel."

"We will now once more sum up the different classes of wives which are included under the term polygamy. They are the following three—

"1. The first wife, called in the East the 'grand lady,' who was the head of the house, and had the charge of the household; a custom which is still prevalent in the East (vide Layard's *Nineveh*.)

"2. The second wives, as Hagar, Bilhah, and Zilpah, who were inferior in authority to the first wife, but were legally married, and whose children were on an equality with regard to the inheritance with the children of the first wife."

"3. The concubines, the lowest order of wives, who were not legally married, but appointed to their husbands, and whose children received no portion in the inheritance."

In regard to the Mosiac law, requiring one brother, or the next nearest kinsman, to marry the widow of another brother, who had died without children, Calmet's *Dictionary of the Bible* says—

"The Rabbins suggest many exceptions and limitations to this law, as * * * if he were married he might either take or leave his brother's widow."

"If the dead person left many wives, the brother could marry but one of them."

Some authors, however, contend that the Rabbins had no authority to make such suggestions, nothing of the kind being found in the Mosiac record.

In an article in *Temple Bar*, in 1868, on "Curiosities of Marriage, Law and Ritual," the writer says:

"Two distinctive features of universal Oriental usage derived a new sanction by the Mosiac dispensation—polygamy, and * * * divorce."

Plurality of wives was allowed by Moses, and has been admitted by the Talmudists; and Jewish harems, of their princes particularly, were sometimes extremely extensive. According to the modern rabbis, though strictly legal, polygamy is not practically convenient under 'the chosen people's' altered circumstances. In the tenth century, A.D., at a general council, it was formally declared abolished [in monogamic nations], a question ascertained by Napoleon I, at an assembly of doctors specially convened at Paris. * * * The duration of the [Jewish marriage] feast was seven days in the nuptials of a virgin; three in a widow's. So obligatory was the feast, that if a man should marry several wives in the same week, or even on the same day, he would be bound to furnish seven days' feasting for each one. Sometimes, as in Tobias' case, it was spread over fourteen days."

JACOB.

Correspondence.

Inquiring Spirit in Tennessee—An Old Saint Brought to Light.

SHADY GROVE,
Hickman County, Tenn.,
October 29, 1879.

Editors Deseret News:

P. P. Pratt having given you a report of the labors and future pros-

pects of the Tennessee mission up to July 21, I now continue the account. Since that time Brother Garn and myself have been laboring steadily on Cane Creek, Lewis County, and vicinity. We have met with some little opposition, but have made many friends, and the efforts of the wicked against us did not amount to much.

The false rumors that are in circulation caused the people to hang back, but by laboring earnestly we have dispelled much of the prejudice, and have succeeded in baptizing seven souls. We expect to baptize five or seven on our return, several having spoken to us respecting the ordinance. There is a good feeling existing at the present time, and our meetings are well attended. Quite a number are believing our doctrines, and we think quite a number will, in that vicinity, soon receive baptism.

We have also been laboring in the vicinity of Shady Grove and have baptized four into the Shady Grove branch.

Brothers George H. Carver and Hyrum Belnap arrived here June 25th, and since that time have been laboring in Williamson County in the northern part of this state with prospects of doing a good work there in the future. They have made quite a number of friends and are feeling well. We met with them in their field of labor last week and held nine meetings, all of which were very well attended. At a meeting which we held on Saturday night last, a prominent respectable gentleman was present, who after the close of the meeting, stated that he had heard a doctrine that he had been looking for, and said he should attend our meetings the next day.

After our meeting on Sunday morning, he came and talked with us, and said that he had been amongst all the denominations in that vicinity, but had never heard the truth preached in its fulness until he heard us, and he invited us to call on him, saying that his house was open for us at any time.

Brothers Carver and Belnap stated that they had discovered an old sister by the name of Hickman. In company with Brother Belnap I visited her and she told us that her husband William R. Hickman and herself, Mary Ann Hickman, were baptized by John D. Lee, in Rutherford County, Tennessee, in the year 1848. She stated that there was an organized branch there, all of whom gathered with the body of the Church, except her husband, herself and one sister. Her husband had been dead ten years. He held on to the faith up to his decease. She has not seen nor heard anything of the Saints for thirty-two years, and supposed they were all dead. She was very thankful to meet with the brethren, and stated that she had lived prayerful before the Lord, and she desired me to say to the authorities that she still wished her name retained on the record books. She is now in her sixty-seventh year, and is very poor, and not likely to be able to gather with the Saints.

We are anxiously waiting the arrival of Brother Morgan to attend conference, to commence on Friday, October 31st.

Your brother in the Gospel
Christ,

JOSEPH ARGYLE.

Mother (very sweetly) to children who have just had a distribution of candy: "What do children say when they get candy?" Chorus: "More!"

Now that women can plead in the United States courts and vote on the school committee, perhaps they may gradually acquire the knowledge that a woman has a right to but one seat in a railway car.—*Bos. Com. Bulletin*.

The other day we printed an account of a man who has invented an instrument by which the deaf can be made to hear with their teeth and nose. We may add that this genius did not get his idea of a "scientific front ear" from Lord Beaconsfield.—*Phila. Bul.*

There was a great excitement in front of a fruit commission house on South Water Street a little after 1 o'clock yesterday afternoon. A party of dealers overhauling and investigating a large lot of peaches which had just arrived in the market, discovered one basket with the fruit just as good at the bottom as at the top. The error was soon rectified and quiet restored.—*Chicago Journal*.