

Poetry.

FOR THE DESERET NEWS.

LINES

To Mrs. Abigail Snow Caldwell—A Tribute of
Respect to the Memory of her Husband, Elder
Thomas Caldwell, who Died in Brigham City, on
the 21st day of April.

A wind—a wave—a breath of even,
And youth's fond earthly hopes are riven;
One moment, and the sun's bright ray,
Behind the storm-cloud, flits away.

A finger touch of death's cold hand,
And man's full power's are all unmann'd;
To-day, youth's strength and vigor bloom,
To-morrow, moulder in the tomb.

Weep, thou bereav'd one—bathe thy grief—
Tears give the bursting heart, relief,
If not too much indulg'd—the strong
Of heart, grow weak, by weeping long.

'Tis well with Thomas—he was true
To God—his brethren, and to you:
He's gone! Not even love could save
That youthful casket from the grave.

Although you feel your heartstrings cleft,
Dear girl, you are not all bereft;
Paternal hearts and doors are wide
To you as ere you was a bride.

With all that kindness can impart,
There's none but God can heal the heart;
Yet those sweet darlings' sunny smiles
Will much your widow'd hours beguile.

He liv'd to know a father's joys—
How proud of those twin-baby boys!
That double pledge of love, to you
Will prove a care and comfort too.

And though in youth you are bereft
Of him you love, those babes are left;
In every gesture, form and face,
His love—his looks you'll fondly trace.

When their soft hands and lips you press,
Ne'er tell them they are fatherless;
In other realms, their father lives;
And they're his representatives.

On honor's threshold firm he stood,
Loved and respected by the good;
Then train your little sons to be
Their absent sire's fac-simile,
In virtue and integrity.

He's left this precious charge to you;
Rouse to the task—your grief subdue;
Guide them from infancy, till youth
Has fix'd its mould for God and truth.

By holy nuptial ties, he'll be
Your husband in eternity—
You blest him with your maiden love,
And now, your constancy, must prove,

He's gone the gospel tramp to sound,
To spirits long in prison bound;
And though beyond our mortal view,
He'll not forget your babes and you.

E. R. SNOW.

REMARKS,

By Elder JOHN TAYLOR, in the Taber-
nacle, G. S. L. City, April 7th, 1866.

REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.

It is good for the Saints to meet to-
gether; it is good to reflect upon the
work of God; it is good to be in posses-
sion of His blessings; it is a great privi-
lege to enjoy the light of eternal truth,
and to be delivered from the darkness,
the error, the confusion, and the in-
iquity that prevails generally through-
out the world. There are but very few
men in the world who can realize the
blessings which we enjoy, unless their
minds are enlightened by the Spirit of
the living God. There are, in fact,
comparatively few among the Saints
who realize their true position, and
who can comprehend correctly the
blessings and privileges that they are
in possession of, for men can only grasp
these things as they are enlightened by
the spirit of truth, by the spirit of reve-
lation—by the Holy Ghost—which has
been imparted to the Saints by the lay-
ing on of hands, and through their obe-
dience to the principles of the everlast-
ing gospel. If men are in the dark in
relation to any of these principles, it is
because they do not live their religion,
because they do not walk according to
that light which has been given to them;
because, as we have heard here, they do
not pray sufficiently, they do not deny
themselves of evil, and cleave close
enough to the principles of eternal truth.
The gospel is calculated to lead us on
from truth to truth, and from intelligence
to intelligence, until that scripture will
be fulfilled which declares that, we
shall see as we are seen and know as we
are known, until one will not have to
say to another, know ye the Lord, but
all shall know Him from the least unto
the greatest, until the light and intelli-
gence of God shall beam forth upon all,
and all shall bask in the sunlight of
eternal truth.

It is a blessing to have the privilege
of meeting together in our general Con-
ference, where the Authorities of the
Church can assemble from different
parts of the Territory, and of the earth,
to learn the law of God, to transact busi-
ness pertaining to His Church and
Kingdom, and to build up and establish
righteousness on the earth. We cannot
realize the extent of the blessings that
we enjoy. We are situated differently
from any other people under the face of
the heavens. There is no people, no gov-
ernment, no kingdom, no nation, no
assembly of people, civil, religious, po-
litical or otherwise that enjoy the bless-
ings that we are in possession of this
day. For whilst others are groping in
the dark and laboring in a state of un-
certainty in relation to the position that
they occupy whether political or relig-
ious, we are free from any surmises or
doubts concerning these matters.

As it regards our political status, we
are well acquainted with that; we know
the destiny of this Church and kingdom;
we know the position that we occupy
towards God and towards the world; we
know that the Lord will accomplish
His own purposes; and having this
knowledge, we rest perfectly easy in re-
lation to the result. We know that the
kingdom of God which is established
among us will continue to spread,
increase and extend until it covers the
earth; and we know that all the plotting
and machinations and designs and com-
binations of men and devils will not be
able to stop it in its progress; but as it
has begun to roll forth, its speed will
continue to accelerate until it has ac-
complished all for which it is designed
of God, and until the kingdoms of this
world shall become the kingdoms of our
God and His Christ, and He shall reign
with universal empire over this earth
and to Him every knee shall bow and
every tongue confess. Therefore we
have no trembling, no feeling of fear,
no anxiety or care as to the result. All
that we have to care about in relation to
these matters is, that we individu-
ally and collectively do our duty, that
we maintain our integrity before God,
that we honor our priesthood and our
calling, that we pursue a course that
shall at all times receive the smiles and
approbation of the Most High, and then
as to the result we care not for we know
what the result will be.

As it regards our religious status, we
feel just the same in relation to that for
everything is connected with our reli-
gion and our God. We are not in-
debted to any Church in existence for
the position which we occupy, nor for
the intelligence we are in possession of.
We have no need to trace our authority
through the Popes, or through any other
medium, we care nothing about them.
We do not need either to go to the
Roman or to the Greek Church to find
out whether we are right or wrong,
where our religion commenced and
whether we are placed on the right or
on the wrong foundation. We are not
under the necessity of searching the
Jewish records or any other records in
relation to these matters. We are not
indebted to any of the schools, acad-
emies or systems of divinity, or theology,
or any of the religious systems extant,
nor to any of the heathen nations; there
is no nation, people, kingdom, govern-
ment; no religious or political authority
of any kind that is of an earthly nature,
that we have to go to in relation to this
matter. We disclaim the whole of them,
claim no affinity to any of them, are not
of them nor from them, and conse-
quently, so far as they are concerned,
we are perfectly independent of them.
Our religion came from God; it is a re-
velation from the Most High; it is that
everlasting gospel which John saw an
angel bring to be preached in all the
earth, and to every people, nation, kin-
dred and tongue, crying with a loud
voice, fear God and give glory to Him,
for the hour of His judgment is come.

Then God is the author of our religion;
He has revealed it from the heavens;
He has sent His holy angels for that
purpose, who communicated it to Jo-
seph Smith and others. Having re-
stored the everlasting gospel, He has
sent it forth to all the world, and those
men who have delivered that gospel to
us have received it by revelation direct-
ly from God, and have been ordained by
that authority. If God has not spoken;
if the heavens have not been opened;
if the angels of God have not appeared,
then we have no religion; it is all a
farce. For, as I have said before, we
claim no kindred, no affinity or rela-
tionship with them, God forbid that
we should, we do not want it. This
then is the platform we stand upon, this
is the position that we occupy before
God; for this is God's work that we are
engaged in. If He has given any au-
thority in the last days to mankind, we
are in possession of that authority; and

if He has not, then we have no authori-
ty, nor any true religion, nor any true
hope. I shall not this morning enter
into all the arguments concerning these
matters. All that I can say to you is
what Paul said in his day, "Ye are His
witnesses of these things and so is the
Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to
them that obey Him."

Brethren, is your religion true, and
do you know it? (Voices, yes). Yes,
you know and realize it, it is written in
living, indelible characters on your
hearts which nothing can remove. We
are living witnesses of the truth of God
and the revelations which He has given
to His people in these last days. Well
then, we are not concerned about what
the nations of the world can do against
it, for they will crumble and totter, and
thrones will be cast down as it is written
in the scriptures. The empires of the
earth may be dissolved, and all the na-
tions may crumble to pieces, and wars
and pestilence and famine may stalk
through the earth, this is not our affair,
they are not our nations, they are not
God's nations. Religionists may squab-
ble and contend and quarrel, and live in
difficulty, doubt and uncertainty in re-
lation to their affairs, but that is none
of our business, it is entirely their own
affair. There may be written upon the
whole world, religious and political,
"mene, mene, tekel, upharsin. Thou
art weighed in the balances, and art
found wanting." What is that to us?
It is none of our affair; we are not asso-
ciated with them, our interest is not
bound up with them; they have noth-
ing which we can sustain. In relation
to all of these matters we feel perfectly
easy. If war goes forth and desolates
the nations; if confusion exist among
religious denominations, and if they
should continue to act as they are doing,
like perfect fools, it is their own busi-
ness. The Pope may tremble on his
throne, and be afraid that France or
some other power will not sustain him,
it is not our affair, we feel perfectly easy
and tranquil, all is right with us for we
are in the hands of God, and it His busi-
ness to take care of His Saints, there-
fore, we feel perfectly easy, quiet
and peaceable in relation to all these
matters.

Would they try to injure us? Yes.
They never tried anything else, and we
are not indebted to them for anything
which we enjoy. Did any of them help
us along in our religious matters? Who
are we indebted to in this world? Is
there a religious society under the
heavens that we are indebted to for any
ideas or intelligence which we possess?
Not one. Is there any priest in Chris-
tendom that has helped us forward in
the least in our religious career? Not
one. You cannot find one. Are we in-
debted to any body for our political
status? We are not. Who is there that
helps us? There has never been a man
yet who dared at any time to advocate
our principles and rights in the legisla-
tive halls of this or any other nation;
there has never been a man who has
had the honesty and truthfulness and
integrity to do it; they dare not do it
because it is unpopular. We dare ad-
vocate our principles, and God dare help
us; and if we enjoy any rights and privi-
leges and peace—if there are any bless-
ings of any kind that we enjoy—we de-
rive them from our Heavenly Father,
and we are not indebted to any power,
government, rule or authority, religious,
political or otherwise throughout the
whole of this habitable globe for any
blessings or privileges we enjoy; except-
ing sometimes, by a little persecution
they help us to be a little more united,
that's all, and we do not thank them for
this, for it does not come with their
good will. If their lies shall make the truth
of God abound to His glory, all right,
they will lie on because they are of their
father the devil, and his work they will
do, he was a liar from the beginning, he
is the father of lies, and they are his
children. Therefore in relation to all of
these matters we feel perfectly easy.

I was asked the other day if I would
like to go and bear testimony before the
court in relation to whether polygamy
was a religious ordinance or not. I
answered yes, if they subpoena me.
They have not done it yet, and I do not
know whether they will or not. I am
quite willing to go and testify to that
matter any time. I think I will testify
to you here. To begin with, there is
nothing that I know of, or am ac-
quainted with in this world, but what
is a part of my religion and mixed up
with it. It is all religion with me.
I was told that the parties
desired to know whether or no I
believed that polygamy was a reli-
gious ordinance, or institution. If
this question had been put to me, I
should have been inclined to ask the
parties what they understood by the
word religion. Because if I could not

find out what their view of religion was,
of course, I could not tell whether I,
in their estimation, had any or not.

This consideration led me to a few re-
flections in relation to this matter. I
had recourse to some of our dictionaries
to find out what popular lexicographers
said about it. I referred to the standard
works of several different nations, which
I find to be as follows:

Webster, (American,) "Religion, in-
cludes a belief in the revelation of his
(God's) will to man, and in man's obli-
gation to obey his command."

Worcester, (a prominent American.)
1. An acknowledgment of our obliga-
tion to God as our creator. 2. A par-
ticular system of faith or worship." We
speak of the Greek, Hindoo, Jewish,
Christian and Mahomedan religion.

Johnson, (English,) "Religion, a sys-
tem of faith and worship."

Dictionary of the French Academy,
La croyance que l'on a de la divinite' et
le culte qu'on lui rend en conse-
quence.

Foi, croyance.

The belief we have in God and his
worship.

Faith—belief.

German Dictionary or Wörterbuch,
by Dr. N. N. W. Meissner, a standard
work in Germany.

"Religion, glaube, faith, persuasion."

Here then we have the opinion of
four of the great leading nations of the
earth, as expressed by their acknow-
ledged standard works, on what they
consider to be the meaning of the word
religion.

The German has it, faith, persuasion.
The French, faith, belief; faith in God
and his worship. The English, a sys-
tem of faith and worship. These three
are very similar.

Next we have Webster, American,
which is our acknowledged standard,
and he says "Religion includes a belief
in the revelations of God's will to man,
and in man's obligation to obey his
commands."

This is indeed very pointed, and if
this definition be correct, it would
necessarily lead us to enquire, as did
Paul of old, "Whether is it better to
obey man or God judge ye."

Worcester, another prominent Ameri-
can lexicographer, speaks of "Religion
as an acknowledgment of God as our
Creator, and a particular system of faith
or worship;" here he agrees with the
French, German and English. He then
quotes from a prominent work—"We
speak of the Greek, Hindoo, Jewish,
Christian and Mahomedan religions"—
He might very properly have added
Mormon.

Faith, belief and worship seem to be
the prominent idea advanced with the
addition of our popular lexicographer,
Walker who adds, to the faith in God,
that it must be in the revelations of His
will to man and in man's obligations to
obey His commands.

Having now found out what the
meaning of religion is we shall be the
better prepared to inquire whether a
plurality of wives, or, as it is sometimes
called, polygamy, is a part of our reli-
gious faith or not.

The Constitution of the United States
says that "Congress shall make no law
respecting an establishment of religion,
or prohibiting the free exercise there-
of." I have thought of the law which
Congress has made in relation to poly-
gamy. The question, however, necessarily
arises, is it Constitutional for Congress
to interfere with religious matters—with the
establishment of religion, or the free
exercise thereof. The Constitution
says no. Then is polygamy a reli-
gious question or is it not? Is it a
marriage ceremony or is it not? Mar-
riage is received by the Greek church
as a solemn sacrament of the church,
the Roman Catholic church and the
Church of England also admit marriage
to be a religious sacrament, and so it is
admitted by the great mass of religious
sects now in the world. These are facts
that need no proof; everybody is ac-
quainted with them. It is true that in
France and in the United States magis-
trates are authorized to officiate in
solemnizing marriages. But in France,
to this day, unless they are married by
a minister of religion, many of the more
conscientious feel that they are living in
a state of adultery.

Now, in relation to the position that
we occupy concerning plurality, or as it
is termed polygamy; it differs from
that of others. I have noticed the
usage of several nations regarding
marriage, but, as I have said, we are
not indebted to any of them for our re-
ligion, nor for our ideas of marriage,
they came from God. Where did this
commandment come from in rela-
tion to polygamy? It also came from God.
It was a revelation given unto Joseph
Smith from God, and was made binding
upon His servants; when this system