

TRACTS, &c.
PUBLISHED

BY

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ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

OF

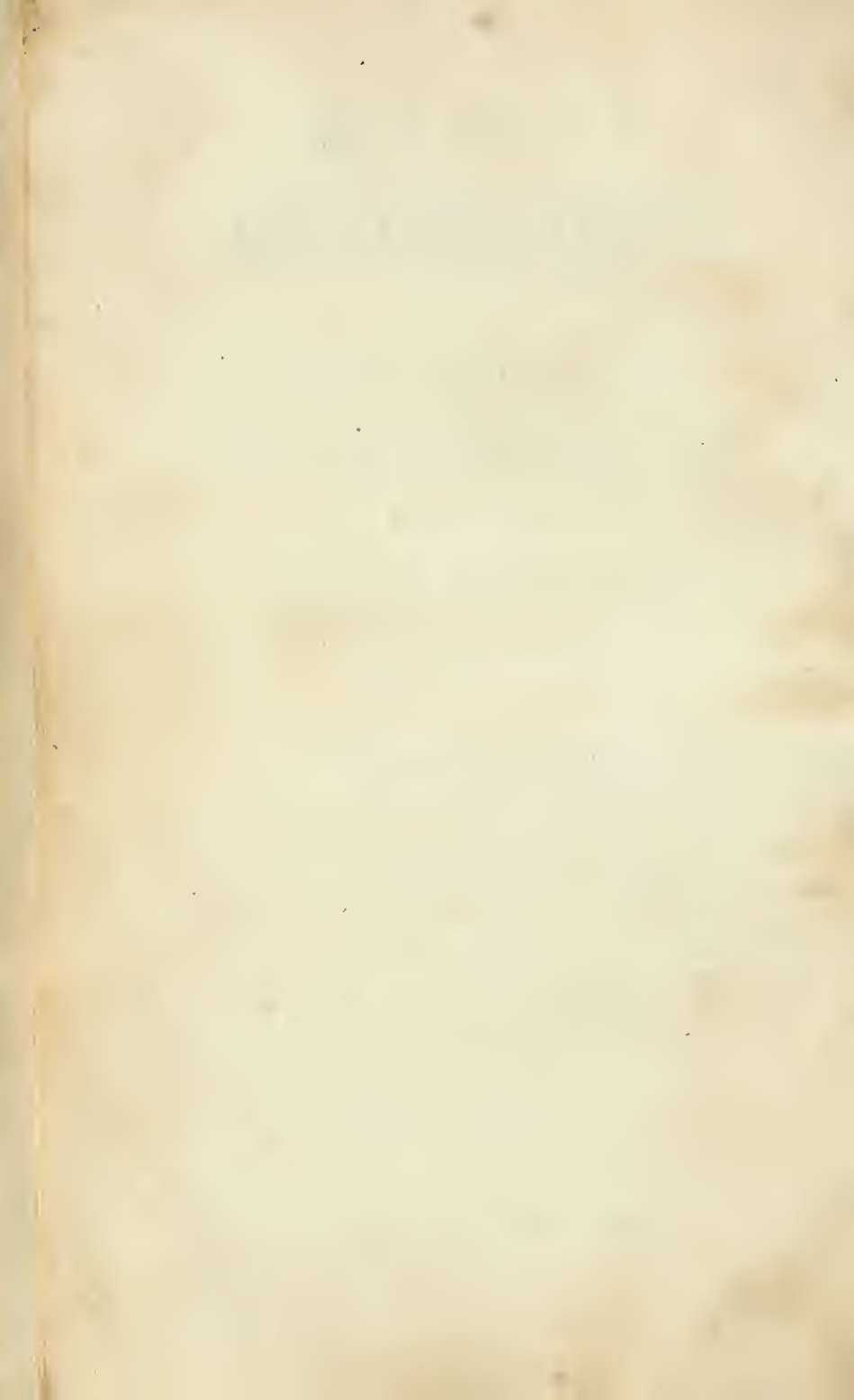
LATTER-DAY SAINTS;

CONSISTING OF :

- ✓ 1st A Proclamation of the Gospel.
- ✓ 2nd The Only Way to be Saved.
- ✓ 3rd A Reply to the Rev. J. Richards.
- ✓ 4th A Second Reply to do.
- 5th Millennial Star for April 1854.
- 6th Do. do. for May „
- 7th Do. do. for June „
- 8th Do. do. for July „
- ✓ 9th A Dialogue on Polygamy.

PRICE ONE RUPEE.

MADRAS, HINDOSTAN, 1853-1854.



No. 6

Dialogue

BETWEEN A. AND B. ON POLYGAMY,

BY

ELDER R. BALLANTYNE.

- A. Good morning Mr. B ; have you heard any thing of these " Latter Day Saints," sometimes called Mormonites, against whom our Priests and all the people say so much ?
- B. I have heard of them Mr. A.
- A. Well Mr. B. what do you think of them ?
- B. Why to tell you the truth, Mr. A. my first impression when I heard of this sect that is every where spoken against was that there must be some truth in what they teach, especially as they evidence their sincerity by going to all the nations without purse or scrip.
- A. But why should you suppose their unpopularity to be an argument in favor of their teaching the Truth ?
- B. Our Saviour says, " Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say *all* manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake ; rejoice and be exceeding glad for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Again, I have long been dissatisfied with the present order of Christianity because of the Pomp and pageantry of the Priests, and the close and intimate connexion that exists between them and the Kings and great men of the earth. Even in our own (Madras) Presidency they exercise an almost unlimited control over the people, not because of their humble and godly example, or the soundness of their doctrines, but because of that somewhat unnatural influence and connexion they have with our Civil and Military Rulers, so that if a poor man should incur their displeasure they (certainly not in a Christian spirit) will use all their influence to exclude him from office and preferment.
- A. What you say Mr. B. is too true. They certainly in many instances manifest a very unkind and arbitrary spirit, but so far as their wealth, easy living, and influence with our rulers are concerned, I cannot see but this is all as it should be.
- B. I have very serious doubts in regard to these points ; I sometimes am led to examine the writings of the ancient Apostles, and, as I was reading the 4th ch. of 2d Tim, the other day, I read of a time when the Churches would not endure *sound* doctrine, but after their own desires were to heap to themselves teachers, who should turn away their ears from the *truth* unto *fables*. Again, Peter in his second epistle, 2d chapter, speaks of teachers that were to arise by whom the way of Truth should be evil spoken of, and who through covetousness were to make merchandise of the flock. I am really afraid, after reading these plain declarations, that we are not taught " the way of truth," and that the high salaries, and worldly influence they possess is a lamentable fulfilment of the words of the Apostles. Moreover, I was deeply affected when reading a prophecy in the 18th ch. of John's Revelations concerning " Babylon the Great," wherein it appeared to me a graphic description is given of the present condition of the Christian nations, of the luxury of the Priests, and of their unnatural influence and alliance with the Rulers and great men of the earth. I would have you friend A. to carefully and prayerfully examine these prophecies, lest we may be connected with an order of Christianity upon which

the wrath of the Lord is to be poured out. For the judgments spoken of in the 18th ch. of John's Revelation will surely make an utter end of some nations and people. Moreover, these "Latter Day Saints" tell us that this prophecy applies to modern Christendom, and that they are sent of God to call upon the poor and meek of the earth to "Come out of her" lest they be partakers of Her sins and receive of her plagues.

A. I think we have wandered from the subject of our discourse. We were talking of these "Latter Day Saints" when you made the remark that you had an *impression* when you heard so much spoken against them that there must be some truth in their teachings, and your convictions were strengthened when you remembered the sayings of Jesus to his disciples. But friend B., remember that Jesus only said his disciples should be blessed when all manner of evil should be spoken against them *falsely* for his name's sake. Do they not teach that a man should have more than one wife: this certainly is against the Law of God, and I cannot for a moment entertain the idea that God would fellowship such characters or show them any token of his favor. All our Christian fathers regard this as a most criminal doctrine and practice.

B. I believe these Latter Day Saints do not teach *us* any such doctrine. Their Mission is not to inculcate such principles to us, but, on the contrary, they consider that a man should be able to govern himself, and live in chastity, before that he is really entitled to one wife. They do not however forbid marriage to any one agreeably to the laws of the country under which they live.

But Mr. A. you remarked that a plurality of wives was certainly against the Law of God, and that you could not for a moment entertain the idea that God would bless or fellowship *such* characters. This I think is going a little too far. Was not Abraham the friend of God? Did not Jacob attain to so close a friendship with God that he wrestled with him, and would not let him go till he obtained a blessing? Was not David, whose Psalms we so devoutly cherish, and whose pious effusions are so congenial to the feelings of every true disciple of Jesus, a man after "God's own heart"? And yet these eminent prophets, and many other valiant men of God, not even Moses excepted, were polygamists, in other words they all had more than one wife; and the Law of God, in the Old Testament, in some cases, required a man to take more than one. Deut. 25—5 to 10; Ruth 3d and 4th chaps., Deut. 21—15, 16, 17.

A. The domestic order of these holy men and the Law of God relating thereto I never thought of before. Their conduct was certainly approbated of God, and their posterity were greatly blessed. Even our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world through their lineage. But these things were practised under the Law of Moses, only.

B. The Law of Moses we are told in Gal. 3—17 was not given till 430 years after Abraham's day; and we are told by Paul in Heb. 4—2 "that to them (the house of Israel before the giving of the Law) was the Gospel preached, as well as unto us, and in Gal. 3—19 we are told that the Law was afterwards added to the Gospel, because of transgression. Abraham lived under the Gospel and not under the Law of Moses, and through Jesus Christ the blessings of Abraham came on the Gentiles through faith, whereby they (the Gentiles) were numbered in the same Gospel covenant with Abraham, and as Paul again says "so then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" Gal. 3—9. Furthermore it is evident that Moses was a Christian for he "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Heb. 11—26. Polygamy, then, was practised under the Gospel as well as under the Law.

A. Well B., granting that Abraham and others lived under the gospel and that even the ordinance of Baptism was administered to those who came out of Egypt by Moses, as is clear from 1 Cor. 10—2, the new Testament strictly prohibits a plurality of wives. Jesus said to the Pharisees Math. 19—4, 5, 6 “ He that made them in the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder.”

B. Jesus does not here determine whether a man shall have one or many wives ; he simply condemns the unnatural practice of putting away their wives, by pointing out the tender and endearing union that is accomplished in the marriage covenant, and adds, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

A. But how can it be said that a second wife can be one flesh with a man that is previously married ?

B. Abraham and Hagar were in the same sense “ one flesh ” as Abraham and Sarah. Jacob and Rachel were as much one flesh as Jacob and Leah. David and Eglah were as much, and in the same sense, one flesh, as David and Michal : and the same may be said of all the other wives which God gave unto David see 2 Sam. 12—8.

It is the relationship of the marriage covenant which constitutes them “ one flesh ” and not the annihilation of their individual identity. Jacob was under the same obligation to nourish and cherish Rachel, as one with him, as he was under to Leah, or his other wives.

A. Well B. your reasoning seems very clear but our modern Divines teach us that a plurality of wives is forbidden in the new Testament.

B. I have already proved to you that the gospel existed before the giving of the Law of Moses, and that under it Abraham and others had more than one wife ; and will now give you some of the views and decisions of pious Christian Fathers, and Protestant Reformers, on this subject, as you probably will have a greater veneration for their decisions than for any opinion which I might offer.

A. You do not mean, Mr. B. to prove by them that polygamy is sanctioned by the new Testament ;

B. Not exactly Mr. A., although this might, perhaps, not be so very difficult as you seem to think ; but I will prove by them that a plurality of wives was neither “ forbid, nor recalled by the gospel,” and that some of them have actually “ approved of it.”

Among the distinguished christian Reformers and celebrated Divines of the sixteenth century may be mentioned the names of Luther, Melancthon, Bucer and Melanther. These wonderful men distinguished themselves in their bold, persevering, and fearless opposition to the corrupt powers of Popery. Although not called and ordained of God with the authority of Apostles and Prophets to restore the church of God to the earth, yet they were Reformers ; and with a noble energy and perseverance exposed, in a degree, the superstitions and wickedness of the Romish Church ; they protested against her blasphemous doctrines and pretensions ; they revolted from the jurisdiction and tyrannical power of the Romish Priesthood ; they laid the foundation of more liberal principles, opened the way for the nations to burst the bonds of religious despotism ; and planted the seeds of civil and religious liberty which have continued to grow and spread until the nations now bask under the extended branches. It was for these great and noble purposes that God moved on the hearts of these men to boldly

protest against a power that had become tyrannical and formidable to an alarming degree ; it was to restore, in some measure, that freedom and independence of mind so necessary to the improvement and happiness of man ; it was to open a door for improvement in the arts and sciences, without being trammelled with the bigoted opposition of priestcraft. They advocated Christianity so far as they understood its principles, many institutions which had been abolished by the Romish Priesthood were, in a measure, restored, at least in form, among which may be mentioned polygamy."

B. Indeed Mr. A., but notwithstanding my respect for you, I must, on a doctrine of such vast importance, have more evidence than your word alone,

A. I am prepared Mr. B. to give it to you in a substantial form ; but I must first inform you how these celebrated Reformers came to investigate the subject.

Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, one of the principal Lords and Princes of Germany, wrote to the great Reformer, Martin Luther, and to the principal heads of the Protestant Reformation, desiring the privilege of a second wife. Many arguments were urged by Philip, showing that the practice was in accordance with the Bible, and not prohibited under the Christian dispensation. Luther met in Council with the principal Divines to consult upon the propriety of granting the request of the Landgrave. After a thorough investigation of the subject they granted his request in a lengthy letter from which I will here give you an extract. The letter commences as follows :

"To the most Serene Prince and Lord Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, Zennembogon, of Diets of Ziegenhain and Nedda, our gracious Lord, we wish above all things the grace of God through Christ Jesus."

"1st. We have been informed by Bucer, and in the instruction your Highness gave him, have read the trouble of mind and uneasiness of conscience your Highness is under at this present ; and although it seemed to us very difficult so speedily to answer the doubts proposed ; nevertheless we should not permit the said Bucer, who was urgent for his return to your Highness, to go away without an answer in writing.

2d. If your Highness is resolved to marry a second wife, we judge it ought to be done secretly, that is that none but the person you shall wed, and a few trusty persons, know of the matter, and they, too, under the seal of confession. Hence no contradiction nor scandal of moment need be apprehended ; for it is no extraordinary thing for Princes to keep Concubines ; and though the vulgar should be scandalised thereat, the more intelligent would doubt of the truth, and prudent persons would approve of this moderate kind of life, preferable to adultery and other brutal actions. There is no need of being concerned for what men say provided all goes right with conscience. So far do we approve of it, and in those circumstances only by us specified, for the gospel hath neither recalled nor forbid what was permitted in the law of Moses with respect to marriage.

"Your Highness hath, therefore, in this writing not only the approbation of us all, in case of necessity, concerning what you desire, but also the reflections we have made thereupon. We beseech you to weigh them as becometh a wise, virtuous, and Christian Prince. We also beg of God to direct all for his glory and your Highness salvation. May God preserve your Highness. We are most ready to serve your Highness.

"Given at Wittemberg, the Wednesday after the fast of Saint Nicholas, 1539.

"Your Highness's most humble and most obedient subjects and servants,
 Martin Luther Adam
 Philip Melancthon John Levensue
 Martin Bucer Justus Wartfute
 Antony Corvin Dennis Melanther"

This letter was in Melancthon's own hand-writing, attested to by George Nuspicher, Notary Imperial, and has been taken from the 1st vol. of a work entitled "History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches" by James Benign Bossuet.

The marriage contract of Philip with Margaret de Saal his second wife, was attested to by Balthasar Rand, of Feeld, Notary Public Imperial.

B. If, Mr. A. these eminent Reformers were satisfied that the gospel hath "neither recalled nor forbid what was permitted in the Law of Moses with respect to marriage," as indeed is very clear from the testimony you have given, why should they have counselled Philip to wed his second wife secretly?

A. They were just emerging from the darkness of popish superstition, the majority of the people were entirely unacquainted with the Bible, the Roman Priests were forbidden marriage, and taught that chastity consisted in celibacy, or unmarried life, consequently esteeming a marriage connexion with one wife as being carnal and inconsistent with chastity, they had taught the people that in proportion as they deviated from the practices of their unmarried Priests and Nuns, in the same proportion were they alienated from virtue and righteousness. Thus the minds of the people being generally prejudiced with false notions of virtue, a public celebration of Philip's second marriage would have given rise to much scandal and persecution from the vulgar.

A. But is celibacy not a more virtuous condition than a marriage connexion with even one or more wives?

B. No. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and a host of other prophets and men of God understanding the design of marriage, and observing a chaste connexion with their wives, were much more virtuous than those who would defeat the purposes of God and desolate the earth for lack of posterity. Paul calls forbidding to marry a doctrine of Devils. See 1st Tim. 4—1, 2, 3. Again he says "Marriage is honorable in *all* and the bed *undefiled*."

If the theory of Popish priests in regard to the perfection of chastity, should be carried out universally, in one generation the whole earth would become a desolate wilderness. The Devil would rejoice, and the designs of God in regard to the multiplication of the human family would be frustrated.

A. I perceive Mr. B. that chastity does not consist in unmarried life for then we would treat with contempt the great command of God in regard to multiplying and replenishing the earth. Neither does it appear from the Scriptures that a marriage relationship to one wife only is any more virtuous than such a relationship with two or more, provided always that the *order* is authorised of God, the object of marriage kept in view, and a chaste conduct habitually maintained. Indeed, Sir, it is to be feared that Christendom, with all their chaste professions, is sunk in sensuality, and lust, not because of their having only one wife, but because in their lustful connexions with that wife they have degenerated below the chastity of the brute creation.

But Mr. B., have you any further testimony from learned men concerning the Law of the New Testament in regard to marriage?

B. King Henry the eighth, of England, who was cotemporary with

Luther in the reformation, lived with Ann Boleyn, while his first wife was yet alive, and it appears conclusive that the more intelligent and learned portion of the English people, and clergy, considered polygamy perfectly consistent with Christianity, or they never would have confirmed, by Parliamentary acts, the title of "Supreme head of the Church" upon their polygamist king. It is in vain for the Church of England to say that polygamy is not sanctioned by the gospel, so long as they acknowledge that the very founder of their Church was a polygamist.

A. All this appears very singular indeed, and I have heard that the Presbyterian Dakota Mission was involved in a difficulty in 1843 in consequence of a man, who before hearing the gospel had two wives, making application for admission into the Church. The Missionaries did not know what to do and referred the case to the Presbytery of Ripley.

B. I have the Minutes of their Proceedings, in the case you refer to, in my possession, and will here give you an extract.

"Extract from the Minutes of the Presbytery of Ripley, met at Sardinia, April 13, 1843:—

"Presbytery took up the reference from the Church of Lacquiparle, viz. A man before hearing the gospel, had taken two wives, by each of which he has children, nearly grown and smaller. They are both pleased to dwell with him. He, having heard the word of God, and believing that there is no salvation except in Jesus Christ, desires admission to the privileges of the Church. Shall we require him to put away one of his wives? And if so, where is our Scripture authority for so doing?"

(Signed) T. S. Williamson,
S. R. Riggs."

"Reply of Presbytery:—

"Dear Brethren,—We have duly considered the question you referred to us. The following was moved and carried as the answer of a majority of one, viz. *We dare not say, require him to put her away.* The majority were of opinion that there is not sufficient warrant for such a requisition. The minority alledged that Matthew 19—1, and Mark 10—2, 9, are sufficient warrant for requiring him to put her away.....

(Signed) Jesse H. Lockhart, Stated Clerk."

This decision of the Presbetyery shows plainly that there is no law in the New Testament forbidding polygamy, and consequently their decision in this case, where a man having two wives desired admission into the Church, was "we dare not say put her away."

A. The sentiments of such eminent men as you have brought forward are surely worthy of consideration, especially as all their preconceived notions and prejudices as well as the general opinion of Christendom, were in direct hostility to their views, and I am resolved to give the subject a careful investigation, more especially as my mind has been somewhat troubled to understand the meaning of that singular prophecy of Isaiah 4th Ch. which says "and in that day seven women shall take hold of one man saying, we will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach."

Do you not think Mr. B. that the practice of Polygamy in the cases you have referred to, at the time of the reformation, was a fulfilment of this prophecy?

B. No Mr. A.; and I will give you my reasons. In the first place Isaiah says that the Branch of the Lord, or Church, shall at that time be beautiful and glorious. Second, that the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. Third, that the cloud by day, and fire by night should rest upon all the habitations of Zion. Fourth, every one

in Zion, at that time is to be called holy, and, Fifth, though the Protestant Reformers at the time of the reformation restored polygamy, yet in their day we have only an account of a man having two wives, whereas Isaiah says expressly that SEVEN WOMEN shall take hold of one man. And though it must be admitted that the Reformers restored polygamy, yet they cannot claim that they restored it in the full sense of Isaiah's prediction.

A. But what, Mr. A. do you understand by the expression "only let us be called by thy name to take away our *reproach*;" for this taking away of their *reproach* seems to be the object which the seven women mentioned by Isaiah are to have in view in taking upon them the name of one man.

B. Among Israelitish women barrenness was considered a great reproach, hence Elizabeth, wife of Zacharias and mother of John the Baptist, who had been barren till she was "well stricken in years" praised the Lord when she had conceived, and said, "thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein He looked on me, to take away my *reproach* among men Luke 1—25. see also Gen. 30—23; Judges 11—36, 37, 38.

A. It is then for the purpose of posterity that the Seven Women mentioned in Isaiah are to take hold of one man?

B. I cannot arrive at any other conclusion.

A. But must there not be a great revolution in Christendom before any woman of respectability will incur the contumely and reproach which such conduct would bring upon her from Papists and Protestants?

B. Certainly there must, but it does not appear that the fulfilment of this prophecy is to take place among any of the various sects at present existing, but in Zion, or among a people upon whom that name is to be named, and who are to be so distinguished for their virtue that the prophet says of them "at that time the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious."

A. Indeed! I heartily thank you Mr. B. for the pleasure of this interview, and for the strange, but interesting and highly important views which you have presented. It behoves us all to awake from our slumbers, and examine the word of God for ourselves; caring but little for the opinions of our fellow-men only as they may lead us to a careful investigation. The ideas you have presented on the subject of chastity, virtue, polygamy, &c. are entirely new to me, but being supported by the word of God, and such eminent and pious men as Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Corvin, Melanther, the Riply Presbyterian Presbytery and Isaiah the prophet, they are at least entitled to my prayerful consideration.

B. Before parting I will give you a few more scripture references on the subject we have had under consideration, and may the Spirit of God enlighten your mind to understand them.

Gen. 4—23; 16—1, 2, 3; 25—1 to 7; 28—9; 30—1 to 21; Exodus 21—10; Numbers 31—17, 18; Deut. 20—10 to 15; 21—15, 16, 17; 25—5 to 11; 1st Samuel 1—1, 2, 3; 6—12, 13, 14; 8—30, 31; 2d Sam. 12—8 to 12; 1st Kings 11—3; Mark 10—28, 29, 30; 1st Tim. 3—2 also 12 h verses.

The counsel of Paul to Timothy in the last references, concerning Bishops and Deacons having one wife, would seem clearly to intimate that there were others in the primitive church who were allowed more than one, as must necessarily have been the case if the law of Moses was still complied with. We need only wonder, when we consider the whole matter, that there is no direct command either in the Old or New Testaments prohibiting polygamy, though there is much in both to show that it was approbated by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. A careful consideration

of the passages of Scripture to which I have directed your attention, will I trust, satisfy your mind on this point.

And now Mr. A. farewell ; may God bless you and lead you into saving knowledge of the truth is my prayer for you in the name of Jesus Amen.

APPENDIX.

MILTON ON POLYGAMY.

(*From the First Book on Christian Doctrine.*)

"In the definition which I have given of marriage, I have not said, in compliance with the common opinion, *of one man with one woman*, lest I should by implication charge the holy patriarchs and pillars of our faith, Abraham, and the others who had more than one wife at the same time, with habitual fornication and adultery ; and lest I should be forced to exclude from the sanctuary of God as spurious, the holy offspring which sprang from them, yea, the whole of the sons of Israel, for whom the sanctuary itself was made. For it is said, Deut. xxiii. 2, "a bastard shall not enter into the congregation of Jehovah, even to his tenth generation." Either therefore polygamy is a *true marriage*, or all children born in that state are spurious ; which would include the whole race of Jacob, the twelve holy tribes chosen by God. But as such an assertion would be *absurd* in the extreme, not to say *impious* ; as it is the height of injustice, as well as an example of most *dangerous tendency in religion*, to account as sin what is not such in reality ; it appears to me, that so far from the question respecting the lawfulness of polygamy being trivial, it is of the *highest importance* that it should be decided.

Those who deny its lawfulness, attempt to prove their position from Gen. II. 24, "a man shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh," compared with Matt. xxix. 5, "they twain shall be one flesh." A man shall cleave, they say, to his wife, not to his wives, and they twain, and no more, shall be one flesh. This is certainly ingenious ; and I therefore subjoin the passage in Exod. xx. 17, "thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass : " whence it would follow that no one had more than a single house, a single man-servant, a single maid-servant, a single ox or ass. It would be ridiculous to argue, that it is not said houses, but house, not man-servants, but man-servant, not even neighbours, but neighbour ; as if it were not the *general* custom, in laying down commandments of this kind, to use the singular number not in a *numerical* sense, but as designating the *species* of the thing intended. With regard to the phrase, *they twain*, and not more, *shall be one flesh*, it is to be observed, first, that the *context* refers to the husband and that wife *only* whom he was seeking to divorce, without intending any allusion to the *number* of his wives, whether one or more. Secondly, marriage is in the nature of a *relation* ; and to one *relation* there can be no more than *two* parties. If a man has many sons, his paternal relation towards them *all* is manifold, but towards each individually is single and complete in itself ; by parity of reasoning, if a man has many wives, the relation which he bears to each will not be less perfect in itself, nor will the husband be less *one flesh* with each of them, than if he had only one wife. Thus it might be properly said of Abraham, with regard to Sarah and Hagar respectively, *these twain were one flesh*."