

POLYGAMY AND CITIZENSHIP

IN

CHURCH AND STATE

BY

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Ἐκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἔχέτω, καὶ ἑκάστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἔχέτω.—Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

I Corinthians vii : 2.

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Notice: By an oversight the first fifty copies of this pamphlet were struck off and circulated without Chapter XVII of this issue. The Conclusion is now Chapter XVIII.

A FOREWORD.

A SUMMATION OF THE ARGUMENT.

If marriage is ordained of God, it must either be between one man and one woman or between more than two of opposite sex at the same time. The positive teaching of the Bible is that the conjugal relation was originally ordained by God at man's creation between two—one man and one woman. There is a total absence of any scriptural evidence that God ever changed or superseded this original ordinance as between two, and only two, or approved of it between more than two at the same time. The Savior did not claim to institute a new ordinance, but, in plain language, reaffirmed the original ordinance of monogamy as still in force, and as the law of his kingdom. He said to his questioners: "Have ye not read about the creation of man and woman, as male and female, and that for this cause a man shall leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife [not wives], and the two shall become one flesh?" (Matt. xix: 4, 5.) From the nature of this disjunctive or alternative proposition, which the case fully warrants, the affirmation of the monogamous predicate is a thus saith the Lord in denial of the polygamous alternative.

This is explicit and irreversible; and most positively there is no reversal of this alternative in the Bible; nor can circumstances change it. It is not a case of expediency dependent on circumstances, but of inflexible principle founded on man's constitution. There is a total absence of any evidence that God ever superseded or suspended the conjugal

ordination for the race between the two at creation, which Christ so unequivocally reaffirmed and re-established. We shall see that natural reason and the providentially equal birth of the sexes abundantly confirm and sustain this Bible doctrine.

The proof or disproof of any proposition simply consists in the marshaling of the evidence in its support or refutation. The proof, in reasonable quantity and quality, will be adduced in this essay in refutation of the claim that there was polygamy in the apostolic church, or that it was approved anywhere or at any time in the Bible by divine sanction.

The attempt is sometimes made to discredit the validity of a negative argument; but it is erroneous and misleading. This is fallacious. The thoughtful and intelligent reader will recall that of the *nineteen* valid forms of the syllogism in the Aristotelic system of logic, *thirteen* are *negative*. All depends on the evidence. And it may be fairly submitted whether the unfitness of polygamists for citizenship in the church of Christ has not in this essay been made sufficiently evident by a reasonable array of proof or evidence. The legislatures and secular courts have settled that for the civilized state; and ecclesiastical courts should even more surely settle it for the church. May heaven so order! If polygamy is an outcast condition and disqualifies for citizenship in the civilized state, much more is this so in the Christian church.

Under the peculiar circumstances incident to the history and fortunes of the original Chesapeake Presbytery Overture on the subject of polygamy to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, a reasonable allowance for its length and for some repetitions in this dis-

course is respectfully bespoken. The aim has been, not a literary product, but, as it is hoped the text will make manifest, the realization of an earnest and definite purpose in the interest of Christian missions, to help defend and warn them against the foul and defiling clutch of polygamy and all its apologies.

I know of no equally serious discussion of this vexatious question, the most important part of which is the Bible argument, a due attention to which should dispel the distracting confusion of individual opinions and practice. Indeed, this serious re-study of Paul's epistles has wholly dispelled all doubt about his teaching on polygamy. The venerable constitution and fundamental law of the Presbyterian Church, overwhelmingly sustained by the word of God, O. T. and N. T., utterly discountenance the entrusting of this subject to unregulated individualism, and properly subordinate the entire lay and official membership of our church to one course of action, from which no departure is allowable. Ch. xxiv: 1: "Marriage is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time." And the Larger Catechism enumerates, among the sins forbidden by the VII commandment, this one: "Having more wives or husbands than one at the same time" (§ 139). It is appropriate to quote the words of I Timothy vi: 3, 4: "If any man teach a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to goodness, he is puffed up, knowing nothing."

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POLYGAMY AND CITIZENSHIP

IN

CHURCH AND STATE.

CHAPTER I.

THE OCCASION OF THIS PAMPHLET.

The relation of polygamy to citizenship is regarded a vital problem. This problem is solved by the courts of all civilized nations by its condemnation and punishment as a crime. Right here in Washington City, a court of the District of Columbia, whilst I was writing this pamphlet, sent a bigamist to the penitentiary. This is treating it as a felony, a high crime.

Under human law grave offenses are crimes; under the divine law all offenses are sins.

Certainly the relation of polygamy to church membership is not less vital to the church than to state citizenship. That is the essential point—the gravaman—of this pamphlet. Whilst it deals with a particular case, the Southern Presbyterian Church, its scope, however, is as broad as christendom.

I will at once explain to the reader the occasion and reason of my writing this pamphlet.

As this explanation has been fairly well given in an article published in *The Southwestern Presbyterian*, April 4, 1906, one of the leading papers of the Southern Presbyte-

rian Church, published in New Orleans, La., and as it has not been furnished to any other paper, I will appropriate it here, with proper acknowledgments. Let it be understood that the proceedings and documents therein referred to all appear later in the pamphlet; and also, that this article was in response to a call made in an earnest editorial comment after considering the overture, the action thereon of the General Assembly and of the Synod of Virginia, and also the joint complaint of several members of Synod carrying the overture up to the General Assembly of 1906.

This explanation was given in response to editorial comment on the overture and the Complaint.

“IS THIS TRUE?”

In publishing the overture on polygamy laid before the Synod of Virginia, and referring to the Complaint which carries it up to the next General Assembly (1906), *The Southwestern Presbyterian* of February 28, 1906, presents some carefully prepared comments and judiciously observes:

“The appositeness of all this depends upon the fact, evidently satisfactorily proved to the author’s mind, but not shown to others except in his general statements, that our church is admitting, harboring, and tolerating polygamy. Is this true? If it is, by all means let specific charges be brought and let the matter be dealt with judicially and not *in thesi*. If the Committee of Foreign Missions is responsible, let it be brought before the bar of the church. If any missionary is responsible, let his Presbytery be duly informed of the facts and be urged to deal with the case. If there is warrant for definite action, why not institute it in a definite way, by judicial process?”

The alternatives suggested were considered, and going directly to the General Assembly was and is still considered the wiser one. If it fails, the other is available.

The two methods of procedure were (1) to take the case by overture directly to the General Assembly for its competent administrative notice or (2) by judicial process begun in the lower court.

The question is: "Is this true?" Is what true? Is it true *that our* (Southern Presbyterian) *Church is admitting, harboring, and tolerating polygamy?* I answer YES, it is true. I ask you to please allow me to state some of the reasons which evidently satisfy my own mind and must satisfy any other mind of *the fact*.

I enclose two clippings, which I hope you will publish entire.

From the *Washington Post*, March 21, 1904:

"POLYGAMOUS PRESBYTERIANS.

"They Are to Be Found Among the Natives of the Congo Free State.

"Polygamy thrives in the Congo Free State, not alone without the medium of a Mormon church, but within the Presbyterian Church, according to the description which Rev. W. M. Morrison, a missionary to that country for the Presbyterian denomination, presented to the congregation of the Central Presbyterian church, last night.

" 'Some of the natives have as many as five wives,' said the missionary. 'Many members of the church have as many as two wives. When they are reprimanded for polygamous living in the church, they will respond that they had the wives when the gospel was brought to them; that it is the custom of the country, and previous to the coming of the white

man no one thought it wrong; and, therefore, it would be wrong to desert all but one of the plural wives and their families.'

"Rev. Mr. Morrison spoke of this point of the African's life in a talk on the work in the Congo Free State. Women, he said, possess rights there which are hardly dreamed of in the Orient, and more than the American woman. The clothing varied from the 'black,' which the children wore, to a single strip of cloth, or, in some cases, a sheet which wrapped the body. The religion of the natives was that of ancestry worship."

From the *Evening Star*, Washington, Monday, March 21, 1904:

"PRACTICE POLYGAMY.

"Statement Regarding a Custom in Congo Free State.

"Rev. W. M. Morrison, a missionary to the Congo Free State for the Presbyterian denomination, presented to the congregation of the Central Presbyterian church last evening a description of the polygamous customs of the people in his mission field.

" 'Some of the natives have as many as five wives,' said the missionary. 'Many members of the church have as many as two wives. When they are reprimanded for polygamous living in the church they will respond that they had the wives when the gospel was brought to them; that it is the custom of the country, and previous to the coming of the white man no one thought it wrong; and, therefore, it would be wrong to desert all but one of the plural wives and their families.'

"He said, however, that the women of the African state occupied a position never dreamed of in the Orient, and as high as that of the American women."

These two influential papers have a circulation of about seventy thousand daily. Their reports are careful. It is the habit of these papers to publish in the Monday issues notices of what is said on Sabbath in the pulpits of the city. You will notice that these clippings are from the Monday issues—now two years since. At that time this community and the country at large were in a state of no ordinary excitement over the Mormon Smoot case before the Senate Committee and still pending, as to whether he should be ousted from his seat in the Senate.*

I was shocked and started out to correct the supposed unintentional misrepresentation. But just then Dr. D. W. C. Snyder, our returned missionary from Luebo, Africa, where he had served our church some seven years, came to my house as a guest. I laid the matter before him. He informed me that the representation was true. He stated that he found polygamy in the church and acquiesced in it reluctantly, and had it still in mind to overture the General Assembly on the subject, and I expressed the hope that he would do so.

As co-operating, I prepared an overture to be presented to the Maryland Presbytery, to which I had been transferred from the Charleston Presbytery, S. C. But by an unexpected adjournment, I failed to get it before my own Presbytery. A member of the Chesapeake Presbytery, which was to meet in Alexandria the next week, suggested to me to bring it before that body. Well, as a corresponding member, and after speaking to some of the brethren, I did so. It was zealously discussed, and the vote stood 15 for to 8 against it. There was entered a protest. In the course of the discussion, Dr. Pitzer, in whose church Dr. Morrison made the discourse referred to by the papers, and who was a guest of Dr. Pitzer, stated before Presbytery as a matter of knowledge from this discourse, and from private personal

* In the House Roberts was denied a seat, but in the Senate Smoot was seated with the distinct understanding that his right to hold it would be contested.

conversation, that the existence of polygamy in the African church was a fact. He defended it, voted against the overture, and led in filing the protest.

Thus I found that it was our church and not the papers that needed correction. This overture was the result, with the idea that its passage would be a walkover without controversy even in the General Assembly.

Soon after the Chesapeake Presbytery, which adjourned April 21, 1904, I received a letter from Dr. W. M. Morrison, our returned missionary, dated Louisville, Ky., June 28, in which he severely called me to task for what I had done. He generously credited me with sincerity in this ignorantly meddling interference and "unseemly agitation" of a question which can only be judged wisely by the missionary in the field. This current claim of certain missionaries is not to be conceded for an instant, as the moral and religious character of the conjugal relation do not depend on varying circumstances, but are settled by Christ himself. However, he also concedes my friendliness to the mission, for he knew that I had given him one hundred dollars for the printing press and, probably, that I had sent a fifty-dollar draft to one of his colleagues. I mention this only to repel the ignorant imputations which have been indulged.

There is a still more important part of this letter which I must give, because it squarely answers the question, "Is this true?"

In reference to the newspaper statements above given, he writes, "Now what I did say was this: We have a few men in our African church who have two wives. There are perhaps not more than fifteen or twenty in over two thousand membership." In the Virginia Synod at Richmond (1905) he qualified this by saying that there were only four or five polygamists. But added, very properly, the principle is the same; and then I understood him to deny the right of the home church to dictate to the missionary in this matter.

I had intended to quote his argument for polygamy in the church and "against making monogamy a condition of

church membership," but it is too long for this communication. However, I shall use it in a pamphlet on this subject which will soon be published.* He and other returned mis-

*I will here insert the main body of Dr. Morrison's letter as a statement of the polygamist plea and of the introduction of polygamy into our church at Luebo, Africa:

"Now what I did say was this: We have a *few* men in our African Church who have two wives. There are perhaps not more than fifteen or twenty in the over two thousand membership. Throughout the history of the Church, from the days of the Apostles down to the present time, Christianity upon its first introduction into a pagan country has had to contend with polygamy. Though the teaching of Christ and the spirit of Christianity are clearly against polygamy, yet there is nothing in the New Testament to warrant us, upon the introduction of Christianity into pagan countries, in making monogamy a condition of church membership. (?) There were polygamists in the early Apostolic Church, as is clearly shown in Paul's letter to Timothy where we are told that only a man who has one wife can hold office in the Church, clearly implying that there were men in the Church who did have more than one wife. (?) In giving the qualifications of a man today for such an office, it would certainly not be necessary to say that he should have to be the husband of only one wife. This comes like somewhat of a shock to us at first, but we who are brought face to face with these problems on the foreign field must meet them in the spirit of Christ and we dare not set up conditions for Church membership different from those indicated in the Bible. In the settling of such a question we must not forget that the woman and the children of a polygamous marriage have some rights, and Christianity respects these rights. To put away a woman with her children does her and the children a great injustice, and will more than likely force her into marriage with another man, which would be adultery. (?) Consequently, at Luebo, after long and careful prayer and deliberation over this matter, we have decided that it is right for us to admit men with more than one wife, but on the condition that no more wives shall be taken and also on the condition that such men shall not be permitted to hold any position of prominence in the Church, such as teacher or evangelist. This latter puts a ban on polygamy, and just as polygamy was thus in course of time weeded out of the early church (?) so we find that polygamy is fast decreasing in the regions about our missions. We believe that the time will not be far distant at Luebo when we can make monogamy a condition of church membership. Already in some of the older missions on the Congo they are now at a point where monogamy can be insisted on.

"The above is in substance what I said." Below p. 92.

sionaries have been industriously arguing in support of admitting and tolerating polygamy in the mission church. Two of their communications on the subject having come into my hands, I have typewritten copies of them.

In your commendable inquiry as to the responsibility of this astounding condition of things, you raise the question as to the Committee on Foreign Missions. Let me say that I have a letter from the Secretary in which all responsibility for this polygamy in the African and Chinese churches is disclaimed, and the responsibility is placed on the General Assembly. (Below, p. 195.)

In the complaint, of which you have a copy, and which is not individual but plural, as a number have signed it, Presbyterian authority and responsibility as primary are distinctly recognized. But I submit that it is a mistake to assume or to assert that our General Assembly is not competent to deal with such a situation as that before us otherwise than judicially. The administrative functions of that body are not confined to appellate processes from inferior courts. The Assembly often meets cases more immediately and satisfactorily. In the existing case, the General Assembly was perfectly competent "to hear testimony against error and immorality in practice, injuriously affecting the church; to decide * * * respecting discipline; to give its advice and instruction, in conformity with the constitution in all cases submitted to it." A concrete case, presumably within the knowledge of the body, was virtually submitted by one of its constituent Presbyteries, without censoriously naming church or individual, and although the matter was not canvassed on the floor, still it was distinctly in the possession of the Committee of Bills and Overtures, when preparing its report on the overture, and should have been stated when that report was made. If there was not as full information as desirable, then the overture should have been entrusted to an *ad interim* committee for full investigation. And that will probably be the best procedure by the next Assembly.

But it is not possible for the action of the 1904 Assembly, even with the endorsement of the Synod of Virginia, to dispose of this case. It may now be said that however undesirable and unnecessary originally was a judicial process, yet if rendered unavoidable, it will certainly come before the General Assembly in that vexatious way.

The conscience of the church will never brook the toleration of polygamy in our communion. The primary aim of the overture was to avert threatened disgrace; an opportunity to do so is still afforded in the reconsideration of this overture without constraining a resort to the agonies of a judicial process.

The foregoing extract embodied in this article is from the *Southwestern Presbyterian* of February 28, 1906, and a portion of what precedes and of what follows it will also be given:

"The subject will interest many. Concerning the main contention there will be but one opinion. That is the opinion expressed throughout the Synod's action (?) *The position of the church should be and assuredly is absolutely clear and unequivocal upon the questions of the Bible law of marriage and the sinfulness of polygamy.* And still further, all will agree that *its action should be in full accord with its principle.* Whether it is so or not is a point upon which there may be just now difference of judgment. As one reads Dr. Laws' paper one sees in it, chiefly, notwithstanding his disclaimer of the *assertion that his overture relates only to our foreign missionary work* (?) charges that our church is violating the word of God and her settled principles. He asserts that there are missions where polygamists are permitted to be in our churches. He makes the assertion of fact, and we know he would not do so without substantial reason for it. If our church is tolerating or endorsing the evil, it would be

well to state directly when and where and by whom." (That is just what I have now done.)

* * * * *

And then immediately following the extract given:

"Then the facts would be brought out if they exist, and the skirts of the church would be cleared. It is denied, however, from authoritative sources, as to at least two of our missions which are working in polygamous surroundings. Mere newspaper charges and loose popular talk about the church as 'polygamous' amount to nothing of itself. Christ was not gluttonous and a wine-bibber because the masses around him said that he was. The church will be glad to have the whole matter brought out in its actual facts, and then it will intelligently determine what specific action it owes to its unquestioned principles."

CHAPTER II.

THE DECREE OF THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM.

"And as they (Paul and Silas) went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the Apostles and Elders that were at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily." Acts xvi: 4, 5, and 29. These "decrees" were addressed, by this assembly of apostles and elders, in a letter to Gentile converts, after having listened to the account that Paul and Barnabas gave of their first missionary tour among the Gentiles. These disciplinary decrees seem to have had a wholesome influence. The Jewish element had raised the question whether these converts and all Gentile converts, should not be circumcised before admission to the Christian fellowship; whereas they had been by Paul admitted by baptism without exacting the observance of Mosaic ceremonials. The council did not change the terms

of admission; and instead of enjoining the observance of circumcision, enjoined the renunciation of and abstinence from certain heathen practices. The language of the letter is thus given: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: That (1) ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols—the pollutions of idols; and (2) from blood; and (3) from things strangled (which related to demon worship); and (4) from fornication (or polygamy); from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well."

The last clause, *and from fornication*—verses 19 and 29, is properly rendered *and from polygamy*, for *πορνεια* was, on good authority, a common designation of polygamy among Jews and Gentiles. Of this, more anon.

It is in harmony with this scripture that Paul enjoins, I Cor. vii: 2, as a countervailing self-protection, morally, against the prevailing and seductive influences of polygamy—"because of fornications"—"Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband." This is heaven-ordained monogamy. The contradictory of polygamy. Thayer's Greek Lexicon virtually sustains this.

Porneia, fornication, designated more especially, concubinage, the vulgar and popular form of polygamy in the age when these deliverances were made, and the same is true in all preceding and subsequent ages and among all nations. *This is a preliminary send-off to the following Discourse:*

It is not *consecutive polygamy*, or the marrying of one wife after another, being duly absolved from the previous marriage, so as to have but one wife at the same time; but *simultaneous polygamy*, the having several so-called wives at the same time, against which it is here to be understood that this decree of the Jerusalem Council and the injunction

of the apostle were aimed, as licentious fornication and adultery—as polygamy. Polygamy is a misnomer, for men really marry but one wife, and never marry the so-called polygamous wives—the mistresses or concubines.

It is the imperious duty of the Christian church to uncompromisingly adhere to monogamy in its mission work. It was in this way the church began its mission work, and in this way it should be continued. This proposition will be elucidated and vindicated in what follows.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH A MISSIONARY BODY.

The Church of Jesus Christ was instituted as the heaven-appointed means of executing the Great Commission. It was organized on the basis of his Deity. By appointment he met his disciples after his resurrection, in a mountain of Galilee, and “spake unto them, saying: All authority—(rightful power)—hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth, Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Here his Deity is asserted and the christian church holds from its divine founder this broad commission which constitutes it his agent for the world’s conversion.

By its original vocation, therefore, this church of Christ is a missionary body. And its disciples are to be gathered from all nations. For a century and more, so thoroughly have christians been aroused to a distinct recognition of their duty to teach all nations the saving truths of the gospel, that

the fruits of their devoted, widespread and persevering labors have brought about a critical transition condition which gives a special emphasis to the work of missions at the present time at home and abroad. This transition condition of the missions which now confronts us is from a state of dependence, (on the part of the mission churches) on the home churches to a state of independence and autonomy. This aspect of the general situation is strikingly illustrated in Japan, which now has its own General Assembly crowning completely its separate Presbyterian Church organization. On a limited scale we find the same movement in China, in Africa and India.

An interesting feature of this situation is that, whilst this independent and automatic condition of the churches, in these foreign lands, is the very thing for which the home churches have been laboring and praying from the beginning, yet its actual or threatened realization takes us somewhat by surprise and gives rise to no little solicitude and even distrust. But this outcome, ultimately inevitable,—is the result of successful missionary enterprise. The only proper ground of solicitude is as to whether the preparation for this autonomy is sufficient and adequate to meet the internal and external strain of the new life.

The point on which it is now desired to fix attention is the very great importance of implanting no false doctrine or practice and of inculcating sound and steadfast scriptural gospel principles in the life of these infant churches, whilst in their pupilage, which shall prepare them for their experience of self-support and self-control in the future. Of this pupilage it may be truly said:—

“’Tis education forms the common mind;

“Just as the twig is bent the tree’s inclined.”

The relation of the home churches has been and still is educational. There can be no reasonable doubt but that these fostered churches, whether individually or collectively, will carry down into their ecclesiastical future the views and practices impressed upon them and with which they were made familiar in their early experiences as proper to and allowable in their Christian life as fostered churches. Touching this aspect of things, from the protestant standpoint, the secretary of the Church Missionary Society, London, read an interesting paper before the Centennial Missionary Conference, 1888, from which, though rather sanguine and conservative, a pertinent extract may be made. In conclusion, then, he says:

"I will only say that the eventuality to which I look forward is somewhat of the following kind:—

"That there will be, in India, for instance, a great Indian Church, from which the Roman Catholic and some smaller bodies will stand aloof, but to which, notwithstanding, the great mass of Indian Christians will belong:

"That the earnest and active members of this (union) church will hold fast to such great facts, and truths, and beliefs as the following: The Trinity of God; the Incarnation; the Propitiation through Christ's death; the Resurrection of Christ, involving in itself the ultimate resurrection of all believers; the present and eternal spiritual union of all believers with Christ, and so with one another, and the indwelling in them of the Holy Spirit—'eternal life and eternal punishment' (Matt. xxv: 46); the Bible as the sole and unerring rule of faith and practice; the reality, the necessity and duty and efficacy of prayer, especially of united prayer. I say *such truths* as these, because I do not mean the list to be in any way exhaustive." (Centenary Conference, vol. 2, p. 476.)

He supposes a great variety of ritual ceremonies and government—as things indifferent and non-essential.

Whether any given catalogue of truths shall in detail be transmitted and realized or not, sure we are that the fundamental truths of the gospel are destined to an imperishable existence in the churches, else the gospel itself must ultimately prove to be a failure. The transmission of things indifferent may be contemplated with composure and equanimity.

But suppose some confessedly sinful practice such as Sabbath desecration, gambling, profanity, licentiousness, thieving—should find its way into the mission churches of the present and be tolerated therein, either deliberately or through neglect of faithful discipline, so that it would pass on down to the rising generations as an allowable or tolerable course of life for a church member—a course of life, however, which was acknowledged to be sinful in its character, but yet had not been made the subject of condemnatory and expurgatory discipline by the officers of the fostering church—what would be thought of it? What must be thought of it? There would be reason for trembling apprehension as to its influence in the future. When the Corinthian Church was not only surrounded but invaded by corruption, Paul's positive injunction and instruction were that church members should not associate with such as are guilty of the unchristian sinful practices which he enumerates. He says to the Corinthians: "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves." (1 Cor. v: 13.) He in terms and in the same connection excludes from church association, *i. e.*, from church membership, fornicators (polygamists), idolators, extortioners, slanderers, and drunkards. It is made the

duty of Christians to judge of such within the church, but God will take account of those outside. Now, one of the current expressions in this evil list, *πορνεία* was, in Paul's day, the reproachful name for polygamy, viz., *fornication*. Polygamy was designated (*porneia*) fornication. John viii: 41. The Jews say, *we were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.*" (*Ἰμεις ἐκ πορνειας οὐκ κ. τ. λ.*) Josephus speaks of 8 of Jacob's sons as "legitimate," and 4 by handmaidens, Dan and Naphthali by Bilhah, and Gad and Asher by Zilpah. The reason of the sensitiveness of the Jews was that they were in fact hatched in a polygamous nest. The Christ taps their worldly pride of birth. Eminent scholarship has with reason understood the circular letter addressed by the General Assembly or Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv) to heathen or gentile converts as enjoining abstinence from, or avoidance of, polygamy in the clause of that letter—"and from fornication." There will be occasion later to recur to this matter. Meanwhile let us bear in mind the critical remark of the great scholar, John Lightfoot, that, "Whatever else is understood by this word fornication (*πορνεία*) I would certainly understand this, namely, that the apostles prescribed against polygamy." (Acts xv: 19, 29.) Lightfoot (1602-1675) finds explicit prohibition of simultaneous polygamy in both Testaments.

All Christian churches Latin, Greek, and Protestant are intolerant of polygamy in their creeds, and the laws of all the political states of Christian civilization arraign and punish it as a crime. By the states polygamy is dealt with as the violation of a law of nature. Right here in the District of Columbia, within less than ten days prior to this writing, a man, a citizen of this city, was promptly condemned to the

penitentiary for two years for bigamy, the lowest grade of polygamy. The District of Columbia is a territory and the United States Laws operate on this subject directly. And wherever the United States courts can lay their hands on polygamists they are dealt with as criminals, it may be as felons. The jurisdiction of the United States courts on this subject, however, is limited to U. S. territories, for the reason that the individual states have never delegated to the General Government jurisdiction over this subject within their several bounds. And the only way in which the General Government of the United States can now acquire legislative or judicial control over this subject of the marriage relation within the several States would be by an amendment of the Constitution—a matter of profound public concern, but difficult of attainment. The case of the present State of Utah is anomalous; for it covenanted to maintain monogamy as a term of admission to the sisterhood of the United States. When it was a territory the United States courts put polygamists in jail and the penitentiary. But Utah now pleads the immunity of statehood. (I am reported in the Pan-Presbyterian Council, 1899, in this city, as having stated on the floor of that body that the explanation of our surprising impotence as to divorces is that the subject is wholly in the power of the General Government—the *very opposite of what I said*.* I was disappointed when the Secretary refused my correction on a slip to be inserted in the volumes before distributing.)

* Indeed, the General Government of the United States has no power over this or any other subject, unless that power has been delegated to it by the individual states jointly. The United States Constitution consists of an enumeration of such delegated powers. There is no unanimity in the laws of the several states on divorce, but there is now a powerful movement on foot to bring that about.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE OVERTURE.

Now, my present interest is in the subject of polygamy in its relation to that portion of the Presbyterian Church; popularly spoken of and known as the Southern Presbyterian Church in the United States. The constitution of this church consists of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Catechisms and the form of government. Chapter xxiv of the Confession of Faith is on marriage and divorce and its first paragraph is in these words: "Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time." No language could, by any possibility, more definitely and unequivocally define the unlawfulness of any relation as truly conjugal between more than one man and one woman or one woman and one man, at the same time within the sweep of its authority—*i. e.*, within the Presbyterian Church. This provision of the Confession of Faith is reinforced—if it be possible to reinforce it—by the answer in the Larger Catechism to Question 139: "What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment? Answer: The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are adultery, fornication, &c. * * * *having more wives or husbands than one at the same time,*" &c.

Here then we see in perfectly plain language that the constitution of the Presbyterian Church unconditionally condemns as sinful simultaneous polygamy. Of course the provisions of this constitution are applicable to all the members

of the church, and the officers of the church are in terms under solemn covenant obligations "to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the church" of whose system of doctrine, government, and discipline, they have avowed their approval when ordained to their official relations to the Presbyterian Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto them on that account. The courts of the church, the Session, the Presbytery, the Synod, and the General Assembly are composed of ordained men under these sacred vows and obligations of allegiance to this church constitution. And as polygamy is explicitly set forth in this constitution among the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, no church officer or church court can countenance or tolerate this sinful practice in the church or by its members without being guilty of bad faith and flagrant disloyalty. So long as the constitution of the Presbyterian Church remains as it is, a session, a minister, or even a General Assembly has no rightful power to admit a polygamist to church membership or to tolerate such an one in the church, unless unconditionally renouncing and abandoning his or her polygamy. To do so is to trample that constitution under foot and to set its administration at naught. If this constitution be ignored or set at defiance by the highest authority and court of the church then the government of the church resolves itself, *quoad hoc*, into a despotism, unless a newly constituted General Assembly cure the fault by a new and reformatory deliverance. To give an illustration without invidiousness: When the Northern General Assembly, in war times, followed up the Spring Resolutions, and finally took possession of the Walnut Street Church property, Louisville, Ky., on a court decision

which set aside the restraints and limitations of the church constitution and accepted in its place the discretionary deliverances of the General Assembly as supreme; this substitution of the discretion of the General Assembly, in the place of the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, in fact and effect converted that Assembly into a despotism. And, as a matter of history, there it now stands in law, and must stand historically there till the feat of ecclesiastical transformation anarchy be renounced, disclaimed and repudiated. Indeed there is now no barrier so serious as this to the union of the Northern and Southern churches. We shall soon see that the Southern General Assembly of 1904, in Mobile, in dealing with the overture on polygamy from the Chesapeake Presbytery, one of the constituent courts of that body, by sanctioning polygamy in the mission churches did, not only what it had no right to do, but what the constitution positively restrains it from doing, and thereby resolved itself *quoad hoc* into a despotic body. And there our General Assembly now stands and must stand till that deliverance is changed.

I am perfectly aware of the gravity of this charge of arrogated despotism by virtue of violating the constitution in tolerating what that constitution denounces as sin. But it is the inevitable conclusion, however, from valid and indisputable premises. And no personal criticism or abuse will remedy it; and no self-respecting and faithful officer or member of the church, when his attention has been once called to it, should rest content till the Assembly unequivocally extricate itself from this unlawful and lamentable attitude and all its revolutionary and degrading consequences. As a church we cannot afford to abide by that radical and suicidal decision.

The General Assembly has no power to admit polygamy into the church, nor to continue or to tolerate it therein; much less has it power to authorize others to do so, whether missionaries or mission church sessions. The Presbyterian Church is a close constitutional organization and not a lax discretionary body. Yet this authorization is precisely what was done, or attempted to be done, by the Assembly of 1904, when it declined to take any notice of polygamy in the Luebo Church, Africa, after its attention had been called to it as a state of fact by an overture from one of its constituent Presbyteries. The solemn appeal of this church court was ignored and set at naught. The attempt that has been several times made to relieve this action of the General Assembly of its odiousness by divesting the overture thus presented of its dignity and claim to consideration as the deliverance of a Presbytery, by invidiously holding up an individual—myself by name—as responsible for it, is a willful and unworthy perversion of the truth of the case. This misrepresentation was made in the columns of the *Christian Observer*, May 4, 1904, before the overture reached the General Assembly; and it was never corrected in those columns, I believe.

CHRISTIAN OBSERVER, MAY 4, 1904.

“CHESAPEAKE.

“The Presbytery of Chesapeake, on April 20, adopted an overture by a majority of two on a recorded vote by ayes and nays, on the subject of polygamy, asking the Assembly to direct all missionaries to refuse church membership to all converted polygamists in heathen lands, until they repudiate all their wives, except the first one. Dr. Pitzer, for him-

self and others like minded, filed with the moderator this protest:

"The undersigned hereby protests against the action of the Presbytery, in the adoption of an overture to the General Assembly on the subject of polygamy.

"1. Said overture did not originate in the Presbytery itself, but was introduced, *ab extra*; by Rev. S. S. Laws, a member of a different Presbytery, who had been invited to 'sit and deliberate as a corresponding member.'

"2. On the general subject of polygamy the mind of the Church is settled, and there is no need of any deliverance by the General Assembly.

"3. So far as this subject is a practical one in our mission fields, it is not a question of the law of marriage, but the law of divorce. 'Shall the converted polygamist in heathen lands, in order to church membership, be required to "put away" his wives, except the first one?'

"Such a requirement is without any authority from the word of God, and its enactment by the General Assembly would be both *ultra* scriptural and injurious.

"(Signed)

A. W. FITZER."

The same thing has again been recently attempted in the *Presbyterian Standard*, which published the following response:

"POLYGAMY IN THE CHURCH.

"I have just received the *Standard* of February 21, 1906, and notice a communication from Rev. W. R. Coppedge, of Hamlet, N. C., containing two mistakes which seem to me to call for correction.

"1. He represents the overture on Polygamy, which was before the General Assembly of 1904, as

confined to 'our mission in Africa,' whereas it is now converted into an 'omnibus bill' to 'accomplish the same thing.' This is a misstatement of fact. The overture before the General Assembly of 1904 is identically the same as the overture on its way to the Assembly now from the Synod of Virginia, except a single clause of five words, to-wit, 'in conjugal relations with him,' added to the paragraph 'first wife still living.' The two overtures otherwise are in all respects identically the same.

* * * * *

"2. This is serious enough, as it implies double dealing, but the other point which I propose to notice, without going at all into the merits of the question, is his discourteous and offensive attempt to divest the overture as it went before the 1904 Assembly of its force and dignity as the deliverance of a church court and to saddle it on an individual. As matter of fact, the Presbytery that sent up the overture in 1904 did so after full discussion, by a vote of fifteen for it to eight against it. That made it the overture of one of the constituent courts of the General Assembly. The transmutation attempted is an injustice to the court and personally offensive. Did the reverend brother deliberately intend this? I feel reluctant to think so, for the least that could be said of it would be that 'it's ungentlemanly.'

* * * * *

"S. S. LAWS.

"WASHINGTON, D. C., *Feb.* 23, 1906."

I will now give the action of the Assembly of 1904. I quote from the minutes, pp. 50-51:

"The following report from the Committee on Bills and Overtures was adopted:

"In answer to an overture from Chesapeake Presbytery, in reference to Polygamy, asking the General

Assembly to make a deliverance on the subject, in its relation to the work of our missionaries in our foreign fields—

“We recommend the following: In view of the fact that the Presbyterian Church is unalterably opposed to polygamy, and would not, under any circumstances, tolerate the entrance into polygamous relations of any of its members, even in heathen lands, and in view of the great care of our Executive Committee of Foreign Missions in appointing to the work in foreign lands only workers of piety and discretion, we deem it unnecessary to make any deliverance on this subject.”

As soon as some notices of this deliverance are given, the overture from the Chesapeake Presbytery will be submitted. Let it be borne in mind that when the overture was sent up by the Chesapeake Presbytery there never had been a deliverance on this subject by our General Assembly, and hence, to the extent that there was any provocation of criticism touching this matter of polygamous membership in our church, it was entirely due to individual or local discretion, or rather indiscretion, whereas the overture, without one word or intimation of censure of an individual or a church as to what had been done, proposed to stop further admissions, and to prompt the discipline of the church authorities to relieve the church of those polygamists already in it. Whilst I was addressing the Synod of Virginia on this subject, a member (Dr. A. L. Phillips) asked me if the Book of Discipline did not make sufficient provision for dealing with polygamy? He was answered; it ought to do so and I presume it does. Of course, within its sphere the Discipline does; but Discipline deals only with church members and has nothing to do

with those outside the church, in excluding from entrance or admitting them into the church. If the door of the church is closed against polygamy, so that no more polygamists can enter the church until they have renounced their polygamy, then Discipline will take care of and rid the church of those already in the church (Discipline, ch. 3: 1, 2). The overture provided for both these alternatives,—keeping them out and removing those already within—and its adoption would have saved our church from the disgrace which has come upon it as the result of the Assembly's action at Mobile, 1904. For, without a word of disapproval, it acquiesced, in the name of our whole church, in the recognition of a number of men and women as in good and regular standing as communicants who are actually living in the church in licentious and sinful polygamy.

This action of the General Assembly is virtually an apology for polygamy. Suppose that Paul, when he learned that that unnamed man at Corinth—just one—had married his stepmother, had fallen back like this Assembly on general principles, and responded to the messengers of the church who went to Ephesus to see him on this subject, that he had full faith in the “piety and discretion” of those Christian brethren in charge of the church at Corinth and that he therefore deemed it unnecessary to take any notice of the information given. Were that the record of this case at Corinth, would we not blush for shame; nay, would not this stately and complacent attitude of tolerance, indifference, and neglect, not even advising respecting the treatment of such offences, have wrecked not only that infant church, but Christianity itself? But would not Paul have deserved credit for defending the pious brethren in

charge! The polygamy case before the General Assembly of 1904 is a more aggravated case of sin, openly and licentiously practiced by a number of members of the church, than was the case of incest at Corinth. And the committee whose report was adopted was aware of the situation. In the constitution of our church, incest and polygamy are classed with fornication, adultery, and the like, on the authority of God's word, as sins, and the Synod of Virginia condemns it as a sin and our courts as a high crime. Polygamy is as foul a sin as incest, measured by the standard of God or man. There is not a particle of evidence that this case of incest at Corinth was not a sin of ignorance as real as any case of polygamy in Africa or China. Moreover, as this incestuous sinner in the Corinthian church found his sympathizers and apologists, just so do polygamous sinners in the church in our day and in our church; especially is this the case, we are told, with those who have been admitted to the church. Certain of our own missionaries are known as advocating the baptism and toleration of polygamists in our mission churches (Painter, White, Morrison, Dubose, J. E. Stuart *et al.*)

But there is a lesson for us in what Paul did. He indulged no tolerance whatever, but ordered: "*Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.*" "*Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*" "*Being gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus, deliver such a one unto Satan*" (1 Cor. v: 4, 5, 6, 13). What could more thoroughly refute the plausible but shallow and fallacious crotchet that no church member may be allowed to enter into a sinful relation (*e. g.*, polygamy), but any one already in that sinful relation may be allowed to continue in it.

There is no ecclesiastical tender-footedness nor cowardice

in this uncompromising intolerance of Paul; no paltering with sin, nor connivance at the misconduct of church officers who may have been implicated. "If ye have respect of persons—approve in one what you condemn in another—ye commit sin." "My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter?" "Purify your hearts, ye double-minded" (James ii: 9; iii: 10-11; iv: 8). All heaven, new and old, is to be cast out.

CHAPTER V.

ARTICLES TO NEWSPAPERS.

"STANDARD."

June 22, 1904, soon after the adjournment of the General Assembly of 1904, the following notice of its action appeared in the *Presbyterian Standard*, published at Charlotte, N. C., and in a sense the organ of the Synod of that State:

"POLYGAMY AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

(*Answer to Chesapeake Presbytery.*)

"*Editor Standard:*

"In answer to an overture from Chesapeake Presbytery, in reference to polygamy, asking the General Assembly to make a deliverance on the subject, in its relations to the work of our missionaries, in our foreign fields.

"We recommend the following answer to the overture from the Presbytery of Chesapeake:

"In view of the fact that the Presbyterian Church is unalterably opposed to polygamy, and would not under any circumstances tolerate the entrance into polygamous relations of any of its members, even in heathen lands, and in view of the great care of our

Executive Committee of Foreign Missions in appointing to the work in foreign fields only workers of piety and discretion, we deem it unnecessary to make any deliverance on this subject. (Minutes, pp. 50, 51.)

"From *The Presbyterian Standard* of June 1st, which came to-day, I learn of the answer given above. This answer is so inadequate and fallacious that it should not be allowed to pass without notice. Will you allow the following notice of it? Of course it is taken for granted that the committee is therein correctly reported, and that the General Assembly adopted it.

"1. The general statement of the purport of the overture is not correctly given. It was not limited to foreign lands, but explicitly related to polygamy in our own land among our Indians, Mormon citizens, and also in our island possessions, as well as in foreign lands.

"2. Again: The overture did not ask for a deliverance against 'entrance into polygamous' relation, but against the admission of polygamists—those already in polygamous relations—into the church. As a matter of fact, which cannot be denied, polygamists have been admitted into our church connection, and are now communicants in our church, under the very eyes of our Executive Committee of Foreign Missions and in spite of the 'piety and discretion' of the workers this heathen abomination has been admitted into and is now tolerated in our church. The indisputable testimony is 'many members of the church have as many as two wives.' This is one of our own churches which is thus reported.

"And yet the General Assembly is allowed by the committee sleepily to ignore this notorious state of fact. And unless our General Assembly proposes to solemnly sanction this glaring outrage on the decen-

cies and duties of our church, the only rectification of the evil is quietly left without a word of admonition to the 'piety and discretion' of the very brethren who—it is hard to believe it—have actually received into the bosom of the church this foul adultery and hold it in fraternal intimacy. No argument from scripture, custom, or sentiment can be validly pleaded in justification.

"3. For the Committee of Bills and Overtures to report, in view of this condition of things, that 'we deem it unnecessary to make any deliverance on this subject,' is simply astonishing, considering that our General Assembly has never made a deliverance on this subject, whereas the actual practice of admitting polygamists into the church has sprung up, and 'many' polygamists are now in the communion of our church. The committee was aware of this existence of polygamy in our church, for I myself sent the published fact to the chairman in a glaring newspaper article arraigning our church, with this heading in large capitals—POLYGAMOUS PRESBYTERIANS.

"This is no slander, but a shameful and disgraceful fact, which has been announced to audiences in various parts of our country by a returned missionary.

"Mr. Editor, I shall not say more now, but this subject cannot be disposed of in this way. The attempt was made to choke this overture before it reached the General Assembly, by false and unjust representation, in *The Christian Observer*. It was published that the overture was passed by only two majority, whereas the vote, after a full discussion, was eight against it and fifteen for it; and the same party who made this misrepresentation should have known better, as he spoke and voted in the negative, and he also did what he could to divest it of the prestige of an action of the Presbytery thus: 'This overture,' wrote he, 'did not

originate in the Presbytery itself, but was introduced, *ab extra*, by Rev. S. S. Laws, a member of a different Presbytery, who had been invited to sit and deliberate as a corresponding member.' I explained that my expectation of introducing it into my own Presbytery, which I had attended a few days previously, was frustrated by an unexpected adjournment. I was requested to bring it into the Chesapeake Presbytery. This was accepted as adequate. No liberty was taken and there was no irregularity in its introduction. And such a criticism of the rights and privileges of a corresponding member is a pronounced piete of ecclesiastical discourtesy and injustice. It is because my name has been gratuitously dragged before the public in this matter that I have spoken.

"No; this overture on polygamy was in good faith, a regularly enacted overture of the Chesapeake Presbytery; and, as I have shown, it was entitled to a more serious consideration and to a more pertinent answer than it received.

"The church is not done with it. A matter of this sort is never settled till it is settled right.

"S. S. LAWS."

June 29, 1904, the following notice of these proceedings appeared in *The Central Presbyterian*, published at Richmond, Va.:

**"POLYGAMY AND THE SOUTHERN GENERAL
ASSEMBLY.**

"Editor Central Presbyterian:

"On the 21st day of last March, an article appeared in the *Washington City Post*, one of the most widely circulated and influential secular papers of our country, with the bold heading in large caps, 'Polyga-

mous Presbyterians.' The declaration was the more startling because of the excitement of this community over the Senate committee's examination of the Mormon Smoot case, in which it had just been brought out that 'the Prophet Joseph Smith,' the present President of the Mormons, is now actually living with five wives, by whom he has forty-two living children; and the authority given for the above classification of Presbyterians with Mormons was the declaration of the Rev. W. M. Morrison, a returned missionary of the Southern Presbyterian Church from Africa, in a discourse in Dr. Pitzer's Southern church in this city. It was given in the very language of this missionary that 'many members of the church have as many as two wives.' I supposed there must be some mistake, such as secular papers are, without evil intent, liable to make in ecclesiastical matters, and I started out to make correction. But in a few days Dr. Snyder, the returned missionary of our church, was a guest at my house, and I learned that the charge of polygamy against the Southern Presbyterian Church is absolutely true. And this condition, I learn, has been published not only from the pulpit here, but in various places. [It appeared, then, that it was not the newspapers, but the church, that needed correction.]

"The circumstance thus given was the special occasion of the Chesapeake overture to which the answer of the General Assembly is published in *The Central Presbyterian* of June 8th, just received.

"Allow me to submit four serious criticisms of the so-called 'answer to an overture from the Chesapeake Presbytery':

"1. It represents the overture as asking for a deliverance on polygamy 'in its relations to the work of our missionaries in our foreign fields.' There is

no such limitation in the overture. It recites that polygamy confronts us on the part of Mormon citizens, North and South, and of our Indians under the care of the Domestic Mission Committee, and in our island possessions, as well as in foreign fields; and a deliverance was asked for covering the world-wide case. (*Ignoratio elenchi.*)

"2. Again: The answer is very pronounced about 'entrance' into the polygamous relation: whereas the overture confines attention to the course to be pursued towards those already in polygamous relations—shall polygamists be baptized and received into church communion, as is the present practice, we are told by some of our returned missionaries. This is the inexcusable fallacy of changing premises, or more plainly, of evasion, whether designed or inadvertent.

"3. In the next place, the appeal to the 'piety and discretion' of our workers as sufficiently safeguarding the work, is resting on a broken reed, for it is these very workers who have taken this abomination into the bosom of the church. It behooves us to insist that those who have taken the responsibility of foisting this practice into the mission work of our Southern Church, can find no adequate justification in the equivocal and unscriptural practice of others. The only alternative left the church is the repudiation of this unauthorized practice.

"4. And finally, the fact that this practice has been taken on by the missionaries and committees without asking the advice even of the General Assembly, and the further fact that our Southern Church has never made a deliverance on the subject, emphasized the importance and moral necessity under the circumstances of a decided and unequivocal deliverance of disapproval.

"It may be relied on that this subject cannot be

permanently ignored, and that it will not down till it is settled in accordance with Matthew xix: 3-12, and Mark x: 2-12, where the Saviour sinks his shaft down to bed rock and appeals to the historic fact of creation as giving rise to the law of nature which governs the conjugal relation as established by the Creator between one man and one woman. This law of nature, as illustrated in the equal births of the sexes, is binding on heathen as well as Christians, so that all the women with whom any man may have sexual relations other than his one wife, are merely concubines. The relations, therefore, are adulterous, and the church can do no less than enforce the law of Christ and require the abandonment of adultery.

“People speak about the rights of the polygamist to enter the church. Has a polygamist no right to enter? they say. Certainly he has, but he has no right to bring his polygamy with him. The door of the Christian church is wide enough and high enough to let in any man who wants to come in, but the door has never been built wide or high enough to let in a man who brings polygamy with him on his back or in his heart. * * * I say, let the polygamist come in, but let him leave his polygamy behind him.’— (Robert E. Speer, Secretary Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church U. S. A., Ecumenical Conference, Vol. II, page 287.)

“Such must be the judgment of our church, and this overture sought to evoke its utterance in rescuing our church from a blighting disgrace. It is not possible for those abroad to understand this subject any better than we do at home. This foul demon must be exorcised.

“S. S. LAWS.

“WASHINGTON, D. C.”

At the meeting of the Maryland Presbytery the following action was recorded—I did not write it, but voted for it.

"REPORT ON MINUTES OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1904.

"Recommendation.

"1. That the Presbytery of Maryland take exception to the action of the General Assembly at Mobile, Ala., in its answer to the overture of Chesapeake Presbytery on the subject of polygamy, inasmuch as the Assembly's answer does not, apparently, touch the point raised in the overture (*vide* Min. Assem., p. 50).

"Adopted."

The overture itself to which the General Assembly makes reference in the above action quoted from the minutes of 1904, was not published in its minutes nor in any of the church papers; and consequently the members and even the ministers of the church were not in possession of the means necessary to form an intelligent and judicious opinion of the merits of the Assembly's action at Mobile. Indeed, the representation was made, and the minutes seemed to favor it, that the overture was an "attack" on our foreign missionaries, and that the Assembly had piously made its deliverance in their defense.* A more gratuitous and mendacious slander could not have been concocted, for no individual and no station, nor church, was named in the overture. Not even the fact that there were polygamists in some of our foreign churches was mentioned in the overture. This fact, however, with the indisputable evidence, was made known to the Chairman of the Committee of Bills and Overtures, and to the committee, therefore, whose business it was to formulate the response of

*This was stated in print by the penman of the Assembly's action.

the Assembly to such documents. There were several present in the Assembly who well knew the facts, though the Assembly as a body seemed to act in ignorance of the actual situation, which had occasioned the overture. Otherwise, if the body knew the facts, it must have been deliberately though vainly imagined that by ignoring the overture, the disagreeable subject would be squelched! Subsequently, on the floor of the Synod of Virginia the chairman of the Committee of Bills and Overtures of the Assembly of 1904, declared that his committee had full information on the subject and that my letter to him was received and read and that the action of the committee in formulating the above-quoted minute was deliberate and after full consideration. This, I confess, somewhat surprised me, for I had been making, in my own mind, no small allowance for the extraordinary character of the deliverance on the score of lack of information, of inadvertence and perhaps diversion of attention from the subject by the perturbed condition arising out of the noted telegram from Buffalo falling into the body at that time like a thunderbolt from a clear sky.

But I must reiterate that, however well informed the committee may have been, the body seemed to act in the dark. I received a letter from one of the officials of the Assembly, a dear friend and a wide-awake man, expressing the hope that the disposition made of the Mormon case was satisfactory to me! I have always felt that what escaped the keen lynx-eyed vision of that commissioner could not have been well understood on the floor. Besides, friends in attendance confirmed the view now expressed. And the circumstances now mentioned must be taken account of, with other considerations, relative to the renewal of the overture which had

been ignored, as a matter of fact, explain it as we may, for the committee recommended the unfortunate minute which was adopted and now stands on the record.

The reason for the reserve mentioned in not using names was the desire of not publishing the matter any more widely, and the hope that by the adoption of the overture the whole matter would be blown over and be hushed. In all simplicity, my surprise was such because I supposed that on the attention of the General Assembly being called to the matter a decided deliverance would at once be made without discussion, and thus the case would be closed. The idea of my name being brought into the discussion of the subject never occurred to me, and I insist that it was gratuitous and unkind. But it seemed manifestly the duty of somebody to take the initiative.

But as the General Assembly avowedly made no answer to the overture, though it did formulate a deliverance on the subject of the overture, the way seemed to be clear for the renewal of the overture. Let it be borne in mind that this overture, before the Assembly of 1904, was sent up by the Chesapeake Presbytery, after a serious debate and by a vote of 15 for it to 8 against it; but before it reached the Assembly, it was attacked and misrepresented by a correspondent in the columns of *The Christian Observer* as not properly an overture of the Potomac Presbytery, and as having had only two majority, as agitating a question settled in the church, and as contrary to the word of God. This unrelieved batch of rude, crude and uncorrected misrepresentations doubtless had its pernicious influence. And, then, certain returned missionaries, whom I need not name, had industriously busied themselves in discrediting the overture as an attack

on the foreign missionary and the cause of foreign missions, whereas the overture aims to defend all mission work, home or foreign, against polygamy. Is the work of the missionary exempt from criticism, advice, or correction?

CHAPTER VI.

THE OVERTURE, WITH MEMORANDA.

This overture which was ignored by the General Assembly of 1904 and is now on its way back to that same body to meet 1906, will now be submitted with some expository memoranda intended to be helpful to the apprehension of its exact import and corrective of misunderstanding and consequent misrepresentation and unreasonable opposition. This overture has been carelessly read and inexcusably misrepresented and unreasonably opposed.

Correctly apprehended and appreciated, this overture must, on reflection, commend itself to every judicious, intelligent, and thoughtful member of our church—yes, I will add, and of the Christian world, including all denominations—for its Scriptural, supreme and sole aim is wholesome good order and *the Purity of the Church*. This idea of the purity of the church of Christ is a fundamental idea on which all the professed followers of Christ agree.

The overture is as follows:

An overture from the Synod of Virginia to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, to meet in Greenville, S. C., May, 1906, on the subject of Polygamy.

Whereas, The missionaries of our church are confronted by polygamous sentiments and practices in

the States and Territories of our country, North and South, not only by Mormon citizens, but also among our Indians, and the inhabitants of our island possessions, and likewise in foreign lands; and

Whereas, Under the light of the gospel no man can marry a second wife while his first wife is still living in conjugal relation with him, without offending against the laws of Christ. Such relation is pronounced criminal by the United States Supreme Court and other courts, although it may be justified by heathen custom and law and be entered into in ignorance of the truth, yet it cannot be perpetuated nor connived at by one who has become a follower of Christ, neither can it be justified by the church; therefore, the Synod of Virginia solemnly invokes the General Assembly to make the following deliverance without delay, to-wit:

1. That no church under its care shall be allowed to tolerate the polygamous or concubinous relation on the part of any of its members whether in Christian or in heathen lands.

2. That when any man in polygamous relations offers for membership, every wife except the one first married, if alive and faithful, shall be repudiated.

3. That if the so-called wife or wives thus repudiated, or their children, or both, be dependent, then the church shall kindly assist him in their support, if need be.

Converts from heathenism should be treated very tenderly in this most painful situation, and yet they should be dealt with in all fidelity; and when a man is called to separate from all but his first and only wife, he should be enjoined to make provision for those from whom he is separated to the full extent of his ability. (See Moore's Digest, p. 507.)

4. In like manner, any woman in polygamous or

polyandrous relation shall abandon the same as a condition of Christian communion and church membership.

5. That the Committee on Home and Foreign Missions are hereby enjoined and ordered to promptly and firmly enforce this rule.

PLEASE NOTE.

(1) The preamble shows that this overture does not confine attention to the foreign missions, but contemplates the whole world wherever the gospel is preached and polygamy is found. But the overture is continually spoken of as relating only to the Foreign Missions. Read the "Whereas."

(2) The overture does not deal with an abstraction or an hypothetical case, *in thesi*, but with an actual state of fact, for there are a number of polygamists in our churches in Africa and China, notably at Luebo, in Africa. The live question before our church which this overture carries up to the General Assembly of 1906 is, whether still more polygamists shall be admitted or the door be closed against this heathen abomination, and those already in the church be required to renounce it, or by discipline be removed from the church.

It must amaze the most of your readers, that there should be any doubt or hesitation—indeed, that there should be any occasion for such an overture. But as a sad matter of fact, the garments of our church are being bedraggled in the mire and filth of this foul and intolerable practice. Our missionary work thus conducted must collapse on our hands sooner or later.

(3) No steps have yet been taken by the courts of the church toward the exclusion of those polygamists now in our church, though attention has been called

to it, nor have the missionaries who admitted them been restrained from admitting others at their discretion; they have not even been advised not to do so. As things now stand, who knows whereunto this thing will grow? So that it is now an open question whether the heathen are to be Christianized or our mission churches heathenized.

(4) All parties are agreed that polygamy is a sin, and that the polygamous relation is in violation of the law of monogamy, which was instituted by Christ as the law of his kingdom, and hence it is a sinful relation. Herein polygamy differs radically from slavery. The sacred Scriptures regulate the duties which spring out of the relation of the bond-servant to his master, but it does not recognize moral duties as springing out of sinful relations. The duty in that case is to abandon and break up the relation. The adulterer must separate from his mistress, or concubine. In the case of incest at Corinth, Paul took the case in hand and ordered that the licentious offender should at once be excommunicated—"delivered such a one unto Satan"—(Read the whole of 1 Cor. v.)—though the corrupt sentiment of the church had tolerated it.

(5) At the creation, the conjugal relation was ordained for the race between one man and one woman, and it is notable that conjugal duties are never recognized nor enjoined except as arising out of the monogamous relation of one man and his wife—*never wives*; or woman and her husband—*never husbands*. Jesus Christ lifted this natural law of monogamy binding on all men into the spiritual sphere of his church.

(6) The plural sex relation is one of adultery, whether by man or woman. The provision of the overture is that these adulterous relations shall not be admitted into the church nor tolerated in it.

(7) As a matter of fact, the *separation* contemplated in the overture has been egregiously misrepresented as iron-clad, harsh, and cruel. There is not a word of truth in such epithets. It is not unreasonable for a man to confine his attention as husband to his one wife. As to the other women, it is simply, in all reason and decency, required of him to discontinue cohabitation with them; but in no manner to discontinue his support of them and their children. His becoming a member of the church would not lessen his ability, and should increase his disposition to do so and to still be their best friend and protector, as in duty bound toward those dependent on him. The overture provides in terms that if he is not able to discharge fully these duties to those dependent upon him without aid, then the church shall aid him. Hence the entire mixed family would be placed in better living condition than before. This is kindness, not cruelty.

(8) Confession of Faith, chapter xxiv. "Of Marriage and Divorce," section first, is in the following words: "Marriage is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time." The overture is no stricter than this provision of the constitution of the church, and it is meant to render it operative; and it is not easy to see how anyone who accepts the constitution of the church can oppose this overture.

In many parts of the heathen world the woman is the breadwinner, and supports the man and their children; and hence the main result of the separation in such cases would be to set the loafer to work. As a rule, the described horrors of separation as thus contemplated are an utter fiction and fraud.

The church is bound to come to some such position

as this overture, or lose its purity and power. And the sooner it is done, after all this waiting and confusion, the better. Of all the churches on earth, one would suppose the Southern Presbyterian Church would most promptly and uncompromisingly unfurl its banner for Christ and the uncorrupted Christian family at home and abroad. If the present state of things is continued, how can our Southern Church be defended against the charge of being "*Polygamous Presbyterians?*"

The overture, with this comment, was published in *The Central Presbyterian*, *The Presbyterian Standard*, and *The Southwestern Presbyterian* after the action taken by the Synod of Virginia.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OVERTURE BEFORE THE SYNOD OF VIRGINIA.

The overture on Polygamy was laid before the Synod of Virginia at its meeting in Martinsburg in the fall of 1904, and by that body, on the recommendation of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, it was, without debate, committed to an *ad interim* committee to report to the Synod at its next meeting in 1905.

The report of the Committee of Bills and Overtures on the overture * * * touching the subject of polygamy, was taken from the docket, and after consideration was adopted, as follows (1904):

In reply to the overture, * * * the committee recommends that an *ad interim* committee of three ministers and two ruling elders be appointed to consider this whole subject and report to the Synod at its next meeting some suitable action.

A. M. FRASER, *Chairman*.

The Moderator announced the following *ad interim* committee on this paper: F. J. Brooke, D. D.; G. W. Finley, D. D.; R. H. Fleming, D. D.; and Ruling Elders T. B. Gresham and K. Kemper.

Subsequently, the name of the Rev. G. W. Painter, a missionary returned from China, was added to the *ad interim* committee.

The 118th Annual Session of the Synod of Virginia convened in Richmond (Va.) Second Presbyterian Church, October 26, 1905, at 8 p. m.

October 27, the *Ad Interim* Committee, Rev. F. J. Brooke, D. D., chairman, on the overture on Polygamy in the Mission Fields, presented its report:

Report of Ad Interim Committee on Overture Concerning Polygamy (1905).

Your committee to whom was referred the overture of the Rev. S. S. Laws, D. D., LL. D., introduced at the last meeting of Synod (see Minutes, 1904, pp. 38, 39), beg leave to report that, after the most careful, prayerful, and exhaustive study of the question, so far as we have had access to authorities, we are unable to come to an agreement so as to make a unanimous report. We therefore beg leave to say that your committee is agreed as to the law of marriage of the Bible being monogamy, and as to polygamy being a sin which should be extirpated by the church; but we differ so widely as to what method should be pursued by the church in the foreign field, that all we can do is to suggest to the Synod either (1) to continue the committee and enlarge it, or (2) to appoint a new committee to report to the next meeting of the Synod, or (3) to send the overture to the General Assembly without recommendation as to its action,

and request the Assembly to refer it to an *ad interim* committee for report.

Respectfully submitted,

F. J. BROOKE,
G. W. FINLEY,
G. W. PAINTER,
K. KEMPER,

Committee.

The other members of the committee were absent.

This report was laid over from time to time till the 31st, the last day of the session, when the following *substitute* was adopted, on the eve of adjournment:

The Synod of Virginia approves* and records the report of the *ad interim* committee on the overture of the Rev. Dr. Laws; commends the diligence and ability with which the committee has done its work, and places the following statements upon its minutes as an expression of opinion upon the subject of the overture:

1. The Synod recognizes the fact that the Scriptures unequivocally enjoin monogamy as the law of God and condemns polygamy as a sin.

2. The Synod is aware that the Assembly's Committee of Foreign Missions and all the missionaries of the Southern Church are in most cordial sympathy with this position.

3. A difference of opinion exists as to the best method of extirpating polygamy in the foreign field.

4. It is best not to reopen this question, but to leave it entirely where the Assembly of 1904 has already placed it.

5. That in the judgment of the Synod of Virginia it should be required and expected of our missionaries in all lands to teach, and to seek to exhibit in the lives of their converts the scriptural law of marriage, and the purity and happiness of the Christian home.

*Yet repudiated it.

This substitute, amended, for the report of the Committee on Polygamy in the Foreign Field, was adopted, and on motion the vote was recorded.

THE COMPLAINT.

Notice was promptly given the stated clerk that the overture would be carried up to the General Assembly by complaint, for reasons to be stated therein. This complaint was placed in the hands of the stated clerk of the Synod within the limit of ten days, as required, and several parties joined in it. (258 F. Gov.) I started to make it an individual complaint, but several brethren learning of it gave to the stated clerk their names, so that a number have joined in the complaint.

COMPLAINT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES, TO MEET IN GREENVILLE, S. C., MAY, 1906, AGAINST THE ACTION OF THE SYNOD OF VIRGINIA RELATIVE TO THE OVERTURE ON POLYGAMY.

[Book of Church Order, ch. v, 90: "The General Assembly shall have power to receive and issue all appeals, references, and complaints regularly brought before it from the inferior courts."]

By virtue of our right as members of the Presbyterian Church, South, and impelled by a profound sense of duty, we do hereby solemnly complain against the action of said Synod at its late meeting in Richmond, October 26 to October 31, 1905, relative to the overture to the General Assembly on Polygamy:—

1. Because the said action shut down on further inquiry,

whereas the *ad interim* committee reported without dissent in favor of further inquiry either by the Synod or by the General Assembly. If the committee, after having the subject under consideration for a year, felt the need of further investigation, the presumption is reasonable that most other members of the Synod, whose attention had not been specially turned to the subject, would have profited by further inquiry. Especially is this rendered probable in view of the declaration that it is "best not to reopen the question, but to leave it entirely where the Assembly of 1904 has already placed it."

This assumes that the Assembly of 1904 closed this question, whereas such an inference is deemed impossible from the facts in the case. And one of our Presbyteries, in reviewing the minutes, takes exception (as stated above) to the Assembly's ostensible answer as "not apparently touching the point raised by the overture." Certainly this point was by the constitution entitled to a pertinent response. The impression has been that the perturbed condition of the Mobile General Assembly diverted attention from the issue.

2. In the second place, we complain against this action of the Synod of Virginia, because the deliverance of the Mobile General Assembly, 1904, to which the Synod in this action gives its endorsement and approval, is in derogation of the constitutional power and duty of the Assembly, and imperils the purity, peace, and prosperity of our church in Christian as well as in heathen lands.

The Constitution of our Church, ch. xxiv, relates to marriage and divorce. We will quote sec. 1: "Marriage is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to

have more than one husband at the same time." When it is said "neither is it lawful for any man," "nor any woman," that means in the church or out of it. And the reason is that monogamy is not only the law of the Bible, but of nature; and the Saviour so expounds it (Matt. xix: 3-9, and Mark x: 2-9). But our chief concern is with the indisputable fact that this constitutional provision is binding on every lay and official member of our church, on every individual church, and all our church courts, sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies.

The language of the Larger Catechism, Q. 139, in enumerating "the sins *forbidden* in the VIIth Commandment," quite agrees with the Confession of Faith, and is as follows, viz.: "Undue delay of marriage, having more wives or husbands than once at the same time, unchaste company," &c.

In the administration of the government of the church under this constitution it is provided that the General Assembly of the church "represents in one body all the churches thereof and constitutes the bond of union, peace and correspondence among all its congregations and courts."

The General Assembly, therefore, represents not merely the church courts, but also the individual churches and congregations of our connection the world over.

Among the powers and corresponding duties with which the Assembly is invested, are enumerated the following, viz.: "*To give its advice and instruction, in conformity with the constitution, in all cases submitted to it.* * * * To concert measures for promoting the prosperity and enlargement of the church. * * * In general to recommend measures for the promotion of charity, truth and holiness through all the churches under its care."

Now this very overture respecting polygamy on which this Synod has just acted was "submitted" to the General Assembly of 1904, by one of its Presbyteries, and so far from that Assembly giving "advice and instruction, in conformity with the constitution" in the case thus submitted, as it was in duty bound to do, it not only failed to comply with the constitution by declining "to make any deliverance on this subject," and by allowing the actual existence and continuance of polygamy in our church without one word of advice or instruction touching it, but it thus, by doing nothing professedly, actually left the treatment of the whole subject to the discretion of the missionaries themselves, in the face of the fact that the missionaries thus entrusted with the discretionary disposal of the subject—a power not within the constitutional competence of the Assembly itself—had already admitted a number of polygamists to baptism and the communion of our church, without any advice or authority for so doing from their Presbyteries or any competent counsellor. This presumptuous and unconstitutional irregularity was disregarded and the question of dealing with polygamy was in this manner committed to the unrestrained and unregulated discretion of those who have already admitted it into our church—the lamb was committed to the care of the wolf—and thus the *door was set wide open*, not only for its continuance in but for its increase in the church. Is this a compliance with the duty of the Assembly "to *promote truth and holiness throughout all the churches under its care*?" and to maintain the law of monogamy in the church? "Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burnt?" (Prov. vi: 27).

In view of the state of fact here concisely given, and which

no man can truthfully deny or materially qualify, how can we defend our church against the (newspaper) charge of being "POLYGAMOUS PRESBYTERIANS"? It is no relief to be told, what may be true, that some others have pursued the same course, and are equally guilty of harboring polygamy within their communion. The simple truth is that this overture was originally drawn and submitted to save our church from this odious and sinful position.

At the time when this overture was submitted in 1904, there never had been, we believe, any deliverance by *our* General Assembly on the subject, so that, to the extent that it then existed in the church, it was wholly referable to individual responsibility; and the adoption of this overture, which individualizes no church but deals with the subject on principle and generically,* would have checked the matter at that point and been an effectual barrier to its further entrance into our church; whilst the adequate disciplinary provisions for dealing with all sinful practices within the church, would have soon rid us wholly of this accursed thing and saved our good name. But the General Assembly and the Synod of Virginia, by the actions in contemplation, have published this unfortunate position to the world, and sanctioned it, from which there is now no escape except by the reversal of these proceedings or deliverances, so contradictory to the constitution of our church and, we are constrained to say, so shocking to the Christian consciousness of God's people as immoral and unscriptural. There is manifest danger that confidence and interest in missionary work thus conducted will be seriously blighted.

* Abundant information was sent to the chairman of the Committee of Bills and Overtures as to polygamy in the Luebo church, Africa, as matter of fact, and there were two missionaries at the Assembly from Luebo.

Before God, therefore, we solemnly complain against this action of the Synod of Virginia as sanctioning and sharing the responsibility of the unconstitutional, unscriptural and unwise proceeding of the General Assembly of 1904 on the subject of polygamy, continuing polygamy in the church and leaving open the door for an unlimited increase of it.

3. We may say that there are two things commendable in the paper adopted by the Synod, in its substitute for the report of the *ad interim* committee to send the overture to the General Assembly: (1) One is its adoption of so much of the report of the *ad interim* committee as declares *monogamy the law of God* and *polygamy a sin*; (2) The other is the amendment by Dr. J. P. Smith: "5. That in the judgment of the Synod of Virginia it should be required and expected of our Missionaries in all lands to teach and to seek to exhibit in the lives of their converts the Scriptural law of marriage and the purity and happiness of the Christian home."

But who is to *require* the missionaries to do as specified? The Synod cannot do it. The Assembly of 1904 does not require it, nor even advise it, but leaves the matter unregulated to the missionaries in the field who have already so taught the law of marriage as to admit polygamists into the church.

But what authority does our church organization provide? Our answer must be, that the only *authority* competent to primarily call to account and to *require* of the missionary, or any other minister of our church, a given course of teaching and practice conformable to the constitution of the church, is the Presbytery. The Assembly, however, should and can approve or disapprove the practice.

But it is a matter of common knowledge that if the Assembly takes a position the Presbytery is virtually disarmed as

to dissenting disciplinary requirements and proceedings, for the case may be already predetermined by the final court of appeal. This is exactly what was done by the General Assembly of 1904, which ignored this very overture and committed this matter to the missionaries in the field, to which deliverance this Synod of Virginia in its action has given its adherence.*

And as this Assembly deliverance, unless repealed, commits our church to the existence and continuance of polygamy in our communion, how can any of us, we ask again, defend our Southern Church against the charge that it is a polygamous church? for it recognizes actual polygamists as church members and communicants without renouncing their polygamy and this by its highest church court; and has not advised, nor recommended any steps for the discontinuance of such membership, nor the closing of the church door against the further reception of such members. Yet, in the very face of this condition of things, the Synod has declined to forward to the Assembly this overture which proposes a definite, a constitutional, a just and kindly and thorough and lasting disposal of the subject, and furnishes an occasion and reason for the reconsideration of the whole subject by the General Assembly.

We submit that the language and spirit of the Smith amendment may be legitimately pleaded in support of the General Assembly giving the subject further consideration.

* Ecclesiastically there are two methods of procedure: (1) One is administrative by the direct supervisory action of the General Assembly, which is brief and effective as the constitution provides; (2) the other is the judicial, vexatious, and wearisome way, beginning in the Presbytery by indictment, &c. If necessary, resort will be had to the second; the overture appeals to the first, and we think wisely.

For it is neutralized and handicapped and like a honey bee in a hornet's nest, by the action of which it is part.

4. We complain again of the attempt to extirpate polygamy either in the church or in the world *by admitting it into the church, and harboring it there*, either temporarily or permanently. It belongs to the camp of an implacable enemy. Could gambling, a less heinous sin than polygamy, be lessened or extirpated from any community by admitting known gamblers into the church and genteel society whilst pursuing their nefarious practices? If so, then may polygamy be extirpated by entertaining it and compromising with it.

5. There are two additional and important reasons for this complaint that ought to be mentioned at this time.

One is the persistent misconception of the separation contemplated in the overture. The provisions of the overture were represented as iron-clad, harsh and cruel. And those who thus spoke against it, doubtless spoke their convictions and aroused unreasonable prejudice and opposition; the only explanation of which would seem to be a failure to give it and the general subject due consideration.

The truth of the case is that the separation provided for in the overture places all of the members of the polygamist's mixed family in a better condition than previously, not only morally but in a business way.

The separation of the man as husband is simply and only from all other women than his one wife. The indecency and gross licentiousness of cohabiting with more, or other, than the one true wife, is to be abandoned because wrong and sinful. The Synod avows that it is sinful, and yet tolerates it.

But the overture provides that the obligation to support

and care for those thus separated remains in full force. His becoming a Christian does not lessen the man's ability to provide for those made dependent on him; indeed, his conscientious disposition to discharge this binding obligation will add strength to his natural resources. Besides, it seems to be overlooked that the overture in terms provides "that if the so-called wife or wives thus repudiated as wives, or their children, or both, be dependent, then the church shall kindly assist him in their support, if need be." There, in this same section, kindly words of tender treatment are spoken.

The charge of harshness and unkindness is an inexcusable *perversion* of the spirit and very language of the overture. Moreover, it is in terms enjoined that, when the separation has taken place and he has made provision for those hitherto dependent on him by his own voluntary choice, "to the full extent of his ability," then, if need be, the church shall aid him. The language is: "The church shall aid and assist him in their support, if need be." (Par. 3.) Hence the manifest betterment of the condition of all concerned. Their natural right implies his natural duty, as a man, which is favorably emphasized by his becoming a Christian. In the ethical system of Confucius the whole subject of right and duty is concentrated in the one word *Reciprocity*. To see the church of Christ thus acting, by firmly opposing polygamy but kindly and generously dealing with those who renounce it, would indeed sap the very foundations of heathen polygamy, instead of encouraging it by taking it into the bosom of the church.

There is kindness as well as Christian wisdom and duty in all this treatment of the polygamists set forth in the over-

ture; and to suggest that a convert could not be trusted in such a case to have virtuous and friendly association with those of his former household, is to say he is not a Christian, and has not the grace to do his duty. To assume that a man will not, as a Christian, care for those dependent on him unless he still cohabits with the women and mothers of his children in his heathen state, is a beastly and godless assumption not to be allowed. Besides, the discipline of the church would look after that as after any other sin. (Rules of Discipline, §§ 145, 146, 152.)

To attempt to saddle upon the separation from a polygamous and adulterous life, provided for in this overture, our just condemnation of the divorce practice, so lamentably rife in our midst, is to transmute a benevolent and virtuous Christian act into a foul misdeed.

In heathen lands the separation contemplated is in no proper sense a divorce at all. It is distinctly provided that the real and only wife shall retain her conjugal relation; and the relation to the other women is simply sinful, as avowed by the committee and the Synod, and the sin is obviously that of adultery. So that the call is to break off this odious and intolerable sin by the righteousness of a monogamous Christian life. If polygamy is a sin, as conceded, then as there is certainly no sin in his relation to the true wife, the sin must be in his relation to other women than this wife. And that is adultery. And the separation of these unwedded partners in adultery is not a divorce at all.

We have before us a recent work on *China in Law and Commerce*, by T. R. Jernigan, and will quote from p. 113 this paragraph as a searchlight on the condition of society in

that country, which is much the same as among other polygamous peoples:

"Neither custom nor law allows a Chinese to have more than one legal wife, and if he transgresses he would be as promptly punished under the Code as if convicted of bigamy under English law. But while forbidden to have more than one legal wife, he may have as many concubines as he feels able to take care of, and there is this peculiarity that his legal wife is selected for him, while his concubines are chosen by himself."

Still further in regard to *the separation*. This is the crucial point—the trying test in receiving or rejecting polygamists as church members. It is urgently charged that it involves cruelty and wrong, and even sin. Pathetic and harrowing descriptions are given of the divorced wives and children reduced to want, and beggary, and crime. That this is in general a cruel misrepresentation, will appear from several considerations.

In the first place, the only separation contemplated and demanded is that of confining the distinctive attentions of a husband to the one wife, and withdrawing such attentions from all other women. The case is substantially brought out in one of the polygamous Mormon cases, as dealt with under Congressional law. When Utah was a Territory, Congress had a perfect right to legislate on the subject of polygamy in it as a Territory, whereas it has no right under the Constitution, as it now stands, to legislate on it in a State in which it takes place, for the individual States have never delegated to Congress power over it in their several territories. But some have complained that Congress dealt too mildly with it in

Utah, when it was the joint territory of the States, as its territorial laws were less exacting than the laws of the several States. However, fines, imprisonment, disfranchisement, and confiscation were pronounced and executed penalties. The representative of the Territory (Cannon) was expelled from Congress because a polygamist. A number of their leading men were indicted as polygamists, and some confessed, paid their fines, and returned to their church duties. But Joseph E. Taylor refused to promise discontinuance, and was fined. This apostle, Taylor, thus states the issue. He said: "This brings us to the question at issue. What shall be done with plural wives who entered into the relation prior to the decision of the court of last resort? Shall they be abandoned, one and all, or, as in my case, shall I select one of the two plural wives named in the complaint—there being no legal wife? If so, which one?—and live with her exclusively, discarding the other, and that, too, without consulting her at all in the matter, and say to her: 'Hereafter you must not come near me. I will give you food and clothing for yourself and children, but you must seek other society than mine.'"

"To this the reply was simply that these plural wives shall be abandoned (as wives): They ought to be supported. But what the law does demand, and what Christian civilization demands, and what common decency demands, is that a man shall not live with more than one woman as a husband; that he shall not cohabit with her (such other woman), and beget children by her." (P. 224, Folk's Mormon Monster.)

This is substantially the issue which the overture contemplates that should be made with the polygamist heathen: He is not called on to utterly abandon and forsake them at all,

but to still support them and act as their best and loyal friend in providing for and aiding the women and the children in life's struggle. Nay, even the church is to aid and supplement his efforts, thus easing life's struggle. His becoming a Christian does not lessen his ability to support them, and certainly should not lessen his disposition to do so. But he is to confine his attention to one woman as husband—"cohabit with her and beget children by her alone." The restraint is placed on his cohabitation, and not on his watchful and even increased and sympathetic care of all dependent on him. Yet he, like other Christian and decent men, is to confine his sexual indulgence or cohabitation within the bounds of his monogamous conjugal relations. This is reasonable, and *from a Christian standpoint it is an imperative duty*. Listen to the language of the constitution of our church: "*Neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time.*" "Any man" makes the law of monogamy universal, *i. e.*, a natural law founded, as Christ expounds it, in the nature of man as originally created, which never has been repealed, and which no human authority can repeal, and which law is republished and sanctified by Jesus Christ as the law of his kingdom, so that it is thus rendered not merely the law of the natural but of the new man. The violation of a law does not abrogate it. The toleration of polygamy in the church of Christ is rank treason. Monogamy, however, remains the fundamental law of the kingdom of Christ.

No appeal has been made, as might have been done, to the notorious fact that in many, if not most, heathen communities, the women, like slaves, largely support the husband and

the children, so that the main consequence of separation is to set the loafing so-called husband to work. Nowhere is this more true than in Africa and among our Indians.

6. The only additional reason that will now be brought forward is the serious *degradation* of the church involved in its toleration of polygamy. Yes, our church is at this time tolerating polygamy in the church at Luebo,* without inquiring now about other cases in China. The General Assembly of 1904 says hands off; leave it to the missionaries on the ground—the very parties who have admitted it into the church, and are now busy in the church and church courts here at home in defending and advocating its continuance. The General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church has acquiesced in this polygamous state of the church, and allowed its continuance and increase without restraint. We complain against the action of the Synod of Virginia indorsing this condition of things, and yet we have faith that the time will come when fuller information and wiser counsels will prevail and rectify the sad situation, by the adoption of this neglected overture or something equivalent to it. Its truth may for the time be crushed to earth, but it will rise again.†

* Since writing this I have a letter from Dr. Chester, given later, in which he concedes that it is also in the Chinese churches. But he disclaims all responsibility, and places that on the General Assembly, as the committee is simply executive.

† The following letter was received from a medical missionary in China, from which I feel at liberty to make some quotations. It is dated at Suchien, China, February 23, 1906:

“Dr. S. S. LAWS, Washington, D. C.

“DEAR SIR: I feel, in your agitating the question of polygamy on the foreign field, that we women missionaries may have a say. I have been a hearty sympathizer in the movement, and hope you will not let

The proof that the present position of our church, and of all other churches which may occupy the same ground, degrades the church below the secular State on the subject of polygamy and of polygamous cohabitation, is easily available and unanswerable.

Whatever the conjecture in regard to the precise steps taken in the organization of human associations and states by man in his lapsed condition, we are not left to conjecture as to the attitude of civilized states, and especially of the United States and of the great mass of Christians, on this vitally important subject. In 1862 the United States Congress first passed the Cullom law making, in a Territory, the act of polygamous marriage unlawful. The Mormons claimed that the law was unconstitutional, because it was an infraction of their right and way to worship God. But in the Reynolds case, 1878, the Supreme Court of the United States declared this law against polygamy valid in all re-

it rest where the Synod of Virginia left it. Missionaries are men of many minds, and so important a matter should not be left to them as individuals.

"I say baptism should be deferred until the Lord opens up the way. The Roman Catholics allow none in their church.

"In my medical work and conversation with the women, I have seen a great deal of polygamous homes, and I feel assured the religion of Christ can not flourish in a home of that kind. No mother in China who has any respect for herself or her daughter would consent to giving her child as a secondary wife. It is always done by those who love money more than a good name. The first wife is often the one who gets the second wife, because she herself has no son. In several cases I know the husband had nothing to do with it.

"Trusting you may be guided in all things,

"Yours in a common cause,

"ANNIE H. PATTERSON."

(Wife of Rev. A. Craig Patterson, missionary of our Lexington Presbytery.)

spects. We will quote from Chief Justice Waite's opinion, as follows: "Polygamy has always been odious among the northern and western nations of Europe, and until the establishment of the Mormon Church, was almost exclusively a feature of the Asiatic and African people * * *. By statute of James I of England the offense (of polygamy) was made punishable with death." (This was the penalty in the Mosaic code. Deuteronomy xxii: 22-25.) The judge continues:

"It is a significant fact that on the 8th of December, 1788, after the act establishing religious freedom, and after the convention of Virginia had recommended as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the declaration of the bill of rights that 'all men have an equal, natural and inalienable right to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience,' the legislature of that State substantially enacted the Statute of James I, the death penalty included, because, as recited in the preamble, 'it hath been doubted whether bigamy and polygamy be punishable by the laws of the commonwealth.' From that day to this, we think it may safely be said there never has been a time in any State of the Union when polygamy has not been an offense against society, cognizable by the civil courts and punishable with more or less severity." * * *

"Can a man excuse his practice to the contrary because of his religious belief? To permit this would be to make the professed doctrines of religious belief superior to the law of the land and in effect to permit every citizen to become a law unto himself. Government could exist only in name under such circumstances."

Thus far Chief Justice Waite.

So also in *Murphy vs. Ramsey* (114 U. S. S., p. 45), construing the Edmunds Act, Justice Matthews says:

* * * * *

"The act in question not only punished polygamy but also unlawful cohabitation, and declared ineligible for office any person who maintained the status of a polygamist or cohabiter with more than one woman. Section 8 of that act is as follows:

"That no polygamist, bigamist, or any person cohabiting with more than one woman, and no woman cohabiting with any of the persons described as aforesaid in this section, in any Territory or other place over which the United States have exclusive jurisdiction, shall be entitled to *vote*," &c. * * *

It is observed that:

"This law has not only the force of a public law, but it was the outcome of years of agitation and reflection. It crystallized the sober sense of the American people; it represented the settled views of our wisest and most conservative statesmen, and later received the stamp of approval from the Supreme Court of the United States in many well-considered cases and was made the subject of felicitous proclamations by the Presidents." (President Harrison, 1892, and President Cleveland, 1894.)

The Edmunds-Tucker Law was passed 1882. Brigham Roberts married a second and bigamous wife, 1885, having married his first wife prior to 1882; and he was by the United States Court put in the penitentiary for this offense of bigamy or polygamy of the lowest grade. He was also denied a seat in Congress after serving his term in prison.

Have we sufficiently considered that, if our Luebo Church

were in United States territory, these polygamist members of our church would be in like manner liable to imprisonment as criminals, and the American people would say, Amen. Yet their sin there, morally, is just the same as it would be here.

This would be a lesson forever in the relation of church and State which we should not be willing either to deserve or to learn. The only barrier to all polygamous Mormons now being thus proceeded against is the subsequently forged shield of Statehood.

Thus we see that in its territorial condition the United States authorities in Utah treated polygamy as a *felony* and put Brigham H. Roberts in the penitentiary for taking a second wife and having and cohabiting with several women at the same time. Yet our church at Luebo has a number of bigamists and polygamists, in holy communion with us who, in our country, by the law of the land would be liable to be put in prison,—it might be in the penitentiary, as criminals!

If this does not show our church to be on a lower plane on the subject of polygamy than the secular State, then language and facts have lost their significance.

The force of this appeal to the decisions of the courts is not, as has been charged, to derive the law of church action from the State, but to fix attention on the endorsement that reason gives to monogamy as a law of nature and confirmatory of the teaching of Christ and the Bible. The argument is valid and forcible and is technically termed *a fortiori*.

We cannot mutely consent to our church living a double life, having one standard of Christian communion and morals in foreign lands and another at home. We cannot consent to live in fellowship with such a vulgar and unchristian practice.

It would be in accord with the kindly treatment suggested in the overture to collect those who manifest an interest in the religion of the missionary into groups outside the church for instruction and observation. It would protect the church in its purity and present an uncompromising and truly conciliatory front as witnessing to the truth of God against this great evil. This probationary treatment is practiced by some; it is practiced at Luebo; and yet the sin of polygamy and the necessity of its renunciation as a condition of baptism are seemingly not taught the probationers. The fault is with the missionary; it is practicable to thus arrange because only a fraction of the heathen, Mohammedans, Mormons, or Indians, are polygamists. The poor, who are the great masses of all peoples, are monogamists. The poor in all ages and in all lands constitute the numerical and spiritual strength of the Christian Church. This overture provides that the rich and the poor, male and female, shall enter and stand in the church on the same footing, for it is not lawful in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, "for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time."

For the above reasons and others which we need not now mention, we, the undersigned, respectfully ask that the General Assembly reverse the aforesaid action of the Synod of Virginia and refer the overture to an *ad interim* committee of its own to report on the whole subject at the next Assembly in 1907.

(The variation from the filed complaint is not material.)

To repel with temper the intimation that the Southern Presbyterian Church is a polygamist church because a few polygamists are in it, as a hasty and unwarranted gen-

eralization and slander, is an impotent cry to which the public will, under the existing circumstances, pay no heed. For should a body be branded as a band of thieves because only a few guilty of theft had gained entrance into it? Surely not. But if the entrance is challenged and the door is by formal action left open and those who had entered are enrolled and treated as regular members of the fraternity, with the understanding that all who shall enter the same door will be fraternized in like manner, the gnashing of wrathful teeth would only be self-condemnation. This would stamp the body as a band of thieves, it matters not how many honest men are in it or individual protests are made.

I hope all will get wrathful and then turn their wrath against its true object—this infamous practice and the support of it—and not against anyone endeavoring to check and to remove from the church this great evil.

“Did you not promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity and peace of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?” Every member of a Session, a Presbytery, a Synod or of the General Assembly has answered this question in the affirmative, and is under the same vow as myself.

CHAPTER VIII.

ADDRESS TO SYNOD IN PART.

Whilst the overture was pending before the Synod of Virginia, I submitted an address in part as follows:

In calling attention to this state of fact, I do not wish to be understood as doing more than pointing out, by way of revived or imparted information, an adequate reason for renewing the overture, especially under the auspices of the

Synod of Virginia, of which I am a member and whose prestige may make sure of adequate and proper attention to it. Of course, proper allowance must be made for the somewhat perturbed condition of that Mobile General Assembly, a sort of distraction not likely to occur again very soon. But no question of this nature is ever finally settled till it is settled right.

If there is any question which involves the purity of the church of Christ and the well-being of society, whether heathen or Christian, that of polygamy must be recognized as doing so. It vitally touches the family—the fountain-head of individual, social and public morals and religion. It touches the vital question as to the heaven-ordained and sacred relation of the sexes of the human race in regard to the sole and only rightful condition of parentage, the multiplication and perpetuation of that race.

This is a subject in which every humanitarian, every good citizen, as well as every Christian, should take a decided interest. But upon none does the obligation to do so press more heavily than upon the officers of the Presbyterian Church. We are all under a solemn ordination vow to be faithful and zealous in maintaining “the *purity* and *peace* of the church.” That comprehends the entire situation. That vow was taken by myself 54 years ago this very month, and in ways I need not recount, in a somewhat eventful and active life, it has been held and kept in sacred remembrance and observance.

There are perhaps 15 to 20 polygamous families in our church at Luebo,* on the Kassai, a southern tributary of the

* This was the public statement of Rev. W. H. Morrison in his Sunday evening discourse, March 20, 1904, in Washington, D. C., in Dr. Pitzer's church, and repeated by the secular papers on Monday morn-

Congo river, in the Congo Free State, whose beginnings are so tenderly associated with the career and death of some of our missionaries, especially the lamented Lapsley.

II. The overture which is now before this Synod provides for the enactment of an ecclesiastical statute or law to render operative throughout the bounds of our church the provision of the constitution of our Southern Presbyterian Church on the subject of polygamy.

1. The *constitution* of the church is like the constitution of a State. A constitution defines and enumerates certain distinctive powers and regulative measures, but these provisions of a constitution, which organize the body for which it is enacted and provides the powers and constituent conditions of its existence and specific operation, are not like the laws of nature, self-acting. It is the function of statute laws and by-laws to provide the ways and means whereby these constitutional provisions become unequivocally operative. To see the Constitution of the United States of America as a living and working organism, you must take into account not only the Constitution itself, but also the immense body of United States statutes and the interpretation of the same relative thereto by the courts. The same is true of every one of the States—its constitution and State statutes must both be reckoned with.

Now, what is thus true of these political bodies is also true of our Presbyterian Church. We are not a conglomerate of individual and merely sympathetic entities, but a homo-

ing and evening. At Synod of Virginia, 1905, Dr. Morrison restated four or five families, but remarked the principle is the same. In a letter to myself, June 28, 1904, Dr. W. M. Morrison writes: "Now what I did say was this: We have a *few* men in our African church who have two wives. There are perhaps not more than fifteen or twenty in the over two thousand membership."

geneous constitutional body. The Confession of Faith and the catechisms, form of government, and our consistent deliverances, constitute us an ecclesiastical organization, which organization differentiates us from all other bodies.

Whenever a constitution provides for certain ends by positive or negative conditions, legislative enactments are thereby authorized and required in order to their realization, and a failure to make such provision, or to make provisions or to sanction proceedings subversive of the same, would be of the nature of grave disloyalty to that constitution. For example: The United States Constitution provides that "No preference shall be given by any regulation of commerce or revenue to the ports of one State over those of another." Now an act of Congress making such discrimination would be pronounced by the court void *ab initio*: and the Government would be liable, I presume, for any damage consequent. Again: Another provision of the United States Constitution is that Congress shall have power "To establish an uniform rule of naturalization." This, in view of the vast immigration to our shores, has a tremendous sweep. Now: suppose that Congress should enact generally that those naturalized should renounce all allegiance to any and every foreign sovereignty and swear allegiance to the United States of America alone, except that all polygamists that come to our shores should be allowed to retain their allegiance and loyalty to the foreign powers from which they come. Would that be a rule that treated all parties uniformly and justly? And would our people and courts sanction it by tamely submitting to such discrimination, admitting disloyal polygamists as citizens? Never—with a voice of thunder it may and must be answered—No, NEVER. All foreign allegiance must be equally abjured by every one

admitted to the sanctities, the rights, and privileges of our citizenship, be he who or come whence he may.

The actual state of fact is much stronger than this hypothetical case. The United States Immigration Law provides that, among other classes enumerated, "polygamists," "anarchists" and "prostitutes" "shall be excluded from admission into the United States" (Immigration Laws, Bureau of Commerce and Labor, § 5). Polygamists, therefore, are not only denied the oath of citizenship, but are even excluded from entering the country. This policy is pursued by the State as a matter of self-preservation.

Admission to state citizenship is somewhat like admission to church membership. Certain conditions, compatible with the constitution of the body entered, must be complied with; and the attempt to pursue or enforce any course of action incompatible with constitutional provisions would and should be deemed and treated as revolutionary and subversive—as complicity with anarchy and treason. And still further, what would be thought of certain officials, under oath, who should undertake, on their individual responsibility, to install aliens in the privileges of citizenship not only without the authority of statute law, but in violation of the fundamental law?

The parties who have admitted these polygamists into our church in Africa and elsewhere have thus acted in violation of their vows and of the constitution of the church. And to ignore the fact that this foul abomination has been admitted into the bosom of our church, whatever may be the circumstances of that admission, and claims increase and continuance therein would be connivance at sin, and dealing falsely with a most serious state of case that imperils the peace and purity of our church—its very existence as a church of Christ.

The uniformity of demanding exclusive allegiance to it in the inducting of aliens into the citizenship of the kingdom of Christ, is as important as allegiance in any earthly kingdom or state. There is no valid ground of naturalization till the candidate renounces all allegiance to every foreign power and positively bows to the exclusive sovereign authority of the United States. There is no conclusive evidence that any man is a genuine child of God and a follower of Christ until he renounces all known sin, all other allegiance, and acknowledges allegiance alone to our King in Zion, in the exercise of genuine faith and repentance. But this no man can do *who clings to any known sin*.* It is conceded and declared in this report of the *ad interim* committee now before us that polygamy is a sin; and clinging to it is refusing to renounce allegiance to the sinful kingdom of darkness and an attitude of subordination to it. It is pre-eminently the

* It borders on the incredible when it is stated that this principle of the renunciation of all foreign allegiance, in this case allegiance to Satan in the practice of known sin, as a condition of church membership, was repudiated on the floor of the Synod by the president of King's College, Tennessee (Dr. Ramsay), who vociferously proclaimed that it would wreck not only our mission churches, but our home churches. I arose in my place, with the privilege, and asked him if he would admit into the church persons who would not make this renunciation, and he did not even qualify his declaration. But the amazing thing that followed was, that an ex-moderator (Dr. Hopkins) of our General Assembly indorsed this view, and repeated the declaration that it would wreck our mission churches. The old-fashioned and scriptural requirement that every convert from the kingdom of darkness should renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, was in the debate repudiated. Strange and incredible as this may seem to old-fashioned Christians, it is nevertheless sadly true. This startling diversion occurred just before the vote. Of course the renunciation would have swept aside polygamy and made the vote given impossible.

badge of loyalty to Satan: and no man that clings to it, can join in the song of the Saints:

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou henceforth my all shalt be.
Let the world neglect and leave me;
They have left my Savior too;
Human hopes have oft deceived me,
Thou art faithful, thou art true.

"Perish earthly fame and treasure,
Come disaster, scorn and pain;
In thy service, pain is pleasure;
With thy favor, loss is gain.
O 'tis not in grief to harm me,
While thy bleeding love I see;
O 'tis not in joy to charm me,
When that love is hid from me."

"He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy." (Prov. 28: 13.) The heathen applicant cannot be supposed to question the missionary's instruction as to the sin of polygamy and the shortness of the time beforehand is not material. The simple question is, whether he has been so informed. If so, in coming into the church he knows that he is bringing his sin with him, if he does not leave and renounce it at the door of the church. This simple fundamental principle of renunciation carries polygamy overboard. It is not the intelligence of the candidate but of the missionary or evangelist that is the criterion of known sin to be renounced.

3. Let us look at the constitution or fundamental law of our church and see what its deliverance is on the conjugal relation and on this very subject of polygamy. I will quote

two passages which are clear and sufficient. Confession of Faith, ch. xxiv: 1—"Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time."

In the Larger Catechism in the answers to Questions 138 and 139 on the seventh commandment, among the duties required are enumerated, "Chastity in body * * and the preservation of it in ourselves and others * * marriage by those that have not the gift of continence, conjugal love, and cohabitation," and among the sins forbidden, "having more wives or husbands than one at the same time."

Here, then, in language too plain and full in these passages to admit of any doubt, question, or controversy, monogamy among church members—not to speak of all others outside the churches—is enjoined and every kind and gradation of conjugal plurality is forbidden. *Even the General Assembly has no right—nor the shadow of a right—to order or to authorize or allow it otherwise, as it has done in the retention of polygamists in our church or the admission of them into it, so long as the constitution remains as it is.* For individual missionaries to claim the right to set up this Dagon in the temple of our God is a daring and reckless presumption; and the possibility of its occurrence without discipline shows the necessity of a prompt and plain remedial and directive action. The General Assembly should direct its churches at Luebo and elsewhere to discipline their members who are notoriously and openly living in the sin of polygamy and to expel them unless they renounce it. They are shamelessly living and cohabiting with several women. With equally dutiful authority the Assembly should interdict the admission of any one in unrenounced polygamous relations.

What a constitution forbids, a body organized under that constitution and for the purpose of its maintenance cannot lawfully do, approve, or tolerate. It would be suicidal, self-destructive, for the United States Government as a body to sanction or tolerate a monarchical state, as it would be subversive of the Republic.

4. Let it be particularly observed that the avowed aim and purport of this overture before the Synod, is to lay down a rule or ecclesiastical statute to render the provisions of the constitution of our church operative. It was deliberately drawn in harmony with the provisions respecting the conjugal relation so explicitly embodied in the fundamental law of our church: and the very last word in the overture designates it a "rule." The rules of discipline are for those within the church. This overture chiefly provides for dealing with polygamists not yet in the church—with outsiders. As a rule it would be an authoritative order for the enforcement of laws in harmony with the constitution of the church. If there is any discrepancy between this overture and the constitution, please point it out.* And if there is no discrepancy but perfect agreement, between this overture and the constitution, as has justly been argued by the chairman of our *ad interim* committee, then let those who oppose it have the courage to confess themselves to be in opposition to the constitution of the church in this matter, and

* This overture broadly enunciates the intolerance of polygamy in the church of Christ everywhere in the wide world where our church order exists, or shall exist. As to those in the church already, it simply stimulates into effective action the existing rules of discipline against "anything in the principles or practice of a church member professing faith in Christ which is contrary to the word of God proved to be such from scripture, as interpreted in these standards" (Book D, ch. 3, §152), and it effectually limits and bars further admission of polygamy.

consistently propose an alteration of that constitution, for it gives no countenance to any imaginable scheme of gradual emancipation from the Satanic bonds of polygamy. "NEITHER IS IT LÁWFUL," and no circumstances, or conditions, or palliations, or compromises are allowed as capable of rendering it lawful for a moment. Brethren, do you hear those words of our constitution—"Neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife" in the church or out of it? It is an absolute and unconditional prohibition without any temporizing with or connivance at any departure from the strictest monogamy equally on the part of man and woman. There is a curious story of a missionary among the Mohawk Indians, in colonial days, undertaking to gradually reform their polygamous practices by reducing them to bigamy. That foolish adventure may seem even more rational than the scheme of attempting to exorcise the demon of polygamy by admitting it to the communion of the church where it ought of itself to be ashamed to appear. A pertinent story is told of an industrial girl who, overtaken by darkness in the short days, as she was as usual going some distance from the ferry to her home alone, a rude, unknown fellow stepped up and offered to accompany her. She declined, stating she had company; but he persisted and finally he remarked that she certainly had no company. "Yes," said she, "*The Lord Jesus Christ is with me and His arm will protect me.*" "Oh," said the fellow, "well, I don't keep that sort of company," and quit her. But if the wicked imp receive the slightest encouragement it will be as difficult to shake off from the back of the church as a monkey from the back of a pony. And missionaries tell us that the polygamists admitted to church communion become advocates of

it, and it is natural that they should. Hence—*obsta principiis*—oppose the beginnings, the initial steps of evil: or it will be like the letting out or leakage of water—the seeping of the dam may soon so swell as to carry away the breastwork and overwhelm all before it in desolation. Give an inch and it will take an ell: admit the nose of the camel and soon its whole ugly body will be installed in the tent, and the legitimate occupant kicked out. Yes, the very existence of the church as a holy family is imperiled.

The General Assembly is as really at fault in sanctioning individual proceedings violative of the Constitution of the church as it would be by a formal enactment setting aside the requirements of the Constitution. This is what has been done. It may palliate the individual action that there is an absence of a specific enactment, but it does not justify it.

As I understand it, there is not now and never has been a formulated *rule* of action on this subject in the Southern Presbyterian Church. It is matter of principle and not of expediency and hence cannot be left to discretion, individual or collective, but should be disposed of by its authority to define action under the constitution. Other churches and organized mission bodies have provided for its regulation as we shall see, though we are supposed to be exceptionally well equipped for the task; yet some of our most valuable testimony in support of not baptizing polygamists is from Congregationalists, Methodists and Episcopalians. The Catholics also have a formally prohibitory statute. The same is true of the Episcopal and Methodist churches. It is perfectly within our competence and is demanded by our very system of church order, and by our actual experience, as an imperative duty. This subject is a matter of too great importance to be

left any longer to the contingencies of individual discretion in the field. It was so thought in the actions of 1875 and 1896 of the Northern General Assembly. (See Moore's Digest, Polygamy, pp. 286, 860.)

The absence of a rule may mitigate the individual irregularity, but by not means authorizes the sanction of it.

The foreign mission work is the work of the home church: and it is the irresponsible proceeding of individual discretion or indiscretion that has plunged our church (at Luebo) into this foul polygamous whirlpool to the mortification and disgust of not a few. There are in that Luebo Church perhaps 15 or 20 polygamous families.* Hence, this overture is not dealing with an abstract case *en thesi*, but with a case *de facto*. These men are in the church and cohabiting with different women with the full knowledge and approval of the missionaries on the ground, however demoralizing, disgusting, and incredible. Suppose that some of those polygamists—some of this new type of saints—with their two or more wives were in Richmond now. Would you welcome them to your private houses or tables? If not, then would you welcome them to the Lord's table? If not, then your Christian judgment and your feelings are set against this pollution of the very fountain of the communion of saints, and prompt you in favor of this filtration and exclusion overture. But how is this? The communion of saints is catholic. A church communicant with us anywhere is one everywhere. This is the only rule. A sin excluding from the church here, excludes there.

* After stating in public discourse and in a letter to myself that there were fifteen to twenty of these polygamous families, on the floor of the Virginia Synod, at Richmond, Dr. Morrison corrected himself by saying "there are five or six polygamous families in the Luebo Church. The principle is the same."

CHAPTER IX.

BIBLE ARGUMENT.

PART 1. NEW TESTAMENT.

But back of all this is the question *whether this provision of the Constitution of the church*, which calls aloud for some such operative rule as is proposed in this overture, is *sustained by the word of God*. If it is thus sustained, then rebellion against it, is also rebellion against God. The presumption is in favor of the existing law, which has had the sanction of God's people of the Presbyterian Church for centuries, and also the presumption is in favor of whatever is needful and proper to give it operative efficiency. This, of course, casts the burden of proof, the *onus probandi*, on the opposition, to show, if you can, that this accepted monogamy law is not scriptural. But all that technicality is waived; and it is proposed now to submit a positive scriptural support of the constitution as it has been quoted, and has stood 260 years, and that is the support of the rule proposed for enforcement in this overture.

We claim no power as a church to decree rights and ceremonies, but we do claim the right and acknowledge the duty to ascertain and declare the laws of our crowned King in Zion. Our power and duty are declarative and administrative. We go at once to the Bible as the royal charter of his kingdom.

a. The Savior made four distinct deliverances on this subject—the subject of the conjugal relation. Let us consider them, for they completely cover the case before us:

(1) The *first* was in the so-called Sermon on the Mount

(Matt. v: 32): "It was said also,—i. e., in past time—Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her, when she is put away, committeth adultery." (Deut. xxiv: 1-2.) The allusion in this passage is to Deut. xxiv: 1-2, where it is provided that a separation should be certified by a writing given to the woman by the man. The justifiable reason for this procedure is given (Heb.) as a *matter of nakedness*, an expression which is equivocal to us and may mean either a physical or a moral defectiveness. This expression often means sexual unchasteness (Levit. 18). But how can it mean adultery here for, for that, she was to die (Deut. xxii: 22), for even the suspicion of it, the ordeal of the waters of jealousy was prescribed (Num. v: 29-31). Whereas the bill of divorce provided by Moses freely allowed subsequent marriage—"she may go and be another man's wife." May it not be that the whole procedure, instead of arising out of a consummated marriage relation, was antenuptial? When, in oriental style, the bride elect was unveiled, if some physical defect such as sore eyes, ugliness or any unexpected thing that provoked his disgust and aversion was disclosed, the nuptial proceedings might end right there, and the man should give a writing certifying the dissolution and release, which would certify her personal innocence and serve to shield her against the ill usage of disappointed and hard-hearted kinfolk. As a virgin, with this clean paper in hand, her "nakedness" or misfortune might not discredit her in the esteem of perhaps as good or a better and more sensible and considerate man.

It is easy to see how this ante-nuptial and extraordinary proceeding might become an occasion of perverted notions and practices touching the real marriage relation.

In this instance, therefore, the Savior seriously rectifies didactically a perverted practice which sanctioned actually unwarranted divorces*—ostensibly complying with certain alleged literalities, but neglectful of the true spirit of the transaction. Fancies give way to facts.

(2) The *second* instance of his discoursing on the marriage relation is given in Matt. xix: 2-9 and Mark x: 2-9. These go together.

There were two Rabbinical schools—that of the noted Hillel, in which very lax notions of the conjugal relation were held, according to which a man was warranted in divorcing his actual wife for the most whimsical reasons, such as over-salting or scorching his food; whereas the school of Shammai taught that there must be a grave moral cause. The Pharisees who came to Christ represented these schools, and submitted to him, as usual, one of their vexed questions: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?—trying him."

"Trying him"—both Matthew and Mark use this language as indicative of the purpose of the Pharisees in propounding this question about divorce. It is plainly implied that it was not a simple desire to have his views on this subject, but a catch to draw down on him the wrath of Herod

* In this sermon, which is his inaugural discourse, laying down the true import of the moral law whose spirit as well as letter was to be satisfied by Him, the matter of divorce from the actual conjugal relation came under this law, as it was the separation of what God had joined; and hence a separation for a grave moral cause was deemed by Him alone justifiable, such as adultery, that destroyed the conjugal bond. This is a case more serious than the prenuptial occurrence.

Antipas, who a year or more previously had beheaded John on account of his disapproval of Herod's divorce from another wife and marrying Herodias (Mark vi: 17-20).

As it was a question in regard to their law, he very naturally asked them how they understood their law-giver. They answered that Moses allowed it—evidently leaning to the perverse Hillel laxity. He at once rectified their idea that the law of Moses (Deut. xxiv: 1-2) had superseded the law regulating the conjugal relation as originally instituted, and convincingly showed them it was a mistake, and that the concession or forbearance had been exercised only temporarily in view of the lapsed and demoralized condition of their ancestors, or it may be that the willful perversion of the true intent of this statute was borne with: and going back of Shammai, and even Moses, he appealed to the sacred writings, whose authority all the parties acknowledged, as laying the foundation of the conjugal relation in man's nature, as shown in the fact of creation: "Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife? and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that marieth her, when she is put away, committeth adultery." The original narrative simply says "they shall be one flesh" (Gen. ii: 24). He accepts the emphasis given to the narrative in the LXX and the Samaritan's Pentateuch—as he accepted the cups in the passover, and amplifies and thus emphasizes the

original statement thus: "The two shall become one flesh. So they are *no more two*, but *one flesh*" (Matt. xix: 5, 6). It is not possible that monogamy could be announced more exclusively and absolutely. He does not give the remotest intimation of an allowable exception in the church or out of it.

It is commonly understood that Christ simply denied that the state tolerated by Moses was the original state. But more than this is meant. The verb is in the perfect tense (Matt. xix: 8—*γέγονεν*) and denotes the continuance of past action or its results, down to the present. Then Christ's language means that the original ordinance had never been abrogated, nor suspended, but continues in force now as at the beginning, notwithstanding Moses' concession in view of the low moral state of the people in his time (Ryle). Toleration of certain circumstances does not mean the abrogation of a right or duty, but only the forbearance to imperatively and fully enforce it.

It is worth while to note that the toleration of anything implies disapproval and the right to abrogate it. The thing tolerated would seem to have been the perversion of the Mosaic statute, from which perversion he now rescues it. If these loose separations existed by perversion, that implies their existence only by forbearance, and not by ordination or sanction of right. This is the precise point brought out by Christ's exegesis. It should be noted that *there is not, even amidst this irregularity, an intimation of simultaneous polygamy*. The consequent consecutive remarryings and unwarranted separations are tabooed. Hence, as it was his indisputable and assumed right to do so, he brushes aside the artificial superstructure of Rabbinical traditions and perversions of

Mosaic forbearance, and re-establishes on a firm basis conjugal monogamy in its most sacred and exclusive form as the only lawful commerce of the sexes of the human race. And this *law of nature* he sanctifies and proclaims as the *law of his kingdom*. So that a refusal to submit to it is a refusal to submit to Him. He sets forth monogamy as the universal law of the race of man, and especially of his spiritual kingdom.

The Sermon on the Mount teaches that even the desire of sexual cohabitation in any other than the conjugal relation is adultery of heart. That is, it is, though inward, if cherished, a gross sin. This powerful impulse which replenishes the earth with its inhabitants is a natural, right, and virtuous constituent of humanity, but the Creator has assigned to it as fixed boundaries, as to the sea, any transgression of which in thought, word, or deed is sinful—is wrong and pernicious. All civilized nations, especially such as have commercial interests, pursue pirates to the death because esteemed the enemies of the race. Polygamy is an infinitely worse enemy. The plausible pretext that it favors increase of population above monogamy statistics ethnologically show to be a mistake. It is race suicide.*

(3) The *third* deliverance of Christ on the marriage relation was in private. Mark x: 10-12, tells us that "in the house" the disciples asked him again of the matter. This interview occurred just after the above-noticed public discussion with the Pharisees, and to it belongs Mark x: 10-12 and Matt. xix: 10-12. It was not unusual for his disciples to ask him privately about his public teaching, as in the case of the par-

* Wayland, in his *Moral Science*, adduces evidence that polygamy does not favor increase of population. The claim is fallacious.

able of the sower. It was in this third discourse on this topic that he silenced their complaint against marrying, if his teachings were to be received, by telling them that certain parties were by nature or by inflicted mutilation incompetent to marry,—and that there were some circumstances, as in the case of Paul, when voluntary celibacy was proper. But in this third discourse he did not fail to set forth the sin of divorce, as before. Amongst the born incompetents, not to speak of earlier instances, three well known in modern times could be named, equally pre-eminent severally in statesmanship, literature and scholarship.

(4) The *fourth* discourse on this subject is recorded in Luke xvi: 14-18. It is addressed to covetous Pharisees who scoffed at his teachings, because they coveted not only the property but the very household gods of their neighbors. And he said unto them, "Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts."

In the third discourse with the disciples in the house, he added a novel element to his discourses which we may now notice. In that instance he placed the right of the wife, in the matter of divorce, on the same level and footing as that of the husband. It was probably the placing of the conjugal rights of woman on this perfect equality with those of man, that so startled his hearers that they were bewildered and remarked that in that case it was best not to marry.

"And he saith unto them: Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery." Mark x: 12.

This idea of a woman divorcing her husband, though common in the surrounding heathen world of Greeks and Romans, was in Jewish circles an astounding novelty.

"Moses punished adultery in male and female alike. This was just." And the penalty was death. (Deut. xxii: 21-25).

The law of monogamy in Christ's kingdom is simply the original monogamous law of nature instituted at man's creation, sanctified and brought into its highest spiritual relations in the church of Christ.

The deliverances of Christ on the conjugal relation ought to go with the GREAT COMMISSION in our missionary work.

b. Yes: The teaching of Christ as exclusively monogamous is in words readily accepted; and yet, as though that did not settle the question by his supreme authority in the church, it is surprising to what extent Christ's plain and unequivocal teaching, as we have just convincingly seen it, is qualified in the minds and practice of many by a plausible, but hasty inference from passages in Timothy, ch. iii: 2 and 12, and Titus i: 6.

I Tim. iii: 2—"The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife;" and verse 12—"Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well."

And Titus, ch. i: 5, 6: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge; if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly."

A proper interpretation of these passages of scripture shows them to be unqualifiedly confirmatory of the conservative monogamous and anti-polygamous views of Christ as set forth in his several discourses just considered.

1. The first inference from these passages that will be noted is that, the requirement that these church officers, the

elder and the deacon—indeed the only permanent officers in the church of Christ—must be the husbands each of one wife, implies that there were polygamists in the church. Why require that these officers be monogamists unless there were polygamists in the church, on whom was visited the penalty or mark of disapproval as being on that account disqualified for holding office in the church, *i. e.* church members that did not on account of their polygamy have the favor and confidence of God as competent to hold office.

Every one must acknowledge a jolt at the idea of a group or definite class of church members being discredited as a class from office-holding, but having the right of suffrage (Acts, xiv: 23 Gr.), which is more vital than office-holding.

The most that can be said for this inference is that it is superficially plausible; but it is by no means a necessary inference, nor even the most probable one. Indeed there are several other inferences each of which is certainly more probable than this one, and each of which is exclusive of polygamy, as will be seen. Above, p. 15.

A ready analogical refutation of this first inference is found in ch. v: 9, of this I Timothy: "Let none be enrolled as a widow under three-score years old, having been the wife of one man." This was a serious business reckoning relative to benevolent support. The church members were poor and what affected money expense was scrutinized narrowly.

The forms of expression, "husband of one wife" and "wife of one husband," are (in the Greek) identical, differing only in gender and case. In each case husband and wife are without the article. If there is any difference in meaning it must arise from the context, but they are both in the same short letter, and the context in the latter case as certainly implies

plurality of husbands as in the former plurality of wives. These expressions are in the same epistle. The simple truth is that neither simultaneous nor consecutive polygamy is implied in either case. Such an inference as this first one is hasty, superficial, and false. This alone should check this crude inference on which some missionaries have conscientiously acted to the confusion of the church.

In the Centenary London Missionary Conference of 1888, this very analogy was given by a missionary as a reason for repudiating the polygamous exegesis of these scriptures, and it was not answered. He denied, and with reason, that Paul recognized polygamy in the apostolic church; and we shall learn further from Paul himself, and from the antiquities and history of the primitive church, that there is no warrant for this inference, nor for this horrid doctrine of polygamy in the apostolic church. But further—

2. A second view is that the bishop or elder and the deacon must be married men—must as certainly be married men as “without reproach.” But let it be noticed that whatever force this view has it is in favor of monogamy and against polygamy—“*must* be the husband of one wife.”

It is obvious to remark that this would have excluded Paul himself from official position in the church, but would not have excluded Peter. But it is exclusive of polygamy in any case. Yet the verb “must” gives an exegetical force to this view greater than to the former. The view suggested at first blush is surely not the true one. The pass between Senator Hoar and the Mormon President (Smith) will illustrate this. When the Smoot case was before the Senate committee which was inquiring into the question whether Smoot should be ousted from his seat in the United States Senate, because he

was a Mormon, allusion having been made to the Christian's Bible, the venerable Senator Hoar, a devoted Unitarian, quoted this scripture—that the bishop must be the husband of *one* wife. Yes, says Smith, at least of one, but it does not exclude more than one. This rejoinder is, really, simply a piece of plausible flippancy. Yet it shows how a shallow ripple, or reflux wave on the surface, may divert attention from the deep underflow of the current in precisely the opposite direction. And this is believed to be true respecting these two epistles when construed as favoring polygamy.

3. The third view, and it is held very confidently, especially by many able prelatical commentators, is that the bishop and deacon must marry but once. If one of them lose his wife and marry again, that would disqualify him for the office. Tertullian speaks of parties deposed for that offense. But this is in contradiction of scripture elsewhere, notably of Paul, who elsewhere plainly teaches the right of remarriage as in Romans vii: 3 and I Cor. vii: 8-9.

The scriptural right of remarriage by the innocent divorced cannot in this connection be properly questioned.

Again polygamy is utterly and emphatically discredited. If a man is to marry but once, he can, of course, be neither a simultaneous nor consecutive polygamist.

4. But there is a fourth view which has strong claims. The main object evidently before the mind of the apostle was that of exemplary families on the part of the church officers. If any man had lived in polygamous relations prior to joining the church, in all likelihood the rags of polygamy would still hang about him—cling to him—as an inevitable part of his environment. This state of things would likely mar the family example which he would be able to set before

the congregation and the world. The disability of holding office under such conditions would seem to be reasonable. It would be an unavoidable consequence of his former state—a scar from that wound. It would not be a disability arising from a tolerated sinful relation, but from the old abandoned life. Here, then, is a fourth view which is equally grammatical and vastly more Pauline and probable than the first, and, again, instead of a sanction, it is a condemnation of polygamy.

5. A fifth view may have more in its support than may appear at first glance. It is *an injunction of personal and official chastity*. In this view the injunction is an official curb or restraint on lust, on the part of the church officials—an elder or a deacon—from the charms of other women than their own wives. Those in official relations to a mixed body, and especially where free social intercourse is indeed a duty, as in the Christian church, are specially exposed to this temptation. It amounts to a pertinent and highly reasonable warning based on the tenth commandment: "Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's wife." Paul's personal experience of covetousness as a principle opened his eyes wide to this kind of sin. He says: "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." This lust is entirely internal, and when Paul saw that the law took account of this strictly subjective state, then it was he understood its spiritual import as in Rom. chs. vi and vii. This amounts to a positive interdict of even the spirit of polygamy by applying the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. The injunction of Hermas is that habitual loving thoughts of one's own wife is the best preventive of this unchastity. Moreover, this fifth view exactly

falls in with the Savior's rebuke of the shuffling of wives—of divorcing and remarrying wives with reckless and licentious levity, then become common among both Jews and Gentiles and favored by perverse rabbinical traditions: "Be conscientiously and religiously content with the wives in providence allotted to you and lust not for cohabitation with other women, and set an example before the flock of devout chastity." As Paul elsewhere teaches (Eph., v: 25): "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it."

Now, here are stated *five* allowable constructions of the quoted language of those letters to Timothy and Titus: and (1) it must be in fairness conceded that the first, which is burdened with the assumption of polygamy in the apostolic church, is the least satisfactory of the list. There is not a particle of collateral evidence in support of this naked view that polygamy found its way into the bosom of the apostolic church. (2) But there is, we shall see, much constraining evidence to the contrary.

So much for the direct consideration of these passages which have been taken as of doubtful import; but if so, they should yield to the clearer light of other Scripture, especially, as we have seen, to the Savior's positive teaching.

c. I will add the teaching of Paul himself elsewhere, confirmative of the interpretation given:

(1) It might and perhaps should be noted that, in closing the second chapter of I Timothy, the apostle's mind was intensely occupied with the conjugal relation of Adam and Eve in Eden. In speaking of the proprieties of woman's dress and deportment and of her disability to teach and rule in the church as consequent on mother Eve's rash and disastrous

leadership in Eden, he relieved the situation by a distinct allusion to the first promise that her maternity should minister to the relief of our fallen state by giving birth to a redeemer. And as the foundation of this hopeful view he says, (not the adverbial clause), "It is a faithful saying," but "*The Logos is faithful*," i. e., The Jehovah who gave that promise that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head" is faithful in having fulfilled the same. Paul has as distinct a doctrine of the Logos as John, the essential and practical character of which is the fidelity of the Logos to His promise of salvation made to the monogamous twain in Eden and especially to our monogamous mother Eve. (See I Tim., i: 15.) All the promises of salvation are yea and amen in Christ Jesus.

I do not know of another instance in our Sacred Scriptures where a substantive sentence, with its subject by the definite article grammatically distinguished from its predicate, is so misconceived, emasculated and degraded as in this case. A distinct, substantive reason is degraded into an adverbial clause! This criticism is based on the Greek text of Westcott and Hort.

Now, my point is this, the preoccupation of the apostle's mind with the monogamous state of our first parents in Eden and also at the time of the protevangelic promise, for whose realization in the organized Christian church he was here providing, is an appreciable *presumption* against any concession whatever to polygamy in what immediately follows, as would be the case were polygamists recognized as having church membership and church *suffrage* (Acts, xiv: 23), among the agencies for destroying the works of Satan. He certainly would not be expected to countenance the slightest

collusion with such a work of Satan as polygamy. It is doing violence to the whole spirit of his teaching and practice to suppose that he would tolerate this leaven of heathenism in the church.

(2) But there are some further and important considerations which help to render this polygamous inference violently improbable. We must assume that Timothy and Titus are letters of Paul, and in ascertaining their import his explicit and positive teaching in other writings on the conjugal relation must be reckoned with; and that teaching is absolutely incompatible with this polygamous view.

It is a circumstance of no little interest that Paul speaks more fully, more searchingly and philosophically, if I may say so, than any other inspired writer on the relation of the sexes. Some have lamented that he did not expressly exclude polygamy from the church, and have gone to sleep under the music of their moanings, surprisingly oblivious and neglectful of the fact that he has in plain language done that very thing. In a writing preceding those letters to Timothy and Titus this is unequivocally done; I refer to I Corinthians and Ephesians especially, though not exclusively.

(3) I Cor. vii: 2. The language enjoining monogamy on church members, positively excludes plurality from the conjugal relation. Listen: *"Let each man have his own wife and each woman have her own husband."* And immediately preceding this, in the sixth chapter, verse 16, he actually quotes the teaching of Christ on the subject: "The twain, saith He (God or Christ) shall become one flesh." In Ephesians, ch. vi: 28-31, Paul repeats the same anti-polygamous doctrine with a sacred and profound emphasis and quotes Christ's language again. The Apostle evidently draws

on the personal instruction he had received from Christ. See Gal. i : 12.

(4) Moreover, what must not be overlooked in this connection, he says: "We are members of his (Christ's) body." Our bodies are identified with Christ's body. In I Cor., vi, this bodily aspect of the sex relation is somewhat dwelt on. It is there said, as the underlying principle of monogamy; "But the body is not for fornication (or polygamy), but for the Lord: and the Lord for the body; and God hath raised the Lord and will raise up us through his power. Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ?" There is a most intimate and divinely constituted union between our bodies and the body of Christ; however mysterious, it is real, so that the prostitution of our bodies to any uncleanness is to befoul the sacred body of Christ himself: "Shall I then take away the members of Christ (*i. e.* so divert or alienate the members of our bodies from their proper and sacred functions and relations to Christ as to) "make them members of a harlot?" God forbid! Or know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot—by intimacy (?)—is one body? He that committeth fornication (*i. e.* any act of sexual intercourse by man with any other than his wedded wife, or by a woman with any other than her wedded husband) is guilty of uncleanness and (he that is guilty of such uncleanness) sinneth against his or her own body. Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? And ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body." (I Cor., ch. vi: 12-20).

That is to say, the Lord Jesus Christ has a rightful claim on the body of every redeemed saint, and the misusing of

this body is misusing the property and bodily members of Christ himself, just as certainly as desecrating his temple is a sacrilege against consecrated property belonging to God. This claim of Christ is alike individually on all married or unmarried, and binds them in the holy bonds of personal chastity. His relation to his bride, the church, is monogamous.

(5) Over and above this idea of Christ's sacred ownership of the bodies of His redeemed people, there is an additional and unique feature of Paul's discussion of the conjugal relation in this connection, which is entitled to special consideration. It is that of a rightful and *reciprocal and exclusive proprietorship* of husband and wife in each other as husband and wife. I Cor. vii: 3, 4: "Let the husband render unto the wife her due; and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband; and *likewise also the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife.*" This ownership is not only rightful and reciprocal, but exclusive. The language is very strong. It is this rightful and inalienable power of each over the disposal of the other that is in strict terms in the original here vested alike in husband and wife as such. In wedding each makes a self-surrender to the ownership of the other as husband and as wife. It will be recalled that it was pointed out in considering the third discourse of the Savior on the conjugal relation, that he, to the bewildering surprise of his disciples themselves, (Mark x: 12), placed the wife on the same footing of right and freedom of action as the husband touching the rights and duties of the conjugal relation. It was and is now the onesided doctrine of heathenism that the man alone has rightful proprietorship and control of the

wife; but Christ announces that the wife has a like proprietorship and a control over the man as husband. This was a doctrine in Israel of woman's rights hitherto unheard of. Nor is it even now heeded as it should be. It is radical and true as to the same individual thing. The apostle here enforces that doctrine identically as though he had just come from the lesson on the subject taught by Christ. The subjection of the wife to the husband as a "helpmeet" does not absolve, nor even compromise, her inalienable conjugal rights. Right and duty are reciprocal—her right and his duty. His right and her duty. She has a right, as to her own life, to his honor and chastity, and he is correspondingly under obligation. Such views and teaching are intelligible only on the ground of monogamy. Right and duty are always compatible and reciprocal, and it is not even thinkable or possible that two or more persons should individually have the same exclusive rights.

This cuts up polygamy by the roots on natural principles.

Angels neither marry nor are given in marriage; but men and women are corporeal beings, and are not angels.

THE THREE MONOGAMOUS NATIONS.

It must be borne in mind that, among other considerations, there is not in the New Testament a recorded instance of polygamy by the Jews in the apostolic times; besides, a circumstance not sufficiently considered, the Greeks and Romans were monogamous nations, so that the class of polygamists so called was not comparatively numerous among the peoples from whom Christianity gathered its

early converts, and their polygamy was lawless concubinage. Moreover, the poor are always monogamists, and they were the converts and not the rich.

In Homer, monogamy is assumed to be the natural condition, yet with wives concubines are associated and mentioned, and the sharp distinction between alien and citizen enforced this monogamy, as only the legal wives bore citizens. Whilst the court of Priam bears much resemblance to that of a polygamous monarch, yet Hecuba alone has the title of wife. It is said by Demosthenes, in one of his speeches: "We have concubines for our pleasure and daily attendance on our persons, but wives that we may beget legitimate children and have faithful guardians of our households." This is the plain prose of the situation—a certain sentimental duty to the state demanded the wife and loyalty to lust the concubine. And Plato's promiscuity is the world's amazement, notwithstanding his specious defense. And yet the impartiality and unselfishness in administration aimed at were commendable. "But in Greece monogamy alone was recognized by law." (Smith's Gr. & R., Ant. Sub. Matrimonum.)

As to Rome, Gibbon, vol. 3, p. 687, says: "The inclination of the Roman husband discharged or withheld the conjugal debt, so scrupulously exacted by Athenian and Jewish laws; but as *polygamy was unknown*, he could never admit to his bed a fairer or more favored partner."

Both Grecian and Roman law and usage were in fact monogamous; but in obedience to individual lust and wilfulness, matrimony was licentiously incrustated and overlaid by concubinage. But men were never married to their concubines and hence the heathen themselves did not regard nor treat them as wives.

As the Jews who were monogamous, were in all the churches, it is hardly credible that they would silently have acquiesced in receiving heathen polygamy, which was wholly concubinous, into the Christian church, when they had in their whole history associated polygamy with hated polytheism and monogamy with the relation of Israel to Israel's God. The polygamous departures from this fundamental law of monogamy were wholly individual and exceptional and never national with the Jewish people.

The heathen custom is to esteem and treat the wife as a chattel bought or captured, so that, to a great extent, she may be beaten, sold, enslaved, or slain by him with impunity. And he alone has the right of repudiation, or divorce, whilst she is the helpless victim of wrong and outrage. This one-sidedness prevailed even among the Jews in the Savior's time. But it is true that this one-sided practice had already been surprisingly and capriciously changed in the classic nations of Greece and Rome, and women rushed to the opposite extreme and reckoned the passing of life not by the years of the consuls, but by the frequency of changing their husbands for every, or any, or no cause. The Saviour struck at the root of all this by recognizing woman's conjugal rights, as well as her duties, as equal to those of man, and equally restraining both parties by laying down adultery as the ground of separation by either (to which death and persistent abandonment are by Paul added). In which case of separation only the innocent party is free to marry again, sinless. In the conjugal relation Paul enjoins love as its supreme bond whatever the conditions of mating. To plead, as is done in certain cases, that as wives are assigned without choice, hence

there is no obligation of love, would also excuse from filial love to parents. This is a heathen fallacy and pretext, as in China, Japan, and elsewhere, in apologizing for polygamy. The voluntary acceptance and acquiescence carries the moral obligation.

This restriction of one man to one woman is rational, and shows the discernment of an expert, that, in this matter, the weaker is in fact the stronger vessel, relative to which polyandria furnishes a telling suggestion. No; the fundamental fault in this whole unclean business is that husbands do not love their wives as the apostle enjoins, and God makes their duty whatever may be the conditions of mating. In the *Japanese Bride* which unveils the domestic customs of that country, it is said: "It will seem strange to people having such ideas (as Americans) that there is no such thing in Japan as marriage for love, and the Japanese place love and brutal attachment on the same plane. The Japanese word love (*horeru*), as applied to a woman, signifies a very corrupt character (p. 13). "It is very clear that we do not marry for love: The man who breaks this rule and pretends to marry for love is looked on as a mean fellow and his parents are ashamed of him" (p. 2). Marrying is less a personal than a family affair, and is arranged by the *Nakodo*, or go-between. Confucius is held responsible for these sentiments, and his pernicious influence is fortified by Buddhism, which teaches that "woman is impure and a scapegoat, and cannot exert other than evil influence over man" (pp. 12, 2, 13, 72). The polygamy in Japan is as notoriously mere vulgar concubinage as in China, or as it was among the classic nations.

It is sometimes pleaded in palliation of polygamous unions in heathen lands that the exacting claims of offspring, partic-

ularly with reference to the perpetuation of the family name and the maintenance of ancestral worship, that the true wife, when barren, often encourages her husband to such an alliance; and it might be said that somewhat similarly Sarah prompted Abraham, and Leah and Rachel Jacob to like mesalliances. But in all such cases a fundamental and governing principle of right asserts itself in that no one has the right to do wrong, nor to influence or authorize another to do wrong. That polygamy is wrong and sinful is not in dispute. Hence there can be no human authorization of it. It argues a sad moral degradation. And who does not see that a moderate installment of Christian instruction would generally awaken the conscience against such connivance. The wife does not in such case know her right and duty, even aside from trust in God.

Let no one intimate that these relative duties hold good only in the sphere of the Christian life, and not of the heathen in his blindness and ignorance. It is true that they are illuminated, intensified and sanctified in the Christian sphere, but they do not originate there, nor are they confined thereto. The conjugal relation is founded in the nature of man as created male and female; and as an existing enduring and normal condition of man, it is recognized, purified and sacredly enforced in the kingdom of Christ. The nature of man is the same everywhere; and ultimately the relative duties arising therefrom are the same. It is the aim and the effect of Christianity to slough off these distortions, which are no more entitled to observance than the perverse traditions which Christ brushed aside. Circumstances do not and cannot change the nature of the case, and hence the folly and fallacy of missionaries growling at and scolding home Chris-

tians as not understanding polygamy and as poorly entitled to any opinions on the subject. The simple truth is that all the essential and concrete elements of polygamy are just as well understood by home Christians as by missionaries in the field, and it may be in many respects vastly better, as less influenced by warping prejudice and covering a wider and more varied field. One of the laments of missionaries is their comparatively individual isolation.

I will submit an extract from Schaff-Herzog on marriage: "Marriage is the union of a male and female human being, without which (union) there could be no family, no parental care, no developed political communities, no general society of mankind. It is, in its essence, not only a union of hearts but a physical union * * * Christ sanctioned this view of it and added, what God hath joined together let not man put asunder. * * * It is thus (a natural and) a religious ordinance, (not a transient contrivance of man, but) contrived and instituted by God which is to control the whole human race as long as the present laws of earth and man shall endure." Dr. Shedd and others of high authority, also support this radical or root view that the conjugal relation is founded in the nature of man—(the natural man)—as plainly taught by Christ in consecrating it as a fundamental law of his kingdom and glorified in the spiritual nature of the new man or Christian.

It is sufficiently obvious that the only true (and scriptural) conception of the relation of the polygamist to all the women with whom he cohabits, except his true and lawful wife, is that of *adultery*. Throughout the gentile world the so-called plural wives are merely concubines. In heathen lands man's ignorance of the heinousness of the sin

against his own soul and body, against his neighbor and against his God, may and does lessen the number of stripes deserved, but it does not change its sinful character, nor does God's forbearance with that sin, any more than with multitudes of other sins, divest it of its sinfulness. In Leviticus (ch. iv) several sacrifices are designated for sins of ignorance by individuals and the community. Why, the sin of the crucifixion, for which Peter called on the perpetrators to repent, was a sin of ignorance. Ignorance is no exemption from guilt though it mitigates the punishment. "*Ignorantia legis excusat neminem—Ignorance of the law excuses nobody.*" Says Peter: "And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers" (Acts iii: 17). This language was addressed to those who had been guilty of the crime of the crucifixion.

This principle of the divine government, which mitigates but does not ignore nor cancel the sins of ignorance, is applicable to Old Testament ignorance; but it is a perversion of this principle to plead it for connivance at sin under New Testament light. It does not allow for a moment's continuance in known sin. So that when the heathen come to the missionary and learn the truth as it is in Jesus, this ignorance cannot then for a moment be pleaded without aggravating the guilt. If a heathen learn enough to accept Christ as a Savior from sin, he has certainly learned enough to renounce polygamy as a sin however ignorant he may have been of it previously. There can nowhere be found any justification of tolerating polygamy in the Christian life. They are as incompatible as fire and water.

Acts xvii: 30 is a searchlight passage on this Old Testament plea point. "The times of ignorance, therefore, God over-

looked: but now He commandeth men that they shall all everywhere repent." Neither Jew nor Gentile is exempted. But this utterance does not stand alone. In Rom. iii: 25 the Apostle is careful to point out that God did not compromise "his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime in the forbearance of God," as would be shown by his holding sinners strictly to account with no hope of deliverance from their sins except on terms laid down by Jesus Christ. Luke xvi: 16 we read: "The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it." In Heb. vi: 1-8 the scripture recognizes progress of enlightenment and warns us that those who do not profit thereby are "rejected and nigh unto a curse." Heb. x: 26: "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment."

With the light we now have, since "the gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached," this polygamous practice tolerated in the twilight of patriarchal times could not now be tolerated for a moment. Continuance in it cannot even plead mitigation where the missionary has dutifully imparted the instruction of the gospel, especially as it has fallen from the lips of Christ and the pens of His apostles.

CHAPTER X.

BIBLE ARGUMENT.

PART 2. OLD TESTAMENT.

The Patriarchs: This leads me to notice finally from the Bible the attempt of some to weaken and qualify the rigid constitutional law of our church against polygamy by an appeal to old-time practices recorded in the Old Testament. The argument from the New Testament is impregnable.

The monogamous conjugal relation is throughout the sacred scriptures the chosen type of Christ's union with his church. The Jew recognized it as the emblem of the relation of the true God to Israel. It pervades the history, the poetry and the prophecy of the Old Testament, and is a dominating conception of the New Testament. (See Eph. v: 22-33 and Rev. xix: 6-9.) Our Lord, the afternoon of the day of his resurrection, whilst journeying to Emmaus, a village a few miles distant from Jerusalem, fell in with two disciples whose minds were bewildered by the occurrences of the past few days, and to enable them to see that it was not all a confused and chance medley, but the well-ordered fulfillment of their sacred oracles, we are told: "And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in (after) all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." This lifting of the veil by the Christ for these simple-minded wayfarers not only cast a searchlight on the work of the atone-

ment, but also on his conjugal relation to his blood-bought church. Christ also is the head of the church, being himself also the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

We thus learn that the ideal of the Messiah was that of a final and triumphant entrance into his glory, not alone, but with his redeemed bride. "The king's daughter within the palace is all glorious: her clothing is inwrought with gold" (Ps. xlv: 13). Hence we see that the second Adam is even more gloriously monogamous than the first Adam.

Hence, in view of this Messianic anticipation of the glorification of monogamy in His conjugal relation to His redeemed and spotless church, I am prepared to appreciate the abounding proof that this fundamental idea maintained its unyielding ascendancy, notwithstanding the sad lapsings through Satanic and lustful promptings of sinful and worldly ambitious individual men, whose perverse disregard of God's goodness and the flagrant immoralities of some of whose lives were a sore trial and disgrace to Israel.

In briefly canvassing the subject of polygamy in the Old Testament, I wish to express at the very outset my obligations to Dr. R. L. Dabney for the assistance rendered especially by his *Theology* and his *Practical Philosophy*. He boldly and confidently announces his position thus: "We assert that the whole legislation of the Pentateuch and of all

the Old Testament is only adverse to polygamy. As some Christian divines have taught otherwise, we must ask the reader's attention and patience for a brief statement. Polygamy is recorded of Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, Elkanah, Saul, David, Solomon, his son and grandson, and Joash; but so are other sins of every one of them except Elkanah, Samuel's father, of whom we know so little. And, as every intelligent reader knows, the truthful narrative of holy writ as often discloses the sins of good men for our warning, as their virtues for our imitation. And he who notes how, in every Bible instance, polygamy appears as the cause of domestic feuds, sin, and disaster, will have little doubt that the Holy Spirit holds up all these cases for our warning, and not for our approval."

Dr. Dabney gives an optimistic interpretation of Deuteronomy xxiv: 1: "What then did Moses enact? Let us explain it." His explanation has already been anticipated but may be repeated more fully and is substantially as follows: Females in oriental society have always been reared in great seclusion, the future bride and groom scarcely seeing each other before marriage. The engagement is usually, as in Japan, through a Nakodo—a go-between or third party. According to the view of this Mosaic statute, the bride-to-be was first unveiled in the presence of the prospective bridegroom; it might be his first distinct view of her person. Now if at this nuptial disclosure he discovered in her "some nakedness"—the equivocal original word—*i. e.*, something physically or morally displeasing, as inflamed sore eyes, ugliness of person, vulgar coarseness, anything which was repulsive and changed his feelings of pleasing anticipation into disgust and repulsion,

he was allowed to reject her as not fulfilling the contract. But he was to give her a bill of release or divorce, and she was free and at liberty to marry another, though discarded, but not embraced by him. She was still a virgin. It was only a divorce in name, and not from a real conjugal cohabitation.

According to this view, the bill of divorce was a relief to the unfortunate girl and a protection against the hard-hearted cruelty or severity from the dissatisfaction of disappointed parents, brothers and kinsfolk, as it certified her honor and chastity and right to marry again, despite her alleged unloveliness in the eyes of this first suitor.

A directly opposite view of a Hebrew scholar of great note is that this bill was a reprieve from the death penalty for adultery, having been enacted on the same day as that penal statute. But the competence to marry discredits this view. Intervening between these extremes are several views which need not now be enumerated. But the thing to be noted is that in none of them is there a glimmer of simultaneous polygamy. The Savior found that this pliable statute had been abusively construed as an unwarrantable pretext for breaking up the actual marriage relation, and consequently dispensed with it and its abuses. As abused by the Pharisees it had been rendered subservient to an unrighteous consecutive polygamy, but was, even as thus abused, utterly incompatible with simultaneous polygamy.

If any have supposed that Moses favored simultaneous polygamy, this exposition extracts its chief fang.

The first polygamist was Lamech, whose murderous conduct in slaying several men, and God-defying temper and boastful challenge are quite in harmony with his descent

from his forbear Cain, and conspicuously exhibit the wickedness of the spirit that originated this wicked violation of the chaste and normal relation of wedlock as ordained at creation between one man and one woman. An eminent Hebraist discourses thus on this passage: "Cain begged for death. Now therefore let be, that any one that findeth me may kill me." This God denied. Lamech was a branch of this root, and brought into the world the abomination of polygamy, or of having more wives at once than one; for which God smiteth him with horror of conscience that he himself might be a witness of that sin that he had introduced, and he curseth himself for a more deplorable and desperate wretch than his ancestor Cain. He acknowledged his sin 70 times greater than that of Cain, his desert of punishment corresponding. For that Cain had slain but one man, and had only destroyed his body, but he himself (Lamech) had destroyed both young and old by his accursed example, which was now so corruptly followed and entertained in the world, that ere long, it was a special forwarder of its destruction. He made his plaint to the two wives that had brought him to this state. In this stock also began idolatry. "Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan," and for this his impious polygamy and for marrying Canaanitish wives, a twofold offense, he is called a fornicator (Heb. xii: 16), "for polygamy is called fornication or whoredom." He gave one of his wives the name of Adah, the wife of the first polygamist in the world (Gen. xxxvi: 2). Let it be noted that that great scholar, Bishop John Lightfoot, frequently notices that fornication was a current designation in scripture, Old Testament and New Testament, for polygamy. Anyone who will bear this view of Lightfoot (1602-1675) in mind will find, as

he reads and studies, evidence in its support clustering about it more and more. In the letter sent forth from the Jerusalem council by Paul and Barnabas that enjoins the Gentile converts to "abstain from fornication," he understands it as forbidding polygamy. This has been noticed in the opening of this discourse.

Although polygamy muddied the antediluvian waters, yet Noah and his family emerged therefrom wholly monogamous. Hence the world took its second start, according to scripture narrative, as it had taken its first in monogamous families. "In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them into the Ark" (Gen. vii: 13).

We hear no more of polygamy till the perverse ambition of Sarah, a schemer to have in some way a maternal relation to the promised seed, led Abraham to hearken unto her scheme to obtain children by her hand-maid Hagar. Jacob was tricked into it by a base deception. When, in the days of Samuel, in a spirit of rebellion against Jehovah the people insisted on having the showy form and trappings of a heathen monarchy in place of the simple rule of Jehovah, the harem came with it. It passed over by succession, like a transplanted tree, to the gardens of David and Solomon and bore on its bending branches and limbs the apples of Sodom, fair without, but filled within with ashes and bitterness.

The transfer of Saul's Harem to David's bosom must not be misunderstood as endorsing the harem as a blessing. In oriental usage, it was simply the final act of obliterating a former and adverse dynasty or family reign, to wipe out its harem.

However, when David is spoken of as a man after God's own heart, it must be understood of his official loyalty and not of his personal character as sinless. It is not unusual to find very wicked men personally distinguished officially for public patriotism and official fidelity.

Under the broad declaration that not only is the Mosaic legislation, but the whole Old Testament adverse to polygamy, attention is directed by Dr. R. L. Dabney and others particularly to three passages:

(1) The first is Leviticus xviii: 18, which is sometimes misunderstood as teaching that a man may take another wife provided she is not a sister, or the daughter of the same parents as his first wife, whereas the proper understanding is conceived to be that no female, no woman shall be thus associated with his wife. Like language occurs in some 40 places and it has been noted that it is generic and not specific, and nowhere else means a daughter of the same parents. In no case does this language mean blood-relation unless it does here. Thus understood it distinctly and explicitly enjoins monogamy and forbids polygamy—forbids the taking of another woman as a rival wife.

(2) Again: In Deuteronomy xvii: 17, the anticipated King is forbidden to multiply wives. A critical inquiry also finds in this scripture a prohibition of having more than one wife. The form of expression is not the same as increasing the number of horses. Luckock says in *Marriage Relations*, p. 15: "A comparison of the two restrictions (as to horses and wives) rather points in the latter—to one (wife) only." If forbidden to the monarch, then, of course, to the subjects. But is it not incredible that so loyal a ruler as David would have lived in violation of such plain

statutes? Not at all. For he did violence to other known and equally plain statutes; and at best, he was a wretched and great sinner, like Jacob and Saul, but saved by grace.

(3) The third passage is in the prophet Malachi, ch. ii: 13-16. In this case the prophet, like our Savior in Matt. xix and Mark x, goes back to creation and draws his argument from the fact that only one man and one woman were created. "Have we not all one Father? Hath not God created us? * * * And did he not make one? Although he had the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? He sought a godly seed." God could have created for man a score of wives, but no, the companionship and moral ends of the conjugal relation were best and only subserved by one.

Undoubtedly, therefore, we have in both the Old and the New Testaments "a thus saith the Lord" for monogamy. Where is there an equivalent thus saith the Lord for polygamy by any body or under any circumstances?

There is a universal principle of logic which is applicable to the case before us. Monogamy and polygamy are contradictories; if one is true, the other is false, and if one is false the other is true. The conjugal relation is ordained between one man and one woman or more than one. To prove from the Bible that monogamy is the ordinance or law of God, is a thus saith the Lord in condemnation of polygamy.

It is contrary to God's law, and it is contrary to the word of God. Polygamy is a sin. It is a sin in its inception; it is always and everywhere a sin. It is a sin among the heathen, though it may be a sin of ignorance. Still it is a sin, and it is in gospel light seen to be a heinous sin. In the Sermon on the Mount even the spirit of polygamy is condemned as a sin.

I notice the only two passages of scripture which I find quoted in support of the position that the polygamous relation is recognized as a relation giving rise to reciprocal duties. These are the main support; and if this be so, then the foregoing superstructure is overthrown, for it is an axiom not to be questioned, that moral or religious duties or obligations are always in their nature consistent and cannot arise out of a wicked and sinful relation. All our duties spring out of our relations as human beings and moral agents. The only duty touching a wicked or sinful relation is to abandon it—to break it off. “Break off thy sins by righteousness.” If not, then “Why not? as some say and we are slanderously reported. Let us do evil, that good may come, whose condemnation is just.” The scriptural test as to the relation of master and bond servant being sinful or not, is found in the fact that the reciprocal duties of the master and of the bond servant are set forth as springing out of this relation. Eph. vi: 5-9: “Bond servants, be obedient unto them that, according to the flesh, are your masters,” (Titus 2: 9-10; Col. 3: 18). Where is there any such language, or *thus saith the Lord*, regarding the concubines and mistresses of polygamy? If monogamy is the law of God, then such an injunction or deduction of duty would be a palpable self-contradiction. The relation of husband and wife is a prolific source of inculcated duties. But never the concubinous relation in Old or New Testament. A clean duty cannot be deduced nor gotten out of an unclean relation. There may be a clean duty to abrogate, but not for continuance in it or for its maintenance. This is a broad assertion to which there is no exception unless in these two passages to which appeal is made:—

(1) The first of the two passages to which some have made appeal to support the claim that polygamy is a permitted relation of springing reciprocal duties, and *tolerable*, is Exodus xxi: 7-12, especially verses 9 and 10. It is assumed that the man has two wives, and that he is forbidden to deprive the less favored wife of her conjugal rights and maintenance. Now, a very little attention will discover plainly that the man is probably a widower with grown sons; that the girl bought for a wife, not pleasing him, he does not marry her, but he is not to sell her, and *may marry her to his son*; or, in default of that, she shall receive a wifely maintenance or go away free, without his getting back any price for her. On the supposition that the father has married her, either as a sole or second wife, the son then marrying her, it would be a plain case of authorizing just such a case of *incest* as that at Corinth—a man marrying his stepmother (I Cor. v). Hence this polygamous supposition is not allowable. This is not a case of polygamy at all. This exposition, unelaborated, is too plain to admit of or call for discussion. The first prop of the polygamous theory appealed to thus falls away.

(2) The second and the only other case appealed to in support of relative or reciprocal duties being recognized as springing out of polygamous relations is Deuteronomy xxi: 15-17. But this is a case of primogeniture, involving the relation of a father to his first-born son and the consequent duty toward that son. There is not a suggestion nor intimation of any duty to either wife arising from his relation to her. The duty is wholly to the son, whose right as first-born must be honored regardless of his personal preference for the women. The reciprocity involving the rights and duties of

the case is between the father and the son alone. The fact of the bigamy is recognized, but no duty to either woman, but only to the son.

It is not a little surprising that Dr. Dabney (Theology, 412), after handling the subject of polygamy in the Old Testament with a master's hand, and that, too, avowedly in support of the radical and valid position that "the whole legislation of the Pentateuch and of all the Old Testament is only adverse to polygamy," should yet dispose of these cases thus: "Both these cases are explained by the admitted principle that there may be relations which it was sin to form, and which yet it is sinful to break when formed." But in neither of these cases is there any conjugal right or obligation recognized. I submit that the principle invoked does not apply to either of these cases. It may be a sin for a man to beget an illegitimate child; but his relation to that child *cannot be broken*. It is his duty to care for that child. Even human law so provides. To ignore or abandon it is wicked. But the polygamous relation *can* be terminated, and the co-participants may not only set it aside without sin, but the continuance of the relation is sin, being voluntary and not irrevocable. It is all wrong. It imposes the imperative duty of voluntary abandonment. And from the nature of the case it never can be a sin to abandon sin nor wrong to do right.

There is a double error here. The polygamous relation is by mistake assumed to exist as the hinge of action in each of these two cases; but it is, as I have shown, not the hinge of action in either case. This is a lamentable error, and he projects it forward into the sphere of the New Testament, which would reverse things by loosening the bands of duty under

increased light. He continues: "No one doubts whether the New Testament makes polygamy unlawful; yet it seems probable that the Apostles gave the same instructions to the husbands of a plurality of wives entering the Christian church. There appears, then, no evidence that polygamy was allowed in the laws of Moses."

This is a manifest error, for his explanation of the two cases concedes them to be polygamous, which is a palpable mistake. Moreover, the principle to which appeal is made does not and cannot apply to sinful relations. Horace says, Homer sometimes *nods*. But I confess that I see no adequate reason for the apologists of polygamy in the Christian church attempting to rally around Dr. Dabney as their leader, for no one has more effectually destroyed their plausible reliance on mistaken supports supposed to be found in the Old Testament.

The current impression and popular representation that the ancient history of the Jewish people and that the Old Testament scriptures not only record the fact that a certain amount of polygamy did crop out in the course of its ages, but did in some sort furnish a warrant for it as having the divine approval, as an institution of the Israelitish nation,—this impression and this representation are empty bubbles that should be punctured. In all the ages the Jewish people were a monogamous people, and the departures from this were individual and exceptional, and provocative providentially of the divine displeasure. It is unfortunate that the sinners were so conspicuous. However, the lives of some of the best of the ancient Bible worthies were not stained by this sin, such as Adam and his descendants in the line of Seth, and Noah and his sons, and Isaac, and Aaron, and

Moses, and Samuel and others. Even all the successors of Solomon from his great-grandson Asa down to Josiah, except Joash, were never blurred nor blighted by this sin.

I will quote an interesting and instructive passage from the Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. x, p. 120. This is a recent work. It says: "Of all the Rabbis named in the Talmud, there is not one who is mentioned as having lived in polygamy" (P. 121a). Again: "There is no Rabbinical evidence that any of the prophets lived in polygamy. Monogamous marriage was used by them as the symbol of the union of God with Israel, while polygamy was compared to polytheism or idolatrous worship" [which was treason and punishable with death] (Hosea ii: 18; Isa. i: 1; Jer. ii: 2; Ezek. x: 18).

I will quote again from the same source, to show that the general sentiment in Israel against polygamy is illustrated by an Aramaic Targum paraphrase of Ruth iv: 16. It runs thus: "The kinsman being requested by Boaz to marry Ruth, he said: 'I cannot redeem her; for I have a wife, and have no right to take another in addition to her, lest she be a disturbance in my house and destroy my peace. Redeem thou; for thou hast no wife.' Rabbi Isaac corroborates this, for he affirms that Boaz' wife died the day that Ruth entered Palestine."

However, even the exceptional and limited extent to which polygamy cropped out in the later ages of Israel gave rise to many Rabbinical discussions. An express decree of prohibition was pronounced against polygamy by Rabbi Ger-shom, b. Judah, the light of the exile (906-1028, A. D.), which was soon accepted generally. Even in the Orient monogamy soon became the rule and polygamy the excep-

tion, for only the wealthy could afford it. But the Reform Rabbis, 1869, met in Philadelphia, U. S. A., decided that "the marriage of a married man to a second woman can never take place, nor claim religious validity, just as little as if a married woman (should be married) to another man, but like this is null and void from the beginning." Vol. x, 122b.

WOULD THE JEWS ADMIT A POLYGAMOUS PROSELYTE?

The history of this people shows with what obstinate tenacity an exceptional few have clung to this ancient and unauthorized departure from the law of God. But I am not aware that any organized authority of this people, either in ancient or modern times, ever made a deliverance in favor of polygamy as a national practice, or of a polygamous proselyte being admitted to the communion of the Jewish people. It was an individual matter without God's authority and without his blessing. Like other sins, it thrust itself into the individual life of a few rich and some very conspicuous people.

As idolatry was extirpated from the Jewish people by the Babylonish exile, and never makes its appearance thereafter, so its wicked congener, polygamy, should naturally disappear with it. In the new Testament there is not a recorded instance of nor allusion to it among the Jews. Herod the Great had ten wives, and several at the same time, but he was not a Jew; and notwithstanding his decided ability and magnificence and public display, such was his gross immorality and savage cruelty that his example repelled rather than attracted imitation. When Herod's son, Herod Antipas, married Herodias, out of deference to the prevalent monogamous sentiment of the public, she made it a condition that he divorce

his wife, the daughter of Aretas, King of Arabia; and when Herod's sister, Salome, quarreled with her husband, Costobarus, she sent him a bill of divorce before she married Pharoras. The bill of divorce did not subserve simultaneous polygamy, which is polygamy in the ordinary popular sense, but it was an efficient and wicked instrument of successive or consecutive polygamy, or the divorcing and marrying of one woman after another on the most capricious pretexts. This was the practice which the Hillel school favored, and which the Savior sharply rebuked and displaced by assigning a cause so grave as to destroy the marriage bond. And the right of divorce which had been monopolized by man, he recognized as equally the right of the wife, and on the same ground. This was startling. Hence the growl in that case, that it was better not to marry at all.

I will repeat, what it is important to bear in mind:

In view of the monogamous practice and sentiment among the Jews, it is quite improbable that the admission of Jewish converts to the company of Christians would give rise to the question of admitting polygamists. The set traditional national sentiment against it, enlightened and intensified by the explicit monogamous teachings of Christ and his apostles, would serve to inevitably set them on edge to sharply dissent from the acceptance of polygamous heathen.

It may be a surprise to some to be told that the social condition of the great mass of the Gentiles, whence Christianity obtained its first converts, also contributes to lessen the likelihood that polygamy—simultaneous so-called polygamy—was admitted into the apostolic church. Such, however, is the actual state of facts, which claims more attention than it has received.

Legally the Greeks and Romans were monogamous nations. It is but voicing the best authorities to repeat that both Grecian and Roman law and lawful usage were monogamous—as really so as in Israel; but in like manner as among the Israelites lust and willfulness wandered, and, to a greater extent, into vulgar concubinous polygamy. Says Gibbon: “The inclination of the Roman husband discharged or withheld the conjugal debt so scrupulously exacted by Athenian and Jewish laws; but as polygamy was unknown he could never admit to his bed a fairer or more favored partner” (Milman’s Gibbon, vol. iii, 687). This at once lifts from these people historically the charge of polygamy. It was the sharp and proud distinction between citizen and alien that enforced monogamy among both these peoples, as citizenship was the inheritance only of the children of the true or legal wife. The son of Pericles by the Milesian Aspasia could only become a citizen by vote of the people. Whilst in Homer a true monogamy is the rule, and is assumed to be the natural condition, yet with the “wedded wife” concubines are mentioned. Whilst Priam’s court bore much resemblance to that of a polygamous monarch, yet Hecuba alone bore the title of wife (*Iliad* ix: 340-343, notes 86). Plato excluded poetry from his republic, but sanctioned promiscuity; this, however, was an Utopian dream, and did not pretend to be either historic or practicable.

The plain prose of the historic condition of both nations is set forth in the following quotation from a speech credited to Demosthenes: “We have female (*hetairai*) companions for our pleasure, concubines for daily attendance on our persons, and wives in order that we may beget [legitimate] children, and that we may have faithful guardians of our

households." Here we have a certain sentimental duty to the state, and an unrestrained loyalty to lust. Yet the position of the lawful and true wife is pre-eminent in the family.

Thus we see that polygamy among these great peoples was not, judged by their own standards, the ideal and lawful condition of society. It was a beclouded state, and had to be apologized for. Even the hetairai, Becker tells us in Charicles, were "not respectable." This distinction between true wives and lawless concubines, or private mistresses, could not and did not escape attention in the very first propagation of Christianity in speaking of the relations of the sexes.

A distinguishing mark of polygamy the world over, and from ancient down to the present time, is that it is an incident of riches. Wherever it has prevailed, or where it now prevails, it is, as a rule, only the relatively rich that practice it, and by no means even all of them. Now, the early converts to Christianity were almost exclusively from among the poor. As among the evidences of his Messiahship, the Savior sent back word to John, in prison, by the messengers, that he was preaching the gospel to the poor (Matt. xi: 5). There were plenty of rich people in Palestine in the Saviour's time, but though polygamy did not disgrace them, he made it a point to publish the good news to the poor, who were exempt from this burden in the way of accepting Christ. The disciples, in following his example in their mission work, where polygamy was found, were brought into almost exclusive intercourse with the poor monogamists. The converts to the gospel were from among the poor. James, the half-brother of our Lord and the first pastor of the church at Jerusalem, addressed a letter especially to the dispersed of

the twelve tribes to remove or prevent prejudice against the gospel because its success was in a marked degree among the poor, in which we find this stirring exhortation: "Hearken, my beloved brethren: did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him; but ye have dishonored the poor man. * * * But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin" (James, ch. ii: 5). And in addressing the Corinthians Paul reminds them of their humble condition before conversion. His own habits of life as a poor mechanic, earning his daily living by making military tents, brought him naturally in association with that class of people. Earning his bread by the sweat of his brow was his habit and his choice.

Now, it seems fair to infer that, as the publishers of the gospel were restrained from courting or expecting the favor of the rich and powerful, among whom alone polygamy, and that in limited measure, was found, and had their attention directed to the poor and destitute, who were monogamists, from amongst whom their converts were chiefly won, this state of facts lessens the likelihood of polygamists entering the church, or even raising therein a question, especially when the godly life of the Christian was held up before them, and would render such entrance altogether improbable unless the sinful life of polygamy was renounced before admission. The presumption is that those who gathered at Jerusalem at Pentecost were monogamists and not polytheists. If a polygamist had been swept in with the crowd, his berth would have been too hot for him. There is a total absence of any positive or probable evidence that polygamists were baptized on the day of Pentecost. That sensible persons should gulp as conclusive such a

flimsy conjecture is incredible. The least that could be said or thought of Pentecost was that it was a monotheistic feast; and monotheism did not well agree with idolatry or polygamy, especially since the exile.*

CHAPTER XI.

VON DOBSCHUTS AND BINGHAM.

It is now proposed to strengthen this presumption against polygamy in the Apostolic church by means of confirmatory evidence which some faithful and diligent investigation into the primitive life of the church has placed within our reach.

I shall first quote, with some fullness, from an elaborate and quite recent work by Ernst Von Dobschuts, D. D., Professor of New Testament Theology in the University of Strasburg, entitled "*The Christian Life in the Primitive Church.*" The particular treatise around which his labors are made to cluster is the Pastor or *Shepherd* of Hermas. The date of this well-known practical treatise, which one can easily read in a few hours, is early in the second century, A. D., set down by Adam Clark at 100, and certainly prior to 140. It is earlier than Justin's First Apology, and probably near the time that Aristides made his address in defense of Christianity to Hadrian, on the occasion of the Emperor's visit to Athens, 126 A. D. (This Apology has, fortunately, been recovered recently.) Some even suppose this Hermas is the same as the Hermas named by Paul in his salutation to the Christians at Rome (ch. xvi: 14), and if

*1888. Conf., ii, p. 74. The presumption is against any polygamists being baptized at Pentecost. The occasion of appointing deacons was the narrow circumstances of these converts.

not, then the brother of Pius, bishop or pastor of Rome, 130-140 A. D. It is the first work extant whose main effort is to direct the soul to God. It is the Pilgrim's Progress of the early church in visions, commands, and similitudes. It dwells on the morality implied in conversion.

Now it is proposed to adduce evidence from this early source, that such was the moral standard of admission to and in the Christian church that the sin of polygamy could not have gained entrance and standing therein.

I will substantially quote Hermas and Dobschuts. In the course of erecting the building, seen in vision, which symbolizes the church, Hermas sees stones, thrown away from the tower, lying near the water, without, however, being able to roll into it and thereby reach the tower. Wilt thou know what they are? The answer is: These are they who have received the word and would have themselves baptized in the name of the Lord; but when they become aware of the holiness, the purity of the truth, they alter their intention and follow their evil lusts again (v, iii, vii, 3). Here Catechumens are meant. They have been attracted by the preaching of the gospel; they have formed the desire to be Christians, to join the community where such a message of comfort, such magnificent promises are proclaimed; they have already notified themselves for baptism. Now they are given instruction, and herein it is made clear to them what the truth, what Christianity, calls for. It is something holy; it calls for a great *renunciation*, the complete rupture with their whole former life. Not only must they avoid certain coarse sins, like theft, fornication (polygamy), adultery, murder, and others; not only must they take upon themselves all sorts of brotherly duties like visiting the sick, hospitality and

so forth, but they are also enjoined to alter their whole trend of thought and to renounce everything that up to now has made life desirable to them. This requirement is too severe. So they turn aside and fall back again into their earlier life.

There is hardly one clearer proof of the energy with which the Christian church had struggled after the realization of its spiritual ideal than this witness of those who drew back. It is too hard for us. Would they have acted thus if they had seen that the requirements, as set forth in the Catechism, were not intended so seriously? Would the strong impulse towards propagandism among many so nearly won, have been renounced, if the slightest yielding in this thing could have made it possible to keep them? Of theoretical hesitation and dogmatic scruples, not a word is here said. It was the unconditional maintenance of the moral ideal in its entire holiness which worked terror amid the undecided Catechumens. Their withdrawal and the fact that no attempt was made to prevent it, show at once how seriously this matter was taken in this Christian church of that primitive time.

He then proceeds to speak of the various moral provinces wherein the Christian life is thus interpreted, such as marriage, divorce, the position of woman, the discipline of children, slaves, &c.

"He first treats of marriage. Its holiness was one of the foremost moral principles of primitive Christianity. It is credited with having first awakened the feeling that not only adultery, but *sexual intercourse outside of marriage, fornication, is sin*. It is remarkable how seldom this is mentioned in Hermas, perhaps due to the absence of polygamy from the church. * * * But Hermas quietly classes all heathen-

ism as adultery. We must note that Hermas, in sharp opposition to hyperæscetic tendencies, commends the continual and loving thinking of one's own wife as the best means of protection against such seducing thoughts. (This supports I Tim. iii: 2, my *fifth* view, p. 86.)

Can we think it possible that the loose relation of the sexes in heathenism which led a Christian writer to speak of it as fornication and adultery was exempted from renunciation on the part of Catechumens before baptism?

"A complete rupture with the sinful heathen pact was demanded of new members." It was not the heathen, but the Christian standard of sin that governed this renunciation, and it was embodied in the Catechumenal catechism to which Von Dobschuts refers.

"This is no imaginary picture. Every single fact, he assures us, has been supported by documentary evidence. The apologists were thoroughly entitled to represent morality in the Christian churches as Aristides has done. Heathen, like Pliny, Lucian and Celsus, were compelled, even against their wills, to witness to the correctness of the picture."

(Von Dobschuts, *Sexual Relations*: pp. 349 and 43.)

"Thou shalt not commit adultery." This command ordinarily restricted to marriage, had already received a wider application in the later Jewish literature through the *prohibition of fornication or sexual relations outside of the marriage bond*. This is polygamy.

We are accustomed, or ought to be, to look upon adultery and fornication as equally sinful. The Grecian world of that time had quite another view. The respectable wife of a citizen was brought up in strict seclusion, shut up in her special apartment, almost like an oriental, and in her case adultery hardly ever occurred on the part of the true wife.

To the husband chiefly and almost exclusively belonged the disgraceful distinction of abusing this sacred relation, till in the then more recent days of degeneracy, wives rivalled their immoral husbands in evil practices and individual divorcements, so that certain women computed the passing times not by the succession of consuls, but of different husbands, to quote a current saying.

In checking up the whole matter of divorce, as we have seen, Christ placed woman on a perfect equality of conjugal rights with the man—not as a license for abuse, but as an effective curb and restraint.

Wherever there was a woman entitled to the name of a wife, a prestige still clustered about her even in the corrupt circles and abodes of the rich polygamists, and the unmarried concubine, the female factor of polygamy, was at an unenviable discount. But ~~just~~ laughs at obstacles.

Now, the point to be noted is that the lawlessness of polygamy or concubinage, and the immorality thereof, must have shocked the simple-minded Christians in the devout early days of Christianity, so that its renunciation should give a clean profession of allegiance to the Holy One, naturally preceded baptism, as our author reports to be his finding. Under such circumstances the incorporation of polygamy in the apostolic church is an unthinkable or self-evident contradiction.

I will now submit some additional evidence in *disproof* of the opinion and assertion that polygamists had a place in the apostolic and primitive churches of Christ. Use will, in this case, be chiefly made of an *inquiry* as to the faith and morals of the early church by Rev. Joseph Bingham, M. A., Fellow

University College, Oxford, in nine volumes, published in London, 1843.

The precise bearing of some of these citations will be apparent when it is remembered that according to *the great commission* the test of baptism determined who were admitted as adults to church membership. Hence, Bingham remarks, touching this feature of his great work on the antiquities of the Christian church: "I have been the more particular in making inquiries concerning these several kinds of adult persons, who might, or might not, be admitted to baptism, because these are questions which the reader will not readily find so distinctly examined in modern writers, who have professedly treated of the subject of baptism." The burden of his inquiry relates to officialism.

Basil the Great, Bishop of Casarea, in the fourth century, observes "that the fathers said little or nothing of polygamy, as being a brutish vice, to which mankind had no very great propensity." He determines it to be a greater sin than fornication, and assigns it a longer course of penance. To speak of it as fornication, therefore, was mild. Is it at all likely that, if polygamy had received apostolic toleration in the early church, it would have so thoroughly died out by the time of Basil? About the same age a story was put afloat that the Emperor Valentinus married his second wife, Justina, while Severa, his first wife, was living, and with her approval; and that he even decreed a law in favor of polygamy. A book, entitled *Polygamia Triumphatrix*—Polygamy Triumphant—was reported to have been written in praise of this law. But no such law appears in either of the codes of Justinian, and a thorough search by such scholars as Baronius and Valesius concludes that the story was a groundless

fiction. Indeed, there is much in the codes quite the contrary, as, for example, the edict of Diocletian, where he says: "No Roman was allowed to have two wives at once, but was liable to be punished before a competent judge." It was by heathen law prohibited to the old Romans. Sallust says that the "Romans were used to ridicule polygamy in the barbarians. And though Julius Cæsar attempted to have a law passed in favor of it, he could not effect it." Plutarch remarks that Mark Antony was the first that had two wives among the Romans; and it is true that a few other conspicuous individuals set the law temporarily at defiance, such as Sylla, who had five wives; Pompey, five; Cæsar, four; and Hortensius divorced his wife to marry her to a friend, which transcended Spartan laxity. But "*there never was any law to authorize polygamy in the Roman Empire*" (notes 152).

Now, it may be fairly submitted, whether it is not violently improbable that the company of Christians who broke away from the heathen life and with a holy zeal consecrated themselves to a higher and holier life, would receive into their society lawless polygamists who were morally accounted as vile as or more vile than individual fornicators?

As having a like pertinence, there was enacted a rule by the first Council of Toledo, 400 A. D., "which accounts it the same thing as polygamy for a man to have a wife and a concubine together; for such an one may not communicate." Here is an explicit exclusion of polygamy from the church. Would such a deliverance have been possible, had they believed the apostolic church had in it polygamists?

But it is further provided, that if he be joined to one woman only, whether wife or concubine, as he pleases, he may not be repelled. In such a case, "she was not to be

accounted guilty of fornication, nor he of adultery, in the eye of the church, *provided* they kept together faithfully and entirely to each other by an exact performance of the mutual contract between them for life. This was the reason that the church allowed such a man to communicate who was united to a concubine in the aforesaid sense." That was what is now known as common law marriage and valid. The formality of a legal ceremony was lacking.

These were genuine Christian monogamous marriages, but "for lack of ceremony the civil law inflicted certain disabilities—she (the informal wife) had no rights in her husband's estates, nor her children to inheritances." However humiliating, these disabilities did not affect moral character. With us these marriages would be legal and valid, without any disabilities, for the mere ceremony is not essential to the formation of the conjugal relation.* When a man and a woman agree to be husband and wife, and act and hold themselves forth to those around them as such, the law firmly holds them in the bonds of this institution. Marriage is not a mere contract, civil or religious, but an institution so that those who enter into it cannot dissolve their relation, but only the sovereign power of the state. Hence in divorce or separation, a court, as the organ of the sovereign State, has to intervene.

Now this sort of concubines so called, being in the nature

* In Brooklyn, N. Y., a gentleman met at the house of a friend he was visiting his friend's sister-in-law; showed her marked attentions, which were favorably received. Once, when riding out, he placed a ring on her finger, with assurance that that was sufficient token of their marriage. She went with him to New York City and lived with him as his wife. When she had two children, she saw in the papers the notice of the marriage of the man she had honored as her husband. The courts defended her honor. It is among the leading cases.

of real wives married without the formalities of the civil law, were not reputed guilty of any immorality, and hence were admitted to baptism without any further obligation even in case the husband was a heathen. There was not in it the slightest taint of licentious concubinage or polygamy. Indeed this was a formal condemnation of polygamy.

Moreover, if the woman thus informally taken was a slave, he had either to dismiss or formally marry her; otherwise he would be cast out (notes 156). Here was formal and positive anti-polygamy in the church. It is not possible to think these early churches accepted even a glimmer of polygamy as receiving apostolic sanction in the church of Christ.

There is no need of pursuing this line of inquiry further, as these various illustrations of the early and pervasive practice of the Christian church contribute confirmatory proof of the monogamous interpretation placed on Paul's epistles and the teachings of Christ. The fact of Paul being a Roman citizen is worthy of being recalled and remembered in this connection. He understood Roman law as well as Roman custom. It was to him a familiar fact that the so-called polygamy of the Gentiles was a vulgar and lawless concubinage. Paul's injunction of obedience to the laws of the State, as in Rom. xiii: 1-7, is a virtual condemnation of polygamy and enforcement of monogamy.

In the Centenary Conference, 1888 (vol. 2: 69, 70), Dean Vahl, presiding, said:

"This meeting is to be a continuation of the meeting which was held here on Tuesday morning, on the relation of the missionary to social customs, such as caste, slavery, polygamy, Indian marriage law, etc.

I should like, before I call upon any gentleman to speak, to make some observations about polygamy. It is necessary that we should arrive at right conclusions and make right distinctions in regard to these grave subjects. It seems to me that it is absolutely necessary to make a distinction between polygamy and concubinage. It has been asked, 'Why has not Christ forbidden polygamy?' and 'Why is polygamy not forbidden in the New Testament?' For myself I do not believe that polygamy existed at all in the Hebrew and the great Latin world, at the time of Christ and the Apostles. Herod Antipas, it is true, had two wives, but he divorced his first wife, and lived only with one. It was the same in the great Roman world. I have never seen anything in the classics to lead us to believe that polygamy existed at that time. There was very great licentiousness, and there was concubinage. A man had a wife—but, though he lived with many others, he had but one wife."

CHAPTER XII.

"FREE LOVE."

The question respecting polygamy in the church at any time is a question of fact, and where not settled by explicit utterance must be approached, as has been done in this treatise, like all other questions of fact, by inference and cumulative evidence—"by necessary consequence." From the explicit teachings of the Savior in his several discourses on the conjugal relation, which indeed seem to settle the question "expressly," authoritatively and finally, so that the tolerance of simultaneous polygamy is to disobey Christ; from the letters of Paul, especially I Timothy, Titus, I Corinthians, Romans and Ephesians, wherein he discourses more fully than any other sacred writer on the relations of the sexes;

from the prevailing monogamous purport of the Old Testament scriptures, and of the history of the Jewish people; together with the monogamous environment of the Gentile peoples, from whom Christian converts were chiefly gathered into the apostolic and primitive churches; also from the scanty but reliable and convincing evidence transmitted to us of the completeness of the renunciation by the converts of the lawless, lapsed, and sinful customs and licentious practices of the heathen nations and of their own former lives in becoming Christians, whose high standard and practice of morals and religious holiness rendered them such a peculiar people and so different from the surrounding world, as to provoke the sarcasm and ridicule of godless poets and the persecution of wicked rulers—when the evidence is collected in reasonable measure from these various sources, pertinent to the question, as has been previously indicated in this discourse, it amounts to a forcible and probable proof, grounding a violent presumption, *against* polygamists—simultaneous polygamists—having been members at all of the apostolic and primitive Christian societies or churches. And there is a total absence of any positive proof in support of it. The Savior's language is confessedly and strictly monogamous, not open to two views on the subject, and his sole relation to his bride, the Lamb's wife, finds a suitable symbol only in the divinely-instituted monogamy which served the prophets for ages as a present and prospective image in portraying the relation of Israel to the one living and true God, in contrast with the vileness and wickedness of polygamy as the shameful emblem of godless and licentious idolatry and polytheism, but found its true climax and realization in the sacred relation of the Christ to his redeemed people as his bride. "And there

came one of the seven angels, * * * and he spake with me, saying: Come hither; I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." "And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof; And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it." "And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And he saith unto me: Write, Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are true words of God."

"And the Spirit and THE BRIDE say, Come: And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come; and he that will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxi: 9, 10, 22-24; xxii: 1, 2, 17; xix: 9).

Only think of this glorious ideal state, to which every company of believers has ever aspired with longing desire, having been befouled by apostolic approval or toleration of the actual practice of polygamy by the members of Christ's church! And yet the only prevention of this heathen and diabolical prostitution by the company of the saints was to keep separate from it. It is true the church was imperfect and beset with sinful practices; but they were disapproved and disci-

plined, and no such radical apostacy from the fundamental idea of the church as the tolerance of polygamy is discernible.

And Jude throws light on this aspect of the situation when he says, verses 3, 4:

"Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." "Woe unto them. Hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you" (11, 12). The apostolic Christians were not easy-going weaklings, but wide-awake and strong men to detect and resist impostors and hypocrites. And the presence of the Holy Spirit gave them discernment and courage. If the vice of polygamy was in the church it was hidden in the double lives of "certain men crept in privily," and not with the knowledge and sympathetic sanction and toleration of God's people. There is no infallible remedy against hypocrites. If there was simultaneous polygamy in the church it was there secretly, as it now infests our monogamous society. Every few days the mask falls or is torn away from some impostor, who has been living a plural life. It is not thus in our church at Luebo. These moral lepers are known and by the officers of the church are actually thrust into the fellowship of the saints. Shall this thing continue? This polygamy is open, flagrant and defiant.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches"—the seven churches of Asia Minor.

They were in an imperfect, struggling condition, but the prevailing and repeated promise was to him that overcometh. The attitude of the Christian societies was not one of careless and easy-going indifference, but of wrestling vigilance as a condition of self-preservation.

The seven churches of Asia Minor were in a mixed condition, and yet the lukewarm Laodicea, the most hopeless of them all, had some ground of encouragement, and is exhorted to repent and given a promise. A study of these churches seems to indicate that they were not lifeless, nor wholly passive to evil influences, but that there was in the most of them the inextinguishable life over which the Spirit brooded, is in evidence as they are exhorted to hear "what the Spirit saith to the churches" (iii: 22); and to Laodicea, the most hopeless, the exhortation is given. What was needed was the assertion of this life in active service and discipline.

The case of Jezebel in Thyatira looks like a case of polyandria, where she is guilty, not of transient acts of licentious fornication, but of an habitual state into which she had apostatized. "And I gave her time to repent, and she willeth not to repent of her fornication," or female polygamy. Then the discipline comes: "Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her, unto great tribulation with her, except they repent of her works" (21, 22, 23). If there was this discipline, as the Spirit enjoins, in these early churches for such offenses against Christian morals, against such heathenish practices as polygamy and polyandria, it is good proof against their being knowingly admitted from heathenism into the church. There is a manifest difference between an apostacy into a vile life and the admission of one already as a heathen living that life; but neither is entitled

to the slightest allowance or toleration. The habitual offender presents a chronic case aggravated. It is a self-contradiction to discipline a lapse into idolatry, but to tolerate the habitual idolator; a lapse into adultery, but tolerate the habitual adulterer; the lapse into polygamy, but tolerate the habitual polygamist. It is a self-contradiction to admit a polygamist into the church and to expel a member who becomes a polygamist. "If ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin."

Von Dobschuts calls attention to the historic fact that it was not till towards the end of the second century of the Christian era that there was a serious falling away from the primitive high standard of moral and Christian life in the primitive churches. But even after that there is no evidence that polygamists, even down to modern days, were admitted to the communion of the Christian church. Whatever may be said of the wholesale methods of St. Xavier and others, the Catholic canons have never allowed it; and if such a thing occurred, it was furtive, individual, and irregular. In this matter, for over a hundred years, the Moravians have been a thorn in the side of missions by consigning the treatment of such cases to a sort of provincial determination of the missionaries in the field, but with emphasis rejecting polyandria, thus, unlike the Savior, conceding to man prerogatives in the conjugal relation denied to woman. And thus they publish their unwisdom and inconsistency instead of a stern notification to polygamists that their immoral and cruel divorcements and vile and lawless concubinage would not find a congenial nor an allowable sphere of activity amongst the poor monogamous Christian societies, wherein the struggle was to live, not only the natural life, but also the new life

of holiness and spiritual consecration. The polygamists should be treated like Hermas' rejected stones in building the Christian tower to the honor of the Holy One.

It is the Moravians who have set the pace for one of the most inconsistent positions that could well be conceived, viz: That those who enter polygamy must be expelled, but those living in polygamy may be received without renouncing it. (Report of 1888 Conf., vol. 2: 166.)

In the opening discourse in the Exeter Hall Conference of 1888, on the subject of polygamy, by the Rev. W. Holm, President of the Danish Evangelical Missionary Society, the special topic was: "How the Mission Church is to deal with such polygamists as wish to be baptized." The general conclusion is, like that of Hermas, "that a polygamist cannot be baptized, but must remain in the state of a catechumen." Without attempting to summarize the discourse there were two utterances therein which I desire to appropriate. The *first* is this. He says: "As far as I can see we cannot allow the polygamist to be baptized if he retains more than one wife after the baptism; for by this sacrament we are clad in Christ that we should live a new life in Him. How then can he be baptized who in receiving baptism will reserve to himself to remain within Christ in one part of his life, in which he will remain in the old life derived from his heathenism? What formerly might be looked upon as something excusable, as something belonging to what God in His long suffering tolerates (Acts 17: 30; Rom. 3; 25), that becomes real sin to the baptized" (p. 55). But he coupled with this sound position the error that it is sin to break up the polygamous relation, and hence concluded that perpetual catechumenage outside the church was the only alternative till Providence relieved him of his plural relation.

The *other* passage effectually disposes of a plausible fallacy which vitiates the deliverances on the Chesapeake overture by Synod and Assembly.

President Holm says (pp. 53-54): "Tho' there were many illicit connections in the Græco-Roman community, there was no polygamy to be found, so the problem possibly did not exist at all in the Apostolic time. Besides it could not be shown that polygamists had been baptized at all in the ancient church. But, at all events, the monogamic matrimony must now, most decidedly be maintained as being the only one in harmony with the Christian faith and Christian life; the only one justified by the Lord's Word and Spirit. And how should we be able to maintain this, if by baptism we admitted polygamists, with or without their two or more wives, into the church? It would be nearly impossible to make it clear to the new Christians in the mission church—[I may add, or to anybody else]—that polygamy, which was sin when entered into by baptized people, nay, a sin so great that it would lead to the excommunication of those who made themselves guilty of it, could be permitted to those who had entered into it before their baptism, and that they could continue in it without losing their privileges as members of the church. Not only the new Christians in foreign countries, but also many Christians at home would not be able to understand this. They would be offended by it, look upon it as a transgression of the law of Christ, and turn away from a Mission tolerating such things. It would appear to them as if the Mission associated with those at home, who, while proclaiming free thought, also proclaim what they call "free love," teaching that a man is not to be tied to one woman, nor a woman to one husband, but that they may connect themselves with whatever number such a

love might connect them with. At a time when so much is done in Christendom to violate the bonds of matrimony, the Mission should carefully avoid everything apparently pointing in the same direction."

I confess that I know of no valid answer to Rev. Mr. Holm's deduction that the tolerance of polygamy in a church member on the one hand and the excommunication of it on the other, so obliterates the distinctions between right and wrong in the relations of the sexes as to be the equivalent of "free love." Upon identically the same polygamous relation, this is blowing hot in one case and cold in the other; it is fish for one and flesh for the other.

The General Assembly of 1904 solemnly declares "that the Presbyterian Church is unalterably opposed to polygamy, and would not, under any circumstances, tolerate the entrance into polygamous relations of any of its members, even in heathen lands," yet at the same moment it threw its arms of protection around and embraces others, actually in the polygamous relations for years, as church members, without even a word of disapproval or suggestion of discipline or renunciation. I take no pride in pointing out such gross inconsistency, nor do I make the slightest apology for doing so. It is a regrettable state of facts, and it is my right and my duty, under the vows of my ministry, to do so—"To be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you (me) on that account" (B. Ch. Order 119, § 6).

How such a gross and self-contradictory absurdity ever gained currency outside or inside of the Moravian communion can only be explained by a piously thoughtless

sequacity—being first enunciated by some stupid blunderer and then passively acquiesced in by others, intolerance on the one hand blinding to the tolerance on the other hand.

CHAPTER XIII.

LESSONS FROM MISSIONARIES—AFRICA.

It is now proposed, before conclusion, to view this subject to some extent through the eyes of modern missionaries, as the accounts they have given us of their experience and observation as workers among the heathen will enable us to do so. I am about to submit the proof that the great burden of mission work is borne by those who are intolerant of polygamy, and that the polygamists are a faction who are impeding mission work.

The subject of this discourse is polygamy, not as a matter of history nor of ethnology, but in its relations to the Christian church, and especially our Southern Presbyterian Church. In Exeter Hall, London, 1888, there was held, from June 9th to 19th, "The Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World." It consisted of 1,519 delegates from 139 societies in Great Britain, Ireland, and the colonies, Europe, Canada, and the United States. These delegates represented missions in all parts of the world. Their perfect freedom of utterance gave a marvelous variety and interest to every topic considered. And among the topics considered, no one was deemed more important and interesting than that of polygamy. The topics assigned for the third day, June 12 were: (a) Caste; (b) Slavery; (c) Polygamy; (d) Indian Marriage Law, etc. But the topic which absorbed the occasion, hardly admitting the mention of the others, was polyg-

amy. The record of the deliverances on this subject, written and oral, by the interlocutors, is found in vol. 2: 49-81—over thirty pages—and over thirty persons participated in the animated discussion.

The Ecumenical Missionary Conference of 1900 was almost a sequel to that of 1888. It was held in Carnegie Hall, New York City, from April 21 to May 1. In the fall of 1854 the first of these missionary conventions was held in the United States, in order "to unite in cordial love and sympathy the friends of missions;" and the special occasion thereof was the presence of Dr. Alexander Duff, the most distinguished missionary of his day. That was over fifty years since, and quite a number of like assemblies have been held since that, but the two largest and most influential were those of 1888 and 1900. In 1900, 2,000 representatives or delegates from more than 200 societies were convened, and the President of the United States (McKinley) and the Governor of New York State extended to them a sympathetic welcome.

There were more than seventy (70) sessions of this Congress, members being detailed to address audiences simultaneously in different churches and halls. The program of discussion bristles with topics and speakers, and about six pages of the second volume report are occupied with the subject of polygamy. The discussion is by no means so extended and full as at Exeter Hall, 1888, but the same earnestness and divergence of opinion appear.

1. Some lessons should be learned from the discussion of this subject in these various assemblies. And one conspicuous lesson is that there is a great *lack of unanimity* on the subject.

2. Certain of the advocates of the admission of polygamy

pleaded that the course respecting it should be the same as in the apostolic church with *slavery*. As the influence of the church abolished slavery so it would polygamy. (So Rev. Hugh White argues in his letter for our Presbyteries.) Hence, admit polygamy into the church as a reform school. But it seems to be perfectly certain that the constitution of the Presbyterian Church fails to provide for such a reformatory, and uncompromisingly condemns polygamy as a sin and in violation of the law of God. Besides, we know that the relation of bondservant and master was in the apostolic church (Eph. vi: 5-9; Col. 3: 22—iv: 1), but there is absolutely no proof that polygamy was in that church, and the conclusive proof is against it.

3. It is pleaded that though the polygamous relation is sinful, it would be sinful to break it up. But as applied to a sinful relation this is a misleading fallacy. It is stated thus: "It is an admitted principle that there may be relations which it was sin to form, and which yet it is sinful to break when formed." Within certain limitations this is true. But this does not hold true at all where the relation formed is sinful, and may be voluntarily terminated. It never can be a sin to quit sin. This is the case with polygamy. A word farther may be allowable.

I will illustrate. A man's relation to an illegitimate child was formed in sin; but it would be sinful in him not to recognize his obligation to that child, for neither he nor it, nor both, can dissolve that relation and the consequent obligation. The child is innocent of any guilt. Reciprocal duties arise from the relation. The father cannot absolve himself from the obligation consequent upon his voluntary and sinful deed. The part of the child is passive, but the relation is abiding and binding.

For example. The law of China is monogamous. The code has been already quoted (p. 63). Parental and family custom allot to him his lawful wife. He cannot claim on that account exemption from obligation to cherish her when he has recognized her, nor can a child plead no obligation to unchosen parentage. Every concubine is taken by the man's own choice and also by her choice, for no woman, the code provides, can be compelled to become a concubine. Both parties are voluntarily in the relation; and both are capable of terminating it. It is an unlawful and sinful relation whose continuance between them is voluntary. Evidently the voluntary continuance in sin is an aggravation of the sin. The obligation of a real legal husband and wife is different, for the relation is right.

The case is different with the innocent children. The father and the concubine mother sinned in forming that relation of parentage to those children; and they would both sin in ignoring or attempting to break it up, were it possible to do so; in fact they cannot break it up. The existing relation to the children is formed in sin, but is insuperable and not subject to their will. The children are innocent, but the parents are both guilty. Hence the duty of breaking up the sinful relation between themselves, whose continuance depends on their own choice, but not between them and their innocent children. The principle appealed to, it must be apparent, does not apply to the formation of a sinful relation by a sinful act; and there can be no such thing as the virtuous or innocent formation of a sinful relation, nor can a sinful relation be innocently continued.

The inference is drawn by Dr. Dabney: "There appears, then, no evidence—from the passages under comment—that polygamy was allowed in the laws of Moses." Undoubtedly,

by parity of reasoning, the conclusion should be, no evidence that polygamy was allowed in the Christian Church. It would be a shocking absurdity to infer from this argument that there is no polygamy in the Pentateuch, but that there is polygamy allowed in the New Testament. It is no compliment to Dr. Dabney to suppose him guilty of such an absurd, illogical crotchet (Exodus xxi: 7-12, and Deut. xxi: 15-17).

I deny that a case can arise where it would be a sin to abandon sin, under any circumstances whatever. Such a case would necessarily involve self-contradiction. It would be the precise equivalent of the position, that circumstances may exist or arise where it would be right to do wrong, *i. e.*, right to commit sin.

4. All who hold—and, surprising as it may appear, some do hold—that it is sinful to separate from plural wives, do so on the *false assumption* that these so-called plural wives are sure-enough or real wives. The law of monogamy is that “Marriage is between one man and one woman: and neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.” The Koran allows *four* wives; the Bible *one*. In a recent divorce convention in Washington City of delegates appointed by the governors of all our States, except South Carolina, in which State no divorce has ever been granted. an eminent lawyer, the chairman of the committee on resolutions, Hon. J. Walter Smith, gave forth an accepted definition of marriage, as standing over against all schemes of divorce or separation, that *marriage is the permanent union for life of one man and one woman*. This was put forth, not as a Bible doctrine, but as a doctrine of reason, or an expression of the natural law of marriage and was unquestioned.

We have before us, then, a two-horned dilemma: monogamy and simultaneous polygamy. There is no third, or other alternative admissible. The parties to the plural connection are true wives or they are not. If they are true wives, then monogamy is false and a delusion. If monogamy is true, they are not and cannot be true wedded wives, and their relation is violative of the law of marriage and adulterous. They are not married at all, for by the law of God only one woman at a time can be married to any man, but are in the sight of heaven and of sound reason, as court decisions indicate, living lives of licentiousness and not of wedlock. Their ignorance may mitigate but does not abolish, nor absolve from guilt and responsibility. We have seen that leading peoples of ancient and modern times have been monogamous where Bible teaching was unknown.

True of classic nations in ancient times, it is true also of China, Japan, and India where these plural relations, though practiced and customary, are irregular and illicit and concubinous. The true wife is never confounded with them, nor degraded to their level, the concubines all being of subordinate and even rank. May not, as already suggested, this recognized distinction of the one true wife prove to be the vulnerable point of polygamy as a handhold for lifting the family out of the ditch? There is usually a vulnerable point in Satan's armor; and he really seems to have dipped the human family in the vile Styx* of

* In philosophy, an attempt at a new philosophy, in the handwriting of James, is Pragmatism; of Schiller, Humanism; and of Prof. Howison, Pluralism, which are different titles of the same scheme which dispenses with Monotheism and its corollaries, and vainly attempts to rehabilitate vulgar utilitarianism and polytheism under new names and subtle distinctions.

polygamy. If monogamy is true, then this marital pluralism is false; and if this pluralism is true, then monogamy is false. And if monogamy is false, then Christianity collapses on our hands. And pluralism in religion, whatever may be its fate in philosophy, is enthroned to the overthrow of the unity of Christ's leadership of the church and the destruction of the divinely appointed and sacred emblem of the relation of the one true and holy God to the spiritual Israel, with loose reins cast upon the neck of licentious polytheism and degrading idolatry. This is not fanciful, for human nature is logical, inevitably gravitating to consistent conclusions from its premises. Hence forecasts are legitimate. In a true sense monogamy is practically the very heart, not only of the family and society, but of our religion and destiny for time and eternity. It is too sacred to be experimented or trifled with as is being done by pluralist missionaries. It is a vital point of citizenship as well as of church membership.

The attempt, however honestly, has been vainly made to bolster up the legitimacy of polygamy by reference also to an incident in the life of David (II Sam. xii: 8, 11) in addition to the appeal to Ex. 21 and Deut. 21.

By Nathan, Jehovah said to David: "I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house and thy master's wives into thy bosom," etc. The heathen harem of Saul had been established by him in conformity with the heathen model of a kingdom which the people chose to have in place of Jehovah's rule over them. This is explicitly set forth in I Sam. viii: 5, 7, 9, 19. Jehovah said to Samuel: "They have rejected me—not you—that I should rule over them." When Samuel tried to dissuade from their folly

and sinful rebellion, they replied obstinately: "Nay, but we will have a king over us, that we may be like all the nations."

Well, one of the characteristics of the king's court among the nations was a harem, more for impressive worldly display and influence through its family connections than for aught else. Lust was made subservient to ambition. When, therefore, this turning over of Saul's harem to David occurred, it simply meant, in oriental style, a complete obliteration of the dynasty and rule of Saul, and in no manner implied a divine sanction of the polygamy of the harem. The oriental dress does not alter the moral obliquity covered by it. It is a whitened sepulchre.

Besides, these sinful practices of old which God's providence bore with, as has been pointed out, were not recorded for imitation, but rather as warning against imitation of the heathen.

5. It is asked, Are we to refuse admission into the church on earth of those who would be admitted to heaven? Are we to refuse baptism to one who would not be excluded from heaven? These polygamous or concubinous patriarchs in Israel who indulged this course of life, it is sufficiently plain, either did not know, as we do under gospel light, that it was sinful, or else that they willfully indulged in this as in other sins. But if ignorant, their ignorance would not have made it sinless, for a large portion of man's sins are sins of ignorance. The seriousness and frequency with which Leviticus, ch. iv, provides sacrifices for sins of ignorance, has an instructive bearing on this matter. We all have profound reason to be thankful to God that his forgiving mercy is not limited by our imperfect knowledge.

"Who can discern his errors?

"Cleanse thou me from hidden faults" (Ps. xix: 12).

Undoubtedly, with our light, the polygamists of ancient Israel would have been debarred from the feast of the Lord. And were they in our midst, living this sinful life, we would not be at liberty to associate with them as brethren. Says Paul: "I wrote you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators; * * * but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator; * * * with such a one, no, not to eat" (I Cor. v: 9, 11). This is scriptural and practical Christianity. Their twilight gropings do not give the pace to our noonday steppings. Had they been taught as Christ and the apostles have taught us, and as the missionaries should teach the heathen, ignorance could not be pleaded. When taught the sin of polygamy, a heathen is no longer in ignorance, and continuance in it is aggravated sinning against light. The prior life may, and should, receive allowance, but not the life after that enlightenment.

6. The sincere and avowed willingness to renounce all known sin is a valid test of conversion, and is a proper condition of admission to the church. Those who would refuse to renounce their polygamy are not genuine converts. They have not become followers of Christ. At least they do not make it evident to our limited vision so that we are warranted in acting on it.

"And when they heard this (the story of the crucifixion of the holy one of God at Pentecost) they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles: Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them—the very parties guilty of the sin of which he had discoursed—Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the

name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Repentance is here preliminary to baptism. But what is it to repent? We need no better answer than that given in the Shorter Catechism: "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, *turn from it unto God*, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, *new obedience*." A true sense of his sin, and *turning from it*, with grief and hatred with full purpose and endeavor *after new obedience*—if this does not inculcate unequivocally *the renunciation* of all known sin, then to my mind language has lost its significance. No impenitent is converted and every penitent renounces his former life of sin.

Now, if polygamy is a sin, as the *ad interim* committee and the Synod of Virginia and the constitution of the church founded on the word of God declare it to be, and as it is in fact, then this renunciation of repentance, as a prerequisite of admission to baptism, would sweep this polygamy away and the applicant would have none of it left on his back nor in his heart to carry into the church with him.

But it should at once be noted that the criterion of known sin is not the intelligence of the candidate, who hitherto may have been an ignorant heathen with blunted moral sensibilities and blurred spiritual vision, but the intelligence of the Christian missionary, pastor, or teacher. If the heathen man or woman has been led to see and accept Jesus Christ as a Savior from sin, then this sin must stand out as an occasion of grief and an object of hatred. The delinquency of that spiritual guide, if the mind of such an one has not

been thus taught to see the sin of lying, of licentiousness, adultery, drunkenness, gambling, and of polygamy—all are classed together—must be of the most aggravated and culpable type. But how can any one who holds that polygamy need not be renounced, but may be taken into the church, be other than a blind leader of the blind, both of whom must fall into the ditch and defile the church?

Time is not of the essence of some contracts, and it is not of this procedure. It matters not how short a time beforehand the light of the gospel may have illumined the mind of the heathen polygamist to see his sin, the time for renunciation and avowed entrance on a new life is *before* baptism, and not *after* it, before entering the church, or its seats may be filled with godless impenitents. The heathen does not enter the church in heathen darkness, nor in the twilight of the old dispensation, but in the bright sunshine of the new. The present missionary is a teacher, and not a proselyter.

I shall never recover from the amazement which I experienced when Dr. Ramsay, president of King's College, Tennessee, a member of the Synod of Virginia, took the rostrum and argued that the renunciation of all known sin, as a preliminary or condition of admission to baptism and church membership, would wreck our mission churches! I arose in my place, and, with the privilege, asked him if he would receive into the church any one who refused to renounce all known sin? He did not even qualify his position. But it was extended to home churches as well. And this surprise was intensified when an ex-Moderator of the General Assembly, Dr. Hopkins, endorsed Dr. Ramsay's position. I have hesitated to give the names, but think it best to do so. My memory and understanding are confirmed by others.

Whilst there is no possibility of these brethren satisfactorily defending themselves, do they not owe the church a disclaimer?

This novel occurrence was just before the vote on the overture, when 79 voted for the admission and tolerance of polygamy in the church to 14 against it. If the heathen is taught, as he should be, that the scripture condemns polygamy as a sin, then he knows it to be a sin, and the renunciation of all known sin would sweep it out of his life. Nor is it possible to find any room for it in the new life,—nor for polyandria, a kindred sin.

Said Dr. Cust, in the 1888 Conference, vol. 2: 59:

“Marriage is the type of the union of Christ with His church, and the relation of the sexes is the touchstone of the purity of the church. If once you allow polygamy in a church, away with its purity.” Said another: “If we bring polygamy into our churches, we shall never get rid of it” (p. 75).

I am able to mention a case where a mission church did rid itself of polygamy, and it is a very instructive case. I learn of it from Herbert Kirby, M. D., for three years a medical missionary on the lower Congo, two hundred miles above its mouth. This Baptist mission has eight stations and 5,000 communicants. Rev. Henry Richards started the work in 1879. At first men were admitted with what wives they had, but were not allowed to take any more, the same course is now pursued at Luebo. After a dozen years, on this basis, the church was disbanded and an entirely new start was made, on the *strict basis of monogamy* and abstinence from palm wine. The people promptly accepted the monogamous condition, rejoined the church, and are now watchful of it and prosperous. During the past year one of the teachers

gave reason to the natives to believe that he had secretly departed from it, and he was expelled.

This Baptist mission on the Congo is a thousand miles from our Presbyterian mission on the Kassai; and it seems clear to me that it would be well for Luebo to follow the noble example it has set, and make a fresh start, if need be, to get rid of the blotch of polygamy; and it is probable that, on the reorganization, very few would be lost in numbers, and great spiritual gain would, as in that case, result. No doubt some of the present polygamous members would renounce it in order to be right and reassociated in the church on a sinless basis.

It may be restated that relatively the number of the polygamists in any community is a scanty few. The great mass of the people are poor and monogamous. Those who have plural wives are the well-to-do, or rich. Even in the Bible, plural families are named only in connection with the rich, as Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, several kngs; and it is confessed that this aristocratic feature of polygamy has unfortunately a tempting influence on missionaries.

Mrs. W. M. Baird, a Presbyterian missionary in Korea, in attendance on the Missionary Conference, 1900, lifts the veil from the experience of a missionary life thus:

"Sometimes when years of faithful effort have been put in, with little or no results in broken hearts or changed lives, a sore temptation comes to the missionary. He feels that the church at home, whose agent he is, is watching him with impatient eyes, and wondering why his reports year after year continue to show little but hopes and anticipations.

"He sees natives around him, friendly and mildly interested, yet clinging tenaciously to their heathen

customs and beliefs, and a strong temptation comes to him to make it easier for them to become Christians by *letting down* the requirements of the gospel. He begins to think that Sabbath attendance at the neighborhood fair, either as purchaser or vender, is perhaps not to be absolutely prohibited, since the natives complain that not to go would subject them to serious inconvenience and financial loss. A compromise, of church in the morning and fair in the afternoon, begins to seem to him not altogether unreasonable. *Or, here is a man who manifests his willingness to become a Christian if he can do so without disturbing his domestic relations, which happen to be plural.* He is a leading man in the community, and the missionary feels that if he can secure him, numbers of the other villagers will follow. He begins to revolve the matter in his mind with a view to letting him in. Plausible reasons speedily suggest themselves. David and Solomon had concubines, and the Lord winked at the matter. This man had assumed these responsibilities in the days of his ignorance; was he warranted in denying them now? It would mean a great tearing up of the man's household; the missionary knows and likes him, and feels disinclined to impose hard conditions upon him. He *loses sight* of the fact that the option of making conditions was not left with him, and so it comes to pass that the gospel is conformed to the heathen, instead of the heathen to the gospel, and by and by we have the spectacle presented of a native church made up of Sabbath-breakers and adulterers.

"Better a thousand times the unbroken regions of darkness than such *baptized heathenism as this*. Better long years of fruitless labor than *such sadly unchristian results*. No appearance of prosperity, however flattering, can atone for such a sacrifice of prin-

ciple. It is easier to keep out than to put out, and when it comes to admitting members into the church, a missionary can not afford to present other than an uncompromising front to the various forms of evil that show themselves, no matter how firmly rooted, in a heathen community."

XIV.

HARMONY OF OVERTURE WITH MISSION WORK.

7. I propose now chiefly to gather helpful information from the deliverances in these councils respecting certain missions which have been and are still conducted on the *monogamous principle of the Overture*, baptizing only such as renounce polygamy—thus excluding polygamy from the church. I have already mentioned the interesting Baptist mission on the lower Congo. I am told (by Dr. Kirby) that there are English Methodist and Swedish missions on the upper Congo pursuing the same course. But if we look at South Africa, missionaries have been laboring on this plan among the Hottentots, the Koramas, and the Bushmen for more than a hundred years. These were amongst the most degraded peoples. "I am not aware," says Rev. John Mackenzie, "I am not aware that human language could depict a more degraded people than the missionaries found them to be at the beginning of the last century. But now they are clothed and in their right mind. They are now 'fulfilling the duties of citizens in Cape Colony—and the offices of good subjects and good Christians and taking part in the management of native churches.'" The gospel was taken into Bechuanaland by Robert Moffit, followed by Livingstone. *From the first it has been monogamous.* In their polygamous state several so-called wives have their separate es-

tablishments or homes like the Mormons. There is only one true wife, and his taking other wives marks his increase in wealth. When the polygamy is renounced in becoming a Christian, neither the woman nor the children lose caste.

"The new doctrine," we are told, "would have no chance whatever there as public opinion is already formed against it. The vast plains and plateaux, the chief home of these people, are four to five thousand feet above the sea level, and hence it is one of the healthiest countries of the world. The missionary from this people in the 1888 conference remarked: "Polygamists showing interest in Christianity should be helped in every way, and treated with consideration and patience. But their place was the Catechumen's class; the water of baptism did not belong to them" (vol. 2: 80).

ZULULAND.

Another strong witness for monogamous and anti-polygamous missions is found in the Zululand, an interesting province of Natal, Southeast Africa. The American Board of C. F. M., instituted this mission in 1835—over seventy years ago. It is one of the most successful missions of that great missionary organization. At the very outset intolerance of polygamy was its rule. Men separated from their wives and then publicly married to the true wife in a Christian way. Bishop Colenso lent his influence against the American missionaries who adopted this rule and favored toleration of polygamy in the church; but at the end of the conflict in 1855, twenty years after the opening of the mission, the practice of intolerance was more firmly established than ever.

This Zulu case is too important to be dismissed without

further notice. I will submit, therefore, the letter of Dr. Smith, the Secretary of this Board, and some extracts from the report to which it refers.

"BOSTON, MASS., Oct. 20, 1904.

"REV. DR. S. S. LAWS, *Martinsburg, West Virginia*.

"MY DEAR DR. LAWS: I have just received a letter from Dr. Gates, of Washington, D. C., making inquiry in your behalf as to the usage of the American Board in the case of persons in the polygamous state who are converted to Christianity. Our usage is quite uniform not to receive such men into church membership until their polygamous relation is corrected. *The usage may not be absolutely uniform.* Circumstances are sometimes taken into the account when a particular adjustment is made. We meet this question most commonly in our missions in Africa, and last year we sent a deputation to Africa that made a reply to inquiries on this subject to the pastors and delegates of the African Congregational Church in Natal. I send you a copy of the report of this deputation, and you will find this letter on pages 59-60. This letter expresses the matter according to the usage of the Board, and I understand its terms are entirely approved by those to whom it is addressed.

"I am, faithfully yours,

"JUDSON SMITH."

"POLYGAMY.

"That this topic should persistently thrust itself upon the consideration of the churches of the Zulu Mission will not be thought strange by those who understand the situation and who measure aright the strength of social customs and complications growing out of these social relations. From the begining of the mission, the wrongfulness of polygamy

has been insisted upon, and admitted by all the churches. Any church member contracting a plural marriage would be at once set aside, not by the missionaries but by his own church. But there are cases in which persons who are believed to be true Christians are held by marriage vows and by native law from which there is no escape. *Especially* are wives who have children sometimes held in a bondage most trying to them. *Shall they be excluded* from the church because of a relationship from which they would gladly be free? Advice on this matter was repeatedly sought of the deputation by pastors and church members, and a reply was greatly desired.

"REPLY TO INQUIRIES PRESENTED ON THE SUBJECT OF
POLYGAMY.

"INANDA, July 22, 1903.

"To the Pastors and Delegates of the African Congregational Church.

"DEAR BRETHREN: You have asked for our views on the subject of polygamy, as to which there is some difference of opinion among you. We understand that there is entire agreement in the judgment that any person who contracts a plural marriage after uniting with the church should be at once removed. We understand also that there are *comparatively few* who would admit to membership a man who *still retains* more than one wife. The principal question relates to the reception of women who have become Christians after they were married to a man who has other wives living and from whom it is difficult, if not impossible, for them to separate. Their situation is most trying. If the man refuses to let them go they are held by the native law. If they break away they

must leave their children, and become practically outcasts in life. Such women who become Christians are entitled to sincerest sympathy and tender care. *Shall they be admitted to the church?*

"You have asked our judgment on this matter. Let it be clearly understood that the deputation has no authority to pass judgment on this question. The American Board, which has sent us, does not wish to govern the churches, and has delegated to us no authority to pass upon points like this. We are not empowered to speak for the Board on the matter of polygamy. But the deputation is at liberty to express its judgments and we see no reason why we should not give to you our opinion on the subject. *We, therefore, reply that it is our judgment, all things considered, that it is not expedient to change the practice as to receiving polygamists which has hitherto prevailed among all Zulu churches. The stand which these churches have taken against this terrible evil is one of the potent influences for the overthrow of the custom. The Zulu people can never take the place they are capable of taking until polygamy is overthrown and the family, as Christ defines it, is established among them. Anything that affects the family unfavorably injures the whole religious and social life of the people. Doubtless all Christians agree in this. And it is, in our opinion, almost inevitable that the protest which these churches have made, and should make, against polygamy, would be obscured and seriously weakened if there should be any relaxation in the practice of excluding from admission to church membership those who are in polygamous relations. Such exclusion does not bar any true Christian from heaven. It should certainly call for every comfort and help to be given to one thus bound in heavy chains. But the gain to such a*

person if received would be greatly counterbalanced by the loss to the many, if the testimony of these churches as to the divine law of one man and one wife were obscured in the thought of the people. A church, for its own preservation, must at times refuse to receive one who, though a Christian, would be a disturbing element in it. And it seems to us that the presence of polygamists in any church could not fail to result unfavorably to its peace and welfare and efficiency.

"We should be sorry to see the Zulu churches breaking from the stand they have hitherto taken and should fear that it would lead to looseness in other ways. We are,

"Your brothers in Christ,
(Signed)

"E. E. STRONG,
"SYDNEY STRONG."

At Clifton Springs, N. Y., summer of 1905, I learned from Miss Clark, a missionary of the A. B. C. F. M., among the Zulus for seven years, that the native pastors and people are more united and firm in their opposition to polygamy than are the foreigners. Secretary Smith assured me of the perfect reliableness of Miss Clark's views.

Here, then, is one of the most successful and venerable of the missions of the American Board which has been built up to an enviable position of autonomy on the anti-polygamy scriptural theory of this overture, whose peace, purity, and future are now imperiled by the erratic course of white men. A Rev. James Scott, of Scotland, related in the 1888 Centenary Convention how he had, on the advice of his wife, broken over the conservative stand of these natives, after he ceased to be a drummer, or commercial man," among the Zulu Kafirs, and became a missionary, and then proclaimed

it as the doctrine he was advocating that "The refusal to receive polygamists into the church of Christ is a great hindrance to the gospel among the Zulus, and that the polygamist family should come in as one" (vol. 2: 71).

I confess that I look on such a missionary as a calamity. More than fifty years ago the American Board missionaries successfully resisted Bishop Colenso's latitudinarian effort to maintain in the Natal churches the tolerance of polygamy. Yet this Rev. Mr. Scott concedes that there is no tolerance due to concubinage. But it cannot be successfully controverted that always and everywhere so-called polygamy is concubinage and adultery.

Bishop CROWTHER, D. D., native African, "Church Missionary Society of the Niger":

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen—The matter before this meeting is one of very great importance, and it is one which ought to be looked at and judged from a scriptural point of view. If we go to consult the feelings of this tribe and that tribe, of this or that nation, and leave the Word of God behind, we shall err. We may as well save all the people who are worshipping imaginary gods instead of the one only true God. My opinion, and the opinion of the women in my own country, is that polygamy is a misery to mankind. You consult men's feelings, but you do not consult the women's. Now I will just give you *some information* about the state of things in Africa where I come from. Whoever has witnessed this life of polygamy would never venture to support or commend its being continued at all. It is an evil. Supposing a man gets married to one wife, and then he marries another, and another, until he has five, seven, or ten wives. When he becomes converted *he is re-*

ceived only with one wife, but the others must be put away. And we have witnessed in the heart of the country, where we missionaries go, that where there are illegitimate children born there is a great deal of heart-burning between the husband and the women. This is a fact. And why? Man was not made to have so many wives in the house. If you understood the secret of the thing you would never advocate a man having more than one wife.

Another thing I must tell you is this: *As a matter of fact, the wives of these polygamists are not fed by their husbands. The women have to provide for themselves.* You have only to go to New Calabar to find these poor women, the wives of chiefs—these polygamists—being obliged to take axes and go into the forests either to cut wood or to make a fence; to cut bamboo poles, to thatch houses, while others again—I am talking of the women—have to go out in their canoes to fish, and one or two may have a little baby on their backs. They have to paddle out and catch fish to support themselves and their husbands. Now, is such a state of things as that to be advocated? My dear friends, I am just telling you all this that you may see what is the state of things. Well, under the circumstances I have mentioned, the wives of polygamists, having children, are not fed by the husbands, neither are the children. The children are not taken care of by the husband at all.

Before I sit down, I would ask whether, if the husband dies, you think these women live ever afterwards in misery? *No*; before many months you find each of them will get a husband.

A MEMBER: May I, for the information of this Conference, be permitted to ask Bishop Crowther a very important question?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

The MEMBER: Will you tell us, please, whether, in the case of a native chief having more than one wife, having married them as a heathen, if he becomes a Christian, would you compel him to put aside all but the one wife before he is baptized? and whether, on the other hand, when one of the wives becomes a Christian first, you would baptize and receive into the fellowship of the church such a woman, she being the wife of a heathen husband, and being one of many wives? (Conf. 1888, vol 2: 72.)

In brief.—The answer was uncompromising for the men, even chiefs, but relaxed for the women. The Zulus deny the plural life to the women the same as to the men.

Rev. J. A. TAYLOR, 1888, colored (Baptist Foreign Missionary from Convention of U. S. A.):

I think if we kept pace with the New Testament scripture we should have no difficulty in finding how to decide this question. Let the teaching of the Son of God be our guide, and we shall always keep right. I fear that sometimes we let our zeal run away with our best judgment in this matter.

The very first difficulty that met our society, some eight years ago, when they opened the Mission Station in West Central Africa, was this very question, as to whether we should admit polygamists into our churches. Having suffered to a great extent in the United States from the allowance of this kind of thing we met, and *decided emphatically*, "*No; the gospel of Jesus Christ did not allow polygamy in His church.*" And I feel so today, and whatever you may decide for India or Africa, I am here to appeal to you in the interests of millions of colored people in America who have a deep interest in the evangelization of Africa. I say for God's sake do not make

such a provision for Africa as to allow polygamists into the church. We do not want it. The Africans themselves do not want it.

Our principle of missionary work is based on this, that it is better to have a few firm Christians with clean moral principles, who will hold up the light of the gospel of the Son of God, than to have a multitude who have sin mixed up in them. Let me tell you that if we want to convert the world to Christ, if we want a church that will shine out "as clear as the sun and as fair as the moon, and be as terrible as an army with banners," against every sin, that church must be purged from sin, and polygamy is one of the worst and most demoralizing of sins. May I ask that whatever you may decide for India or for China, do not make any provision for Africa, that dear old country which I love, to admit polygamists into the church of Jesus Christ. (Conf. 1888, vol. 2: 81.)

Rev. A. MERENSKY, Superintendent, Berlin Missionary Society (*Ibid.*, 60):

Brothers and Sisters—I must ask your forbearance because I am not well versed in the English language. But if it is not possible for me to bring pleasing words before you, I hope I shall be able to tell you some encouraging facts with regard to missionary work and the treatment of polygamy in Africa. In Africa the treatment of polygamy is a burning question. *Polygamy is the greatest obstacle to the spread of Christianity among the African tribes*, and very often younger brothers coming to the new countries and the fresh tribes are perhaps inclined to have too little courage with regard to this great obstacle. It is like a mountain before us, but we know that even mountains may be removed by the power of Christian faith; and so it

is with polygamy in Africa. I have baptized in South Africa very many who were polygamists before their conversion. I have lived for *more than twenty years* among the tribes of the interior and Transvaal, and I have had to deal with this question. I am glad to say that on this subject there is almost complete *unanimity* between all the missionary societies of South Africa, and *the system of toleration in regard to polygamy is, as far as I know, entirely done away with.*

Where the Spirit of God is working upon the hearts of the natives I cannot see that there is any difficulty in treating this question. When a polygamist came to us asking to be received into instruction, he often asked, "How about the women?" And I said, "Do not trouble yourself about that; come and hear the Word of God. You have no power in yourself to deal with this question before you are a really converted man, a true follower, willing to follow Christ; you must follow Christ, and I will instruct you if you come." Month after month passed by, and when the time for baptism arrived we selected some of those who were perhaps ready for it; then most of them came and said, "This matter is regulated already; it is all right; I have given my wives back to their parents." We have not tried to press that upon such men; but it has been simply the effect of other Christians upon them, and the effect of the Word of God. Therefore we have found that the question was not so difficult as we thought before. Very often those native "wives" are young girls five or six years old, and when they are sent back their parents receive them with joy, because they think they can sell them again and get more cattle for them.

ETHIOPEAN MOVEMENT.

"BUREAU OF MISSIONS, BIBLE HOUSE,

"NEW YORK, *February 8, 1906.*

"REV. S. S. LAWS, D. D.,

"1733 Q St., Northwest, Washington, D. C.

"DEAR SIR: Your favor of February 2d is received enclosing clipping respecting the polygamy overture. I am glad to get it, and shall be glad to see the minutes of the Synod when they are ready.

"The movement for independence among the native churches is, as you know, especially marked in South Africa where the African Methodist Episcopal Church of America has had a good deal to do with what is known as 'the Ethiopian movement.'

"I have just received a curious impression of this movement from the monthly bulletin of the Swiss Missionary Society working in the Zulu territory on the southern borders of Portuguese East Africa. The view which these good people give of the effects of the Ethiopian movement among the churches founded by the American Board of Boston is very suggestive, and I enclose to you a translation of the essential parts of the story. Of course it may be somewhat colored by the Swiss missionary's point of view, but after making due allowances it is worth reading.

"Cordially yours,

"HENRY OTIS DWIGHT."

INDEPENDENCE IN ZULU CHURCHES.

(Translated from a letter of Rev. Mr. C. Bourquin, in the Bulletin of the Swiss Romande Mission, January, 1906.)

Mr. Wilcox, of the American Board's Zulu Mission, visited the Swiss station of Matutuene in order to ask the Swiss missionary to go with him to the Board's outstation of

Madladlane, with the purpose of carrying out a transfer of the work there to the care of the Swiss mission.

* * * * *

The chairman of the district, however, said that they had no need of foreigners. "You may come occasionally to baptize and to perform marriage ceremonies. But we can get along very well by ourselves."

"This self-sufficiency," continues Mr. Bourquin, "this pride, this ignorance of their own needs, would be supremely ridiculous if it were not sad enough to bring tears. These people five years ago joined the Ethiopian church, that black church which cannot tolerate the control of a white missionary. It was heart-breaking to see these blacks, who owe to the missionary the little which they know, refuse the help which we had come to offer them. We suffered something of what Jesus Christ suffered when He came to His own and His own received Him not.

"The upshot of it was that the people refused to make any arrangement. They did not trust us. They told Mr. Wilcox that they were independent and would carry on their work as they chose and would extend their efforts into the whole field of the American Board if they wished to do so."

I may remark that so strongly does the current of mission labors in Africa still move against polygamy in the churches, that our Luebo patron of polygamy is virtually side-tracked. It seems to be agreed that monogamy is more easily enforced in Africa than in some other countries—thanks to early monogamous missions. It is to be deprecated that the influence of our southern church should falter in this great movement for redeeming Africa from one of the most terrible curses that sin has inflicted upon our race.

The Mohammedans favor polygamy, and are supposed to have introduced it into South Africa.

In Bishop Heber's stirring missionary hymn:

"From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand,
Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand;
From many an ancient river,
From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error's chain."

CHAPTER XV.

JAPAN, CHINA, AND INDIA.

Japan.—There is only occasion for a glance at Japan, with her 50,000,000 population and 50,000 Christians. It is hardly forty years since the gospel gained free access to this peculiarly gifted people. It was in 1854 that Commodore Perry opened the Bible on the capstan of his vessel in a Japanese harbor and read the 100th Psalm. It was not till that that the door of entrance to Japan swung wide open to the nations of the world and Japan ceased to be a hermit nation. In Africa the aspiration for the Ethiopian Church, or the church of the African continent, has been alluded to as becoming more and more pronounced. But in Japan this national aspiration has been realized, and the Christians of Japan have leaped forward to a full home organization and independence. And to their honor, be it said, polygamy is excluded from the Japanese church. And in Dr. Dennis, vol. 2, it is said: "Concubinage, so common as reported, has been disgraced and forced into privacy, and lessened and discredited, and family life ennobled." Is not this too optimistic?

CHINA.

China.—We have seen that the most successful mission work in Africa has been monogamous and anti-polygamous; also that the marvelously successful Japanese mission is anti-polygamous. The anti-polygamous mission work in China claims special attention for its marked success and promise. Indeed, a Presbyterian missionary who went forth from the District of Columbia Presbytery fifteen years ago, addressed the Ministerial Association of Washington in December, 1905. This was the Rev. Charles A. Killie, located at Paotingfu, China, and he knew only of monogamous mission service whilst in that country. He did not entertain the thought of baptizing polygamists, nor had he come into association with any who did. But some further information most instructive along this line may be gathered from the report of the Centenary Conference of 1888:

Rev. W. MCGREGOR (English Presbyterian Mission, Amoy):

I should also like to say a few words upon this question of polygamy. When our Lord reminded the Jews of the original institution of marriage, I believe He laid down a rule which is to be the rule of the Christian church in all ages. If we are to admit Christian polygamy, I do not see how we are to exclude Christian polyandry. With regard to the question of different rules for those who are already married, my experience in the missionary field has led me to think that in what we do we must carry with us the *consciencess* of our Christian converts; and I am persuaded that if we have *one rule for this member* and

another for that member, we shall not carry their consciences with us.

With regard to the case of China, which I know best, I was very much amazed to hear a gentleman who has been in China saying that all the women whom a Chinaman has in his household are equally wives. The Chinese recognize simply one woman as the real wife—one woman as the mistress of the household; there is a second wife who has quite a different position subordinate to her. All the others are simply concubines, bought for so much money, and *they do not hold the position of wives at all.* The children, whether they are of the secondary wife or of the concubines, do not address their real mother as mother in their own family; they address the mistress of the household as mother; *they are all considered children of the mistress of the household, who is considered to be the real wife.* Consequently I do not think it is doing anything in the way of *breaking up* a Chinese family, when we insist if a man is to be received into the Christian church, that he shall make provision for these other women belonging to his household, and that he shall regard his real wife, the mistress of the household, *as his wife*, and live with her as his wife. We have had several cases of men who have been long kept in the position of *catechumens*, not being received into the church simply on account of these women in the family. We have had cases of men *making provision* for these women, and being ultimately received into the church. In one case we have a native minister, a most valuable man in connection with the mission, who is the son of such a family. I do not believe that he would have been in the position of an ordained Christian minister today if we had received the father into the church while he had a number of women in his harem.

Rev. G. SMITH (English Presbyterian Mission, Swatow, China):

I want to say a word as to the subject of polygamy that has been so much spoken of. The subject is so important, having to do with the family, and thus having so much to do with the purity and perfectness of religion, that it warrants all the attention we can give to it in the time allotted. A good deal has already been said upon this subject, and I will only refer to one or two points. God's ordinance is that *two* should be one flesh; not three, not more than two but two, are to become one flesh. This is the fundamental law of human society. Christ tells us to go back to what was at the beginning, and He evidently means to lay it down for the regulation of His church in all time to go back to the original law. There is more grace now than there was under the old dispensation, and so a higher standard of attainment is required. Thus, much that was permitted under the former is not tolerated under the present dispensation.

Then there is another thing that we must remember. A great deal has been said about the *hardship* arising from a man who has more wives than one putting some of them away. But there are many hard things to do in Christianity. A man is required to give up his life, if need be, in order to be a Christian; he is required to pluck out his right eye, and cut off his right hand, and cut off his right foot. This is the law of Christ. A great deal that is *sentimental* may be said against it; but that is the law of scripture. Then we are to remember another thing. When Christ calls us to do anything, He always gives grace to do it; there is grace for whatever we are called to do, and *to do right wrongs no man*. A right thing done in a Christian way *has no bad results*. A passage has been quoted about a bishop being the hus-

band of one wife, and it was quoted as implying that there might be polygamy in the Christian church. Now I wish another passage to be taken and kept side by side with it. It is the converse of it: The woman is to be the wife of one husband. Does that imply polyandry? Are you prepared to receive as a member of the church a woman who has several husbands? I say it is impurity, and I do not suppose that there is a Christian minister who would allow it. But it is only the converse to the other.

Still further from Rev. G. Smith, of Swatow, China:

I have been a missionary for fully thirty years. The church with which I am connected consists of Chinese converts and communicants, the latter numbering three thousand five hundred, and with another church united with us, more than four thousand communicants. Well, during all these years the uniform practice of this church has been to exclude polygamists, and this has helped to maintain the purity of the church, and it is no barrier to the conversion of the Chinese.

I must explain about the Chinaman and his wives. There are what are called wives, and also concubines, and it is the ambition of a Chinese mandarin to have a wife from each of the eighteen provinces in China and as many concubines as he can afford to support. Polygamy is very common among the higher circles, but I venture to say from my own experience that a man who indulges in polygamy goes against the conscience of the Chinese. I have had it pointed out that a man, when he became wealthy and took a second wife, and while he was rising in the scale of wealth, was falling in the scale of morality. I believe that we have the consciences of the people on our side when we oppose polygamy. * * *

I have no sympathy with the appeals to the love of God to sanction polygamy. I believe such appeals to be an utter misrepresentation of Scripture. God is a holy God, as well as a God of love. I was deeply grieved to hear the sentiments expressed by a man holding such a position as Mr. Hudson Taylor. When he told us the story about the woman who was put away by her husband, and then suffered all the hardships that she did, I cannot but say that, as far as I can judge, the case was mismanaged.

Let it be always remembered that in China there is not the slightest difficulty for a woman to get a husband; the great difficulty is for a man to get a wife; and if a woman is put away she can get a dozen men to choose from, if she wish, without trouble. So that it is not a fair representation of the thing to say: She is an outcast when put away. Her former husband is still bound to care for her welfare.

Now, coming to another point, we have heard of Africa from Bishop Crowder; we have heard from the Fiji Islands, and from other places how the work has been done. Polygamy has been banished from these parts and elsewhere, and the church is flourishing, and that shows that it is practicable. It has been found to be successful for the church becomes prosperous.

I will remark—

That I have never read of a more successful mission work as a steady growth anywhere than has been given in these monogamous and anti-polygamy narratives. The simple truth seems to be that instead of the rejection or renunciation of polygamy being an obstacle it wins the faith of the heathen. It has the winning power of consistency.

It might be remarked that the substance of the Hudson

Taylor case mentioned above, as given by himself, is given substantially thus: When he began his work in China, he required one of his first converts to separate from a second wife and her children. It was in fact a heartless abandonment; and about a year afterwards she confronted Taylor with her curses of himself and of his religion on account of her hardships. That is wherein his mismanagement of the case was apparent and directly contrary to the provisions of our overture. The unfortunate result of this error was that this distinguished medical missionary, Hudson Taylor, was carried off his feet and by no new scriptural light became tolerant of polygamy. And this has become the unscriptural attitude of many excellent brethren whose theory of missions is that it consists in sowing the seed broadcast and trusting to Providence for the results, instead of dealing with Christianity as an institutional religion which is to be established in heathen lands as an organized church and nurtured as a permanent witness and sponsor of the Christian faith.

The Presbyterian Church undertakes the spread of Christianity as the extension of the organized church of the living God.

(1) I repeat that I have never read of more successful gospel mission work as a steady growth anywhere than is given in these narratives. The truth seems to be that the rejection or renunciation of polygamy is a help and no real obstacle.

(2) Some serious misconceptions are here rectified as to the consequence of the separation of a Chinese polygamist from his concubines. Let it be noted beyond dispute, that Chinese polygamy so-called is a system of concubinage, for a man in China can be lawfully married to only one woman at a time. His relation of cohabitation with other women than this wife is illicit—it is adultery.

It is the teaching of the Chinese code that "neither custom nor law allows a Chinese to have more than one legal wife, and if he transgresses he would be as promptly punished under the code as if convicted of bigamy under English law." (J. F. Jernigan's "China in Law and Commerce.")* There is given but a single exception where a Chinese can lawfully have two wives, and that is, or seems to be, so rare and exceptional that it need hardly be named. It is where a man, without a son, adopts a nephew and this nephew is then authorized to marry a wife whose son will represent the uncle and also a wife whose son will represent himself. By Chinese custom the daughter on marriage passes out of her own family into that of her husband; and hence a son only can perpetuate the ancestral family worship (p. 123). The extinguishment of this ancestral worship is the extinguishment of the family name. Hence the expedients to avert it as a calamity. And this is the chief stay of polygamy. After signing the marriage contract and going to the house of her husband, he is under no compulsion to respect any wish of the wife; and "she has no right to demand of him conjugal fidelity, but if she sins against it she commits a heinous crime. (Indeed she is when first married sometimes taken to a house or home already occupied by his concubines.) And if she disobeys her husband, he may sell her to another as a concubine" (p. 120). But he may not degrade her in his own house. "There can be but one wife in the house, and she is the superior female in rank and authority. The children born in such a home, whether the children of the legal wife

* The Manchus overturned the native Ming Dynasty 1643, and in 1647 published a revised code, and this work of Jernigan is that code done into English by Jernigan, who was United States Consul General for several years, and is now practicing law, in Shanghai.

or of the concubines, are considered the children of the legal wife, and they regard her as their mother" (p. 114). Their real mothers they address as sisters.

The husband is permitted to choose his concubines from females of any grade, whereas the wife must be of the same rank; and the same is true in Japan. He cannot force a woman, however low her grade, to become a concubine; but if willing, he may choose a slave, and all the concubines are of even rank among themselves" (p. 114). The masses of women in China spend their time in cooking, spinning, weaving, and sewing. The rich spend their time in embroidering, gossip, and gambling.

The present Empress Dowager was a Manchurian Princess; and in default of the first wife of the deceased Emperor giving an heir to the throne, she became his second wife. She became regent, at his death, and her son on his accession proved to be a great disappointment; and on his consequent death, the reins fell back into her hands, where they still, in fact, remain.

Marco Polo (p. 63), in the 13th century, writes that the Emperor Kublai Khan had four wives and a great number of concubines. Each wife was by name styled Empress, and had her court of thousands. "But during the time of the later Emperors * * * but one wife, who is the Empress, is allowed the Emperor; but the practice of having concubines is not disallowed" (p. 63).

These extracts and statements are given as plainly indicating that the Chinese are by law a monogamous people, just as were the Græco-Roman peoples, and also that their so-called polygamy is alike a system of illicit concubinage. And polygamy is a misnomer of the relation of the man to these

concubines for he is not married to any of them, but merely indulges a loose and licentious intercourse with them as their paramour. They differ little from and are inferior to the Greek disreputable *hetærae*, but are unlike the public harlots or whores in that they are supposed to be the illicit mistresses of single instead of miscellaneous paramours. The usual accounts given us of these concubines as wives are misleading; a separation from them is separation from lawless mistresses and consorts in adultery—it is not a divorce.

(3) This simultaneous so-called polygamy is the exact converse of polyandria, whatever extenuation may be pleaded on the score of ancestral worship; and morally, or rather immorally, it is its precise equivalent.

It is not strange, therefore, that we find this kindred vice among the Chinese. I quote (Code, 122, 123): "There is a custom, said to be exclusively confined to the prefectural city (p. 37) of Ting Chao, in the province of Fukien, which allows one woman to fill the office of wife to several men. The cases which have come under the observation of writers on the subject have been mostly those where several brothers, for reason of their poverty, have one woman with whom they live alternately. This is called polyandry, and wherever practiced, child murder is practiced." This is from the code. In Thibet and elsewhere, except in Ceylon, polyandry appears to be everywhere incident to poverty. The Moravians wink at polygamy, but are horrified at the tolerance of polyandry, a seemingly one-eyed conscience; but if the doors of the churches are opened for one there can be assigned, as these missionaries state, no consistent reason for excluding the other,—seats at the table of the Lord had just as well be prepared for both if for either. Indeed, the sympathy of the

church for the poor finds here an anomalous immoral sphere for its exercise. . Even bestiality and sodomy obtained among the classic nations and found apologists among philosophers. And considering the debasement of morals and the absence of a clear and clean standard of judgment amongst the Gentile peoples, this perverted apologetic need cause no greater surprise than the abnormal apologetic for the kindred and shocking vice and sin of polygamy by professed Christians with the holy example and teachings of the Savior before them, and enthroned in their hearts and lives calling them to separation from all such uncleanness and enjoining them, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

(4) The unavoidable conclusion to which this lurid state of facts constrains us is that there is no hope of Christianizing China by concessions to or tolerance of concubinage, for there is no such thing as polygamy among the poor as a class, who are angered by its tolerance among the rich; and with the noble, with whom it prevails, it would in no true sense lessen the offense of the gospel to them. It requires no persuasion for a true convert to renounce polygamy. The strong point is to emphasize the lawfulness of monogamy and the sacredness of the marriage relation which their custom and law establish as sanctioned and sanctified by the Christian religion, and help them clear it of abuse. Of course this must sooner or later arouse the attention and the interest of all true wives. And after all they must be the most influential women of the empire as a class. Then, indeed, would we have an impressive realization of the prophetic import of the Psalmist's words, so long hidden under a misconception and mistranslation, but thus revealed in the new version: "Thou, O God, didst

prepare of thy goodness for the poor. The Lord giveth the word: the women that publish the tidings are a great host."* In all polygamous households the wife, the only true wife, is legally and by custom the dominant female factor. The monogamy of the poor, and the acknowledged eminence of the legitimate wives of the rich and noble, surely present a vantage ground for the overthrow of concubinage, so delusively honored by being called polygamy, as though the relation of the concubine was a marriage relation. This is doubtless a strategic point of which the apostolic gospel should take advantage, and an opportunity is now before the church among the monogamist heathen. The separation from these concubines is not and never was treated as a divorce.

(5) The divorces of which the Savior took notice were not separations from concubines, but from real wives according to law and the custom of the land. He raised the dignity and the sacredness of the marriage relation by restricting separation to an offense which subverted and destroyed the bond of conjugal union as established at creation between one man and one woman as helpmates and united companions. These divorcements for trifling reasons, such as the Hillel school approved, and the Gentiles as well as Jews practiced, did favor and were subservient to frequent marriages of one woman after another or consecutive polygamy, but they did not bring about simultaneous polygamy or the marriage of several women at the same time. Christ's teaching was that there was no lawful or morally valid dissolution of the marriage bond between two living persons except where one was innocent and the other guilty, so that the guilty party could not innocently remarry, and that the innocent wife was

*Ps. 68: 10-11.

equally with the innocent husband entitled to assert and sue for relief and redress. The two, husband and wife, for a novelty, were in Jewish and Christian circles put on the same or equal footing of right and privilege by Christ. •

In the extension of the gospel among the nations of the earth, it is not conceivable that any doctrine could possibly have a greater or more wholesome moral power, in transforming the family, than this fundamental and revolutionary doctrine of the gospel which sanctifies monogamous maternity as the divinely instituted conservative and formative constituent of the family relation. When Achilles' mother dipped him in the Styx, she held him by the heel, and that became his one vulnerable point. Satan's attempt to render the family invulnerable to the arrows of truth, left vulnerable the conjugal bond of the true wife, the concubinous incrustation of which may be struck off as preparatory to revitalizing it with the potency of the decree, "*What God hath joined together let no man put asunder.*" As you weaken that bond you enfeeble the race, as surely as God is in the affairs of man.

Before leaving China I feel constrained to mention one more witness in favor of our overture as suited to China. There is a living mandarin of China of high degree—there are nine degrees and his is of the eighth—who has examined this overture and approved it as well suited to China. On his arrival in New York city last fall, I sent him this overture and he after examining it wrote me as stated. This mandarin has been at the very head of the educational work of China for many years, and no man is better acquainted with the language, literature, history, philosophy, and social and political condition of the country, and it is not possible that any man's opinion on this subject could be of greater value or a safer guide.

My reference is to Dr. W. A. P. Martin, who has resided in China for over fifty years, was President of the Royal College at Peking for about thirty years, and when under the leadership of Li Hung Chang the Imperial University of China was founded after the war with Japan, Dr. Martin was made its chancellor. Since our college days we have been friends and correspondents. I look on him as one of the most, perhaps the most, gifted of the men who have gone from the United States of America to foreign lands.

This overture, without the suggestion of a modification, was emphatically approved by him as well suited to China.*

INDIA.

India will next claim our attention. There is no more important mission field than it, unless it be China, with one-fourth of the human race. Next comes India, with its one-fifth. It is estimated that British India, whose census gives about 300,000,000, embraces nearly one-fifth of the inhabitants of the world. It is barely second in importance to China, and a greater host of Christian missionaries has been devoted to its Christianization. These labors have now been in progress for over a hundred years, for Cary entered India before Morrison entered China. There is in India a much greater missionary and Christian population than in China. The story of these missions is one of surprises and thrilling interest. But our topic restrains us. Africa is a complex dependency of complex Protestant and Catholic powers; Japan and China are independent Pagan empires; but India is, and has been for a century and a half, a depend-

*I will give in part Dr. Martin's exact language of approval: "Your views as to the attitude of the Church on polygamy and concubinage, I heartily indorse."

ency of England, the most influential Protestant power of the world. This background, hostile at first, and then friendly, has served as a special stimulus to missionary enterprise in India for more than fifty years.

There is a singular witness for monogamy in Ceylon, among the Dravidians, who are esteemed the lineal descendants of the original inhabitants of India, who, by the Aryans, more than a thousand years before the Christian era, were reduced to abject slavery, and have come down in history as the Soudras, the lowest of the four castes. They were driven out and trodden down by the Aryans, and their language is a mixture of Aryan and Dravidian. They are thought to be the Yakkos of the Sanscrit writers. This poor, downtrodden people observe lifelong monogamy. Uninfluenced by foreign peoples, polygamy and polyandry are unknown by them. There is no prostitution among them. Conjugal fidelity is remarkable. Free courtship exists, and children are treated with kindness. This looks like a stray number from the primitive files of man's original society; and it is suggested that it places the *onus* on those who question the original monogamy of the race.

The Dravidian monogamist is taken from one extreme of Indian life; and it seems fair to single out from the opposite extreme, as more nearly representing the moral condition of the Hindus, an incredible Brahmanic practice of polygamy. The facts are taken from the History of the London Missionary Society for 100 years—1795 to 1895 (p. 49).

The Kuhlin Brahmans at Bengal are original orthodox, and are now the highest of the three orders of Brahmans. The lower ranks of Brahmans aspire to the Kuhlin rank, but can only gain it by marrying their daughters to a Kuhlin Brahman.

"This custom has led to a widespread and degrading profligacy. A considerable dowry is given at the marriage, and the wife remains at her father's house. Her support is no charge to the Kuhlín. The Kuhlín Brahman often marries into forty or fifty different families, and spends his time going from home to home of his many wives, honored as a god, and all the while living a life of sloth and debauchery that would degrade a beast." "This system is a great obstacle to the gospel."

One is hardly prepared to appreciate this shocking abandonment till reasonably well informed of the superstitious esteem in which the Brahmans are held by their countrymen. According to their doctrine amongst the Hindus, all things have emanated from Brahina—the Brahman priests from his head; the soldiers, or kshatrizas, from his arms and chest; the merchants and industrial classes, or vaisyas, from his thighs and legs; and the sudras, or slaves, from his feet. The Brahmans are the priests of their religion, and alone have the privilege of reading the sacred books, or vedas. "They are the mediators between heaven and earth, themselves worshiped as demi-gods. Cursed indeed is the man who is cursed of a Brahman, and thrice blessed if but a Brahman's shadow fall upon him" (Russell's Religions of the World, p. 89).

In 1873, I heard Rev. Norayan Sheshadrai, a converted Brahman, deliver an address in the Madison-Square Presbyterian Church, New York City, on India and his conversion to Christianity. I distinctly recollect his saying, "I was taught as a Brahman to believe that I was a god on earth." The most remarkable thing about this Brahmanic pretension is, that the mass of the people devoutly concede it to them as a great honor to the nation.

Where imperialism and royalty prevail, especially in the East, the example of the court, as in China and Japan, in favor of polygamy is almost irresistible. An analogous and perhaps more irresistible influence emanates from the divine Brahman of India. In India, the moral influence of the Viceroy and of Europeans for the Christian family is neutralized or handicapped by the fact of their being foreigners. But the example of an ignorant Brahman of beastly life inspires reverence, admiration, and imitation. A Brahman, dying, may cry in hopeless uncertainty, "Where am I going?" Although his professed faith is that of reabsorption into Brahma, and though he may have prayed for hours daily, the most acceptable service his friends can render him, *in extremis*, is to *clasp his hands about the tail of a cow!*

From the first till now polygamy has been a vexed question in India among the missionaries, but it is now on the eve of a local and final settlement, so far as Presbyterians are concerned.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE POSITION OF THE CHURCHES.

I.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, U. S. A., 1875.

It was in 1875, thirty-one years ago, that an overture came from a Presbytery in India on this subject to the Northern Presbyterian General Assembly, to which the answer was given "*That polygamists cannot be received into the church while remaining in that relation.*" That is to this day the unrepealed rule of the Presbyterian Church in U. S. A.

*Polygamists Cannot be Received Into the Church
While Remaining in that Relation.*

Overture No. 14. From the Presbytery of Kolapore, asking for an answer to the following questions, namely:

Can a man who, before his conversion from heathenism, had been the husband of two wives, each the mother of several children, and with whom he continues to live in apparent harmony, be received into the Christian church while retaining them both, or should he be required to separate from one of them? In the latter case, from which ought he to separate? and why should he be separated from her?

The committee report that they have given the subject the most careful consideration, and have called before them all the foreign missionaries in attendance on the Assembly, and fully consulted with them. As the result of all their deliberations, the committee recommend that the following answer be returned:

Under the light of the gospel no man may marry a second wife while his first is living in conjugal relation with him, without offending against the law of Christ. Such a relation, although it may be justified by human law and entered into in ignorance of the truth, cannot be perpetuated by one who has become a follower of Christ; neither can he be justified by his church. Converts from heathenism should be treated very tenderly in this most painful situation, and yet they should be dealt with in all fidelity, and, when a converted man is called to separate from all but his first and only wife, he should be enjoined to make suitable provision for her that is put away, and for her children, if she have any, to the full extent of his ability.

The report was unanimously adopted,*1875, page 507.

General Assembly, U. S. A., 1896.

A Memorial of the Synod of India "requests the General Assembly, in view of the exceedingly difficult complications which often occur in the cases of polygamists who desire to be received into the church, to leave the ultimate decision in all such cases in India to the Synod of India."

Your committee are unanimously of the opinion that as the request contemplates a matter of doctrine it cannot be granted in view of the provision contained in chap. xii, sec. iv, form of government: "The General Assembly shall receive and issue all appeals, complaints and references that affect *the doctrine or constitution of the church* which may be regularly brought before them from the inferior judicatories."

The provision is mandatory. * * * The only recommendation is that in view of the mandatory nature of chap. xii, sec. iv, "The request of the Synod of India cannot be granted."† 1896, pp. 149, 150.

BUREAU OF MISSIONS, BIBLE HOUSE, NEW YORK.

"NEW YORK, *February* 26; 1906.

"MY DEAR DR. LAWS: In the *Indian Witness*, published at Calcutta, January 25th, is the following item in a report of the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in India (at Nagpur, December 16-21):

* It will be noticed that the overture before our General Assembly of the United States of 1904 copied in part the deliverance of the General Assembly of the United States of America of 1875, to which it makes reference.

† The notable thing to be observed in this case is, that a power which was denied to a Synod by our sister Assembly in 1896, on constitutional grounds, was by our Southern Assembly lodged in the discretion of individual missionaries, 1904. This is conservatism with a vengeance!

"The Synod of Bombay and Central Provinces referred to the Assembly the question of the baptism of polygamous converts. A Hindu with two legally married wives, both of whom were willing to follow him into the church, and the man not prepared to part with either of them, applied to the session of one of the churches in the Nagpur Presbytery for baptism. The session referred the question to the Presbytery, and the Presbytery, in turn, referred it to the Assembly.

"After careful consideration, the Assembly decided to ask the Presbyteries to consider the question, and send up to the next Assembly their opinions as to the best way to deal with such cases. In the meantime the Assembly forbade the reception of polygamists into any of the churches. In addition, the Assembly appointed a committee of twelve, representing the whole church, to gather information as to the way other churches deal with this problem, and to report at the next Assembly, making any recommendations they think wise.

"From the discussion in the Assembly and inquiries from the members, it came out that only two Indian delegates would have voted in favor of the baptism of this man. We rejoice in this. The admission of polygamous converts to our churches in India would be a lowering of the moral tone of the church.'

"It seems to me that this investigation, as well as the *ad interim* prohibition of baptism, is rather important for your case. Rev. Dr. J. W. Youngson, of Sialkot, Punjab, India, is moderator, and Rev. Dr. J. A. Graham, of Kalimpong, Bengal, India, is stated clerk of the General Assembly.

"Cordially yours,

"HENRY OTIS DWIGHT."

Since the last of the above actions was taken, in 1896, India has, in a Presbyterian point of view, like Japan, become autonomous. And the polygamy question seems now to be on its last legs, as may be judged from the letter of Dr. Dwight, which I am sure he will not object to my using in this connection. I am sure it will, with thanks to Dr. Dwight, Secretary of the Bureau of Missions, be very acceptable to any one who, like myself, is not otherwise in possession of the information it conveys. I sincerely thank him for his considerate kindness in sending it to me and for other favors.

II.

As the position of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions is given so fully in regard to Zululand, I will not repeat but refer back to pp. 160-165.

III.

The Position of the United Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Watson, the secretary of the United Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, in answer to inquiry, writes that "No man living in polygamous marriage is admitted to church membership or to baptism in our missions. No such persons are, therefore, now connected with our missions."

IV.

Dr. Cobb, secretary of the Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America, says: "Native churches are organized in all our missions, over which the home church exercises no control whatever, and that he does not recall that the question as to the baptism or church membership of polygamous persons has ever been before the board in the twenty-three years he has been secretary."

This looks like missionary anarchy. How is it with the Inland Mission in China by Hudson Taylor?

V.

Dr. Huntington, writing for Dr. Barbour, Secretary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, says: "It is the strong feeling of the committee and of our missionaries that the law of Christ is the only true standard in such matters in all lands and among all peoples; even a temporary waiver of the principle is very rare."

Rev. Dr. S. H. Greene, pastor of the leading Baptist Church of Washington City, answers "not to my knowledge" do Baptist missionaries baptize polygamists of either sex retaining their polygamy; and that they have the "same custom everywhere, so far as I know."

I am able to state that the practice of the Baptist brethren is not absolutely uniform. But this shows the prevailing sentiment of Congregational Churches, and departures are exceptional—"very rare."

VI.

Rev. A. B. Leonard, corresponding secretary of the M. E. Church North, writes: "My understanding is that no converts are received into the Methodist Episcopal Church (North), in foreign countries, retaining polygamous relations. It is barely possible that in some instances in China they have been taken on probation, but under no circumstances into full membership. The subject is not left to the discretion of the missionaries."

VII.

Dr. W. R. Lambuth, secretary of the Board of Missions of the M. E. Church, South, says:

"(1) A person converted while living in polygamous marriage is neither baptized nor admitted into church membership in the M. E. Church South until he has put aside all but the woman to whom he was first married.

"(2) The converted wife of a polygamous husband is admitted to baptism, but not to church membership, while remaining in the wifely relation.

"Of course we would consider concubinage as adultery, and would not tolerate it in a candidate for church membership; our missionaries have no discretion on this point."

Rev. W. F. Locke, the pastor of the Southern Methodist Church of Washington, D. C., in replying to inquiries, says: "The M. E. Church South, in giving the rite of baptism to adults, baptizes them only on profession of faith, and their promise to renounce the devil and all his works. A polygamist must renounce his polygamy before we will baptize him.

"Our rule is the same at home and abroad. Our missionaries all operate under the same rule.

"We no longer receive on probation. Therefore, if baptism is denied, membership is also."

VIII.

The Paris Evangelical Missionary Society: "From their periodicals it is learned that the point of excluding from church membership converts who have more than one wife is enforced. In the last two or three years several incidents

have occurred where insistence on this rule has long delayed the baptism of converts."

IX.

The Executive Committee of Foreign Missions of the (Southern) Presbyterian Church in the United States.

"NASHVILLE, TENN., November 17th, 1905.

"REV. S. S. LAWS,

"1733 Q St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

"DEAR DOCTOR: In reply to your note just received, I will state (1) that we have no information other than that which we get from Mr. Morrison's statement, quoted by you, as to the number of families in our church at Luebo in which the husband has more than one wife. (2) I suppose there are members of our churches in China who have more than one wife. I am sure this is not the case in Japan, and I do not think it is so in Korea. (3) Of course, no member of the church has been allowed, after he became a church member, to be a polygamist. (4) As to what course should be pursued with those who were already polygamists, as is the case with nearly all the men in China who are able to keep more than one wife, I think the policy has differed according to the views of the missionary, and the missionaries have been left to deal with that question according to their own best judgment. (5) It is not a matter with which our executive committee has any authority to deal, as we only handle administrative questions and leave doctrinal and ecclesiastical questions to be decided as they come up by the General Assembly. (6) The question has not been raised heretofore, that I know of. As it has now been raised, it will be for the Assembly to give a proper deliverance on the subject, which will be for

the guidance of both the missions and the executive committee in our future policy.

"With kindest regards,

"Yours very truly,

"S. H. CHESTER,

"Secretary."

X.

The Protestant Episcopal Church.

(My inquiry was made of Dr. McKim and he referred it to the General Secretary.)

"REV. R. H. MCKIM, D. D.,

"Washington, D. C.

"MY DEAR DR. MCKIM: I have just read yours of the 14th, and with pleasure am sending back the answer that *the church's uniform rule has been, and is, that no person living in polygamy can be baptized.* Where the case has arisen that men were baptized who formerly had a number of wives, I understand that provision has always been made for them (the wives),

"Very truly yours,

"A. S. LLOYD,

"General Secretary," *The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church, U. S. A., New York City.*

Minute of the London Church Missionary Society on Polygamy in 1856.

It confirmed the previous practice of the Yoruba missionaries agreed to by them unanimously, and with the sanction of the Bishop of Sierra Leone, which was "that while the wives of a polygamist, if believed to be true converts, might

be received to baptism, since they were usually the involuntary victims of the custom, *no man could be admitted who retained more than one wife.*" It is printed as an appendix to the report for 1856-'57.

Third Lambeth Conference, London, 1888.

"The Conference itself, when the report was presented, confirmed its chief recommendations, viz.: (1) *That a converted polygamist should not be baptized, but should continue a catechumen until he should be 'in a position to accept the law of Christ,'* and (2) that the wives of polygamists might be baptized under certain circumstances to be decided on locally.

The General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, U. S. A., at Boston, 1904, whose attention to missions was unusual, passed *a new canon* that interests us. "A new missionary canon provides that all legislation concerning missions and the determination of missionary policy shall be effected by the concurrent action of both houses of the General Convention." (*The Outlook*, Nov. 5, 1904, p. 548.)

Random individual discretion such as the Lambeth Conference allowed seems not to suit the United States churches. Indeed, our Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America authoritatively sanctioned the exact position of our overture.

XI.

The Roman Catholic Church.

(I was referred by Dr. Stafford to Dr. Shahan, of the University, for the information I sought, and he referred my

letter to the Professor of Canon Law, who promptly gave me the following answer:)

"THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA,

"WASHINGTON, D. C., *October 17, 1904.*

"DEAR DOCTOR SHAHAN: The following extract from a decision of the Holy Office, June 20, 1866, is an authoritative, and, I think, clear answer to the first question put by your correspondent:

"There can be no doubt that a second marriage contracted by an infidel while his first wife is still alive, is null according to both natural and divine law. Hence, when it is certain, first, that an infidel (polygamist) has intended to contract a real marriage with his first wife, and not to enter merely concubinary relations; and, second, that no diriment impediment existed to annul such a marriage, that first woman must be regarded as his legitimate wife, and all others whom he took after his union with the first must be regarded as adulteresses and concubines. Therefore the polygamist must retain the first wife, the only just and lawful one, and must reject the others. And this obligation, arising from divine and natural law, is by no means lessened on account of conversion; on the contrary, it is all the more urgent; so that on no consideration is it allowed to baptize a polygamist who is unwilling to comply with it.

"In one case alone does this obligation cease, so that a converted polygamist can contract marriage with any woman he prefers, and that is when the circumstances allow the use of the privilege granted by Christ our Lord in favor of faith, and promulgated by the apostle Paul' [marrying in the Lord].

"In some cases, where the previous relations partook rather of the nature of concubinage than of real marriage, and it was impossible to ascertain who the

polygamist's real wife was, the Holy See has been obliged to regard him as unmarried.

"But in all the pertinent decisions there is to be observed a desire to safeguard the interests of the real wife, if she can be found.

"There is no work in English that treats this matter. Latin works abound, *e. g.*, *Gasparri*, *Tractatus Canonicus de Matrimonio*; *De Becker*, *De Matrimonio*; *Perrone*, *De Matrimonio Christiano*; *Palmieri*, *De Matrimonio Christiano*, etc.

"From a non-catholic standpoint it is considered in the second volume of *Esmein*, *Le Mariage en Droit Canonique*.

"Missionaries are not left to their own discretion in such cases, but are governed very strictly by decrees of the Congregation of the Holy Office, which have been published in the *Collectanea Sacræ Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, Rome, 1893.

"The decrees make no mention of dependent children or of any provision for the unlawful partners of the convert. But the charity of the missionaries must naturally be exercised in their behalf, in so far as is possible.

"Yours sincerely,

"JOHN T. CREAGH."

It may be noted in view of these official expressions from the different churches:

1. That whilst there is not perfect uniformity, there is, in the main, substantial agreement.
2. The burden of this substantial agreement sustains the position of the overture to come before the Southern General Assembly in 1906, in all its parts.

3. The moral sentiment in the Congregational bodies has brought about an approximation to the intolerance of polygamy in the Church of Christ so generally held by the disciplinary churches, whose will on the subject is formulated by the central organizations. The intolerance of falsehood and sin is a defense of the truth, and the only true liberality.

4. It is also evident that to the extent that individual discretion is asserted and exercised, irregularity and confusion result.

5. It is plain enough that a more careful study of the Scriptures, whose great lesson is intolerance of polygamy as of all sin, instead of wilfully substituting our own impressions for the fundamental scriptural rule of action, gives the most hopeful promise of still greater unanimity. Sin is confusion—all compromises with it beget confusion. Strict adherence to the divine doctrine of monogamy is the highway to harmony and maximum efficiency as coworkers with the Lord Jesus Christ in drawing all men "unto him," and in establishing and maintaining the purity of the Church of the Living God.

CHAPTER XVII.

INDIANS AND MORMONS.

The first clause in the preamble of the Overture under consideration challenges attention to both classes here named as polygamists. I will quote it:

"Whereas, The missionaries of our church are confronted by polygamous sentiments and practices in the States and Territories of our country, North and South, not only by Mormon citizens, but also among our Indians, and the inhabitants of our island possessions and likewise in foreign lands; and whereas," &c.

But these polygamists are not in the foreign field. Those hitherto considered are foreigners, but these are not. I would emphatically invoke attention to this distinction, for the reason that it has been persistently ignored or overlooked. These peoples are in our own country and the allotted beneficiaries of our home missions and missionaries. The field contemplated by the overture is both home and foreign,—absolutely universal wherever our people publish the gospel and are confronted by polygamy.

INDIANS.

Our best information gives the United States about two hundred and sixty thousand Indians, and Canada about two hundred and four thousand. In the last Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs our Indian "population is enumerated under two hundred and fifty-two names of tribes, or separated parts of tribes, or remnant groups."

In answer to inquiries I received the following letter from the Commissioner:

"DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

"OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

"WASHINGTON, Oct. 17, 1904.

"MR. S. S. LAWS, 1733 Q. St. N. W., City.

"SIR: Replying to your verbal inquiry as to the extent to which polygamy is practiced among Indians, I can only give you very general statements, as the office has no definite statistics on the subject.

"Recognized *polygamy is quite common among the Navaho and is not infrequent among the Apaches. It has prevailed somewhat among the tribes in Oklahoma; but the Oklahoma law of 1897 strictly forbids it. In 1897 the agent reported that fifty Cheyenne*

and Arapaho had more than one wife and would be permitted to retain them, although plural marriages would be forbidden in the future.

"Immorality prevails among the Indians, but polygamy as an admissible institution is fast disappearing. *It is undoubtedly still practiced occasionally among many tribes by the old men*, but the younger generation knows better and hides what it is well aware will not be tolerated.

"One great obstacle in the way of reform is the indifference of State and county officials to the moral status of communities who do not pay taxes and who thus do not help bear the expense of prosecution for crime.

"Yours respectfully,

"W. A. JONES,
"Commissioner."

The following incident is related by Catlin, the noted Indian antiquarian and the painter of a greater number of the portraits of Indian chiefs than any other man, which portraits were collected in the Smithsonian Institution gallery and were greatly damaged by fire. Catlin states that the son of a chief of one of these polygamous tribes had been handsomely provided with an outfit for life; and so he concluded to marry. He made a selection and after the arrangement was made and the day and place agreed on, he stipulated that the wedding was to be kept secret. He then bought another girl; and a third and a fourth, and had the same understanding with each. When the day arrived, he and all the interested parties were on hand; and as he stepped out with the first girl, there was consternation. But the excitement and demonstration became intense when he stepped forth and claimed the third, so that he deemed it best to explain that, according to the

custom of his tribe, a man was allowed as many wives as he could buy and support; that the price of a girl was a pony, ten pounds of tobacco, and a gun; that he had bought and paid for four and they were all to become his wives then and there. The turbulence subsided in deference to the force of tribal custom; and when the ceremonies were over, this young native American took with each of his hands two wives and tripped off to his wigwam. Mr. Catlin painted the picture of one of them as the four grouped around a fire. Of course these so-called wives were looked on as being as really property as the ponies, guns, and tobacco that bought them. One of the sorest trials of polygamists in separating from their plural wives is that it is a loss of property.

I will also give a polygamy incident in the life of an old Indian chief. I clipped it from *The Indian's Friend*, the organ of the Ladies' National Indian Association, next to the Board named below, probably the most efficient friend of our Indians:

"Hon. J. S. Sherman, in the *Chilocco Farmer and Stock Grower*, relates this tale of Quanah Parker, chief of the Comanches. 'Not long ago orders were issued that an Indian living in polygamy must cut off his superfluous force of wives and console himself with one. Quanah Parker immediately saw to it that this order was enforced on his reservation with the exception of his own household, where the six wives were allowed to remain. When he visited Washington he was taken to task for this little inconsistency.

" 'Do you wish me to tell five of those women to go?' he asked.

" 'Certainly,' said the Commissioner.

" 'Oh, no; you tell 'em,' said Quanah, after a moment's reflection.

" 'The future had evidently revealed itself to him.'"

(June 19, 1904.)

It should be remarked, however, that it is unusual for Indian polygamists to have more than two wives. It is understood that poverty is in this matter a conservative factor among the Indians as with others.

This case of the old Comanche chief is most suggestive. It suggests this curiously interesting state of facts, that the general government, through the Department of the Interior, has seriously undertaken to break up and exterminate polygamy from amongst our Indians. That has been brought about in a way that may be briefly stated, but has escaped the notice or the memory of many intelligent citizens. In 1869, during General Grant's presidency, and under the influence especially of Quaker philanthropy, a *Board of Indian Commissioners* was appointed as a sort of moral auxiliary of the Indian Department. There are three functionaries to be kept distinct: (1) the Secretary of the Interior; (2) the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; and (3) the Board of Indian Commissioners or the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The members of this Board or Bureau are chosen from among distinguished citizens and serve gratuitously. The specific and avowed object of this Board is to "help forward in all right ways the civilization of the Indians" (Rept. Bu., 1901, p. 4). The citizenship of the individual Indian has been the supreme aim of this benevolent organization. It would seem that it was after pursuing the problem in the individual, the social, and the public life of the Indian some thirty years that, at last, the full-orbed conviction took possession of the Board that: "In order to break up the old savage life and the old tribal organizations, which can be so helpful as the inculcation of sound views of the marriage relation and of family life?" On its suggestion, almost immediate steps seem to

have been taken by Congress, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (Rept. Bureau, 1900, p. 8).

The result can be given from the Report of the following year. The Board says, 1901, p. 5 (Report of Com. Ind. Af. to Sec., 1901, pp. 42-46):

"REGULATIONS ADOPTED TO CHECK POLYGAMY, TO SECURE LICENSE BEFORE MARRIAGE, TO KEEP REGISTERS OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS, ETC.

"In our last annual report we called attention to the great need of *regulations to prevent polygamy* and to build up a true family feeling among the Indians. It gives us great pleasure to report that, acting upon the suggestions of this board and in consultation with us, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, has issued regulations requiring each agency and sub-agency to make and to keep up a register of all Indians, giving their family relations so far as possible, and from this time on keeping an accurate record of marriages, births, and deaths. *These regulations further prohibit polygamous marriages*; require a license before marriage in order to insure the prevention of *polygamy* and the proper age in the contracting parties, etc.; and they further require the solemnization of each marriage by missionary, minister, priest, or civil officer of the State or Territory, as the applicants may choose, with return of names of the contracting parties and dates, to be made by the person who officiates at the marriage and to be duly recorded at the agency. Marriage certificates, designed to be framed and hung in Indian homes, are also issued free of expense to all Indians who are duly married. Since the severalty act (1871) has already made full citizens of more than 60,000

Indians, and since all who thus become citizens are under obligation to observe the laws which govern marriage in the State or Territory in which they reside, it is evident that these regulations were greatly needed and should be carefully carried out at every agency."

Actual experience extending over thirty years, an ordinary lifetime, has led these active and faithful guardians of these national wards to exert a successful influence on the general government to lay down the law of monogamy and anti-polygamy as the fundamental law of their family life as a condition of United States citizenship as distinguished from their tribal or barbarous citizenship. The underlying reason of this is that only such families are compatible with the betterment of the Indian and of the self-preservation of our federal government. Allotments of land to individuals carry citizenship and are made only to monogamists—the polygamist is required to separate from all but his one wife. Family inheritances are regulated accordingly.

Now the bearing of all this on our missionary and church problem is so obvious as scarcely to need statement. The argument is again *a fortiori*—from the weaker to the stronger, from the inferior to the superior. If on strictly rational and political grounds polygamy is adjudged destructive to the well being of the people and the state as a political, social, and moral organism, much more is it ruinous to the church as a religious and spiritual organization. Shall it be said in this case that "the sons of this world are for their own generation (or age) wiser than the sons of light"? I feel inclined to say that the only sons of light, whose unwisdom is in this matter conspicuous by contrast, are those constituting the sporadic faction of the polygamist apologists.

As illustrating the misconceptions to which the advocacy of this beneficent overture has been subjected by otherwise intelligent men, I will close this topic with the following quotations from the *Central Presbyterian*, with thanks for the appreciative service:

February 7, 1906:

"POLYGAMOUS PRESBYTERIANS.

"Such is the soft impeachment of Dr. S. S. Laws in a recent number of the *Central Presbyterian* in his effort to get his overture before the next General Assembly. In defending himself from the charge of an attack on Foreign Missions, he makes the assertion that polygamy exists among our Indians, as well as in Luebo, Africa. I wish to say that this is a mistake so far as the Indians are concerned. I have spent a large portion of my time in Indian Territory since I have been Secretary; I know all the missionaries personally, and nearly all of the elders, and a large number of the private membership; and I have never heard the slightest hint of any case of polygamy anywhere among our people. I do not believe that any such case exists. I cannot answer for Luebo, Africa, but I do not hesitate to say if there is no more polygamy in Luebo, Africa, than among our Indians in the Territory, that Dr. Laws has no ground of complaint for an overture.

"S. L. MORRIS, *Secretary*."

February 14, 1906:

"In our last issue, Dr. S. L. Morris, our Secretary of Home Missions, has a card referring to the overture of the Rev. Dr. S. S. Laws on Polygamy, in which Dr. Morris says: 'In defending himself from the charge

of an attack on Foreign Missions, he makes the assertion that polygamy exists among our Indians, as well as in Luebo, Africa. I wish to say that this is a mistake so far as the Indians are concerned.' Our respected Secretary, we are sure, misunderstands Dr. Laws, who in the overture clearly refers to the whole body of American Indians, and not to the limited number in our churches and missions. In a communication to us, Dr. Laws, by a number of quotations from the official papers of the United States Government, shows that beyond a question polygamy does exist among American Indians, fully justifying the statement of his overture. Of course, Dr. Laws never made 'an attack on Foreign Missions,' and he has no reason to defend himself from any such charge. But we believe that he has ground for asking that our Assembly make a clear and unmistakable deliverance, warning our missions, at home and abroad, against any complicity with polygamy."

MORMONISM.

Mormonism, as originally proclaimed, was understood to be a missionary enterprise for the recovery of our Indians as the lost ten tribes of Israel, whose restored Zion was to be built on this continent. This explains the strange movement from Ohio to the western margin of Missouri, that they might be near the Indians. Hence Article 10 of their creed: "We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the ten tribes." Indeed, their leader first stuck his stake down just west of the Missouri line, in the soil of Kansas, in the bounds of the Kaw tribe, as the location of the contemplated Temple. But on being informed by the proper authority that he would not be allowed to proceed there with

that enterprise, he very soon received a special revelation that Independence, a town about ten miles directly east of Kansas City, was the chosen site. In the western edge of Independence the Mormons at this time own a beautiful lot, and a stone meeting-house is erected on it. I have attended Mormon meetings in it.

I might state right here that this property was in litigation for a number of years, the litigants being the two factions, the polygamist and the anti-polygamist Mormons, and the polygamists gained the suit. The home center of the polygamist faction is in Utah, and the corresponding home of the anti-polygamist Mormons is in Iowa. Fifteen years ago a thousand of the citizens of Independence, Missouri, were Mormons.

Let it be understood at once that the Mormons were not originally polygamists, but strict monogamists. The Mormon Bible—the Book of Mormon—is explicitly and fiercely opposed to polygamy. I will quote a single passage from the *Book of Jacob, chapter 2*: “Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none: for I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women; and whoredoms are an abomination before me; thus saith the Lord of hosts.”

Joseph Smith claimed that the revelation authorizing and commanding polygamy was given him and his latter-day saints July 12, 1843. A company of ladies (whose names I could give) visited Mrs. Orson Pratt, at Salt Lake City, 1882. Her husband and she had become Mormons before polygamy was practiced by them. Her story was that Smith acted in such a way as to cause quite a stir, and then conveniently this

revelation came to him at Nauvoo, Illinois, on the above date. Brigham Roberts claimed that it was as early as 1831.

Orson Pratt, one of the apostles, was reluctant about complying with the new revelation by taking additional wives, but he was dragooned into it, as Mrs. Pratt related. Not till he had taken four more did he say anything to her about it, and then he informed her that she must not thereafter expect all his attentions, as he must share them with his other wives. She at once replied that she would no longer recognize him as her husband, and took her four children and bravely entered upon a desperate struggle, unaided, to raise them. Every obstacle was thrown in her way, and every inducement was offered to have her return, either willingly or of necessity. But she bore up, and her children, grown and married when these ladies visited her, were, after the example of their mother, monogamists.

Mrs. Pratt had the portrait of her husband and the father of her children on the wall of her humble abode, and spoke of him affectionately as having been overruled by his associates. Our party—and Mrs. Ex-Governor Hardin, of Missouri, was one of it—heard Orson Pratt in the Tabernacle on the Sunday preceding the Monday on which these ladies called on his wife. Mrs. Hardin had knowledge of her case, and greatly sympathized with her.

In 1844 Smith was killed, probably assassinated, by one of the mob that broke into the jail where he was a prisoner, a young Englishman, from special provocation, two of whose sisters had been induced to go to Nauvoo. The Mormons had been driven from Missouri at the point of the bayonet, because of their lawlessness, whilst Independence was their home; and in like manner they were, and for like reasons,

driven from Nauvoo, Illinois. My own brother-in-law, Judge W. T. Wood, was acting State's attorney at the time of the expulsion from Missouri. He informed me that Smith offered him a retainer of ten thousand dollars, which was an enormous fee sixty years ago, but Mr. Wood declined, with the not very complimentary remark: "Mr. Smith, I know too much of your case to undertake it."

Polygamy has been made the corner-stone of their ecclesiastical and social system. At Ogden, June 12, 1903, the present head of the Mormon organization said "that anyone who denied the doctrine of polygamy might as well deny any other doctrine of the prophet Joseph." This same head of the church, about two years ago, under oath in the still pending Smoot case, stated that he had five wives, and that his family expenses were about \$20,000 a year. Not all are able to practice the precious doctrine of polygamy.

Is it not passing strange that in their thirteen articles of faith, which are scattered far and wide, there is not one word on the subject. But their "everlasting covenant of polygamy" is known as enjoining "and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned." "If a man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, * * * if he have ten virgins given him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore he is justified." (See P. G. P., pp. 123, 126.) Again, p. 125: "If plural marriage be unlawful, then is the whole plan of salvation, through the house of Israel, a failure, and the entire fabric of Christianity without foundation."

The statement seems to be fully warranted that their theory of polygamy is the outcropping of or has led to blank *atheism*. Listen: "Are there more gods than one? Yes, many.

God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man. And you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, the same as all gods have done before you. He (Adam) is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do. There is no other God in heaven but that God who has flesh and bones." There is not a glimmer of Christianity nor of true Deism except in phrase alone—the kernel of the nut is impious atheism.

A grosser, more thoroughly sensual and debasing system of esoteric opinions and practice has never been foisted on any company of dupes. The *Baptist Home Mission Monthly* of April 19, 1906, has an admirable and carefully prepared article on "Mormonism."

The origin of the Mormon Bible is very well understood. Solomon Spaulding was a Congregational minister of Northeast, Ohio, whose health failed him; and on giving up the ministrations of the pulpit he whiled away his time writing in the style of the Chronicles his romantic lucubrations respecting the lost tribes of Israel. Occasionally he would read these effusions to friends. The manuscripts disappeared mysteriously, but were recognized as freely edited in the Book of Mormon. When the manuscript was offered to Thurlow Weed, of Albany, N. Y., for publication, although a responsible farmer offered to go security, he refused to publish it, deeming it a fanfaronade of balderdash.

The original manuscript, written at the dictation of Joseph Smith, was a few years since in the possession of a son of one of the original witnesses, who lived at Richmond, Missouri. The polygamist faction of Utah, it was so reported, offered a large sum for this manuscript, but it was refused.

When Smith found the bronze plates, so the story goes, he found with them a translucent stone or gem; and it was only

when he looked at the engravings on the plates through this stone that he was able to translate them. A curtain was drawn across the room, and Smith, from behind it, dictated aloud to his amanuensis, who wrote it down. And it is believed that Joseph Smith did this dictation from the Spaulding manuscript. No one but himself ever saw the plates.

In the Mormon creed anthropomorphism is not viewed as a helpful symbol or parable leading to a fundamental truth beyond, as when man is viewed as imaging God; but with the Mormon it is itself the ultimate—a perfectly stupid suicide of thought and intelligence—resolving man himself into God and the object of his own worship. This, however, is a freak not limited to the Mormons.

The eternal covenant of matrimony projects a neverlasting proliferation of gods of human origin and human attributes; and hence the sealing with even departed spirits. It is well understood that the blood covenant, or atonement, not mentioned in the articles, and of which there is so much vague shyness, is such an interpretation of brotherly love that, if a brother is liable to fall away, he is to be saved by the shedding of his blood. It is analogous to Freeman, of Maine, killing his daughter to save her. The circumstantial injunctions are shocking. But I must abstain; there was in my burned library quite a complete collection of the literature of this anomalous abortion.

I will remark two things:

(1) The State of Utah and the Mormon Church are two distinct institutions which should not be confounded. The State is entitled by the United States Constitution to representation in our Senate. But the Mormon Church has no such right; indeed, this "church" may inflict on its devotees

an incurable disability to represent the State. That is the question.

Suppose a man elected from the State of New Jersey is found to be a member of the association of anarchists, would not that connection with such an organization in the State be deemed a sufficient reason for declaring his seat vacant?

It would not require an overt act of anarchy after the election or entrance oath, but the representative status of the man would be fatally disqualified. His supposed qualification would become a nullity, though no lawless act was personally chargeable to him.

(2) It used to be the case that an atheist was not allowed to take an oath in the courts; and whilst that credal rule has been relaxed, nevertheless a man's status may be such that his sworn relations, so long as those relations are retained, may utterly disqualify him to give or take a credible oath of allegiance and service.

It may be recalled that throughout the Bible polygamy is the companion of polytheism, and polytheism is atheism in fact. Hence the religious atheism of Mormonism, with its polygamy, give it a broad and unenviable association with one of the most blighting and degrading perversions of the well-being of our race. Human nature is logical; give it premises or principles, and it will work out the legitimate results. There is a logic of events. And the responsive movement may be either upward or downward. In this case the downward trend admits properly of no question in Church or State.

The same evil faith and association may, apart from individual overt unlawful action, disqualify for membership, or citizenship, in both Church and State. The truth is that both the Christian church and the civilized State move by

faith. Our faith in our neighbors and in our public officials is most pronounced. It is the undergirding of our social, national and ecclesiastical life.

In leaving this subject, I will remark that it is now a matter of common information that Mormonism—this subversive and so-called religion, but religio-political scheme, for a long time treated with contempt and indifference, already in about three-fourths of a century, to such an extent, by persistent propagandism, dominates Utah and other new western States, as to threaten seriously, at no distant day, a controlling faction in our Senate. It will be a great misfortune to allow things to drift along till then before awakening to the peril. Being forewarned, we should be forearmed; and the time of action already confronts us.

In this case we have an abortive outbirth of the fanatical union of politics with a scheme that prostitutes the name of religion, and illegitimately claims, under the title of latter-day saints, a kinship to Christianity. This is an emphatic notification that apologists for polygamy in Christian churches abet and favor this imposture in fact, and all its dire consequences, whether they so design or not.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, let us reassure ourselves that the missionary goes forth under the great commission not as a timid, shrinking, and compromising apologist, but in the fearless and thoroughgoing defense of truths and principles whose avowed aim and mission are to overturn and cast down the strongholds of Satan primarily in the individual hearts and lives of men, and through them to leaven, for good, societies and States as the natural and inevitable consequence. So-

called ancestral worship, which is the ostensible motive for so much polygamy, bears the marks of a supreme Satanic device to obstruct the gospel. Ancestral remembrance, respect, and reverence are good and noble traits; but to pervert these worthy sentiments into a worship which dethrones the providence of God and puts the creature, even though a revered parent, in the place of the Creator, is dishonoring to God and wicked. The mission should by the gospel sanctify the sentiment and cherish it; strip it of its profane idolatry and cultivate it as fulfilling the 5th Commandment. (Deut. v: 16.) Rescue it from this lamentable perversion; then this worship would be superseded by something more rational and sacred and the idolatrous perversion would cease to be an obstacle either to the spread or the perpetuation of the gospel. In every case the gospel brings the heathen something better than what he has; it puts him in possession of something infinitely better than what he casts aside. Christianity goes for the best and brings the best, for it is heaven's best gift to man.

The new reading of the history of the family, which has been most industriously pursued of late years under the impulse of radical evolutionary skepticism, and has assumed to reconstruct all history, sacred and profane, has rather strengthened than weakened the presumption in favor of the lifelong union of one man and one woman as the primitive relation of the human sexes. As to Mr. Darwin, "he infers from the passion of jealousy, which man has in common with the brutes, that the most probable view is that he (man) aboriginally lived in small communities, each with a *single wife*, or, if powerful, with several, whom he jealously guarded against all other men." According to this, monogamy was the rule, and plural wives the departure. Herbert Spencer, in his "Principles of Sociology," p. 698, says: "Monogamy

dates back as far as any marital relation;” also: “Polygamy can but in exceptional cases, and then in only slight degree, permit better relations than exist among animals.”* On page 700 he says: “The monogamic family is the most evolved,” *i. e.*, the highest and most perfect conjugal relation. And the closing words of the chapter from which these quotations are taken are as follows: “Monogamy has long been growing innate in the individual man—all the ideas and sentiments that have become associated with marriage having, as their necessary implication, the singleness of the union” (p. 704). This prepares us to appreciate the doctrine of Mr. Spencer’s accomplished friend, Prof. Huxley, who is one of the highest authorities on ethnology, and, in opposition to Prof. Agassiz and his school, utterly repudiates the multiple origin of the human race, polygeny, and emphatically approves its monogeny, or the unity of its origin. He insists that a single pair, and actually names Adam and Eve, is an entirely adequate origin of the human race, with all its varieties. No writer was better informed or less influenced favorably by religious prejudice in making this statement than Huxley.

It seems to me that it would be difficult to overestimate the apologetic value of this testimony of these three witnesses, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley. It is an implied vindication of the solid value of the Bible narrative of man’s estate in Eden, and of Jesus Christ’s exposition thereof. Indeed, it may be set down among the anticipations of the Bible, persistently and for long ages rejected and even scoffed, but finally substantiated by investigation and discovery. Agassiz believed in God, but held to the multiple origin of our race as of plants, and opposed evolutionism. But atheistic evolution

* This view of Mr. Spencer suggests that the toleration of polygamy in our country, whether in Utah or elsewhere, is an insidious but unmistakable step backward toward brutal barbarism.

has refuted the multiple origin, and in vindication of its own unifying pretensions has contributed to the vindication of the theory of the Bible that the entire human race has sprung from a single pair. And this means, of course, that man's original sex relation was monogamous.

From this standpoint how can we view a concession to polygamy, touching citizenship in the State or membership in the Church of Christ, otherwise than as a backward step from monogamy towards barbarism? To step down from monogamy to polygamy is to step from a rock into a filthy mudhole. To rise from polygamy to monogamy is to rise heavenward. To compromise with it under any circumstances is to compromise truth with falsehood. "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward" It was Livingstone's motto: "Anywhere, provided it be *forward*."

These distinguished scientists do not reckon with the Bible nor with the teaching of Christ, and yet they, on purely natural and rational grounds, condemn and proscribe polygamy as a degradation of humanity, and incompatible with the true interests of civilized society.

On ethnological grounds, Messrs. Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and Professor Huxley may all be cited, after tracing man's sex relations through animal promiscuity and every gradation of matriarchal, patriarchal, polygamous and polyandrous states, as having substantially gravitated to a conclusion in favor of the primitive and finally destined monogamy, as the beginning and highest attainment of the sex relation of the race of man. It may be stated that this most recent research into the history of the family, making reasonable allowance for inevitable vagaries, winds up with what may be set down as virtually an undesigned and unacknowledged substantial agreement on this vital point with the Christian scripture.

As pointing to the law of nature as controlling the relation of the sexes, it is stated that in India 95 per cent. of the 60,000,000 Mohammedans are monogamists; in Persia, 98 per cent.; and probably about the same with the 30,000,000 or 40,000,000 in China, notwithstanding the Koran allows four wives and as many concubines as a man may choose to support. Among the American aborigines, the same authority states that though polygamy widely exists, yet monogamy is the rule, and few have more than two wives. Howard, in his history of "Matrimonial Institutions," also says: "Almost everywhere polygamy is confined to a very small part of the people, the majority being monogamous" (pp. 144-150). His estimate is that at least 98 per cent. of the race are monogamous. That would give a sum total of polygamists in the world, if there are two millions out of every one hundred millions and there are one thousand five hundred millions of human beings in the world, at 30,000,000. "And so," Howard says, "we come back to the starting point. The complex phenomena of human sexual relations have been examined in the light of scientific criticism and recent research. *The result seems unmistakably to show that pairing has always been the typical form of human marriage*" (Howard's Hist. Matri. Instit., vol. 1, 79-85). Who so blind as not to see that the toleration or countenancing of polygamy, on purely scientific ground, is thus discredited? Westermarck enumerates the various monogamous tribes and nations, but it is not practicable here to follow up this suggestion and reference.

But at this reduced rate there still remains before the anti-polygamous missionary enterprises of the world a stupendous problem.

The conquest of the Christian church is not by direct assault—not by the unfurling of flags and banners, the beating of drums and blare of trumpets, the boom of cannon and the shout and onrush of embattled hosts—but by the quiet and persevering and uncompromising spread of Christian truths which show a better way of living by the example of individual and family life, whose purity and peace put to shame the ways of sin and give a healthy stimulus and impulse to a holy obedience to the Master's voice. It is by surrounding this heathen encampment, which presents a frowning front so ancient and defiant, with the simple blasts of our ram's horns and prayer, that the barriers will fall down flat, and not by yielding or compromise in one jot or tittle. Great moral and spiritual conflicts are not won by compromise, but by unyielding adherence to the right. It is by keeping the church of Christ absolutely pure and free of polygamy that it can most effectually contribute to its overthrow.

Remark 1. The aim of our mission work is primarily the salvation of souls from sin, and not in sin. We are not to save them in, but from, sin.

2. But the gospel has the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come. And as exhibiting the present and legitimate fruit of the gospel, our missions aim at an improved condition of society mainly through the purity of the family (I Peter iv: 16-19).

3. This improved outcome must be found primarily in the family. Mr. Robert E. Speer, A. M. (Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America), made a brief address to the 1900 Missionary Conference so admirable that I feel constrained

to again quote from it. He says: "I do not know of any question that is of more importance in connection with the standards of conduct than the question of admitting polygamists, with their polygamy, into the Christian Church. What guarantee have we that polygamy will not do in the Christian Church what polygamy does outside the Christian Church? Outside the Christian Church polygamy destroys homes and makes impossible personal purity. Will baptized polygamy create Christian homes and promote personal purity? I do not believe that polygamy can be kept from doing in the Christian Church that which polygamy does outside of the Christian Church. Why, then, should it be let in? People say because of the hardships which the exclusion of polygamists will force upon them. But it seems to me that there is some confusion of thought there as to what it is that constitutes polygamy. The financial relationship between a man and certain women does not constitute a polygamous relationship. If a man has wanted to support financially five women before coming into the Christian Church, there is nothing in the fact of his baptism that makes it compulsory upon him to stop supporting four of them. * * * We do not ask a man who comes into the Christian Church to stop supporting these women. We do not ask them to cease bearing his name, but we do insist that he shall cease living in that relationship, which alone constitutes a polygamous relationship, with these women, and shall confine himself to a proper marriage relationship with one of them." (Ecumenical Missionary Conference, 1900, vol. 2, 286, 287.)

4. Our religion legitimately ministers to freedom from tyranny, but polygamy is adultery and a sin against God and man, and it ministers to private and public despotism

(Lieber, Kent, Matthews, Waite). Says Judge Matthews: "The union of one man and one woman in the holy state of matrimony is the (only) sure foundation of all that is stable and noble in our Christian civilization and the best guaranty of reverent morality and the beneficent progress of social and political improvement." Shall we in America venture to take out the keystone of the arch on which the institutions to spring from our missions are to rest? This would be disastrous.

5. It is solemnly the duty of the church to guard against the prostitution of the gospel by this degrading apostacy from the original conjugal relation in Eden. That manogamous conjugal relation is held up by the Savior for the observance of his people and as an obligation on all men in all time.

The allusions in the overture to the condemnation of polygamy as a *crime* in our courts has been vindicated. The idea of our toying with this viper—this cobra capella—instead of decapitating it, seems inconceivable.

The claim that those who favor the admission are as much opposed to polygamy as the exclusionists, may be safely denied. If you harbor a polygamist and allow him to indulge his nefarious practices whilst in your family, and with your knowledge, it is in vain that your opposition to plural cohabitation is avowed. Do you tell me you are just as much opposed to it as your neighbors? It won't be accepted. You admit this polygamous sinner, and he continues his nefarious practices right under your eyes, and with his concubines eats bread at the same table with you. Your opposition is compromised (II Cor. vi: 14-18). You may have persuaded yourself that you are opposed, but it is self-deception. Your actions speak louder than your words.

6. Shall we as a church admit this thing to our communion and fellowship—the purest and most sacred fellowship on earth—that fellowship of which we make confession and avowal whenever we repeat the Apostle's Creed, in the words, "I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting, Amen"? "Saints, by profession, are bound to maintain a *holy fellowship* and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification" (C. F., xxvi: 2), as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus" (I John iii: 17). I repeat, shall we as a church of Christ admit to this holy fellowship men and women who in the United States would be treated as criminals, and by the courts of the land consigned to jail and the penitentiary? We know enough from scripture and history, from observation and experience to be fully aware that polygamy is a master device of the evil one. Its enthronement in the family gives him and his demons their chief citadel. In contemplation of the terribly licentious consequences to Israel of tempting Jehovah by intercourse with demons, the apostle solemnly avows his solicitude lest the Corinthian Christians should fail to heed the warning: "And I would not that ye should have communion with demons. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons" (I Cor. x: 20, 21). It is a case of intolerable incompatibility.

7. The home church will lose its confidence in missions

thus conducted and in the men conducting them. Indeed, we are told that it is too bad that this subject should be publicly agitated. Christ did nothing in secret—for one I pledge you to do all in my power, as long as God spares my life, to overthrow this apostate and wicked practice, and to fortify the church against it.

8. The rule of this overture agrees with the greater body of most efficient missionary workers. It agrees with the constitution of our own church and with the word of God. What more could be asked? It wrongs no one in providing for enforcing the abandonment of a great sin. It will bless our church in sympathetic co-operation with the leading missionary churches, and the overwhelming majority of the people of God whose prayers and substantial support are in this world-wide campaign. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." To those ensnared among these wayward transgressors the Spirit and the bride say, "Come out from them and be ye separate."

THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

In *The Central Presbyterian*, November 15, 1905, page 752, is found an editorial by Rev. Dr. James P. Smith, editor, relative to the then quite recent action of the Synod of Virginia on the overture which is the burden of this pamphlet. I will now close by using a part of that editorial as giving the readers of this pamphlet and the General Assembly the benefit of the views of one of the most venerable and highly esteemed members of the Virginia Synod, and one of the wisest and most influential counsellors of our church on the subject under consideration. I am sure that those who have had occasion to wrestle with this subject will thank Dr.

Smith for his clear and incisive views. I hope that the views of Dr. Summey, in the *S. W. Presbyterian*, given at the opening of this discourse, will be recalled in this connection. And I feel sorry that the powerful address to Synod by Dr. F. J. Brooke, chairman of the *ad interim* committee, on the purity of the church, whilst this matter was pending, cannot be given.

The extract from *The Central Presbyterian* is as follows:

"What are we sending to the people that live in darkness? What are we trying to establish in the midst of the gross darkness of the pagan lands—in China, Korea and Africa? It is not a building, nor a book, nor a ritual of worship, nor a form of civilization with clothes and houses, but *a life, a new human life*, redeemed and renewed and sanctified to God through the Divine Redeemer. The first thing we have to show the degraded heathen is a Christian life, to be lived out before their eyes, a life clean and loving and consecrated. It is shown in the missionary and in his home; and his relations to his wife and his child are a revelation sent by God to the poor darkened heart. And the same things are to be shown in some degree by every one baptized into the name of Christ. The missionary is to be the image and message of Christ, and every convert is to be called Christian, and in his own poor and imperfect way, "a living epistle, known and read of all men." The missionary and his convert are and must be the samples and illustrations of the Christianity we hope to establish in the dark places. For hundreds of miles around among a multitude of ignorant and degraded beings, all that is known of the Christian religion is what they see and hear of the missionary and his converts at the station.

"Shall we consent that the lie be spoken among

those who exhibit our religion in the heathen land? Shall a man living in the habit of falsehood, openly, before all men, be baptized and made an example of the strange religion that has been brought by the white man? Will that man be an example and a lesson of what we are sending? Will that man be an influence for the extension of the kingdom of our Christ? It must be admitted that church members in Christian lands have been known to lie. But we do not set them forth as examples, and especially when we know that a man is a liar, we do not baptize him and give him the name of Christ. In the heathen land where our religion is not known, all the more we would not baptize the liar; neither the liar nor the thief, nor the drunkard nor the impure will we seal with baptism and set him up in a dark land as an example of Christianity.

"Can a man living in polygamy be an illustration of the Christian religion? Polygamy is one of the gross evils of pagandom, from which we go to deliver. We go to China and Africa, not to compromise with evil, but to teach and illustrate and invite to a more excellent way. One of the inestimable blessings which belongs to the very substance of our religion is the law of marriage, established in a sinless Eden and keeping about it nearly all there is of Eden in a fallen world. We cannot see how our religion can be exhibited in a pagan land without the testimony borne to the scriptural law of marriage and the purity and happiness of the Christian home.

"It is not a question as to our charitable treatment of the native convert, who is in many ways entangled in the evils of his heathen life. All charity, all Christian helpfulness must be given to the man slowly emerging from the bondage of pagandom. *But we cannot think that the native, living in polygamy,*

unable to shake off the things of his old life, *is the man to be baptized and to be set forth before all eyes in the dark land as an example and guide of the Christian religion.*

"Let our Assembly say distinctly, without censure on the past, that our missions are instructed to withhold, not charity nor helpfulness of any kind, but baptism and church membership from the polygamist, until he can be free to be an example of the Christian life."

As a last word, I submit the solemn query:

Had we not better abandon our missionary work of establishing impure churches than to pursue our voyage with this Jonah, as a passenger or stowaway, on board the old Ship of Zion?

The storm is already brewing.

SAMUEL SPAHR LAWS,

Washington, D. C., 1733 Q Street, Northwest.

MAY 1, 1906.