

MARRIAGE RELATIONS OF BISHOPS AND DEACONS

AN ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG, DELIVERED AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE,
IN THE TABERNACLE, GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, OCTOBER 6, 1854

Reported by G. D. Watt

I do not wish to eradicate any items from the lecture Elder Hyde has given us this evening, but simply to give you my views, in a few words, on the portion touching Bishops and Deacons.

In Paul's first epistle to Timothy, third chapter, he writes as follows—

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well."

I have read this that your minds

may be refreshed, and that you may know how it does read.

Instead of my believing for a moment that Paul wished to signify to Timothy that he must select a man to fill the office of a Bishop that would have but *one* wife, I believe directly the reverse; but his advice to Timothy amounts simply to this—It would not be wise for you to ordain a man to the office of a Bishop unless he has a *wife*; you must not ordain a *single* or *unmarried* man to that calling.

If you will read this chapter carefully, you will learn the qualifications necessary for Deacons and Bishops, and also for their wives.

I will simply give my views with regard to this matter, and then leave it.

I have no testimony from the Bible, neither have I from any history that I have any knowledge of, that a man was ever prohibited in the Church in the days of Paul from taking more than one wife. If any historian has knowledge to the contrary, let him make it known at a suitable time; but if such was the case it has not come to my knowledge.

I will now give you my reasons why it is necessary that a Bishop should have a wife, not but that he may have more than one wife. In the first place he is (or should be) like a father to his ward, or to the people over whom he presides, and a good portion of his time is occupied among them. Still he does not wish to be bound up, or flooded with cares of this world, so