

Jewish record, we find nothing that forbids the children of Israel from taking as many wives as they thought proper. God gave laws regulating the descent of property in polygamic families.

Turn to the 21st chap. of Deuteronomy, and the 15th verse, and you have there recorded that, "If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his."

In this law the Lord does not disapprove the principle. Here would have been a grand occasion for him to do it, if it had been contrary to his will. Instead of saying, If you find a man that has two wives, he shall be excluded from the congregation of Israel, or shall divorce one and retain the other, or shall be put to death, because he presumed to marry two wives, he considers both women his lawful wives, and gives a law that the son of the hated wife, if the firstborn, shall actually inherit the double portion of his property. This becomes a standing law in Israel. Does not this clearly prove that the Lord did not condemn polygamy, but that he considered it legal? That he did not consider one of these wives to be a harlot or a bad woman? Does it not prove that he counted the hated one as much a wife as the beloved one, and her children just as legitimate in the eyes of the law?

Again, let us go back to the days of the Patriarchs before the law of Moses

was introduced among the people, and we find the same principle still existed and approbated by the God of heaven. I have heard many of our opponents argue that the law of Moses approbated a plurality of wives; but it was not to be under other dispensations—as much as to say, it was merely given because of the hardness of their hearts. But such a saying is not to be found in the Bible. I can find a declaration of our Lord and Savior that the divorcing of a wife was permitted in the days of Moses because of the hardness of the hearts of the people; but I cannot find any passage in the sayings of the Savior, or the Apostles and Prophets, or in the law, that the taking of another wife was because of the hardness of their hearts. There is quite a difference between taking wives and putting them away.

This law of plurality, as I am going to prove, did not only exist under the law of Moses, but existed before that law, under the Patriarchal dispensation. And what kind of a dispensation was that? It has been proved before the people in this Territory, time after time, that the dispensation in which the Patriarchs lived was the dispensation of the Gospel—that the Gospel was preached to Abraham as well as unto the people in the days of the Apostles; so says Paul; and the same Gospel too that was preached in the days of the Apostles was preached to Abraham. "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham," &c. The same Gospel that the heathen would be justified by was the same Gospel that Jesus and his Apostles preached, and which was before preached to Abraham. If we can find out that, under the Gospel preached to Abraham, polygamy was allowed, the Gospel preached by Jesus, being the same, of course, would not condemn it. Jacob,