

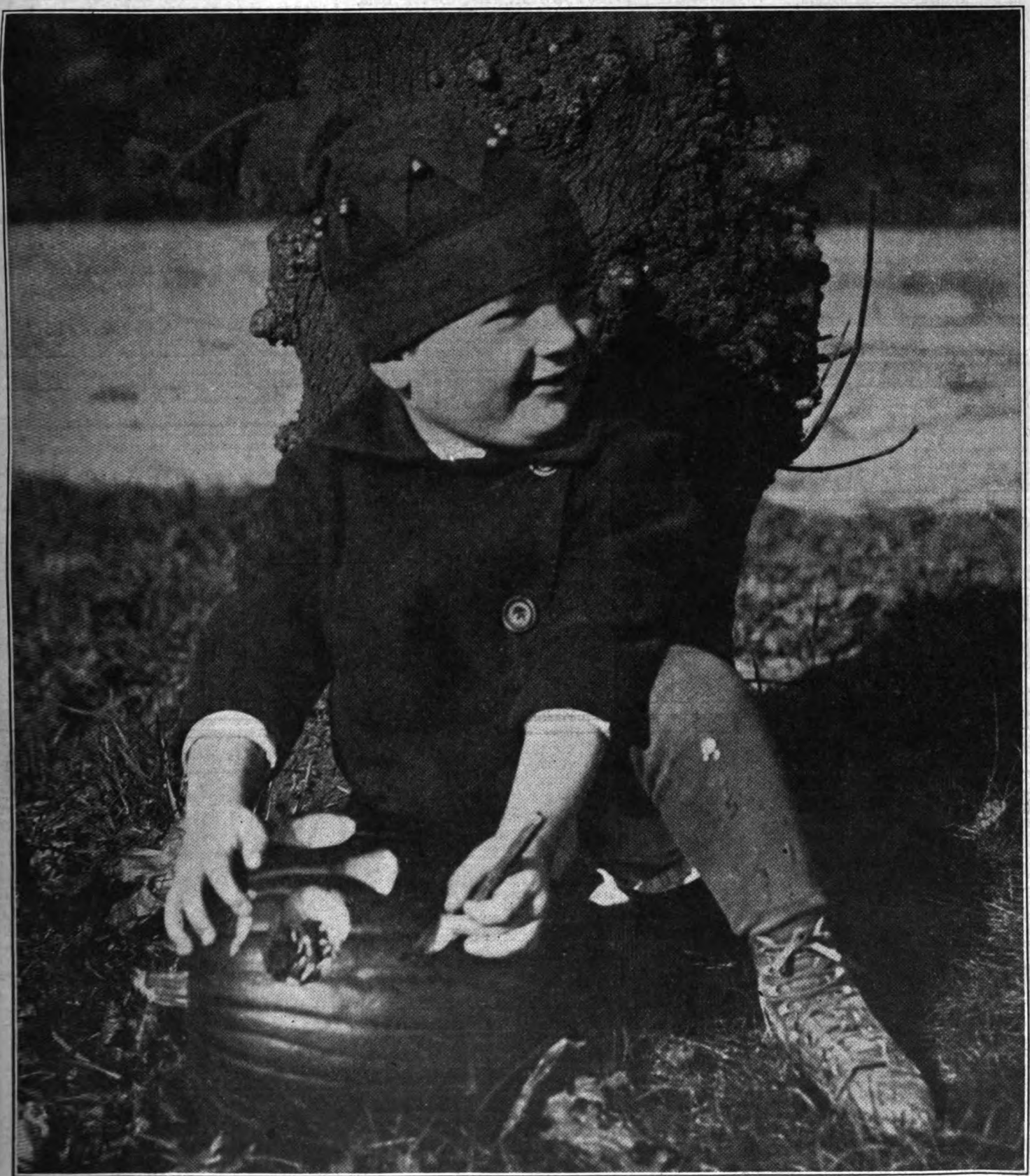
05
07
PUBLISHED WEEKLY

OCTOBER 20, 1921

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LIBRARY

NOV 29 1921

The CONTINENT



THE CONTINENT

NOLAN R. BEST, EDITOR. OLIVER R. WILLIAMSON, PUBLISHER. THE McCORMICK PUBLISHING COMPANY, PROPRIETORS.
156 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK. 509 SOUTH WABASH AVENUE, CHICAGO.

VOLUME 52, NUMBER 42

OCTOBER 20, 1921

WHOLE NUMBER 2680

Shall Mormonism Be Called Christian?

THE CONTINENT recently expressed the opinion that the Mormon Church has at length actually discontinued polygamous marriages. A considerable number of the older Mormons continue to live polygamously with wives whom they married before the church professed to abandon polygamy. This, however, the popular sentiment of the country has tacitly agreed to tolerate, out of deference to gray heads that death will soon dispose of.

The live question therefore has always been whether the Mormons were honest in keeping the other part of Utah's statehood compact—the promise to allow no new plural marriages.

For years The Continent insisted that in defiance of this pledge the hierarchy of the church was encouraging a certain number of instances of new polygamy in order to keep alive this "peculiar institution." The Continent still believes that charge was true.

But now The Continent is convinced—and so far as it has discovered, all competent "Gentile" observers agree—that the Mormon chiefs have definitely ceased to sanction any more such unions.

What is the likely reaction on Utah home missions?



Apparently the idea is rather widespread that polygamy has been the only serious fault of Mormonism. From that premise it is easy to assume that once plural marriage is abolished, there need be no hesitation in recognizing the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" as a part of the Christian forces of America.

But against this kind of religious alliance The Continent wishes with all its might to protest. Candid as it means to be in acknowledging every moral advance which Mormonism may make, this journal none the less conceives that candor equally demands a still unabated witness against the gross falsity of Mormon claims.

For this is not a matter of merely subjective opinion on which honest men may agree to differ because nobody can tell what the actual truth is. In this Mormon case fact is fact, and anybody can know it if his mind is open.

Demonstrably, as a matter of history, Joseph Smith never found golden plates in a New York state hill or anywhere else, and the book which he pretended to translate therefrom was concocted by himself and one or two confederates to make him out a prophet.

There is therefore even less reason to speak of Christian comity as if it forbade "proselyting" Mormons than there would be for objecting to efforts to win to Christ the disciples of Confucius.

For Confucius was honest. And he sought nothing for himself.



It is fortunate that just as this question becomes acute, public interest is revived in "ten reasons" which a good many years ago Presbyterians in Utah formulated to justify their refusal to admit that Mormonism is a branch of authentic Christianity.

Though the reasons are not new, a new edition of them was recently published with indorsements from both the Congregational and Baptist Associations of Utah. Brigham Roberts, the most eminent Mormon preacher, was so concerned about the document that he made public reply to it in a tabernacle sermon at Salt Lake City. Summarized, the points he had to answer ran thus:

1. The Mormon Church does not ask to be considered a branch of anything. It claims to be the only church in existence.
2. It puts the Book of Mormon on the same level with the Bible.
3. It gives Joseph Smith an authority which is in theory barely second to the authority of Jesus—in practice superior.
4. It teaches that all who disobey its priests will be damned.

5. It describes God as an exalted man not yet perfect.
6. It says the Ruler of this present world is Adam deified.
7. It is polytheistic, claiming that many men attain to deity.
8. It requires for salvation faith in Joseph Smith, not in Christ.
9. It believes that polygamy is "sacred and fundamental."
10. It teaches that God is himself a polygamist.



Now what does the apologist of present-day Mormonism—Elder Roberts—say in answer to this summing up of Mormon principles?

He denies not one point of the whole. Some he tries to soften down, but the total effect of his review of all ten amounts to a confession that Presbyterians understand Mormonism very well.

The assertion that Mormons look on their church as the only real church in the world the elder cheerfully admits to be exactly true—also the statement that the Book of Mormon stands on a level with the Bible. The claims described for the authority of Smith and his priests are of course involved in these admissions.

The view of God as a man who has ascended from humanity to the divine rulership of the universe is also acknowledged by Roberts as the basic conception of Mormon theology. That this present God is glorified Adam "may have been taught," he says, by Brigham Young and others, but "it has never been accepted by the church." Inasmuch, however, as Brigham Young, successor to Joseph Smith, was accounted by the church the heir of all Smith's infallible powers as a "revelator," what he taught can't be heresy.

On the charge that the Mormon theology recognizes many gods, the defense offered by Roberts is obviously confession. He says all trinitarian Christians teach that "three distinct personages . . . have entered into this divine nature" and there can be no reason for refusing to believe that others too reached that height.

Relative to polygamy, this spokesman denies that "Latter Day Saints" regard it as "fundamental." But he declares with seeming pride that they do look on it as "a high privilege conferred under special conditions and directly under the commandment of God wherever it is allowed."

This is certainly sufficient to demonstrate that the Mormon leaders have in no sense repudiated polygamy. They are deterred from practicing it not by any sense of its spiritual repulsiveness but simply by the fact that at present "special conditions" are adverse.

And to cap the climax, Elder Roberts offered this breath-taking answer to the tenth of the "ten reasons":

"The Mormon Church does not teach that Jesus Christ was a polygamist. It is absolutely silent on that subject. She does not teach that God is a polygamist. The church is absolutely silent on these matters."

What straighter indictment for total lack of historical sense and moral sensibility could be imagined than this defensive apology? "Absolutely silent," forsooth, on slander against the Son of God!



To cultivate toward law-abiding Mormons the neighborly feeling that Christians owe to every man who is doing the best he can, is the constant duty of evangelical workers in the Mormon country.

But to interpret such neighborly friendliness as requiring the courtesy of silence while Mormonism with mammoth effrontery describes itself as pure—and the only pure—Christianity, would be a restraint on the freedom of truth such as surely the bold and frank among evangelical Christians can never be led to allow.

tion from one in his position would be as acceptable as the one for fifteen hundred just received, he agreed to pay five dollars a year for five years, proud to consider himself a helper in so wise and just a cause.

And so church after church, individual after individual, has been visited, informed, prayed with and enlisted. As a result, the people throughout a great state have been interested and made partners in a good and going concern sure to pay dividends of imperishable

nature. They have given expression of allegiance to the Christ, and there is a solidarity among Presbyterian people such as was never known in the state before. The college has been most effectively advertised and students will be coming in in increased numbers with each succeeding year. All of which puts new heart in those who have been bearing the burden and new resources are placed at the feet of the King.

No, it's not a bad job, this raising money for a college.

Does the Negro Respond to Education?

BY S. J. FISHER

IS IT WISE to give negroes a good education? I have heard men say that it spoils them; that it unfits them for real usefulness. I deny it. A true Christian education increases their usefulness. Listen to a true story from which, as told by Mrs. B. B. Clokey and issued as a leaflet by the Presbyterian Freedmen's Board, I shall quote incidents and suggestions. To one of the boarding schools of our board there came a young negro girl, so unkempt, so untaught, so unpromising, that a teacher later said, "A more ignorant girl never found her way to this school." She had never seen a glass window or a stairway or even a board floor. Under the guidance and perpetually helpful influence of those devout teachers, she began her education.

From Ignorance to Culture

Three years of Christian training not only transformed her character, but developed and enlarged her intellect. She showed a remarkable literary talent, and when she graduated it was with high honors—this girl who three years before had never seen a carpet.

Several weeks before commencement she came to the principal's room one evening, asking for a quiet hour's talk about her future. The faithful woman, who was like a mother to all her girls, longed to see this brilliant mind and loyal heart used in the wisest way. Would this girl be unfitted for her true sphere? The principal hoped she might desire to teach in some of the board's large schools. Judge of her surprise when she learned it was the desire of this growing heart to "go and establish a little school of her own out in the black belt, where no teacher had ever been." She remonstrated, as she thought of the dangers which would surround her. Few white men would wish to spend a night there.

But the girl answered: "That is where I want to go and my safety will lie in the fact that I am just a 'nigger' with the rest of them." Her eagerness was compelling. She went. She found an old log cabin and, having cleaned it, there dwelt and established a school which was soon crowded with children. "Every night she held industrial classes, and taught the older girls and women how to sew and cook and keep their cabins clean. On Sabbath men, women and children gathered about her cabin to hear the wonderful Bible stories, listening for the first time to the gospel. In two years that entire community was revolutionized by her influence and example and tact."

Then she felt that she might leave this school in the care of one of the more recent graduates of the seminary, and she would push on into a more needy district and do for the blind, ignorant and sin-bound there what she had done in this reclaimed hamlet. The love of Christ constrained her. Her increased powers, her developed talents were held at her Redeemer's call. She had been privileged, and she longed to extend those privileges to others.

Education Barren Without Christ

What had God wrought in that half-clothed, ignorant girl; and what has he not wrought through her love and gratitude and regenerated heart? Industrial education is desirable. Training of the mind, enlargement of abilities should be given. But you will never obtain the best and purest and happiest result, unless your education and training are steeped in or encircled by submission, gratitude, and loyalty to Christ. You will not reach black belts and savage depths without Christian love and sympathy.

Do not say that this is an exceptional case. The harvest in our schools is great, and such results frequent. Down at Oxford, North Carolina, there is a school by whose fruits you shall judge. From it have gone seven young men into the Presbyterian church and more into other churches. For though our schools teach the shorter catechism to every scholar, as well as the Bible, the schooling is so much better than that otherwise available that parents in other denominations risk our influence. This school has sent out

also seven young men who have studied medicine, every one of whom has attained to more than a local distinction.

One in particular evidences the negro unspoiled by education. After graduating in 1915, he was sent to Memphis to conduct clinics. At the close of the war he was sent to North Carolina, where he is now a member of the board of health. He is sent all over the state to give illustrated lectures on disease. Going to Oxford, North Carolina, he called on the health officer, as was his custom. That official said: "Doctor, I am glad to have you give your lecture to the colored people, but we need the same for the whites, and we ask you to see to it that we get it." This colored physician has no desire to cross the line of prejudice, but the insistence of the officer called up the state authorities and arranged for a lecture, first to the negroes, and then to the whites. The head of the department at Raleigh said that this physician was the best informed man in the work.

I pluck another flower from this garden of the board's planting. Several years ago an old man brought a girl of 14 to this school, saying her mother was living wickedly, and he and his wife, thinking it a shame to let this girl grow up in such conditions, had decided to appeal to the principal of our school. The principal says: "We decided to take her, though neither she nor the old people had a cent to pay on her board. At his request we did not let her go home during the summer. Her development in beauty of appearance, in charm of expression and beauty of conduct was marvelous. She graduated, and began teaching in the public schools. Then, having a desire to study trained nursing, she completed that course and began hospital work. Two years ago, when influenza was raging in this state, she was sent from Alabama to Greensboro, North Carolina, to open and conduct an emergency hospital."

Well, Then, Does It All Pay?

This, also, is not exceptional. I have a large bouquet of such attractive flowers. Do they not justify every dollar spent by our church for this long-crushed race? Each one of these useful men and women would very likely have been either an ignorant, cheerless worker or a pest and source of corruption to the whites as well as to their own race.

Do you wonder that the teachers in these schools, these men and women, real missionaries for Christ, encircling these boys and girls with knowledge and power, sanctified by relation to God, are deeply interested and profoundly convinced that the true education never spoils the negro? Has the board no right to ask for more scholarships, for more money for teachers and more buildings? Let it make such requests, so that principals shall not suffer as one describes it: "I had to tell the father of these two girls, who had worked all summer in the cotton fields for the needed money, that we were already crowded. And they turned away, the father with bowed head, the girls with tears in their eyes."

WHO THEY ARE

S. J. FISHER, who contributes to this issue "Does the Negro Respond to Education?" is president of the Presbyterian Board of Missions for Freedmen.

JUDSON L. UNDERWOOD, "College Ambassador Asks No Pity," financial secretary of Parsons College, Fairfield, Iowa.

J. W. LAUGHLIN, "Welsh Union Adds More Than Numbers," pastor First Presbyterian church, Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

VIRGINIA TERHUNE VAN DE WATER, "The Value of 'The Common-place Woman,'" member of the well-known Terhune family of writers and herself author of numerous novels and essays. Mrs. Van de Water's home is in New York city.