

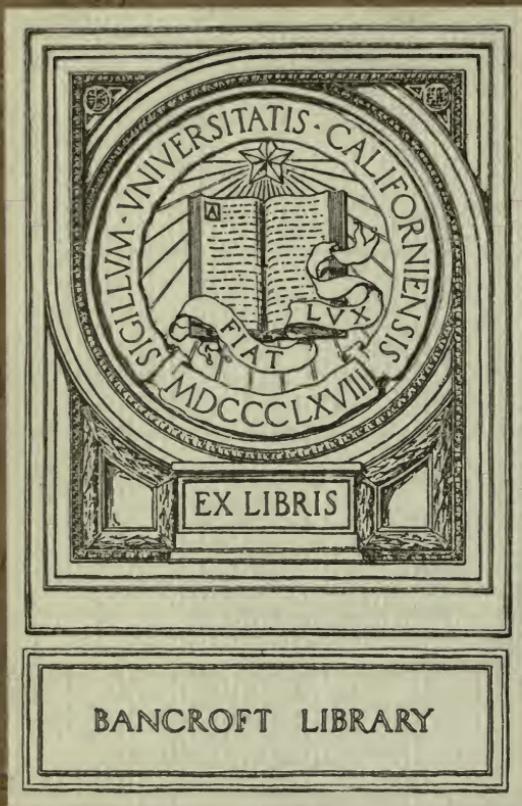
Smith. Polygamy not of God.

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Polygamy Not of God.

The series of Letters of which this Tract is the closing one, was begun by the publication of an "Open Letter to Joseph Smith and others," written by Elder L. O. Littlefield, of the Church in Utah, and printed in the "Utah Journal," Logan, Cache Co., Utah, dated April 27th, 1883. Four of Mr. Littlefield's letters and three of Mr. Smith's were published in the "Journal," and "Deseret Evening News" of Salt Lake City; but Mr. Smith's fourth letter (this tract) was declined by the "Journal" management, because they thought that the Correspondence had been prolonged far enough; that the publication of it further in their columns might "surfeit" their subscribers. This refusal to publish Mr. Smith's last letter was deemed unfair, and for the purpose that those who might wish, could have it to read, this Tract is published. All the Letters were published in the "Saints' Herald" at Lamoni, Iowa.

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[Rejected by the Utah Journal].

JOSEPH SMITH'S FOURTH LETTER TO L. O. LITTLEFIELD.

MR. L. O. LITTLEFIELD: *Sir*.—I am not surprised that you do not like the continued reiteration of the Word of God from the Book of Mormon. That book is one of the essential features of Mormonism. It should be to you and all other Mormons what the Koran is to Mohammedans, the Bible to Christians—the end of dispute. Without it the Mormon Church had not been born. It is the Golden Bible to the devout Mormon. From it I have the undoubted right to select those portions of the text that confirm and sustain my faith in Christ as primitive Mormonism has revealed him. The word of God to the Church, in the revelation charging the Church to remember the Book of Mormon, to "do according to that which I have written," is directly applicable to the matter in dispute between us. In that revelation the will of God touching the conduct of the Church is plainly stated—too plainly to suit you, hence your dislike to my quoting it. The only reason I assign for not quoting the whole, as complained of by you, is that I desired to make my letter as short as possible to cover the points I tried to make. At the risk of invoking another reproof from you for quoting such passages as suit my side of the controversy, I cite:

"And now it came to pass that the people of Nephi, under the reign of the second king, began to grow hard in their hearts, and indulge themselves somewhat in wicked practices, such as like unto David of old, desiring many wives and concubines, as also Solomon, his son. * * * Wherefore, I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first obtained mine errand from the Lord."

This errand from the Lord, Jacob essayed to perform. In doing so he states the object for which the people were led out of Jerusalem.

"Wherefore, thus saith the Lord, I have led this people forth out of the land of Jerusalem, by the power of mine arm, that I might raise up unto me a righteous branch from the fruit of the loins of Joseph."—B. of M., Jacob 2:6, 7.

The nature of the corruption existing among the Nephites, which was reproved by Jacob, was stated by him at the time his reproof was given. Your explanation of it is not according to the record itself. Whatever credit others may give to you as qualified to explain away the damaging

effect of the words of the Lord through Jacob, I do not trust you. The arts of sophistry employed by you are too transparent, the results too ruinous to be accepted. To show you what I mean by this I quote what you assert I refrained from doing for fear the "keystone of the arch of my argument would fall out."

"Wherefore, [for which reason], saith the Lord, if I will raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise [in a different manner, under different circumstances, in different respects] they shall hearken unto these things."

Instead of the closing clause of this sentence being a prophecy, as you assert, it bears no mark warranting such assertion. The purpose of "raising up a righteous branch unto him," had already been stated by the Lord. It was for this that he led them out from the people of Jerusalem. It was for this that he reproved their departure from the law given at the outset. The language of Jacob's commendation of the Lamanites in which he states, "For they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord, which was given unto our fathers, that they should have, save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none," points to that rule as one commanded long before Jacob's indictment against the Nephites, and shows its imperative character. The corruption which Jacob reproves is precisely that of David and Solomon, which God said he would not suffer. The command is sweeping and comprehensive: "There shall not any man among you have save it be one wife, and concubines he shall have none." The reason assigned, "For I, the Lord God, delighteth in the chastity of women."

The sophistry upon this question is on your part, not mine. The language of the text will not bear the strained construction you put upon it. The whole sentence taken with its connections can mean nothing more than this. The Lord had wearied of their sin. He set the task upon the prophet Jacob to reprove it. In doing this He uses plain language and does not indulge in double meaning words. That which he declares is like what he declared elsewhere. I am God I will command my people. They shall hearken unto my words. This is the only force the words have. The word "otherwise," upon which you predicate your statement that it is a prophecy, because it suits your side of the case, used in two of its senses, as given by Webster, is equivalent to the saying that "under different circumstances," and "in different respects," my people "shall hearken un-

to these things." The statement, "I will command my people," is affirmative only of the fixed determination of God to be obeyed. If your theory about this sentence was right, it would render void and meaningless the terrible indictment of Jacob. Such rendition would destroy the force of the statement that it was for the purpose of raising a righteous seed unto him of the loins of Joseph. It would, by antithetical reasoning, declare that the seed he was then trying to raise up by monogamic law, was not his; and that he would have none until he commanded contrary to the strict law then obtaining. "For if I will," construed as you state it, would mean that he had not at that time willed to raise up a righteous seed to himself; but that when he would so will he would do so by giving a law contrary to and conflicting with the commandment he then gave.

The statement that the polygamic practices of the Hebrew race were "not known among the Nephites" is too glaring to pass without notice. What means the language, "They seek to excuse themselves because of the things written of David and Solomon?" They understand not the Scriptures?" "I will not suffer that this people shall do like unto them of old?"

The discovery that there are "two kinds of plural marriage," is unique, and worthy of the cause you advocate. David and Solomon practiced these two kinds, so you say. Please tell me when David began to practice the one and ceased to practice the other? Also please state at what period of Solomon's life was he practicing the one and abstaining from the other.

It is a very strange thing that while you admit the premises of the argument of my last letter, that Adam, Noah, Lehi are all examples of God's establishment of the monogamic principle; and that under the dispensations then inaugurated plural marriage would have been a sin, that you can still say that it is no argument "against polygamy."

The same kind of argument would destroy the basis and fabric of every created thing. For instance: God created man as we now see him, one head, two eyes, one mouth, two ears, two arms, two legs, &c. But this is no argument that God did not intend that a man might not have two heads, four eyes, four legs, four arms, four ears, &c. Yet every departure from the established form is a monstrosity, a deformity, a *lapsus naturae*. The vine was created to bear grapes, the fig tree figs; but this is no argument that man may not gather "grapes of thorns and figs of thistles." God "set some in the Church, first apostles, secondary prophets, after that pastors" &c.; but that is no argument but what there may be in the church popes, cardinals, prelates, curates, sees, &c.

I cling so tenaciously to the Word of God in the Book of Mormon; because in direct harmony with the law of marriage as defined by Jacob, is the law given to the Church "in the fulness of times," as found in the Doctrine and Covenants. It is also in keeping with the dispensations of Adam, Noah, and Christ.

Here I present what may have escaped your memory, that in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the conferring of the authority to preach the gospel, and the establishing of the Church in these last days, the fact was presented that the

Adamic dispensation was a gospel one. That the gospel was before the law. That the law was added because of transgression, and that the fruitful cause of God's displeasure towards the people and the giving of the law was the breaking of and departure from the everlasting covenant, the gospel. That Noah was a preacher of the gospel; and that the world was deluged to death because it rejected his gospel administration. That in Christ the law which had been added as a school-master was ended. That the dispensation of Christ was also a gospel dispensation. It so happens that you have admitted all this substantially. It follows then that in each of these gospel dispensations the monogamic rule prevailed by the design and introduction of God. You also admit that Lehi and Jacob's dispensation on this land was monogamic. It is also in proof that in the establishing the gospel economy through Joseph Smith in 1830, it was again instituted as monogamic. No surer evidence that in a gospel dispensation monogamy was God's plan and will ought to be asked by any mortal being.

One of the marks upon the revelation which you claim as the basis of plural marriage, which warrants my conclusion that it is not from God is that it contradicts the rule obtaining in each and every gospel dispensation. It can not be from God for it is not like him. It contradicts all former revelations from God upon the same subject. If the phrase "I will command my people," was prophetic, it is far more reasonable, and more in harmony with God's characteristics as revealed by the revelations to the Church, to believe that the command of 1831, which "was to be a law to them then and in the New Jerusalem," "was given in fulfillment of said prophecy, than to believe the labored construction you put upon it. For the command of 1831 is like the one given to Lehi; is like the gospel dispensations of the past; and in accordance with the examples set by God when he essayed to people the earth.

David Fulmer does not state that the revelation on celestial marriage was presented to the High Council at Nauvoo, August 12th, 1843, by my father's "knowledge and consent." The statement made in the affidavit, is that on the convening of the High Council that day, Dunbar Wilson, who had heard some rumors about plural wifery, made inquiry about those rumors. Upon this inquiry Hyrum Smith went to his house, got a copy of the revelation and read it to the council, bearing testimony to its truth. Leonard Soby, Austin Cowles, and William Marks would not receive it, nor the testimony of Hyrum Smith. Father was not there. The revelation was not submitted by him nor with his "knowledge and consent." The presentation of it, so far as Mr. Fulmer's affidavit is concerned, was prematurely forced upon Hyrum Smith. It was not formally presented by call of the Seer in an official manner, to test its validity. Is this copy the one that was made by Joseph Kingsbury, kept by N. K. Whitney, until after his death it fell into Pres. B. Young's hands? Is it the copy made by William Clayton and kept by Pres. B. Young in his private desk on which he had a patent lock? Is it the copy of which Emma Smith burned the original? An original which she states she never saw. Mr. Littlefield, when you made this false statement respecting what Mr.

Fulmer stated in his affidavit, did you forget that you had published a copy, and that I could read the English language?

Let me repeat, though you do not like it, there is no scriptural evidence that Abraham was a polygamist. Sarah was his wife until she died; Keturah after Sarah's death. Hagar was his concubine, not his wife.

Whatever God may have said to Sarai as stated by Josephus, quoted by you, it was not by any prophet's hand, nor the hand of a king that Abram received Hagar. It was Sarai who took the Egyptian slave to his bed. But your witness proves too much for your case, for he also states that when Sarah decided that Hagar must go, Abraham agreed to it because "God was pleased with what Sarah had determined." Josephus, B. 1, c. 12. More than this, the sagacious servant of Abraham when making his statement to Laban, said of Isaac, "He is his (Abraham's) legitimate son; and is brought up as his only heir." Ibid c. 16. Josephus places the marriage of Abraham and Keturah after Sarah's death.

So far as Moses is concerned, it is clear that the daughter of Jethro, was an Ethiopian woman. This woman Moses married before his return to Egypt; and there is no record of his having taken any other.

The allusion made in Numbers 12, is made in relating the history of the people while yet they were in the wilderness; and the sentence "the Ethiopian woman whom he had married," more reasonably applies to Zipporah, to whom Moses was a "bloody husband," because he had circumcised her children, than to a second or concubinal wife. Besides this, if he had married a second wife who was an Ethiopian woman, he would have had two of the same race. In that case Miriam's reproach would have been that he had married two Ethiopian women, not "the woman." Your readers will do well to read Numbers, 12 and Exodus 2, without your befogged spectacles, Mr. Littlefield. The inference that Zipporah and the Ethiopian woman named in Numbers 12 are two separate women, and thus make two wives for Moses in order to fasten polygamy upon him, is not tenable.

Why should you state what is so easily disproved concerning Jacob's marriage. Rachel and not Leah was Jacob's real wife. Leah was palmed off upon Jacob by the designing Laban. "Did I not serve thee for Rachal." was Jacob's indignant remonstrance. Nor is it true that Leah was Jacob's wife in any sense for seven years before he obtained Rachel. The hard necessities of your cause make you to stumble in your statements. Jacob, recognizing the fact that Laban had deceived him, and had the power to enforce the advantage gained over him, and fearful that he might lose Rachel, submitted to "fulfill" Leah's "week;" at the end of which "week" he was married to Rachel, for whom he continued to serve the seven years enforced by Laban. In the eyes of God, and good men, Rachel was Jacob's real wife, and the accepting of Joseph and Benjamin, in whom the succession is named is proof, not that God sanctioned polygamy, but that he had respect to the marital betrothal of these two, Jacob and Rachel.

The first wife given to David was Michal, and she was the gift of Saul. Saul in David's

enforced absence married her to Phalti. Was she David's wife? After Nabal's death David took Abigail, and Ahinoam after Samuel's death.

Let me call your attention to what I presume has escaped you. The relation of David's taking the wife of Uriah to be his wife, as you admit, and as it is stated in the so-called revelation on plural wives was a grievous wrong and not in harmony with the theory of plural marriage, but in contravention of those laws which you hold to in regard to marriage. She is not reckoned as his wife legitimately by you, neither by the monogamic rule, nor the one called by you the righteous polygamic law. David's successor was not the son of any one of his polygamic wives as you count them; but was the fruit of his loins by Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. It was her son Solomon who succeeded to King David. If then polygamy is approved of God because David had more than one wife; then by a parity of reasoning, the connection between David and Solomon's mother is approved, and the means by which she became his polygamic wife is sanctioned of God. This son is the one selected for the exhibition of favor. David murdered Uriah that he might obtain his wife. Nathan, the one whom you say gave Saul's wives to David, declared that David was a sinner in the matter, your revelation also brands the transaction as a sin; and yet the issue of that marriage is approved and that bloody deed condoned by the favor and blessing of God. No amount of twisting can avoid this conclusion being forced upon you, if you insist upon my acceptance of your argument.

I am no more convinced now that Joseph Smith, the Martyr, practiced "plural marriage" or "polygamy," as it is called and practiced in Utah, than I was before you opened the correspondence in the *Journal*. You have produced no evidence of which I have not been aware of its existence. No new lines of support to your doctrine have been advanced by you. The same double faced statements and arguments that others have presented have been revamped by you. I give you in as concise form as practicable reasons for not accepting the statements and proofs offered by you to prove that my father was a polygamist, and that the doctrine has not divine origin.

1. Joseph Smith was the human instrument through whom a dispensation of the gospel was committed to man.

2. Every gospel dispensation, Adam's, Noah's, Christ's, on the eastern continent, and Lehi's and Christ's on the western, was monogamic in its institution of marriage.

3. The dispensation committed through Joseph Smith was like each preceding gospel one, in its marriage institution—monogamic.

4. Polygamy, the having more than one wife at the same time, was specifically forbidden to the Church of Christ as established by command of God in 1830, by Joseph Smith and others. Book of Mormon, Jacob 2d chapter.

5. Monogamy, the having but one wife at the same time was instituted in the Church of Christ established in 1830, by direct revelation from Jesus Christ the Great Spiritual and Divine Head of the Church. Doc. & Cov. sec. 13, (42), par. 7. Doc & Cov., sec. 65, (49), 3. Doc. & Cov., sec. 109, (111). The latter reference is found in all

the editions of the Book of Covenants published by the Church, in Europe and America, except the one published in Utah in 1876, from which it is expunged and the so-called revelation on polygamy put in its place.

6. Monogamy was adopted, and polygamy declared to be a crime by the Church in 1835, in public assembly; and this action was endorsed by the publication of the article then adopted, in repeated editions of the Church articles and covenants from that year until, and including the Liverpool edition published in 1854.

7. No revelation from God authorizing the abrogation of the monogamic rule, and the substitution of the plural wife system, or polygamy, was received, presented to the Church and adopted by it during the life-time of Joseph Smith.

8. Joseph Smith denounced polygamy in February, 1844. *Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, p. 423.

9. The existence and teaching of the doctrine of plurality of wives in the Church at Nauvoo in 1844, was publicly denied by Hyrum Smith, one of the First Presidency, on March 15th, 1844, *Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, p. 474.

10. The official organ of the Church, the *Times and Seasons*, of April 1st, 1844, contains the following denunciation: "If any man writes to you or preaches to you, doctrines contrary to the Bible, the Book of Mormon, or the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, set him down as an impostor. * * * You need not wait to write to us to know what to do with such men; you have the authority with you,—try them by the principles contained in the acknowledged word of God; if they preach, or teach, or practice contrary to that, disfellowship them; cut them off from among you as useless and dangerous branches." *Times and Seasons*, vol. 5 p. 490. John Taylor, Editor.

11. Polygamy is not taught in any part of the acknowledged word of God.

12. Joseph Smith was a man in the full use of manhood's physical powers, capable of begetting children at the time of his death, and had children by his wife Emma, one of which was born to him after his death.

13. No children were born to Joseph Smith by any of those women whom you assert were wives to him with all that the name implies.

14. There are good reasons for believing that had Joseph Smith been married to those whom you assert were his plural wives, issue must have resulted; and the fact that no children were born to him in polygamy is strong proof that he had no such wives; especially as said women subsequently bore children to other men, no better physically than he.

In regard to the certificates in your last letter: At the time Lovina Walker made the statement respecting what Emma Smith told her, Mrs. Smith was living and her testimony could have been obtained. Mrs. Smith stated that she neither gave any woman to her husband in marriage, nor knew of his having any wife but herself.

The affidavit of Emily D. P. Young is false upon its face; for at the time that she states that she was

"married, or sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by James Adams, a High Priest in said church; according to the laws of the same regulating marriage;" to wit, May 11th, 1843, there was no law of said church permitting, or authorizing plural, polygamous, or bigamous marriages. This is proved by your own statement that the revelation bears date July 12th, 1843, two full months after said marriage, or sealing took place; and by such giving of the "revelation the law of plural marriage was given to the Church." It did not exist before that; nor then, for it was not until August 12th, still a month later that the revelation was even read to a single quorum; and it was not then read by direction of Joseph Smith, but to still the the inquiry of Dunbar Wilson, which inquiry was caused by rumors which he placed no confidence in. Worse than this, that so-called revelation was never presented to the Church for endorsement, sanction and adoption, until August 29th, 1852. The statements in this affidavit, if true, so far as the act of marriage, or sealing, is concerned, state that Joseph Smith was a bigamist, having married an unmarried woman while yet his legal wife was living. This was sin against his wife Emma. If he afterward cohabited with Emily D. P. Young, he sinned secretly against my mother. Now, who thus makes him a sinner, you who assert and believe this affidavit, or I who disbelieve and deny it?

If the affidavit is true, Joseph Smith transgressed two well accredited rules of the law of the church, at that time prevailing. One of these rules is that forbidding to have more than one wife living at the same time; the other that which declares that "he who keeps the law of God hath no need to break the law of the land." If the statement that Joseph Smith was married to Emily D. P. Young in Nauvoo, Illinois, May 11th, 1843, is true, Joseph Smith, Emily D. P. Young and James Adams were all liable to prosecution for violating the statutes of said state defining the crime of bigamy and providing the penalties for such infraction of the law. Who then makes Joseph Smith a transgressor, you who believe and affirm such things, or I who disbelieve and deny them?

In the face of what is above written, how can you consistently expect a man whose legal training you admit gives him the power to analyze evidence and give it true weight, to receive as conclusive what is so unsatisfactory and damaging to your own cause.

As before, while I do not accept the proofs offered by you that my father was a pluralist or polygamist, as conclusive, I repeat that whether he was, or was not, the gospel of Christ as it was taught by Christ and as recommitted through Joseph Smith, is complete and sufficient for the salvation of man. Nor is it essential to the validity of that gospel that my father be proved to be a polygamist, or that I be compelled to believe that he was.

JOSEPH SMITH.

LAMONI, Iowa, Sept. 12th, 1883.

For further information on the above subject, address me at Lamoni, Iowa.

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