

# THE BASIS OF BRIGHAMITE POLYGAMY:

A Criticism upon the (so called) Revelation of July 12th, 1843.

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## THE BASIS OF POLYGAMY.

The revelation purporting to have been given July 12th, 1843, first paragraph, contains several noticeable points.

1. It represents Joseph Smith as enquiring of the Lord, "Wherein I, the Lord, justified Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; Moses, David, and Solomon, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines."

It is curious to contemplate the principle on which Isaac was justified in Polygamy and Concubinage, when there is not a shadow of proof that he practiced either; while the evidence of justification in Abraham's case, is the fact that the Lord commanded a separation, requiring that both the divorced wife, or concubine, and her child should leave the country, and an express commandment that the child should not be an heir. If this is justification, we beg to know what terms would express condemnation? And as respects David and Solomon, is it not passing strange that Joseph Smith, who had translated, as he said by the gift of God, the Book of Mormon, in which it is written that the acts of plurality on their part were abominable; here is the passage:

"Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord."—Jacob, chapter 2, Book of Mormon.

Was it not strange, we say, that with this statement so lately received from the Lord, Joseph Smith should ask the question how the Lord justified these same men? But if we suppose that he was under the condemnation common to the church at one time for disregarding the Book of Mormon and the former commandments, and in this darkness did ask so causeless a question, the only consistent answer would be, "How is it written; how readest thou?"

2. The doctrine of concubinage, as authorized by this paragraph, ought not to pass unnoticed; for, as we learn in paragraph fourteen, it is a holy institution. We are there told that "Abraham received concubines, and they bore children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness." In the absence of any light upon this branch of the subject from the great commentator, Mr. Pratt, we only have recourse to the ordinary sources of information to determine the distinction between a wife and a concubine. Mr. Pratt is lucid upon the former, but shady upon the latter. The

text is, "The doctrines of many wives and concubines."—Mr. Pratt. Now the real status of a concubine in the "new and everlasting covenant" of this paragraph is important; because, failing to comply with its requirements, subjects one to great inconvenience in this world, and in the world to come,— "then are ye damned," saith the text.

The distinction between a wife and a concubine is kept up from Abraham to Belshazzar; but the proportion is not uniform. While Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, Rehoboam had eighteen wives and sixty concubines. But the clue to the real distinction is found in Esther 2: 14, where those young women who had been prostituted by the king, are called concubines; and in the sworn statement of Brigham Young in which he claims but one lawful wife, but at the same time confesses having been sealed to a plurality. These two testimonies make the distinction clear. Among the Greeks they were called courtezans; the English and French call them mistresses—kept mistresses. Now then the full import of the inquiry appears, to-wit: to know the justifying phases of the doctrine of having many wives and mistresses.

What an eye opener is this paragraph; though it requires considerable preparation as is therein suggested, in order to receive it; and this preparation requires the repudiation of all the revelations and commandments to the Church upon this subject, so that when this revelation was adopted, it was consistent to lay aside the books, and substitute "council," or "do as you are told;" for Polygamy can only exist under a despotism.

Paragraph second discredits all covenants, contracts, vows, obligations, or associations made and entered into outside of the "everlasting covenant" of paragraph one; whereas, Doctrine and Covenants, sec. III, par. 4, says, "All legal contracts of marriage made before a person is baptized into this Church, should be held sacred and [be] fulfilled."

This article requires the Church to hold sacred such covenants of marriage, and the fulfillment of such contracts is the consummation of a purpose, or the end for which the contract is made or ordained. Now what is this purpose—this end? We are informed in Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 64, par. 3, "For marriage is ordained of God unto man,"—not to a few favorites through "the President," but unto man,—the race, the species. This ordinance is not written

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