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POLYGAMY

NOT A DOCTRINE OF THE TRUE CHURCH OF
LATTER DAY SAINTS.

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THE above statement may seem strange to many, and some may even question its correctness, because it has often been made to appear that polygamy is the chief corner stone of the Church of Latter Day Saints. But nothing could be further from the truth, as we shall proceed to prove.

All Latter Day Saints make the claim that their church is the result of direct revelation from God. Among the first revelations received is the following:

"The elders, priests, and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fullness of the gospel; and they shall observe the covenants and church articles to do them, and these shall be their teachings, as they shall be directed by the Spirit."—Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 42, par. 5.

It will be observed that according to this revelation, given less than a year after the church was organized, the ministry were limited in their teachings to the Bible and the Book of Mormon; they were to observe also the church articles. But the statement is made that in the Bible and the Book of Mormon is contained the fullness of the gospel. Now, if these books teach polygamy, we have lost our case. But do they?

We all ought to know that the Bible does not so teach, therefore we shall call attention to only one statement, but given by the very highest authority, Jesus Christ, who said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh." Observe the word *wife*, not wives. Also the words, *they twain*, not they fifteen or twenty.

We turn to the Book of Mormon; and not only do we fail to find in the entire book one word in favor of polygamy, but instead a very effective answer to the arguments of the Utah Mormons who claim that because Solomon and David had a number of wives it is therefore lawful for us. Here is the answer from the Book:

“Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord. . . . Wherefore, I, the Lord God, will not suffer that this people shall do like unto them of old. Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife: and concubines he shall have none.”

Could words be plainer against this wicked doctrine? And this, too, from where the fullness of the gospel is to be found, and to be the teachings of the ministry.

The “covenants and church articles” agree with this.

“Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else; and he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not, he shall be cast out.”

This language is certainly plain enough for anyone to understand, and is a part of the same revelation cited above, directing the ministry what they shall teach.

The form of the marriage covenant is:

“And if there be no legal objections, he shall say, calling each by their names: ‘You both mutually agree to be each other’s companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives.’ And when they have answered ‘yes,’ he shall pronounce them ‘husband and wife’ in the name of the Lord,” etc.

“Wholly for each other and from all others” forbids, in strongest terms, the practice of polygamy.

The question may now arise, Where, then, did the doctrine of polygamy originate in connection with what the world calls Mormonism? We answer, With Brig-

ham Young and his followers, who, after they had violated this law of God and the doctrine of the church by their unlawful practices, introduced this doctrine.

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”—2 Peter 2: 1, 2.

But to settle this matter beyond all doubt, let us turn to the decisions of the courts of the land, to which full evidence in the case has been submitted.

In the Kirtland Temple suit for quieting the title to the Kirtland Temple, “In Court of Common Pleas, Lake county, Ohio, February 23, 1880. Present: Hon. L. S. Sherman, Judge; F. Paine, Jr., Clerk; and C. F. Morley, Sheriff;” the findings of the court in part are as follows:

“That the church in Utah, the Defendant of which John Taylor is President, has materially and largely departed from the faith, doctrines, laws, ordinances and usages of said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and has incorporated into its system of faith the doctrines of Celestial Marriage and a plurality of wives, and the doctrine of Adam-God worship, contrary to the laws and constitution of said original Church.

“And the Court do further find that the Plaintiff, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is the True and Lawful continuation of, and Successor to the said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, organized in 1830, and is entitled in law to all its rights and property.”

The following extracts from the decision of Judge Philips, of the United States Court, for the Western District of Missouri, handed down March 3, 1894, concurs with the foregoing, in another suit in which the Reorganized Church was complainant for the recovery of the temple lot at Independence, Missouri:

"Beyond all cavil, if human testimony is to place any matter forever at rest, this church was one in doctrine, government, and purpose from 1830 to June, 1844, when Joseph Smith, its founder, was killed. It had the same federal head, governing bodies, and faith. During this period there was no schism, no 'parting of the ways' in any matter fundamental, or affecting its oneness."

"There can be no question of the fact that Brigham Young's assumed presidency was a bold and bald usurpation."

"It [the church in Utah] has introduced societies of a secret order, and established secret oaths and covenants, contrary to the book of teachings of the old church. It has changed the duties of the President, and of the Twelve, and established the doctrine to 'Obey Counsel,' and has changed the order of the 'Seventy, or Evangelists.'"

From the foregoing, it would seem as though any fair-minded man could see that the heading of this article is correct, and that from the very nature of the case polygamy is not, never was, and never can be a doctrine of the true Latter Day Saints. Those who teach this pernicious doctrine are not Latter Day Saints, no matter what their claim may be.

"The Reorganized Church," which the courts have declared to be the "*True and lawful continuation of, and successor to, the said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,*" also the sons of the Prophet Joseph Smith, have always opposed this wicked doctrine, as did also Joseph Smith, the founder of the church, from its very beginning.

We write this little tract in the hope that it may be the means of correcting some who have been misinformed regarding this church, and that if any are not satisfied with the evidence presented, they may take pains to examine the matter still further, and cease to accuse an innocent people.