

we understand, went from his father's house to sojourn at a distance from the land that was promised to him; and while he sojourned there, he married Leah, one of the daughters of Laban, after having served faithfully seven years. It was a custom to buy wives in those days: they were more expensive than now-a-days. It is true he got cheated: he expected to have married Rachel; but as, I presume, the old Eastern custom of wearing veils deceived Jacob, he could not exactly understand whether it was Leah or Rachel until after he was married. Then he served seven years more to get Rachel. Here was a plurality of wives.

Did the Lord appear to Jacob after this? Yes. Did he chasten him? No. Did he send his angels to him after this? Yes: hosts of them came to him. He was a man of such powerful faith, and his heart so pure before God, that he could take hold of one of them and wrestle all night with him, the same as people wrestle in the streets here, only they did not swear; and, I presume, they had not been drinking whiskey; and they wrestled with all their might. I do not suppose the angel, at first, exercised any peculiar faith, but merely a physical strength. He was unable to throw Jacob; and Jacob, like a prince, prevailed with God; but he began to mistrust that he was something more than a man that was wrestling with him, and began to inquire after his name; and by-and-by the angel, determined not to be worsted, put forth one of his fingers, and touched one of Jacob's sinews, and down he came. Did this angel inform Jacob that he was a wretched polygamist—an offscouring of the earth, not worthy to dwell in the society of men? No. He was recommended as a great prince, and one that had power to prevail with an angel all night, until the angel put forth his miraculous power on him.

This same Jacob conversed with God, heard his voice, and saw him; and in all those visions and glorious manifestations made to him, we find no reproof for polygamy. Certainly, if the Lord did not intend to approbate a crime, he would have reproved his for polygamy, if polygamy were a crime. If he did not intend Jacob to go headlong to destruction, he would have told him he had taken two wives, and it was not right; but, instead of this, he blessed these wives of Jacob exceedingly, and poured out his Spirit upon them. Leah bore him four sons, and then she became for awhile barren. Finding she had left off bearing children, she gave Zilpah—a woman that was dwelling with them, to Jacob to wife, although he already had two; and Zilpah raised up children to Jacob. Leah had borne several children, and had left off bearing. She had been more backward about giving her handmaid Zilpah to Jacob to wife than Rachel had been in giving Bilhah. Seeing the Lord was about to curse her with barrenness, because she did not do according to the example of her younger sister, she gave Zilpah to Jacob. Then the Lord hearkened to her prayer, and Leah said—"God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband." (See Genesis xxx. 18.)

Whoever heard of the Lord's hearing one's prayer, because a person was doing an evil? If polygamy were a crime, God would have condemned her, because she gave up her handmaiden to her husband. We cannot suppose that any woman not acquainted with the law and commandment of the Most High, and believing it to be sinful for her husband to have two wives, would express herself in such a manner—The Lord heard my prayer and gave me the fifth son, because I gave my handmaid to my husband to wife. This shows to us that Jacob's wife, Leah,