

progression in godliness until we know all things as our Father in Heaven knows them, there is no life of greater importance than this life, for there is no life in heaven or on earth to the true followers of Jesus Christ that is not incorporated in His gospel. Those who reject the gospel, when it is proclaimed to them by the authority of heaven, cannot know the Father and the Son, and are cut off from the eternal life which this knowledge alone gives.

We are in the hands of the Almighty as a people, and He is able to take care of us. We entertain no antipathies against any person or community upon this earth; but we would give eternal life to all, if they would receive it at our hands—we would preach the truth to them and administer to them the ordinances of the gospel. But, it is said, you believe in polygamy, and we cannot receive the gospel from your hands. We have been told a great many times that polygamy is not according to Christianity. The Protestant reformers believed the doctrine of polygamy. Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, one of the principal lords and princes of Germany, wrote to the great reformer Martin Luther and his associate reformers, anxiously imploring them to grant unto him the privilege of marrying a second wife, while his first wife, the princess, was yet living. He urged that the practice was in accordance with the Bible, and not prohibited under the Christian dispensation. Upon the reception of this letter, Luther, who had denounced the Romish church for prohibiting the marriage of priests, and who favored polygamy, met in council with the principal Reformers to consult upon the letter which had been received from the Landgrave. They wrote him a lengthy letter in reply, approving of his taking a second wife, saying—

“There is no need of being much concerned for what men will say, provided all goes right with conscience. So far do we approve it, and in those circumstances only by us specified, for the gospel hath neither recalled nor forbid what was permitted in the law of Moses with respect to the marriage. Jesus Christ has not changed the external economy, but added justice only, and life everlasting for reward. He teaches the true way of obeying God, and endeavors to repair the corruption of nature.”

This letter was written at Wittemberg, the Wednesday after the feast of St. Nicholas, 1539, and was signed by Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, Martin Bucer, and five other Reformers, and was written in Melancthon's own handwriting.

The marriage was solemnized on the 4th of March, 1540, by the Rev. Denis Melanther, chaplain to Philip. Philip's first wife was so anxious “that the soul and body of her dearest spouse should run no further risk, and that the glory of God might be increased,” that she freely consented to the match.

This letter of the great Reformers was not a hasty conclusion on their part that polygamy was sanctioned by the gospel, for in the year 1522, seventeen years before they wrote this letter, Martin Luther himself, in a sermon which he delivered at Wittemberg for the reformation of marriage, clearly pronounced in favor of polygamy.

These transactions are published in the work entitled, “History of the variations of the Protestant churches.”

Ladies and gentlemen, I exhort you to think for yourselves, and read your Bibles for yourselves, get the Holy Spirit for yourselves, and pray for yourselves, that your minds may be divested of false traditions and early impressions that are untrue. Those who are acquainted with the history