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CHRISTOLOGY.

(Continued.)

In and for the work of redemption, and in the manner and measure requisite for such work, Christ the God-man humiliated himself. The verb, ταπεινώω, means *to lower, to humble*, the contrary being ὑψόω, *to raise, to elevate, to exalt.*¹⁾ With the reflex pronoun, ταπεινοῦν signifies *to humble one's self*, to forego honor or high stations or prerogatives which one might rightfully claim or enjoy. Thus Paul says that he had "abased himself,"²⁾ when he had "preached the gospel of God freely," earning his livelihood with his own hands, and taking what other churches gave him, instead of taking and enjoying what he might have rightfully claimed at the hands of the Corinthians.³⁾ And such was the self-humiliation of Christ, *that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor;*⁴⁾ *that he, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being in fashion as a man, he humbled*

1) Matt. 23, 12. Luke 14, 11; 18, 14. Phil. 2, 8. 9.

2) ἑμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν, 2 Cor. 11, 7.

3) 2 Cor. 11, 5 ff.

4) 2 Cor. 8, 9.

Historical Theology.

LUTHER AND LANDGRAVE PHILIP'S DOUBLE MARRIAGE.

Our attention has, from various quarters, been called to an article published in the *Literary Digest* of Jan. 27, 1900, in which the question, "Was Martin Luther the 'Father of Mormonism?'" is answered in the affirmative by quotations from *The Catholic Mirror*. To do justice to this perfidious piece of Romanist rancor, we give the article unabridged and place it in the light of history drawn from the real sources of information accessible in our day.

Here, then, is the article from the *Literary Digest*:—

A recent Roman Catholic writer thinks that modern Protestants are inconsistent in their spectacular hostility to Mr. Roberts and the doctrine of polygamy. They venerate Luther and the fathers of the Protestant Reformation; yet these very fathers, he asserts, preached a doctrine not appreciatively different from that of the Latter-Day Saints upon this point. "Civil legislation," he says, "has effected locally a check upon simultaneous bigamy, but the evil is to-day by no means confined to Utah. Its emissaries are to be found in almost every State of the Union zealously planting the seeds of Mormonism, as is ignorantly supposed, but, in truth, the seeds of Lutheranism in one of its most destructive phases on society." The writer asserts that Martin Luther "is the father of Mormonism," and that neither Joseph Smith nor Brigham Young can make good that claim. In support of this assertion, he quotes (in *The Catholic Mirror*, December 23) from the original Latin of Luther's collected works (pp. 119, 123, Württemberg edition), and continues:

"Here we have the principle of divorce, obsolete and forgotten in the history of Christianity for fifteen centuries,

once more brought to light and promulgated by the apostle of the Reformation in Germany, before Cranmer started the divorce demon in England. But Luther and his coadjutors in the dissemination of the pure (!) gospel of the Reformation did not confine themselves to the trifle of divorce in their practical sympathy with aspirants to the gratification of unbridled lust. Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, appealed to Luther, Melancthon, and other minor apostles of the Reformation in Germany to oblige him with permission to have a second wife *simultaneously with his lawful wife*. The grounds given by the applicant were, that he had never loved his wife; that he had not been faithful to her more than three weeks; and that he could not abandon the dissolute life in which he lived. For these reasons he begs a dispensation to have two wives. In their answer these eight patriarchs of the Reformation reply thus:

“But if your highness be fully resolved to take another wife, we judge that it ought to be done secretly; that is, that none but the lady herself and a few trusty persons obliged to secrecy under the seal of confession, know anything of the matter. Hence it will not be attended with any important contradiction or scandal. For it is not unusual for princes to keep mistresses; and altho the vulgar should be scandalized, the more prudent would understand *this moderate method of life and prefer it to adultery, or other brutal and foul actions*. There is no need of being much concerned for what men will say, provided all go right with conscience. Your highness hath, therefore, not only the approbation of us all, in a case of necessity, but also the consideration we have made hereupon. We are most ready to serve your highness. Dated at Wittemberg, the Wednesday after the feast of St. Nicholas, 1539.

‘MARTIN LUTHER,

‘ADAM,

‘PHILIP MELANCTHON,

‘JOHN LENINGUE,

‘MARTIN BUCER,

‘JUSTICE WINFORTE,

‘ANTHONY CORVIN,

‘DIONVSIUS MELENTHER.’

“Our fellow citizens of the United States will find in the above precious documents the true inwardness of ‘the Apostle of the Reformation’ and his equally zealous *confrères* in introducing into Christianity, after an absence of fifteen full centuries, the doctrine of polygamy simultaneous (Mormonism) and consecutive polygamy (divorce).”

Of course, we might, in dealing with a Romanist assailant, file a cross bill and demand that he who would come into court should come with clean hands. To think that a writer who, if he were to write the history of his own church, would have to stir up the stench of a veritable Sodom and Gomorrha in the annals of papal Rome and Avignon, should go nosing about in the history of the Reformation and then, with a pretense of historical research, pronounce an absolution over Joseph Smith and Brigham Young which he and his readers know to be false, and impute the fatherhood of Mormonism to Martin Luther, whom he and his readers know to be as little responsible for that abomination as the man in the moon! But we do not feel inclined, at present, to write another *Liber Gomorrhianus*, as Damiani did in the days of Hildebrand, on the sexual life of Romanist ecclesiastics; nor do we deem it worth while to deny an assertion which nobody believes, that Luther was the father of Mormonism. What we would set forth here is simply Luther's true relation to the Landgrave's second marriage during the lifetime of his first wife, not as caricatured from a garbled fragment of a single and much abused document, but as far as it can be ascertained from all the available sources of information on a subject which, to its full extent, never was and never can be a matter of historical record.

In 1523, Philip of Hesse, then nineteen years of age, was married to Christine, daughter of Duke George of Saxony, a woman whom he never loved and to whom he was never a faithful husband keeping himself to her only. He had his grievances against her; but what they were is

not fully known. In a letter to Luther, written in 1540, he says: "I will tell you, under confession, things in view of which you will be satisfied with me; but they will sound bad. God have mercy! May God protect you from similar things! You may know this, because you wanted to know; do not think of anything that is good, but of what is worst. May God punish me if I lie; but I have also proofs."¹⁾ Even as early as 1526, in the third year of his married life, the Landgrave had communicated his complaints to Luther, though not so fully as in later years. And it is remarkable that already in connection with those early overtures the Landgrave broached the idea of a second marriage. But here is what Luther wrote to Philip in a letter of Nov. 28, 1526:—

"—²⁾ As concerning the other matter, my faithful warning and advice is that a man (especially a Christian) should have no more than one wife, not only for the reason that it is offensive, and a Christian must not needlessly give, but most earnestly avoid offense; but also for this reason, that there is no word of God whereon we may rely that this thing is well pleasing to God in a Christian. Let heathen and Turks do as they will. The patriarchs of old had, some of them, many wives; but they were bound thereto by necessity, as Abraham and Jacob, and later on many kings, to whom the wives of their relatives fell by death as a heritage according to the law of Moses. Now, it is not sufficient for a Christian to consider what the patriarchs have done; he must also have a word of God on his side, which may assure him, as they had. For where there was no need or cause, the fathers of old had no more wives than one, as Isaac, Joseph, Moses, and many others. Therefore my advice, especially to Christians, *cannot be in favor, but must go against this thing*, unless in a case of extreme

1) Seckendorf, Comm. de Lutheranism, III, p. 278.

2) The opening part of the letter, the remaining part of which is preserved in the Court- and State-archives at Cassel, was torn off and has not been recovered.

necessity, as when the wife is leprous or has been otherwise withdrawn. To the others I have no prohibition to make. This is what I would humbly reply to the question submitted by your Grace. Herewith I commend you to the grace of God. Wittenberg, Wednesday after St. Catharine's, 1526.

Y. G.

obedient

Martinus Luther.¹⁾

The Landgrave had evidently understood Luther's attitude toward his plan as being in direct opposition to his desires, and he seems to have dropped the subject entirely in his correspondence and intercourse with Luther. In a number of letters directed to Philip in subsequent years no mention is made of the matter, although, as Luther afterwards learned, the Landgrave's relations and conduct were such as to bar him from the Lord's table.

Now, in December, 1539, Martin Bucer arrived at Wittenberg with a memorial dated Melsingen, Nov. 30, wherein the Landgrave presented his case to Luther and Melanchthon and once more urged his reasons why he thought it permissible for him to contract a second marriage.²⁾ These statements were supplemented by oral disclosures made by Bucer in Philip's name as under confession. What these were, will never be known; they were never divulged, being looked upon as under the inviolable seal of confession. Thus, in a letter to the Saxon chancellor, Brück, written in January, 1540, Luther defines his position with regard to the matter as that of a man who knew nothing of the case, except from hearsay, what every-

1) Luther's Letters, ed. de Wette-Seidemann, vol. VI, pp. 79 f.

2) Corpus Reformatorum, ed. Bretschneider, vol. III, pp. 851—856. This petition was probably drafted by John Lening, a former Carthusian, who was then preacher at Melsingen and on very intimate terms with the Landgrave. The document evidently existed in various copies differing considerably, and there is no possibility of telling which text was submitted to Luther.

body knew. "For," says he, "what I know in secret and under confession, I know before God only, and in secret, and not before men. Nor must I desire to know it. And if I should tell, I must not be believed, according to the maxim that one man's testimony is no testimony."¹⁾

On Dec. 10, Bucer was still at Wittenberg, and it was a physical impossibility for him to be at Spangenberg on the 11th. Yet at that day and place, Christina, in her own hand and over her signature, gave her written consent to a secret second marriage of her "kind and dear lord and spouse," for reasons "well known to him and herself," and in consideration of certain stipulations stated in a similar document executed and delivered to her by the Landgrave on the same day.²⁾ It thus appears that this mutual agreement was made at Spangenberg before Bucer's return from Wittenberg, though the marriage between Philip and the "left-hand Landgravine," as she was commonly called, did not take place till March 3, 1540.

The response which Bucer secured at Wittenberg was dated Dec. 10, 1539. It is extant in Latin and in German, the latter being doubtless the original, written by Melancthon, who in his correspondence with the Landgrave invariably employed the vernacular. We give a translation of the entire document.³⁾

"To the Illustrious and right Honorable Prince and Lord, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, Count of Catzenellenbogen, Ziegenhain, Dietz and Nidda, etc., our gracious Lord.

The grace of God and our Lord Jesus Christ for previous greeting. Illustrious and right honorable prince and lord. Forasmuch as your Princely Grace have, by Dr. Bucer, brought to our notice some protracted encumbrance of your

1) De Wette, VI, 295 f.

2) Corp. Ref., III, 864 f.

3) The German text, with various readings, De Wette-Seidemann, *Luthers Briefe*, VI, 239 ff. V, 242 ff. Bretschn., *Corp. Ref.*, III, 856 ff.—Latin text, De Wette, V, 237 ff. In the editions of Luther's works, Leipzig, XXII, 469. Altenb. VIII, 977. Walch X, 866.

conscience, together with an opinion and the delivery of a written instruction given him by your Grace, though we find it difficult to answer in such haste, yet we were unwilling to let Dr. Bucer ride without a written reply.

First, then, we cordially rejoice and thank God that He has helped your Grace out of your sickness, and pray that He would strengthen and preserve your Grace in body and soul unto His praise. For, as your Grace see, the poor, afflicted church of Christ is small and forsaken and verily in need of devoted lords and rulers, as we do not doubt that God will preserve some few, though all manner of tribulations befall.

And as to the question of which Dr. Bucer has spoken to us, our opinion is, in the first place, this.

Your Grace yourself know and understand this, that there is a great difference between making a common law, and in a case, for weighty reasons, and yet according to divine permission, availing oneself of a dispensation. For against God a dispensation, too, will not hold good.

Now, we cannot recommend that by public institution and the enactment of a law every man be permitted to have more than one wedded wife.

But if anything should appear in print concerning this matter, your Grace may be sure that it would be taken and accepted for a common law, whence much great offense and difficulty would ensue. Hence this should in no way be done, and we beg your Grace to consider this, how burdensome it would be for any man to bear the charge of having introduced this law in the German nation, whence everlasting trouble in all marriages must be apprehended.

It might be objected that whatever is right before God must be generally permitted; but this requires proper restriction.

When the thing is enjoined by divine commandment, or necessary, it is true. But when it is not enjoined and not necessary, other circumstances must also be considered, as of this question. *God has instituted marriage thus that*

*it should be a union of but two persons, and no more,*¹⁾ if nature were not corrupted. This is the meaning of the text, They twain shall be one flesh. And this was observed at first. But Lamech introduced the example to have more wives than one generally; which is recorded of him in the Scriptures as an innovation against the original rule. Thereafter this grew to be customary among unbelievers, until Abraham and his descendents took more wives, and it is true that afterwards this was permitted in the law of Moses, as the text says, Deut. 21. *Si habuerit uxores duas.* For God made some concession to weak nature.

But whereas it is in accordance with the original order and with creation that a man should have no more than one wife, such law is praiseworthy and thus accepted in the church, and no other law at variance therewith should be made or established. For Christ repeats this text, *Erunt duo in carne una*, Matt. 19, and reminds us how marriage should have been at first, before human infirmity.

That, however, in some case a dispensation was used, as when certain men in captivity in a foreign nation were there married and, when again set free, brought their wives with them, or, again, when protracted illness was the cause, as has been at times the case with lepers: if in such cases a man take another wife, with the counsel of his pastor, not to introduce a law, but to meet his want, such we could not venture to condemn.

While, then, to introduce a law is one thing, and to use a dispensation is another thing, we humbly beg that your Grace would consider

First, that by all means this matter must be prevented from being published to the world as a law which any man might be free to follow;

Secondly, that, while it should be no law, but a dispensation, your Grace would consider the offense, that the

1) The Italics are our own. — ED.

enemies of the gospel will clamor, we were like the anabaptists, who had taken more wives than one at the same time;

Again, that the Evangelicals sought such liberty, to take as many wives as they pleased, as is the custom in Turkey;

Again, what princes do is far more widely published than what is done by private persons;

Again, if private persons hear of such examples of princes, they would have the same permitted to them also, as we see how easily things obtain prevalence;

Again, that your Grace have a wild nobility, many of whom, as in all lands, because of the great benefits they drew from the chapters, are bitterly opposed to the gospel, and as we ourselves know of very malignant language used by some great nobles, it is easily surmised how such nobles and estates would conduct themselves toward your Grace in this matter, if it should be introduced into general practice;

Again, your Grace have, by the grace of God, a highly respectable name among foreign kings and potentates and are feared on that account by those in whose eyes you would, by this matter, suffer disparagement.

In view of these manifold offenses we humbly beg that your Grace would well and carefully ponder this matter.

On the other hand, it is likewise true that we in every way beg and admonish your Grace to avoid fornication and adultery. We have, in truth, been sorely grieved this long time since we learned that your Grace were burdened with such impurity, whence divine punishment, disease and other calamities may ensue.

And we pray that your Grace would consider such extra-conubial abuse a sin of no small moment, though the world makes light of and disregards it. But God has often horribly punished unchastity. For this is adduced as one of the causes of the deluge, that rulers practiced adultery, etc. Thus, also, the punishment of David is a grave example, etc., and St. Paul often says, God is not mocked; adulterers will

not enter into the kingdom of God, etc. For faith must be followed by obedience, that we may not act contrary to the dictates of conscience and God's commandments. 1 Tim. 1 and 1 John 3, If our conscience condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God, and Rom. 8, If through the spirit we mortify the desires of the flesh, we shall live; but if we live after the flesh, that is, continue against our conscience, we shall die. We relate all this in consideration that God will not trifle with such sins, as many people now boldly entertain such heathenish notions.

We were gratified to hear that your Grace earnestly deplore such sins and bitterly repent of them.

Now, your Grace are loaded down with grave affairs concerning all the world, and, besides, your Grace are not of a robust, but of a delicate constitution, and sleep little, and your Grace should, therefore, take care of your body in this respect, as many others are bound to do; and we read of the praiseworthy prince Scanderbek, who performed many great deeds against two Turkish emperors, Amurat and Mohammed, and while he lived protected and defended Greece, and who is said to have particularly inculcated chastity upon his men, saying that nothing so takes away the courage of brave men as unchastity.

Again, if your Grace had another wife and would not earnestly resist the evil habit and propensity, your Grace would not even then be helped. A man must in such external conduct control his own members, as St. Paul says, Yield your members as instruments of righteousness, etc.

Therefore your Grace should, for all these reasons, the offense, other cares and labors, and the weakness of the body, thoroughly deliberate this matter, also considering that God has given your Grace fine young princes and princesses with your present spouse, and must be lenient with her, as many others must have patience in their married state, to guard against offense. For we are by no means willing to induce or prompt your Grace to introduce an irksome innova-

*tion. The states of the province and others would assail us if we did, and this would be unbearable to us for the reason that WE ARE, BY THE WORD OF GOD, CHARGED TO DIRECT MARRIAGE AND ALL HUMAN AFFAIRS TO THE FIRST AND DIVINE INSTITUTION and, as far as possible, to preserve them therein, and to dissuade all men from all manner of offense.*¹⁾ In fact, the world is nowadays very commonly inclined to lay the blame upon the preachers when any annoyance occurs, and human hearts in persons of high and low estate are unsteady, and there is manifold cause of fear.

If, however, your Grace do not desist from your unchaste way of living, since, as you write, this is not possible, we too would prefer to see your Grace in a better condition before God, and that you live with a good conscience for your soul's salvation and for the benefit of your subjects.

If, then, your Grace finally conclude to have another wife, our opinion is that this should be kept secret, as has been above said concerning the dispensation, that is, that your Grace and that person, together with some few confidential persons, have knowledge of your Grace's mind and conscience, as by confession.

Hereof no particular talk or offense would ensue. For it is not uncommon that princes keep concubines; and though not all the people would know what were the circumstances, yet reasonable men would understand and be better pleased with such retired life than with adultery and other dissolute lewdness.

And if conscience is properly disposed, there is no need of heeding all that may be said. Thus far our opinion goes, and this we deem right. For what, concerning marriage, is permitted in the law of Moses is not prohibited in the gospel, which does not alter the policies of external life, but brings eternal righteousness and eternal life, and makes a beginning of true obedience toward God, and would work a restoration of depraved nature.

1) Italics after the original.

Here, then, your Grace have not only our testimony in case of necessity, but also our previous admonition, which we beg your Grace would ponder as a worthy, wise and Christian prince; and we pray that God would guide and govern your Grace to His praise and your Grace's salvation.

As to your Grace's intention of submitting this matter to the Emperor, we hold that the Emperor will deem adultery a sin of little weight; for there is much cause to fear that he has the popish, cardinalish, Polish, Spanish, and Saracenic faith, and would disregard your Grace's petition and put off your Grace with words to his own advantage, as we hear that he is a faithless, deceitful man and has forgotten German ways. Your Grace see that he pays no earnest attention to Christian interests, permits the Turk to remain undisturbed, practices all manner of lawlessness in Germany to increase the Burgundian power. It is, therefore, to be desired that devoted German princes keep aloof from his faithless practices. May God ever protect your Grace, and we are willing to serve your Grace.

Dated, Wittenberg, Wednesday after St. Nicolas', 1539.

Your Grace's willing and obedient servants,

Martin Luther. Philip Melanthon.''

To these signatures several were added later, those of Martin Bucer, Antonius Corvinus, then preacher at Witzzenhausen, near Cassel; John Lening, preacher at Melsingen, whom Luther suspected of having been at the bottom of the whole affair;¹⁾ Justus Winter, and Dionysius Melander, Philip's court preacher, who solemnized his marriage with Margaretha von der Saal.

If anything at all is clear from this document, it is this, that Luther and Melancthon held polygamy as an institution to be at variance with the ordinance of God established in the beginning and in the institution of matrimony, and

1) De Wette-Seidemann, VI, 296.

that they looked upon a deviation from this divinely established order as abnormal conduct never to be recommended, but ever to be discouraged and dissuaded, and only to be conceded in particular, individual cases under peculiar circumstances. We do not now argue the question whether this view does full justice to the divine institution of monogamous marriage. But what we do emphasize is that this position held by Luther and Melanchthon is diametrically opposite to the doctrine and practice of Mormonism as advocated by Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, making polygamy a social and religious institution of a higher order, commendable and desirable because of its benefits in this world and in the world to come. Luther was as firmly and uncompromisingly as any man of his or our time determined that the rule, *They twain shall be one flesh*, should remain the rule for all Christendom, not only because of its expediency, but because God has established this rule. We repeat his words above quoted:—"Whereas it is in accordance with the original order and with creation that a man should have no more than one wife, such law is praiseworthy and thus accepted in the church, and no other law at variance therewith should be established. For Christ repeats this text, *They twain shall be one flesh*, Matt. 19." In dealing with sacerdotal and monastic celibacy, Luther spoke and wrote and acted as the Reformer bent upon putting down an abomination and restoring the dignity of marriage as honorable in all, the ministry not excepted. But in dealing with the Landgrave he speaks and writes as a confessor in a given and very peculiar *casus conscientiae*, the circumstances of which were submitted to him as under confession, and his opinion and counsel was never intended for any man but the Landgrave. For this reason he, from the outset and at all subsequent times, insisted upon the observance of strict secrecy concerning the whole affair. This was not a demand made by one who, in the course of events, when the matter had grown troublesome, had seen that he

had blundered. Luther never thought that he had blundered in what he had said and done in the matter. But he held that, as the defense of the adjustment of the case lay in the circumstances of the case, a public defense was impossible while the circumstances of the case were secret and did not admit of publication. That this was Luther's position, to which he strictly and consistently adhered throughout, appears from the following utterances to various correspondents.

On April 12, 1540, when the Landgrave had informed him of the solemnization of his marriage with Margaretha von der Saal, he wrote to the Elector, John Frederick:¹—

“Grace and peace and my poor pr. nr. Most illustrious and noble prince, most gracious Lord, I humbly inform your Grace that I have promptly burned the letter of M. G. L., the Landgrave, lest it be forgotten or mislaid by me and get into somebody's hands. For, God willing, this secret shall not be divulged by my fault. His Grace only write thanks and announce that they have accomplished the work and will keep it secret; for which I have again prayed, that it should and must be kept secret and not noised abroad, as has been previously advised.”

In the Archives at Weimar there is a draft of a response from Luther's own hand, as follows:—²

“Grace and peace. My dear Sir and friend. That I do not write to my gracious lord the Landgrave, but to you, at your request, has its reasons. For I am greatly troubled by men of high and low estate, so that I must abide by my *Nay*. For what is a secret *Yea* must not be made a public *Yea*; else secret and public would be the same without any difference, which can and must not be. Therefore the secret *Yea* must remain a public *Nay*, and *vice versa*, for the reason that *Unius testimonium* (. . . secret) *nullum*, *Duorum autem* (. . . public) *omnia*. *Sicut ergo nullum et omne, sic*

1) De Wette-Seidemann, l. c., VI, 258 f.

2) Ibid. VI, 263 ff.

differunt secret and public. This has been and is still my position; I say the Landgrave's second marriage is nothing, and no one can prove it. For as they say it . . . *palam*, it is not true, though it be true as they should not say . . . *clam*.

But herein the Landgrave is unfair toward us, and even to himself, that he would make *palam*,¹⁾ what we have made him *clam*,²⁾ and make an *omne*³⁾ out of a *nullum*.⁴⁾ This we can neither defend nor excuse. Neither would my Gen. 16 do him any good, as I have, both before and afterward, taught in many ways that we must not renew the laws of Moses, though one might secretly in case of necessity, or publicly by order of the civil government, avail himself of what might be chosen for an example. Accordingly, if I were to advise an afflicted conscience in secret trouble, as under confession, to use the laws or examples of Moses, I would not and could not thereby have established a public right or proper example, being a confessor, whose office is not to enact anything as a public right or example, but only to deal with the secret distress of conscience.

But this must be no public right or example, though in times past it was conceded to the dear fathers in the law of Moses, notwithstanding that also in the history of the Christian era some few examples are found of men who were by necessity constrained to have two wives, or by the will of the secular power, as some say of Charlemagne and Valentinian. But of all this we must not make a legal example or custom publicly. For it will not do to say, What you do of necessity, I may do of right. A hungry thief steals bread and goes unpunished; self-defense is murder, but not condemned. But hereof comes no right or example freely to steal and murder. Necessity is above right and example and yet makes no right or example. *Necessitas frangit legem, sed non facit legem*.⁵⁾

1) public.

2) secret.

3) all.

4) none.

5) Necessity breaks the law, but makes no law.

But this pointed discussion will nevertheless leave the splinter in the hearts, that the Landgrave had two wives publicly, and endeavored to trim this thing with words and make it secret; and there will hardly be an end of the quarrel. Therefore I should desire, if it were possible, that the Landgrave would return to the secret *yea* and public *nay*, and *cause teachers and preachers simply to declare that no one may by right or example claim the privilege of having more than one wife*, and to say nothing at all of the secret counsel given or yet to be given under confession. But from the written publication I would abstain. For since no declaration was published saying that a man may have two wives, but all is yet a rumor, and concerning but one person, that of the Landgrave, let rumor go against rumor. Thus the negative would be preached, and the affirmative rumor would in time be easily silenced, forasmuch as a public sermon avails more than a hundred rumors in the taverns and gossips in the streets.

Such would appear to me the easiest way and that the Landgrave, as is his duty, meantime keep this matter secret, not, however, deserting the woman, since he has so solemnly *taken upon himself* that it had been a matter of necessity with him. Thus we, as theologians or confessors, might aid in defending it before God, as a case of necessity which must patch itself with Moses' example. But that we should defend it before the world and *jure nunc regente, this we can not and will not do*. Otherwise we shall surely render our services unsparingly."

In a letter of June 27, 1540, directed to Eberhard von der Tann, Luther says:—¹⁾

"I shall, God willing, on my part maintain silence on the confession I received of his Grace through Bucer, even though I should thereby stand disgraced. For it is better that it be said, Doctor Martin has committed a foolishness in yield-

1) Ibid. VI, 267 f.

ing to the Landgrave (for even great men have committed and still commit foolishness, as the saying goes: A wise man commits no small foolishness), rather than I would divulge the reasons why we gave a secret dispensation. For the disgrace and disparagement ensuing therefrom to the Landgrave would be too great."

While attending the convention at Eisenach, on July 20, Luther wrote another response, the original of which is in the secret Archives at Weimar. Here he again declares:—

"As I have from the beginning advised and prayed, so I still advise and pray (and for the last time, since this is all I can do and shall do, and here I let the matter rest) in all humility, that my g. Lord the Landgrave would again retire this affair into secrecy and keep it there; for publicly to defend it as right is impossible, as I said yesterday. . . . And before I would openly aid in defending it, I will rather say *nay* to my own and M. Philip's counsel publicly exposed. For it is not *publicum consilium*, and *fit nullum per publicationem*.¹⁾ Or, if that were of no avail, I would rather confess that, if it should be an advice, and not rather (as it is) a petition, that I had committed an error and a folly, and beg pardon."²⁾

The Landgrave having again written to Luther, importuning him with some animosity to agree to the publication of the whole affair, received a very determined reply, dated July 24, 1540. In this very lengthy letter Luther says:—

"I have received your Grace's writing, which, it appears to me, was penned in a somewhat excited state of mind and in a manner which, I think, I have not deserved. For, as I take it, your Grace are of the opinion that we acted in our own interest, and not in your Grace's faithful and humble

1) not a public counsel and becomes none at all by publication.

2) *Ibid.* VI, 272 f.

service, to avert future trouble from your Grace. I would, therefore, here state to your Grace from the very bottom of my heart that it is not for my sake that I so earnestly set my entreaties and warnings against divulging the counsel. Your Grace should hold with a certainty and undoubtingly *that my interest is not at stake. If all the devils would have the counsel published, I would, by God's grace, know how to answer them so that they should have nothing in me.*

For I have the advantage that your Grace and all devils must testify and confess, first, that it was a secret counsel; secondly, that I have with all diligence prayed that it be not divulged; thirdly, that, if it come to extremities, I am secure that it was not divulged by me. While I have these three points, I would not advise the devil himself to set my pen astir, and God will help me. I know by the grace of God how to distinguish between what may be by grace conceded in distress of conscience, and what, without such distress, is not right before God in external affairs in the world. And I would not wish that your Grace should get into a conflict with my pen. Your Grace have enough to do without this, and so have I. . . .

For your Grace will not be able to maintain that the world should accept this secret marriage of your Grace for a public marriage, even though many hundreds of Luthers and Philips and others were led forth in its defence. They will still say, Luther and Philip have no power to establish another right in opposition to the public right now prevailing and worthy of all praise, though they be bound to counsel otherwise in private and for a troubled conscience' sake. . . .

Now, let your Grace consider, if our best friends use such language, what will our enemies say? For such speech will have the effect of entirely exploding our counsel; and those who will may say Doctor Luther believed what was impossible to believe, and has deceived himself and willingly allowed himself to be deceived; though we do yet believe

your Grace were in earnest, and will not permit such solemn words of your Grace uttered in private confession to be made false.

In short, I still beg that your Grace would let the counsel remain a secret, and permit the gossip to rush by and drown, also to withdraw what can be withdrawn, in order that the offense, which cannot be defended, may be stilled.'¹⁾

When Justus Menius had written a book against polygamy, Luther, on Jan. 10, 1542, wrote:—

“I hold that *silentium* is in such cases not only *responsum*, but also *optimum responsum*. But the book is not against *us*; for Mr. Just proceeds against a law and public example of polygamy, *which we also do*, and not against a case of necessity and casual dispensation of an individual person, *wherewith we have dealt as confessors*.”²⁾

This, in the main, was also Melanchthon's position. In a letter to Vitus Dietrich, dated Sept. 1, 1540, speaking of this *θρηλλούμενον πρᾶγμα*, he says:—

“Wherein we were deceived, not by Aretius Felinus,³⁾ but by Jason⁴⁾ himself, under the pretext of piety, as begging that we would, for urgent reasons, advise his conscience, he even added an oath that he was in need of this remedy. *We responded that the law must be preserved, as the text says, They twain shall be one flesh*. But if there is such necessity, the remedy must be used secretly and without public offense. . . . Nor has he complied with our advice, being overcome by love. *I might mention many other things*. But let us pray God that he would heal this scandal. He says that he will not acknowledge it. But in this business he has often said one thing and done another.”⁵⁾

But while it is well known that the Landgrave's conduct, and, especially, the fact that he had been prevailed

1) Ibid. VI, 273 ff.

2) Ibid. p. 296.

3) Martin Bucer.

4) Philip of Hesse.

5) Corp. Ref., III, 1079 f.

upon to be a witness to the left-hand marriage, threw Melanchthon on a sick-bed which, but for Luther's intervention, might have been his death-bed. Luther remained cheerful in spite of all the noise the affair had occasioned; he not only upheld his policy, but also endeavored to cheer up his companion. On June 2, 1540, he writes to Lauterbach:—

“Grace and peace! As to your enquiry concerning the new nuptials of the Landgrave, I have nothing to write, my Anthony. . . . *Let those bark who will bark.*”¹⁾

Two weeks later, on June 15, he wrote to the same friend:—

“ . . . There is no news here but that bugbear of the Landgrave's, which some begin to mollify, others, to deny, still others this or that. They lay the greater part of the blame to the door of the Princess of Rochlitz, the Landgrave's sister. *Whatever it may be, the day will show.*”²⁾

Again three days later, he writes to Melanchthon:—

“As to the Macedonian's³⁾ business, I wish you would not bother yourself too much, after the matter has now come to where neither sorrow nor joy can do it any good. Hence, why should we kill ourselves for nothing, or by sadness obstruct the knowledge of that Conqueror of all deaths and sorrows? Has not He who conquered the devil and judged the prince of this world at the same time also conquered this scandal? For even if this scandal shall blow over, he will stir up new, and, perhaps, greater clouds of scandal, which, if we live, we shall conquer in the same Conqueror, and laugh them to scorn. . . . Therefore, I beseech you for Christ's sake, be at ease and quiet in your mind, and let those whose business it is, also do something, and let them bear their burden and not lay everything to our charge, whom, knowing us to be candid

1) De Wette, V, 290 f.

2) Ibid. p. 292.

3) *Macedo* = Philip of Hesse.

and faithful, they cannot accuse of any crime save that of mercy or the most human leniency. . . . But let Satan go his way. On his account we will neither grieve nor sorrow; but in Christ the Lord we will rejoice and exult; he will bring to naught all our foes."¹⁾

Among those who were ill pleased with Luther's position was the Landgrave. It was a breach of faith on his part when he permitted the written opinion of Luther and Melancthon to go into other hands, although it had been intended only for himself, and he was continually itching after some manner of public sanction of what he had done. To this Luther, while he scrupulously guarded the confessional disclosures of the Landgrave, persistently refused to yield, preferring, if it must be, to bear the blame of having blundered in his counsel, rather than to divulge those things which had prompted him in what he had done. The Landgrave, however, found others more willing, and, in 1541, a book appeared, bearing the title, *Dialogus, i. e. a friendly talk of two persons, on the question whether to have more wives than one at the same time agreed or disagreed with natural, imperial, and spiritual law, and whether, if a man were to do such a thing at this time, he must be rejected and condemned as unchristian, or not.* The author of the book, who called himself Huldreich Neobulus, was not Bucer, to whom the work was afterwards ascribed, but that ex-Carthusian of Melsingen, John Lening, and his argument in defense of the Landgrave was looked upon as directed against the Wittenberg theologians. But the handling he received when Luther laid hold of him was such that he and his Landgrave might have wished that "the shameful book of Nebulo Tulrich," as Luther called it, had never been written. The casual references to the "fool Melsingen" in his letters²⁾ were certainly far from flattering to the man who "boasted that the Landgrave's

1) Ibid. p. 294.

2) De Wette, V, 344. VI, 296.

cause could be publicly defended.”¹⁾ But in a published review of the *Dialogus*, he took the “shameful fool” to task in a way that probably few dogs in Germany would have eaten bread from the hand of Nebulo Tulrich. “God is Lord;” says Luther, “he may abrogate, change, mitigate his law as he will, of necessity or without necessity. *But it does not behoove us to do the same*, much less to establish a right which must prevail or be an example. But our Tulrich comes along and gives license to carnal lust, and would set up a world as before the flood.”²⁾ He calls it a piece of rascality that Nebulo “introduces the example of the fathers and this or that king, knowing very well that this is not to the point . . . and that the law of Moses does not concern us and is no longer a law, and that we must not consider the examples of the saints, much less those of the kings, but God’s commandment.”³⁾ He calls the author *Lupus in ovili*, a wolf in the sheep-fold,⁴⁾ and says:—“If he should come to the light of day, he may rouse me, the old lazy writer, to crush my quill on his head and paint his nose with my ink, as he deserves. But God has found him out, as he has found out others before him. And if any man be desirous of hearing my judgment of this book, let him hear. Thus says Doctor Martinus concerning the book of Neobulus: *whosoever follows this knave and his book and accordingly takes in marriage more wives than one, and would have it to be a right, to him may the devil bless the bath in the pit of hell. Amen.* This I will, thank God, maintain, though it snowed nothing but Nebulos Nebulones Tulrichs and devils for an entire year.”⁵⁾

In the same year, when he published his book, *Wider Hans Wurst*, against Duke Henry of Brunswick, who had called the Landgrave a bigamist, Luther again touched

1) De Wette, V, 344.

2) Luther’s Works, Erl. ed., vol. 65, p. 211.

3) Ibid. p. 208.

4) Ibid. p. 212.

5) Ibid. p. 209.

upon the matter, saying:—"In Hesse I know of one Landgravine, and none other will be able to bear and nurse young Landgraves; I mean the Duchess, Duke George's, of Saxony, daughter."¹⁾

From all this it appears beyond a shadow of doubt that Luther did not advocate or recommend, but emphatically discountenanced and condemned bigamy; that he did not advise the Landgrave to take a second wife, but earnestly and repeatedly dissuaded that measure; that he never defended the Landgrave's second marriage when, against his advice, it had been contracted and given a measure of publicity; that Luther's opinion as to the admissibility of the second marriage in the Landgrave's case was based upon peculiar circumstances confided to him and never made public either by him or by the Landgrave, and that this opinion was never intended to cover more than the individual case for and in consideration of which it was asked; that Luther never uttered a doubt as to the correctness of that opinion while, at the same time, he rejected and strenuously denied the right of bigamous or polygamous marriage; and that it is preposterous and due either to ignorance, or to malice, or to both, to stamp Martin Luther the father of Mormonism.

A. G.

AN ABUSED DICTUM OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

A correspondent writes to us: "St. Augustine is quoted by Cardinal Vaughan as saying: *Ego vero Evangelio non crederem, nisi me Catholice Ecclesie commoveret auctoritas.* A translation is given, which seems to be by the cardinal, thus: 'I should not believe in the truth of Scripture unless the authority of the Catholic Church so bade me.' (Literary Digest, Feb. 17, p. 217.) Would you please, if

1) Luther's Works, Erl. ed., vol. 26, p. 60.