

On polygamy (4 October 1675)

[A VI 3, p381]

4 Oct. 1675

This morning I received a letter from Mr Gallois. I saw Mr Tschirnhaus, who told me that he saw in Holland a book published from a few pages in Latin by a German author who was the protégé of Mr Konigsmarck.¹ In this book he claims to prove that polygamy is necessary and in accordance with the law of God and of nature; and that monogamy is an invention of the devil [A VI 3, p382] opposed to humankind and its growth. He puts forward a number of passages from Holy Scripture which are very far fetched. Yet he does not permit women to have many husbands. As one might expect. He says that he spoke to many clever men who were in agreement with him, but who replied that they would not dare to say it. On this he accuses them of being cowards who do not dare to admit the recognized divine truth, and says that they commit a sin *in spiritum sanctum, ut resistentes agnitae veritati* [against the Holy Spirit, in that they resist a recognized truth]. At the end he puts forward this passage from Holy Scripture: *cursed is he who does the work of God deceitfully;*² and in the margin: *NB, this is the work of the Lord, he understands the act of procreation.*

Mr Tschirnhaus says that there is a library in Holland (in Amsterdam) which holds lectures on the Cartesians and the Socinians. For that passes for the same thing in Holland.

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¹ Johann Leyser *Discursus de polygamia*, 1673.

² Jeremiah 48.10.