

DISCOURSE

BY

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DELIVERED IN THE

New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,
on the occasion of the attendance
of the New England and New
York Editorial Excursion Party,
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REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I will call the attention of the congregation to a portion of the word of God, contained in the 19th chapter of the gospel according to St. Matthew. [The speaker read the 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 verses.]

I have read these passages of Scripture in order to dwell, this afternoon, if the Lord will, and his Spirit shall so direct my mind, upon the subject of marriage, and to show wherein the people called Latter-day Saints differ in their views from other Christian denominations in relation to this great and divine ordinance, and to make such other remarks, not particularly connected with the subject, as the Spirit of the Lord may direct.

First, however, before taking up this divine ordinance, it may be well to state, in brief terms, some of the views of the Latter-day Saints in regard to the doctrine which they have embraced. I shall endeavor to be very brief on every point, in order to enumerate, as far as possible, the variety of doctrines and principles which we have embraced, that are peculiar to us as a people. I will commence by saying, that the church of Latter-day Saints has not grown out of the various religious societies that now exist, or that have existed, in Christendom; neither has it grown out of any of their institutions. Our priesthood, our doctrine, our authority, the organization of our church, and everything connected therewith, have been something revealed directly from the heavens. Perhaps you may inquire—"Have you not been guided more or less in relation to these principles by the book which is called the Bible?" I answer that, in the organization of the kingdom of God on the earth in the nineteenth century, we have been guided by direct revelation to us from heaven. We do not profess that our doctrines and principles are entirely distinct and something entirely different from that which is recorded in the Bible, we are far from making any such profession; but we believe that the same God who organized his kingdom in ancient times, and revealed his will to the inhabitants of the earth, has revealed, in these last days, principles in accordance with those revealed in former times, and that he is a consistent Being, and that he would not communicate a gospel for the inhabitants of the earth to observe in the 19th century that was not revealed and understood in former ages. The same gospel, therefore, which God has revealed anew in our day, when compared with the gospel contained in the New Testament, is found to accord in every principle, and in all its ordinances and institutions with ancient Christianity.

This church was organized on the 6th day of April, 1830. The very day of the month on which it should be organized was pointed out by new revelation; the officers that were placed in the church were appointed, and the names of many of them were given by new revelation. The duties of these officers were also appointed by direct revelation from heaven. God organized the church with apostles in it, the same as he organized his ancient church; he organized it with revelators and with prophets, inspired from on high, the same as he organized the ancient Christian church. He commanded the people to believe in his Son Jesus Christ, as the great Redeemer who died in the meridian of time for the sins of mankind. He commanded, by new revelation, that we should believe in the same Redeemer and in the same atonement; he commanded us to repent of all our sins, forsake all unrighteousness, cease to do evil and learn to do well, and to reform our lives in every respect, the same as he commanded the people in the ancient dispensation of the gospel. By new revelation we were commanded to be baptized by immersion in water, for the remission of our sins, the same as he commanded the people in ancient times to attend to the same divine ordinance. By new revelation, he com-

manded his servants the apostles, and those to whom he gave power and authority, to lay hands on all baptized believers, and to confirm upon them the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, the same as was practised among the Saints in ancient times. By new revelation the Lord promised that certain signs should follow the believers among all nations, kindreds, tongues and people to whom this gospel should be sent. All that would believe, men and women, were promised certain signs, among which I will name that they should cast out devils, speak with new tongues, and if they should take up serpents, or drink any deadly thing, it should not hurt them, they should lay their hands upon the sick and they should recover. The same promise was made by our Saviour under the ancient dispensation of the gospel. He commanded his servants, in these days, to go forth and preach to the Gentile nations first; and when we had faithfully borne our testimony to them, and they were sufficiently warned, then we were to turn to the scattered and dispersed remnants of Israel in the four quarters of the earth and preach the gospel to them. He commanded, by new revelation, that his servants should say unto the inhabitants of all the earth that would believe, repent, be baptized, and receive the gospel of the Son of God, that they should leave their respective nations, and gather together in one place which the Lord, by new revelation, should appoint.

All this was given by new revelation. Does it agree or disagree with the Scriptures contained in the Bible? Judge ye for yourselves. Did the ancient Christian church have inspired apostles, who had power to call upon God and receive new revelations, as the ancient apostles were. Is there any disagreement, then, between the former pattern and the latter-day pattern? Did the ancient Christian church have a multitude of inspired prophets, men and women, who could prophesy concerning future events? So the latter-day Christian church, organized by new revelation, has an abundance of prophets and prophetesses to whom the future has been opened, and they foretell future events; hence, there is no disagreement between the ancient pattern and the latter-day pattern. Did the apostles lay on hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, and did the Spirit of God descend from the heavens, and fall upon the baptized believers through the laying on of hands? So in the latter days have the same blessings been given among all the nations and people and kindreds and tongues, wherever this gospel has been preached. No difference, then, so far as this is concerned.

Did the ancient Christian church have a great variety of members possessing a variety of spiritual gifts? So does the Latter-day Saint Christian church believe in the same thing. Did any in the Christian church presume, in ancient times, to take unto themselves the authority of the ministry, without being called of God by new revelation? Never, no never! All were called by new revelation to officiate in the various offices of the church, after the same pattern that Aaron was called. "No man," says Paul, "takes this honor unto himself, save he be called of God as was Aaron." Everybody knows, from the history given, how Aaron was called by new revelation. Have any among all the peoples and nations of the earth authority to administer baptism? Yes. Who are they? Those who are called by new revelation, and none else. Have any authority to administer the Lord's Supper among all the Christian nations of the earth? Yes. Who are they? Those to whom the Lord has spoken, whom the Lord has called as he called Aaron. Have any Christian denominations who deny new revelation authority to administer this sacred ordinance? Not one upon the face of the whole earth. Are ordinances, administered by those who deny new revelation, accepted by the Most High? Not one of them. Why? Because God does not sanction that which is not appointed by him.

Perhaps some may inquire, if this does not cut off the Christian church from the face of the earth? I answer, it does, unless God has a Christian church with revelators and prophets in it, and whose officers are called by new revelation. Inquires one—"Do you mean to say that we have had no true Christian church on the earth for a great many centuries?" I do mean to say this, unless there have been persons who have been authorized, according to the requirements of the holy Scriptures. If we can find a church anywhere on the face of the earth that has apostles in it and revelators, and inspired men, then we have a true Christian church; but if we

can not find this, then we have no such church. If we can find a church that has the gifts and the signs spoken of by the New Testament, we can find a true Christian church; but if we can't find such, we have no reason to believe that there is such a church on the earth. "But," says one, "we call ourselves Christians." That is a very easy matter, but calling yourselves Christians or Christian churches does not make you such. Inquires one—"Is it not contrary to the Scriptures to suppose that the world would be left for so many centuries without a Christian church?" No; it is in accordance with the Scriptures, for they foretell the apostasy, the falling away and the darkness that should reign over the nations, and show that instead of having true teachers men would heap to themselves teachers without authority from God, uninspired men, whose ears would be turned away from the truth unto fables. This great apostasy commenced about the close of the first century of the Christian era, and it has been waxing worse and worse from then until now. A short time after the death of the last of the apostles, the Christian church, what few of them remained, were persecuted from mountain to mountain, from den to den, from one cave of the earth to another, and from nation to nation until they were entirely exterminated and rooted out of the earth. Well, what was left? An apostate Christianity, a Christianity without revelators without any voice of God, without any prophets to unfold the future, without visions, without any communications from the heavens. Apostasy succeeded the Christian church and has borne rule over all the nations of the earth; and these Scriptures have been fulfilled; for they say that a certain power should arise, and make war with the Saints and overcome them, and they should be given into the hands of that power.

But is our earth always to be left without the church and kingdom of God, and without apostles, prophets or a voice from the heavens? No. John saw in his vision on Patmos how the gospel should again be preached among the nations, after great Babylon should arise, after she should persecute the Saints and destroy them from the earth, and present her golden cup full of filthiness and abominations for all nations to drink thereof.

After he had seen this, he saw how the Christian church should again return to the earth. In the fourteenth chapter of Revelations and sixth verse, he says—"I saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, unto every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.' And another angel followed this one that had the gospel, saying—'Babylon is fallen, is fallen.' Why? Because she hath made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

Immediately after this, the Son of Man was seen by John, sitting upon a white cloud, coming in his glory and power to destroy the nations of the earth. Here, then, were three great events portrayed by the ancient apostle John, which should take place just prior to and at the time of the coming of the Son of Man. The gospel is to be brought by an angel. For whom? For all people. Now, if there had been any people, nation, kindred, or tongue, in any part of the earth that had the gospel, and had the authority to administer its ordinances, there would be no necessity for this angel's coming, all we would have had to do, would be to hunt up that people, and there, among them, we should have found apostles, prophets, revelators, and men having power to call upon God, and get revelation; and then persons would be called by new revelation to the ministry. But no such people existed, and hence, when the angel brings the gospel, it has to be preached to all people, nations and tongues, under the whole heavens.

Now the Latter-day Saints have happened to live in the day when the Lord has sent this angel, and when he has again established his church, and has commanded his servants to go forth, calling them by name, to preach the gospel to the people, without purse and scrip, to organize his people among all nations and to say unto them—"Gather out from all these nations unto one place." "But," says one, "what does this mean? Did the ancient apostles and the ancient Christian churches gather?" I answer that the same doctrines which they taught are taught in these days; yet when it comes to some of the great temporal principles of salvation God has varied in his plans in every dispensation. To Noah a command was given to build an ark; that was the way in which was to be effected the temporal salvation of all believers in his day. Abraham was commanded to leave his country, kindred and friends; that was a command of a very different character to the one given in the dispensation of Noah. In the days of Moses another command was given quite different from that given to either Noah or Abraham, and so on down. In the days of Jesus, so far as temporal salvation was concerned, the believers were permitted to remain at Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia and in all the countries wherever the Christian church was organized; there was no gathering in that day. But the last dispensation is to be a dispensation of gathering together of all of the people of God. It is spoken of by Paul in the first chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians, where it is said "that, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, the Lord will gather together in one all that are in Christ, whether they be in the heavens or upon the earth, that they may all be gathered in one."

Now if this angel who brought this gospel from the heavens, and commanded this church to be organized, had left out this gathering together in one, we would have had reason to suppose him to be an

impostor. Why? Because the great essential feature of the latter-day dispensation was a gathering together in one of all things in Christ. That is the reason why these valleys are filled with inhabitants of different nations and tongues; they have heard in different parts of the earth the sound of the gospel which God has brought to light in these latter-days by an angel; they heard the voice of the Lord calling upon them to flee from Babylon, and to gather together in one, and that is why they are here. This agrees with the testimony of John, that, after the angel came, the gospel should be preached to all nations. He heard a great voice from heaven, saying—"Come out of her, my people, lest ye be partakers of her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have reached to the heavens, and God hath remembered her iniquities." That voice, recollect, was not to be a cunningly devised fable, got up by a certain number of divines or theologians, according to their own wisdom; it was to be a voice from heaven, a new revelation, commanding the people to do this. About a hundred thousand of the Latter-day Saints, dwelling in this mountain region, building up towns and cities for some four or five hundred miles in extent, have heard the voice of the Lord from the heavens and have gathered out. You have heard the proclamation, when the latter day kingdom was established, to take your lamps and go forth to meet the Bridegroom. Instead of staying in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia or among the islands of the sea, you have been commanded to take your lamps and gather out; this is like the fish net that was cast into the sea, and gathered all kinds, both good and bad. "Do you mean to say," says one, "that there are some gathered among you who are bad?" Yes; if there were not the parable of our Saviour would not be fulfilled. But by and by there will be a sorting out, and the bad will be cast away unto their own place, while the good will be gathered into vessels and be saved.

This will be fulfilling the words of the Prophet Isaiah, in the 43rd chapter—"I will gather them from the east, and from the west, I will sa to the north give up, and to the south keep not back. Bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth, even every one that is called by my name." Says one—"Do you really think there will be no Christians left in the north, nor in the south, nor in the east, nor in the west, but that every one that is called by the name of the Lord will be gathered in one?" Yes, that is what we believe, and that is one of the peculiarities of what the world call "Mormonism," we do not believe there will be a Christian left on the whole face of the earth, but what will be gathered together. "Well," says one, "if that is true, if Isaiah told the truth about that, and the day is at hand for his prophecy to be fulfilled, the nations will truly be in an awful dilemma, when every Christian is gathered out." I think they will, I think you draw a very correct conclusion.

Why does the Lord gather them out? As the Prophet Isaiah has said in another place, he gathers them out to the mountains, and they say one to another—"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob." What for? "That he may teach us of his ways, and that we may walk in his paths." It seems, then, that the Lord will have one people somewhere on the face of the earth, up in some mountainous region, who are going to teach the nations his ways, and how to walk in his paths.

Now, if we can find out where that mountain is where the Lord is going to have a house built, and to which the nations shall gather, it will be well for us to open our eyes and to see whether we are gathering together to learn the ways of the Lord.

Perhaps you may enquire, "What peculiarities are to be taught in the mountains different from what are taught abroad?" I answer, undoubtedly there will be a great many; and among the rest is that of marriage and now we come to the words of our text. You may ask, "Do you not marry here in the mountains, as we do in the East?" In reply, I will say, in the first place, that marriage is a divine ordinance, as you see by the words of my text—"What God has joined together, let no man put asunder." Now how does the Lord join together persons in marriage? Does he ordain a justice of the peace, who avows himself to be an infidel, and does not believe in God, or his Son Jesus Christ, or in the gospel of life and salvation? Has such a man the authority of God to join the sexes together in marriage? Suppose that such pronounce the marriage ceremony what has the Lord to do with it? Does the Lord inspire the infidel, one who has no faith nor confidence in him, to join together the sexes in marriage? I think not.

But suppose we pass by the infidel who holds the authority of the civil law to administer the ordinance of marriage, are there not many persons among the Christian nations, who do believe in God and his Son Jesus Christ, who are justices of the peace, and who have authority, under the civil laws of the country, to administer the ordinance of marriage? I answer—there are many who hold this authority under their respective governments; we do not dispute this. The infidel I was speaking of, who is a justice of the peace, has authority by the laws of his State or county, to administer and officiate in the ceremony of marriage. But God has nothing to do with it; it answers the ends of the civil law, and that is as far as it goes.

Now suppose you take those persons who are not infidels, but who profess to believe in God, and they hold authority, under their various governments, to pronounce a man and woman husband and wife, has the Lord anything to do with that? He has if he has appointed that minister or justice of the peace; if he has given him a revelation authorizing him to officiate in the ordinance of marriage, then he has authority to do it; according to the

mind and will of God. But, on the other hand, if God has said nothing to him, he has no divine authority—and if he is a sectarian he is sure to reject all revelation, unless it happens to be in the Bible, and the Bible calls no man by name in the 19th century to officiate in marriage, neither in baptism nor any of the ordinances of the gospel—his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ does not give him divine authority to administer the ordinance of marriage. Nevertheless the individuals whom he marries are married according to the laws of the country, and the marriage is legal so far as the laws of the country are concerned; but if God has not spoken to those men, if he has not given them revelation authorizing them to do this, their ceremony, so far as God is concerned, would be just the same as though it was administered by a heathen priest, just the same as though it was ministered by an infidel, for God has nothing to do with it.

Who is it, then, that the Lord joins together? It is those who are married by one authorized of God to officiate in that sacred and holy ordinance, and the Lord could not do this, without he gave new revelation; hence you begin to understand what our views are as Latter-day Saints in regard to the nature of marriage. Inquires one—"Do you mean to say that there have been no marriages legal in the sight of God for nearly seventeen hundred years past, among all the nations?" Yes, that is what we say. Those old and middle-aged men, who were married in the nations before they heard the sound of the gospel, were married legally according to the laws of man, and their marriages will stand all the controversies of the law, and their children are legal heirs to their property; but they are not joined together of the Lord.

Now let us come to a marriage where the Lord officiates. It is indirectly referred to here, in this 19th chapter of Matthew—"In the beginning God made them male and female." And who officiated in the first great marriage ceremony? It was the Lord. Probably, if there had been any man on the earth at that time who held the keys, authority and power, the Lord would not have come and officiated directly; but inasmuch as the marriage was between the first pair who dwelt upon the earth, and there was nobody else to officiate, the Lord took it in hand to officiate himself; and after he had formed the woman he brought her to the man, and the man said—"This, now, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, therefore she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man."

Now let us inquire in regard to the perpetuity of this first marriage, for all Christendom, and I do not know but all heathendom, have got the curious idea into their heads that marriage pertains only to this little speck of time called our present life, and that by and by the grim monster Death will come along and part man and wife asunder, and that is the end of the marriage union. Such is the idea of all Christendom, and that is the way they marry; it is after this form that justices of the peace, the professed ministers of the gospel, and all the judicial authorities of the various states, territories, nations, countries and empires of the world have officiated in the marriage ceremony.—"I join you together," or, "I pronounce you husband and wife," as the case may be, "until death shall you part." Oh indeed! It is a very short time to be married, is it not? We might die in the course of a day or two after being married, then the contract is run out, no more claim after that, according to their ideas. But now, in relation to this first marriage between Adam and Eve, who were they? Two immortal beings. What! Does God marry immortal beings? Yes. We have no account of his coming officially to marry a couple of mortal beings; I do not know that we have any such account anywhere. But these two personages, Adam and Eve, were immortal. Says one—"I never knew before that immortal beings were to be connected as husbands and wives, I thought marriage pertained to mortality, and until death should us part, and that was the end of it." I know that we have had a great many erroneous ideas about baptism, about the laying on of hands, about marriage and about a great many things, all of which came in consequence of the darkness that is spread over the nations, since ancient Christianity was rooted out of the earth. Two immortal beings—Adam the bridegroom, Eve the bride, stood up together, and the Lord gave the bride to the bridegroom. For how long, I wonder? If he had learned the ceremony of these Protestant and Catholic denominations, he might have said—"I pronounce you husband and wife until Death shall separate you." No, I think he had never learned that; Death had not then come into our world; the forbidden fruit had not been eaten then; there were no fallen beings then on the earth, no mortality yet upon the face of our fair creation, but two immortal beings who were capable of enduring to all ages of eternity were united together in marriage.

This, then, was marriage for eternity, not for a little speck of time, not for a hundred or a thousand years, not for a million years, but for all eternity, to be as durable in its nature, action and effects as the immortal beings themselves. "But," inquires one, "are you sure that Adam and Eve were immortal?" I am; the Scriptures inform me that by transgression sin came into the world, and death by sin. If sin had not come into our world there would have been no death. But—Do you really think that Adam and Eve would have been alive to-day? Yes. Can you reflect in your minds upon a period in the future, when they would not be immortal, when they would be overcome? Can you point out the time when they would no longer be husband and wife? Never. When did the Lord give the commandment to be fruitful and multiply, &c.? He gave it to Adam as immortal be-