

DISCOURSE

BY

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Delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, July 18th, 1880.

REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

Visions of Moses—Rebellion in Heaven—Satan cast down—Our first parents fell—Before the fall they were immortal—After the fall, mortal—The command to multiply was given to two immortal beings—This command more fully to be carried into effect, after the resurrection—First marriage eternal in its duration—For death was not yet known—The Bride and Bridegroom being immortal, the ceremony must have united them for eternity—Marriages for eternity among the Saints—Marriages celebrated by uninspired men divinely illegal—Re-marriages—Children born under other marriages illegal—Can only be divinely legalized by adoption to their parents—Dead and living wives—Both will live after the resurrection—Both belong to one man—A polygamist—The living to officiate for the dead, not only in baptism but in marriage ordinances, etc.—Marriage for eternity necessarily includes plural marriage.

I WILL call the attention of the congregation to a portion of the word of God, that was given unto Moses before he delivered the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. It may be well for me to mention, before reading, that Moses received many communications, by visions and by revelation, before he was sent from the land of Midian to visit his brethren who were in bondage in Egypt. He beheld, in these visions, many great and important events, some of which took place in the spirit world. Among other things which he saw was the pre-existence of the children of men, and also the rebellion that took place among the great family of spirits before the world was made; and in this vision the Lord thus speaks to him:

"And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying, that Satan whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me saying: Behold I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost; and surely I will do it. Wherefore, give me thine honor. But, behold, my beloved Son, which was my beloved and chosen from the beginning, said unto me, Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever. Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also that I should give unto him mine own power, by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down, and he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive, and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice. And now, the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which I, the Lord God, had made. And Satan put it into the heart of the serpent (for he had drawn away many after him), and he sought also to beguile Eve, for he knew not the mind of God, wherefore he sought to destroy the world, and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden? (And he spake by the mouth of the serpent.) And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which thou beholdest in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil."

These few words which I have read, from the "Pearl of Great Price," were suggested to my mind immediately before rising to my feet. The short history that is here given, by new revelation to Joseph the Prophet, contains a vast amount of information for so few words. It shows

the origin of evil, pertaining to the inhabitants of this creation. I do not suppose that this was the first origin of evil. We do not consider that this creation on which we dwell was the first one that was made. We do not consider that the rebellion which took place in heaven prior to this creation was the first rebellion that had ever existed. We do not consider that those beings who rebelled were the first ones that ever had their agency; but we believe that God has always been at work, from all eternity; and that the creations which he has made are innumerable unto men. No man is capable of conceiving of the number. And those creations were made to be inhabited by rational, intelligent beings, having their agency. But this seems to be the origin of evil so far as the inhabitants intended for this earth, and who were then living in heaven, were concerned. They had their agency; and when I speak of the inhabitants that dwell in heaven, pertaining to this creation, I mean the spirits of men and women. I have no reference to the mortal tabernacles which we have received here, but I have reference to those beings who dwell within these tabernacles, who are intelligent, who have their agency, who had a pre-existence, who lived before the world was made. The inhabitants of heaven who were selected to come on this creation, were agents, just as much as we are. They had a law given to them, just as much as we have. They had penalties affixed to that law, just the same as we have. They could keep that law given to them in heaven, just as well as we could keep a law given to us. They could rebel against that law, because of their agency, the same as we rebel against the laws of heaven.

We have an account given here of a personage called Satan, who stood up in heaven, being an angel of light, an holy angel, prior to that time—who stood up before the Father and the Son and made a proposition concerning the new creation that was to be made. "Behold," said he to the Father, "send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor." This was the language, according to this revelation which I have just read, made use of by this angel who stood in the presence of God. But the Only Begotten of the Father, the First Born of this great and numerous family in heaven, said unto his Father: "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever." Then we have an account that the Lord, because Satan thus transgressed, and because he sought to destroy the agency of man, and to redeem all mankind, that not a soul should be lost, was displeased with the proposition. And why should he not be? An agency was given to all intelligent beings; and without a proper agency, intelligent beings could not receive glory and honor, and a reward and a fulness of happiness in the celestial kingdom. There must be an agency wherever intelligence exists, and without agency no intelligent beings could exist; and because Satan sought to destroy this, and to frustrate the great and eternal plan of Jehovah, the Lord was displeased with him. He did not repent of his rebellion, nor of the wicked proposition; but he sought to turn away the family of heaven, the family of spirits that were in the presence of God—he sought to turn them away and convert them to his plan. But he did not succeed. He did succeed in leading away about one-third part of that great family of spirits, because of their agency. They hearkened to his proposition; they thought it would be a very great and important thing to destroy the agency of man in the future creation that was about to be made, and to redeem them all in their sins, and consequently they joined with this rebellious character; hence came the fallen angels. What became of them? They were thrust down from the presence of God and the Lamb after this creation was made, and they were permitted to dwell in this creation. Finally, one of those spirits who kept their first estate was placed in a body upon this creation, and likewise a woman; and Satan came before the woman in the garden of Eden, and tempted her. What was his object in tempting this woman? He did not succeed in overcoming her in the first estate—I mean he did not succeed in turning her away from God's commands; but inasmuch as they were now placed under different circumstances—placed in bodies of flesh and bones—placed in the gar-

den of Eden, he thought that he would assault them with a new temptation, to see if he could possibly overcome them. He succeeded in overcoming Eve, the woman that was given to this first man, and prevailed upon her to transgress the law of heaven, to partake of the forbidden fruit, and she succeeded in leading her husband to transgress the same law. Now, here arises a question, Did Adam partake of this forbidden fruit, being deceived as Eve was deceived? or did he partake of it knowingly and understandingly? I will give you my views upon this subject. Adam very well knew that his wife Eve, after she had partaken of the forbidden fruit, having transgressed the law of God, must die. He knew this; he knew that she would have to be cast out of the garden of Eden, from the presence of her husband; she could no longer be permitted to dwell with him. Hence, inasmuch as there was a great separation threatened between husband and wife—the wife having transgressed—he concluded that he would not be separated from the woman, and hence he was not deceived, but the woman was deceived; he partook of the forbidden fruit to prevent a separation between the two, and fell, even as the woman fell, and both were cast out together. If one only had transgressed and been cast out, the great command that had been given prior to that time—to multiply and replenish the earth—could not have been fulfilled, because of the separation. In order, therefore, that the command first given might be fulfilled, Adam, though not deceived, partook of the forbidden fruit, was cast out with Eve, and hence began, as far as possible, to fulfil the command, and to multiply his species upon this earth. There is one very important item, right here, to be understood, and should be thoroughly understood by every person desirous of knowing the truth, and that is, that when Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden, before this transgression took place, they were not subject to mortality; they were not subject to death; they were not subject to any kind of pain, or disease, or sickness, or any of the afflictions of mortality. Now, perhaps those who are not in the habit of reflecting upon this matter, may suppose that when Adam was placed on the earth, and Eve, his wife, they were mortal, like unto us; but that was not so. God did not make a mortal being. It would be contrary to his great goodness to make a man mortal, subject to pain, subject to sickness, subject to death. When he made this creation, and when he made these two intelligent beings and placed them upon this creation, he made them after his own likeness and in his own image. He did not make them mortal, but he made them immortal, like unto himself. If he had made them mortal, and subject to pain, there would have been some cause, among intelligent beings, to say that the Lord subjected man, without a cause, to afflictions, sorrows, death and mortality. But he could not do this; it was contrary to the nature of his attributes, contrary to the nature of that infinite goodness which dwells in the bosom of the Father and the Son, to make a being subject to any kind of pain. At the time of the creation, all things that proceeded forth from his hands were considered very good. How came, then, Adam to be mortal? How came Adam to be filled with pain and affliction and with great sorrow? It was in consequence of transgression. Hence, the Apostle Paul, in speaking upon this subject, said, that by transgression sin entered into the world, and death by sin. Death, then, instead of being something that the Lord created, instead of being something that he sent into the world, came by sin; the Lord suffered it to come upon Adam in consequence of transgression. Two immortal beings, then, were placed in the garden of Eden, male and female. Was there any commandment given to those two immortal beings before the fall? There was one commandment, namely: "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." What! Did the Lord command two immortal beings to multiply their species? He did. In meditating upon this great command given to these two immortal beings, it opens to us a field of reflection, of knowledge, concerning the great designs of the Almighty. It imparts to us a knowledge that the Lord our God intended that immortal beings should multiply their species. Can you find any place in the book of Genesis where our first parents were sommanded to multiply after the

fall? I do not remember any such scripture. I have read the scriptures very diligently; I do not remember any such command. Yet they did so, and the consequences were that children of mortality were born—mortal beings came upon the earth. Why? Because after the fall Adam and Eve became mortal, and their species, of course, were after the order of the world, mortal in their nature. As the parents were subject to death, subject to pain, and sorrow, and distress, and all kinds of evil, so were all their posterity. It was contrary to the law of God for mortal beings to bring forth children of immortality; it was contrary to the order of heaven for mortal beings to multiply their species in the form of immortal beings. But may we not suppose that it was really necessary, notwithstanding there was no command given, that the children of mortality should multiply their species? Notwithstanding the Lord said nothing to Adam and Eve upon this subject after the fall, so far as it is written, yet we may suppose that it was according to his purpose and design that they should multiply children of mortality, even though he gave them no command after their fall to this effect. They have continued to do so, and their children after them, in all of their generations, until the present time, and will continue to do so in future generations, until the earth has filled the full measure of its creation, according to the number of souls that existed before the world was organized, in the family of the two-thirds who kept their first estate.

But will the time ever come, in the endless duration of the future, when our first parents will fulfil that command which was given to them while they were yet children of immortality? In other words, will the time ever come when Adam and Eve will become immortal and carry out the command that was given to them in the days of their first immortality? I answer, yes; without this, the command of God never could be, in all respects, fulfilled. Though there should be hundreds of thousands of millions, or more, of the descendants of those mortal beings come here upon the earth, the command is not fully complied with; though he may have begotten sons and daughters, Cain, Abel, Seth and many others for some nine hundred years and upwards, yet all the sons and daughters he begat while he was mortal here upon the earth did not, in all respects, fulfil the command given to him while an immortal being. That has to be fulfilled after Adam and Eve are resurrected from the grave. Have they yet been resurrected? I think so. There were a great many resurrected at the time of the resurrection of Christ. Christ was the first fruits of the resurrection, and then there were a great many Saints who came forth out of their graves and were resurrected, and permitted to enter into the celestial glory and dwell at his right hand. Among the number, I have no doubt but what our first parents, Adam and Eve, were permitted to come forth and enter into celestial glory; and I have no doubt but what they have been fulfilling the commandment given to them before they fell. Nearly two thousand years have passed since this first resurrection of the Saints. I cannot believe that Adam and Eve, during these nineteen centuries, have been in idleness. I cannot believe that they alone constitute their whole family; but I believe that during this time they have been fulfilling literally the commandment that was given to them in the morn of creation, and as immortal beings have brought forth immortal sons and daughters since their resurrection. Thus the commandment of the Most High was not made void, but is in process of fulfilment.

But let us inquire still further concerning this matter; for this seems to open up another field before our minds. The children of immortality are obliged to multiply, in order to fulfil this commandment. Hence, there is more contained in the gospel in all its fulness and glory than what this world ever dreamt of. The Christian world, so called, have not looked forth unto the great future; they have not recognized the great law which God ordained for immortal beings to bring forth their species; for if our first parents must do this, in order to obey the commandment that was given before the fall, so must their children, or else ever be transgressors, one or the other. Their children, I say, never can fulfil the object of the commandment that was given to im-

mortal beings, unless they, as immortal beings, so multiply their species; and for this reason, we find incorporated in the gospel that Paul preached this great saying, "Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord." What! Can I, can you, can the inhabitants of the earth really not be in the Lord, and yet not be united together in the holy covenant of marriage the male with the female? So Paul says. It is a very curious kind of saying, however, in the case of this generation, who have lost the knowledge of God through the apostasy of their fathers. They have all the time supposed that they could enter into a fulness of the glory of the celestial world without being united in the bonds of eternal union. But it is not so; it was not so in the beginning. The very first marriage that was ever known in this creation, was not a marriage between the children of mortality, but was a marriage consummated by divine authority, by divine power. It was a marriage between two immortal beings. No other marriage could be so important, so essentially necessary, to the inhabitants of this creation, as the first one celebrated in the beginning. What do you think, Christians of the nineteenth century, who belong to the various denominations?—what are your views in regard to marriage? Your looks inform us. Your articles of faith inform us. The disciplines that you have, for the government of your churches, inform us that when marriage is performed among you, it is between two mortal beings, and they are only married till death shall separate and part them. Oh! how different from the first marriage on record between two immortal personages, whose days, inasmuch as they kept the commandments of God, were never to end, but their lives were to be endless or eternal. The Latter-day Saints have a different form of marriage from these sectarians. We have a marriage in our church, between the male and female, which reaches forward to the endless ages of eternity; we do not consider a marriage of very great importance, unless it takes hold of eternity. We do not believe in these marriages which are to remain in force barely while this mortal thread of existence continues; we do not believe in a marriage that must be broken up, dissolved and divorced by that tyrant called death. Death has nothing to do with dissolving marriages—I mean those marriages that are performed according to the mind and will of God. Death may come in and separate the two for a short season, but it does not dissolve the marriage ties. If Eve dies before her husband, Adam, she is not divorced from him, neither is he divorced from her, but she considers, while dwelling in a celestial paradise, that she has legally and lawfully a husband in the flesh on the earth. Adam, if he still continues to live on the earth, while Eve has taken her flight to the eternal world, considers that he has a wife in heaven, though separated for a short time from her. She still is his wife, and will be his, until he himself shall fall into the grave, and even that does not dissolve the marriage tie. The great redemption wrought out through the only-begotten Son—the great redemption that reclaims Adam and Eve from their graves, restores them also from this short period of separation that has taken place by reason of death; it restores them again to each other's society, as husband and wife; and they will remain in that relationship while eternity shall endure.

But here arises another question, —one of great importance to the children of men of all generations, and that is, are there any marriages that God will recognise which he is not the author of? In other words, supposing that two persons in the Roman Catholic church, in the Greek church, in any Protestant church, or two persons that do not belong to any religious denomination, are married by a minister, by a justice of the peace, by any person professing to have authority among men, to celebrate the marriage ceremony—have they any claim upon each other when death separates them? According to their own covenants they do not. The minister only married them till death should them part. When death comes along and separates these two persons their marriage covenant has expired; it has run out, it is at an end. But, inquires one, will not the Lord permit them to live together as husband and wife, after the resurrection? Why should he? If he had joined them together, according to