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DISCOURSE

On Celestial Marriage delivered by Elder ORSON PRATT, in the New Tabermane, Salt Lake City, Oct. 7th, 1869.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

It was announced at the close of the foreuson meeting that I would address the congregation this afternoon upon the subject of Celestial Marriage; I do so with the greatest pleasure.

In the first place, let us inquire whether it is lawful and right according to the Constitution of our country, to examine and practice this Bible doctrine? Our fathers, who framed the Constitution of our country devised it so as to give freedom of regious worship of the Almighty God; so nat all people under our Government hould have the inalienable right,-a right by virtue of the Constitution,-to believe many Bible principle which the Almighty has revealed in any age of the world to the human family. I do not think however that our forefathers, in framing that instrument, intended to embrace all the religions of the world. I mean the idolatrous and pugan religions. They say nothing about these religions in the Constitution; but they give the express privilege in that instrument to all people dwelling under this Government and under the institutions of our country, to believe in all things which the Almighty has revealed to the human family. There is no restriction nor limitation so far as Bible religion is concerned, or any principal or form of religion believed to have emanated from the Almighty: vet they would not admit idolatrous nations to come here and practice their religion, because it is not included in the Bible; it is not the religion of the Almighty. Those people worship falois, the work of the rown hands, they have instituted rights and ceremonies pertaining to those idols, in the observance of which they, no doubt, suppose they are worshipping correctly and sincerely, yet some of them are of the most revolting and barbarous character. Such, tor instance, as the offering up of a widow on a funeral pile, as a burnt sacrifice, in order to follow her husband into the eternal worlds. That is no part of the religion mentioned in the Constitution of our country, it is no part of the religion of Almighty 1 South

pic. Marriage for eternity was the order in speaking to them, says that-in the res-God instituted on our globe; as early as urrection they neither marry nor are given the Garden of Eden; as early as the day when our first parents were placed in the garden to keep it and till it, they, as two immortal beings, were united in the bonds of the New and Everlasting Cove; nant. This was before man fell, before the forbidden fruit was eaten, and before the penalty of death was pronounced upon the

heads of our first parents and all their posterity, hence, when God gave to Adam his wife Eve, He gave her to him as an immortal wife, and there was no end contem plated of the relation they held to each other as husband and wife.

By-and-by, after this marringe had taken place, they transgressed the law of God, and by reason of that transgression the penalty of death came, not only upon them, but also upon all their posterity. Death, n its operations, torensunder, as it were, hese two beings who had hitherto been immortal, and if God had not, before the oundation of the world, provided a plan of redemption, they would perhaps have been orn asunder forever; but inasmuch as a plan of redemption had been provided, by which man could be rescued from the effects of the Fall, Adam and Eve were restored to that condition of union, in respect to immortality, from which they had been separated for a short season of time by death. The Atonement reached after them and brought forth their bodies from the dust, and restored them as husband and wife, to all the privileges that were pronounced upon them before the Fall.

That was eternal marriage; that was lawful marriage ordained by God. That was the divine institution which was revealed and practiced in the early period of our. globe. How has it been since that day? Mankind have strayed from that order of things, or, at least, they have done so in intter times. We hear nothing among the religious societies of the world which profess to believe in the Bible about this marriage for eternity. It is among the things that are obsolete. Now all marriages are consummated until death only; they do not believe in that great pattern and prototype established in the beginning; hence we never hear of their official characters, whether civil or religious, "niting men and women in the capacity of husband and wife as immortal beings. No, they marry as mortal beings only, and until death does them part.

What is to become of them after death? What will take place among all those nations who have been marrying for centuries for time only? Do both men and women eceive a resurrection? Do they con with all the various affections, attributes and passions that God gave them in the beginning? Does the male come forth from the grave with all the attributes of a man? Does the female come forth from her grave with all the attributes of a woman? If so, what is their future destiny? Is there no object or purpose in this new creation, save to give them life, a state of existence? or is there a more important object in view, in the mind of God, in thus creating them anew? Will that principle of love which exists now, and which has existed from the beginning, exist after the resurrection? I mean this sexual love. If that existed before the Fall, and if it has existed since then, will it exist in the eternal worlds after the resurrection? This is a very important question to be decided. 2 A T 10 - 10 - 10

may swear that you shall not enjoy the bles-sings ordained for those who inherit the highest degree of glory. Let us pass along to another instance un-der the dispensation of Moses. The Lord says, on a certain occasion, if a man have in marriage but are as the angels of God. Now, how are the angels of 6 od after the resurrection? According to the revelations

which God has given, there are different married two wives, and he should happen to hate one and love the other, is he to be punished, —cast out and stoned to death as an adulterer? No; instead of the Lord declasses of angels. Some angels are Gods, and still possess the lower office called ancols. Adam is called an Archangel, yet he is a God. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, no nouncing him as an adu terer because of donbt, have the right to officiate in the capacity of angels if they choose, but still having two wives, Hegs vea commandment they have ascended to their exaltation, to a higher state than that of angels,—namely. of hate in the mind of it e man towards one higher state than that of angels,—namely. to thrones, kingdoms, principalities and powers, to reign over kingdoms and to hold the everlasting priesthood. Then there is another order of angels who never of his wives should no control him in the important question of ne division of Lis in-heritance among his children, compelling him to give just as much to the son of the hated wife as to the son of the one beloved; and, if the son of the hated woman happen-ed to be the first-born, he should actually inherit the double portion. Consequently, the Lurd approved, not only the two wives, but their posterity also. Now, if the woman had not been considerhave ascended to these powers and dignilies, to this greatness and exaltation in the presence of God. Who are they? Those who never received the everlasting cove-

only the two wives, but their posterity and. Now, if the women had not been consider-ed wives by the Lord, their children would have been bastards, and you know that He has said that bastards shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, until the tenth generation, hence you see there is a great distinction between these whom the Lord distinction between those whom the Lord calls legitimate or legal, and those who were bastards,-begotten in adultery and Jesus had reference to when speaking to whoredom. The latter, with their posterity, were shut out of the congregation of the Lord until the tenth generation, while the former were exalted to all the privileges of legitimate birthright.

There is a difference between the classes Again, under that same law and dispenof angels called celestial, terrestial and tesation, we find that the Lord provided for lestial. The celestial angels have not atanother contingency among the hosts of Israel. In order that the inheritances of tained to all of the power and greatness and exaltation of kings and priests in the prethe families of Israel might not run into the sence of God; they are blessed with glory, hands of strangers, the Lord, in the book happiness, peace and joy; but they are not of Deuteronomy, gives a command that if a man die, leaving a wife, but no issue, his brother shall marry his widow and take blessed with the privilege of increasing their posterity to all ages of eternity; neither have they thrones and kingdoms but they possession of the inheritance, and to pre-vent this inheritance going out of the fam-ily a strict command was given that the widow should marry the brother or nearest living kinsman of her deceased husband. are servants to those of the highest order. The angels of the terrestial and telestial orders, while possessing a degree of happiness and glory, are lower than those of the celestial order. We might enquire have The law was in full force at the time of the angels not also these affections which belong to the higher class of beings, inasmuch as they are resurrected beings? Yes, but herein they have lost, through disobedience, of the Sadduces on one occasion when conversing with Jesus proves that the law was the privilege of attaining to the higher glory and exaltation. They have affections then observed. Said they, "There were and desires that never can be gratified, and seven brethren who all took a certain woman, each one taking her in succession after the death of the other," and they inin this respect their glory is not full.

I am talking, to-day, to Latter-day quired of Jesus which of the seven would Saints; I am not reasoning with unbehave her for a wife in the resurrection. The lievers. If I were, I should appeal more fully to the Old Testament Scriptures to Sadducees, no doubt, used this figure to prove, as they thought, the fallacy of the bring in arguments and testimonies to prove the divine authenticity of polygamic doctrine of the resurrection, but it also marriages. Perhaps I may touch upon proves that this law, given by the Creator this for a few moments, for the benefit of while Israel walked acceptably before Him, strangers, should there be any in our was acknowledged by their wicked de scendants in the days of the Savior. I midst. Let me say, then, that God's people, under every dispensation since the creation merely quote the passage to show that the of the world, have, generally, been polyga- law was not considered obsolete at that time. A case like this, when six of the brethren had died, leaving the widow mists. I say this for the benefit of strangers. According to the good old book, called the Bible, when God saw proper to without issue, the seventh, whether mar-call out Abraham from all the heathen na- ried or unmarried, must fulfill this law and tions, and made him a great man in the take the widow to wife, or lay himself liable world, He saw proper, also, to make him a to a very severe penalty. What was that polygamist, and approbated him in taking penalty? According to the testimony of unto himself more wives than one. Was it the law of Moses he would be cursed, for wrong in Abraham to do this thing? If it Moses says "cursed be he that doth not all according When did He ever reproach Jacob of the law, and let all the people say Amen. for doing the same thing? Who can find There can be no doubt that many men in the record in the lids of the Bible of God those days were compelled to be polygamreproving Abraham, as being a sinner, and ists in the fulfilment of this law, for any having committed a crime, in taking to man who would not take the childless wife himself two living wives? No such thing of a deceased brother and marry her would is recorded. He was just as much blessed come under the tremendous curse recorded come under the tremendous durse recorded after doing this thing as before, and more so, for God promised blessings upon the issue of Abraham by his second wife the curse, because he would not obey the law in the book of Deuteronomy, and all the of God and become a polygamist. They were was equally faithful. This was a proviso in every case. When we come down to Jacob, the Lord permitted him to take four wives. They are so called in Holy Writ. They are not were commanded to be polygamists; not merely suffered to be so, but actually commanded to be. There are some Latter-day Saints who,



But contining ourselves within the limits of the Constitution, and coming back to the religion of the Bible, we have the privilege to believe in the Patriarchal, in the Mosaic, or in the Christian order of things; for the God of the patriarchs, and the God of Moses is also the Christians' God.

It is true that many laws were given un der the Patriarchal or Mosaic dispensations, against certain crimes, the penalties for violating which, religious bodies, under our Constitution, have not the right to inflict. The Government has reserved, in its own hands, the power, so far as affixing the penalties of certain crimes is concerned.

In ancient times there was a law strictly enforcing the observance of the Sabbath day, and the man or woman who violated that law was subjected to the punishment of death. Ecclesiastical bodies have the right, under our Government and Constitution, to observe the Sabbath day or to disregard it, but they have not the right to inflict corporeal punishment for its non-observance.

The subject proposed to be investigated this afternoon is that of Celestial Marriage, us believed in by the Latter-day Saints, and which they claim is strictly a Bible doctrine and part of the revealed religion of the Almighty. It is well known by all the Latter-day Saints that we have not derived all our knowledge concerning God, heaven, angels, this life and the life to come entirely from the books of the Bible; yet we believe that all of our religious principles and notions are in accordance with and are sustained by the Bible; consequently, though we believe in new revelation, and believe that God has revealed many things pertaining to our religion, we also believe that He has revealed none that are inconsistent with the worship of Almighty God, a sacred right guaranteed to all religious denominations by the Constitution of our country.

God created man, male and female. He is the Author of our existence. He placed us on this creation. He ordained laws to govern us. He gave to man, whom he

We read in the revelations of God that

there are various classes of beings in the eternal worlds. There are some who are kings, priests, and Gods, others that are angels; and also among them are the orders denominated celestial, terrestrial, and teles-

tial. God, however, according to the faith of the Latter-day Saints, has ordained that the highest order and class of beings that should exist in the eternal worlds should exist in the capacity of husbands and wives. and that they alone should have the privilege of propagating their species,-intelligent immortal beings. Now it is wise, no doubt, in the Great Creator to thus limit this great and Heavenly principle to these who have arrived or come to the highest state of exaltation, excellency, wisdom, knowledge, power, glory and faithfulness, to dwell in His presence, that they by this means shall be prepared to bring up their spirit offspring in all pure and holy principles in the eternal worlds, in order that they may be made happy. Consequently He does not entrust this privilege of multiplying. spirits with the terrestrial or telestial, or the lower order of beings there, nor with angels. But why not? Because they have not proved themselves worthy of this great privilege. We might reason, of the eternal he certainly was doing so if the ideas of this worlds, as some of the enemies of polygamy reason of this state of existence, and say that there are just as many males as they had not improved upon. That is the or-

then did God reprove him for so doing? same as that of the first wife, providing he

nant of marriage for eternity; those who

have not continued in nor received that law

with all their hearts, or who, perhaps, have

fought against it. They become angels.

They have no power to increase and extend

forth to kingdoms. They have no wives,

no husbands, and they are servants to those

that sit upon thrones and rule over king-

doms, and are counted worthy of a far

more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

These, no doubt, were the kind of angels

those ungodly classes of beings called Sad-

ducees and Pharisees, one of which denied

the doctrine of the resurrection altogether.

permitted him to take four wives. They denominated prostitutes, neither are they called concubines, but they are called wives, legal wives; and to show that God approved of the course of Jacob in taking these wives. He blessed them abundantly, and hearken-ed to the prayer of the second wife just the same as to the first. Rachel was the second wife of Jacob, and our great mother;

for you know that many of the Latter-day Saints by revelation know themselves to be the descendants of Joseph, and he was the son of Rachel, the second wife of Jacob. God peculiar manner blessed the posterity of this second wife. Instead of condemning the old patriarch, He ordained that Joseph, the first-born of this second wife. should be considered the first-born of all the twelve tribes, and into his hands was given the double birthright, according to the laws of the ancients. And yet he was the offspring of plurality,-of the second wife of Jacob. Of course, if Reuben, who was indeed, the first-born unto Jacob, had conducted himself properly he might have retained the birthright and the greater inheritance; but he lost that through his transgression, and it was given to a poly-gamic child, who had the privilege of in-heriting the blessing to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills; the great continent of North and South America was conferred upon him. Another proof that God did not disapprove of a man having more wives than one, is to be found in the fact that. Rachel, after she had been a long time barren, prayed to the Lord to give her seed. The Lord hearkened to her cry and granted her prayer; and when she received seed from the Lord by her polygamic husband, she exclaimed"the Lord hath bearkaned unto me and hath answered my prayer." Now do you think the Lord would have done this if he had considered polygamy a crime? Would he have hearkgeneration are correct.

Moses, under another dispensation?

perhaps, have not searched these things as they ought, hence we occasionally find some who will say that God suffered these things to be. I will go further, and say that He commanded them, and He pronounced a curse, to which all the people had to say amen, if they did not fulfil the commandment.

Coming down to the days of the prophets we find that they were polygamists; also to the days of the kings of Israel, whom God appointed himself, and approbated and blessed. This was especially the case with one of them, named David, who, the Lord said, was a man after His own heart. David was called when yet a youth, to reign over the whole twelve tribes of Israel; but Saul, the reigning king of Tarael, persecuted him, and sought to take away his life. David fied from city to city throughout all the coasts of Judea in order to get beyond the reach of the relentless persecutions of Saul. While thus fleeing, the Lord was with him, hearing his prayers, answering his peti-tions, giving him line upon line, precept upon precept; permitting him to look into the Urim and Thummin and receive revelations, which enabled him to escape from

his enemies. In addition to all these blessings that God bestowed upon him in his youth, before he was exalted to the throne, the Lord gave him eight wives; and after exalting him to the throne, instead of denouncing him for having many wives, and pronouncing him worthy of fourteen or twenty-one years of imprisonment, the Lord was with His servant David, and, thinking he had not wives enough He gave to him all the wives of his Tacob and tried in a court of justice and sent to prison this of Davidt No, certainly not; it was in ac-cordance with His own righteous laws, and We he was with His servant, David the King,



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