

DISCOURSE

BY

ELDER ERASTUS SNOW,*Delivered in the Meeting House,
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REPORTED BY JOSIAH ROGERSON.

"And God said, let us make man in our own image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be ye fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." First chapter of Genesis, 26th, 27th and 28th verses.

In the 5th chapter of Genesis, 1st and 2d verses, we read, 'This is the book of the generations of Adam: In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him, male and female created he them, and blessed them and called their name Adam in the day when they were created.'

All mankind feel instinctively that there is a God. I admit that many people try to reason themselves out of the idea and into a state of infidelity, or into atheism, but it is very hard for them to do it, or to satisfy themselves that they are correct when they think they have done it. And the universal feeling that may be set down to be common to all nations and people bearing the human form, is that there is a God; and there is a yearning after him, and a desire to worship him, however difficult it may be to satisfy themselves of the manner in which they may worship him acceptably.

On one occasion, our Lord and Savior said to the people among whom he ministered, "Ye worship ye know not what, but we (speaking of himself and his disciples and followers) know whom we worship, and we speak the things we have heard of him, and we know what we speak, and yet you receive not our testimony."

The Jews were in possession of many laws and regulations given to their fathers, and they were taught the true and the living God, but darkness covered their minds, and many of them walked in darkness at noonday, and enjoyed not the true light, as it was in Christ, pertaining to themselves and to their Heavenly Father.

Heathen nations, as they are termed by Christians, have less definite ideas of their Creator, though all of them entertain the common notion of the Deity, and seek to worship him, though it may be in a crude way, and very undefined. Sometimes they are accused of worshipping the work of their own hands—images made of wood, of stone, iron and brass, and various other materials, and other nations, tribes and tongues are accused of worshipping animals of various kinds. They have their sacred elephants, crocodiles, or other beasts of the earth, whom they learn either to love or fear and worship, either as "friend" or "foe." Yet when we become acquainted with these nations and find out their inward faith, we find that none of them look upon these images—the work of men's hands—or these beasts or other objects of worship—we find that none of them look upon these as anything but representations of Deity. They do not see Deity before them, they do not walk, and talk, and converse, and eat, drink and sleep with the being whom they have in their minds as God, but they set up before them something they can see, to represent him, and as soon as they begin and rear up before them some representation of Deity—one representative they consider to be about equal to another, and if it is the work of men's hands, it is something that corresponds to their ideas of a Deity, and whether it be in his exact likeness or not they know not—not having formed a personal acquaintance with him, nor having any likeness of him, from which they can pattern after—one image answers as well as another, or one representation as well as another. But all these are but representations of Deity. And no nation has been found upon the earth, tribe or tongue, but what have some mode of worship, or some faith in the Deity, and feel the need of honoring a superior Being.

This craving of the human heart is universal; and education does not remove it. It is not confined to barbarous tribes and less cultivated people. All nations may have their sceptics, and in many enlightened nations of modern times, there is an evident tendency to infidelity; yet those who seriously entertain doubts of the existence of a Supreme Being, are generally those who have a smattering of learning and have become mad in this particular. The thorough scientist is forced to recognize the existence of the Great Supreme. They cannot get around it, or arrive at any other conclusion, than that the great wheel of nature is moved by an over-ruling hand, and the regularity and uniformity that is found in all her laws, are traceable to that Supreme Being, and unaccountable upon any other principle. It is almost impossible for them to arrive at any other conclusion, and where, in the history of the world, is it chronicled of any great astronomer that he was an infidel? any one that has the mind, and whose researches have enabled him to stretch out and begin to comprehend and fathom the greatness of the works of creation, that has not in the most humble and reverential manner acknowledged God? Those who deny him, as I said before, are those that have but a partial education; and a little learning is intoxicating to the brain.

As the great English poet says:

"Drink deep—or taste not the Pyrean spring,
Shallow drafts intoxicate the brain,
And draining deep sobers us again.
A little knowledge is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep—or taste not the Pyrean spring."

It is those that gain a little knowledge, and begin their researches in various branches of science, but do not fathom them, who are bewildered in their imaginations, and they tend to infidelity.

There is a theory in the human mind—I will say with a certain school of modern philosophers—to satisfy themselves and justify their infidelity; the bent and tendency of their inclinations is that way. But it is probable that the crude, undefined devices and erroneous notions and ideas of modern Christianity touching the Deity leads to this infidelity, as much as anything else. The advocates of Christianity are in a great measure to blame. When we begin to scan the teachings and enquire into the views of the leading divines of modern times, and examine their articles of faith and their discipline, the teachings of different Christian denominations on the subject of the Deity, we do not wonder that the reflecting, careful thinker, should repudiate their crude notions.

The old Catholic Church, who call themselves the Holy Mother Church, the English Church and the Lutheran Church, the two most extensive branches of dissenters from the Catholic Church, and the most of the lesser Protestant denominations, all declare to their followers that God is a spirit, without body, parts and passions. Some leave off the word passions, but they all say he is without body, or parts; and when they attempt to locate him, they locate him nowhere. His centre is everywhere, his circumference nowhere! His form may be best described in the quaint language of Parley P. Pratt, "A footless stocking without a leg," sitting upon the top of a topless throne, far beyond the bounds of time and space; that heavenly unknown place that some crazy poet sung about. And we are asked to believe in, render obedience to and worship this being. The careful thinker says, "I cannot; it is impossible for me to believe in a being that has neither body, parts nor passions, and that is located nowhere; I cannot conceive of him." The elaborate thinker says, "I cannot conceive of any such being, nor can anybody else conceive of him. It is not within the sphere and range of our comprehension." It is simply nothing at all; and in the exercise of his reasoning faculties, he chooses to disbelieve in their dogmas, and is set down by them as an infidel. Yet the true philosopher is not an infidel. He is only infidel to those vague ideas and theories that are in themselves monstrosities. Yet in the absence of true religious teaching, and being taught by the Christian world that the Scriptures do not mean what they say, and must be taken in some mysterious sense, they come to the conclusion that they

do not know anything about the true character of the Deity, and it is not their province to teach him, only as they learn to know him in scanning his works. But in scanning his works, we learn that he is a Being of order and law, and that all things are governed by law. Whether the minutest atoms that are examined under powerful glasses in the molecular world, that are scrutinized by the aid of the microscope, or whether we study the works of God in the vast unnumbered worlds that are rolling in the midst of the power of God, we find the same order. "All things are governed by law."

If we study physiology or anatomy, we are led to exclaim with the Psalmist of old, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made," and see a beautiful harmony in all the parts, and a most exquisite design. This is proven by an examination of the various parts of the human form. And every organ adapted to its special use, and for its special purpose, and combining a whole, a grand union—a little kingdom composed of many kingdoms, united and constituting the grand whole, the being we call man, but which in the language of these Scriptures was called Adam—male and female created he them, and called their name Adam, which in the original, in which these Scriptures were written by Moses, signifies "the first man." There was no effort at distinguishing between the one half and the other, and calling one man and the other woman. This was an after distinction, but the explanation of it is—one man, one being, and he called their name Adam. But he created them male and female, for they were one, and he says not unto the woman multiply, and to the man multiply, but he says unto them, multiply and reproduce your species, and replenish the earth. He speaks unto them as belonging together, as constituting one being, and as organized in his image and after his likeness. And the Apostle Paul, treating upon this subject in the same way, says that man was created in the likeness of God, and after the express image of his person. John, the Apostle, in writing the history of Jesus, speaks in the same way; that Jesus was in the likeness of his Father, and express image of his person. And if the revelations that God has made of himself to man, agree and harmonize upon this theory, and if mankind would be more believing, and accept the simple, plain, clear definition of Deity, and description of himself which he has given us, instead of hunting for some great mystery, and seeking to find out God where he is not and as he is not, we all might understand him. There is no great mystery about it; no more mystery about it than there is about ourselves, and our own relationship to our father and mother, and the relationship of our own children to us. That which we see before our eyes, and which we are experiencing from time to time, day to day, and year to year, is an exemplification of Deity.

"What," says one, "do you mean we should understand that Deity consists of man and woman?" Most certainly I do. If I believe anything that God has ever said about himself, and anything pertaining to the creation and organization of man upon the earth, I must believe that Deity consists of man and woman. Now this is simplifying it down to our understanding, and the great Christian world will be ready to open their mouths and cry, "Blasphemy! Sacrilage!" Open wide their eyes and wide their mouths in the utmost astonishment. What! God a man and woman? The Shakers say he was, and Ann Lee says, "Christ came in the form of a man in the first place, and now came in the form of a woman and she was that form."

Then these Christians—they say he has no form, neither body, parts nor passions. One party says he is a man, and the other says he is a woman. I say he is both. How do you know? I only repeat what he says of himself; that he created man in the image of God, male and female created he them; and he called their name Adam, which signifies in Hebrew, the first man. So that the beings we call Adam and Eve were the first man placed here on this earth, and their name was Adam, and they were the express image of God. Now, if anybody is disposed to say that the woman is in the likeness of God and that the man was not, and if

vice versa, I say you are both wrong, or else God has not told us the truth.

I sometimes illustrate this matter by taking up a pair of shears, if I have one, but then you all know they are composed of two halves, but they are necessarily parts, one of another, and to perform their work for each other, as designed, they belong together, and neither one of them is fitted for the accomplishment of their works alone. And for this reason says St. Paul, "the man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord." In other words, there can be no God except he is composed of the man and woman united, and there is not in all the eternities that exist, nor ever will be, a God in any other way. I have another description: There never was a God, and there never will be in all eternities, except they are made of these two component parts; a man and a woman; the male and the female. Some of those who are disposed to cavil will say, how will you explain the idea of a plurality in the female department? Here opens a subject involving philosophy and the philosophical propagation of our species, and it involves the great principles of virtue, and the laws that govern, or should govern through all eternity the commerce of the sexes; and the more they are scanned in the light of true philosophy and revelation, the more it will be proven that the superior wisdom of Jehovah has ordained that in the higher type of the Godhead, they are not limited in their union of the sexes; I refer to the female principle. On the other hand all the laws governing the commerce of the sexes, and the results flowing from them in the procreation of our species, show that the violation of the laws that God has ordained to govern and control the commerce of the sexes, produces disease, death and deterioration of the human family; deteriorates the vital power and physical strength and longevity, and tends to weaken, lessen and destroy the human race, instead of building up, and sustaining and strengthening; while on the other hand, the strictly confining of a woman to one husband, tends to all that is lovely, to family organization and government, and the classification of human beings in groups, in families and kingdoms, tends to increase the vital powers, endurance and long life; and in every sense accomplishes the great object of creation.

There is a theory put forth by Mr. Darwin, and others, that is the school of modern philosophers, which is termed in late years, the theory of Evolution; that man in our present state upon the earth, is but the sequence and outgrowth of steady advancement from the lowest order of creation, till the present type of man, and that we have advanced step by step from the lowest order of creation till at last man has been formed upon the earth in our present sphere of action; in short, that our great-grandfathers were apes and monkeys. And how much satisfaction these philosophers have in the contemplation of their grandfather monkeys, we are left to conjecture; but such are the theories put forth by some of our modern philosophers. But we find nothing on the earth, or in the earth, nor under the earth, that indicates that any of these monkeys or apes, or any other orders of creation below man have ever accomplished any great exploits. So far as the history of this earth is known, whether written or unwritten, or whether written in volumes of books, whether engraved upon metallic plates, or whether found impressed in rocks, neither geologists, nor any other scientists have ever been able to show us any great exploits of any of these inferior grades of being to indicate that there was any such vitality in them, as to develop in their future progress, the present order of beings we call man. But if there is any truth in the history given us, by Moses this being we call man, is only God in embryo. And Moses tells us that the Creator conversed with this man whom he called Adam, consisting of male and female. He conversed with them, showed himself to them, spoke with them at different times, gave them instructions, gave them his law, visited them repeatedly in their new home, in the place we call the Garden of Eden, the garden that the Lord planted for man—eastward in Eden. And after he was driven out from the face of his Creator, from the Gar-

den, and the vail was drawn between him and his Creator, yet from time to time God was wont to draw aside that vail and show himself, and we not only find that Adam and Eve had frequent intercourse with their Creator and talked with him personally as we talk with our children and they with us; but we find many of Adam's descendants obtained like privileges of seeing their Creator, and speaking with him, receiving instructions from him. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, it was said walked with God, and enjoyed this privilege for three hundred years. From time to time the vail was drawn aside, and when ever he desired, and it was expedient to receive instructions and counsels from his Father and Creator he enjoyed this privilege, and the Father came and showed himself to him and spoke with him. The same may be said of Noah and of Abraham, who conversed with him, and the Scriptures tell us, furthermore, that Abraham killed the fatted calf, and prepared savory meat for a meal, and set before him and he ate with him.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, the Scriptures tell us; and she bare record of it, and there were many witnesses of this fact, and the record teaches us that he was begotten by the power of God, and not of man, and that she had no intercourse with mortal man in the flesh until after she gave birth to the Savior, who is called the Son of God. I will also say that Adam was called the Son of God.

Matthew, in giving the genealogy of Jesus Christ, traces it back from his mother, through the lineage of the fathers, back to David, from David to Abraham, from Abraham to Noah, and Noah to Adam; when he gets back to Adam he says "Which was the Son of God." But Jesus was begotten by the power of God and not by mortal in the flesh. And the New Testament tells us that God sent his angel to visit this beautiful virgin Mary, and to make known unto her that she was chosen of the Lord to be the Mother of Jesus who should be the Savior of this people. And the messenger or the angel sent to her was designed to prepare her mind, her heart and her faith for this great work unto which the Lord had chosen her. And he said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, and therefore that Holy Thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. This Jesus, therefore, partook of this divine nature; he partook also of the human, the mortal, through the mother. And because he had partaken of the human—the mortal through the mother, He became subject unto death, the same as all other mortal beings; for death passed upon our first parents, Adam and Eve, through their partaking of the fruits of the earth, their systems became infected by it, and the blood formed in their veins, and composed of the elements of the earth, which they partook, and these contain the seeds of dissolution and decay. And this blood, circulating in their veins, which was made up of the fruits of the earth—those things of which they partook—that formed their flesh, and made the deposits that constituted their muscle, and their bones, arteries and nerves, and every part of the body, became mortal and this circulating fluid in their systems produced friction which ultimately wore out the machinery of their organism, and brought it to decay, that it became no longer tenable for their spirits to inhabit, and death ensued; and this was the decree of the Father. "In the day you partake of this fruit, you shall die." But this death was the death of the mortal, and not the immortal. The desolation of the mortal tabernacle, which was the outer covering of their spirit. As I said, man was created, male and female, and two principles are blended in one; and the man is not without the woman nor the woman without the man in the Lord; and there is no Lord, there is no God in which the two principles are not blended, nor can be; and we may never hope to attain unto the eternal power and the Godhead upon any other principle. Not on y so, but this Godhead composing two parts male and female, is also composed of two elements, spiritual and temporal. Or in other words, two organisms; the one capable of dwelling within the other. The spirit dwelling within the out-