

Moses, one of the greatest prophets that ever arose, with the exception of Jesus, not only approved polygamy but actually practised it himself. We find on a certain occasion that the brother of Moses, Aaron and the prophetess Miriam, began to upbraid him in consequence of a certain Ethiopian wife he had taken, (see Numbers xii, 1.) he had already one wife, the daughter of Jethro, the priest of Midian. Did the Lord join in with them? Did he say, you are right to make light of Moses' second wife? It is polygamy? It is a great crime! It is sinful! Was this the way the Lord talked? No. But he was angry that they should make light of a thing which he himself esteemed as very sacred, and as a consequence he smote Miriam with leprosy, and she became as white as snow; and although she was a prophetess she had to be put out of the camp, and stay out seven days because of speaking against one of Moses' wives. Did this look like the Lord's considering it an illegal marriage? It proves that the Lord did consider the marriage legal.

I have only demonstrated to you that the Lord approved polygamy, and gave laws regulating the descent of property to the polygamic children. But I will now repeat to you an express command of God to certain persons to marry more than one wife, and they could not get rid of it without breaking the law of God. The Lord said, cursed be every man that continueth not in all things written in this book of the law. However righteous and moral a man might have been in many other respects, yet if he did not continue in all things written in that book of the law, he was to be cursed; cursed be that man and all the people shall say amen. Now among the things written in that book of the law we find these words: "If brethren dwell together and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger; her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her. And it shall be that the first born which she beareth, shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel." (See Deuteronomy xxi: 5, 6.) Must his brother do this if he has a family of his own? Yes. It does not matter whether he has a family or not, that command is given to him; it is the law of God, and the reason is given in order that the name of the dead might not perish, and be cut off from Israel. The living brother had to preserve the inheritance in his deceased brother's family. Now if the widow of the deceased brother married a stranger, a person that did not belong to that particular tribe, the inheritance would go to a stranger, and would be shifting from tribe to tribe, or even might become the inheritance of one that did not belong to the tribes of Israel. In order to prevent this, the first born male of the living brother was to be considered the son of the dead brother, and was to receive the inheritance and perpetuate the same in the family, and this was to continue from generation to generation. Now, suppose that there were seven brothers, as there often were families of that size in Israel; suppose they married them wives, and six of them should die without leaving male issue to bear up their name, but the seventh brother was still living; do you not see that this law and commandment would be binding on that seventh, still living, to take the six widows? This he would be compelled to do; and yet this generation say polygamy is a crime: while here is the sanction of divine authority, here a man is brought under obligation to take these six widows, and raise up seed to his dead brothers. How long was this to continue? Is there any evidence in the Bible that it was to cease when christianity should be introduced by our Savior and his Apostles? What was the condition of the Jewish nation at the time Jesus went forth preaching repentance and baptism and admitting members into his church? I will tell you, there were thousands and thousands that were polygamists and were obliged by the command of God to be so; they could not get rid of it if they obeyed the law of Moses, and if they did not obey they were to be cursed.

These polygamists, then, that took their deceased brothers' wives, according to the notions of christendom in the nineteenth century, would be prohibited from baptism. The Son of God and the Apostles that went forth 1800 years ago, were so holy that they must not permit any of these polygamists to enter the Christian church, though they were only obeying the command given by the God of heaven through Moses, yet they must not be baptised, they must be rejected. This would be the argument of Christianity in the nineteenth century. But can we suppose that Jesus would be so inconsistent that he would actually command a thing a few thousand years before, (for Jesus was the one that gave the law to Moses) and then come two or three thousand years afterwards, and not permit the people to enter his church because they had obeyed that former command? Such is the foolish argument of christendom in these days. Say they, polygamy is not to be sanctioned under the Christian dispensation. I would like to know where their evidence is. What part of the New Testament, or where in the teachings of Jesus and his Apostles, do we find such evidence recorded, that a man should not have more than one wife? It cannot be found. But says one, I have read the New Testament, and I do not recollect that the term wives is used by the eight writers of that book, but they always used the term wife, in the singular number. And from this it is presumed that they did not have more than one. Let us examine the strength of this presumption:

I find eighteen or twenty writers of the Old Testament who use wife and not wives; will you therefore, draw the conclusion that plurality was not practiced among them under the Old Testament? If the presumption is of any weight in relation to the eight writers of the New Testa-

ment, it certainly is of greater weight in relation to twenty writers of the Old Testament. But it is known that in the latter case the presumption is false; therefore it is of no strength or force whatever in the former case.

Now let us examine some other objections urged against polygamy. The objector has often referred to the saying of Jesus, when commanding the people that they should not put away their wives saying it should be for the cause of fornication. Jesus says, Moses suffered a divorce to be given because of the hardness of the hearts of the people, and further says, it was not so from the beginning, that God made man, male and female, and they were joined together by divine authority and they twain became one flesh. Now, says the objector, it does not say that three or that four shall become one flesh, etc. And consequently this is an argument against plurality. Let us examine this, and see if there is any force in it. It was not so in the beginning before the days of Moses. What was not so? This putting away of wives—this divorcing of wives for every little nonsensical purpose. Jesus was showing that it was contrary to his mind and will; that Moses only suffered it, because of the hardness of their hearts; but that in the beginning it was not so, as much as to say, if you give divorces, you practise something given through the wickedness of the people. If you put away your wives for any other cause than that of fornication you cause your wives to commit adultery, and if any man marry her that is put away, he committeth adultery.

Then again, he says, if a woman put away her husband, she committeth adultery. A man has no right to put away his wife nor a woman her husband. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder, for in the beginning it was not so but they twain became one flesh.

Is this an argument against having more than one wife? For instance, Jacob and Leah were one flesh, Leah being his first wife. Jacob and Rachel were one flesh. Jacob and Bilhah were one flesh. Jacob and Zilpah were one flesh, and if he had had a thousand more it would have been the same: each wife would have been a legitimate wife, and one flesh with Jacob, and their children would have been legitimate. This was no argument against plurality; if so, Jacob would have been found a transgressor.

In the second chapter of Genesis, it is stated that the Lord took a rib from Adam, and by adding other materials, formed a woman and brought her to the man, and gave her to him as an help meet—as a wife, "and Adam said, this I know now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore, shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh."

This is the saying which Jesus quoted. Now Jacob in taking four wives became one flesh with each one of them; but how and in what respect? Perhaps it may be said that they became one in mind, one in understanding, one in intellect, one in judgment, etc. Their minds were to be one. But it does not say one in mind, one spiritually, but one flesh.

How are we to understand this? Paul (Eph. v, 28-31) says, "So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself: for no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

Paul makes this quotation from the second chapter of Genesis, to prove that the woman was one flesh with the man, because she was taken out of man's body, and made out of his flesh and bones. She was one flesh in this respect—not in identity—they were two distinct persons, as much so as the Father and the Son are two distinct personages.

And again the wife becomes one flesh with her husband in another respect; when she presents herself to the man, and gives herself to him with an everlasting covenant, one that is not to be broken; she becomes his flesh, his property, his wife, as much so as the flesh and bone of his own body.

The Father and the Son are represented to be one. "I and my Father are one," said Jesus.—Would any person pretend to say, because Jesus and his Father were one, that he could not receive a third person into the communion?—a fourth or a fifth? If we examine the arguments of modern christendom, nobody but Jesus could be admitted into the union, or in other words, They twain, that is, the Father and the Son were to be one, and no others. But Jesus says, Father, I pray not for these alone which thou hast given me out of the world, but I pray for all them that shall believe on me through their words (the Twelve) that they all may be one as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they may be made perfect in one.

The disciples of Jesus were not to lose their identity, because Jesus was one with the Father—the identity of Jesus was not destroyed, but he remained a distinct person and so did all the disciples, and yet they became one: and so is every man and his wives. Because they twain, that is, Jesus and his Father were one—it did not hinder the disciples from attaining to the same oneness; and so likewise with regard to the man and his first wife; because they twain are one flesh, it does not prevent him from being one flesh with each of his other wives which he may legally take.

Again, there is a principle which I will now relate more particularly for the benefit of strangers. There is such a principle as marriage for eternity, which may imply one wife or many. The marriage covenant is indissoluble, it is everlasting, it is not limited to time; but it is a covenant to exist while eternity exists, it pertains to immortality as well as mortality. I will prove this—the first example we have on record of a

marriage was that of our first parents, Adam and Eve. Were they married as people marry nowadays? Were they married as the world of christendom marry at the present day? No; they married as immortal beings. They knew nothing about death; they never had seen any such thing as death. When Eve was brought to Adam she was brought to him an immortal being; when Adam received her as his wife, he was an immortal being; his flesh and bones were not subject to sickness and decay; he was not subject to pain and suffering; there was no death working in his system; no plague that could prostrate him in the dust; they were intended to endure forever and ever. So far as their bodies were concerned they brought death on themselves.

Paul says that sin entered into the world by transgression and death by sin. Notice that expression. Death entered into the world by sin. If there had been no sin, there would have been no death. If Adam and Eve never had sinned, they would have been alive on the earth at this time, just as fresh and pure as in the morning of creation; they would have remained to all eternity without a wrinkle of old age overtaking them.

These were the personages first married.—Question—were they married for a certain period of time as persons are married by the world of christendom at this day?

When you go up before a magistrate, to have marriage solemnized, you hear him saying—I pronounce you husband and wife, or man and wife, as the case may be, until death.

Adam knew nothing about that monster, it was not in his creed; such an idea never entered into his mind, as they have at the present day—I bind you together as husband and wife until death, which shall separate you. If I were married by the laws of christendom, I should consider the woman I had taken was my wife unto death. I should consider this marriage covenant, the same as if I had a piece of property promised to me for a certain period of time, say for the space of twenty years, after which, I have no claim upon it. When death comes, I have no claim upon the woman married to me by those who pretend to administer the sacred ordinance. But not so with our first parents. When Eve was presented to Adam, as an help meet to him, as a wife, it was not intended that that relation should cease after a few score of years, or when death should come; but it was as everlasting as Adam and Eve themselves. When they went down to their graves they could go down with a sure and certain knowledge that they still were husband and wife; and that this sacred relationship would continue after the resurrection.

This is the great and first example for marriage. The Latter Day Saints have adopted this example, not by our own wisdom, for I do not know that we should ever have thought of it, but by new revelation. The same God that originated marriage for all eternity in relation to the first pair, has again spoken from the heavens, and told us something about this sacred ceremony; he has informed us that if we are married, and expect to have claim on our wives, and wives on their husbands in the eternal worlds, that this ordinance of marriage must be, not till death, but forever and ever, reaching forward through all our future state of existence.

Having established this principle of marriage for eternity, let us examine the results flowing from it. Let me suppose that here is my neighbor, he has a wife, and she is married to him for all eternity. By and bye, he dies and leaves his widow. I am a young unmarried man, and pay my attentions to her, and she, being still young, accepts my attentions and wishes to be married to me, yet she has been married to a man for all eternity; can she be married to me for all eternity? No. I accept of her as a wife for time only, yielding her up with all her posterity in the morning of the first resurrection to her legal and lawful husband.

But now what shall become of me? I have got to give up this wife to her legal and lawful husband in the morning of the first resurrection; and I must not according to the laws of christendom marry another as long as she lives; and she might live as long as I. Am I to be deprived of a wife for eternity, because I married this widow for time? or would plurality come in and supply me also with a wife?

This is one of the results necessarily arising, when marriage for eternity is admitted; there is just as much reason for it as for any other principle God has ever revealed to the human family.

Again, for instance, here is a man that has married a wife for time and all eternity, and here is a woman that has not had a privilege of being married like thousands and tens of thousands that are abroad in the States and in all the world among the nations of christendom; they have to live contrary to their own will and die old maids without a husband for time or eternity either.

If one of this class who had not had an opportunity of marriage with a righteous man, and who was unwilling to trust herself with those whom she considered unworthy of marriage for time or eternity either, should come to the Territory of Utah, and still having no offer of marriage from a single young man here, she sees a good man that has a family; he proposes marriage to her; she voluntarily offers to become one of his wives; he accepts the offer; the ceremony is celebrated. What harm is done? Who is injured? What law is broken? None. I ask, would it be right, with a view that marriage is to exist, not only in time but in eternity, that this woman, who is a good, moral, virtuous woman, should remain without a husband through all eternity, because she did not have an opportunity of being married? If marriage be of any benefit in the eternal world, would it not be far more consistent with the law of God that she should have the privilege, by her own free, voluntary consent, to marry a good man, though he might have a family, and claim him for her husband, not only through time but eternity?

Jesus informs us that in the resurrection man-

kind are neither married nor given in marriage; all these things have to be attended to here. In the resurrection a man is not to be baptized; here is the place to attend to these things. If we are to become the promised seed, and heirs according to the promise, we must be baptized into Christ and put him on, and do it before the resurrection; for if I put it off beyond this life, in the resurrection there will be no such thing as putting on Christ by being baptized. Just so, in the resurrection there will be no such thing as attending to the ceremony of marriage, so far as we are informed. But Jesus further says concerning those persons who have not attended to those matters here, that in the resurrection, they are as the angels of God; and some of the angels are a little lower than men; in what respect? They have not the power to increase their kingdom by the multiplication of their species; and this, because they have not lawful and legal wives. They are probably among that class who have put off marriage for eternity and die without attending to it, and after the resurrection, they find themselves wifeless, without any family or kingdoms of their own offspring. In this single and undesirable condition they are to remain because they cannot hunt up a wife after the resurrection. Such, instead of receiving crowns, will merely become ministers or messengers for the crown, being sent forth by those who have attained to a higher glory, who have the power of receiving kingdoms, and increasing the same, through their own offspring that are begotten after the resurrection by the wives given to them while here in this world. These angels have forfeited this privilege; consequently, they are lower than the man who keeps a celestial law, and if these angels lived on the earth, they would be called old bachelors.

Do you not see the difference between the glory of those who claim their privileges and those who do not? I am not speaking of the class who pay no attention to the law of God or to the nature of marriage; but I am speaking of those ancient patriarchs and prophets, and holy men that understood the law of God, and practised it, and prepared themselves here to receive an exceeding weight of glory hereafter. Do you not understand that such men arise above angels?—that they have kingdoms while angels have none?—that they are crowned kings and princes over their own descendants which will become as numerous as the sands on the sea shore, while the angels have neither wives, sons, nor daughters to be crowned over? Shall a young, moral, virtuous woman, because she does not find a young man that is suitable to her nature, or worthy of her, shall she be deprived of this exaltation in the eternal world, because of the gentile laws of modern christendom? No. The Latter Day Saints believe otherwise. We believe that woman is just as good as man, if she does as well. If a good man is entitled to a kingdom of glory, to a reward and crown, and has the privilege of swaying a scepter in the eternal world, a good woman is entitled to the same, and should be placed by his side, and have the privilege of enjoying all the glory, honor and blessings that are bestowed upon her lord and husband. If she cannot get any lord or husband through whom she can trust herself for exaltation to that glory, who can blame her for going into a family where she thinks she will be secure?

These are some of the reasons in favor of polygamy. Many people think it strange that there should be a whole territory of polygamists, organized in the midst of christendom. It is so contrary, say they, to our institutions, and to the traditions of our society and nation, and to the practise of our forefathers that have lived for many generations past. But did you never reflect that it is possible for some of the institutions, traditions and practices of our forefathers to be incorrect? Look at the vast number of traditions that have had their place upon the earth, and that, too, among the most enlightened generations, which are now entirely discarded. Look at the laws which existed but a few years ago in enlightened England, where a man, if he went into a shop, being hungry, and took the amount of five shillings' worth, he must be hung up by the neck.

If a man was almost ready to perish with starvation, as thousands and millions often are in Great Britain, and should go into a neighboring park and take a sheep to preserve his life and the life of his family, he must be hung up by the neck. The people thought these were wholesome laws, when they existed; they were just as sincere in supposing these laws to be good, as the people of the United States are in supposing there should be a severe law against polygamy.

Now let me say, plainly and boldly, without the fear of contradiction, that the citizens of Utah are transgressing no law of man by taking a plurality of wives. But it is asserted by some that we are transgressing the traditions and institutions that are established among civilized nations. We admit this freely, and the people of the United States are transgressing that law that was in force in old England about sheep stealing; for they suffer many of their sheep stealers to go unhung; and if a man steals five shillings' worth of provisions, they do not hang him up.

Why have the American nation abolished, not only many of the traditions, customs, and institutions of other civilized nations which have been handed down for so many ages, but have even abolished and discarded many of their criminal laws? Why have they made these innovations upon civilized society? Is it not possible that the sovereign states of this enlightened nation may be misguided in regard to their strict laws which they have passed against polygamy as it was for our forefathers to be misguided in their strict laws against witchcraft in Massachusetts, where every man and woman must be put to death for a witch, if somebody became prejudiced against them? This was a law among our forefathers in enlightened America, but a short period back. They thought they were right, and were