

# Marriage

*Discourse by Elder Orson Pratt, delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, August 31, 1873.*

I will read a portion of the Word of God found in the 19th chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew, commencing at the 3rd verse—

The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female,

And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

That portion of these sayings of Jesus to which I wish more especially to call your attention, is contained in the 6th verse—“Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” There are some few things which transpire in our world in which the hand of God is specially manifest. We might name some things ordained of God, and which he himself has given to the children of men for their observance. Such are the ordinance of baptism, the Lord’s Supper, now being administered to the Saints in this congregation, and the ordinance of confirmation by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost. These ordinances have been ordained of God; he is their Author, and he confers authority upon his servants to officiate therein, and without authority from God to do so, all such administrations are illegal. In addition to these we might name a variety of other ordinances, such as ordinations to the ministry—ordaining a person to officiate in the office and calling of an Apostle, and in the offices and callings of Elders, Priests, Teachers, &c., without which no man can perform the duties of these several offices so as to be acceptable in the sight of God.

But, to be brief, we will come to the point more fully. God has appointed marriage, and it is as much a sacred and religious ordinance as baptism for the remission of sins, confirmation, ordination to the ministry, or the administration of the Lord’s Supper. There is no distinction with regard to the divinity of these ordinances—one is just as much divine as the other, one is a religious ordinance as much as the other, and, therefore, people of all sects and parties in this great Republic, should be left free to administer them according to the dictates of their own consciences. In other words, Congress should not assume to be the dictator of my conscience nor of yours. What I mean by this is, that if I am a minister, Congress, or the President of the United States, has no right, by virtue of the Constitution, to say how I shall administer the ordinance of marriage to any couple who may come to me for that purpose; because I have a conscience in regard to this matter. It is an ordinance appointed of God; it is a religious ordinance; hence Congress should not enact a law prescribing, for the people in any part of the Republic, a certain form in which the ordinance of marriage shall be administered. Why should they not do this? Because it is a violation of religious principles, and of that great fundamental principle in the Constitution of our country which provides that Congress shall make no law in regard to religious matters that would, in the least degree, infringe upon the rights of any man or woman in this Republic in regard to the form of their religion.

Perhaps some may make the inquiry—“What shall we do with those who make no profession of religion, some of whom are infidels, or what may be termed ‘nothingarians,’ believing in no particular religious principle or creed? They want to enter the state of matrimony, and, in addition to religious authority, should there not be a civil authority for the solemnization of marriage among these non-religionists?” Yes; we will admit that, inasmuch as marriage is an important institution, it is the right and privilege of the Legislatures of States and Territories to frame certain laws, so that all people may have the privilege of selecting civil or religious authority, according to the dictates of their consciences. If a Methodist wishes to be married according to the Methodist creed and

institutions, Congress should make no law infringing upon the rights of that body of religionists, but they should have the privilege of officiating just as their consciences dictate. The same argument will apply to the Presbyterians, Quakers, Baptists, and every religious denomination to be found in this Republic, not excepting the Latter-day Saints. Then, as regards the non-religionist, if he wishes to become a married person, and does not wish to have his marriage solemnized according to the form used by any religious denomination, it should be left open to him to comply with such forms as the Legislature may prescribe. This is leaving it to the choice of the individual, and this is as it ought to be, and as it is guaranteed to us, so far as other ordinances are concerned. For instance, Congress would never think of making a law in regard to the form of baptism, or of appointing a Federal officer to go into one of the Territories of this Union, and decree that he only should be authorized to administer the ordinance of baptism. Do we not know that the whole people of this Republic would cry out against such an infringement of the Constitution of our country? Every man and every woman who knows the least about the great principles of religious liberty would at once say, "Let the various religious bodies of the Territory choose for themselves in regard to the mode of baptism; a Federal officer is not the person to prescribe the mode or to administer the ordinance of baptism."

Why not this reasoning apply to marriage as well as to baptism? Can you make a distinction so far as the divinity of the two ordinances is concerned? I cannot. I read here in the last verse of my text, "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder." It will be perceived from this sentence, that God has something to do in the joining together of male and female; that is, when it is done according to His mind and will: we will make that a condition. But we will say that, in all cases under the whole heavens, where a couple are joined together, and God has anything to do with it, he does not ask Congress to make a law, nor the President of the United States to appoint a form, and he will sanction it. No, he claims the right, and his children claim that God has the privilege, to prescribe the form or ceremony, and the words to be used; and when that ceremony is performed by divine authority, we may then say, in the fullest sense of the term, that they are joined together divinely, and not by some civil law.

The union of male and female I consider to be one of the most important ordinances which God has established; and if its solemnization had been left entirely to the whims and notions of men, we might have had as many different ways of performing the matrimonial rite, as we have of administering the ordinance of baptism. You know that in the performance of the baptismal rite, some believe in sprinkling, and some in pouring; some societies believe in immersion after they have obtained the remission of sins; others, like Alexander Campbell and his followers, believe that immersion is to be administered for the remission of sins. Another class believe in being immersed face foremost; others, again, believe in being immersed three times—once in the name of the Father, once in the name of the Son, and once in the name of the Holy Ghost. Taking all these classes as churches, they are no doubt sincere; they have been instructed by their teachers, until they sincerely believe in these several forms of baptism.

Now, if Congress, or the legislative assemblies in the different States and Territories, were permitted to make laws regulating this they would perhaps have many other forms besides those I have named, which they would force the people under heavy penalties to comply with. And so in regard to marriage. If Congress should undertake to make a law to govern the Methodists, for instance, in the solemnization of marriage, they would not like it, neither would the Presbyterians, nor Baptists. A man belonging to either of these denominations would say, "Here is a law which prohibits me from exercising my religious faith, and compels me to be married by a justice of the peace, or a federal officer, or some person who, perhaps, does not believe in God, and who has no respect for the ordinances of heaven. I am compelled by the laws of the land to have him officiate and pronounce me and my 'intended,' husband and wife, or to remain unmarried." The Constitution does not contemplate this forcing of the human mind in regard to that which is ordained of God. If I, believing in God and in the ordinances which he has instituted, am forced to be married by an unbeliever, perhaps a drunkard and an immoral man, or I do not care if he is a believer in some kind of a creed, if I am satisfied that he has not authority to officiate in the union of the sexes, and I am compelled to be married by him, would it answer my conscience? Could I consider myself joined together by the Lord? It is inconsistent to suppose that I could feel so, and in the very nature of things the solemnization of the marriage ceremony, as well as all other religious ordinances, are matters which should be left for all persons to act in as they feel disposed.

But we will pass on; we must not dwell too long on this subject. My reason, however, for making these few remarks is to prove that the ordinance of marriage is divine—that God has ordained it. I want it particularly understood by this congregation that, in order to be joined together of the Lord, so that no man has the right to put you asunder, the Lord must have a hand in relation to the marriage, the same as he has in relation to baptism.

Now I inquire if any of the religious societies on the earth, with the exception of the Latter-day Saints, have received any special form in relation to the marriage ceremony? If they have, from what source have they received it? Did they invent it themselves? Did a learned body of priests get together in conference and, by their own wisdom, without any revelation from heaven, make up a certain form by which the male and the female should be joined in marriage? Or how they have come in possession of it? They have invented it themselves, as you can find by reading the disciplines, creeds and articles of faith, which almost every religious society possesses, and which some of them have possessed for a long period of time. If we go back for several hundred years, we shall find some of these forms in existence. In the Roman Catholic church the ritual of marriage has existed for many generations. The same is true with the Greek church, a numerous branch of the Catholics who broke off from the church established at Rome, a few centuries after Christ. Martin Luther also had his views in relation to the marriage ordinance. He was a polygamist in principle, as you will find in his published writings. We have an account of him, in connection with six or seven others, ministers of his faith, advising a certain prince in Europe to take unto himself a second wife, his first wife being still alive, Luther and these ministers saying that it was not contrary to the Scriptures. John Calvin had his notions on the subject, but each and all of the ceremonies of marriage in use among the various Christian churches, the Catholics as well as Protestants, from the days of the first Reformation, several hundred in number, down to our own day, are the inventions of men; for, amongst them all, where can you find one which claims that God has said anything to them about marriage, or anything else pertaining to their officiations as ministers in his cause? Not one; the whole of them claim that the Bible contains the last revelation that was ever given from heaven. Hence, if their claim be true, God never said a word to Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, or any other reformer, about their ministry, the order of marriage, baptism, or anything else. If their claim be true—that the last revelation God ever gave was to John on the Isle of Patmos, what conclusion must we come to in regard to them? We must conclude that all their administrations are illegal. If I have been baptized by the Presbyterians, Church of England, Roman Catholics, Greek church, Wesleyans, or by any other religious denomination which denies any later revelation than the Bible, my baptism is good for nothing. God has had nothing to do with it, never having spoken to or called the minister who officiated, as Aaron was called, that is, by new revelation.

“Well,” says one, “that is unchristianizing the world.” I know, according to the views contained in the Bible, that it is unchristianizing it in one of the most fundamental points—it shows that all the ordinances and ceremonies of the Christian world, being administered in the name of the Trinity, without new revelation, are illegal and of none effect, and that God does not record them in the heavens, though they may be recorded by man on the earth. But when a man is called by new revelation, it alters the case. When God speaks or sends an angel, and a man is called and ordained, not by uninspired men who deny new revelation, but by divine authority, when he administers baptism, or any other ordinance of the Gospel, it is legal, and what is legal and sealed on earth is legal and sealed in heaven, and when such an administration is recorded here on the earth, it is also recorded in the archives of heaven: and in the great judgment day, when mankind are brought before the bar of Jehovah, the Great Judge of the quick and dead, to give an account of the deeds done in the body, it will then be known whether an individual has officiated in or received ordinances by divine appointment: and if not, such administration being illegal, will be rejected of God.

“Oh but,” says one, “such a person, officiating or being administered to, may have been sincere.” Yes, I admit that. Sincerity is a good thing, and without it there can be no real Christians; but sincerity does not make a person a true child of God; it requires something more than that. If sincerity alone were sufficient to make a person a child of God, then the heathens, when they wash in the Ganges, worship crocodiles, the sun, moon, stars, or graven images, or when they fall down and are crushed beneath the cars of Juggernaut, would be children of God; for in these various acts, they certainly give proof of their sincerity, and if, according to the ideas of some persons, that only were necessary to make them God’s children, they would certainly be right. But it is not so. Sincerity

undoubtedly shows the existence of a good principle in the heart of either heathen or sectarian, but it does not show that its possessor is right, or that he has received the true doctrine; it only shows that he is sincere.

Let us come back again to the subject of the administration of ordinances by divine appointment. I said their baptisms are illegal. Now let me go a little farther, and say that the ordinance of marriage is illegal among all people, nations and tongues, unless administered by a man appointed by new revelation from God to join the male and female as husband and wife. Says one—"You do not mean to say that all our marriages are also illegal, as well as our baptisms?" Yes, I do, so far as God is concerned. That is taking a very broad standpoint; but I am telling you that which is my belief; and I presume, so far as I am acquainted, it is the belief of the Latter-day Saints throughout the world, that all the marriages of our forefathers, for many long generations past, have been illegal in the sight of God. They have been legal in the sight of men; for men have framed the laws regulating marriage, not by revelation, but by their own judgment; and our progenitors were married according to these laws, and hence their marriages were legal, and their children were legitimate, so far as the civil law was concerned; and this is as true of our own day as of the past; but in the sight of heaven these marriages are illegal, and the children illegitimate.

"Well," says one, "how are you going to make these marriages legal? Here are a man and woman, who were married, according to the civil law, before they ever heard of your doctrines; but they have come to an understanding of them, and now is there any possible way to make their marriage legitimate, in the sight of heaven?" Yes. How? By having them re-married by a man who has authority from God to do it. This has been done in almost numberless instances; and it is the same with baptism. Has any person, baptized by the Methodists, Church of England, Baptists or Presbyterians, been admitted into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, on his old baptism? Never. Not one among the hundreds of thousands who have joined this Church, since its rise in 1830, has been admitted on his or her old baptism. Why not? Because we do not believe in their old baptisms. The Lord has commanded his servants to go forth and preach the Gospel, and to baptize all who come unto them for baptism. If we find a sincere man, who has gone through a correct form of baptism—and many have, such as the Campbellites and the Baptists—we tell him that, if he believes in our doctrine, he must be baptized over again, because his former baptism was administered by a man who denied new revelation, and who did not believe that any had been given, later than that contained in the New Testament. It is the same in regard to marriages.

The people are very anxious that their children should be legitimate, and that their marriages should be so solemnized that God will recognize them in the eternal worlds; and hence we say to all the thousands and scores of thousands who come here from foreign lands—"Come forward and be married according to divine appointment, that you may be legally husband and wife in the sight of heaven."

Now let us go a little further. Having explained to you the authority necessary to join men and women in the Lord, we will now explain the nature of marriage itself—whether it is a limited condition, to terminate with what we call "time," or whether it is a union which will exist throughout all the ages of eternity. This is an important question. So far as the ordinance of baptism is concerned, we know that does not relate to time alone. It must be administered in time, or during our existence in mortal life; but its results reach beyond death, and the burial in, and coming forth out of, the water are typical of the death and resurrection of our Savior. When we come forth out of the water, we rise to a newness of life, and it is declared to all people who witness the performance of the ordinance, that the candidates thus receiving baptism, expect to come forth from the tomb, that their bodies will be resurrected, bone coming to its bone, flesh and skin coming upon them, and the skin covering them; that if they are faithful to the end they will come forth immortal beings, and will inherit celestial glory. Thus you see that baptism points forward to eternity, its effects reaching beyond the grave. So in regard to marriage.

Marriage, when God has a hand in it, extends to all the future ages of eternity. The Latter-day Saints never marry a man and a woman for time alone, unless under certain circumstances. Certain circumstances would permit this, as in a case where a woman, for instance, is married to all eternity to a husband, a good faithful man, and he dies. After his death, she may be married to a living man, for time alone, that is until death shall separate her from her second husband. Under such circumstances, marriage for time is legal. But when it comes to marriage pertaining to a couple, neither of whom has ever been married before, the Lord has ordained that that marriage, if performed according to his law, by divine authority and appointment, shall have effect after the resurrection from the dead,

and shall continue in force from that time throughout all the ages of eternity.

Says one—"What are you going to do with that Scripture which says that in the resurrection, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage?" I am going to let it stand precisely as it is, without the least alteration. A man who is so foolish as to neglect the divine ordinance of marriage for eternity, here in this world, and does not secure to himself a wife for all eternity, will not have the opportunity of doing so in the resurrection; for Jesus says, that after the resurrection there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. It is an ordinance that pertains to this world, and here it must be attended to; and parties neglecting it willfully, here in this life, deprive themselves of the blessings of that union forever in the world to come. It is so with regard to baptism. We are bringing up these two divine ordinances to show you how they harmonize. A man who, in this life, hears the Gospel and knows that it is his duty to be baptized in order that he may come forth in the morning of the resurrection with a celestial, glorified body, like unto that of our Lord Jesus Christ, and neglects baptism and dies without attending to the ordinance, cannot be baptized himself after the resurrection of the dead, any more than he can be married after the resurrection of the dead. Why not? Because God has appointed that both marriage and baptism shall be attended to in the flesh, and if neglected here, the blessings are forfeited.

We read, in our text, something about the first marriage which took place on our earth. Much has been said in relation to this event, and inasmuch as God ordained this sacred rite, I feel disposed to bring it up as a type of all future marriages. The first pair of whose marriage we have any account, on this earth, were immortal beings. "What! You do not mean to say that immortal beings marry, do you?" Yes, that is the first example we have on record. Inquires one—"Do you mean to say that Adam was an immortal being?" What is the nature of an immortal being? It is one who has not had the curse of death pronounced upon him. Had Adam the curse of death pronounced upon him, when the Lord brought Eve—the woman—and gave her to him? No, he had not. Had the Lord pronounced the curse of death upon Eve at the time he brought her to Adam? He had not. Why not? Because neither of them had transgressed. It is said in the New Testament that death entered into this world by transgression, and in no other way. If Adam and Eve had never transgressed the law of God, would they not be living now? They certainly would; and they would continue to live on millions of years hence. Can you, by stretching your thoughts into the ages of futurity, imagine a point of time, wherein Adam and Eve would have been mortal and subject to death if it had not been for their transgression? No, you cannot. Well, then, were they not immortal? They were to all intents and purposes two immortal beings, male and female, joined together in marriage in the beginning. Was that marriage for eternity, or until death should separate them? I remember attending some weddings when I was a youth, and this sentence has generally been incorporated in all the marriage ceremonies I have seen performed by civil authority—"I pronounce you husband and wife, until death shall you separate." A very short contract, is it not? Only lasts for a little time, perhaps death might come tomorrow or next day, and that would be a very short period to be married, very different from the marriage instituted in the beginning; between the two immortal beings. Death was not taken into consideration in their case; it had never been pronounced. The Lord had said nothing about death, but he had united them together, with the intention of that union continuing through all the ages of eternity.

Inquires one, "Did they not forfeit this by eating the forbidden fruit?" We have no account that they did; but supposing they did, can you show me one thing that our first parents forfeited by the Fall that was not restored by the atonement of Jesus? Not a thing. If they forfeited the life of their bodies, the atonement of Christ and his victory over the grave by the resurrection restored to Adam and Eve that immortality they possessed before they transgressed; and whatever they lost or forfeited by the Fall was restored by Jesus Christ. But we have no account that Adam and Eve forfeited the privilege of their eternal union by their transgression; hence, when they, by virtue of the atonement of Christ, come forth from the grave (if they did not come forth at the resurrection of Christ), they will have immortal bodies, and they will have all the characteristics, so far as their bodies are concerned, that they possessed before the Fall. They will rise from the grave male and female, immortal in their natures, and the union which was instituted between them before they became mortal will be restored, and, as they were married when immortal beings, they will continue to be husband and wife throughout all the future ages of eternity.

It may be inquired, "What is the object of that? Marriage, we supposed, was instituted principally, that this world

might be filled with inhabitants, and if that was the object, when the earth has received its full measure of creation, what is the use of this eternal union in marriage, continuing after the resurrection?"

Have you never read the first great commandment given in the Bible? God said, "Be fruitful and multiply." Did he give this commandment to mortal beings? No, he gave it to two immortal beings. "What! Do you mean to say that immortal beings can multiply, as well as be married for all eternity?" I do. God gave the command to these two immortal personages, before the Fall, showing clearly and plainly that immortal beings had that capacity, or else God would never have given it to them. I will admit that they had no power to beget children of mortality; it required a fall to enable them to do that, and without that no mortal beings could have been produced. But we see what has been entailed upon the children of Adam, by the Fall. Instead of his offspring being immortal, they come forth into this world and partake of all that fallen nature that Adam and Eve had after they fell; and they have also inherited the death of the body. If we are to be restored to immortality with them, we must be restored to that heavenly union of marriage, or else we lose something. If they had the power to multiply children of immortality, and if the command was given to them to do so before they became mortal, if their children are ever restored to what was lost by the Fall, they must be restored to that also. Here then is a sufficient object why multiplication should continue after the resurrection.

"But," inquires someone, "will not this world be sufficiently full, without resurrected beings bringing forth children through all ages of eternity?" We must recollect that this world is not the only one that God has made. He has been engaged from all eternity in the formation of worlds; that is, there have been worlds upon worlds created by those who have held the power, and authority, and the right to create; and an endless chain of worlds has thus been created, and there never was a period in past duration, but what there were worlds. The idea of a first world is out of the question, just as much as the idea of a first foot of space, or the first foot in endless line. Take an endless line and undertake to find the first foot, yard or mile of it. It cannot be done, any more than you can find out the first minute, hour or year of endless duration. There is no first minute, hour or year in endless duration, and there is no first in an endless chain of worlds, and God has been at work from all eternity in their formation. What for? Is it merely to see his power exercised? No: it is that they might be peopled. Peopled by whom? By those who have the power to multiply their species. There never will be a time that there will be a final stop to the making of worlds; their increase will continue from this time henceforth and forever; and as the number of worlds will be endless, so will be the number of the offspring of each faithful pair. They will be like the stars in the sky or the sands upon the seashore; and worlds will be filled up by the posterity of those who are counted worthy to come forth, united with that heavenly and eternal form of marriage which was administered to Adam and Eve in the beginning.

"But you told us a little while ago, that our marriages were illegal, and now how can our species be multiplied after the resurrection? It cannot be, there is no marrying nor giving in marriage then. What then will become of the people, unless there is some provision, ordained by the Lord, whereby the living can act for the dead?" Take away that principle, and amen to all those who have not been married for eternity, as well as time, so far as the multiplication of their species is concerned; for you cannot get married there. But if there is a provision by which those who are living here in the flesh, may officiate in sacred and holy ordinances, for and in behalf of the dead, then the question will arise, How far do these ordinances extend?

Some may say, "Perhaps they only extend to baptism. We believe that baptism for the dead is true, because the Scriptures speak very plainly about that in the 15th chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, in which, in arguing about the resurrection of the dead, the Apostle says—'Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why then are they baptized for the dead?'" Sure enough, it would have been useless for those Corinthians to have been baptized for the dead, if there had been no resurrection. But Paul very well knew that the Corinthians understood that they should be baptized for their dead; and that they were actually practicing that ordinance, that their ancestors, who had been dead for generations, might have the privilege of coming forth in the resurrection. Baptism was typical of their burial and resurrection, and hence Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, used it as an argument in support of the principle of the resurrection.

But is there any inconsistency, in supposing that other ordinances may be officiated in, for, and in behalf of the

dead? Or shall we say, that God has merely selected the one ordinance of baptism, and told the living to officiate in that for the dead, and to neglect all others? If, however, we believe that God is a God of order and of justice, it is reasonable to suppose that if, by his permission and ordination, the living can do anything for the dead, they can do everything for them, so far as ordinances are concerned. That is, if they can be baptized for and in behalf of the dead, they can be confirmed, and can also officiate in the ordinance of marriage for them. Why be so inconsistent, as to suppose that God should ordain a law by which the living can be baptized for the dead, and do no more for them? God is more merciful and consistent than that; and when he spoke in our day and revealed the plan of salvation, he, as far as we were ready to receive it, gave us a system, by which the dead who have died without the opportunity of hearing and obeying the Gospel, may be officiated for in all respects, and redeemed to the uttermost and saved with a full salvation; and hence, Latter-day Saints, there is hope for our generations who have lived on the earth, from our day back to the falling away of the church—some sixteen or seventeen centuries ago. You can reach back to that day and pick up all your generations—the hearts of the children searching after the fathers from generation to generation; and the ancient fathers looking down to their children, to do something for them, just as the Lord promised in the last chapter of Malachi. There is a promise that before the great day of the Lord should come, it should burn as an oven, and all the proud and they that do wickedly should become as stubble. But before that terrible day should come, God would send Elijah the Prophet to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children, lest the Lord should come and smite the earth with a curse. As much as to say, that the children would perish as well as the fathers, if this turning of their hearts towards each other did not take place. Paul, in speaking about their forefathers, to those who lived in his day, said—“They without us cannot be made perfect, neither can we be made perfect without them.” There must be a union between ancient and modern generations, between us and our ancestry. To say that God would be kind and merciful to a certain generation, and reveal his Gospel through a holy angel for their special benefit, and leave all other generations without hope, is inconsistent. When God begins a work, it is worthy of himself—Godlike in its nature, soaring into high heaven, and penetrating the regions of darkness, for those who are shut up in their prison house, that liberty may be proclaimed to the captives; a plan that not only pertains to the present, but reaches back into the past, and saves to the uttermost all who are entitled to, and are willing to receive his preferred mercy. But these ordinances must be attended to here, in this world and probation. This is the law of the Great Jehovah. In the resurrection these things cannot be done.

Having explained marriage for eternity, let me explain another portion of my text—“Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

There seems to have been, in the beginning, so far as we have any account in the Bible, two personages, one man and one woman—Adam and Eve, united for all eternity. They had power to multiply their species, and their posterity will become so numerous that, in the coming ages of eternity, they will be innumerable. Some, perhaps, may argue that, inasmuch as in the beginning of this creation God saw proper to place only one pair to begin the work of peopling the world, there could not be such a thing, divinely ordained and appointed, as a man having two wives living at the same time. In answer to this let me ask, Was there no man of God in ancient days, to whom the Lord revealed himself, who had two or more wives living with him at the same time? Without devoting much time to the discussion of this subject, I will refer to the special instance, recorded in the Book of Genesis, of Jacob, afterwards surnamed Israel, because of his mighty faith in, and power with God. He had four living wives. Was his practice in this respect sanctioned by the Almighty? Read about Jacob, when he was a youth, before he was married at all, and see what peculiar favors the Lord bestowed upon him. He, upon one occasion, fled from the country where his forefathers, Abraham and Isaac, had sojourned, to escape from his brother Esau, and he laid himself down on the earth, having a rock for his pillow. He prayed to the Lord, and the Lord heard his prayer, and the visions of heaven were opened to his mind. He saw a ladder ascending from the place where he was sleeping, that reached into the heavens; he saw the angels of God ascending and descending upon that ladder; he heard the voice of the Lord proclaiming to him what a great and powerful man he should become, that the Lord would multiply him, &c., and his seed should be as numerous as the stars of heaven, and Jacob worshiped the Lord from that time forth. He went down into Syria, and there he entered the service of one Laban, as a herder of sheep. In process of time he married one of the daughters of Laban, whose name was Leah. Shortly afterwards he married a second daughter of this Laban, whose name was Rachel. In a very short period of time he married another woman,

who lived in the household of Laban, named Bilhah, and in a little time after that he married a fourth woman, whose name was Zilpah. Here were four women married to Jacob, and in the book of Genesis they are called his wives. Now, did the Lord sanction, or did he not sanction the marriage of Jacob with these four wives? And did he, after Jacob had married them, condescend to hear Jacob's prayers? We find Jacob continually receiving revelation after this, and that is pretty conclusive proof that he was not rejected of the Lord because of his having more than one wife.

When the children of Jacob and his four wives became numerous, he resolved to leave that foreign country, and returned to the land where Abraham, and his father, Isaac, had lived. He reached the brook Jabbok, and then sent his company on before him, and he began to wrestle in prayer with God. He felt some alarm in consequence of the enmity of his brother Esau, who lived in the country to which he was going, and he wrestled and plead with the Lord. The Lord sent an angel down in order to try the faith of Jacob, and to see whether he would give up wrestling and praying or not. The angel undertook to get away from him, but Jacob caught hold of him and said, "I will not let thee go until thou bless me." The angel, of course, did not exercise supernatural power all at once, but he continued to wrestle with Jacob as though he desired to get away from him, and they struggled there all night long, and at last, finding that the only way he could overpower him was to perform a miracle, the angel touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and caused the sinew to shrink, producing lameness. Here, then, was a man with mighty faith. He wrestled all night with one whom he had reason to believe was a divine personage, and he would not let him go without receiving a blessing from him. The Lord finally blessed him, and said that, as a man who would take no denial, as a prince, he had prevailed with God, and received blessings at his hands.

Some people suppose that this was Jacob's first conversion, and that he got his wives before his conversion. But we will trace the history of Jacob a little further. The day after he had wrestled with the angel, he went across the brook, and expecting Esau to meet him with a great army of men, he felt a little fearful. So he took one wife with her children, and sent them ahead; behind her he set another wife with her children; still behind her he set the third wife and her children, and, last of all, the fourth wife and her children. By and by Esau came along, having passed by the flocks and herds which Jacob had sent ahead as a present to him, and he meets the wife and children placed first in the row. Probably he looked at them, and wondered who they could all be. He passed the second and third company, and finally he came to Jacob and the fourth company, and, said he, "Jacob, who are all these?" The answer was—"These are they whom the Lord my God has graciously given to thy servant." What! A man who, according to Dr. Newman, was converted only the night previous, telling his brother that the Lord had given him four wives and a great many children? Yes, and it was all right, too.

"But," says one, "How are you going to reconcile this with that portion of your text, also a quotation from the forepart of Genesis, which says—'and they twain shall be one flesh?'" Are they one flesh, or at least are they one personage? No, the Lord did not say that they should be, but they twain should be one flesh. In what respect? Says one, "I suppose in respect to their children, as the flesh of both man and wife is incorporated in their children, and they thus become one flesh." Let us look at it in this light. When the first child of Jacob's first wife was born, if it had reference to the children, they twain were one flesh then. By and by Rachel brings forth a son, and if the "one flesh" had reference to the children, Jacob and Rachel were one flesh in that child. By and by Jacob and Bilhah become parents, and they are also one flesh in the child born unto them; and lastly Zilpah has a child, and she and Jacob are also "one flesh therein."

"Well," says one, "If it does not refer to the children, perhaps it may refer to that oneness of mind which should exist between husband and wife." Very well, let us look at it in this light. Can there be a union between two individuals so far as the mind is concerned? Let us see what Jesus said. "Father, I pray not for these alone"—meaning the Twelve Apostles—"whom thou hast given me out of the world, but I pray for all them that shall believe on me through their words, that they all may be one as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us." What! more than two be in one? Yes. It matters not if there were two thousand that believed on Jesus through the Apostles' words, they were to be one in their affections, desires, &c., and it might include and would include all the members of the Church of God that ever did live in any dispensation, and remained faithful to the end, for they all will be one as Jesus and the Father are one.

"They twain shall be one flesh." If it means in regard to mental qualities and faculties it may incorporate the four wives of Jacob, as well as one. Take it any way you please and we find that God did acknowledge it, for he blessed these four wives and all their children. Look at their posterity, for instance. God so honored the twelve sons of Jacob's four wives, that he made them the heads, the patriarchs of the whole twelve tribes of Israel. The land was named after them—the land Reuben, the land Simeon, the land Judah, etc.; and these tribes acknowledged these polygamist children as their fathers and patriarchs.

We may go beyond this life, to the next, and we shall find that the honors conferred by God upon these twelve sons are continued there. Christians believe that there will be a holy Jerusalem come down from God out of heaven, which will be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. This holy city which will descend from God out of heaven, will have a wall round it, and in this wall there will be a certain number of the most beautiful gates—three on the north, three on the south, three on the east and three on the west. Each of these gates will be made of one pearl—a precious stone most beautiful to look upon. On each of these gates there will be a certain name—one will have inscribed upon it the name of Judah, another Levi, another Simeon, and so on until the whole twelve gates will be named after the twelve sons of Jacob and his four polygamic wives; thus we see that, instead of the Lord calling them bastards; and forbidding them to enter the congregation of the Lord until the tenth generation, he honors them above all people, making them the most conspicuous in the holy city, having their names written on its very gates.

Of course, everybody who enters therein must be very holy, or the city could not be holy, for without the city, we are told, there will be dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, adulterers, murderers and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, but all within will be holy and righteous—such men as Abraham and a great many others, who have had more than one wife. If Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are to be saved in the kingdom of God in that holy city, will not monogamists, who only believe in having one wife, be honored if they have the privilege of entering there? We are told that many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, ancient polygamists, the latter with his four wives, and will be counted worthy to be saved therein; while many who profess to be the children of the kingdom, will be cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. This is what Jesus says, consequently I do not think that those who have formed the idea that only the monogamic system of marriage is accepted of the Almighty, will feel in those days as they do now. I do not think that class of persons will be ashamed, if they have the privilege of coming forth in the morning of the first resurrection, of entering into that holy city, even if they see the names of Jacob's polygamic children upon its gates. There may be some so delicate in their feelings as to say—"O, no, Lord, I don't want to go in at that gate, the people are polygamists, I would like you to take me to some other place." They go to the next gate, and the next, until they have been to each one, and they all are polygamic. Then the inquiry may be—"Is there not some other city where the people are not polygamists?" "Oh yes, there are plenty of places, but outside of this city there are dogs, sorcerers, whore-mongers, adulterers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. Do you want to associate with them?" "Well, I think their society will be a little more pleasant than that of those old polygamists."

Will this be the way people will reason, when they come before this holy city? No, I think they will be very glad to get into Abraham's bosom if he has more than one wife. You remember poor Lazarus the beggar, who died seeking a crumb from the rich man's table. After his death he was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. By and by the rich man died, and he, being in torment, lifted up his eyes and saw Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom, that is, associating with the polygamist Abraham. How this rich man did plead! "Oh, father Abraham, send Lazarus to me!" "What do you want?" "Let him come and dip the tip of his finger in water and touch my burning tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." "Oh, no," says Abraham, "there is a great gulf between you and me, you must stay where you are. Lazarus is in my bosom, and he can't be sent on such an errand as that." "Well, then, father Abraham, if you cannot send Lazarus to perform this act of mercy on my behalf, do send him to my brethren who are living on the earth, and warn them, that they come not to this place." He did not want anybody else to go there, he was so tormented himself. "No," said Abraham, "they have Moses and the Prophets; they have the revelations of God before them; if they will not believe them, they would not though Lazarus or anybody else should be sent to them from the dead."

That is the case with this generation also. If they will not believe what is testified to and spoken of in the Bible, in regard to marriage, the holy ordinance ordained of God, they would not believe though Lazarus or anybody else were sent from the eternal worlds to preach these things unto them. They would ridicule then as they do now, and their cry, then as now, would be, "Congress, oh Congress, can't you do something to stop that awful corruption with which we are afflicted away up in the mountains? Can't you pass some laws that shall restrict those 'Mormons' and compel them to be married by some Federal officer who shall be sent into their Territory, and do away with that part of their religion? Oh Congress, do something to destroy this corruption out of our land. There is a people up in yonder mountains, who profess to believe just as the Bible teaches in many places, and we can't endure it. They believe in the Old Testament as well as the New, and it must be blasphemy."

Who said so? Did our forefathers, when they framed the Constitution, say that all who believed in the New Testament should have religious liberty, and that all who undertook to believe in the Old Testament should be turned out of this government, and be afflicted with some terrible penalty and law that should be passed by Congress? I think we have the privilege of believing in the Old Testament as well as the New. Amen.