

tinue, to increase in faith? for the business of this kingdom will increase, and the responsibility also; the labor will and must grow, and continue to increase, until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our God and His Christ. So much on tithing; you see where the failure is; it is in that point, and nowhere else.

It is not for any man to think he is a cipher—that what he can do will not tell in this matter, and say, “They will get along well enough without me;” but it is every man’s duty to lay it to heart, and help what he can with his earthly substance; though I wish you to understand distinctly that it is no commandment—you are left to act freely.

Let all the sheep stay in the Valley; also the cows; for they will give milk and butter, and replenish the stock. But when we speak of the horses, mules, and oxen, let every man look up his spare stock of this description, and with *them* help to liquidate these debts. Stock will now pay debts. I will use my stock for this purpose, and my brethren will do the same, until we have enough. I do not enjoin this upon you, as you have already paid the tithing which is required of you; except in some instances in the

money tithing. Had we received the money due to us, we should have had no debts; but this failure has been, and is now, in existence. I will take every kind of spare stock I have, except my cows and sheep, and wipe off these debts until they are cancelled; and now every man who will do the same, let him rise upon his feet. [*The whole congregation of two thousand men rose up to a man.*] Do you suppose we want to deprive you of your teams? It is not so, but we wished to know the state of your faith, so that when we are ready to call upon you, we can be sure our call will be responded to. I would not cripple any man, I would rather give him five yoke of oxen, than destroy his team, and you know it. [*Some of the brethren in the stand, not believing their own eyes, that the whole congregation rose, it was tried over again, to satisfy them, when the congregation all rose again to a man.*] Brother Hunter now knows what to do. Many of the brethren are killing their calves; don’t do this; if you cannot raise them, it will be better to give them away to those who can.

I bless you, and may the Lord bless you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CELESTIAL MARRIAGE.

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED BY ELDER ORSON PRATT, IN THE TABERNACLE,
GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, AUGUST 29, 1852.

It is quite unexpected to me, brethren and sisters, to be called upon to address you this forenoon; and still more so, to address you upon the prin-

ciple which has been named, namely, a plurality of wives.

It is rather new ground for me; that is, I have not been in the habit

of publicly speaking upon this subject; and it is rather new ground to the inhabitants of the United States, and not only to them, but to a portion of the inhabitants of Europe; a portion of them have not been in the habit of preaching a doctrine of this description; consequently, we shall have to break up new ground.

It is well known, however, to the congregation before me, that the Latter-day Saints have embraced the doctrine of a plurality of wives, as a part of their religious faith. It is not, as many have supposed, a doctrine embraced by them to gratify the carnal lusts and feelings of man; that is not the object of the doctrine.

We shall endeavour to set forth before this enlightened assembly some of the causes why the Almighty has revealed such a doctrine, and why it is considered a part and portion of our religious faith. And I believe that they will not, under our present form of government, (I mean the government of the United States,) try us for treason for believing and practising our religious notions and ideas. I think, if I am not mistaken, that the constitution gives the privilege to all the inhabitants of this country, of the free exercise of their religious notions, and the freedom of their faith, and the practice of it. Then, if it can be proven to a demonstration, that the Latter-day Saints have actually embraced, as a part and portion of their religion, the doctrine of a plurality of wives, it is constitutional. And should there ever be laws enacted by this government to restrict them from the free exercise of this part of their religion, such laws must be unconstitutional.

But, says the objector, we cannot see how this doctrine can be embraced as a matter of religion and faith; we can hardly conceive how it can be embraced only as a kind of domestic concern, something that pertains to do-

mestic pleasures, in no way connected with religion. In reply we will show you that it is incorporated as a part of our religion, and necessary for our exaltation to the fulness of the Lord's glory in the eternal world. Would you like to know the reasons? Before we get through, we will endeavour to tell you why we consider it an essential doctrine to glory and exaltation, to our fulness of happiness in the world to come.

We will first make a few preliminary remarks in regard to the existence of man, to his first existence in his first estate; and then say something in relation to his present state, and the bearing which it has upon his next or future state.

The "Mormons" have a peculiar doctrine in regard to our pre-existence, different from the views of the Christian world, so called, who do not believe that man had a pre-existence. It is believed, by the religious world, that man, both body and spirit, begins to live about the time that he is born into this world, or a little before; that then is the beginning of life. They believe, that the Lord, by a direct act of creation, formed, in the first place, man out of the dust of the ground; and they believe that man is possessed of both body and spirit, by the union of which he became a living creature. Suppose we admit this doctrine concerning the formation of the body from the dust; then how was the spirit formed? Why, says one, we suppose it was made by a direct act of creation, by the Almighty Himself; that He moulded the spirit of man, formed and finished it in a proper likeness to inhabit the tabernacle He had made out of the dust.

Have you any account of this in the Bible? Do the Scriptures declare that the spirit was formed at the time the tabernacle was made? No. All the tabernacles of the children of men that were ever formed, from remote

generations, from the days of Adam to this time, have been formed out of the earth. We are of the earth earthy. The tabernacle has been organized according to certain principles, and laws of organization, with bones, and flesh, and sinews, and skin. Now, where do you suppose all these tabernacles got their spirits? Does the Lord make a new spirit every time a tabernacle is made? if so, the work of creation, according to the belief of Christendom, did not cease on the seventh day. If we admit their views, the Lord must be continually making spirits to inhabit all the tabernacles of the children of men; he must make something like one thousand millions of spirits every century; he must be working at it every day, for there are many hundreds of individuals being born into the world every day. Does the Lord create a new spirit every time a new tabernacle comes into the world? That does not look reasonable, nor God-like.

But how is it, you inquire? Why the fact is, that being that animates this body, that gives life and energy, and power to move, to act, and to think: that being that dwells within this tabernacle is much older than what the tabernacle is. That spirit that now dwells within each man, and each woman, of this vast assembly of people, is more than a thousand years old, and I would venture to say, that it is more than five thousand years old.

But how was it made? when was it made? and by whom was it made? If our spirits existed thousands of years ago—if they began to exist—if there were a beginning to their organization, by what process was this organization carried on? Through what medium, and by what system of laws? Was it by a direct creation of the Almighty? Or were we framed according to a certain system of laws, in the same manner as our tabernacles? If we were to reason from analogy—if we admit analogical reasoning in the ques-

tion, what would we say? We should say, that our spirits were formed by generation, the same as the body or tabernacle of flesh and bones. But what says revelation upon the subject? We will see whether revelation and analogy will agree.

We read of a certain time when the corner stones of the earth were laid, and the foundations thereof were made sure—of a certain time when the Lord began to erect this beautiful and glorious habitation, the earth; then they had a time of joy. I do not know whether they had instruments of music, or whether they were engaged in the dance; but one thing is certain, they had great joy, and the heavens resounded with their shouts; yea, the Lord told Job, that all the sons of God shouted for joy, and the morning stars sang together, when the foundations of this globe were laid.

The SONS of God, recollect, shouted for joy, because there was a beautiful habitation being built, so that they could get tabernacles, and dwell thereon; they expected the time—they looked forward to the period; and it was joyful to them to reflect, that the creation was about being formed, the corner stone of it was laid, on which they might, in their times, and in their seasons, and in their generations, go forth and receive tabernacles for their spirits to dwell in. Do you bring it home to yourselves, brethren and sisters? Do you realize that you and I were there? Can you bring it to your minds that you and I were among that happy number that shouted for joy when this creation was made? Says one, I don't recollect it. No wonder! for your recollection is taken from you, because you are in a tabernacle that is earthly; and all this is right and necessary. The same is written of Jesus Christ himself, who had to descend below all things. Though he had wisdom to assist in the organization of this world; though