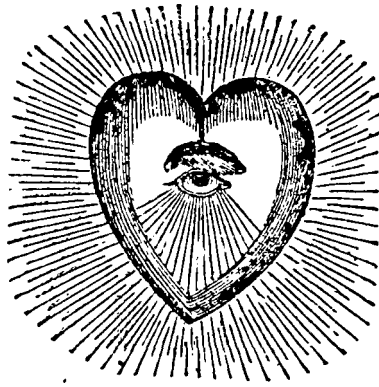


THE



SEER.

All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, See Ye, when He
lifteth up an Ensign on the Mountains.—*Isaiah* xviii, 3. ;

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THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF MAN.

(Continued.)

88. Besides the laws, given to govern each individual particle in its organized capacity, there are other laws, given to govern the whole body. These again are of a still higher order; for these laws which regulate the different parts of the organization for the general good of the union, are altogether insufficient to govern the body as a whole. For instance, by the laws regulating each particle, the whole system becomes angry at the same time, if a cause exist, exciting that passion; but this law is insufficient to control the passion when it is excited. Another law is required to regulate the action of the whole system while under the passion. Under the first law no one particle has a right to get angry while the others are pleased; they are bound by law to all get angry at once, or to all be pleased at once, that there may be a perfect agreement in their feelings. Under the second or higher law, the whole body of particles are required to govern the passions excited, in a certain manner, in accordance with the principles of justice and mercy that exist in the bosom of the one who gave the law. The spiritual body in its infancy is entirely ignorant, as a whole, of the nature of justice and mercy, good and evil, and such like qualities; but laws of justice and mercy, of good and evil, being given, the whole body learns to control itself according to those laws. A violation of any of these laws, immediately brings unhappiness—that is, the being is chastized, according to the nature of the offence, and the penalties annexed to the law; in this manner the system learns, by the things which it suffers, to obey this higher law which is very different from any of the preceding laws under which the particles have been educated. The nature of justice and mercy, good and evil, are thus actually learned by experience. Obedience to the laws of justice, and suffering the penalties of disobedience, impart, in the course of time, a sense of justice to the particles in their organized capacity: so likewise obedience to the laws of mercy, and the chastisements, resulting from the infringements of those laws, soon inform the organized particles, concerning the nature of mercy. In like manner, a sense of good and evil, and of all other like qualities, is obtained from the enjoyments resulting from obedience, and the miseries inflicted for disobedience, to the laws given to govern all those qualities and passions. All these qualities, therefore, are gained by experience. The laws, being given and adhered to, discipline and instruct the infant or youthful spirit in the knowledge of things, which previously it was entirely ignorant of.

89. As all the infant spirits are instructed under the same laws, they all acquire the same sense of justice, mercy, good, and evil. It is for this cause, that two or more spirits do not form different ideas of the nature of good and evil; so far as they have been properly educated and taught in the same law, one will not call good, evil; or evil, good; and another have a different idea of the same principles. Of course, there will be spirits, possessing different degrees of intelligence, depending on the obedience which they have rendered to the various systems of laws under which they have acted, during the past ages of eternity, and also depending upon the length of time in which they have been educated and taught in their spiritual organization. But so far as they have acquired knowledge, it has been through the medium of the same laws; consequently the same degree of knowledge in one, cannot differ in its nature from the same degree of knowledge in another.

90. If one class of spirits were educated under a system of laws which rewarded them for doing that which we call evil, and punished them for that which we call good: while another class were educated by laws of an opposite nature. These two classes of spirits, when brought together, would have entirely opposite ideas concerning good and evil. The fact that the spirits have, so far as their knowledge extends, the same ideas concerning the nature of justice and mercy, good and evil, virtue and vice—shows most clearly a cause for this sameness; now that which is preceded by a cause cannot be eternal; hence, there must have been a time, when this sameness of knowledge was acquired by the particles constituting each spiritual body. The capacities for perceiving this knowledge are eternal; but the exercise of these eternal capacities in acquiring a knowledge of the laws of good and evil had a beginning. We cannot conceive of millions of beings, having the same idea of the nature of good and evil, without introducing a cause to account for this sameness and likeness; and a cause always implies a beginning to the effects which follow.

But if millions of beings eternally possessed the same idea of the nature of good and evil, all causes for this sameness of idea would be excluded: they would possess this sameness by chance: if it were eternal, there would be no reason why even two beings should have the same views concerning anything: but when numberless millions of beings are perceived to have the same ideas in regard to the nature of different acts, calling one species of acts good, and another evil, it demonstrates, in the most incontrovertible manner, that these beings did not possess these ideas eternally, but that they acquired them from one common cause, which instructed and enlarged the eternal capacities in the same school of laws, that the same ideas, the same views, and the same knowledge, might pervade the whole, so far as they are instructed. This sameness of ideas will enable them to act in unison, not only for their own individual benefit, but for the benefit of the whole community or family of spirits with whom each is associated.

91. While we are obliged to admit the eternity of the substance and its capacities, on the other hand, we are compelled to admit a beginning to the organizations of the particles of this substance; there must also have been a time when the eternal capacities began to know good and evil, justice and mercy, love and hatred; for the sameness of these qualities, existing in the minds of all mankind shows that they must be derived qualities and therefore that they could not have possessed them eternally. All must at once see, that the moment a quality or thing is admitted to be eternal, all causes for the nature, or peculiarity, or sameness of the quality, and all causes for the particular magnitude or form of the thing or being, are totally excluded. In regard to that which is eternal, we would have no right to ask the questions, Why it is so? Why it possesses such a quality? Why it has a certain magnitude? Why it exists in a certain form? All such questions imply a cause, and, therefore, a beginning. If we were to admit that water was eter-

nal, then it would be entirely inconsistent to ask the question, Why one drop of pure water possessed precisely the same qualities of another? If both drops were eternal there would, in reality, be no cause for one being of the same nature as the other. As there would be no cause for any two drops, out of an infinite number, to be alike, we would have no reason to infer, prior to experience, that they would taste alike, or extinguish fire alike, or that drops of the same size would weigh alike, or that they would quench thirst alike, or that they would manifest any other qualities alike. If, on the examination of the drops, we found them to possess qualities alike, we would naturally inquire, How came they to be alike? The natural answer would be, They were designed to be alike for purposes beneficial to the universe. But if they were designed to be alike, there must have been a period before that design and before they were alike, and consequently their present qualities are not eternal, but acquired or derived from some anterior qualities. So it is in relation to the qualities of the human mind. The very fact that all human minds look upon certain acts to be good, and certain others to be evil, shows that the qualities of the mind are in many respects precisely alike. If they were eternal there would be no cause for any two, out of all mankind, to have any qualities alike: and no one would be able to infer, prior to experience, that any of the rest of mankind possessed qualities at all resembling his own. If the qualities were eternal, he could not with propriety ask the question, Why a man possessed superior qualities to a brute? Or, Why the constitution of human minds resembled each other? But man finds by experience that there is a resemblance or similarity in the constitution of all human minds, and he naturally asks the question, What is the cause of this likeness? The answer naturally occurs to his own mind that, It was thus designed for the general good of man; and consequently there must have been a time before the design took effect, when the constitu-

tion of our minds were unlike, and, therefore, that the present qualities of our minds are not eternal, but are the results of the combinations of anterior qualities, which in their turn are again the results of the exercise of the eternal capacities.

92. *Thirdly.* Having investigated the nature and origin of man's capacities, let us next inquire into the *extent* of those capacities. It is almost universally supposed that the capacities of man are finite—that is, limited in their nature, and that it is utterly impossible for man to acquire a fulness of all knowledge. But this is a false supposition, without the least shadow of foundation. We shall proceed to prove that the capacities of man are not finite, but infinite. It may be well for us to define the terms, *finite* and *infinite* before we proceed farther. These terms have quite a different sense when used in relation to different things. When used in reference to space or duration, *finite* signifies space or time included within limits; while *infinite* signifies boundless space or endless duration. When used in reference to numbers, the first means a limited number, and the last a number unlimited or an endless series of numbers. When applied to knowledge, one means to know only in part, while the other is to know in full. When used in reference to capacities, *finite* signifies a capacity that is stationary or can only be expanded in a limited degree, while *infinite* signifies a capacity sufficiently great to grasp a fulness of all knowledge, after which expansion ceases for the want of nothing more to be learned. A being may have an infinite capacity, and still have only a finite knowledge. We know of no beings having only finite capacities. Angels, men, beasts, birds, fish, and insects, have finite knowledge, but we have no reason to suppose any of them to be limited in their capacities. For aught we know, each and all of them may have capacities capable of receiving infinite knowledge. If we were to suppose that some of these beings are finite in their capacities, then there must be a certain limit of knowledge,

beyond which they can never pass: for if they were capable of passing any assigned limits of knowledge, they would be capable of receiving a fulness of all knowledge which would be infinite.

93. The constitution of our minds is such, that we cannot easily conceive of a being who is capacitated to perceive one truth, but unable to perceive another. It is true, there may be obstacles in the way by which this being is prevented from acquiring a second truth; but remove all obstacles and place the being in a favorable condition, the question is, Could it not perceive a second, a third, a fourth, or even any number of truths, as well as the first? We can see no possible hindrance to its advancement in knowledge only by interposing obstacles in the way. If the capacity have an existence, which it must have in order to perceive one truth, we cannot conceive how that it could possibly be limited, so as never, under any circumstances, to be able to perceive another. We do not see why a faculty that is capable of discerning that two are more than one, cannot also discern that three are more than two. Some truths are more difficult to be perceived than others, but this is owing, not to the want of capacity, but to the obstacles which intervene between the capacity and the truth to be perceived. Let the intervening obstacles be removed, and the capacity that is able to perceive one truth could perceive all truth. Therefore, wherever a being exists that has any knowledge, however small the amount, that being has infinite capacities, capable of perceiving all things past, present, and to come, just as soon as the intervening barriers are removed. We are aware that this idea is in opposition to the views of almost all mankind: they have been taught that the capacities, as well as the knowledge of all beings, but God, were finite; and from these false premises they have drawn the conclusion that no beings could ever attain to all the fulness of the knowledge of God. If the premises were granted, the conclusions would be just: but the premises are without

foundation, and are evidently false. The capacities of man are not only eternal, but infinite, and he is capable of receiving infinite knowledge. And without infinite knowledge his capacities never will be satisfied.

94. It is frequently said by philosophers, that knowledge which is finite can never be increased so as to become infinite; but this is in direct opposition to fact. Our Saviour, when He came into the world, possessed only finite knowledge; hence He is represented as increasing in wisdom and stature. To increase in wisdom evidently proves that He was not at that time in the possession of all wisdom. His wisdom and knowledge were finite. But He afterwards attained a fulness, and as Paul says, "In whom (Christ) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." And again, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2: 3, 9.) "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." (Col. 1: 19.) John the Baptist bore record that he beheld his glory, and that he was "full of grace and truth." (John 1: 14.) At the time his Father gave him the Holy Spirit, he, no doubt, received a fulness: for John soon after speaks thus of him: "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands." (John 3: 34, 35.) All the treasures of wisdom, knowledge, and truth, were hid in him; he was full of them: the fulness of the Spirit, the fulness of the Godhead, and the fulness of power, dwelt in him: all things were given into his hand. There was no wisdom, nor knowledge, nor power, nor dominions, that the Father possessed, but what Jesus possessed also. In fine, he was one in all the fulness of the attributes and perfections of the Father. It was for this reason that Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." (John 10: 30.) Here, then, we have an example of finite knowledge, wisdom, and power, increasing until the same became infinite.

95. As we have one example of finite knowledge being increased to infinity, we have reason to believe that

it may be the case in other instances. If the First Born or oldest brother has received a fulness, we see no impropriety in believing that the younger brethren may also receive the same fulness. Paul prayed that the Saints "might be filled with all the fulness of God."—(Eph. 3: 19.) And Jesus prayed that they all might be made perfect in one, as he and the Father are one.—(John 17.) When these prayers are answered, they will know as much as the Father and Son know. They will be in the Father and Son, and the Father and Son will be in them, and the Father and Son and all the Saints will be made perfect in one. Hence John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him."—(1 John 3: 2.) Not only like him in body, but also in mind. For then he "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." (Phillipians 3: 21.) Then we shall be perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect—(Math. 5: 48:) then shall we be pure as He is pure, and holy as He is holy: then shall we know as we are known, and see as we are seen: then shall we be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ in the inheritance of all things: then shall knowledge in part be done away, and we shall know in full: then there will be no knowledge, or truth, or wisdom in the heights above or in the depths beneath, or in the Heavens, or in the Heaven of Heavens, or in the immensity of space, or in the eternal ages of duration, but what we shall comprehend and know; then there will be no Being or Beings in existence that will know one particle more than what we know: then our knowledge, and wisdom, and power, will be infinite; and cannot, from thenceforth, be increased or expanded in the least degree: then we shall be Gods, because all the fulness of God will dwell within us.

96. It has been most generally believed that the Saints will progress in knowledge to all eternity: But when they become one with the Father and

Son, and receive a fulness of their glory, that will be the end of all progression in knowledge, because there will be nothing more to be learned. The Father and the Son do not progress in knowledge and wisdom, because they already know all things past, present, and to come. All that become like the Father and Son will know as much as they do, and consequently will learn no more. The Father and Son, and all who are like them and one with them, already know as much as any Beings in existence know, or ever can know.

97. In the twenty-second paragraph of this article we showed that there could not possibly be but one God, so far as the attributes are concerned, but so far as it regards persons, that there were an immense number of Gods. Now we wish to be distinctly understood that each of these personal Gods has equal knowledge with all the rest; there are none among them that are in advance of the others in knowledge; though some may have been Gods as many millions of years, as there are particles of dust in all the universe, yet there is not one truth that such are in possession of but what every other God knows. They are all equal in knowledge, and in wisdom, and in the possession of all truth. None of these Gods are progressing in knowledge: neither can they progress in the acquirement of any truth.

98. Some have gone so far as to say that all the Gods were progressing in truth, and would continue to progress to all eternity, and that some were far in advance of others: but let us examine, for a moment, the absurdity of such a conjecture. If all the Gods will be eternally progressing, then it follows, that there must be a boundless infinity of knowledge that no God ever has attained to, or ever can attain to, throughout infinite ages to come: this boundless infinity of knowledge would be entirely out of the reach and control of all the Gods; therefore it would either not be governed at all, or else be governed by something that was infinitely Superior to all the Gods—a something that had all knowledge, and

consequently that could not acquire more. Have we any right to say that there is a boundless ocean of materials, acting under such Superior laws that none of the Gods to all ages of eternity can be able to understand them? We should like to know what Law Giver gave such superior laws? If it be said that the laws were never given, but that the materials themselves eternally acted according to them. This would not in the least obviate the difficulty; for then there would be a boundless ocean of materials, possessing a knowledge of laws so infinitely superior to the knowledge of all the Gods, that none of them, by progressing for eternal ages, could ever reach it. This is the great absurdity, resulting from the vague conjecture that there will be an endless progression in knowledge among all the Gods. Such a conjecture is not only extremely absurd, but it is in direct opposition to what is revealed.

99. We shall now show from the revelations given through JOSEPH, the SEER, that God and his son, Jesus Christ, are in possession of all knowledge, and that there is no more truth for them to learn, and show also that the Saints will attain to the same fullness and know as much as they know. First, we will give Enoch's testimony concerning God, the Father: "And it came to pass that the God of Heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and He wept; and Enoch bore record of it, saying, how is it the Heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as rain upon the mountains? And Enoch said unto the Lord, how is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity? and were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, and millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations; and thy curtains are stretched out still; and yet thou art there and thy bosom is there; and also thou art just; thou art merciful and kind forever; thou hast taken Zion to thine own bosom, from all thy creations, from all eternity to all eternity, and nought but peace, justice, and truth, is the habitation of

thy throne; and mercy shall go before thy face and have no end: how is it that thou canst weep?" Connected with the reply, the Almighty said to Enoch, "Behold I am God; Man of Holiness is my name; Man of Counsel is my name; and Endless and Eternal is my name also. Wherefore, I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made; and mine eye can pierce them also." (See Joseph Smith's inspired translation of the Book of Genesis, published in "The Pearl of Great Price.") The Being whom Enoch here addressed, and who conversed with him, is represented in the same connection as the Father of Christ. This Being is declared to be "from all eternity," and the creations that He had made were so immensely numerous, that the particles of dust in a million of earths like this, "would not be a BEGINNING to the number." This shows that His creations are endless, or in other words infinite in number. Now a finite number cannot, in one sense, be a beginning to an infinite number. The vast number of particles contained in millions of worlds, is still only a finite number, and is therefore limited; but an endless series of worlds is not limited, and therefore can have no beginning; and no finite number, however great, can be the beginning of something that has no beginning. This endless number of worlds are all held and controlled by the power of God, the Father of Christ. And to show that He has a full knowledge of them all, He exclaims, "*Mine eye can pierce them also.*" The perceptive powers of His vision must be infinite or he could not look upon an infinite number of creations. It shows still further that His "eye can pierce them" all at the same instant; for if He were obliged to withdraw His vision from one in order to look upon another, He never could have time to behold them all. If He were to observe each only for the short period of one second, He could not behold even a beginning of the endless number in as many millions of ages, as there are particles of dust in the visible universe; but as His "eye can

pierce them" all, He must necessarily have the power of beholding them all at the same instant. Moreover, He is present with them all, for Enoch, in speaking to the Lord in regard to the immensity of the numbers of His creations, exclaims "*Thou art there, and thy bosom is there.*" Being present in all, beholding them all, and governing them all, He must necessarily have a knowledge of them all. And as the number of worlds are infinite, His knowledge must be infinite, and, therefore, He knows all things, and can know no more. This agrees with what this same Being said to Moses.

"And God spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name, for I am without beginning of days or end of years; and is not this Endless? And, behold, thou art my son, wherefore look, and I will show thee the workmanship of mine hands, but not all, *for my works are without end*, and also my words, for they never cease; wherefore no man can behold all my works, except he behold all my glory; and no man can behold all my glory, and afterwards remain in the flesh. And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son; and thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten; and mine Only Begotten is and shall be the Saviour, for he is full of grace and truth; but there is no God besides me, *and all things are present with me, for I know them all.*" (See "Pearl of Great Price.") Here the Father of Christ declares that His "works are without end," that "all things are present" with Him, and that He knows them all.

The same idea is conveyed in another revelation, as follows: "Judgment goeth before the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne, and governeth and executeth all things; *He comprehendeth all things*, and all things are before Him, and all things are round about Him; and He is above all things, and in all things, and is through all things, and is round about all things; and all things are by Him, and of Him, even God, forever and ever." (Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 7, par. 10.) As "He comprehendeth all things," His knowl-

edge must be infinite; therefore, the vague conjecture that God, the Father, can progress eternally in knowledge, is, as we have shown, not only absurd, but directly opposed to the revelations which He has given.

100. We shall next prove by the new revelations that the Only Begotten Son is in possession of equal knowledge with the Father. "And I, John, saw that He (Christ) received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace; and He received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until He received a fulness, and thus He was called the Son of God, because He received not of the fulness at first." (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 83: Par. 2.) What was this fulness here mentioned? Jesus answers this question, "I am the Spirit of truth, and John bore record of me, saying, He received a fulness of truth, *yea even of ALL truth.*" But what is truth? "Truth is the knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come." (Par. 4.) John was not satisfied with telling us that Jesus received a fulness of truth, but repeats the idea, "yea, even of *all* truth," or in other words, He received a fulness of the knowledge of all "things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come." No power of language could be able to express the idea in clearer or more forcible terms. And now we ask, is there any other truth or knowledge in existence that Jesus could learn? We fearlessly answer, No. A fulness of all truth embraces, first, a knowledge of all "things as they are" in their present condition, or in other words, a knowledge of all the worlds that *now* exist throughout the boundless immensity of space, and of all the materials of nature, whether organized or unorganized, and of all their relations, and dependencies, and laws, and operations, whether animate or inanimate, intelligent or unintelligent; it embraces a knowledge of every thought and desire, of every feeling and emotion, that exists among all the countless swarms of living beings in all worlds; it grasps within its infinite capacity the present state of every

individual particle, its properties and qualities in all planets and suns, and systems, and universes in the boundless heights and depths of infinity itself. But this is not all; it takes in the past as well as the present; a fulness of all truth, embraces an endless duration that is past—a boundless ocean of space—an infinity of materials—the eternal and unceasing operations of each particle—a knowledge of the exact condition of the universe as a whole, and in all its parts in every successive instant from the present back through endless ages without beginning. But we must not stop here; the fulness of all truth embraces a knowledge of all things to come; of all worlds that shall be organized, redeemed, and glorified; of all the eternal laws, operations, and changes of every particle of substance in existence in every successive moment throughout eternal ages that will have no end. This, in connection with the present and the past, is what constitutes "*all truth*"—this is, the infinite knowledge dwelling in Christ; and this is what He received when a fulness was given unto Him. John informs us of the period when this fulness was granted. "And I, John, bare record, and lo! the Heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon Him in the form of a dove, and sat upon Him, and there came a voice out of Heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son. And I, John, bare record that He received a fulness of the glory of the Father; and He received all power, both in Heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with Him, for He dwelt in Him." (Par. 2.) It is this fulness of truth that is God, and that is personified and called by the different names which the Lord has appropriated to Himself: it is this fulness of truth that constitutes the one only true and living God, and besides Him there is no God. He dwells in countless myriads of temples, and is in all worlds at the same instant. He is in all, and over all, and through all things, and the power by which they are governed. He is in the personage of the Father in all of his fulness, even the Spirit of truth. God is

Truth, and Truth is God, and the material universe is His tabernacle; men are designed to be his tabernacles or temples, if they will receive Him. Jesus says, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one: the Father, because He gave me of His fulness." (Par. 1.) Jesus was called the Son "because he received not of the fulness at the first;" and he was called the Father because he afterwards did receive it. Thus the name of Father is given to the Son not because of the tabernacle, but because of the fulness of truth, which is the Father dwelling therein.

101. We shall now proceed to show from new revelations that the Saints are to have equal knowledge with the Father and Son. We now only know in part; so far as truth dwells in us, so far the Father and Son dwell within us. Hear what Jesus says: "Behold, ye are little children and ye cannot bear all things now; ye must grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. Fear not, little children, for you are mine, and I have overcome the world, and you are of them that my Father hath given me; and none of them that my Father hath given me shall be lost: and the Father and I are one: I am in the Father and the Father in me; and inasmuch as ye have received me, ye are in me and I in you. Wherefore I am in your midst, and I am the good Shepherd, and the Stone of Israel. He that buildeth upon this rock shall never fall, and the day cometh that you shall hear my voice, and see me, and know that I am." (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 17: Par. 8.) We are in this revelation represented as only little children, not able, as yet, to bear all things, but are commanded to grow in grace and in truth; and are told that inasmuch as we had received Him we were in Him, and He in us. As the Father and Son are called *Truth*, inasmuch as we receive truth, they dwell within us. Where only a small degree of light and truth dwells within us, there only a small portion of the Father and Son abide in us; as we increase from grace to grace, and from truth to truth, so

do we in like manner inherit greater, and still greater, portions of God, and when we receive a fulness of all truth, then all the fulness of God dwells in us, even the Father and Son. The fulness of all Truth in us will make us Gods, equal in all things with the Personages of the Father and the Son; and we could not be otherwise than equal, for He is the same God who dwells in us that dwells in them; instead of dwelling in two tabernacles, under the names of the Father and Son, He will then dwell in the additional tabernacles of the Saints. And wherever He dwells in fulness, there would necessarily be equality, in wisdom, power, glory, and dominion.

102. We will quote another extract in order to show how we are to attain this fulness. "And it shall come to pass, that if you are faithful, you shall receive the fulness of the record of John. I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of His fulness, for if you keep my commandments you shall receive of His fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace." (Doc. and Cov., sec. 83: par. 3.) The fulness is to be obtained on condition of keeping His commandments. That we are to receive a fulness in the same sense that He received it, is evident from the fact that when we obtain that blessing, Jesus says, that we should be glorified in Him as He was in the Father. In the next paragraph we have a still stronger evidence, Jesus says, "John bore record of me saying, He received a fulness of truth, yea, even of all truth, and no man receiveth a fulness unless he keepeth His commandments. He that keepeth His commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things." This is as plain as language can make it. When this promise is realized, the

Saints will know all things past, present, and to come, and there will be no Being in existence that will be in advance of them in knowledge and wisdom. Again, Jesus says, "If your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you, and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things." And still again, "The day shall come when you shall comprehend even God; being quickened in Him and by Him." (Doc. and Cov. 7: 12, 18.) It is not necessary to multiply passages, for the revelations, both ancient and modern, are very full upon this point. Enough has been quoted to demonstrate that the light of the Saints will grow brighter and brighter until the perfect day at which time their light will be full and cannot from thenceforth be increased in brilliancy. How much more satisfactory it is to the mind to contemplate millions on millions of glorified worlds, each peopled with myriads of Beings filled with all the fulness of God or Truth, than it is to suppose them all progressing in knowledge without a possibility of ever attaining to a fulness worlds without end. This perfection and equality in knowledge among the Gods of all ages and worlds, serve to produce a perfect oneness among them all. Having equal knowledge, they would of course have equal wisdom and equal power, and would act with the most perfect union, and harmony, and concert in all things. But what inextricable difficulties and confusion there would be, if they differed in knowledge and all of them were progressing. The oneness, so necessary for the peace and good order of the Heavenly worlds, could not exist; one for the want of the requisite knowledge would undo what another of superior knowledge had done: upon the progressing principle, they never could be made perfect in one, worlds without end. Thus we have abundantly proved that the capacities of man are not only eternal, but infinite.

(To be continued.)

CELESTIAL MARRIAGE.

(Continued.)

The object of laws is to prohibit every practice which is calculated to injure individuals or society. But in what respect are individuals or society injured by the practice of a plurality of wives? We answer, in no respect whatever. The objector may say that such a practice is calculated in some instances to produce poverty and bring distress upon the family, and, therefore, should be considered criminal, and prohibited by law. We reply, that there are many practices which bring poverty and distress, and yet those practices are perfectly lawful. For instance, the slave holder may reduce himself to poverty, by accumulating slaves, and by a mismanagement of them. Would the Southern States consider this a crime? Would they prohibit by law the purchase of slaves, because, in some instances it reduced the purchaser to poverty and brought distress upon himself and family? And again; a man may bring poverty and distress upon himself and family by unwisely employing mechanics, clerks, day laborers, &c. Would any of the States or Territories consider this criminal? Would they enact laws to prohibit the hiring of mechanics and laborers, because, in some instances, it reduces to poverty? Another instance; many persons by marrying one wife reduce themselves from a state of wealth to abject poverty, yet no State would, for such a reason, denounce the marriage of one wife as criminal and prohibit it by law. We might multiply any amount of instances, where poverty and distress are brought upon families by the practice of things which are perfectly justifiable by the law. Because a plurality of wives may, in some instances, reduce a family to poverty, is no reason, therefore, why it should be prohibited by law, any more than thousands of other practices which may produce the same results. But in the most of cases, the plurality system would have a contrary tendency: instead of diminishing the wealth of a

family it would increase it. A large number, bound together by the strong ties of family affection, and taking hold of business in a united capacity, will be able, most frequently, to accomplish more than the same number of individuals acting separately, and governed only by individual interest. A union of interest and action is admitted by all to be more powerful in its results, than disunion. A numerous family of children are calculated to accumulate wealth, or to accomplish any other object by their united energy, more than a small family. Hence, the Psalmist says, "Children are an heritage of the Lord." Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (Ps. 127.) Instead of a large family being a disadvantage in point of wealth or strength, they are of great advantage. Therefore, so far as this cause has any bearing, it would be more just for the States to prohibit the one-wife system, than to prohibit the system of plurality.

Sometimes objections are urged against the plurality system, by saying, that it takes away the rights of women, and, therefore, it should be prohibited by law. But what rights of women does it take away? If several women voluntarily and from their own choice, and with the consent of their relatives, wish to unite their destinies with one man, what rights have been taken away? what injuries have been sustained either by themselves or by society in general? We answer, none at all. On the other hand, the rights of women are destroyed and taken from them in prohibiting them by law to have the man of their choice: they are compelled, by legislative enactments, to relinquish all hopes of marrying a man upon whom their affections are placed, and obliged, if they marry at all, to go contrary to every feeling of their nature—to be united with one for whom they have no love.

How many thousands of women there are who would rather remain single all their days, than to accept the offers of many profligate young men for whom they entertain no other feelings but those of disgust. Could these same women have their rights which naturally belong to them, but which our illiberal State governments have deprived them of, they would unite their destinies with good men, and be infinitely more happy under the plurality system, than they would be to remain in a state of celibacy, or to be united with some wicked profligate. Give women their rights; let them marry the man of their choice. Where pure affection exists, there let them consummate that affection by freely uniting themselves in the sacred bonds of matrimony with the man whom they love, and who loves them sufficiently to make them the partners of his bosom for life. Any thing short of this is illiberal and destroys the rights of women.

It is said that plurality destroys the rights of the first wife, and, therefore, should not be tolerated by law. This depends upon circumstances. If a man has been foolish enough to make a contract with a woman previous to their marriage, that he will never marry another while she lives, then it would be taking away her rights to violate that contract without her consent. Such a man, under such a contract, should not be permitted by the laws of the States to break his agreement, for in so doing, he would take away the rights which he has guaranteed to her. But if a man marry a woman without binding himself by such a contract, or if he marry her with an understanding that he can marry others when he thinks proper so to do, then there are no rights of the first wife taken away, nor no contracts broken. The first wife, under these circumstances, enjoys all the rights that she had any reason to expect. When she gave herself to her husband, it was not by compulsion; she freely and voluntarily consented to be his, with the full understanding that he might marry others, whenever he chose. A woman,

under these circumstances is divested of no rights only what she has voluntarily surrendered. She prefers rather to be united with such a man, though she may share but a measure of his attention, than to live a life of celibacy or be obliged to marry one whom she loves less. Therefore the objection against plurality upon this ground is wholly without foundation.

Another objection is urged against plurality by pretending that it corrupts the morals of society, and, therefore, it is argued that it should be considered a crime, and be prohibited by law. But we ask what morals of society does it corrupt? Morality is only another name for virtue, goodness, righteousness. Immorality is its opposite—that is, vicious, evil, unrighteous. To be moral is to be innocent of crime: to be immoral is to be guilty of crime. It can neither be shown from reason nor the word of God that plurality is criminal, and hence it cannot be immoral, and therefore the morals of society are not in the least endangered by its practice. On the contrary, plurality is a great and powerful antidote against immorality. How many hundreds of thousands of women there are, who, in consequence of having no opportunities of marriage, yield themselves up to a life of profligacy, and become notoriously immoral and unvirtuous. If these same females had not been deprived of the rights which all should enjoy under our glorious Constitution, they might have united themselves to some virtuous good men, and been happy as their second or third wives, and thus been saved from the temptations and evils into which they have fallen. Look at the misery and wretchedness of thousands of females in almost every city in America and Europe—inquire into the causes of their shameful and criminal course of life, and it will be found that in nine cases out of ten, they were driven to that state of degradation for the want of a protector—a husband in whom they could centre their affections, and on whom they could rely for a support. Would it not have been far better for these females to have been

honorably connected in marriage, according to the plurality system, than to have plunged themselves into the vortex of irretreivable ruin? What an immense amount of immorality, and consequent suffering would have been prevented, had the State governments not been influenced by the corrupt traditions of Apostate Christianity in prohibiting plurality and denouncing it criminal! But this order of things would not only prevent females from becoming public prostitutes, but would promote virtue among the males. Because of the vast numbers of unvirtuous females with which the nations are cursed, many young men neglect marriage, and seek to gratify their sexual propensities by unlawful and sinful connections. If no public female prostitutes existed, or if they rarely could be found, the natural consequences would be, that young men, instead of abandoning themselves to prostitution, would seek to unite themselves in honorable marriage with the partners of their choice. Plurality, therefore, not only would be a preventative against female prostitution, but would diminish the causes or means of prostitution on the part of the males. Young men abandon themselves to vice and immorality in proportion to the amount of temptation and evil influences with which they are surrounded. Diminish the causes and the effects are diminished also: and if the cause be destroyed the effect ceases. Let our State laws permit plurality, and it will seldom be the case that a female will yield to prostitution, preferring lawful marriage to a life of degradation and suffering. The army of degraded females, receiving little or no accession to their numbers, would soon be diminished and eventually destroyed by their own folly and wickedness, and thus, the causes of temptation having, in a great degree, ceased, young men would walk in a more healthy atmosphere, and not be constantly allured, as they are now, from the paths of virtue. Plurality would also diminish greatly the temptations which beset the paths of married men, as well as those who are young; they would no longer be under

the temptation to keep a mistress secretly, and to break the marriage covenant, and thus sin against their wives and against God. How many thousands there are who practice this great abomination. And why do they do it? Because they are compelled by our bigoted State laws to confine themselves to one wife. Had they the liberty which four-fifths of the other nations have, and which the Bible and our National Constitution guarantee, they could marry a plurality of wives, and be compelled to support them and their children, instead of having their secret mistresses, and turning them away when they get tired of them. Which, think you, a woman would prefer? Would she rather live in adultery with a man, subject, at any moment, to be turned away, penniless and unprotected, or to be lawfully united with him in honorable wedlock? Would she not infinitely prefer the latter to the former? If plurality existed, it would be very seldom that women would consent to be mistresses. Plurality, therefore, instead of injuring the morals of society, would have an effect directly the reverse; it would greatly purify society from the immoralities which now exist. How long shall the State governments be cursed with such illiberal laws! When will the people awake to a consciousness of their duties, and repeal those acts which have resulted in so much evil! When will they learn to be freemen according to the spirit of the Constitution, and no longer fetter themselves with the chains of superstition, handed down from the dark ages of Popery! Arise, Americans, arise! break every yoke that tends to bondage! Assume the dignified position of American citizens! Maintain inviolate the choice liberties of your country—the liberties so dearly purchased by your illustrious ancestors! let not the galling chains of priestcraft bind the nation's conscience! let not the bigoted traditions and customs of Apostate religions influence your legislative departments! let not the judgment and wisdom of your great statesmen be swayed from the important principles of liberty, so dear to

every American heart! let no laws be enacted, denouncing as crime, that which reason, morality, and the word of God, approve, as a virtue! let no laws prohibit you from the enjoyments, arising from domestic relations which are reasonable, moral, virtuous, pure, and good! If your fathers have been in bondage to Romish superstitions, remember that you are free! Yes, free from religious intolerance! free from all nations under Heaven! free to enjoy all blessings, unmolested, which God has ordained for man, unless you, yourselves, prefer laws tending to bondage, rather than liberty!

Another objection to plurality is made by pretending that it is calculated to excite jealousies in families, and, therefore, it is argued to be criminal, and should be prohibited by law. If several women mutually agree to be the wives of the same man, and he treats them with impartiality, we see no cause existing for jealousy. Each receives all the attention which she expected to receive, when she entered into the matrimonial contract. If jealousies should arise, they would be entirely of a different nature from those occasioned by unlawful steps taken by a husband. If a husband violate the laws of virtue by unlawful connections, the wife loses confidence in him; and when confidence is gone, peace and quietness are gone, and the foundation of happiness is destroyed in the family. Not, so, when jealousies arise between members of the same family. Each wife knows that the other wives are as much entitled to the attention of the husband as she, herself; she knows that such attentions are not criminal, therefore, she does not lose confidence in him; though she may consider him partial, in some respects, yet she has the consolation to know that his attentions towards them are strictly virtuous. Confidence being retained, the elements of happiness are retained. Jealousies, arising from unvirtuous conduct, are mingled with a consciousness of the guilt of the individual; while those arising from the other cause have no such distressing reflections; the first is cruel as the grave, knawing, like the

worm that never dies, at the very heart-strings of enjoyment and peace, while the latter is only a partial transitory evil which is speedily dissipated by the kindness and attention of the husband. Plurality, as we have already stated, is a great preventative to unvirtuous connections, and therefore is a remedy against the jealousies arising from such causes. And as for the other kind of jealousy, if it should be stigmatized by that name, it is of trivial importance; like the jealousies which frequently arise between children, it is soon gone. This kind of jealousy is not the result of plurality, but a result of partiality or supposed partiality. If plurality should be prohibited on account of jealousies which may arise, monogamy or the one-wife system should be prohibited on account of the still greater jealousies which may arise for fear the husband may keep his secret mistresses, as many thousands do. These kind of jealousies work far greater evils in society, than what the other kind can possibly do. If the great object be to put a stop by law to the evils arising from jealousies, let laws be enacted, requiring man to have a plurality of wives, or else none at all; prohibit the one wife practice, and you will accomplish much more than you do by prohibiting plurality. But we say let no prohibitory laws be passed in regard to how many wives a man may, or may not have; leave every man free in this respect, and in a very few years, you would see a great reformation in the morals of the country; you would see not one-tenth part of the prostitution that is seen now; you would see females fulfilling the noble purpose of their creation, instead of being abandoned prostitutes, houseless, homeless, and childless, going down to their graves in wretchedness and misery, uncared for and unlamented.

Another objection presented against plurality is, that it is contrary to the customs of American and European nations, and for this cause should be considered criminal, and prohibited by legislative enactments. In reply to this objection, we say that there are many things which are entirely contrary to

the general customs of the people, which are not criminal, and which would be a violation of the Constitution to prohibit. The Shakers believe in dancing in their religious assemblies on the Sabbath day; this practice is wholly derogatory to the customs of the nation. Would it be lawful and right to enact laws, prohibiting this practice of the Shakers, on the ground of its being contrary to custom? Another class of individuals believe in the abominable practice of sprinkling infants, actually practicing this abomination in the name of the Lord. This is entirely contrary to the customs of the great majority of this nation. Must this class be prohibited from this practice, because it is contrary to the custom of the nation? The Shakers, and some other communities, have adopted the ancient practice of having all their property as common stock: this is also entirely different from the general custom of the nation; must it, for this reason, be prohibited by law? The Roman Catholics practice many ceremonies and ordinances which the great majority of the nation do not practice. Must their customs be denounced as criminal and be prohibited by law, because they are different from those of the nation? Each society in the United States have some practices which agree with the national customs, and some which are peculiar to themselves. Would it accord with the spirit of the Constitution to compel each society to cease all of their peculiar practices, because they were not national customs? The Church of the Latter-Day Saints practice in many respects according to national customs, and in other respects they have their peculiar customs, like all other societies. It matters not how much the peculiar customs of a society may differ from the national ones, providing that they are not immoral, or criminal, or calculated to injure society. The peculiar customs of plurality, practiced by some in Utah, in no way interferes with the rights of any one: it is in no way immoral; it in no way injures the parties themselves, or any one else; it is in no way unscriptural; it is in no way conflicting with the Constitution; it is in no way violating any of the laws of Utah, or any other laws to which the citizens of that Territory are amenable. Therefore, there is no reason whatever for calling it a crime, or for passing legislative enactments against it.

It is difficult for us to imagine, why State Governments ever considered it necessary to pass laws confining their citizens to one wife. We can see no causes or necessity whatever for such laws. They are laws founded wholly on custom. Because the European nations, from whom they originated, have been bound down under these illiberal institutions, and have had a yoke placed upon their necks by priestcraft, and by a union of the ecclesiastical with the civil powers, our fathers could not all at once free themselves from these traditionary superstitions. They must follow the customs of their fathers in some respect, however inconsistent they may be. How true is the sentiment that a people who have been long in bondage, or under the influence of erroneous traditions, can only free themselves by degrees. We see this verified in the American nation: they have broken the yoke of tyranny and oppression, and have planted the germs of liberty upon their soil; they call themselves free, but they are only free in part. Their Legislative departments are still tinged with priestcraft, or with the illiberal sentiments imbibed by our fathers under the oppressive institutions of the European powers. This is exemplified by their still following those governments in the prohibition of plurality. The States can render no reason why they follow this erroneous tradition, only to say, "it was the custom of our fathers." Is it not time that legislators and statesmen should begin to inquire into the reason of their laws? It is not sufficient to satisfy the advancing spirit of the age, to tell us that certain laws are enacted, because they are sanctioned by the customs of the dark and tyrannical ages. It is not enough to merely say, we denounce an act as criminal, because the European nations denounce

it. If the sons of American freedom are to be prohibited from certain practices which they may consider perfectly innocent, they wish to be informed wherein those practices are criminal: they do not wish to be brought into bondage blind-folded. Neither do they wish to elect legislators to palm upon them the impositions of Popery, because they are customary among other nations. We wish some of our wise statesmen, or some other competent persons, would take up the subject of plurality and show wherein it is immoral, or unscriptural, or criminal. Upon this subject, the people want arguments, not denunciations; reason, not sophistry; evidence, not popular traditions or customs; they want a clear, lucid demonstration that the practice is evil. If there are no persons competent to the task, they will signify it, by continuing to follow the old custom of denunciation, or at least, by their silence.

The States should not only permit plurality, but enact wise and judicious laws regulating the same. The husband should be compelled by law to provide for his different wives and children, the same as if he had but one. The law should make provisions for each of his wives and children upon his decease, to inherit a share of the property. The law should consider him bound for life to each of his wives the same as if he had married but one; he should not be considered divorced from either, only through due course of law; and adultery should be the only crime, as our Saviour has said, for which a man should be justified in putting away either of his wives. If, instead of abolishing plurality, the States would regulate the same under good and wholesome laws, they would make it far better for the female portion of the community; and thus in time would redeem the nation from the terrible evils of prostitution with which they are now cursed. We have in these arguments set forth what should be tolerated in regard to plurality, so far as the genius of our Government and our legislative enactments are concerned. But when we consider mar-

riage in relation to the divine government of Heaven, we say, as we have already expressed ourselves, that no man in this nation, nor any other, has a divine right to marry even one wife, much less a plurality, until he becomes righteous enough to bring up his children according to the law of Heaven; and to save himself and his children in the eternal worlds. There is a broad distinction to be made in relation to this thing, between the divine government and human governments; and they should in no wise be confounded in one. Church and State are with the American nation entirely distinct. By the laws of the church the wicked should have no right nor title to the divine institution of marriage; by the laws of the State they should have the right of marrying as many wives as they please; it is a privilege which they have a right to claim, according to the spirit and genius of the Constitution; it is a violation of the principles of liberty, contained in that sacred document, to limit them to one, when two or more are just as honorable as one. It is true, God has nothing to do with their marriages while in a state of wickedness. Whether they have one wife or a dozen, it is all illegal so far as God is concerned. But to be consistent with the form of government which the nation has adopted, there should be no restrictions in regard to the number.

There is an entire distinction in the Territory of Utah, as in all other Territories, between the civil government, and the various forms of church governments. The civil government of Utah, has not seen proper to abridge the liberties of its citizens in regard to the number of wives that they may have. Therefore, the Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Methodists, the Latter-Day Saints, and all other denominations, or individuals, whether believers in any creed or unbelievers, who may feel disposed to settle in Utah, have, each and all of them, the liberty of marrying as many wives as they think proper, and the civil government will not interfere with them. But if the Latter-Day Saints, or any other

denomination in that Territory, feel it their duty to limit the members of their respective churches to one wife, or to none at all, (like the Shakers,) under the penalty of the disfellowship of their church, they have the most perfect liberty there, as in all other territories, so to do. If any member of the Latter-Day Saints should not be permitted by his church to marry two wives, he could still, by rebelling against the rules of his church, go and marry two under the civil law; and the Latter-Day Saint Church could do nothing with him, only to expel him from their fellowship. Any denomination in any State or Territory have the most undoubted rights to prohibit marriage altogether so far as their church is concerned; but they have no right to interfere with the civil laws, regulating marriages.

The denomination called the Latter-Day Saints in Utah have no more liberties or privileges granted to them by the civil power than any other denomination who may choose to settle there. If they constitute the majority of the population they can elect such individuals as they see proper to the legislative departments; this is not oppression, but is precisely according to the practice of all the other Territorial and State governments. The majority rules—the majority elects: this is the very essence of our national institutions. Utah is not an exception: she is governed, in all respects, by the civil power, and not by the ecclesiastical: the latter is confined wholly to the churches of the different religious societies who have or may settle in the Territory, while the former regulates all by the civil laws. The Latter-Day Saints in the capacity of a church have no more voice in the government of Utah, than the Methodists or any other religious denomination. They,

as well as all other societies, are obliged to submit to the civil powers.

It is to be hoped that the legislative department in Utah will never be so trammelled by the customs of the other territories as to infringe upon the rights of the domestic relations, limiting and abridging them according to the erroneous superstitions handed down to our day by the nations of Apostate Christendom. It is further to be hoped, that they will carefully examine the nature of all customs and practices which have been denounced criminal, and wisely and impartially distinguish between what is in reality criminal, and what is, because of custom, erroneously called so. Such are the kind of legislators that ought to be sought for in every State and Territory.

We have, in the foregoing, answered all the objections against plurality, based on the supposition of its being criminal; and have clearly shown that they are without foundation. We shall next proceed to show that plurality of wives is among the greatest blessings bestowed upon the righteous. It is evidently a great blessing to be entrusted with power and authority to rule and govern, according to the law of righteousness. God is the supreme Ruler of the universe. He rules all beings and things by laws, through which His wisdom and power are made manifest. He exercises supreme power and authority, because He has supreme wisdom and knowledge. It is His glory and happiness to govern all things. If He were deprived of the privilege of governing, He would be deprived of his glory. So it is with all His offspring: they are happy and glorious in proportion to the amount of divine authority and power with which they are intrusted, providing that they exercise the same in righteousness.

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