

fidence in him, to join together the sexes in marriage? I think not.

But suppose we pass by the infidel who holds the authority of the civil law to administer the ordinance of marriage, are there not many persons among the Christian nations, who do believe in God and his Son Jesus Christ, who are justices of the peace, and who have authority, under the civil laws of the country, to administer the ordinance of marriage? I answer—there are many who hold this authority under their respective governments; we do not dispute this. The infidel I was speaking of, who is a justice of the peace, has authority by the laws of his State or county, to administer and officiate in the ceremony of marriage. But God has nothing to do with it; it answers the ends of the civil law, and that is as far as it goes.

Now suppose you take those persons who are not infidels, but who profess to believe in God, and they hold authority, under their various governments, to pronounce a man and woman husband and wife, has the Lord anything to do with that? He has if he has appointed that minister or justice of the peace; if he has given him a revelation authorizing him to officiate in the ordinance of marriage, then he has authority to do it, according to the mind and will of God. But on the other hand, if God has said nothing to him, he has no divine authority—and if he is a sectarian he is sure to reject all revelation, unless it happens to be in the Bible, and the Bible calls no man by name in the 19th century to officiate in marriage, neither in baptism nor any of the ordinances of the Gospel—his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ does not give him divine authority to administer the ordinance of marriage. Nevertheless the individuals whom he marries are mar-

ried according to the laws of the country, and the marriage is legal so far as the laws of the country are concerned; but if God has not spoken to those men, if he has not given them revelation authorizing them to do this, their ceremony, so far as God is concerned, would be just the same as though it was administered by a heathen priest, just the same as though it was ministered by an infidel, for God has nothing to do with it.

Who is it then, that the Lord joins together? It is those who are married by one authorized of God to officiate in that sacred and holy ordinance, and the Lord could not do this, without he gave new revelation; hence you begin to understand what our views are as Latter-day Saints in regard to the nature of marriage. Inquires one—"Do you mean to say that there have been no marriages legal in the sight of God for nearly seven-hundred years past, among all the nations?" Yes, that is what we say. Those old and middle-aged men, who were married in the nations before they heard the sound of the Gospel, were married legally according to the laws of man, and their marriages will stand all the controversies of the law, and their children are legal heirs to their property; but they are not joined together of the Lord.

Now let us come to a marriage where the Lord officiates. It is indirectly referred to here, in this 19th chapter of Matthew—"In the beginning God made them male and female." And who officiated in the first great marriage ceremony? It was the Lord. Probably, if there had been any man on the earth at that time who held the keys, authority and power, the Lord would not have come and officiated directly; but inasmuch as the marriage was between the first pair who dwelt upon