

wickedness and hardness of heart. I will tell you how this law became done away and ceased to exist among the children of Israel—it was in consequence of their rejection of the Messiah. In consequence of this their city was overthrown, and their nation destroyed, except a miserable remnant, which were scattered abroad among the Gentile nations, where they could not keep the law in regard to their brothers' widows. When John the Baptist was raised up to that nation, he must have found thousands on thousands of polygamists, who were made so, and obliged to be so, by the law which I have just quoted.

Some of you may enquire—"Had not a surviving brother the right to reject that law of God?" He had, if he was willing to place himself under its penalty. I will quote you the penalty, and then you can see whether he could get away from polygamy or not. One penalty was that he should be brought before the Elders and that the widow whom he refused to marry, according to the law of God, should pluck his shoe from off his foot, and should then spit in his face, and from that time forth the house of that man should be denounced as the house of him that hath his shoe loosed, a reproach among all Israel. Instead of being a man of God, and a man to be favored by the people of God; instead of being a man such as the Christian world would now extol to the heavens because he rejected polygamy, he was a man to be scorned by all Israel. That was the penalty. Was that the only penalty? I think not. Read along a little further, and it says—"Cursed be he that continues not in all things written in this book of the law." Oh, what a dreadful penalty that was, compared with being reproached by the whole people! Oh, what a fearful curse upon a man that

refused to become a polygamist, and would not attend to the law of God! A curse pronounced by the Almighty upon him, also the anathemas of all the people as well as from God! The word of the Lord was that all the people should say amen to this curse. Now, if I had lived in those days, I should not have considered it very desirable to bring myself under the curse of heaven, and then have the curse of all the twelve tribes of Israel upon my head. I should not have liked it at all. I would rather have gone into polygamy according to the command, even if it had subjected me to a term of five years in a penitentiary.

We find many other passages, touching upon this subject. I will quote one, which will be found in the 21st chapter of Deuteronomy. It reads as follows: "If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he makes his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn."

Now this applies to two classes of polygamists. First, to those who may have two wives living at the same time, and then to those who may have married two wives in succession. It applies to both classes, for both classes existed in those days, and the Lord gave this, not to condemn polygamy, not to do away with it, but to show that the individual who had two wives should be impartial in regard to his children. Did he approbate this man that might have two wives in his hatred of one, and in loving the other? No, he did not, but inasmuch as man is weak and may sin against God, and