

that the revelation on marriage to Joseph Smith was given by the Lord, and I not only believe it but I know it, and it is sufficient for me to know that He has His own purposes in doing so; and furthermore, our covenants are associated with eternity as well as time.

Mr. H.—If you marry for eternity how is it that you divorce so commonly?

Mr. J. F. Smith (who had come into the office).—The same authority (as was given by the Lord to Peter) that has power to unite or bind together has power to loose. Furthermore, our divorces are not so common.

Mr. P.—If the object was to increase the number of people it did not originate with Joseph Smith, but from the Lord; this revelation is not the product of man but of God, and whatever the object of it was, the object was in the mind of God and not in the mind of man.

Mr. H.—Is it not a great trial to both men and women to enter into the practice of polygamy?

Mr. T.—I don't think it is much of a trial; our people enter into it quite readily. Perhaps not more so than to enter into monogamy, judging from the number of unmarried persons everywhere. I suppose in New York alone there are not less than 40,000 men who are unmarried, and with plenty of women with whom they might enter into marital relations.

Mr. P.—Whatever trials there are in monogamy to some extent are enlarged in polygamy; and whatever benefits there are in monogamy are enlarged in polygamy.

Mr. H.—I got the impression, from reading your published discourses, that its practice was anything but pleasant to either men or women.

Mr. T.—That is in part correct. It was a very great trial for Joseph Smith, and for the Twelve Apostles and others, to shoulder the responsibility of introducing a system that was at variance with our customs and traditions, and those of the people of the world. There is where the trial comes in; but we felt that we would rather do that than disobey the command of God.

Mr. H.—It is not on record that Joseph Smith enjoined this on the people as the command of God.

Mr. J. F. SMITH.—It is recorded, but the records are not published. And as to the trials attending it, there is this which I think should be mentioned: There are the increased responsibilities of a numerous family, which religious conviction alone could enable a man to assume; and perhaps it is hardly necessary to say that only such convictions could induce women to enter into it.

Mr. H.—I have an idea that the majority of the women are so influenced, but cannot say as to the men; some may possibly be, but not all, by a great way.

Mr. P.—I admit that to a small extent, but that does not affect the principle. Exceptions of that kind exist in every denomination.

Mr. H.—You say it was commanded by revelation from God. Was not Joseph Smith in the habit of praying for revelations when at a loss how to proceed?

Mr. T.—Yes, sir, and so were the other prophets of whom we read.

Mr. H.—Then I will ask you, wherein it would be more improper or impracticable to get a revelation forbidding it than it was to get one enjoining it?

Mr. J. F. S.—That would be assuming that Joseph Smith's revelation was the product of his own imagination; such a thing we cannot admit.

Mr. H.—Have not all nations had revelations according to the light of the best minds of those nations at the time?

Mr. P.—No, far above the light of the best minds.

Mr. T.—You, not being a believer in the Bible, of course, it would be difficult for you to understand our position. We believe in God's speaking and directing, from time to time, as He may deem fit; in fact, our Church is founded on the principle of revelation.

Mr. H.—How many in your judgment do the adherents of your Church in Utah now number?

Mr. T.—I do not know positively, probably about 150,000. You have your sources of information as well as I have.

Mr. H.—No. I have not access to the Church records; you must have all the members recorded who are more than eight years of age.

Mr. T.—That is as near as I could give it, which is about correct.

Mr. H.—How many of the men

of marriageable age are practical polygamists?

Mr. T.—That I could not say, I have no idea.

Mr. H.—Mr. Cannon I understand said in Washington, before a committee, one in every ten; did he say so?

Mr. T.—I think he did.

Mr. H.—Would that in your judgment be correct?

Mr. P.—It is a difficult thing to get at, there being no statistics kept that I am aware of.

Mr. H.—I am not trying to catch you on any record question, I am seeking information simply that would be of general interest in the present state of this controversy.

Mr. T.—Oh, Mr. Hollister we are not afraid of being caught, we have nothing to conceal from the world. We are quite willing they should know about these things.

Mr. H.—Are there more marriageable women than men in the Church in the aggregate?

Mr. T.—You have the same opportunities and advantages of arriving at such conclusions as we have.

Mr. H.—I think not. You must have records, and it seems to me that somebody must have some substantially correct idea about these statistical matters. I am trying to ascertain whether the practice is increasing or not.

Mr. T.—It would be a very difficult thing to answer a question of that kind.

Mr. H.—Are there as many polygamous marriages in proportion to the whole number of people as there were ten or twenty years ago?

Mr. T.—I would not be able to answer that.

Mr. H.—Is there not a growing distaste to it among the younger members of your church?

Mr. T.—I think not.

Mr. P.—Such assertions have been made, but I think it a great mistake. I find that among the young people there is a better understanding about the principle of plural marriage than ever before, and consequently their belief in it is more widespread.

Mr. H.—I have been told differently in my travels through the Territory.

Mr. P.—Of course there are some who do not believe in it, and some who do.

Mr. H.—You yourself, Mr. Taylor, have not married since the law was passed proscribing polygamy?

Mr. T.—No, sir.

Mr. H.—Why not? from respect to the law?

Mr. T.—I do not think I should have considered consequences if I had thought it my duty to take another wife. I am pretty well on in years, upwards of seventy.

Mr. H.—But the law was passed in 1862, 16 years ago.

Mr. T.—It was not out of respect to the law; for I consider the law a most unjust one. And I may say that I always entertained a great deal of respect for the Supreme Court of the nation until some little time ago, when it was dragged into politics, and its decisions given according to a direct, distinctive, political line drawn between the members of that august body, as might have been expected from any other politicians; I then felt that the glory of our judiciary had departed, and I had not much confidence in regard to their acts afterwards.

Mr. H.—You allude to the electoral commission. It is not apropos to the purpose of this interview, but I will say that every man has his political bias, or conscience, to which he could no more be untrue than you could to your religious bias or conscience. If he were, he would be worse than crucified, covered with such odium and contempt as no sensitive man could live under. The members of the Supreme Court I believe simply decided in that case in accordance with their consciences, which were of course in accordance with their political faith.

Mr. T.—You say the Judges cannot give up their political bias, yet we are called upon by them to give up our religious bias.

Mr. H.—To return, I was in hopes you would say the reason you had not taken another wife since 1862 was out of respect to the law.

Mr. T.—If that were so, I should be a hypocrite; but what has political bias to do with justice and equity? Is that a reason for that august assembly to pervert the law?

Mr. H.—Will not Judge Waite's decision throw an apple of discord among your people, if you do not

cease the practice of polygamy, by strengthening those, if any, who are opposed to it; and is there not ground to hope or fear that its opponents may ultimately be in the majority in the Church itself?

Mr. T.—No, sir; no ground, to either hope it, or fear it; quite the opposite. I would state that if the United States think that by prosecution or persecution, or through proscription they can control the consciences of men, they have then discovered a phase in human nature entirely new and unheard of before.

Mr. H.—They do not propose to control their consciences but their acts.

Mr. T.—But that is all so much bosh, you know; that is tantamount to saying, We will allow you to think but not to act; it does not give the liberty that the Constitution prescribes to allow free action in the exercise of religious convictions. Do you think that law can control conscience?

Mr. H.—It does not propose to, but it cannot accept the verdict of the individual conscience against that of the general conscience. If you may set your conscience above the law, I may, everybody may, and there is then an end of law; there is anarchy.

Mr. T.—Excuse me, but that is the argument Judge Waite has introduced. He has cited the practice of the Suttie, saying that if they could do that in the name of religion, anything else might be done. You, I understand, Mr. Musser, (who was present) have been in India, let me ask you a question. I believe there are some 150 to 180 millions of polygamists, in practice and theory, in that country under the British Government, does that government interfere with their polygamous marriages, or protect them therein? That government has, and very properly too, prevented the destruction of life by the immolation of widows, but not the propagation of life through the practice of polygamy; that I believe is sustained by the law, and Christian missionaries who have been brought face to face with this principle in India, have defended it, and commended the action of the British Government in its protection. The United States Government in the enjoyment of the same right because we are a handful of people.

Mr. Musser.—The British Government in India does protect polygamy by law, whilst it enforces its laws against Suttie.

Mr. H.—India is an old and populous country, and it is perhaps impossible for the British government to change its customs in this respect. This is a young country with a great future before it, and polygamy is yet in its infancy, which are sufficient reasons for a different policy. It is deemed the part of wisdom to start right, and your being small or large, weak or strong, cuts no figure in it. Not only polygamy, but the principle of ecclesiastical control in secular affairs presents an antagonism to our institutions that is as complete as can be imagined. It must be modified in some way or great trouble will one day ensue. It can not reasonably be complained of, it seems to me, that we should seek to suppress polygamy, at least, by force of law in its infancy.

Mr. Musser.—But Suttie was, if anything, a custom to which the natives of Hindostan were more devotedly attached than to polygamy, and the government has suppressed that.

Mr. Taylor.—You say you think it wise for the government to endeavor to suppress polygamy. I think they should first manifest their antagonism to the practice of infanticide and feticide and the prevailing prostitution, and instead of prosecuting and proscribing us, they should assist in us removing these contaminating influences from our borders. Furthermore, while Great Britain is a monarchical government she can tolerate 180,000,000 of polygamists, and throw around them the protectingegis of the law, while the United States, a republican, and professedly a free government, is enacting laws prosecuting and proscribing so small a number as 150,000 in her Territory; this does not speak well for the administration of republicanism.

Mr. H.—Should Congress amend the law so as to make the offence continuous, and thus annul the statute of limitations as regards this offence, and should your leading men be convicted and imprisoned, would not that stop the further

contraction of polygamous marriages?

Mr. T.—The uniform testimony of both sacred and profane history among all nations answers No. I am very sorry that Congress, through its unwise action has placed us in an attitude of hostility. Polygamy is not a crime, *per se*; it was the action of Congress that made polygamy a crime. As before stated, the British government allows one hundred and eighty millions of their people to practice it, and by law, protect them in it. It is very unfortunate that our republican government cannot be as generous to its provinces as a monarchical government can to its colonies, being placed in this position by their action, and having a commandment of God which is binding upon us, not only in time, but in eternity. We have a great reverence for the admonition of our Savior, who says, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Furthermore, Daniel, the three Hebrew children and others, it would seem, were governed by the same principle, and absolutely refused to be governed by the dictum of their oppressors.

Mr. H.—If you persist in the future as in the past in this practice, what kind of an ultimate outcome do you anticipate. Could you not consistently surrender polygamy on the ground that there is no prospect of changing the opinion and law of the country against it, and that nullification of the laws issued to result disastrously in the end to the nullifiers?

Mr. T.—Not so much so as the nullification of the Constitution; but we leave that with God. It is His business to take care of His Saints. An eminent poet has said: "Do what is right let the consequence follow."

Mr. Musser.—I think the Lord could better answer that question.

Mr. H.—"The Lord" is a foreign power to this government, in the sense in which you constantly refer to him.

Mr. T.—I am afraid he is, and there lies the difficulty. When nations forsake God we cannot expect them to do wisely. In doing what they have done, they have opened the flood gates of discord to this nation which they cannot easily close. We are now proscribed, it will be others' turn next. Congress has assumed a most fearful responsibility in breaking down its Constitutional barriers; but the flood gates once opened, it becomes quite a problem to say where the proscription will end. Others may not receive these infringements on their religious rights quite as peaceably as we do; if Congress and the nation can stand it, we think we can.

Mr. H.—You hold then, that your church possesses the oracles of heaven exclusively, and that the condemnation of polygamy by all Christian nations is without reason and wisdom, and contrary to the spirit of revelation?

Mr. T.—We most assuredly do.

Mr. P.—Noah would have made the same answer to that question.

Mr. H.—If capacity or adaptability to universal application be a good test of the soundness of a principle of this nature, and polygamy will not stand the test, does not a doubt as to the fact of God's having commanded the Mormons to receive and live it justly arise?

Mr. T.—Your hypothesis we do not acknowledge.

Mr. H.—You claim, then, polygamy as a principle is of universal applicability, and could be universally practised.

Mr. T.—Yes, sir. It is the normal condition of mankind and has been practised from time immemorial by almost all nations. Monogamy is but the outgrowth of a system where corrupt Christianity affiliated with a debased paganism. Why, sir, three-fourths of the human family as near as can be told, are acknowledged polygamists to-day, and the balance corruptly so, though professedly monogamists.

Mr. H.—Is it not possible that there is some mistake about it?

Mr. T.—I might answer that by asking you if there is any mistake about the authenticity of the Bible.

Mr. H.—Do you really believe that God has actually commanded you to practice polygamy—don't you men ever have a doubt of it?

[Mr. Taylor, a few parties having come in on business, called a vote of those present as to whether they knew that the principle of plural

marriage was of God or not. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.]

Mr. H.—If not, why did your constitutional convention in Feb., 1872, agree, by a two-thirds vote, to submit the question of its abandonment, in case Congress should make that a condition of admission into the Union, to the test of a popular election, and why did the people vote unanimously in favor of it?

Mr. P.—They did not.

Mr. H.—They agreed to submit to the people whatever Congress should make a condition of admission into the Union.

Mr. P.—We did that to meet the minds of a few members, but there was no promise of compromise in any shape.

Mr. H.—In the DESERET NEWS of June 3, 1872, the editor, whom I presume was Mr. Cannon, said that the Mormon representatives who had returned from Washington had assurances from the House Territorial committee that a bill for the admission of the State of Deseret would be reported favorably at the next session, provided polygamy were absolutely and unconditionally renounced. Does not that show that you understood precisely the terms of admission and meant to comply with them by renouncing polygamy?

Mr. P.—No. It was only an item of news.

Mr. H.—Then you admit that the calling of a constitutional convention by the legislature, the meeting of that convention, framing a constitution, its submission to and adoption by the people, the election of a State legislature and other officers, the meeting of that legislature, its election of senators, and their going to Washington to urge upon Congress the ratification of these proceedings was a farce.

Mr. Taylor.—Its object was to obtain the views of Congress and the conditions it would impose before admitting us as a State and then lay them before the people, but I acknowledge it ended in a farce.

Mr. H.—The proceedings at that time created the impression that you would give up polygamy for statehood; it was general and I am sorry if it was not justified by intentions.

Mr. T.—You are mistaken on that point, our people never entertained such an opinion.

Mr. H.—Section 5 of the ordinance providing for submitting to the people such terms as Congress might prescribe was adopted in the convention by a vote of two to one, and the people sanctioned it by 25,000 votes. And you, Mr. Taylor, advocated the retention of this section in the ordinance.

Mr. T.—No sir, I was not a member of the convention.

Mr. H.—Then it was another man of your name.

Mr. J. F. Smith.—He was from the south.

Mr. Penrose.—The entire proceedings were intended merely to give Congress a chance to admit us, or show why we were not admitted.

Mr. H.—Is not, in fact, what you call revelation, the expression of the crystallized public sentiment of your people; and if a majority of them should desire to abandon polygamy, would what is called revelation deter them from doing so?

Mr. Calder.—Mr. Colfax, when he was here, and as he was leaving, said to President Young, Mr. Young, you say Joseph Smith had a revelation instituting polygamy; my advice to you is to get a revelation to do away with it.

Mr. H.—My idea of revelation is embodied in my question. In your case I look upon it as the crystallized expression of the highest wisdom of your people, speaking through your organ, the head of the Church.

Mr. T.—Of course you are not a believer in revelation?

Mr. H.—Not in the sense in which you use the word, nor perhaps in the sense in which it is ordinarily used.

Mr. T.—Then I do not see that you can consistently apply your ideas to our faith, at least we cannot acknowledge them.

Mr. Penrose.—Joseph Smith received a revelation written on gold plates and he and three others saw it together. It was just as tangible as that which Moses received written on the tables of stone; and it was not the crystallized opinion of our best men, it was a fact.

Mr. H.—If it is a fact, then it can be proven.

Mr. P.—It can be proven; the Lord very wisely caused to be taken