

them. It is true that in France and in the United States magistrates are authorized to officiate in solemnizing marriages. But in France, to this day, unless they are married by a minister of religion, many of the more conscientious feel that they are living in a state of adultery.

Now, in relation to the position that we occupy concerning plurality, or, as it is termed, polygamy, it differs from that of others. I have noticed the usage of several nations regarding marriage; but, as I have said, we are not indebted to any of them for our religion, nor for our ideas of marriage, they came from God. Where did this commandment come from in relation to polygamy? It also came from God. It was a revelation given unto Joseph Smith from God, and was made binding upon His servants. When this system was first introduced among this people, it was one of the greatest crosses that ever was taken up by any set of men since the world stood. Joseph Smith told others; he told me, and I can bear witness of it, “that if this principle was not introduced, this Church and kingdom could not proceed.” When this commandment was given, it was so far religious, and so far binding upon the Elders of this Church, that it was told them if they were not prepared to enter into it, and to stem the torrent of opposition that would come in consequence of it, the keys of the kingdom would be taken from them. When I see any of our people, men or women, opposing a principle of this kind, I have years ago set them down as on the high road to apostasy, and I do today; I consider them apostates, and not interested in this Church and kingdom. It is so far, then, a religious institution, that it affects my conscience and the consciences of all good men—it is so far religious that it connects itself with time and with eternity. What are

the covenants we enter into, and why is it that Joseph Smith said that unless this principle was entered into this kingdom could not proceed? We ought to know the whys and the wherefores in relation to these matters, and understand something about the principle enunciated. These are simply words; we wish to know their signification.

Where is there in the world a people that make any pretensions to have any claim upon their wives in eternity? Where is there a priest in all Christendom that teaches anything of this kind? You cannot find them. Marriage is solemnized until death do them part, and when death comes to either party, then there is an end to the whole matter, and what comes after death is in the dark to them. It was so with us up to the time of the giving of that revelation; we had no claim upon one wife in eternity. They had obeyed the Gospel as we had; they had been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins as we had; we had been married to them according to the laws of the land, and were living as other Gentiles were, but we had no claim upon them in eternity. It was necessary that one grand truth should be unlocked, which is, that man and woman are destined to live together and have a claim upon each other in eternity. The Priesthood being restored, the key was turned in relation to this matter, and the privilege was placed not only within the reach of the Elders of this Church, but within the reach of all who should be considered worthy of it, to make covenants with their partners that should be binding in the eternal worlds; that in this respect, as well as in other respects, we might stand as a distinguished people, separate and apart from the rest of the earth, depending upon God for our religion.

Previous to this revelation, who in