On Thursday, April 24, at 4:10 p.m. in 309 McKay, Elder John Whitaker, a personal secretary to the First Presidency of the Church for many years, spoke to the History Club. His discussion centered around the efforts of the Church to control the practice of polygamy after the issuance of the Manifesto. Elder Whitaker is 94 years old and is thus a participant in the events which he discusses.

I come before you in great humility, dependent upon the Holy Spirit, to say some things that may increase your understanding. I must therefore lay the foundation from the beginning, when our Father presented His plan to His spirit children. He declared, "For this is my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."

Then Lucifer, declared his opposition, wanted the glory and power of God. He declared He would save all. This contemplated the taking away of the free agency of all spirits. After the battle in heaven, according to the 12th chapter of John's Revelation commencing with verse 7 to 12: "And the Devil and his angels were cast down to this earth to continue His fight against His Father." During that grand council in heaven the spirit children of Our Father were trained in all things necessary to fit them for all experiences of earth life, and when they had proven before our Father that they would do all He commanded them, they were selected, ordained, and set apart to come here to earth life at a time when their experiences there fitted into the Great Plan. So the powers of good and evil have been manifest ever since that struggle in the spirit world, from the days of Adam, through history, during the ministry of Jesus the Christ; and again when the Church was commanded in this generation. A very wonderful experience of the conflict between good and evil is seen when Joseph Smith went to get the plates before the time set by the angel, as he tried to take the plates from the boy containing them. He received several shocks that made him declare, "Why cannot I get the plates?" The angel said, "Because you have not kept the commandments." Then the angel said, "Look Joseph!" then he beheld the prince of darkness surrounded by his immovable train of associates in all their diabolical fury. As the visions of evil poured before him the angel said, "All this is but the good and the evil, the holy and the impure, the glory of God and the power of darkness, that you may know hereafter the two powers and never be influenced or overpowered by that wicked one. Behold, whatever entices and leads to good is of God, and whatever does not fit in with wicked one. It is he who fills the hearts of men with evil. To walk in darkness and blasphe God, and you may learn from henceforth, that his ways are to destruction; but the way of holiness in peace and rest." This lesson to Joseph Smith was of lasting benefit to him and should be of great benefit to us.

Now let us discuss some matters of history most of which I experienced and for which I am responsible. The Edmund Tucker Bill of 1862 had remained inactive until the period of 1890 when it was brought to public attention throughout the nation and new aroused such bitterness that President John Taylor in April 1892 refused to furnish the government with the marriage licenses in the Temple. At the general conference of the Church, April 1892, he explained to the people what the U. S. Government was going to do and said in his address on that occasion, "After reviewing the history of the muggings and drawings of the statues to barely Soil, I see some U. S. Marshalls in the audience. You would like to arrest me and create an incident like you did in Missouri, and Illinois, but I am not going to give you
the chance." Then he advised the Saints to be calm under the terrible storm that is coming, like the snow storm this morning. He asked, "What shall we do? We will roll up our coat collars and wait until the storm is over, and it will pass." Then he later went into hiding and remained the rest of his life and died at the home of Mayor Bouch at Kaysville, July 1887. Then President Woodruff was sustained as President of the Church and the persecution continued in great bitterness. President Woodruff asked us to build him a little secret room in the historian's office so he could work. The power of evil had manifested itself through politicians here and at Washington D.C. in the Congress of the United States, and the Ministerial Association of Salt Lake City, represented by all Protestant Churches which gathered votes from their various Churches to the number of six and one half million and filed them with the committees on elections at Washington D.C. asking Congress to disfranchise the Mormon people, take away the Church's charter, or right to act, which Congress did, May 19, 1890. Our people had contested this enactment and the Edmunds, Tucker Law of 1862, until the Supreme Court of the U.S. declared these laws were constitutional.

It was then that President Woodruff appealed to the Lord. He saw the destruction of the Church through the U.S. Government, and was impressed to do as the Lord commanded him. To observe the laws of the Land. Thus, the Manifesto was issued to the world and published in September 25, 1890, and presented to the October Conference 1890. Just before the Manifesto was presented, President Woodruff had Bishop Whitney read Articles of Faith Nos. 6, 9, 11, and 12. The Articles of Faith were sustained as a rule of the Church. President George Cannon then read the Manifesto. Elder Lorenzo Snow supplemented the reading with the notion that, "I move that recognizing Wilford Woodruff as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the only man on the earth at the present time who holds the keys of the sealing ordinances, by virtue of his position to issue the manifesto and consider his declaration concerning plural marriage as authoritative and binding." The Conference sustained it and it became a law of the Church. In his remarks President Woodruff said, "The step which I have just taken in issuing this Manifesto has not been done without earnest prayer before the Lord. He went on to say that the Lord had required many things at our hands which we have carried out as far as we could, but when we cannot do it, we are justified. The Lord does not require at our hands things that we cannot do. The Lord will never permit nor any other men who stands as the President of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the mind of God. If it were to attempt that, the Lord would move me out of my place."

President George Q. Cannon had just previously quoted the following declaration in his remarks: Deseret News, Sec. 124 Verse 46 which reads, "Verily, verily, I say unto you that when I give a commandment to any of the sons of men, to do a work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might, and with all they have to perform that work and cease not their diligence and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work; behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings."

It was the advice of President Woodruff that they accept the Manifesto. During the days following, reports were coming into the historian's office, where I worked and where the business of the Church was transacted, that some polygamists bitterly opposed this action. I remember how it made the Church authorities feel. Some of these polygamists were associated with me before this action was taken and they said they would not accept the decision of the action of the Church at the
General Conference and began a bitter public press opposition and secret whispering campaign against the action of the Church and continued to follow performance of plural marriages and to enter into new relations, in secret.

At the time President Joseph F. Smith was President, some new polygamist marriages came to light, which were performed in Centerville and one especially prominent man, Apostle John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley had written certain people naming the time and place to perform plural marriages. The letter written and delivered by President Joseph F. Smith for girls to take a plural wife after the Manifesto, and continued to write long letters to the press implicating President Smith. So, I visited him to find out why he was doing. He repeated some of these charges and it finally resulted in taking this man (Michel Hood) to a meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve at which the following occurred:

I introduced him to President Smith as the man who said his brother received permission from you to take a plural wife. President Smith then said, "Michael Hood, who is your brother? What is his name?" Michael Hood said, "My brother's name is John Hood, a worker in the temple." President Smith, "What did he tell you?" N.H. "He said you gave him permission to take a plural wife." President Smith, "Your brother is a liar. He is not living nor is the man dead who could truthfully say I ever gave my consent for him to take a plural wife since the Manifesto." Then President Smith related what happened to those two apostates. In this special meeting the First Presidency, President Smith, asked Apostle Taylor, "Did you write this letter?" showing him the letter. Brother Taylor said, "Yes, President Smith I did," President Smith said, "Then if you did, write out your resignation as an apostate of the Lord Jesus Christ right now." Brother Taylor said, "President Smith, I'll do nothing of the kind." President Smith said, "Then we will have to handle you." President Smith turned to Matthias F. Cowley and said, "Brother Cowley, did you write this letter?" (showing him the letter). President Smith said, "Yes, President Smith." President Smith said, "If you wrote this letter, write out your resignation as an apostate of the Lord Jesus Christ." Brother Cowley then wrote out his resignation as an apostate and handed it to President Smith. Later Apostle John W. Taylor was excommunicated from the Church and never was re-entracted. After he died one of the members of his family told us that President Francis H. Lyman had conferred all former blessings upon John W. Taylor before he died. President Joseph F. Smith, over his own signature emphatically denied in the public press that John W. Taylor ever came back into the Church before his death. He died out of the Church. Matthias F. Cowley was disfellowshipped from the Church. But later he wrote President Heber J. Grant confirming his wrong and was reabsorbed into the Church before he died.

While teaching in the Granite Seminary another case came to my attention. One day, I felt inspired to ask a certain young lady if she had gone into polygamy. During the noon hour she came to me and asked me to read the Dec. Sec. 132 and said a number of young women were meeting secretly and the teachers in that meeting told us girls if we want to enter the Celestial Kingdom there is no other way then to take a plural wife. I questioned her closely and explained Dec. Sec. 132 revelation on the sanctity of the marriage covenant including plurality of wives. Plural marriage was for Joseph Smith only and to those whom the Lord called. It was an incident and given in answer to the prophet's inquiry, Why he allowed the patriarchs of old to have wives and concubines." This girl told me privately after much inquiry what was taking place, private meetings were being held every Thursday in the Handsome Ward and young women and polygamists were meeting and being converted to become young wives of these men. I explained to her where she would lead if she
became a plural wife, after the Manifesto and persuaded her to go with him to President Grant to show she explained what was going on. The result was that he instructed the President of Granite Stake to call those men to account, which resulted in their excommunication from the Church; and this is only one of many secret meetings where such things were going on by the Fundamentalists.

John Wooley, a neighbor of mine, while living in Centerville, became a worker in the Salt Lake Temple from its dedication. He performed plural marriages after the Manifesto, and President Smith learning about it sent for him and said, "Bro. Wesley, is it possible you are performing plural marriages secretly?" "Yes, President Smith, I cannot lie to you." Then we shall have to handle you. The result was after his trial, John Wooley was excommunicated from the Church and became the first Fundamentalist, as I learned from un-impeachable sources. His son, Lorin Wooley became the second, John Y. Barlow the third and Joseph H. Musser and others followed, until in many parts of the Church they were claiming membership in the Church and were able to get recommendations to the temple. I have had Woodruff Stad and wife Zevada come to my home and bring a large volume or collection of proof of their claims; among them the so-called revelation they claimed was given by John Taylor when they claim set apart George Q. Cannon and five other men to continue secretly the practice of plural marriages. After seeing the so-called revelation, I told them that the writing was not the work of John Taylor, it wasn't true but was very likely born in the brain of Lorin Wooley. I have many other documents and other claims.

Since the days of John Taylor these Fundamentalists have continued to fight against the Church, saying the Church has lost the right to use the Priesthood and claim in ordaining people they have changed the wording the angel Moroni used in ordaining Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

They claim to make people think they are still members of the Church even preaching their doctrines at funerals.

Testimony of Charles Scovens, former Bishop of Bryon Ward, Patriarch Banks of the S rigor House Stake.

John Wooley
Lorin Wooley
John Y. Balou
Joseph Musser and others