

The fact is the desire and effort are not to "reform," but to destroy the "Mormon" Church. Time was when the ablest ministers of various denominations who passed through this city preached on Sunday in the Tabernacle, and the writer knows with what delight and profit they were often listened to by both the people and their leaders. Not that such men hoped to change the faith of their hearers. But the beautiful manner in which they frequently expounded, illustrated and enforced those moral and spiritual truths in which all alike believed, tended to elevate and ennoble the souls of the listeners. But for many years this has been changed. The *Tribune* and its supporters have made any association with "Mormons" appear so disreputable that professed ministers of Christ—who ought to be above the fear of men—have been deterred from being seen or heard where, according to their own account, they are most needed, and would still have been welcomed if they came in the true spirit of their Master.

In a report sent some time ago to headquarters from one of the religious bodies in this city great stress was laid upon the fact that the faith of the "Mormons" was as unyielding as ever, and that renewed efforts must be put forth to win or force them from their degrading superstitions. Now, what are these superstitions from which the "Mormons" are to be delivered by their quixotic champions? Is faith in God as the Creator of heaven and earth and the Father of the spirits of all flesh, one? Is belief in Jesus Christ as His Son, our elder Brother and the Savior of the world, another? Are baptism for the remission of sins and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost such terrible heresies? Is it treason to believe that God is the rightful Governor, both moral and physical, of the worlds He has created, and that the time will come when all the kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdom of our God and His Christ? Is it a crime to believe that it is the right of every sincere Christian to enjoy the guidance of that Spirit which Christ promised to His faithful followers to "lead them into all truth and show them things to come?" Doubtless Ingersoll would pronounce all this superstitious nonsense. But it is all believed in by one or other of the so-called Christian sects of the day. Which of these tenets would they have the "Mormons" renounce?

The reply used to be, "None of them. We only want you to give up polygamy." Well, the performance of plural marriages has been abrogated. Are you any more satisfied than before? No. The cry is, that this concession should have been made by actual revelation from God commanding its abolition. This is sheer hypocrisy. Had it been so announced you would simply have gloated over it as another instance of the hardness and blasphemy of the "Mormon leaders." It has come with as much authority and is considered as binding by the "Mormon" people as if it had claimed to be an

actual revelation. Every person possessed of common sense sees and feels it was the right thing to do, and it could not be more right if the voice of God had audibly commanded it.

But the demand now is that church and state must be separated; or, in other words, that the "Mormons" must cease to all vote one way [assuming that they ever did] under penalty of the direst vengeance.

Now, if men are entitled to vote at all, have they not the right to vote as they please? If not they are better without the franchise. Nor is it to be expected that "Mormons" or anybody else will vote for their enemies—they would be fools if they did. Suppose that party lines are drawn in Utah as elsewhere, and men array themselves under their respective republican, democratic, prohibition or other banners. Are the "Mormons" to be compelled to vote for one side or the other, or is a "Royal Commission" to be appointed to see that their vote is evenly divided? Suppose one party entirely ignores them and does not propose to grant them a voice in the legislation by which they are to be governed. Are they likely willingly to vote for that party? If the other side meets them on a common sense platform and proposes to share the offices on a just basis, are the "Mormons" to be visited with mob violence and slaughtered with shot and shell if they dare to vote for their own protection? Do not political parties, the world over, do the same? Nor would the "Mormons" need any advice from their leaders which way to vote. However, has not every man—whether priest or layman—the right to advise, influence and urge others, by all lawful means, to vote as he thinks best? All political parties do this; and it is the duty of every good citizen—minister or layman, religious or otherwise—to satisfy himself as to which party he thinks will best promote the interests of the community, and then win all the votes he can by honorable means for that party. Are "Mormons" alone to be denied that privilege? Or is it a crime for them to vote solidly for nominees of their own?

Whatever may have been done in the past, the bitterest anti-"Mormon" in this city knows that henceforth it will be impossible for the "Mormon" leaders to control the votes of their followers, except to the extent they can do so by reason and moral suasion.

Is it considered necessary, however, that Republicans or Democrats should vote the opposite ticket in order to prove that they are "independent" and are not controlled by the advice or dictation of their party leaders?

But suppose the "Mormon" leaders should try to dictate to their followers the way in which they should vote. Are over one hundred and fifty thousand people to be deprived of all political and civil rights and to be visited with fire and sword because a dozen men claim and attempt to exercise this prerogative?

It is very evident that there is,

among a certain class, a disposition to accord the same treatment to the "Mormons" that Russia is dealing to the poor Jews. No matter how sincerely the present generation of young "Mormons" are trying to profit by the experience of the past and to place themselves in accord with all that is best and highest in the age, the determination seems to be to hold them accountable for all real or imaginary wrongs for which they were in no way responsible, and to treat them with ostracism and contempt unless they prove the sincerity of their conversion by entirely abandoning the faith of their fathers and every principle of virtue and decency and descend to the level of the vicious and depraved. May God preserve them from doing this for the sake of the franchise or any other real or fancied privilege.

Amongst all the men who have grown rich from "Mormon" patronage, amongst all the professed ministers of Him who came to seek and to save those that were lost, are there none who have the courage and manhood to enter their protest against the misrepresentations and falsehoods that are being scattered broadcast over the nation about the "Mormons," and that have caused the cruel persecution and death of many innocent persons? Heretofore they could not speak without the imputation of excusing or winking at polygamy. That excuse exists no longer. It is time that the world should know something about the virtues of the "Mormons," and that—notwithstanding all that has been laid to their charge in the past—they are, as a people, honest, industrious, God-fearing and law-abiding. There ought to be a protest from the business men of this Territory, regardless of religion or politics, against any further proscriptive legislation towards the "Mormons" until they have had time to prove the sincerity of their promises. Prosecutions of a special class under the Edmunds law cease to serve any good purpose, now that pledges are given against the extension of the practice of plural marriage. The principal suffering falls on women and children who are deprived of support and education, thus injuring society. Government can afford to be generous, and doubtless would be if requested by leading Gentiles. Are they magnanimous and courageous enough to make the request?

By earnest and self-sacrificing—if not always wise—advocacy of the rights of individuals and minorities heretofore I have earned the right to demand truth and justice for the "Mormon" people, and to ask that humanity and mercy be exercised towards them. My sympathies are always with the oppressed, no matter what their creed or nationality. In this I shall have the respect of honorable men of all parties—the opinions of the rest are a matter of indifference to me.

Let us stop our bickerings, unite our efforts to build up our city, develop the resources of our wonderful country, and prove ourselves