

LETTER FROM REV. A. H. HENRY

The course that has been pursued by Rev. A. H. Henry, pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal church in this city, since his advent in this community, has been such as to entitle him personally, and his sentiments, to respectful consideration. He has been an earnest worker in his pastorate yet has been conservative, broad-minded, and charitable in dealing with issues and questions that are peculiar to this State, and has shown a disposition to avoid doing injustice to any class. For these and other reasons a letter from him dated March 30, but which came to hand this morning, is cheerfully given space.

Permit me to offer a few comments on your editorial of March 28th concerning Dr. Iliff's recent lecture at Quincy, Ill. Several similar editorials having appeared of late in your paper reflecting upon the character of the work being done by the Christian churches of this state, it seems fitting that some reply should be made.

"Concerning your quotation of the statement that 'polygamy is now being practiced in all parts of the State,' I have little to say.

"It is a well known fact that such statements are freely made by many people; with what ground of fact or evidence is of course is best known to themselves. It has, however, been admitted by Mormon speakers themselves that many who had taken to themselves plural wives before the 'Manifesto' are still living with them, and supporting them. You are certainly mistaken in your supposition that statements in this effect are made before Eastern audiences by those who would not be perfectly willing to make them here as openly if circumstances demanded.

"Concerning the question of church and state to which reference is made—There are many who are not 'preachers' or even members of Christian churches who are firmly persuaded that church authority in political matters is a deadly menace to free institutions. This is true no matter what church seeks to exercise that authority. Mormons, if freed from the dictation of the Mormon Church and permitted to exercise their inalienable right as free men, are certainly as good citizens and have as much right to compose a majority as any other of men.

"Methodists, organized as Methodists and voting under instructions from Methodist church officials and in obedience to Methodist church policy, would not be tolerated anywhere in this Republic, no matter how strong numerically they might be. The world has learned too well the awful lesson taught it during the middle ages to ever again submit to the political rule of a secularized church, ambitious of temporal power. The Church of Christ, armed with the civil power, is a monstrosity and has, in the past, proven itself capable of terrible apostacy and of the perpetration of enormous crimes. It is not strange that every tendency in this direction is looked upon with suspicion by thoughtful men.

"Finally, you question the ground for supposing that Utah presents a field for missionary effort on the part of the Christian churches. Why, let me ask, should Utah not be considered such a field? We have missionary workers in every state in the Union and in every country upon the globe. Is there no drunkenness, or immorality, or gambling, or Sabbath breaking, or vice of any kind in Utah? Is there no practical infidelity or worldliness or rejection of Christ, that the Gospel should not be preached? Wherever there are those who are

ignorant of, or who ignore, the practical teachings of Christ, there is a call for the messenger of the Cross. Whether the people call themselves Methodists or Mormons, Presbyterians or Catholics, Baptists or Mohammedans, Congregationalists or Hindoos, if these conditions exist, if there is dearth of spiritual life, and lack of real moral purpose, if there is substitution of church membership or the performance of rites and ceremonies for a spirit of vital piety, if there is worldliness and practical forgetfulness of God, there is certainly a field for earnest Christian missionary effort. The evangelical churches have come to Utah to stay. Their influence is being felt more and more every day. They have come to antagonize nothing except what is false, unchristian, misleading and evil, and they desire to present the truth of salvation from sin as revealed in the Gospel of Christ for the individual acceptance of every soul whom they can reach.

Very truly and sincerely yours,
ALFRED H. HENRY,
29 F Street.

Pastor First M. E. Church.

In the same spirit of earnest candor with which Rev. Mr. Henry has apparently endeavored to write, the "News" will offer some observations upon matters he has touched. It was not our intention to deal severely with Dr. Iliff, nor did we, from our standpoint do so; not half as severely as he dealt, before an eastern audience, with the religious society which it is the duty of this paper to defend. In regard to marital conditions in this State, spoken of by him and by Mr. Henry, the "News" has this to say:

Polygamy, as defined by statute, is the act of marrying a plural wife, and is a felony. The manifesto abolishing polygamy, which was adopted by the Mormon Church nearly eight years ago, was an assurance that no more such marriages should be contracted by members of that Church. If Dr. Iliff spoke as he was reported, he declared that polygamy was being widely practiced by the Mormon people, which was equivalent to accusing them of both perjury and felony.

Now there has not occurred in Utah, with the consent of the officers of the Mormon Church, since the adoption of the manifesto, a single instance of polygamy; and by a natural process the institution of plural marriage is dying out. Mr. Henry might reply that Dr. Iliff, and other persons from Utah who have gone east and talked in a vein similar to that in which he spoke, and whose utterances have been noticed by the "News," have intended to be understood as saying that men who married plural wives before the adoption of the manifesto have continued recognition of them since. Between such recognition and polygamy there is a vast difference. At the worst the former is only a misdemeanor while the latter is a felony; and the language the persons referred to use describes the greater offense.

The effect of such talk in the East as is here objected to is to greatly misrepresent the Mormon people and the actual status in Utah. Both in letter and spirit such statements are untruthful and unjust, and consequently unworthy of a professing Christian. If persons who go away from Utah and talk about the Mormons would tell the truth, and make the truth complete, and separate it from everything that is not of itself, this paper would never criticize them unkindly.

In regard to the question of church and state, of which Mr. Henry speaks, the "News" can only refer to its own utterances, and those of the general authorities of the Mormon Church, repeated on many different occasions, to

show that that Church utterly disclaims all control of its members in political matters. A Mormon is as free as a Methodist to take such part in politics, join such party, or vote such ticket as he may see fit. The zeal with which one Mormon opposes another in politics without either being called in question by ecclesiastical authority, sufficiently proves the absolute freedom of both from Church control.

By far the most important portion of Mr. Henry's letter is that in which he treats of Utah as a missionary field, and the "News" willingly concedes the cogency of what he says upon this subject. "Wherever there are those who are ignorant of, or who ignore, the practical teachings of Christ, there is a call for the messenger of the Cross," is a grand sentiment to which too strong an endorsement cannot be given by any believer in Holy Writ, and the intimation which Mr. Henry conveys, in the closing sentences of his letter, that all denominations in the State would do well to work together in the interests of true religion, meets the cordial approbation of the "News."

Mr. Henry's letter has been called forth by comments made by this paper on the utterances of persons who have gone east from Utah and have represented that crime, immorality and other conditions contrary to the teachings of Christianity, were widely prevalent in this State, and that the Mormons were the transgressors. Shall the Mormons remain silent while being thus traduced? Shall they make no defense when thus assailed? Throughout this whole controversy, who is the aggressor? If the controversy is to cease, how shall it be ended? When the attacks cease the strife will cease, but not till then.

Suppose a prominent ecclesiastic of Colorado were to travel through the country representing that in that state a large majority of the people were practicing and abetting crime, subverting American institutions, destroying the freedom of elections, etc., would not the Denver papers expose him? Would the press representing that portion of the inhabitants of Colorado who were being thus assailed, remain silent? Is the Utahn who goes abroad and represents his fellow citizens as given to evil and criminal practices, a friend of his State, or is he its enemy, who seeks to tear down its reputation and injure its material interests? A final question: Would it not be more truly Christian; more consistent with peace and brotherhood; more advantageous to the financial and material interests of our State, and productive of more good in every way for the people of Utah, clergy and laity, saint and sinner, believer and unbeliever, Mormon, Jew and Gentile, for this commonwealth to settle its own problems within its own borders, than to have men of prominence, including ministers, traveling and proclaiming throughout the Union, what a wicked place Utah is?

SUPREMACY OF CIVIC GOVERNMENT

Ladies and Gentlemen—I was intensely gratified to learn only a few days ago of your league. I had no idea that any such organization existed. In a measure I reproached myself, for it seemed to me that I ought to have known; I ought in a sense to have scented it. I have earnestly longed for such a society; but like a civic Micawber I have simply waited for something to turn up. Or is it that your light has been under a bushel? I certainly have never seen a flicker of it until this evening. I have been in the work for three years—chiefly as an observant student—reading, thinking and feeling, that civic,