

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE REAL POINTS AT ISSUE IN THE MORMON QUESTION.

Editors of The Index:—

It was meant that the article about the Mormons in *The Index* of May 1 should be so well worded and well aimed that no one could fail to understand that its object was not to defend polygamy or the Mormon religion as such, but only to present the facts with regard to the virtues and worth of the Mormon people as citizens, and to show by them that no such evils are rising from their institutions and beliefs as to call for the interference of the federal government. But, as it seems to have missed of its design in the mind even of so fair an observer as my friend, Mr. Potter, let me take another shot, aiming to show more clearly what the points at issue really are, and to correct the mistakes about them into which he has manifestly fallen.

I. Instead of its being assumed by the article, as Mr. Potter thinks, that all the good things testified to about Mormonism are the result of polygamy, its very title, "Gentile Testimony," not to polygamy, but, "to Mormon Worth," shows it is Mormonism as a whole, and not one of its parts, of which they are said. The expressions used in it,—"What community can present stronger testimony to its virtues," not what institution, "Polygamy guarded and penetrated by the Mormon religion"—and not polygamy alone—"produces as much happiness for its citizens as monogamy does,"—not produces the whole of it,—all point in the same direction. And, in those places where polygamy and monogamy are spoken of by themselves as doing certain things, it is so manifestly to avoid repeating the words "Mormon" and "Gentile," and so in accordance with a well-known figure of speech, putting the part of a thing for the whole, that it seems hardly possible for it to be misunderstood. Polygamy is indeed only a single feature of Mormonism. The real power of the system is not all in that, but in its religious ideas,—these which produce its virtues, these which uphold and uplift its polygamy, these, if anything, which make it dangerous. And it is this fact—the fact that it is all through a religion—which ought to, and which by our Constitution does, place it beyond the interference of legislation, and which makes the argument all the stronger that must be dealt with, if at all, by simply religious methods.

II. Mr. Potter says that, "to secure a valid, logical comparison" for the argument in behalf of Mormonism derived from its moral superiority, its other term should be "a religious community of similar faith and ecclesiastical government to that of Mormonism, but different from it in maintaining monogamy instead of polygamy." This, however, is necessary only on the supposition that the comparison is between polygamy and monogamy, to see which is best. As it is not between them, but between Mormonism as a whole and the Gentile party as a whole to see which of them, if either, most needs interference with, the state of things that we do have in the problem,—each of the two parties side by side with each other in the same community and under the same territorial laws,—is all that is necessary for the work. Comparing them thus, the statistics show that the Gentile population of Salt Lake City furnishes fourteen times as many arrests for crime in proportion to its numbers as the Mormon population, and, in the Territory as a whole, forty-eight times as many criminals for the penitentiary as in a like ratio the Mormons; while the testimony of scores of accurate observers is in the same direction. And this, I contend, is a perfectly valid and logical comparison to help prove what is my carefully stated object,—not that polygamy in itself is better than monogamy, but that "polygamy in Utah and in connection with the Mormon religion is producing no such evils as to call for the interference of the general government."

III. Mr. Potter ascribes the virtues claimed for the Mormons of the fact that "the Mormon population for the most part is a picked community of simple people bound together and to certain rules and conduct by a fervent religious faith, and guided by a very astute leadership." Very good. But how does this harmonize with the assertion so often heard, that they are made up of the lowest, vilest, and most ignorant classes of Europe, deduced here by crafty leaders, and that on this account they ought to be suppressed? And, if a picked community in a Territory redeemed and built up out of the wilderness by their own hard toil see fit to adopt a special religion and institution, and by their help bring forth a better civil condition than their neighbors without them, what sort of logic is it that the unpicked communities in the rest of the country should sit in judgment on their conduct, and suppress them because of their immorality? In admitting that they are a "picked community," is not the whole case against them given up? Who shall say what the institutions of a picked community shall be, more properly than its own men and women?

IV. Mr. Potter asks, if "this vast difference in criminality between them and others be owing wholly and solely to the difference of marriage institutions, and if marriage is simply a social institution, why not heroically smother the feeling that monogamy

'best meets the heart's need' at the East, and move at once for the conversion of citizens in Connecticut to polygamy as the surest means of emptying its prisons?" Now, if my friend will look at what was really said, he will see at once how little ground there is for such a question. The words are: "What does this difference show? Not, indeed, that polygamy in itself and for the country at large is better than monogamy; for, in itself and elsewhere, it is not regarded as a religious principle,—a view which makes all the difference in the world,—but only that for Utah and in connection with the Mormon religion it is producing no such evils as to call for the interference of the general government." The whole thing is made to turn on its connection with the Mormon religion, on its being "penetrated and guarded" by it, and on the state of things in Utah. And, because a person does not believe it should be interfered with in this form and under these circumstances, is it a very brilliant piece of logic to argue that therefore he ought to advocate its adoption in another form and under entirely different circumstances? If I should say that, in Florida and in connection with the Florida climate, oranges are the best crop a farmer can raise, and that their culture there ought not to be interfered with by the government at Washington, what would be thought of a person's mental condition who should turn round and ask, Why, then, do you not smother your liking for apples and wheat, and advise all Connecticut farmers to go to raising oranges as the best way of getting out of debt? Yet what is the argument about advocating polygamy everywhere, because it is to be tolerated in Utah, but a principle of precisely the same calibre?

V. Mr. Potter, like many others, compares polygamy with slavery, and thinks that, as the one has been abolished by United States law as morally wrong, the other on the same grounds ought to be also. But slavery was recognized as morally wrong, because its subjects had no voice in its establishment, and were held in it against their own wills, because it deprived them of all their great natural rights as to education, property, self-control, and the pursuit of happiness, and because it brought forth evil fruits to society at large,—though even then the nation did not feel it had any right to legislate it away till its friends had risen in rebellion against the national authority. Suppose now that slavery had been guilty of none of these acts, suppose it had been established by the negroes themselves, that they wished its continuance, that each one was free to leave it when he would, that it provided schools and ballot boxes for them equally with the whites, that it gave them the fullest rights of property, and that it produced for the South more prosperity, wealth, intelligence, and virtue than anti-slavery did at the North, and forty-eight per cent. Less crime among its advocates than freedom did among its opponents: who would have held that the general government ought to spend—as it did—millions of money and five hundred thousand lives in putting it down? But all these liberties, rights, and privileges Mormon polygamy does allow to its subjects: all these good fruits it does show in connection with its religion. There is not a single point of resemblance between the two things. And yet, because somebody has called them "the twin relics of barbarism," it is argued that they are equally wrong, and that what was done to the one it is right to do to the other! Was there ever a more glaring instance of how sensible people can have their minds darkened by the "shadow of a name"?

VI. Mr. Potter's article declares that "it is one of the marks of advancing civilization that the statute law defining crime harmonizes gradually with the demands of the enlightened moral sense." Very true. But it is still more a mark of advancing civilization that less and less stress is laid on the letter of a law or institution as a test of its moral worth, and more and more on its spirit and results. The elevation of marriage, like that of Sunday and worship, has been produced and marked, not by increasing legal enactments with regard to it, but by the new appreciation among the best people of its spirit and of its great purpose. And this is true of all marriage, polygamous as well as monogamic. It is just as unfair to judge of the one by what it was in past ages as to do so with the other. We must compare them both as they are now, judge them, not by their letter and form, but by their spirit and results,—see which in these respects is penetrated most with religion, and has felt most the influence of our advancing civilization. Take Mr. Potter's own test, that of absolute equity" between the parties. With every monogamous State in the Union denying to wives the right of suffrage, taking away very largely the control of their property and children, and in some cases utterly suppressing their individuality, making the twain one and that one the husband, and with polygamous Utah allowing them all of these rights equally with their husbands, which side, on the whole, has "advancing civilization" done the most for?

VII. What Mrs. Jackson says about religious fanaticism as the influence which prompts some Mormon women to plural marriages and about their unhappiness and self-sacrifice in this estate is true beyond question. But cannot stories equally be told of the motives which prompt some women to marry under monogamy, and about the happiness and self-sacrifice

of their condition? What is the standard argument against all marriage and in favor of free love? Is it not the miseries of married life? What are the motives which notoriously, in a vast number of cases, at the East lead to unions? Are they not the desire of wealth, position, and sometimes of a mere living, rather than true love,—a desire for whose gratification all manner of sacrifices are endured? An account has just been given, in the New York newspapers, of a woman who came into court pleading for the release of her husband, who was about to be imprisoned for cruelly beating her. "But," said the judge, "if I do, he will only beat you again." "I know it," said this poor victim of monogamy, "but I would rather be beaten than starve." Which, now, is the higher motive,—that of Mrs. Jackson's Mormon woman, who clings to marriage for religion's sake, or that of her New York sister, who clings to it for the sake of bread? If such an incident had occurred in a Utah court, how the whole land would have rung with it, as an illustration of the horrors of polygamy! And, as it is, will not Mr. Potter's exclamation over the one case apply equally well to the other?—"How can one read such words, without feeling a new and even indignant protest rising within him against a form of marriage into which a pure and noble-minded woman can enter only by crushing out the deepest natural sentiments of the heart? Where is there a greater crime against nature than this which thus transforms the holy instinct of wedded love and motherhood into a life-long torture? And one can but feel indignation also toward the ecclesiastical system which seeks to build up its power."

Nor is the New York incident the only illustration of what is possible under monogamy. Look at the divorce records of our courts. Look at the matrimonial scandals society is full of. Look at the efforts made, not in Utah, but in Massachusetts, to revive whipping as a needed punishment for wife-beating. Look at the sorrowful faces of too many wives at the East, and see whether the monogamous world is yet in a condition to say very much about the unhappiness of the plural wives of Utah. Nor is it a condition of things which is confined to the vicious, ignorant, and poor. I know of a mother hardly outside of Boston who, all through her last years and on her death bed, implored her young daughter not to marry a man of good family and education, because of the absolute brutality she had known so many wives to suffer from like husbands. Ask any physician what he knows about the matter; and, were it allowable, he could give repeated instances of alike character, give some especially which arose from the very fact that the marriage was monogamous. And again, to quote, with a slight change, Mr. Potter's words: "This witness gives an interior view of one of the direct results of monogamy, which is often passed by without notice; and, so long as such a cry comes out of an Eastern woman's heart, let not Eastern men be led to think that any general condition of social order and prosperity which they can exhibit is going to justify or excuse their crime against marriage before the judgment of the civilized world."

But, in view of these undeniable facts against it, how is monogamy really justified as a blessing by its friends? Why, we say that they show only one side of it: that on the other side there is still a greater amount of happiness, of virtue, of kindness and of joy, entering into it through motives of the purest love; and that we should take both sides together, not one alone, to get at its true character. And the same reasoning will apply to Mormon polygamy. Mrs. Jackson gives one side, a true one, but no more the whole than the story of the beaten New York women is the whole of monogamy. Against it there are a multitude of testimonies as to the fair degree of happiness experienced in Mormon families. An educated lady, originally with her husband a Free Religionist, told me that one of the things which helped to convert her to Mormonism, after living for two years as a Gentile in Salt Lake City, was what she saw of the Mormon women in their sweet, peaceful home life. Another woman, a teacher in one of their schools and herself a Gentile, testified that, after living in many families both at the East and in Utah, she "had found just about as much happiness in the one as in the other,—little quarrels, jealousies, and heart-burnings among Mormon wives, but no more than in families of New England sisters." Mr. Phil Robinson, the experienced English traveler, says: "I was sitting one day with two Mormon ladies, plural wives, when the conversation turned upon marriage. 'Do you mean to say,' I asked one of them, 'that you and your friends are voluntary agents, when you go into plurality?' 'Certainly I do,' was the reply. 'If I had the last seven years of my life to live over again, I should do exactly what I did seven years ago.' 'And what was that?' I asked. 'Refuse to marry a Gentile to please my friends, and marry a polygamist to please myself. I had two offers from unmarried men, either of which my family were very anxious I should accept. But I did not care for either. But when my husband, who already had two wives, proposed to me, I accepted him in spite of my friends' protests. And I would marry him again, if the choice came over again.' 'Then yours must be an exceptional case; for I cannot bring myself to believe that those who have been first wives would ever consent to their husbands' remarriage, if the past

could be recalled.' But I was his first wife," said the elder lady; "and, if my past were recalled, I would give my consent to a second marriage just as willingly as I did twelve years ago. Perhaps," said she, laughing, "you will call mine an exceptional case, too. But, if you go through the Mormon families individually, I am afraid you will find the exceptional cases very large." It is a conversation which indicates anything but that condition of "torment," "self-sacrifice," and "fanaticism" which Mrs. Jackson has so much to say about; and, unquestionably, it expresses the views and feelings of very many Mormon women. They have a newspaper of their own; and, very strangely to us, it is quite as much filled with the romance and sentiment of marriage as any at the East; defends plurality, too, on the grounds, not of religion alone, but equally on those of affection and happiness; nay, even commiserates Gentile women for their forlorn condition under monogamy. Their happiness, however, as Mr. Robinson says, is doubtless that of peace and content rather than rapture and ecstasy, not the highest ideal; and, apart from any religious motives, some rejoice in plurality as relieving them largely from household drudgery, the sisterhood of wives rendering the work light, and as affording them more leisure and strength for society, self-culture, and individual development than singleness,—rather humble motives, it may be, but, in contrast with those of the starving and beaten single wife of New York, hardly indicating a torture which calls for the interference of the United States government.

VIII. Mr. Potter thinks that the real duty of Free Religion towards the Mormons is, not to defend them against any attempt of the national government to oppress polygamy, but to "emancipate the religious sentiment among them from bondage to ecclesiastical dogmatism and superstition." But, admitting the need of this emancipation, how is it to be brought about? By the use of arbitrary law? By the agency of the United States Congress and the American army? By taking away from a whole community their right of deciding by a majority vote what shall be their institutions? Is not this the method of all persecution, one of the very things Free Religion was organized to protest against? Was there ever anywhere a worse superstition than the idea that superstition can be legislated away? ever a worse dogmatism than to tell a people at the end of a bayonet that they shan't dogmatize? ever a worse tyranny than compelling women to be free of what to them are solemn marriage bonds? As I read the constitution of the Free Religion Association, its method of emancipating the religious sentiment is directly opposite to all this,—is a reliance, not on force and law, but on "liberty of thought," on "scientific culture and study," and on "appeals to impartial reason." It is the method, in other things, of all our best civilization. Women, under the bondage of religious sentiment, are everywhere sacrificing themselves to something,—some to their husbands and children, some to dress and fashion, some to fanatical temperance crusades, and some, as in the Roman Catholic Church, to a life of celibacy quite as "abhorrent to the natural sentiment" as polygamy. How do we seek to cure them? Not by force; not by Hoar and Edmunds laws; not by breaking up their homes and shutting them up in prison, as the United States officers have actually done in Utah; but by education, by a better religion, by other things as objects of sacrifice, by all the sweet and refining influences of society. How did we make Kansas a free State? Not by legislation at Washington, but by pouring into it a majority of free men, building up in it free institutions, and showing in it side by side with slavery that freedom could give people more prosperity, more happiness, more virtue, more of all the higher things of life than bondage could. Why now should we not do the same with Utah? It is a method of opposing polygamy and Mormonism, and of emancipating its people from ecclesiastical bondage, if there is any there, in which I fully believe. The whole question is one of means, is whether we shall employ the old, worn-out, persecuting methods of outside force and law, which never did succeed anywhere, or the modern, civilized, Christian ones of love, justice, persuasion, education, and a larger, better truth; and I am amazed that any Free Religionist should hesitate for an instant which to advocate. Utah is as open as Massachusetts, free schools, churches, newspapers, free discussion, free thought, free trade, monogamy, monogamists, and all the influences of civilization; and the Mormons are willing and eager to compare their arguments, their virtues, their civilization side by side with ours. These are what we have been long contending are the only weapons that truth wants: these have been proclaimed as our infallible reliance in this age of the world against error. What now can be more cowardly, what more false to our own principles, what more a showing that our boasting of them was all bombast, than for us, the moment a chance comes for their trial, to drop them all and fall back on the old weapons of force and law, merely because they are on our side and not on theirs! Suppose that David, after accepting the challenge of Goliath to settle their difficulty at single combat, and going forth to meet him with the boast to his friends that a sling and pebbles were all that he wished for the fight, had turned pale at the sight of the mons-

ter, and rushed back, asking for the whole might of the Israelitish host to aid him, while Goliath stood alone: would any one, even a Sunday-school boy, ever have thought David much of a hero? Yet, after taking in hand our sling and pebbles of free schools, free churches, and free thought with which to kill Mormonism, what is our falling back on the United States government for help but a piece of the same heroism! Why, our conduct is enough to make the very stones of the soil cry out against us. Surely, Free Religion "is obligated" to resist such moral cowardice. Let us be true to our better nature. Let us not be ashamed to measure our logic, truth, life, virtue, all our moral weapons point to point with theirs on a fair and equal field, asking and giving no favors. And, if they in the end can show a stronger and better civilization than ours, show that their polygamic and Mormonism can bring forth richer fruit than our monogamic and Gentile one, ought we not graciously and gladly to yield it place, rejoicing that what is fitting for that part of the country is to survive, just as what is fittest for that part of it does here, and feeling that, the law of nature, it is also somewhat the law of progress and the will of God?

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[SENATOR BROWN'S SPEECH

UTAH AND NEW ENGLAND POLYGAMY

THE HYPOCRISY OF ANTI-"MORMON" FANATICS.

In the Senate of the United States May 27th, the Utah bill being under consideration, Senator Brown made the following speech.

Mr. Brown. Mr. President, as the question I am about to discuss is an important one, and I have prepared my remarks with some care, I desire to say in advance that I will not submit to interruptions during the delivery of my speech. At the close of it I will cheerfully answer any questions that may be propounded by senators, or engage in any running debate to the extent I may think necessary to a full understanding of the whole question. As the bill reported by the committee is one professing to have for its objects, as stated by Mr. Hoar, in charge for the committee, on yesterday, the correction of improper social habits in Utah, and the punishment of illicit intercourse between the sexes, and the preservation of the purity of the family by the suppression of polygamy, would seem not only to be germane to the objects of the bill, but proper; we should also consider what is necessary to protect the family against the wrongful dissolution of the marriage tie and the contracting of other marriages which are illegal and immoral. In other words, if the protection of the family against illegal and immoral marriages is a proper subject of congressional legislation, then the protection of the family against illegal dissolution of the marriage tie and adulterous remarriages is likewise a proper subject for our consideration.

The question of the marriage relation and of the manner of dissolving the marriage tie is often discussed with propriety in ecclesiastical and clerical assemblies. And some consider it an encroachment upon proper prerogatives of that jurisdiction to discuss the subject here.

But as the question of the family and of the marriage relation is considered necessary for discussion in and action by Congress, it follows that the moral principles which lie at the foundation of the family and the dissolution of the bond of marriage are also proper for discussion while these questions are under consideration in the Senate.

If, then, in the remarks which I shall make I may seem to trench upon the rights of any other jurisdiction, let it be borne in mind that our own jurisdiction over the question can be properly discussed nor our duties properly performed without examination into the great moral principles which underlie this whole question. Before I proceed further I will ask the Secretary to read the amendment which on yesterday I proposed as an additional section to this bill.

The President *pro tempore*. The amendment will be read.

The Chief Clerk read as follows:

That the voluntary sexual intercourse of a married person with one of the opposite sex, not the husband or wife of such married person, shall be cause, and the only cause, of absolute divorce from the bond of marriage in the District of Columbia and in the Territories of the United States and in other places subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States; but the courts of the United States may, in proper cases, as at common law, grant divorces from and board in said District, Territories, and other places subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States.

Mr. Brown. The bill is directed against the abuse of the family by illegal plurality of marriages in Utah, which is called polygamy. My amendment is directed against the destruction of the family by the rapidly increasing practice of divorce, which is forbidden not only by the principles of sound morality, but by the divine law itself, and against the polygamy which is rapidly increasing by remarriages by numerous parties who have been illegally divorced. But before entering upon that part of the subject, I shall make some remarks upon the constitutional guarantees which are thrown around religious liberty in this country