

back again to their idolatry? This would be no less unchristian than unkind. Shall we compel them to put away all their wives, but those first married, and then receive them into the church? But in many cases this would be impracticable, in others unjust, in all cruel. For the chastity of the women hitherto irreproachable would be tarnished by their repudiation: they would often be left without a home and without support; and, like other disgraced and destitute women of all lands, they would be thrust upon a life of infamy and vice. "Who," continued they, "shall dare assume the responsibility of separating wife from husband, and children from parents? since the Bible expressly forbids a man to divorce his wife, for any cause, except unfaithfulness to her marriage vow: God is not said in the Bible to hate polygamy, but it says there that he hateth putting away."

"I need not say that I was completely disarmed and silenced by this array of the law and the testimony," and was compelled, by their arguments, to admit that their course was one of equal justice and mercy. I soon learned, however, that the rules of the missionaries are by no means uniform upon this question. Many of them, particularly those who possess a great regard for the authority and the dogmas of the church, and who reason rather from the 'tradition of the elders,' than from the law of Nature or of God, have rigidly enforced monogamy among their converts, and if any one becomes a Christian while living in polygamy, such missionaries require him to repudiate all his wives but one."

The author then relates a case, as published in a Boston paper, where an Indian chief, of North America, became converted, and before baptizing him the missionary required him to put away one of his wives. So he repudiated his second wife, a young, healthful woman, the mother of one boy, whom she also was required to give up, as the other wife was barren. "The repudiated wife and bereaved mother soon died inconsolable and broken-hearted." And this is what many self-righteous monogamists regard as Christianity! Heaven save us from such diabolical "Christianity."

The experience recorded above caused the author of the work in question "to inquire into the origin and the moral tendencies of the two social systems of monogamy and polygamy." His book is one result of those inquiries. Says he—

"I have now pursued this investigation many years, and have become convinced that polygamy is not always an immorality; that sometimes a man may innocently have more than one woman; and then that it is their right to be married to him, and his duty to love and cherish them, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death shall part them."

I make a few more extracts from the same work:

"The sacred Scriptures represent the wisest and best men that ever lived, as practising polygamy with the divine blessing and approval. \* \* But it is unnecessary to cite other examples from the Bible. No one familiar with that book has ever denied that polygamy is taught in the Old Testament, and yet most Christians suppose it to be forbidden in the New. Have we any right to such a supposition? Are we right in entertaining any supposition on this subject? If it is forbidden in the New Testament, have we not the right to demand the most unequivocal and undoubted proofs of such prohibition? Is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob the Christian's God, or is he not? Is it not possible, that this supposition is an error? And, if it be an error, is it not possible that it has been one means of lessening our reverence for the Old Testament, and thereby undermining our confidence in the Bible as a whole? If this supposition be an error, has it not been tending to make infidels of us all? \* \*

"The marriage system of polygamy never formed a part of that ceremonial dispensation which was abrogated by the New Testament; nor has it ever been proved that the New Testament was ever designed to effect any change in it; but the presumption is that this new dispensation has also left it, as it found it—abiding still in force. If any change were to be

made in an institution of such long standing, confirmed by positive law, it could obviously be made only by equally positive and explicit ordinances or enactments of the Gospel. But such enactments are wanting. Christ himself was altogether silent in respect to polygamy, not once alluding to it; yet it was practised at the time of his advent throughout Judea and Galilee, and in all other countries of Asia and Africa, and, without doubt, by some of his own disciples.

"The Book of the Acts is equally silent as the four Gospels are. No allusion to it is found in any of the sermons or instructions or discussions of the apostles and early saints recorded in that book. It was not because Jesus or the apostles durst not condemn it, had they considered it sinful, that they did not speak of it, for Jesus hesitated not to denounce the sins of hypocrisy, covetousness and adultery, and even to alter and amend, apparently, the ancient laws respecting divorce and retaliation; but he never rebuked them for their polygamy, nor instituted any change in that system. And this uniform silence, so far as it implies anything, implies approval. \* \* The apostles always denounced the sins of fornication and adultery, but never polygamy, nor intimated in any way that it was a sin. In all the long and painful catalogues of sins enumerated in the first, second and third chapters of Romans, many of which relate to the unlawful indulgence of the amorous propensities, polygamy is not once named. It is the very place where it is morally certain that it would have been named if it were sinful; and, that it is not there named, we are fully warranted to believe that it is not sinful. \* \*

"I sum up the divine testimony thus: If polygamy is now a vice and a sin, like adultery or lying or stealing, it always has been and always will be a sin; and God would never have approved or commanded it, but we have seen above, that he has commanded it in two cases at least, viz., in case of the married man's illicit intercourse with an unbetrothed virgin, and in case of the married man's brother's widow; and in these cases, therefore, it cannot be a sin. In further proof of its innocence, let it be remembered that it was practised without rebuke by Abraham, when he was styled 'The Friend of God'; by Jacob, when his name was changed to Israel on account of his piety and faith; by David, when God himself gave testimony, and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse a man after my own heart'; and by many others whose names will be held in everlasting remembrance, being preserved in Holy Writ, long after those of pseudo-religionists, who now denounce polygamy as barbarous and sinful, shall have perished in oblivion. \* \*

"At the council of Toledo, in A. D. 400, it was ordered, by canon seventeenth, that every Christian that had both a wife and a concubine should be excommunicated; but he should not be excommunicated who had only a concubine without a wife. \* \*

"The only safe and proper provision for homeless women is marriage. An early marriage will usually save them from the dangers to which they are exposed. Monogamy cannot secure their marriage; but polygamy can; yet we are taught to look with horror upon polygamy as one of the 'relics of barbarism,' although it is plainly taught in the Bible, and is the only system which provides marriage for all, and which secures the honest and lawful gratification of those impetuous passions which must be and which will be indulged in some manner if not by marriage, then without it; while we wink at all the disgusting abominations of prostitution, divorce, adultery, and other vices, which are the well-known and inevitable results of restricted marriage. Monogamy, in forbidding to marry, assumes all the curses which this prohibition entails. We must choose between the system which provides marriage for all, with comparative purity, or the system of restricted marriage with inevitable impurity. \* \*

"The Bible forbids prostitution, but permits polygamy. The ancient Greeks and Romans forbade polygamy, but permitted prostitution. Modern monogamy pretends to forbid both, but really permits prostitution also. Our monogamous morality is, therefore, that of ancient Paganism, and not that of the

Bible; and prostitution is as much a necessary part of our social system as it was of that at Athens, at Corinth, or at Rome. Our magistrates are not ignorant of the extent of public licentiousness; but they do not attempt to suppress it. They only seek to conceal it, and confine it, if possible, within its present limits, requiring its votaries to keep it in the dark. Our police officers know almost every prostitute that walks the street, and allow her to apply her nefarious trade unmolested, so long as she is polite and unobtrusive. As the Spartans are reputed to have said to the youth of their State, in regard to theft, 'Steal, but do not be caught at it,' so the guardians of our public morals say, 'You may be as licentious as you please, only make no public display of your immorality.' The reason of this connivance at prostitution must be because our legislators and judges believe its suppression to be impossible; and, with our system of monogamy, it is impossible. If there must be a multitude of women unmarried and unprovided for, there will be a multitude of prostitutes; and, if there are a multitude of prostitutes, there will be a multitude of men, who, like Shakspeare's Falstaff, will decline marriage, because they can be 'better accommodated than with a wife'; and so the evil will go on continually increasing and propagating itself."

Dr. Foote augurs in this way— "Why, in prescribing marriage, should one system be forced upon such a variety of people, any more than one religion? \* \*

We want a secretary of marriage, whose duties it shall be to investigate the various systems of marriage which have been practised from the earliest period, study impartially their effects upon the peoples living under them, make annual reports of the same for the enlightenment of present generations, in order that they may profit by the experience of the human family in past ages; this report to be accompanied with such recommendations as may be thought best calculated to contribute to the happiness and moral and physical improvement of the people. \* \*

Polygamy should be tolerated expressly by national consent. \* \* We have among our Christian missionaries the example of toleration in respect to polygamic marriage. They find that many of the people among whom they are laboring cannot be restrained from having a plurality of wives, and consequently, and I think very wisely, they let the marriage question alone."

JACOB

## Correspondence.

### The School Law.

#### Editors Deseret News:

The late revenue law, sec. 1, provides, "That three mills on the dollar for Territorial purposes, three mills on the dollar for the benefit of district schools, and such sum as the County Court may designate for county purposes, not to exceed six mills on the dollar."

Here we have three distinct taxes, each for their legitimate purpose. Sec. 27 provides that Auditor's Warrants shall be received for Territorial taxes, and County Warrants for County taxes. School tax, strictly is not Territorial tax, and I conclude that the Legislature did not design that it might be paid in Auditor's Warrants, and the practice of doing so has compelled the districts to wait a year sometimes for the money, or submit to a shave of 20 to 35 cents on the dollar, and the trustees could not contract with a teacher and use it in the current year without being subjected to this loss. The law expressly provides that the money shall be collected and paid into the County Treasury on or before the 31st day of December, each year, and the County Treasurer, is required to pay it over to the trustees, on the order of the County Superintendent, which certainly should be done in January.

Since the repeal of the law providing for a tax of one-fourth of one per cent. (when necessary) to provide for repairs and other incidental expenses, the trustees are left without any provision of law, to raise any means for such purposes. If it is said that they can raise a tax by a two-thirds' vote of a district, I answer that the residents of a district could vote to tax themselves without law if they were so disposed, but frequently they are

not so disposed. Better require them to pay more on the tuition of their own children, and something for fuel, repairs, etc.

It may be hoped that the committee on compiling a school law may consider these facts, and that the Legislature will remodel the school law. Publish it in one act in plain language, in pamphlet form, that it may not be mixed up in several books, nor misunderstood.

S. RICHARDS.

Union, Dec. 18, 1879.

### Hayes on the "Twin Relic."

To the Editor of the East Saginaw Courier:

Mr. Hayes devotes a portion of his last message to the subject of polygamy in Utah. He thinks it should be set down on without further delay. His reason for this conclusion is thus stated: "The opinion widely prevailed among the citizens of Utah that the law was in contravention of the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom. This objection is now removed. The Supreme Court of the United States has decided the law (against polygamy) to be within the legislative power of Congress, and binding as a rule of action for all who reside within the Territories." "Prevailed!" Just as if a decision of a court of a union from which they have long been excluded on the ground that they were heathens, could suddenly change their social and religious status and cause them to renounce doctrines for which they have suffered the fiercest persecutions, and an institution which they regard as authorized and commanded by a special revelation. Mr. Hayes ought to read some work on evolution if he lacks the common sense to know that it takes more than four minutes to educate out of a man what it took half a century; with the aid of ghostly authority, to educate him.

What if the Supreme Court has decided the law against polygamy to be not against religious freedom. This is a very simple question, and one which any person of fair intelligence can understand as well as that learnedly ignorant body, an electoral commission, composed of these gowned gentlemen, put Mr. Hayes in the White House, but I am not aware that any one has written. "The opinion widely prevailed that Mr. Hayes was not the choice of the people," though no doubt he and his parasites would be glad to have the tense changed. Prevails is the word.

I have been among the Mormons in Utah and elsewhere, and know them to be a peaceable, quiet and industrious people, and noted for minding their own business. These qualities ought to challenge respect anywhere. As for their adherence to the practice of polygamy it is almost wholly a matter of religious conviction. The Mormon women have the same natural instincts that other women possess, and admit freely that their feelings are against the plural system; but they say it is simply a question whether they will obey God or man, and they claim to know that polygamy among them has been commanded direct from heaven. I have no doubt the Lord was conspicuously absent at the time Joseph Smith received the 'revelation' in behalf of polygamy, but I am equally well convinced that the great body of the Mormons believe it was genuine. Their bible, the Book of Mormon, condemns the practice in general terms, but puts in a saving clause, thus:

"For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things."

Now, since they regard the institution as in accordance with a divine command, of course to interfere with it forcibly is to interfere with their religious freedom. It may be that religious freedom ought to be interfered with sometimes; that question I shall not now consider. But why single out one class of Christians—a class too, that has done all they could to separate themselves from the rest of the world and live their religion so as not to give offense—and make them the object of proscriptive legislation? The Jews practice circumcision in America, which is a sin against nature, and of no possible use to any one. The Catholics drill every child they can get control of in counting beads, worshipping images, observing

particular days, etc., until you can no more approach a boy or girl of 14 with reason than you could take up a hedgehog or a cactus with bare hands. And the same thing is true in a large degree of protestant churches. Again I ask, why discriminate against a particular branch of the Christian church?

Polygamy is authorized by the Old Testament, and is not forbidden in the New. There are genuine reasons against it, but they are not Christian reasons. Probably the most of the opposition to it comes from the first impression, that it is a system of prostitution. But nowhere else in America are there so few traces of sexual sin as in Utah. The whole power of the Mormon priesthood and all their teachings are arrayed against adultery and kindred sins; while the simple, inexpensive habits of that entire people, their plain style of dress, and their unrivalled industry, all tend to keep in check the baser passions. The general marriage system of Christendom covers up and excuses most of the sins of the sexes, and enables them to maintain in tolerable condition a thin gauze of respectability. Mormonism teaches male continence and the Church insists on it. During gestation and lactation the Mormon wife is no more to her husband than a friend. As a consequence, their children are born free from an unnatural predisposition to sensuality. This cannot be truly said of the general fruits of the monogamic relation. L.

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