

## Correspondence.

BERNE, Switzerland, Feb. 18, 1872.

Editor Deseret Evening News:

Dear Sir:—I have before me a French translation of a verbatim report of the discussion which took place at Rome, on the 9th and 10th of the present month, between Catholic and Protestant divines, on the following question: Was the apostle Peter ever in Rome?

As it is a novelty, in the "Eternal City" of the Popes, to see Catholics consent to discuss a point which is held as a dogma by their church, I thought a mention of the fact would be interesting, together with a very brief analysis of the principal arguments made use of on either side.

On a platform sat, on the evening of the 9th, four presidents, two Catholics and two Protestants; they were, on the Catholic side, Mr. De Dominicis, church attorney, and the Prince of Campagnano; and on the opposite one Messrs. Piggot and Phillips, both English.

A little below this presidency sat the six champions. The Catholics were represented by Messrs. Fabiani, Cipolla and Guidi; the Protestant speakers being Messrs. Sciarelli, Ribetti and Gavazzi, all of them Italian I believe. Each speaker had one or two reporters, so as to secure a faithful, complete report, which is to be published in all languages.

At 7 o'clock Mr. D. Dominicis rose to state the object of the meeting, and in a few words explained the nature and character of the debate. A few minutes were then allowed for silent prayer, and the discussion was opened by Mr. Sciarelli, the first Protestant speaker, who read his speech.

Mr. Sciarelli first stated: "It is claimed by Roman Catholic theologians, that St. Peter went to Rome in the year 42 of the Christian Era, which was the second year of the reign of Claudius the Emperor, and that St. Peter was Pope nearly 25 years, and died in A. D. 66, under the reign of Nero." He then proceeded to show that Peter, in his opinion, did not go to Rome in A. D. 42. "St. Paul," said Mr. Sciarelli, "was converted to Christianity, after the year 37 A. D., and in his epistle to the Galatians, written in A. D. 39, we find that Peter was at Jerusalem, where St. Paul met him, and lodged with him 15 days. In A. D. 42, St. Peter, late from Cesarea, was again in Jerusalem, and could not at the same time be in Rome."

"But," asks the orator, "did Peter go to Rome subsequently? In A. D. 43, Peter went to Joppa and remained there several weeks; after which he went to Lydia and healed Enos the paralytic; he then returned to Cesarea, and baptized Cornelius, with whom he remained a certain time. Peter next reappears in Jerusalem, and shortly after is made captive by Herod Agrippa (successor of Herod the Great), who died in A. D. 45."

"Miraculously delivered, the apostle Peter, so St. Luke informs us in the Acts, was sheltered by Mary, mother of John, after which he departed and went into another place. The Roman Catholic theologians claim that another place means Rome. In that case, why not name the great city, after naming Joppa, Lydia, Cesarea, etc? At any rate in A. D. 56 a council of apostles and elders is held at Jerusalem, at which Peter is present, and from which he proceeds to Antioch."

"In A. D. 58 St. Paul writes to the Romans; it is not likely that he would have omitted to mention Peter's name if he had been in the great capital of the Empire? And then again had Peter been Pope, would not St. Paul have refrained from meddling with the religious affairs of Rome?"

"St. Paul reached Rome in A. D. 61, and all the Christians go to meet him, yet Peter is not among them, and nobody speaks of him. St. Paul remains two years in Rome and writes four epistles, never mentioning Peter's name, while he speaks of his friends, of his neighbors and companions in captivity."

"In A. D. 66 St. Paul writes to Timothy that all have abandoned him, except Luke who is with him: would not St. Paul have named the first apostle, if Peter had been in Rome?"

The conclusion the Protestant orator draws from this series of circumstances is: "that Peter never was in Rome, never in prison with Paul."

Mr. Sciarelli next rejects the opinion of Catholics, that since the letters written by Peter bear the date of Babylon, that word Babylon can mean no other place than Rome. He says:

"The real Babylon still existed in the first century, and was the central point of the Jewish dispersion, with regard to which Peter had received a special mission from Jesus."

Mr. Sciarelli ended his speech by complaining that too much importance and reliance are placed in mere tradition, as a historical proof; in his opinion, "Tradition has no value whatever when it is in opposition to the text of the Bible."

It appears this speech was listened to very attentively by both Catholics and Protestants, and created a favorable impression on the left of the assembly, where sat the latter.

Mr. Fabiani, the first Catholic speaker, next rose to refute the preceding arguments. His remarks were improvised and reveal much talent and a profound study

of the subject, which he asserts he has been engaged in for upwards of 40 years. But it is somewhat difficult to select from his long and interesting speech, the most salient and interesting points. He first objects to the very foundation of all his adversary's arguments, which "rest upon the supposed correct chronology of the Bible." Mr. Fabiani asserts that the chronology of the Bible is most uncertain, and that the "Acts of the Apostles" for instance are arranged not in chronological but in logical order. This he attempts to demonstrate by numerous quotations.

He next takes up a particular view of the question in debate. "It matters not," says he, "what year Peter was in Rome, nor how long he remained there. We wish our adversaries to prove that he never was there; and if I can prove that Peter was only one day, one hour in Rome, you have lost the question."

"The fact of Peter's presence in Rome is complex; first there is the historical fact," and he quotes historians to establish it, "secondly, there is the mysterious fact, which can only be proved by the authority of the church itself, which looks upon Peter as its founder."

"The Scriptures, or the Bible as it is is not the only authority which Catholics recognize in the matter of religion. Many things in the Bible are only made clear by the light of history, and many circumstances which are not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, or which are not sufficiently clear, can only be explained by contemporaneous historians. When the Bible is silent on a point one must examine facts."

"The presence and sojourn of Peter in Rome were never disputed until recently, the heretics themselves having respected that tradition until these latter days."

He then examines the question of Peter's death, which, he says, took place in Rome; "A fact so notorious did not need a mention in the Acts, everybody knew it," and he again quotes early Christians and other early historians, who speak of Peter's stay and death in Rome; among them Papias, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Arnobe, Theophanes, etc.

"If Holy Scriptures said that Peter died in such a place, if there were a prophecy to sustain the ground taken by our adversaries, we would consider ourselves beaten, but the Bible contains not a line contradicting the facts that we state, that Peter lived and died at Rome."

He next proved that the historians quoted were worthy of all credence, that Papias, more especially, never made an assertion that did not rest on the most incontrovertible certainty.

As regards the objection made by the Protestant champion to the tradition which considers the word Babylon, in Peter's letters, to mean Rome, he, Mr. Fabiani, considers the substitution of the word Rome a very plausible one, and with great sagacity, he remarks that "had Peter's letters really been written in Babylon, and not in Rome, the mention of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, etc., would have been in an inverse order, whereas they are precisely mentioned in the order in which any one would place them, who would be writing from Rome."

As for Peter's special mission to the Lambs of dispersion, "Rome was as good a place as any, even Babylon, to fulfil it successfully, there being a great number of Jews in Rome, some of whom had great influence; as, for instance, Poppea, the mistress of Nero, who was a Jewess."

This speech had, it is said, quite as much success as the first.

Mr. Ribetti, second Protestant orator, then improvised a very long speech, from which I select only the arguments that are not a repetition of what had already been said by Mr. Sciarelli.

He confesses "he has not studied the question 40 years, being much too young. In his mind the tradition of Peter's sojourn at Rome is the result of a mere insinuation, which spread and grew and finally had the semblance of truth; then, and then alone, historians picked it up, and helped to sustain it by the sanction of their well-reputed authority."

"Our adversaries wish us to prove that Peter was not in Rome; why prove it? Any one would be considered a madman, who would believe in the Phoenix who rises out of his ashes, so long as it was not proved to him that the Phoenix ever existed." In the opinion of this speaker, "there is no need of proving the non-existence of a thing, when there are no proofs it ever existed. You Catholics say, 'If Peter had been only one day in Rome, everybody must submit to the authority of the Papacy, and recognize the dogma of the Pope's infallibility, of the immaculate conception, etc.; such a consequence is false. Even if Peter had been 25 years in Rome, it would be no argument in favor of infallibility.'"

Mr. Cipolla, Catholic priest, rose next to reply, and said: "To assert that Peter never was in Rome, you must find a text in the Bible to deny it categorically." Like the first Catholic speaker he is of opinion "that there was no reason why the Bible should mention Peter's life and death in Rome; it was an acknowledged fact, known to all the Christians."

The discussion had now lasted four hours and it was thought best to adjourn until the next evening at 7 o'clock.

In this second meeting, Father Gavazzi continued the debate for the Protestants and made the most eloquent speech on the

Protestant side. Among other things of great importance he said. "The difference of opinion between our adversaries and ourselves is based upon the diversity of proof and appreciation. Catholics wish to see in the silence of the Bible, a proof that Peter came to Rome; we see in that silence a proof absolutely contrary. For a comparison we will say: In his history of the consulate and Empire, Mr. Thiers, now President of the French Republic, does not say a word about a journey made by Napoleon I to the United States of America; is that a proof that Napoleon the first was there? No! It is the same with Peter's pretended journey to Rome."

In answer to the first Catholic speaker, Mr. Gavazzi said: "You ask for a prophecy alluding to Peter's death, in any other place than Rome; you shall have it. Christ said to the Pharisees, 'You will crucify some of mine;' so that according to Jesus himself the Jews were to crucify some of his, but not the Romans, the Jews. Now, the only disciples crucified according to Scripture, were Andrew and Peter, and others were stoned to death or beheaded. This prophecy of Jesus can therefore only refer to those two, who were the same referred to by Christ. But for this prophecy to be accomplished, Peter had to be crucified by the Jews and not by the Romans, or at any rate in a country where the Jews enjoyed much power. Such was not the case in Rome. But if we say that Peter was crucified in Babylon, the prophecy is fulfilled, for there the Jews were very powerful, enough so to obtain permission of the king to crucify Peter. As for the manner of Peter's crucifixion, with his head downwards, such a custom did not exist among the Romans, who crucified their victims with their head upward, after which they broke their legs." Even the mode of Peter's death, is, in the opinion of Father Gavazzi, a proof that it never occurred in Rome.

He next objects to the theory of Mr. Fabiani who proclaims the incorrectness of the Bible chronology. He, Fabiani, asserts that some of the dates, at any rate, are certain; as, for example, the date of Paul's arrival in Rome; and he thus concludes his remarks:

"All testimonies posterior to the first century, are like a fog which is dispersed by the first rays of the rising sun. Generations have repeated the testimony of early historians as do the parrots or the sheep in Dante. Those testimonies are but soap bubbles which shine brilliantly, but which burst at the breath of a child. Tradition has no more authority than a liar, who may sometimes and by chance speak the truth, but who, to be relied upon, must be supported by other and more reliable testimony; since the Bible does not mention Peter's sojourn in Rome, we Protestants conclude, he never was there."

Mr. Guidi closed the debate with short remarks, repeating the arguments of his Catholic colleague, and ended with the affirmation that: "The presence of Peter at Rome is as certain as the very existence of the Church of Rome, which was founded in Rome by Peter himself. If the church exist to day, it is tantamount to a positive proof that Peter was at Rome to establish it."

And thus ended that curious debate, throughout which the best of feeling seemed to exist between the opposing elements composing the meeting. The speeches were listened to very attentively, by the fortunate few who were present. It is certainly something unusual in Rome to see Protestant and Catholic clergymen meeting peaceably in the very metropolis of papal infallibility to discuss, without hatred and fear, a question concerning the origin itself of the Christian church, and it must have appeared curious to see the adversaries embrace one another at the end of the conflict, as the reporter positively asserts they did.

Yours respectfully,  
C. L. BELLERIVE.

## THE MORMON PROBLEM.

To the Editor of the Nation:

Sir: While writing for another purpose, let me express the hope that the Nation, among its other good works in calling attention to injustice and sham and corruption, may have something more to say in reference to the state of things in Utah.

On my way to this coast from the East, just about the time the U. S. officials were inaugurating their present policy; I made a little visit among the Mormons at Salt Lake, and, like every other visitor not entirely blinded with prejudice, could but have many of my previous notions reversed and my sympathies in no small degree stirred up. It seemed to me then, from what I heard and saw—an impression which has been deepened by all which has since occurred—that the Federal officers were animated by a bitter spirit of persecution against them, combined, perhaps, with the vulgar desire of making a sensation, utterly inconsistent with justice and the dignity of a great nation, and that the course being taken was wholly unwarranted by anything in the existing state and tendency of Mormon affairs.

Utah within the past few years has been developing with wonderful rapidity in all the elements of a fully civilized and enlightened community, with the single exception of its system of polygamy. The women are allowed as much freedom to go and come as they are in New York; are

given, too, the ballot; paid generally the same wages as men; and occupy in not a few cases as independent a position. The two sexes are schooled together in all the branches of a liberal education, with books and by teachers that are selected for merit, and, in some cases at least, independent of any considerations of Mormonism. Any sect of the religious world is perfectly free to go in and establish churches and Sunday-schools there of its own. The Mormons themselves invite public discussion, giving up to it their own tabernacle, and are far more catholic in their fellowship practically than nine-tenths of the Christian church. The arts and sciences are cultivated and encouraged among them to an extent equalled only by a very few of the older States, Orson Pratt, while I was there, delivering a course of lectures on astronomy, which went more thoroughly into the subject than speakers generally would venture to in our Eastern cities, attended night after night by crowded houses; and not a few of the problems which other communities have taken up only in theory, that of connecting religion and amusement for instance, have been solved by them practically, and with the completest success. In short, all those agencies of education, religion, and free discussion usually proclaimed to be so mighty and infallible against error, have free play among them, with an open door for more to go in; and, if Gentile Christianity and civilization cannot meet what remains of their polygamy and superstition in a fair fight, and without resort to persecution, and vanquish them, it certainly looks as if the Mormons had something on their side that we need to get—not destroy.

The generous, liberty loving heart of the country needs only to know what is doing there on the part of its officials to be filled with indignation, and stop at once a persecution worthy only of the dark ages.

I write this entirely as an outsider, and from a love not of Mormonism, but of fair play. Shall I say, too, that the Christian church, with all its holy horror of polygamy, is bound to share some of the blame for it with the Mormons? It is not an abnormal seedless growth, but a legitimate fruit, so far as doctrine is concerned, of that literalness of Scripture interpretation which all the religious world has done so much to encourage.

Will it do, also, to hint that possibly Mormonism may have its divine mission to work out as well as all other religious bodies, not, indeed, through its polygamy and superstition, but through its inner faith? There can be no question that it does really have this faith, a belief in directness of relationship with Deity and divine things that is in marked and grateful contrast with the materialism and indifference that we find so much of through the Great West—a faith more like that of the old Puritans than is felt by any other Christian sect. All history shows, New England history certainly, that these old root faiths, with their visions and revelations and realness of the spirit world, though terribly gnarled and ugly themselves, are wonderful things into which to graft new truth. At any rate, it will do no harm to look on the hopeful side, and to remember that the world's good before now has come out of its Nazareths.

Olympia, W. T., Feb. 1, 1872.

—New York Nation..

## ABORTION.

If there is one crime more than another deserving of the severest condemnation, it is that of abortion as flagrantly practiced in this and other large cities. Thousands of creatures in God's image are thus basely murdered before they see the light of day, and thousands of shattered constitutions and untimely graves attest the magnitude and importance of the evil. Little do the victims of the foul quacks who practice this deadly crime imagine the evil they are working upon themselves. If they did they would a thousand times rather bear the shame and disgrace incident to the position than submit to the consequences which must in after life most assuredly flow from this invasion of nature's laws. But we regret to say that the evil is not always confined to those who seek in it an avoidance of shame, but married ladies are sometimes weak enough to imagine they may thus avoid the trouble and cost of child-bearing. Could they but realize the sure effect of their ill-advised action, they would hesitate before allowing themselves to be thus led to their physical ruin, to say nothing of their moral delinquency. The pulpit has raised its voice time and again, against this great and growing evil, the medical profession necessarily sets its face against it, and still the signs of the abortionists are seen in all the highways and the evidences of their vile acts are constantly arising to public view. The subject should be met with a united effort on the part of all who see its evils, and the band of reformers would justly win renown who would inaugurate a system for its repression.—S. F. Chronicle.