HOW TO SOLVE

THE

MORMON PROBLEM.

THREE LETTERS

BY

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The telegraph has just announced the fact that Brigham Young, President of the so-called Mormon Church, and one of the greatest frauds of the nineteenth century, not only upon his people, but upon himself, breathed his last at Salt Lake City to-day.

The second Mohammed, of American Mohammedanism,—Joseph Smith being the first—has resigned, forever, his imperial authority, which will now be exercised by "The Twelve Apostles," until October 6th, when, at the meeting of their Semi-Annual Conference, the people will be called upon to elect a successor. Many have predicted that Brigham Young, Jr., son of the deceased, will be that successor; but I do not think so. Many of those, too, in Utah, who desire the reclamation of the Mormons, have predicted that Mormonism will go to pieces, immediately upon the death of Brigham Young. But there is nothing in the nature of the case to promise any such happy result. On the contrary, it is my settled opinion that Mormonism has greater promise for future life and vigor, than any sect of Christianity corruptors has had since the beginning of Mohammedanism. While Mohammedanism was, to a large extent, a corruption of Christianity,—its originator being greatly assisted by an Apostate Monk,—it was also military, and empire-building in its genius.

In both these respects Mormonism is its exact counterpart; and herein lies the promise of the future strength and greatness that await the modern deception. In addition to being the most thorough organization of which we have any account in history it is intensely military, and empire-building, in its hopes and belief. Nothing short of universal empire, do they aim at, preach about, pray for, and believe to be theirs in the future.

If any one should smile at the thought of the possibility of the Mormons being able to build an empire on this continent, let them cast their eyes over Mexico and Central America, and try to realize how much more inviting that field is for such an enterprise than were the roving tribes of Asia.

If an empire has been built upon the Koran,—a fable as false as the Book of Mormon,—in the one case, why is it not possible in the other?
Assuredly the advantage of experience, and the weakness of the peoples to be conquered, are in favor of Mormon success.

If our government would give its consent to such a proceeding, the Mormons could take, and hold the Republic of Mexico, without assistance from any quarter.

This they are preparing to do, without bloodshed, for the present, or for many years to come, by quietly colonizing in the rich Pacific States of that Republic, where they will control the situation by converting the sparse population to their faith.

The present descendants of the Aztecs will more readily exchange Romanism for Mormonism, than they did the religion of Montezuma for that which Cortez brought by fire and sword; for while the Romanist came robbing and destroying, the Mormon will go, giving absolute protection for life and property. Ten years hence the Mormons will have a series of settlements and military posts reaching from Northern Utah, southward, through the Territories of Utah and Arizona, to Guymas, a sea-port on the Pacific coast, in the State of Sonora. They have compassed much more than half the distance already, and are pushing forward in that direction every year.

Having studied the subject fairly and faithfully, without reference to politics, passion, or prejudice, with the view of understanding fully the present evils, and future possibilities of Mormonism, I wrote the following letters to the *Chicago Tribune*. They have attracted much attention, both from statesmen and divines; therefore, no apology is necessary for offering them to the public in a form more permanent and convenient.

BALLARD S. DUNN.

New York, August 29, 1877.

HOW TO SOLVE THE MORMON PROBLEM.

Salt Lake City, June 2, 1877.

To the Editor of the Tribune:

After a residence of more than six years in this Territory, under circumstances the most favorable to a just and fair study of the Mormon problem, I am forced to the conclusion that that problem will never be honorably and satisfactorily solved by Congressional legislation, "specially designed for Utah," while our National Constitution remains as it is. To reach the evil of polygamy, and at the same time deal justly with a rapidly-increasing population that already outnumbers that of some of the States, in my humble judgment, a constitutional amendment, that will amend and explain Art. 1 of the Constitutional Amendments proposed by the first session of Congress, held in 1879, and adopted by a majority of the States, is absolutely necessary.

Upon such an amendment—the character of which I will indicate before closing this letter—just and equitable legislation could be based which would reach and effectually deal with, not the Mormon anomaly alone, but other communities that outrage decency by debasing women in the name of religion, while claiming protection under "the free-exercise thereof" clause of the National Constitution. Ever since the execution of John D. Lee, one of the fiends of the Mountain Meadows massacre, wild, sensational, and for the most part baseless rumors, intended to affect not only the Mormon leaders, but the whole population, have been telegraphed throughout the country, with the view of arousing public sentiment, in the hope that it will take shape in the form of summary proceedings against the Mormons.

Upon principle, this is all wrong, because it is wicked and false; while, as a policy, it is the old mistake over again. The Mormons have only to wait patiently for the reaction which is sure to follow to reap an abundant harvest of converts in the persons of ignorant men and women in whom a strong sense of justice easily overrides their immature reasoning powers and lands them on the side of the persecuted. Every lying telegram sent over the wires, every false letter sent abroad, and every illegal prosecution, yields some sort of return for the up-
building of Mormonism; for their leaders are shrewd enough in the absence of actual bloodshed and violence, to make these false issues of their enemies do the work of the needed persecution.

The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church" is not only true of the Church of God, but it is true of every form of false religion. Without persecution they languish and die; with persecution they flourish and prosper. If Mormonism had never been driven from home, its women insulted, and its prophets slain, it would long since have shared the fate of the thousand other religious delusions that have died for lack of violent opposition.

Knowing this as I do, and believing that action—just, firm, decisive and statesmanlike—has been too long delayed, and having an earnest desire to do these people a real service, though all unappreciated as it will be by them for the present, I ask permission, through your widely-circulating journal, to indicate a mode of treatment that will enable our great Government honorably to repair its past mistakes, while it metes out even-handed justice to its citizens in criminal error, tempered with Christ-like mercy and concern for the innocent victims of a sensuous, religious delusion.

I ask this permission in the hope that some real statesman, already in the National Legislature, will take the pains to verify my statements, and then urge upon Congress the adoption of the plan proposed, or something wiser and more catholic if possible. The competent physician first informs himself as to the nature of his patient's disease before prescribing for him.

Following, then, the example of the physician, let us inquire as to the character of this troublesome Mormon malady, and get the testimony of those under the dominion of the distemper as to its effects upon themselves.

At the very threshold of this inquiry, they inform you that they knew their religion came from God, because it was revealed to them through the Prophet Joseph (Smith); and they assert with equal confidence that polygamy is right, because it was commanded by God through the Prophet Joseph.

At this stage of the investigation you will discover that the average Mormon is not amenable to right reason; for he will vehemently contend that Mormonism is true, because he knows it is true. If asked how he knows it to be true, he will quickly inform you that the spirit of truth, bearing witness with his own spirit, testifies to him that his religion is true.

You have now the deluded victim of his own delusion fairly before you, and you might as well try to convince the inebriate suffering under a high state of excitement induced by delirium tremens that there are no serpents besetting him, and no murderers seeking his life, as to try to reason a Mormon out of his religious belief.

Just here I may be permitted to venture an opinion as to the origin of Mormon revelations—not the Book of Mormon, that I believe to be the result of a conscious fraud—and the process by which they are obtained. This opinion is founded upon a careful study of the psychological condition of the Mormon mind. Their revelations are identical in character with so-called Spiritualistic revelations, and both are the result of antecedent desire in the heart and mind for the thing sought to be revealed.

The thing is first desired, then expected, and when the revelation comes it is the result of strong desire and expectancy, otherwise called faith by the Mormons. This accounts for the fact that nothing unpleasant or distressing has ever been revealed to a Mormon or Spiritualist.

Contrast these modern revelations with those recorded in the Bible, fortelling the most awful calamities that were to befall, and, as a matter of history, did befall, prophets, Kings, and nations, and the Divine source of Scripture revelation will appear, and, appearing, manifest the false and deceptive character of the modern.

Their so-called miraculous cures, which have been the means of converting many sensible people to Mormonism, are brought about in the same way—that is, by desire and expectancy on the part of the sick and the healer as well. Of the influence of expectancy in producing the most remarkable changes in the bodily organs, either curative or morbid, the history of medicine affords abundant and varid illustrations; and it operates no less remarkably in calling forth movements which, not being consciously directed by the person who executes them, have been attributed to supernatural power.

Balaam was doubtless a Mormon in so far as self-deception is concerned, and by the Mormon process got permission to go with the servants of Balak. He wished to go, because there was money in it; he therefore "inquired at the mouth of the Lord" until desire and expectancy obtained permission.

Joseph Smith, in like manner, desired many wives; because, to a sensual, fanatical, emotional nature like his, sexuality was the chief good. The same kind of desire that blinded the eyes of David in the matter of Bathsheba produced in Joseph Smith the expectancy which resulted in the revelation to take many wives. The rule, therefore, is with all false revelations, whether of Spiritualism, Quakerism, or Mormonism, antecedently to the revelation, the thing, and the desire for it,
have been in the heart of the revelator, and only needed the false light that Satan can cast upon any subject in the mind, or desire in the heart, to cause it to flame forth from the deceived and deceiver as the light of God.

Hence the difficulty in the way of reasoning with a Mormon. To him these false revelations and miraculous cures are real. He calls upon his desires, affections, emotions, and expectations, and they answer him just as he would have them answer.

This description applies to all sincere Mormons; and all are sincere, from the highest to the lowest, with a few exceptions, in the persons of certain money-grubbers, who pretend to believe in it that they may the better attain their darling object. If you ask the more intelligent Mormons why they violate the laws of Congress and shock the moral sense of the nation by the practice of polygamy, they will inform you that Congress has no power to make such laws, for the simple reason that the Constitution guarantees "the free exercise" of all religions; that polygamy is a part of their religion, being commanded of God through the Prophet Joseph, and that they have a right to practice it. At this point the Mormon seems to have the advantage in the discussion; for no candid man can deny that the Constitution guarantees to all "the free exercise" of their religion, whatever that may mean.

To the Mormon mind the conclusion is perfectly clear and logical. Polygamy with him is not a crime, but an "exalting" virtue, commanded of God as a part of his religion, "the free exercise" of which the Constitution guarantees. And when I tell you that the Mormons regard the Constitution as a work of inspiration, designed by God to protect His people, in practicing what He has revealed in "the latter days," what wonder if they resent and endeavor to evade all laws of Congress that from their stand-point violate the spirit of the Constitution? The unprejudiced, philosophical mind sees more of justice in the Mormon's defense against the charge that he is a chronic law-breaker hurled against him by his "enemies," than the multitude are willing to admit.

From the time that Romanism, in the name of religion, forbade the clergy to marry, on down through all the sects that have interfered with the normal relation of the sexes, to "Shakerism" in our own day, the polyandry, promiscuity of Free-loveism and Church Familism, in our own country, Mormonism sees a custom that has come to be a law which gives them all the right to regulate the relations of the sexes, and therefore resents any law of Congress punishing polygamy as a crime.

Furthermore, Congress not only allowed but fostered polygamy for more than ten years. To say that Congress has fostered polygamy at any time will sound strangely in many ears; but facts are stubborn things, and the facts in this case seem to justify the assertion, in a qualified sense, if not absolutely.

And now as to the facts.

When Congress gave to Utah an organic act, polygamy was not forbidden by that act; and yet it was notorious at that time that polygamy was extensively practiced in the Territory. This, to the unprejudiced mind, is tolerably good evidence that Congress understood the Constitution to forbid legislation on the subject of religion, polygamous though it was.

At this stage of the inquiry the question is pertinent: If Congress did not mean to foster polygamy, as it fostered every other interest of the Mormons, material, moral, and spiritual, by thus giving them a basis of government, why did they not say so, and take vigorous steps to crush the infant evil before it had time to grow into the hydra-headed monster that it is, able to shock and horrify the moral sense of Western Europe and America?

I suppose that the reason why they did not was because the Constitution was in the way.

Later on the Government declared war against the Mormons, not on account of polygamy, but for other alleged irregularities and outrages. At the close of that war, when the Government recognized the belligerent rights of the Mormons by sending Commissioners to treat with, and a Governor to rule over them, said Governor and Commissioners were entertained by Brigham Young and danced with his many wives. In all these acts Government not only recognized, but fostered polygamy, in that it was conserved, at a time when a little statesmanship could have cast it out as an unclean thing, if there had been no Constitution in the way.

To one in this territory who stands aloof from political radicalism on the one hand, and the religious fanaticism of Mormonism on the other,—studying the situation, as far as he may, in the spirit of a Christian philosopher and statesman,—the subject is a vast one, involving momentous issues. He sees upon the backbone of this great continent a moral and social excrecence that has firmly taken root, and he plainly foresees that, if the appliances that stimulate its growth be not speedily removed, it will spread southward into Arizona and the Pacific States of Mexico, whence the sparse populations now beckon them onward so rapidly that fifty years may suffice to find its adherents as many millions as they now number hundreds of thousands.

If these strange people be not wisely and effectually restrained, and their all-engrossing delusion of sanctified lust dissipated, they will set back the moral progress of the millions that will flow unto them as
they have set back the progress of their present votaries four thousand
years, and place religious, suffering woman just where the worship of
one God, as revealed to Abraham, found her, in which degraded rela-
tion God in His wisdom permitted her to remain until the perfect law
of matrimony, as re-enacted by the Savior of mankind, restored her to
the holiness of sexual love, in the sacred “one” in “twain,” of man and
wife, as contradistinguished from the lust that defiles and the polyga-
mous companionship that degrades.

And if the unstatesmanlike, ungodly radical movement against the
Mormons just now urged by certain influential journals that deal so
largely in falsehood and exaggeration should take the form of
special legislation designed for Utah,” the result will be another mistake
in point of statesmanship; while Mormonism will receive an impetus
similar in kind, but greater in degree, than any former persecution has
yet imparted.

What then shall be done? My answer to this question is, Let the
people of the United States take this matter in hand and begin aright.
Take away the sheltering arm that protects alike polygamy in Utah,
Freelovisim, Polyandry, and Promiscuity as practiced in the Oneida
Community in the great State of New York, and other so-called reli-
gious institutions in Kansas, and elsewhere throughout the Union,
based upon abnormal relations of the sexes.

Let Art. I. of the amendments to the Constitution which were
adopted in 1789, which stands thus: “Congress shall make no law
respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise
thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or the press, or the right
of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government
for a redress of grievances,” be so amended that it will read as follows:
“Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or the
press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition
the Government for a redress of grievances, or respecting an establish-
ment of religion or the free exercise thereof; but Congress shall have
power by appropriate legislation to prohibit in any individual, sect, or
community, the practice of polygamy, polyandry, promiscuity, and
every form of crime attempted in the name of religion.”

I specify in the proposed amendment the abnormal relations of
the sexes, because they are known to be the bases of a number of so-
called religions under the name of “Church Familism,” “Marriage
Reform,” “Progress,” etc., etc., which are flooding the country from
New York, Boston, and other great centres of population with litera-
ture more vile and corrupting than the wildest ravings and coarsest
harangues of Mormonism on the subject of polygamy.

Upon such an amendment a national law could be based that
would effectually reach every form of vice now practiced with impu-

The Catholic character of the law would divest it of the nature of
persecution; for, instead of being “special” or “class legislation,” it
could be labeled universal legislation in the interest of morality
throughout the country.

This would take the wind out of the Mormon’s sails; for he would
find himself treated just as other citizens are treated—something he
has never experienced since the rise of Mormonism, and something, I
may add, that its leaders dread more than anything else, for then
persecution would cease, and they perforce, cease to be the “peculiar
people of God,” and be tried as common criminals are tried.

As to the penalties attached to the proposed law, I would make
them quite severe, including fines and imprisonment at hard labor, and
I would make cohabitation proved, evidence sufficient to convict, with-
out reference to marriage ceremonies.

This is the same point in the present law, even if it proves constitu-
tional; proof of marriage is necessary, and that is very hard to get.

But for the past I would give almost entire immunity; inflicting
no greater punishment upon the polygamist than to require him to live
with and provide for his many wives and children the remainder of his
natural life, with no power to make other disposition of his property
than an equal division among his wives and children.

This state of things I would permit, not that it would be unmixed
with evil, but because it would be a less evil than the abandonment of
the women, which would lead to prostitution and the consequent dis-
grace and bastardy of the children.

Thus would I crystallize the sound moral sense of the nation into
a just and universal law, that would enjoin Mormonism with an im-
passable barrier, over which it could no longer leap in the name of reli-
gion; and with it I would encircle all kindredisms, suffering only that
which is pure and of good report to escape, imprisoning their vices and
immoralties until they rot out and disappear with the natural lives of
such as have disgraced the nation, and polluted the name of Christian,
by defiling lovely woman under the guise of religion.

BALLARD S. DUNN.