

# TRUTH

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## The Ministers and the Mormons

A couple of weeks ago the Ministerial association issued a "review" of an address to the world issued by the Mormon church authorities. The Ministerial review wasn't worth noticing. Mr. B. H. Roberts, however, did notice it and according to the ideas of most people, thereby made a grave mistake. Last Sunday in the Tabernacle both afternoon and evening Mr. Roberts delivered two great orations in which he answered the review. The review and the answer were theological discussions with the Mormon church as the storm center. Of course there was acrimony and ill feeling in plenty in both, Mr. Roberts being especially heated and severe in his denunciation of the preachers. Perhaps that was to some extent excusable in Mr. Roberts as he was repelling a gratuitous and unwarranted attack by the ministers on his church.

It is nobody's business but their own whether the Mormons believe or do not believe in the doctrines of marriage for time and eternity, baptism for the dead, the continuance of the physical body in the world to come, the rightfulness of the principle of polygamy, that God was once a man and even now has a wife or wives or any other tenet of the faith, so long as they are not guilty of breaking the civil laws as a result of holding those beliefs. Neither is it anybody's business but their own whether or not the Presbyterians or any other denomination believe in infant damnation, an eternal literal hell, election and predestination, the efficacy of baptism, salvation by faith or anything else, so long as those beliefs don't cause them to break any laws of the land.

These theological points were the principal things discussed by the ministers and Mr. Roberts, and in doing so both were meddling with other people's business instead of attending to their own.

Only two points appeared in the whole volcanic like eruptions which concerned the public or that the public care anything about. These were: First: Are the Mormons breaking

the law of the land as a result of their belief in polygamy?

That they are ever since the church manifesto of 1890, keeping with exceeding faithfulness their covenant with the nation not to enter into new polygamous marriages no reasonable man can doubt; very few do doubt it, but there are some for profit or revenge pretend to doubt it. The prosecution in the Smoot case with all the money they could possibly use, the prestige of the Ministerial association and powerful senators at their command and after the most diligent search could find only three or four cases of polygamous marriages during a period of more than a dozen years, and these marriages were not performed with either the knowledge or the consent of the church. It is safe to say that in that period there were more bigamous marriages, 10 to 1, among the Gentiles than the Mormons in this state, the population of each class considered. But because of those exceedingly few infractions of the law the Ministerial association, the Tribune and a few others seek to condemn a whole people.

Suppose the same rule were applied to the Ministerial association, where would its members get off? In about the same period of time it has had among its few members, one double murderer, adulterers, perjurers, forgers, embezzlers and what not. Would it be fair on that showing to condemn the whole people represented by the Ministerial association? The principal one of the two points is thus justly and truly disposed of.

The second point is that those Mormons who entered into the polygamous relation prior to the church manifesto, prohibiting it, are still maintaining that relation and cohabiting with their plural wives. That is not denied. On the contrary it is freely admitted and on that issue Mr. Roberts based his defiance of all creation and almost of the Mormon God who was once a man.

There are in Salt Lake today not to exceed 43 polygamists and in the whole state only a few hundreds. They are nearly all old men and their

wives are old. They entered into this relation when they thought they had a right to do so, they in the majority of cases did it because they were religious fanatics, not from lustful motives. In a very few years they will have departed from this sphere of action. It was and is understood, was so understood when statehood came, that they should be permitted to live their lives to the end. Judge Powers, an ultra anti-Mormon, the leader of the former Liberal or anti-Mormon party, the man who won the victories for that party stated the condition most excellently in his testimony before the United States Senate Committee in the Smoot investigation as follows:

The chairman of the committee said to the witness (Judge Powers): "Will you state why it is that those who live in polygamous cohabitation today are not prosecuted?"

The witness answered: "I will do so as well as I can, and I simply state here the views as I know them of what are termed the old guard of the Liberal party, Republicans and Democrats, who fought the church in the days when it was a power. Those men have felt and still feel that if the church will only stop new plural marriages and will allow this matter to die out and pass away they will not interfere with them. First of all, of course, we want peace in Utah; we would like to be like the rest of the country; we want to make of it a state like the states of the rest of the Union."

"We want the Mormon people to be like the rest of the American people, but we realize that there is a condition there which the people of the East do not, and I presume cannot understand. You cannot make people, but we realize that there is a conour system of government and our system of marriage believe that folks can sincerely and honestly believe that it is right to have more than one wife, and yet those people believe it. They are a God-fearing people, and it has been a part of their faith and their life."

"The Mormon wives are as sincere in their belief in polygamy as the Mormon men, and they have no more hesitation in declaring that they are one of several wives of a man than a good woman in the East has in declaring that she is the one wife of a man. There is that condition. There

are those people—"

Senator Hopkins interrupted to say: "Do you mean to say that a Mormon woman will as readily become a plural wife as she would the first wife?"

The witness: "Those who are sincere in the Mormon faith, who are good Mormons, so-called, I think would just as readily become plural wives—that has been my experience—as they would become the first wife. That condition exists. There is a question for statesmen to solve."

You remember that is what I said to these gentlemen this afternoon. "We have not known what was best to do. It has been discussed and people would say that such and such a man ought to be prosecuted; then they would consider whether anything would be gained, whether we would not delay instead of hastening the time that we hope to live to see, whether the institution would not flourish by reason of what they would term persecution. And so notwithstanding a protest has been sent down here (meaning to Washington), I will say to you, the people have acquiesced in the conditions that exist."

An attorney said: "You mean the Gentiles?" The witness said: "Yes, the Gentiles."

That's a fair statement of the case by Judge Powers.

On these few rapidly passing "amorous old jack rabbits," as Mr. Fitch calls them, living in the sage brush, the Ministerial association and their allies base their agitation for the overthrow of the constitution of the United States, a return to the days of the thumb screw and the rack, so that they can dictate to men what they shall believe and what they shall not believe, although their churches countenance or at least permit polygamy (wrong thought it be) in members of their churches in other lands. The Ministerial politico-religious review is a "fake" issued by fakers who want to make personal gain and notoriety out of it.

We have little, if any, more respect for Mr. Roberts' evident motives in making his spectacular reply to it. To begin with it wasn't worth a reply. His answer didn't convert any Gentiles to the Mormon faith, didn't make any Mormons more staunch Mormons than they were before. It just served the purpose of arraying