

"So now, my dear sir, you have all the facts in my possession. Please "go ahead and solve the Shakespeare Enigma. I have been at it for almost "thirty years and have given it up. Yours faithfully,

"APPLETON MORGAN."

"New York, March 6th, 1904."

I suppose if Mr. George Brandes sees this, he will add Dr. Morgan to his list of "raw Americans." Will he please also add the name of

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THE PRAISE OF HYPOCRISY—A REJOINER.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

I have read the reply to my letter in your issue of May, which reply I presume is by Dr. Knight, and fail to see that he in any way touches the question that I raised. This question was, allowing that the utterances of "the defenders of Christianity" which he so lavishly quotes are true, is his "Praise of Hypocrisy," a judicious or well timed paper? Will it prove helpful to any one, especially to one who,—weakly perhaps, if Dr. Knight is right,—is clinging to his or her church as the only thing that can save that one's faith? Let me commend to Dr. Knight a study of the warning which he quotes from Matthew xxvi. 52: *emfwyp emfwyp shrdlu shrdlu shrdlu emfwyp shrdlu shrd* And looking at the spiritual signification of the ear, may it not be possible that Dr. Knight, in the mighty swing of his sword, has struck off some one's right ear, with no loving power at hand to touch and heal the wound? I think he *has* done this, and in this opinion I am not alone.

When Dr. Knight's article came to hand, I read it with much interest. Its power, whatever his intent may have been, is indubitable. I took it up to the home of a very dear old friend, one to whom hypocrisy, or sympathy with hypocrisy, is an impossibility. Her daughter and grandson, a youth of seventeen, were present, and I began to read the article. I had not proceeded far when I noticed signs of unrest and disturbance, and the mother sent the boy out of the room. A little further on both interrupted me, and earnestly desired me to cease reading it, declaring it "the most unbalancing attack on simple, trusting faith they ever listened to."

Dr. Knight denies Paul's regard for the "law of conformity," but will he favor us with an "exegesis" on I. Corinthians ix. 19-22.

I did not say that reformation is to be effected by *an* individual, but by *the* individual,—*each* individual, if this will make my meaning plainer. It seems to me that too much stress is laid on the reformation of "the church," which is only an aggregation,—and a very incongruous one,—of individuals. If I run up against a case of scarlatina in a family, I do not dose the whole family with aconite and belladonna. I bestow my attention on the *sick member*, and when he or she recovers the whole family is well.

Dr. Knight tenders me a free prescription, "Truth, Honesty, Sincerity," in heroic doses. Many thanks to him,—it is a fine, "all round" tonic, equally good for the layman or the Doctor of Divinity. Doubtless Dr. Knight has used the prescription to some purpose himself, but,—in the interests of

spiritual hygiene,—I suggest to him that in the clearing of his lungs he should be careful where he deposits the sputum.

Dr. Knight "is sorry to have shaken the faith of a good man." If he means *me*, I pass by the apparent irony of his sentence, and hasten to assure him that he may "conserve his sorrow." He is not big enough,—intellectually or otherwise,—to "shake my faith." Nor can all the D.D.'s in "the church," with all the carping atheistic critics outside of its pale, have the least effect on that Faith. Let Dr. Knight "lay this flattering unction to his soul."

I thought to stop here, but I would like to say a word or two further, even if I appear egotistic.

Some years ago, while I was an infidel of the Andrew Jackson Davis stripe, my only sister united with the Baptist church, which was the church of both my parents. I could not understand her acceptance of a creed which we had both of us considered the climax of absurdity. Shortly after this I emerged from my atheism through a study of the philosophy of Swedenborg, and finally joined the Swedenborgian church. After a time my sister, not finding her church answering her spiritual questionings, followed me into the Swedenborgian church, where she found what filled her needs. One day I asked her how she came to join the Baptist church, and she told me that she did it to "save her faith." I remembered this when I read Dr. Knight's paper, and,—iconoclast as I am by nature,—it seemed to me certain to disturb the faith of many who found in "the church" an ark of safety, "honeycombed with hypocrisy," as it may be, and probably is. And one can but ask, if the man is known by the company he keeps, how one who vaunts his integrity and honesty can remain in an organization which he confesses is *hopelessly* corrupt, for Dr. Knight suggests no remedy.

It is on record that our Divine Master was in the habit of attending the synagogue on the Sabbath, and taking part in the services. Did he not know that the Jewish church was "honeycombed with hypocrisy"? One would judge from his utterances on various occasions that he was fully aware of the fact, although his denunciations were directed principally towards the leaders of "the church." He did not pronounce his "woe unto you" on the humble worshipers who thronged the synagogue, but on the Scribes and Pharisees. Is this race extinct in this day? And further He counseled obedience to their teaching and commands, while cautioning His followers against imitating their practices. May not His suggestion on this point have some force in our time? (See Matthew xxiii. 2-3.)

But I have trespassed too much on your space. In conclusion I wish to call Dr. Knight's attention to the fact that I *did* indicate a remedy for the condition of which he complains. And the remedy is that each and every one divest himself or herself of the idea that any human power or organization can effect regeneration. All regenerative work is accomplished within, and when every man and woman is "*True, Honest and Sincere*," it follows, as a matter of course, that the church,—which is an aggregation of these men and women,—will become the same.

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[The Editor seriously doubts the advisability of publishing Dr. Phelps' rejoinder to Professor Knight, but considering the fact that our correspondent believes his most sacred faith attacked, he shall have the last word in the con-

troversy, which, however had now better be closed. So far as the Editor's personal attitude is concerned, he must confess that while he deems Professor Knight's position justified, he has not lost sympathy with and consideration for the religious conviction of people who cling to faith for faith's sake. But is not this position weak because it involves a despair of truth?—ED.]

THE POLYGAMY OF THE MORMONS.

The Mormon problem has again come broadly before the public and we extract the passages here published from a pamphlet* by George Seibel that appeared a few years ago.

“It will surprise many people to learn that the Book of Mormon in plainest terms forbids polygamy. Here are the words:

“Behold, thus saith the Lord, This people began to wax in iniquity; they understand not the Scriptures. . . . David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord. . . . Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord; for there shall not any man among you have, save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none; for I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women.”

“This passage shows that a multiplicity of wives formed no part of the Prophet's original scheme. Indeed, in the early days of his career he found it difficult enough to support a single wife, much less a harem of forty, as is charged against him later. John Hyde, one of the few apostates who spoke with fairness of the church after seceding, said ‘polygamy was not the result of Smith's policy, but of his passions.’

“There is ample evidence of flagrant immoralities practiced by Smith and others at Nauvoo, and perhaps earlier, which gradually transpired, and made necessary the ‘special revelation’ given in 1843, sanctioning and commanding a plurality of wives. For many years that revelation was kept secret, and the practice was publicly denied—partly because Illinois had laws to punish bigamy, chiefly in order that proselyting might not be hampered; but in 1852, Young at Salt Lake City officially proclaimed the doctrine, and ever since it has been a cardinal tenet of the church, which simultaneously made the startling discovery that ‘Jesus had several wives, among them Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus.’

“Simple polygamy was not broad enough for these peculiar Saints, so they invented the doctrine of celestial ensequence, which makes Mormonism almost a revival of the obscene cult of Babylonian Mylitta, of which the practical application means sexual promiscuity under the sanction of the church. A man may wed as many ‘spiritual’ wives as he can persuade to enter into that relation with him—while they may at the same time be the temporal wives of other men. A woman may have any number of ‘celestial’ husbands—that is, she can be ‘sealed’ to some dead person, who has an earthly proxy, with all marital rights, save that the children born are credited to the Saint in heaven.

“The Saints defend polygamy by an elaborate line of argument, the

* *The Mormon Problem.* The story of the Latter-Day Saints, and an exposé of their Beliefs and Practices. George Seibel. Pittsburgh Printing Co. 1899.