

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### A TESTIMONY FOR JOSEPH.

On another page of this issue will be found the account of an interview with William Smith, a brother of the Prophet Joseph. The conversation recorded took place shortly before his death, and as the subject of it was the Book of Mormon and the character of Joseph, it has peculiar interest to the Latter-day Saints.

The testimony of the aged brother of the martyrs is important for several reasons. In the first place the views he expressed may be looked upon as the result of a life-long consideration of the topics discussed. It is not the sentiments of a youthful enthusiast, who might have been led astray by inflaming oratory. William Smith was born in 1811, and had consequently reached a mature age at his demise. He had ample time to change his views, had he found, on a second thought, that his brother was not what he claimed to be. But he did not change his opinion concerning Joseph, but testified to the last to his nobility of character and integrity of purpose. In the second place, his testimony is that of a natural brother. He knew what he was speaking of. They had been reared in the same home, shared with each other joys and sorrows and various duties, and knew well the characteristics of one another. And further, William Smith, although once identified with the Church and a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, was eventually led to associate with other organizations, and may on that ground be supposed to have had an interest in exposing any fraudulent plans with which, during his early familiarity with the organizers of the Church, he might have become acquainted, had there been any such to expose. His testimony is therefore that of an impartial witness, and as a man who filled prominent positions in public life to the satisfaction of his constituents, his words are entitled to particular respect.

"Uncle William" touches upon several important points in connection with the rise of this Church. He says, for instance, that nobody in the family would think of doubting the words of Joseph. His record was that of absolute truthfulness, and his assertion was always enough to those who knew him best. He was never known to indulge in fabulous stories. The consequence was that when he told his people that angels had visited him, they believed him. Another feature of Joseph's character was his diligence as a worker. This, according to William, was a well known and acknowledged fact among the neighbors. The opponents of Joseph, in later years, invented the story that he was too indolent to work and sought to obtain a living by means of utilizing the credulity of men. But never was a more absurd charge brought against anybody. The magnificent physique of the Prophet shows a man who was developed in the school of toil, and the whole of his career is one ample refutation of this silly charge. Think of a man, who in a few years mastered

several branches of learning, including languages; who directs a large missionary enterprise comprising two continents; who translates and publishes volumes; who builds cities and temples and superintends the ecclesiastical concerns of a growing Church; who preaches and administers to the spiritual wants of coreligionists, and besides cares with loving tenderness for his own family! All this did Joseph accomplish in the few years between his call and martyrdom. Was there ever in the world a greater example of faithful work and diligence exhibited? No wonder that already as a boy Joseph's neighbors should prefer him to anybody, when a good day's work was wanted.

Of peculiar interest is the account "Uncle William" gives of the way in which Joseph was led to seek the Lord in prayer. Having heard a Methodist minister preach a sermon on the familiar text: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God," Joseph understood this to mean what it says and decided to follow the advice. Like the greatest of the reformers, Luther, he grasped the reality of the word of God and regulated his conduct accordingly without fear of men. This made him fit to be the instrument in the hand of the Lord to accomplish the greatest work in this age.

The friends of Joseph, who stood by him during all the various phases of his eventful career, learned to love, honor and respect him as only a good man, a man of God, can be loved and revered. And the thousands who in his teachings have found a true message from the Eternal Father, share these feelings. They honor him as they honor the Prophets of old. The world at large is not yet prepared to view him in the same light. He is still looked upon more in the same way the majority of the Jews and Romans looked upon the crucified Messiah. But this will change some time, as he is better understood and his real character is seen through the mists of slander and vilification that have been gathered about his memory. It was always so. Future generations honor those who were slain by the forefathers for the sake of righteousness.

### OBJECTIONABLE BILLS.

At least two bills now pending in the lower house of the Legislature are open to serious objection. One is that which relates to artesian wells, and the other is the so-called attorneys' lien bill.

The former provides, in section 1, that any artesian well which is not furnished with such mechanical appliances as will readily and effectually stop the flow of water, is a public nuisance, and the owner, tenant or occupant of the land upon which said well is situated, who causes, or even permits the well to remain in that condition, is guilty of a misdemeanor. Section 2 makes it a misdemeanor to permit "water to unnecessarily flow from such well, or go to waste." Sec-

tion 3 defines an artesian well to be one, "the waters of which, when properly cased, will flow continuously over the natural surface or the ground adjacent to such well, at any season of the year." Mining shafts are excluded from the application of the proposed law. Section 4 defines what constitutes waste of water from artesian wells, and the definition accords with the popular meaning of the term. Section 5 makes the penalty for violating any provision of the act, a fine of not less than \$10 nor more than \$50, and costs. Section 6 authorizes certain public officers, upon complaint of any citizen, to enter upon any premises and inspect any artesian well thereon.

Numerous practical tests have demonstrated that there is great danger of ruining an artesian well by stopping the flow, even for a short time. The theory is that, at the base of the pipe, there exists a cavity in the earth which remains filled with water as long as the flow of the latter continues at the surface, but when the flow ceases, the cavity, and the lower end of the pipe, fill with sand, which prevents any further flow after the pipe is opened at the surface, and the well is ruined. Experiences of this kind have been so numerous that it is an insult to common intelligence to name or make further mention of them by way of proof.

Moreover, to punish a mere tenant or occupant of realty for failing to make improvements upon some appurtenance thereto, over which the terms upon which he holds possession may give him no rightful control, is unjust, absurd and unconstitutional. One man cannot be punished for failing to improve property belonging to another.

Again, many artesian wells have connected with them hydraulic rams, or other devices for elevating, or using for different purposes, a portion of the water they produce, while the balance runs to waste, as the latter term is defined in this bill. The wells were driven for this express purpose and frequently at great expense. Such property and improvements are practically destroyed by the bill. For these, and other reasons that could be named, this bill should be rejected.

The attorney's lien bill is as follows:

Sec. 1.—An attorney-at-law has a lien for a general balance of compensation:

1.—Upon any papers and personal property of his client which have come into his possession in the course of his professional employment.

2.—Upon money in his hands belonging to his client.

Sec. 2.—From the commencement of an action or the service of an answer containing a counterclaim, the attorney who appears for a party has a lien upon his client's cause of action or counterclaim which attaches to a verdict, report, decision or judgment in his client's favor, and the proceeds thereof in whosever hands they may come; and cannot be effected by any settlement between the parties before or after judgment: Provided, that the lien given by this section shall attach to all actions heretofore commenced and which are now pending.

Sec. 3.—This act shall take effect from and after its approval.

If this bill were a law, an attorney could hold and sell any promissory notes, stock certificates, evidences of debt or personal property of any kind, belonging to a client, that might come