

## A JOSEPHITE CONTROVERSY.

ALBERT COMER'S ANSWER.

By special request the "News" publishes the following which is Albert Comer's answer to the Reorganized church which preferred charges of apostasy against him on the grounds named:

### CHARGE AND SPECIFICATIONS.

Lamoni Branch  
vs.  
Albert Comer.

The charge of apostasy from the faith of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is hereby made and filed by the officers of the Lamoni Branch of said church against Albert Comer, based upon the following specifications, to-wit:

1. He holds that the church is a man-made institution.  
2. He holds that the church holds no authority other than of man.  
3. He claims that if there be any divine authority on the earth it is with the Utah Church.

(Signed)  
J. A. GUNSOLLEY, President,  
M. J. DANIELSON, Priest,  
A. K. ANDERSON, Teacher,  
C. E. BLAIR, Deacon.

Done at Lamoni, Iowa, October 24th, 1899.

### ANSWER.

To the Lamoni Branch, and to J. A. Gunsolley, M. J. Danielson, A. K. Anderson and C. E. Blair, the Four Presidents of the Lamoni Branch:

I am not aware that the branch has ever investigated me, nor questioned the integrity of my views regarding the faith of the Reorganization, and ordered its four presidents to pursue me into the retreat of my retirement. This is somewhat mysterious to me. When the fathers built the basement wall on which the Reorganization now stands, they framed nine resolutions as the sources of light to guide them in their work. The sixth one reads: "Resolved, That the whole law of the church of Jesus Christ is contained in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants."

I turn to those books but fail to find any provision for four presidents for any branch; nor any authority for branches to order their presidents to sit in council and formulate accusations against the members, in any of them. But I do read in Doctrine and Covenants: "Behold I am God, and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given to my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language; that they might come to understanding; and inasmuch as they understand wisdom they might be instructed, and inasmuch as they are instructed they might be chastened, etc." Please show me by these books wherein I have sinned against the faith of the Reorganization. Am measure must not be endorsed by those books must of necessity be invalid, or why seek "understanding" in and by them; therefore in the absence of all justification for your assumption, and for the further reason that I personally convened, distinctly and emphatically announced my withdrawal from all connection and affiliation with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, since which time I have taken no active part in any of the proceedings of that body in any respect whatever.

For these reasons I am fully persuaded that you have mistaken your calling and jurisdiction in your zeal to do a

useless and unauthorized act, in concocting an accusation for my hurt.

Having no use for your document I return it to you. But I will use this opportunity to say to you, that your statement that "Having diligently labored with you to reclaim you to the church, and to bring about reconciliation, etc." is a concession that you and I were not in fellowship with each other, and that the church has lost its claim upon me, which statement amounts to a confession that I had withdrawn from the church and that you knew it. Then why seek to prosecute me. I came into the church of my own consent—freely—and act and I have committed no sin against it for having entered of my own free will and choice. I had the right to withdraw on the same basis; and for you to hurl the invective of Apostasy after me is neither manly, just, nor Christian, but cowardly and vindictive, and such a disposition only wants the opportunity to re-establish the pillory and relight the faggots of the inquisition period, as a cure for heresy, and has no affinity with that Christian suzerainty and suffering described by the poet thus:

"Lord, whence those blood-drops all the way  
That mark out the mountain's track?  
They were shed for one who had gone  
Ere the shepherd could bring him back.  
Lord, whence are thy hands so rent and torn?  
They are pierced tonight by many a thorn."

The Christian example requires the shepherd, to be the servant—the bleeding victim—wanderer, must be sought—not driven—tenderly cared for.

"Go for my wandering boy tonight;  
Go search for him where you will;  
But bring him to me with all his blight,  
And tell him I love him still."

Again:  
"Though they are slighting him,  
Still, He is waiting,  
Waiting the penitent child to receive,  
Plead with them earnestly,  
Plead with them gently;  
He will forgive if they only believe."

If the methods adopted and practiced by the Reorganized authorities be the correct ones, those "blood drops that mark the mountain track" should have been shed by the "one who had gone astray, rather than by the shepherd, and the "wandering boy with all his blight" should have been forever barred the parental roof; and those that were "slighting him" have had the charge of "Apostasy" "placed on file," and instead of "Pleading with them earnestly—Gently," reminded them that they must think as we think or off comes their tenure. Surely the Reorganization has forgotten, or never did—

"Know then that every soul is free  
To choose his life and what he'll be.  
For this Eternal truth is given  
That God will force no man to heaven.  
He'll call, persuade, direct him right,  
Bless him with wisdom, love and light,  
In nameless ways be good and kind;  
But never force the human mind."

Gentlemen, if you propose to pursue this secret inquisitorial method of blackmailing character in secret coun-

cils, and court trials behind closed doors, I would advise you to remodel 1113 hymn, or banish it from your assemblies. If God says my "Soul is free to choose my life and what I'll be," am I to be held responsible to the four presidents of the Reorganized Church for daring to exercise my God-given right?

Now as to the charge of "Apostasy from the faith of the Reorganized Church" which is declared by the four presidents to be on file against me, I have only this to say: If the "Epitome of the faith and doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," as published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ, at Lamoni, Decatur county, Iowa," expresses the faith referred to in the charge, then I challenge the four presidents of the Lamoni branch, or any one of them, or any person, to lay their finger on any paragraph that I have ever repudiated in any sense.

The faith in its simple verification as declared by the founders of the "New Organization," I accept and endorse; but an Independent Sabbath School, Daughters of Zion, Religion, Student Society, Sons of Zion, Secret Councils, Secret Courts, and charges of "un-Christian-like conduct" by which a man is made an offender for a word, were not part of that organization; neither are they sustained or protected by any shadow of Gospel law, precept or precedent, but are creations of the reorganized structure strictly man-made, as is the "Book of Rules."

If Jason W. Briggs, David Powell, H. H. Deam, Z. H. Gurley, and Samuel Blair could withdraw from the church established by God through the instrumentality of the 19th century prophet, still retain their standing with God, and retain the priesthood bestowed upon them by the seer, or "by the hands of those ordained by him," and not be guilty of apostasy notwithstanding the brand of apostasy laid upon them by the organized body under the apostleship established by that seer, over that people who were not cast off as declared by the revelation to Jason W. Briggs, November, 1851, I can't see why I or any other man should be branded "Apostate" for a similar act. If that revelation is true, the Reorganization claim of "Rejection" and "Disorganization" of the original Nauvoo church is not true. The revelation to Elder Briggs declares no rejection nor disorganization, neither does it provide for, nor order "Reorganization" but orders the duty of the Gospel cry, "Repentance, and remission of sins through obedience" to the Gospel ordinances as found in the three books; and promises in God's "own due time" to do the rest.

But Elders Deam and Powell "counselled together" and decided to invoke "the great influence" of Elder Z. H. Gurley and gained him, and Brother Gurley turned the whole (Yellowstone) branch." Elder Gurley says, "We appointed a day—in which to acknowledge the legal heir." The revelation of Jason said God would do that in His "own due time."

Elder Gurley claims no authority from God and acknowledges only human agency and authority. The manifestation of tongues, etc., which becomes a part of the history of this case, was not cited in the revelation as an evidence that should follow the action of choosing of the proper heir as a witness of the arrival of his (God's) "own due time."

By suggestion of Elder Gurley a conference was convened at Beloit, Wisconsin, which resolved Brigham Young, Strang, Brewster, Wm. Smith, etc., etc., out of the race as candidates for the presidency in place of the martyrs; and that "the Church, organized on the 6th day of April, 1830" exists as on that day, wherever six or more saints are organized according to the pattern of Doctrine and Covenants that the whole law of the Church is contained in the three books. These resolutions were the basic principles upon which the "New Organization" eventually was built.

When the president of the re-organization offered his service to the New organization at Amboy, Illinois, April 6, 1860, he said: "I will come to you if you will receive me, give me ability, and the influence my name may bring, together with what little power I possess, and I trust by your prayer and faith to be sustained. I pledge myself to promulgate no doctrine that shall not be approved by you, or the code of good morals."

On the strength of this idea the conference then voted "that he be received as a prophet—the successor of his father," and Elder Gurley said, "Brother Joseph, I present this church to you in the name of Jesus Christ."

This whole transaction was a simple transfer of confidential trust between man and his fellow man, the one pledged fidelity to society and its approval, the other presents the confidential trust of jurisdiction as the representative of a people. Thus there is no "thus saith the Lord" in the transaction but a delegation of human authority. Joseph said that he came "by the influence of the spirit," and that he had "received manifestations pointing to the position" (of presidency) to be assumed. (Elder Sheen put it thus): "If the spirit which prompted him in coming there, prompted his reception, he would be with them."

Joseph in speaking of this matter under date of Nauvoo, Illinois, November 7th, 1840, over his own official signature said in an address to the scattered saints: "When I assumed the position I now occupy I covenanted that I would never willingly or willfully do anything to injure the cause of the true Latter-day Saints, or make their condition worse than it was when I found them, and I mean by God's help to keep that covenant."

In the absence of any "thus saith the Lord," or divine command, I fail to see anything more than the authority of man in the new organization or its successor, "the reorganization."

As to the third specification, viz.: "That if there is any divine authority on the earth, it is with the Utah Church." Those people profess, teach and practice faith, repentance, baptisms, impartation of the Holy Spirit, healings, prophecy, tongues, etc., and the same manner of Church organization as did the "New Organization," and as is now held by the reorganization, with this difference: The Utah Church being a practical, law governed people, interpret polygamy to be a crime, subject to penalty when the construction, as defined by government, is violated. The Reorganization pays less attention to legal definitions, and insists that Webster and public opinion shall be the criterion of interpreting the polygamous tendency.

If history is true, (and I believe it is) according to a revelation recorded as given to J. W. Briggs, 18th November, 1851, the Lord says, "I have not cast off my people." The expression is generic in character, and if it applies to any part of the Latter-day Saints, it applies to all as there is no excepting clause.

The New Organization resolved to "recognize all legal ordinations and that the church exist, as on the 6th of April, 1830, wherever six or more are organized according to the pattern of Doctrine and Covenants. In the absence of exception this recognition reached Utah. This same idea was confirmed by him who "Covenanted to do nothing the church would not approve" on the 6th day of April, 1831, at Kirtland, when he said, "It is my conviction that there are men in those (Utah) valleys who hold a legitimate priesthood, who will have to be recognized."

Then I turn to page 34, Doctrine and Covenants, and read paragraph (which is supposed to refer to the people of "those valleys"). "Verily there are some, who are chosen vessels to do good who have been estranged by hindering causes which are in the world, and will in due time return unto the Lord, if they are not hindered by the men of my church." And that brother who "pledged himself to do

## THERE'S A SHOE

In our window that tells the tale quicker and better than we can. It is one of our \$3.00 shoes. Worn over a year by a brick-layer—tested thoroughly. Every shoe we build for man or boy is just as good.

ROBINSON BROS. CO.,  
SHOE BUILDERS. 124 Main St.

nothing that would not be approved," by those who accepted him, has subscribed himself and published to the world that he "Believes there are individuals in the different factions that hold the priesthood," and "That where there are six or more regularly baptized members, any one of which, who is an elder, priest, teacher or deacon, there the church exists." That organization is necessary, and such an organization as the number of members and the will of God enables them to attain to.

Nay, he goes farther, and teaches, "That wherever a branch exists, the power of church extension exists also, to the fullest extent when acting in accordance with the law."

Is it heresy, or "apostasy," for me to say that if there is any authority on earth that it is in the Utah church, when the fathers of the Reorganization declared it as from the mouth of God? Dare you have the hardihood to brand me as an "apostate" for accepting as truth what your president declares and publishes to the church and the world? O shame!—the Lamoni branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints being in business session this evening, November 7, 1899, President Gunsolley announced that for some reason certain documents are not present, and that the branch officers having preferred charges against two brethren, one of them Albert Comer, desired that the branch appoint a court of Elders.

It was asked that the charges be read. The president answered that the officers had decided that it was not necessary those charges be made public. That notice had been given to the parties. It was then asked whether either of the accused parties had made answer to those charges. The answer was that it was immaterial whether they had or not, and ruled the question out of order.

Thus another chapter is added to the history of the hidden deeds of the inquisition of the nineteenth century. What is the matter, gentlemen? Has your frail craft, constructed from the flaws of a little delegated authority briefly bestowed become so trustworthy that after setting away the pennant staff, you stealthily flout to the rear to take refuge behind the sternmost bulwarks?

Now, kind reader, the action of the four reorganized branch presidents, in making a public charge—venial, or otherwise—against me, and refusing to state the nature of that charge to the body whom they pretend made it; and for suppressing my answer to the branch impels me to reproduce the charge and my answer to the same, that I may not be misunderstood in deed or motive by a generous public.

Now, gentlemen, this is my answer to the charges as preferred by the Lamoni Branch through its four presidents.

Yours respectfully,  
(Signed) ALBERT COMER.

## ONE ACRE FLOOR SPACE

Will be devoted to the Exhibition and Storage of "THE BEST LINE OF VEHICLES, IMPLEMENTS AND FARM MACHINERY" in our new building on State St., half block south of Theatre.

We expect to move on or about January 1st, 1900. The cost to move our immense stock from the premises we now occupy will be several thousand dollars. We are not advertising.

## A REMOVAL SALE,

BUT

Have many bargains to offer for cash, giving our customers the benefit of saving the expense indicated above. Call early.

## Co-operative Wagon & Machine Co.,

Leading Implement Dealers, Utah and Idaho.

GEORGE T. ODELL, General Manager.

Cancer, the most deadly of all diseases, is beyond the skill of the doctors. The most obstinate and malignant cases have been cured by Swift's Specific, **S.S.S. For the Blood**

**SEVEN SUTHERLAND SISTERS'**  
Hair Grower and Scalp Cleaner.

**TABLER'S BUCK EYE PILE OINTMENT**  
CURES NOTHING BUT PILES.

A SURE AND CERTAIN CURE known for 15 years as the **BEST REMEDY FOR PILES.**

SOLD BY ALL DRUGGISTS.  
Prepared by RICHARDSON MED. CO., ST. LOUIS.



THE OLD MISSIONS OF CALIFORNIA are suggestive of the many who, before the buildings were brought down, covered that sickness, result, skin, the kidneys become clogged and instead of filtering the blood, retain uric acid impurities, until the poison permeates the whole system, manifesting itself in many forms of disease. With healthy kidneys you will always be well. See Cure and see how Cathartic Tablets will prevent uric acid accumulations, and positively remove them from the system where they have secured a hold. Rheumatism and Kidney and Bladder Troubles were unknown to the Mission Indians who discovered the wonderful properties of these specifics now given to the world as

California's Mission Remedies

For Sale by all Druggists.

**CALA CACTUS LINIMENT**  
Is a magic balm for all inflammation. Its work is practically instantaneous.

FIVE PER CENT.

5%

FIVE PER CENT.

Of the Latter-day Saint Population of any Ward Secured as Subscribers to the

## IMPROVEMENT ERA

Will insure to the YOUNG MEN'S MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION of such Ward, a Rebate of

Twelve and One-Half (12 1/2) Per Cent

on each and every subscription obtained in that Ward.

This Offer is Made by the General Board of the Y. M. M. I. A.

For the benefit of the Associations. Every president and officer should go to work at once and make it sure that the Ward in which they reside shall win this rebate.

CANVASS YOUR WARDS WITHOUT DELAY!

SEND IN YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS AT ONCE!

Joe F. Smith  
EDITOR.

IMPROVEMENT ERA  
Is the PROPERTY and ORGAN of the Y. M. M. I. A.  
\$2.00 Per Year in Advance.  
214-15 TEMPLETON BUILDING, SALT LAKE CITY.

Heber J. Grant  
Business Manager.