

EDITORIALS.

THE PLEA OF THE COWARD.

The refusal of those consistent Latter-day Saints who have been brought before the courts on account of their religion, to pledge themselves to forsake their families and repudiate their sacred covenants, has been the subject of many comments. The bar, the bench, the pulpit and the press, have dilated on the position taken by our brethren who have gone to prison cheerfully rather than dishonor themselves and renounce their religion. But the following, which appears in a local sheet, is perhaps about as childish a plea on the side of submission as anything uttered by preacher or judge:

"But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. v. 8.)

The right meaning of fidelity is to be true and faithful; and the meaning of infidelity is to be untrue and unfaithful. The modern meaning of "infidel" is an unbeliever in Christianity, while the ancient meaning was apostate. But it makes little difference to this writing which definition is accepted. Then what is the meaning of the passage just quoted? It means exactly what it says, that is, a man who will not provide for his kindred, especially his wife and children is worse than an apostate, or, if preferable, an infidel.

Now if those who have been convicted under the provisions of the Edmunds act will consider this matter in their quiet, deliberate moments they will see that it places them in a very unenviable position. By refusing to promise to obey the law they enclose themselves in a prison. Many of them leave little children unprovided for and who will suffer by the absence of their father. Mothers have to take the responsibility of caring for and supporting the family. Women and children are made to suffer unnecessary hardships. What for? Because their husbands and fathers have refused to provide for them by refusing to stay out of prison. According to the Bible such men are worse than infidels. God does not require men to neglect their families and He condemns instead of blessing them for so doing. Neither does God require men to disobey the law, but instead tells them to be "subject unto the powers that be, for all power is ordained of God." It is a great mistake for a man to think he pleases the Almighty by disobeying the laws of his country, going to prison and neglecting his family, for all such work is in positive conflict with the teachings of the Bible.

Suppose the authorities of the Mormon Church should come forth tomorrow and say: "Brethren, God does not require you to break the laws of the land; neither does he require you to neglect your families; but, on the other hand, he commands you to be subject to the laws and above all, to support your families. If any of you are guilty of polygamy or unlawful cohabitation, go and plead guilty and promise to keep the laws in the future. By doing this you will gain favor in the sight of God and man, and your sentence will likely be suspended. After this go home to the bosom of your family and enjoy the blessings of your homes with your loved ones." Could the course of duplicity any further go? Make the promise, but never mind about keeping it. Agree to obey the law "as construed by the courts," which means, never speak to your plural wives again, treat them worse than strangers, utterly cast them off and reject them, and then, after that agreement, go home and enjoy their society and have a good time. If that is Biblical, or religious, or commonly honest, we must confess we do not understand any of these terms.

We recommend the writer of the article we have clipped to take a few lessons in both Biblical and secular history, and also learn something of the true significance of fidelity and honor. Of duty to God and the recognition of conscience. Until he or she has done this and considerably more, he or she will not be qualified to give advice to the "Mormons" or to expound scripture even to the most ignorant of mortals.

THE CORRECT POSITION.

There is probably no journal published in the country that is more outspoken and independent on all general as well as special topics than the Chicago Herald. While its utterances have no uncertain ring, they are carefully sustained by facts and reason. In the treatment of the Mormon question the capable editor of that paper makes no exception in the exhibition of those qualities. As an evidence of the clear conception he has formed of the situation, we extract the following:

"The bill which has now passed both houses of Congress, and awaits the action of the President, is not so much a measure against polygamy as it is a legislative attempt to cripple and despoil the Mormon church. That there is a vast difference between punishing a crime upheld in the name of religion and taking steps to deprive the adherents of that faith of the property which their thrift and industry have built up will be patent to the most casual observer.

Laws already on the statute books provide ample pains and penalties for polygamists. To enforce these laws it has been necessary to deprive one territory of the right of self-government, to deny to its inhabitants the

protection and guarantees of the Constitution of the United States, and to set up among them a system of jurisprudence which would do credit to Siberia or Timbuctoo. But as to these extreme measures, no one would be justified in making serious complaint, as, under the circumstances, the punishment of crime and the enforcement of the laws would be impossible without them. As much cannot be said relative to the supplementary legislation which has now been had. It goes, beyond the question of polygamy and attacks the Mormon church as a church, closes up its financial corporation and confiscates its property. The precedent established by the original Mormon legislation was cited by the members of that church as dangerous, because it was claimed that if a majority of the people should ever come to the conclusion that any other faith was practicing some ceremony which was held to be injurious to public morals, it too could be attacked in the same manner. This did not cause much trepidation anywhere, for it is not at all likely that any religious sect will ever adopt a practice which the laws have from time immemorial held to be pernicious. As to this later legislation, however, the precedent established is of a different character.

Polygamy has been the convenient weapon of the enemies which the Mormon Church has made. If it had not been a part of their faith something else would have been found on which to base the attacks which interested parties are making upon them. The fact is unquestioned that very few Mormons are polygamists. Aside from that tenet there is nothing in their creed to which any American can lawfully take exception. It has been the aim of the Gentiles and of the fanatics at the East to have never understood the situation in Utah and who have never made any effort to understand it, to destroy the church and come into possession of its vast temporalities. It was driven from Nauvoo. It was burned, pillaged and murdered out of Missouri. If it can be legislated out of Utah some precious scoundrels will make their fortunes by the operation, and that is the present object. By dwelling upon polygamy the agitators have misled millions of people and covered their own tracks, when it is notorious that they care nothing at all for polygamy; that even in Salt Lake itself it is rarely heard of, and that but for the vulnerability of the Church on this score it would be attacked on other lines in the same interest. The spoil of the Church is the bait which has attracted the attention of the avaricious, and while that is permitted to tempt them, they will clamor for laws more and more severe until they at length come into possession.

No necessity exists for the legislation which has just been made. It is not for the suppression of polygamy, but for the destruction of the Mormon Church. The laws against polygamy are being enforced with much success. Nine men out of ten who are arraigned are convicted. The crime is punished in Utah with much more zeal than it is in any other Territory or State in the Union. Beyond this the people of the United States have no legal or moral right to go. They may punish the crimes committed by members of a religious society, but they cannot lawfully punish the society itself 95 per cent of whose members are not guilty of any offense. To set up this right in the present case will make it easy to do so in other cases. A majority may some day conclude that some other church is getting rich enough to rob and it will be robbed. The very instrument of oppression and injustice which some religious bodies are now applying to the Mormons may one day be turned against themselves. It is a dangerous business to permit a majority to over-ride the Constitution in obedience to a passing clamor.

A BRACE OF PROTRACTED FIGHTS.

The States of Indiana and New Jersey had two of the most protracted fights over their respective Senatorships that ever occurred in the country. They began about the same time, and the former ended her struggle first by the election of David Turpie to the United States Senate; New Jersey did not complete the task till yesterday, when Rufus Blodgett was elected. Both the gentlemen named are Democrats, and as they succeed Republicans this makes a difference in the voting strength of the Senate of four, which the change in a California seat increases to six. The Democrats also gain a Senator in Virginia, but this is offset by a Republican gain in Nevada, where Stewart (Republican) will succeed Fair (Democrat.) The present majority of the Republicans in the Senate will be reduced to four after the 4th instant; it is now ten.

ON TOP.

The belligerent remarks of Senator Ingalls on the occasion of the passage in the Senate of the retaliation bill against Canada, were expected to excite great indignation in England. They occasioned much comment in this country, being applauded by the

pugnacious and explosive sort of "patriots," and deplored by the pacific and clearheaded promoters of justice and consistency. The utterances of the London press were looked for with some anxiety, and it was expected that through that medium the British Lion would roar in anger and defiance.

But the papers of the British metropolis treated the bitter sayings of the senator from Kansas as insignificant, and informed their readers that Ingalls was a very unimportant personage, without a friend or supporter either inside or outside of the American Capitol. This might have been considered a politic kind of revenge and was not very flattering to the caustic and spiteful orator.

However, Ingalls' turn has come now. His election as President of the Senate pro tem puts the London press into an unfortunate position. It shows that they were either densely ignorant of the gentleman's status and influence, or that they were endeavoring to throw dust in the eyes of the public and to meanly detract from the reputation of a powerful opponent. Ingalls, though in our opinion a rash and unreasonable assailant of the mother country, in this little scrimmage with the London press has certainly come out on top.

AN OPEN QUESTION.

There is considerable discussion yet, over the question whether the anti-Mormon bill has become a law or not. This difference of opinion is not confined to Utah; it is the subject of dispute in Washington, as we learn by telegraph. The matter is considered settled here by some, in consequence of a dispatch from Attorney General Garland who, in answer to the question from Chairman Carlton, of the Utah Commission, on Friday: "Has the Utah bill become a law?" replied in the affirmative. Mr. Garland is as likely to know as anybody, and yet it is just possible that he may have erred in the same manner as it is thought the agent of the Associated Press erred.

The Constitution provides: "If any bill shall not be returned by the President within ten days—Sundays excepted—after it shall have been presented to him, the same shall be a law in like manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their adjournment shall prevent its return, in which case it shall not become a law."

The question, then, turns on the time when the President received the bill from the Senate. It has been positively stated that the bill was not sent to him until Monday, February 21st. On the other hand it is claimed that it was engrossed and forwarded to him on Saturday, Feb. 19th. If the latter statement is correct the argument is at an end; the bill has become law without the President's signature. But if it did not reach him until Monday, the question is still open.

Some claim that if the bill was sent to the President at any time before midnight on Monday, it became a law, because Monday is counted for one day in the ten. Others, and among them men of legal learning, and acquainted with parliamentary usages, are emphatic in the opinion that Tuesday was the first day after the bill was presented to the President, presuming it went to him on Monday, and that the ten days did not expire until midnight of March 4th. The adjournment of Congress at noon on that day would thus leave the bill out, and it would be void without the President's signature.

Up to this writing we have not been able to obtain a definite answer as to the exact time when the bill was presented to President Cleveland, and so we regard the question as not yet finally settled.

KNOWLEDGE IN PLACE OF DOUBT.

The controversy over the reappointment of Mr. Hume as a foreign missionary, which we have previously explained, has been decided by the Prudential Committee of the American Board, and he is to be permitted to return to his field of labor notwithstanding his position on the question of "probation after death." It appears that the gentleman has expressed no positive conviction on that doctrine. He endorses the report of his views to the Committee in which it is said:

"He firmly holds every doctrine of the evangelical faith, and takes the position that no man will be finally lost for lack of a gracious opportunity of salvation through Christ, but only for refusing it. In regard to God's method of giving this gracious opportunity to the heathen who never heard of Christ, he does not profess to have any certain knowledge, since he believes the Bible is not explicit on this point."

This, it appears, was sufficiently vague to suit the Prudential Committee, and he is sent back under the assurance that he will work in harmony with the desire "that he avoid the preaching or teaching of any speculation

in favor of a future probation." Mr. Hume thus recants nothing, but virtually agrees to hold his tongue on the great question, while the Prudential Committee yield nothing as to their position in regard to it. All this is quite in line with the doubt and uncertainty that prevail in the religious world on most theological questions that agitate inquiring minds, and the lack of any authority to decide is painfully apparent. The dead letter of ancient scripture is their only guide, and this is susceptible of so many "private interpretations" according to the bent of the mind of the reader, that it becomes no fixed standard at all.

The action of the Prudential Committee may be perfectly consistent in the case of Mr. Hume, for that body, though holding different views from him is not competent to decide as to which is right; but its subsequent action on other cases appears altogether in another light. Two applicants for missionary service—Messrs. Torrey and Morse, have been rejected solely because they stand on the same ground as Mr. Hume as to the probation question. Here is Mr. Morse's statement in regard to it:

"I am not prepared to affirm that all those are lost who do not receive the Gospel in this life. I do not believe that the Bible teaches such a doctrine. I do believe that the general tenor of the Biblical teaching is that now is the day of salvation. This teaching it is my purpose to teach. All I mean with reference to the hypothesis of a future probation is that I do not know. Practically, it affects neither my belief nor my teaching."

It will be perceived that Mr. Morse, is as much of a know-nothing on this point as Mr. Hume. He does not intend to teach what he thinks in relation to it. But he has refused an appointment while Mr. Hume is accepted. And the only reason offered for the difference is that Mr. Hume was an old missionary and Mr. Morse as well as Mr. Torrey is a new applicant. But they are not rejected, because they are new, but because they occupy the same ground on the probation question as Mr. Hume!

We refer to this subject again, although it is of no consequence to us or most of our readers whether these persons go out to mystify the heathen, or stay to speculate on theological mysteries at home. But the whole matter illustrates the condition of the sectarian world, and shows the importance and necessity of present revelation and living authority, to dispel the darkness that clouds the minds of men and establish the truth beyond the reach of controversy. And yet the professed ministers of the Gospel of Christ not only refuse to listen to the voice of inspiration which has settled the disputes that are perplexing the thoughtful throughout Christendom, but also to seek for information from the source of all light and knowledge and wisdom.

We do not mean by this they do not, in form, ask for Divine guidance, but that they do not expect any definite communication from on high. For their creed shuts out a direct answer to their formal petitions. They do not believe that God will speak, that Jesus will reply, that angels will minister as in days of old. And they not only despise the Latter-day Saints for being so simple as to give credence to revelations purporting to have come from heaven in this age of the world, but utterly repudiate the doctrine of modern revelation, and thus virtually shut up the heavens over their own heads and reveal the very idea of expecting actual and direct knowledge from the Supreme Being.

In this condition they are bound to remain without present revelation. And the perplexing indecision voiced by both Mr. Hume and Mr. Morse, is shared by multitudes, who cannot believe the orthodox doctrine of eternal torment for millions who never heard of Jesus because they have not accepted him as the Christ, and yet know not how this awful fate is to be averted. The glorious vision given to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, February 16, 1832, unfolding the future of mankind in the world to come, casts all doubts and disputes on this question to the moles and the bats, with the idols and vagaries of heathendom and Christendom, and manifests the justice, mercy and wisdom of the Almighty in such resplendent colors as to fill every believing soul with wonder, love and praise. It is to be found in the Doctrine and Covenants, page 265. And it is all in harmony with Biblical teaching unclouded by the notions and renderings of uninspired men.

No son or daughter of Adam will be lost through failure to learn the plan of salvation. All nations and tribes and tongues will hear the one, everlasting and only true gospel of redemption, either in the flesh or in the spirit, and that portion only of the eternal punishment, always ready for transgressors, will be meted out as is deserved in different cases. The final result will be the redemption of every soul except those who sin against the Holy Ghost after having received it, and the entrance of the redeemed into various degrees of glory "according to their works." Let the "Christian" world read and receive that vision and the Gospel it proclaims, and knowledge will take the place of doubt, and light and joy will radiate to the ends of the earth.

Sam Jones' creed is "a bottomless hell and a topless heaven." That creed can't be said to lack means of ventilation.