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AS TO "BLIND OBEDIENCE."

The Deseret News recently paid some attention to an article that appeared in the Northwestern Christian Advocate, the greater part of which was culled from an effusion that appeared in the organ of the "Reorganized" church over the signature of Fred M. Smith, a counselor in the Presidency of that society. From what appeared in those publications, the article had found place in a local sheet to which we pay little if any attention, because it descends far below the level of decent journalism, and therefore most of the persons whom it attacks have ceased even to read, let alone reply to, its scurrilities.

Our first response to the misrepresentations of the writer whose name we have mentioned, was simply to correct the false impression conveyed by his assertions and implications, to the effect that the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, particularly in Utah, were in a condition in which they dared not "assert their right to think and speak without endangering their social and religious standing," and further, that they were under an "oppressive priestcraft" resulting from unquestioning obedience to the priesthood.

The writer named endeavored to make it appear that he was in Utah for the purpose of delivering the "Mormon" people from the fetters which he assumed they were bound with, and to induce the Saints here to "think for themselves and read for themselves, outside of prescribed courses laid down by a dominating priesthood." His article contained many sneers and slurs against "The Holy Priesthood," and some personal allusions to the editor of the Deseret News, which were easily accounted for by the company that Mr. Smith delighted to keep, but to which we paid no attention. In an editorial that appeared Dec. 2, 1905, we made some reference to the charges and insinuations mentioned, and stated that:

"There is no 'domination' by the men holding authority in this Church. No member is prevented from thinking and speaking as he wishes, or from reading whatever he chooses. There is no course 'prescribed' for them in that respect which they are required to take or that is made exclusive. 'Unquestioning obedience to men' is not a doctrine of the Church, nor is it exacted of any of its members. Therefore, the pretended desire to free them from such alleged bondage is nothing but a sham."

We showed also that in all the organizations, quorums and associations of the Church the utmost freedom of thought and speech is encouraged and exercised, but that this does not extend to assaults upon individuals, the defamation of character, groundless charges or insinuations of a purely personal nature, and further that order and decorum in all the assemblies of the Saints are necessary to be maintained. As to courses of reading, we explained that there was nothing of an exclusive nature in advice given as to the "best books" to be perused by members of the Church, nor any command or requirement that limited the perfect freedom of every Church member to study that which he or she desired. Therefore, the insinuations made by the individual who claimed to have come to Utah for the purpose of delivering them from alleged bondage, were unfounded and his pretended endeavors to give them liberty were like beating the air with a stuffed club.

The would-be champion of free thought and free speech, who has nothing to fight on that field, then came out with a batch of excerpts from discourses delivered away back in 1852 and more particularly and profusely in 1857, in order to prove, after the style of logic adopted by his helper, that the doctrine of "unquestioning obedience to men" is a tenet of the "Mormon" faith. His article was recently noticed in the Northwestern Christian Advocate, and was published in full by the Saints' Herald, the official paper of the "Reorganized church."

The discourses from which the quoted sentences were picked out, were delivered during a time of great excitement, chiefly when the army sent here in the time of President Buchanan was on its way, threatening to hang the "Mormon" leaders and confiscate "Mormon" property, appropriate "Mormon" women and run riot in looting generally when they arrived on Utah soil. Some very extreme denunciations were indulged in, and the speakers advocated strict obedience to the councils of their leaders. President Young at that time being the Governor of Utah as well as President of the Church. It was necessary in order to carry out the means of defense established, that the people should be united and willing to follow instructions suited to those times.

The strong urgings, particularly remarks made by the late Heber C. Kim-

ball, whose peculiarities are remembered by old residents of this city, were applicable to conditions then existing, and were generally received in the spirit in which they were uttered. But they were even then the views of the men who expressed them. When spoken under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord, they were profitable in the enunciation of principle. When they were declaimed under excitement of the individual they were understood in that light. Some of them were spoken in that jocular strain which was customary with Brother Heber C. Kimball, and were so construed. But why should any person desirous of showing what is the doctrine accepted by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today, go back to those strenuous times for evidences to establish a point, instead of taking the acknowledged and adopted written standards of the Church for that purpose?

Our "Reorganized" assailant, in order to give some color to his assertions that "unquestioning obedience to men" is a doctrine of our Church, picked out small parts of a paragraph from a discourse delivered in 1896 by President Joseph F. Smith. We quoted the entire paragraph in reply, showing that there was not anything in his remarks that taught the doctrine of unquestioning obedience to men. Our opponent further attempted to bring in as evidence on his side a sentence from an Ogden paper, purporting to be from remarks made by the editor of the Deseret News. Here is what the accuser said:

"No longer ago than the 26th of October last he was teaching this doctrine in his peculiarly oracular manner. In his sermon at Ogden on that date he is reported to have said:

"In a nutshell the philosophy of the Mormon religion consists in obeying the commandments and living up to the revelations of God as revealed to his chosen servants on earth. In this last dispensation of the fullness of times."

Now, for the facts. The editor of the "News" was not in Ogden on the 26th of October last. Therefore he did not deliver a sermon or discourse of any kind at that time. He did deliver a lecture on "Mormon philosophy" in the Ogden Tabernacle at a different date, but then did not make any remarks of the kind attributed to him by the Ogden paper. The lecture was entirely devoted to the philosophy of the Prophet Joseph Smith concerning the eternity of matter and of spirit, of duration, of space, of beginningless and endless succession of beings and worlds, including the doctrine of pre-existence and after-existence and the relationship between man and Deity. The subject mentioned in the paper quoted from was not touched upon or alluded to, and we do not believe that any reporter from that journal was present at the meeting. So much for Mr. Smith's desperate effort to bolster up his misrepresentations concerning "unquestioning obedience." And on examining even the remarks alleged to have been made by this editor, what is there in them that will logically support his erroneous assertion?

But it is not our intention in this article to go through the numerous exhibitions of chop logic and forced reasoning which our opponent has indulged in, in the article that appears in the "Reorganized" organ, but our purpose is to show what Mr. Smith himself has taught on this subject in language that cannot be mistaken, and which appeared in the Saints' Herald of Feb. 11, 1903. It is on the subject of obedience and is entitled "Sermon by Frederick M. Smith at Lamoni, Iowa, January 25, 1903 (reported by E. Leon Gold)." This sermon contains an argument in favor of the doctrine which the preacher is now attempting to foist upon the Church in Utah as one of its fundamentals, and from the effects of which he has come to deliver us.

After relating several stories illustrating the virtues and benefits and necessity of "implicit obedience," including the history of the healing of Naaman and the result of his obedience to the Prophet Elisha, he told the story of Abraham's "implicit obedience" in the attempted sacrifice of his son, at the command of the Lord. He remarked:

"There is one thought that I wish to draw from the three stories; and if I can get that one thing, or one lesson, before you, I shall be satisfied; and that is the lesson of obedience, obedience which is the result of absolute faith or confidence in God. When Abraham went out into the new country, as we are told, he did it in obedience to a command, and, as he believed, a direct command from God. He saw not where he was going. He knew not why the Lord told him to go. And yet, obeying absolutely upon the faith that he had in God's justice, he went."

"Think you not that that took faith, a confiding faith, to promulgate and to institute such absolute obedience? Now, then, have you ever heard the statement made, or has it ever occurred to you, that you would not obey a command of God unless that command appeared to your intelligence? I want to ask you here, did this command of God appear to Abraham's intelligence in any way? When he was told to leave the land where he had been raised, where he had settled down, and where the most of us would think that he would be likely to spend his days, do you think that statement appealed to his intelligence, when he was told to move and go into a new country and make a new start? And again when he was told to kill his son, or offer his son as a burnt offering, do you think there was anything therein that appealed to his intelligence that it ought to be done?"

"There was absolutely no reservation in his obedience. He obeyed implicitly."

In connection with this, Mr. Smith quoted a passage of scripture which the "Mormons," as he calls us, have been greatly condemned for citing. It is this:

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than man. Acts v. 29."

to call attention to is that when the Lord has commissioned a certain person to do a certain work, so long as that person is in discharge of that work, his voice should be obeyed, when it is given in his name, as though it was from the Deity himself. Mind you, I say, that so long as he is in the office of his calling, that person in discharge of that work should receive the same implicit obedience, by those who are presumed to obey, as though the Deity himself were speaking."

Can Mr. Smith find in any of the discourses delivered under the peculiar circumstances existing away back in 1857, a stronger enunciation of the doctrine that he now condemns, that he himself promulgated in the discourse from which we have quoted, which he delivered as late as 1903?

Discussing further on the "unquestioning obedience" of Abraham, which he highly extolled he asked again and remarked:

"But did he hesitate? No, he went with blind faith and blind obedience, and fulfilled that command to the very letter, so far as all practical purposes are concerned. And that is why, to me, it seems that this is one of the most striking examples of obedience. And what was the result? Abraham today stands as a figure scarcely paralleled by any other man except the Christ man, in all the history of the world, either sacred or profane. And why? Simply because in him was manifested some of the most implicit obedience that the world has ever known. And I am of the opinion that only in so far as we manifest obedience somewhat similar to this, will we be profited or benefited in our religious life. It seems to me that this faith that shall impel us always to obedience is the one chief principle that shall finally win us our eternal glory and bliss."

He went on to talk about "soldiers of the cross" and the necessity of implicit obedience to commanding officers by "valiant soldiers in the army of the Lord," and asked:

"What does it mean? Does it mean that when we receive a command we should say, 'I do not know whether or not to obey that command. It does not appeal to my intelligence. It is not clear to me. What he was talking about.' Is it the right of the soldier to rebel and say, 'I will not do that, because I know that the consequences will be bad?'"

He then quoted from the Doctrine and Covenants to show that in 1834 the Lord complained of the Latter-day Saints, that they had not learned to be obedient, and that therefore they "must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be by the things they suffer." Then he went on to apply this to circumstances existing at the time of his preaching, as follows:

"You have been called upon within the past few months to do a little more in a financial way than possibly you ever were before. * * * And you hesitate on the ground, 'Well, I don't believe that those men that are placed in charge are doing just exactly right; those men do not know any more than I do about those things; and I do not believe I am compelled to render obedience to them until I see it just exactly the way.' Did Abraham talk like that? Is it well for you to talk like that?"

There is a good deal more of it in the same vein, which we have not space enough to reproduce. Our readers, however, can find it all in the Saints' Herald of February 11, 1903. But we must quote one more paragraph from this precious sermon by Fred M. Smith. It is this, as a summary of the whole discourse:

"You can talk of intelligent compliance all you want, but you can't talk of intelligent obedience all you please; and there comes a time in the life of every man, when he cannot rely on his own intelligence, nor on his own mental force, nor on his reason. There are times in the life of every man when he must be led absolutely by faith, blind faith; and it is then that he renders obedience that makes him truly great in the eyes of the Redeemer. And I would to God that the time would hasten when we, as a people, as Latter-day Saints, would realize the lessons to be learned from the obedience of Abraham, and place ourselves so strictly in the line of duty, that we can express the sentiment: 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'"

It seems, then, that the gentleman who has come to Utah to rescue the Latter-day Saints from the alleged "unquestioning obedience" which he asserts they are subject to, is an advocate of implicit obedience, blind obedience, unreasoning obedience, unintelligent obedience, and that this should extend not only to compliance with a direct revelation from God to the individual, as in the case of Abraham, but to implicit obedience unto any person who is commissioned of the Lord to do a certain work, in financial as well as other things, and that his voice should be obeyed "as though it was from the Deity himself."

Now, we reaffirm, and again declare, that "unquestioning obedience to men" is not a doctrine of the Church to which we belong, and is not required of its members. And our assailant has not been able to establish his charge in all the quotations that he has culled from almost forgotten discourses, delivered in times of peculiar need for unity and compliance with wise counsel among the Saints. Even then there was no compulsion. The advice delivered was suited to the occasion. There was no penalty for non-compliance. Appeals were made to the good sense, intelligence and faith of the people. The free agency of man is a fundamental doctrine of this Church. Intelligent obedience, willing obedience, cheerful obedience is inculcated. The very doctrine of rewards and punishments is predicated upon it.

We pay this much attention to the attack of one leader of a sect that appears to have for its chief object to place that which it calls the "Mormon Church" in a false light before the public. That sect is nothing if not contentious. We do not wish to enter into extended controversy with him nor any of his ilk. What they are lacking for is to find an opening in our papers and meetings, to launch forth their misrepresentations of our doctrines and our authorities. We do not intend to indulge them in their endeavors to sow division and breed trouble. This is not because we have any doubt as to the result, so far as argument and truth are concerned, but simply because we know their purpose and do not wish to indulge them in wrangling or in opportunities for their usual vilification. And as to "unquestioning obedience

to men," we think we have shown clearly that our assailant is a far more strenuous advocate of it than can be found today in the Church that he has come here to attack, or than any of our leaders who ever urged upon the Saints the duty and virtue of obedience to God.

DEFENSE IS NOT ATTACK.

Whenever the "News" defends the Church against the vicious assaults made by "Christian" ministers and their gentle amazons, our venomous critics squeal and squirm and complain that we are "attacking" the saintly preachers and the "noble" women. If we prove them to be deceivers, or deceived, propagators of wilful falsehoods, and the allies of bad characters in their warfare upon an unforgiving community, the cry goes up that we are "attacking" them. But this merely proves that some of our critics are so befogged that they no longer know the difference between defense and attack.

The "News" does not attack anyone. We very seldom take any notice of the attacks made upon us. If, at times, we endeavor to show the "noble women" who have enlisted in a warfare the true nature of which they do not understand, that they are in the wrong, being merely the tools of a few designing men, we only state beforehand what they themselves will, sooner or later, discover for themselves. It is only a question of time when the common sense and good hearts of these women will assert themselves, and break the evil spell that now seems to be upon them, and then they will realize the meaning of the scheme to which they have been made parties, by seducing spirits. It is only a question of time till truth will be fully vindicated, and all the plots and plotters exposed in their true character.

PROTESTANTISM ARRAIGNED.

The New World quotes an excerpt from a sermon delivered by Rev. Charles Edw. Stowe, son of Harriet Beecher Stowe, in which Protestantism is arraigned in these vigorous terms:

"Our Puritan fathers never would have made the break that they did with Catholic Christianity could they have foreseen as a result thereof the Christless, moribund, frigid, fruitless Protestantism that can contribute neither warmth, life, inspiration, nor power to lift us above the weight and weariness of sin. Thank God, this is not true of all Protestantism! The great doctrines of Catholic Christianity are still believed and preached in many of our churches. But, alas! it is only too true that the heavenly city, which our Puritan fathers yearned for and sought with prayers and tears, has become to many of their Christless descendants a city of ice palaces, built of pale negations, cold, cheerless, shining in a pale winter sun with an evanescent glitter of doubtful and unsubstantial intellectual worth. As the icebergs from the frozen north floated with the ocean currents only to be melted and disappear in the warm waters of the equator, so shall these transcendental ice mountains melt in the warmer currents of the life-giving Spirit which will bring to human hearts from our crucified but now risen and glorified Lord. The full, rich, glorious Christ of Catholic Christianity has been dragged from his throne by these 'advanced thinkers' (God save the mark!) and reduced to beggary. A pale, bloodless, emaciated Syrian ghost, he still dimly haunts the icy corridors of this twentieth century Protestantism, from which the doom of his final exclusion has been already spoken. Then in their boundless arrogance and self assertion they turn upon those of us who will call them to before the Risen One, 'My Lord and my God,' and tell us that there is no middle ground between their own vague and sterile rationalism and the Roman Catholic Church."

Mr. Stowe is said to be a Congregational minister. What he says about Protestantism in general is but too true. It is frigid and fruitless, and though it wraps itself in the sulphureous odors of persecution, it cannot restore warmth, life, and spirit. It remains a ghost of the past, once a living, vigorous organization, but now as useless as a form without soul.

For a Quaker, isn't Poulney Bigelow unduly pugnacious?

The English elections are a continuous performance, but the Unionists do not enjoy the play.

It would be no more than fair if U. S. Senator Depece should ask N. Y. State Senator Brackett to resign.

Town Topics' instructions to its correspondents read like the science of abuse reduced to a financial basis.

The President did the Wright thing in naming the ex-governor-general of the Philippines as first American ambassador to Japan.

When the war in the Orient broke out it was said in mitigation of its horrors that it would send people to their graves. It did. But is not the Algerias conference doing the same thing?

Last year Mr. Carnegie presented nearly fifty organs to churches in various parts of the country. And now through the long drawn aisle and fretted vault these organs psal the note of praise of their giver.

To show an easy way of making a little fortune, it is demonstrated that the man who saves \$5.00 a week and deposits it in a bank where he gets only four per cent interest, compounded semi-annually, is, at the end of forty years, worth \$25,588.

The sentiment in Chicago now is to build a great library as a monument to the late Dr. Harper. Whatever the University of Chicago shall prove to be that will be Dr. Harper's true monument.

An agitation for a universal two-cent postage rate has been started in England. Its promoters have as one strong argument in behalf of their proposal the success which has attended the British Imperial penny (two-cent) postage. Since its establishment the number of British letters to and from the colonies has more than doubled.

Speaking before the House appropri-

tion committee of the defects in our consular system, Secretary of State Root said among other things: "When an eminent citizen comes round you cannot examine him in geography and arithmetic. He resists it, and there is the dickens to pay all along the line." Secretary Root has discovered that it is very hard to "teach old dogs new tricks."

Special Immigration Inspector Braun declares, upon the statements of bankers and steamship agents, that the amount annually received in Italy from Italians in this country averages one dollar a day for every Italian in this country. That is no doubt a gross exaggeration. The Italians in this country do not average over two dollars a day, and out of that they must live. If they save fifty cents a day out of their earnings, then they are the thriftiest laborers in the country, and set an example for all others.

"I believe that public ownership of all public utilities will be the main plank in the next Democratic national platform. I don't believe we can control great corporations like the railroads by commissions. The public ownership spirit is blazing and by the next election it will be red hot," says Mayor Dunne of Chicago. Such a thing, of course, is possible, but not probable. "Public utilities" can be made to mean almost anything, and a declaration in favor of their public ownership is a declaration in favor of state Socialism. His Honor's success in the matter of public ownership of public utilities in Chicago is scarcely such as to warrant him in making predictions.

Elder R. B. Summerhays, who was formerly an attaché of the Deseret News printing office, is now connected with the publishing department of the Southern States Mission, having charge of the subscription part of the business of the Elders' Journal, which, by the by, is a very excellent and useful periodical, and is receiving deserved support not only among the Elders and Saints in the Southern States, but also from friends in Utah. We have made reference to and copied from it on several occasions. We commend it to the readers of the "News," and especially those who are interested in the progress of the work in the Southern States. We wish Brother Summerhays great success in his labors.

ON RELIGIOUS TOPICS.

Washington Post.

Are there any "real followers of Christ?" Among all the millions who believe in Christ and strive more or less earnestly to live up to His teachings, are there any who succeed? Take, for instance, the single doctrine of non-resistance as laid down and explained by the Master—what is there that abides by it? Members of the Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, give special prominence to that doctrine, and labor incessantly to promote peace; but when our great domestic war came on the young and middle-aged Friends took up arms with the same alacrity that characterized their fellow-citizens of other religious denominations. Looking at the world as it stands today, where is the ground for a belief that any government could safely disarm and announce to all mankind that henceforth it would be a real follower of Christ? The confident belief of the professed followers of Christ is that the world is steadily progressing toward his ideals, and will arrive there ultimately. But they do not expect to see that consummation. It is for a far-off age.

Springfield Republican.

There is at least room for speculation in considering how far churches are likely to be crowded aside in the commercial development of great cities. The question is invited by the reported plans of the Westminster Presbyterian church, in New York City, for a new house of worship—or what is designed to pass as such. The venerable present structure, on Twenty-third street is to be demolished, and in its place it is proposed to build a 16-story apartment house church, the church itself to take a humble place in the rear. The plan involves an amazing knowledge to modern commercialism. It is proposed to invite the worshiper as he goes to his devotions to thread his way down a long passage having stores upon both sides, until he reaches the church. This is the way which one religious organization proposes to solve its financial problem.

Worcester Gazette.

Science is making all nature speak in praise of God. The tornado is a part of the whole machinery, and is changing with it. The snow-crowned mountain-tops are oxygen factories. Our religion must be natural, not supernatural; it must be normal, not abnormal; our temple cannot be built with its apex downward. Religious teachers should be clear at this point. Fervor is no substitute for clearness. The preacher may mistake perspiration for inspiration. Nature is the argument of God, and a beautiful garment it is. It must remain an unblemished whole, to the praise and honor of Him whose garment it is.

E. W. Howe in the Atholens Globe.

At dinner in Hongkong the other day a doctor who has lived in the Orient six years, sat at our table. He says that if an American paper should print the plain truth about missionary work done here, every minister in the country would attack it the following Sunday. The doctor said he came to this section in hearty sympathy with the missionaries, but that he has changed his mind. I do not pretend to discuss the question, but it is undeniably true that missionaries are very unpopular wherever you go in the Orient. Every American I have met has sneered at the missionaries; even the good church members over here despise them.

Boston Transcript.

If the Roman Catholic church will but recognize the worth of the Protestant contention of individual liberty more than it hitherto has done, it will find not a few Protestants willing to admit the principle of authority more than they have done; for the fruits of individualism in religion are not wholly wholesome viewed from any institutional point of view. With each side making concessions and admitting the relative worth of the principle for which the other stands as well as its own historic position, the church would enter on a new era of amity and cooperative strength. Signs are not wanting that in the camps of both individualists and collectivists in religion there are searchings of the heart. The more individualistic Protestant denominations are restive under the waste and the lack of co-ordination of their polity. The closely articulated, episcopally-governed churches realize that the modern man must have larger liberty of belief and more initiative in action.

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

The Red Book for February has a number of short stories by clever authors, and interesting notes on Pacific run modes, and the drama of the day. The "art studies" with which the number opens, are by Sarony, and form a notable and pleasing feature.—158-154 State St., Chicago.

In the current number of Leslie's Weekly, Mrs. C. R. Miller describes an interview with, and makes an estimate of, the Hon. Charles J. Bonaparte, the head of the American navy. On the same page are presented a good portrait of the secretary and photographs bearing on his efforts to suppress hazing at the Annapolis Naval Academy. The more important illustrations of this, "The Midwinter and Automobile number," include a cover drawing in colors by H. G. Dart, representing Broadway, New York, during a blizzard; odd and lively scenes on the beach near Ormond, Fla., where the international automobile meet is soon to be held; and other automobile photographs. Notable features of the letterpress are the automobile story by William P. S. Earle; Alex Schwabach's "Man in the Auto" notes, and Eleanor Franklin's seventh letter from Korea.—New York.

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