

such expressions as these, and much more of socialistic enmity to the Republic than either. The framers of the Constitution worked wisely and well when they drafted that precious document. Its principles were nurtured in patriotism, and were born of an undying love of justice and human liberty. The system provided for a combination of the elective and appointive agencies that should express the popular will in safe and convenient form and yet guard against hasty and unreasoning popular clamor. The reasons for adopting the system were elaborately discussed, carefully weighed, and wisely passed upon. We shall not attempt to review them now. With the development of the nation, additions and amendments to the Constitution have been necessary, but no change has been required in the general plan, so far as the welfare of a free and patriotic people is concerned. And any such general assault on the constitutional form of government in this country as would characterize it as a system menaced by a "tramp at one end" and a "princely duke at the other" should be hotly resented by every patriotic American, whether the assault be made by the chief of an extensive labor organization or an ordinary Haymarket anarchist. Such persons should be given to understand that the great palladium of liberty and rights in this nation is in its general inception and plan suited to every one fit to enjoy the privileges of American citizenship.

That there are abuses under our laws everyone will admit; that laboring men have good cause to complain in many ways is also true. But the remedy for the wrong lies in the exercise of constitutional powers, not in the abrogation of the Constitution. We are of the opinion that any organization which makes a serious business of threatening such vital changes in the Constitution as those proposed will find that in the effort their "wanderers" will become more weary still, and that the "final and triumphant struggle" will place the victory on the other side. All citizens should work with vigor and determination for needed reforms, but individuals or organizations who seek to revolutionize constitutional government in this country must be invited to take a back seat and forced there. The nation can get along better without them.

SAINTS AND SECRET SOCIETIES.

A correspondent calls the attention of the NEWS to the fact that persons who have membership in the Church, some of them influential in the locality where they reside, have taken upon them the obligations, oaths and agreements of certain secret societies, thus becoming members of such organizations. The inquiry is made as to whether it is consistent for a professing Latter-day Saint to unite with a secret order or society.

The position of the Church on this matter has been clearly defined in the scriptures, by revelation, both ancient and modern, and by earnest, repeated and consistent instructions from those in authority. It is almost inconceivable that there should be any uncer-

tainty or doubt as to what the rule of the Church and the duty of the Saints is in this regard. There has been no change in the revelations, no change in the teachings of the Church, and no change that we are aware of in the secret orders and organizations themselves. And yet there appears to be necessity for fresh warning on the subject lest some be unwittingly led into transgression through following the uncondemned example of others.

Let it be understood, therefore, that those who are numbered with the Latter-day Saints have no place whatever in any of the secret orders, societies, combinations or unions of the day. The proper and safe course for each member of the Church is to leave this class of organizations severely alone.

At various times in the history of the ancient inhabitants of this continent secret societies flourished among the people, so that "they did have their signs, yea, their secret signs, and their secret words;" they had their "oaths, their covenants, and their agreements;" their works in connection with their societies were in secret, or in darkness. In every instance the existence of these organizations brought condemnation and sorrow upon the people or the nation that encouraged them, in accordance with the declaration of the Lord: "Yea, and cursed be the land for ever and ever unto those workers of darkness and secret combinations, even unto destruction, except they repent before they are fully ripe."

The historical examples referred to and the word of the Lord quoted should be sufficient warning to every Latter-day Saint; for though the nations in which these societies existed have passed away, leaving only a remnant on the land, the Lord revealed through His Prophets in ancient times that in the present age, in this nation, such organizations would again exist, "secret combinations, even as in times of old, according to the combinations of the devil, for he is the foundation of all these things; yea, the foundation of murders, and works of darkness; yea, and he leadeth them by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he bindeth them with his strong cords forever;" and of these the Lord said: "That my covenants may be fulfilled which I have made unto the children of men, that I would do unto them while they are in the flesh, I must needs destroy these secret works of darkness, and of murders, and of abominations." The reason for the divine condemnation of such organizations may be found in the reason which the Savior gave to His disciples as to why men worked in secret combinations or in darkness: "They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Individuals who have membership in the Church should hold perfect communion through the appointed channels with its Head. When any of them unite with secret, oath-bound societies, they are thereby obligated to "hide their counsels from the Lord," and therefore have taken a long stride toward an apostate condition, and ought to take the first opportunity of retracing their steps.

It may be urged that these societies are formed merely for beneficent

purposes. Such, we have no doubt, are their avowed objects, and these are perhaps the only ones ostensibly sought. But why, then, is there need for the secrecy and darkness of their works? The presentation of such a theory in advocating their cause among the Saints has its perfect simile in the evil one leading people "by the neck with a flaxen cord," until they can be bound more firmly with harsher and stronger thongs. There is no question that unions may be and have been formed which have accomplished much good in improving the condition of men. But the fact that they may have done and can do good does not dispose of the objection that they can also do harm. Certainly in their banding together to help one another and resist all outsiders their tendency is to create hostility between classes, to exact allegiance to one's fellows which may not be properly given, and eventually to menace society, order and government.

It is a matter of history that trades unions, originally organized for the mutual protection and benefit of members, in the main have passed out of that field. The causes which have produced the change we will not discuss now; it is sufficient to know that it has taken place. From the original position of union for defense against oppression they have in turn become oppressors. They now endeavor to exclude from employment those who do not choose to become members of the organizations; within the scope of the power which they claim and attempt to exercise is that of compelling the granting of their requests, frequently regardless of the property rights of those upon whom their demands are made. Passing from a legitimate field of unity for mutual benefit, they are ambitious to aggrandize themselves at the expense of others, and practically have become secret societies whose object is to gain means and power to control in the affairs of men. Of course, secret associations of this order are not confined to the industrial classes. Federations of capitalists and employers are entered into, one of the alleged objects being to meet and resist what are deemed the unjust demands of labor unions. These federations also engage in secret conclaves, and from the methods which they follow it is beyond question that their chief object is the acquisition of wealth by any means available, and the combination of power to retain the ascendancy over the masses and crush out anything that tends to diminish their autocracy.

Beyond these there are numerous other secret societies, in business, religious, political and social circles, all having in view a similar object, viz: to get power and gain. There are monopolies, trusts, combinations and federations almost without limit, all studying to advance their own interests and gratify their selfish desires, without regard for the welfare or the rights of others.

Were the methods employed confined to the moral forces, there might some hope that the progress of these organizations would not prove a means of convulsing society or disrupting governments. But the experience of the