

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

SUCCESSION IN THE PRESIDENCY.

"Succession in the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" is the title of a pamphlet from the able pen of Elder B. H. Roberts, of the presidency of the Seventies, and just published by the DESERET NEWS Publishing company. The aim of the author is to throw the search light of history and logic as well as revelation on the controversy for which the "Reorganized Church," commonly known as the "Josephites," is responsible. He treats the subject exhaustively and establishes his conclusions with irrefutable arguments, presented in clear and vigorous language. In the first sections the various claims to the succession of the Presidency of Joseph the Prophet are dealt with. Sidney Rigdon's rejection by the Church as a guardian receives special attention and the pretenses of William Smith, Miller and Strang are shown in their true character. Then a sketch of the birth of the "Reorganized church" is given and the claims of "young Joseph" considered. The author further shows that with the death of Joseph and Hyrum and the rejection of Sidney Rigdon, the First Presidency was removed and the succession in the Presidency went to the Twelve, in accordance with the teaching of the Doctrine and Covenants, the testimony of Joseph himself, and the expressed views of the Josephites themselves upon the order of Presidency in the Church. In proof that the Almighty has sustained the Church, Elder Roberts points to the work accomplished under the faithful leadership first of the Twelve and then under Presidents Brigham Young, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff. The little work closes with a testimony of President Woodruff on the subject discussed, delivered in the Assembly Hall, this city, February 3, 1892.

For the valuable Church historical data, gathered from many sources, as well as for the convincing clearness with which the theme is treated, the pamphlet will be read and reread with great interest by the Saints. Its tone is free from bitterness and the points are made with accuracy and impartiality. It can be recommended to the careful perusal of members of the Reorganized church as well as to all who are interested in the subject of which it treats. To those who look for truth it cannot fail to be a welcome and helpful guide.

BE EXEMPLARY.

The influence wielded by example is the most potent that a person can exercise for good or ill. Whether the field of operations be among the youthful or the aged, in public or private life, the estimate placed upon an individual is based on his conduct rather than on his professions, and his influence receives its force from his actions rather than from any theoretical standard he may raise. The rule expressed by the Savior, "By their fruits ye shall

know them," is that which men apply, consciously or unconsciously, to their fellow beings, and then direct relations with them in accord with that judgment. Upon this rule, people who so give themselves up to evil as to malign and afflict those who walk in a higher and nobler path, yet have a measure of admiration for an upright, consistent man, and feel and recognize his superiority.

Not only are the associates of an individual affected by his methods in life, but his own character is formed or changed thereby. For instance, frivolous conduct and thoughtlessness wield a baneful influence, and to the extent that a person submits himself thereto does he become frivolous and thoughtless, and his life's superstructure is weakened. His offense in this line is made more serious according as others may be led away by his bad example. It is a universal law that an account will be rendered of the works of all men. Each act that is not inspired by a desire for righteousness will bring its condemnation; while each kind and thoughtful expression, each loving and noble deed, will lay claim to blessings that cannot be refused.

The great Exemplar of Christian doctrine taught: "Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." This is a declaration of the principle that the future of man is affected by his present deportment. He must at some time answer for every idle word. Shall it be said that such words include only foolish or ill-advised expressions that come from a spirit of recklessness or a neglect of the proper amenities of life and of the dignity of manhood or womanhood? or do they also embrace professions that are made idle words by being disregarded in conduct—words that shall stand at the great day against those who uttered them and shall judge them for their hypocrisy? Folly and heedlessness have an ill effect upon those who submit to them, but how much more serious is the injury wrought by the vain professions which make hypocrites!

The matter of being exemplary in their habits ought to receive careful attention from those who have received the light of the Gospel. They should seek to conform to the truths they have accepted, not only in word but in every thought and deed. Their example should be worthy of emulation, in that it is harmonious with the Gospel, the fruits of which are love, peace, faith, virtue, charity, knowledge, temperance, patience, diligence, brotherly kindness, humility, godliness. The responsibility of all Saints is to make their lives consistent with their profession of being followers of the Divine Master.

The more prominent a person is before the people, the broader will be the effect of his example. He who is called to be a servant of the Lord is appointed a messenger of salvation to the people. If his practice does not harmonize with the principles he is ordained to promulgate, he becomes by his example a messenger of destruction. This is not because of the prin-

ciples, but the result of violating them in the deeds performed. For instance, the Lord forbids the use of strong drink, and enjoins temperance. Suppose one called to the ministry should indulge in intoxicants. He not only brings scandal on the Church thereby, but in so doing becomes a servant of the evil one, and a messenger of destruction to himself and those influenced by his example. Instead of being true to his calling as an ambassador of the Lord, he betrays the One in whose service he has enlisted, to the extent of his wrongful action and its effects, because his influence and strength are used to aid the enemy.

Those who have received the sacred office of Elders in Israel are called to be preachers of righteousness. If they were to make this merely a profession of the lips, and their example be evil, they would become preachers of unrighteousness through that misconduct, and would be unworthy their calling. If, however, they continue in their lives to show forth brotherly kindness, love, and faith, they are teaching principles that lead men to God; if they remain diligent, patient and humble, the door of inspiration is open to them in their holy office; while they seek virtue, temperance, knowledge and truth they proclaim the power of godliness to save and exalt. The fruit they bear is to the glory of God and the blessing of themselves and those influenced by them.

All members of the Church are under sacred obligations to be exemplars of the will of the Lord. They are under covenant to remember Him and to keep the commandments which He has given to man. In fulfilling these duties is the source of their strength and salvation. Availing themselves of this position, though they may be called to pass through affliction, the burden is lightened by the spirit and power of the Holy One, which is always to them a rift in the clouds, a light in the darkness, that illumines the pathway to the heavenly kingdom. They are observing the command, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." As true Saints, bearers of the word and doers of it also, they become models of righteous conduct in all the affairs of life, because of their exemplary habits, attained to through knowledge of and obedience to Gospel truths.

TOLSTOI'S VIEWS ON PRAYER.

During a recently published interview with Count Tolstoi, the Russian author, philosopher, philanthropist and nobleman, the conversation drifted to religious topics. The count asserted that the early Christians met in meeting together for worship, since Christ taught that prayer was a private devotion and not for the purpose of public exhibition.

The following is that part of the interview:

"Do you go to church?" the reporter was asked by the count.

"Yes, sometimes," was his cautious reply.

"Why do you?" he asked.

"Because, I think I receive spiritual