

EDITORIALS.

LOYALTY OF THE "MORMONS."

The Springfield Republican says:

"Mr. Cannon repels strenuously all reflections upon the loyalty of the Mormons, declaring that they 'believe the Constitution of the United States to have been inspired by God, and venerate it as a sacred instrument.' This is news, proclaimed for the first time; and a good many of Brigham Young's old speeches, and several hundred more or less important occurrences in the last thirty years have a marked inconsistency with this statement."

The Republican is very much mistaken. It always is, when discussing "Mormon" affairs. What Mr. Cannon has said on the subject of the Constitution is but a repetition of the words of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, uttered nearly half a century ago, repeatedly echoed by Presidents Brigham Young and John Taylor, and responded to in every "Mormon" heart. The sentiment, as an expression of the faith of the Latter-day Saints, may be new to the Springfield Republican, but it has been proclaimed over and over again during the period we have mentioned, and can be found in "a good many of Brigham's old speeches," which the Republican draws attention to, and those "several hundred occurrences" all corroborate the utterance.

But the Republican will perhaps refer to objections which have been made by leading "Mormons" to the acts of United States officials. If this is to be taken as a test of loyalty, then all the politicians in the country may be branded as disloyal. The Democrats assail a republican administration, as Republicans assailed the Democratic administration when it was in power.

We honor the Constitution, we support the Government, but we frequently have reason to dissent from the acts of men clothed with a little brief authority. And if we denounce the villainy of some jack-in-office, who has been thrust upon us without any vote or voice of ours in this free and popular republic, he and all of his confederates immediately raise the cry that the "Mormons" are disloyal, as though those creatures of a term were the Government, the Constitution and the country, all blended into one magnificent and unassailable institution.

We maintain without fear of successful contradiction that no people in the United States are more loyal to the Constitution and the Government of the United States than the Latter-day Saints commonly called "Mormons," and that those who state to the contrary are either ignorant of the facts or they lie with malicious intent.

THE "JOSEPHITES" AS PERSECUTORS.

Most of our readers are aware of the existence of a sect commonly called "Josephites," and professing to be the "Reorganized" Church of Latter-day Saints. Its adherents are called Josephites because some years ago they induced Joseph Smith, son of the martyred Prophet, to assume the leadership of their organization, which was composed of a few apostate "Mormons." The claim of the right of the later Joseph to the Presidency of the Church was based upon the promise of the Lord that certain blessings should be given to the Prophet and his seed after him.

The term "Reorganized," as applied to the concern, is a fraud upon its face, because the Church was never disorganized. It has continued from the 6th day of April, 1830, to the present time intact. The death of Joseph Smith no more disorganized it than the death of any other man holding the fulness of the Priesthood. The Church continued, the Apostles—upon whom the Prophet Joseph had conferred the keys and powers revealed to him—leading the Church by virtue of the authority conferred upon them as a "presiding High Council," the next quorum to that of the First Presidency, and by their right to "build up the Church and regulate the affairs of the same in all nations." There was no break, no cessation of the functions of the Church, no dissolution of any kind.

But the work commenced by the Prophet Joseph has been continued with all the doctrines, keys, ordinances, priesthood, gifts, blessings and manifestations revealed through him, for a Church and kingdom which God declared should "not be left to another people," but should prevail and endure for ever.

The claim of presidency was simply absurd. The blessings promised to Joseph and his seed were similar to those pronounced upon Abraham and his seed, and had nothing whatever to do with presidency. By the rule which the men who put young Joseph forward and argued as to his rights, the son of every man who has presided over a conference or a mission or a quorum in the Priesthood might claim to take the right of his father's place on his decease. There is no lineal inheritance of presiding authority in this Church. There are rights of Priesthood descending from father to son, conditioned always on the worthiness of the latter and his conformity to the laws and ordinances of the Church. But Priesthood is one thing and presidency another. No man can preside over this Church except he has "come in at the gate," holds the lawful authority, is "chosen by the body," appointed and ordained to that office and upheld by the confidence, faith and prayer of the Church. This is settled by the plainest revelation and is laid down in the Doctrine and Covenants.

But passing by these questions which are settled in the minds of all Latter-day Saints who understand the order of the Church, we come to the matter which has occasioned our notice of this sect, the chief characteristic of which is abuse of the Church established under divine direction by the Prophet Joseph.

Two persons deputed by the Josephite body have been doing their best at the seat of government to fan the flame of intolerance and the fires of bigotry now burning against the Saints, and to invoke destruction upon the people of Utah. What for? Have the Josephites ever been interfered with in the free exercise of their religion? Not by the Latter-day Saints. They have been free to do anything lawful for the promulgation of their tenets and to vilify to their hearts' content the leaders of this Church. In some instances Bishops have been so weak and foolish as to permit preachers of that sect, who are always impudent, aggressive and sophistical, to speak in the meeting-houses of the Saints. But those people have never been molested even when assailing our most respected men with low vituperation and venomous falsehood.

And what is it they seek? The answer has come by telegraph and has been published in the press dispatches. But these are frequently erroneous in some respects, and are not to be trusted at all where "Mormonism" is in question. We therefore now turn to the statement of their own case which is now before us, in a circular signed by the Josephite delegates to Washington, Z. H. Gurley and L. E. Kelley. In this they state they have kept and sustained missionaries in Utah for the past thirty years, who have "succeeded in extricating at least ten thousand persons from the binding corruption of polygamy, etc.," and ask that "more effective measures be enacted and carried into effect by the Government of the United States for the suppression of polygamy, and its kindred evils," claim that they have twenty thousand members of their body; assert that polygamy is no part of religion (Christian) and especially of that portion called "Mormonism;" quote from the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants isolated passages concerning the marriage law given to the ancient Nephites and to this Church at an early day; draw from them the conclusion that "there can be no possible excuse" for the Latter-day Saints to practise plural marriage, nor to cry persecution when assailed for it; and impudently Congress to amend the laws as follows:

1. So that reputation of living together and cohabitation be received as evidence to prove the marriage relation.

2. That avowed polygamists, or Mormons, who are by their ordinances obliged to obey the priesthood (which means in fact a nullification of the laws) be not allowed to sit as jurors when one of their brethren is being tried for bigamy. Holding as we do, that if an individual was to be tried for robbery,

that it is not in harmony with jurisprudence that the jury should be made up partly from his own gang.

3. That the Statute of Limitations be so amended that all persons, male and female, may be punished for the crime of polygamy.

4. That the homestead law be so amended that polygamous wives (concubines) be not recognized under the title of "Heads of Families."

We draw attention to this not to take up space in any argument against the statements of these people, that is almost unnecessary, but to let the Latter-day Saints know what kind of spirit those wolves in sheep's clothing bear. They do not aim to correct what they deem to be error, but to break up the families and homes of the Saints, deprive them of the commonest political rights, and in fact bring upon them a repetition of the troubles which they endured in Missouri and Illinois. The Josephite claim of drawing away ten thousand persons from this Church is an amazing falsehood; they have not succeeded in entrapping as many hundreds nor anything approaching such a number. Neither have they maintained missionaries here for thirty years past. A few apostates and persons cut off this Church for gross iniquity have joined the impertinent fellows who have occasionally visited this Territory as Josephite proselyters, but they have scarcely numbered enough to make up a meeting, and it is only quite recently that they have been able to establish themselves in this city.

The attempt to make instructions to people ages ago under altogether different circumstances apply to the Latter-day Saints, and at the same time to suppress those portions of the text which prove that under other circumstances a different law would be given, is all of a piece with their general sophistry and their claim to a re-organization of that which was never disorganized. It is of the flimsiest character and only calculated to deceive the weak-minded and ignorant. The divine law under which the Latter-day Saints have received plural wives is not to be judged by directions given in other times and other conditions, any more than the gospel is to be gauged by the Mosaic law. The Josephites may reject it as they have other principles revealed to the Prophet whose son is fighting the father's works; they may preach their milk-and-water sermons, continue to blackguard good men who lived and suffered with the martyred founders of the Church; but they cannot succeed in establishing their absurdities, and this effort to join in the demand for brute force to put down that which can only be destroyed by argument and scripture, ranks those people with the persecutors of the Saints of all ages, and numbers them with the villains who slew the servants of God at Carthage in '44 and drove the Saints from Nauvoo in '46. Let all good people beware of them and shun them as adders that bear poison under their tongues.

The following in relation to this movement is clipped from the N. Y. Graphic of Feb. 4 and shows how it is viewed by reflecting minds, even when unacquainted with the merits of the case:

"Whenever a schism takes place in an ecclesiastical or political organization the schismatics are certain to claim that they are the true originals, and that the body from which they have separated is a fraud. So it is with the seceders from Tammany Hall, who insist that they are the regular and orthodox Democrats, and so it is likewise with those Mormons who say that they never accepted polygamy, and who declare that they are the sole depositaries of the true and original faith delivered to the saints by Joe Smith, upon which the dogma of polygamy was engrafted by Brigham Young and his wicked partners. But the weak point in their claim, as in the claim of all other schismatics, is the fact that the other body has retained the outward and visible form of the Mormon Church, and has kept a firm hold upon its temporalities. This counts for much. If our erring brethren of the South, during our now almost forgotten unpleasantness, had succeeded in taking possession of Washington and holding it, the European powers would have hastened to recognize Mr. Davis as the ruler of the nation, and the position of the Northern and Western States would have been something like that of an evicted tenant. The non-po-

lygamous Mormons may be very estimable people, but their claims to be recognized by the Government as the only true and genuine Mormons can scarcely be acted upon. Their protest against the polygamous practices of the Mormons in Utah is all well enough; but these polygamous Mormons hold in their strong grasp the temporalities of the Mormon organization—its lands, its temple and its money. And it is with these men that the struggle must be fought, if it be fought at all. As for the petition of the non-polygamous Mormons, that they be not persecuted for their religious opinions when those opinions do not lead them to violate the law of the land, it is sufficient to say that they need fear nothing on that score. In this free country—this very free country—any man or set of men may believe what they please and do what they please, so long as they do nothing which the written law forbids. And the written law does not forbid one from believing, with Parson Jasper, that the sun doth move, as Hamlet did, nor from worshipping the sun, as the Parsees do, providing their worship does not take the form of anything calculated to create a breach of the peace."

We will merely add that the Josephite movement does not amount to a schism. It is merely an organization of persons severed from this Church at different times who have taken hold of it as drowning men grasp at a straw, and a few others who have been attracted by such truths as it advocates and who have not yet had their eyes opened to its deficiencies and fallacies.

A PREMIUM FOR VILLAINY.

The various measures presented to Congress by the supposed champions of Morality have one feature in common which should be held up for examination. They offer an inducement to men who have married plural wives, to discard them all with their offspring and turn them off to shift for themselves, after the fashion of this "Christian" generation. By doing this they are tempted with a double consideration. They can escape the care, responsibility, expense and inconveniences of the plural wives and families, and retain the right to vote, to hold office, to serve on juries, and to be eligible to any position under the law. They will also escape the danger of punishment under the provisions of anti-polygamy legislation.

There are not a few individuals who make a great show of piety and respectability—and it is hinted that certain Congressmen are not altogether exempt from this imputation—who, while married to but one wife, maintain illicit relations with other women, either by keeping them as mistresses or by occasional association without regular maintenance. The usual way is to cast off such entanglements when the weaker and more dependent vessel becomes unattractive, or the freshness of youth or the romance of the connection fades. If there are children in the way as fruits of the unlawful connection, they are repudiated also, are counted on the list of waifs, and go out into the cold world fatherless and branded with shame. Will any one pretend that such instances are rare? We think not.

Now the authors of several bills presented to Congress virtually say this to men who have married two or more wives, who have lived with them and raised up families under obligations as sacred in one case as the other or others, and who have thus multiplied their cares and responsibilities: you turn off your plural wives and their children and remain with one, the same as men of the world do who form alliances without marriage, and you shall be free to exercise all the rights of citizens, with an increased chance for honors and emoluments, because there are some who will be so stubborn and rebellious that they would see all the "Christian" statesmen in Tophet before they would take the course marked out, and thus there will be more opportunity for you. But if you don't thus repudiate the plural wives whom you have vowed before God to love and cherish in time and eternity, they will deprive you of the simplest rights of freemen, and the commonest privileges of citizens. We will disfranchise you; we will put you under the control of a few irres-

ponsible men appointed by arbitrary power to vex you; and we will punish you in addition by fine and imprisonment. That is the position.

And why? This is the reason: you profess to be guided by revelation and to make this wife system part of religion. The pious people of the United States can't stand it. They can endure prostitution, debauchery, baby-killing and venting, drunkenness and whoredom, and such necessary evils right under their sanctified noses, because the things are not claimed as religion and they have become common custom. But you Latter-day Saints claim to be regulated by religion in all your relations with opposite sex, and though the Bill which all "Christians" revere when tightly clasped, does mention such things as sanctioned by Almighty in early times, yet it don't see it in that light and it will not tolerate your practices under the name of religion. If you want more women than a wife can have them, provided you keep them on the sly, but if you make them we'll put you in the penitentiary, deprive you of all constitutional rights and pursue you to bitter end.

We are very much of the opinion that to all threats, temptations, pains, penalties and other infamies of this character, there will be quite a number of obstinate men who will shut their teeth hard and as though all earth or hell might its worst. We will not attempt to surmise what these men would do on such propositions, we would rather leave that to the reader's imagination. But we ask the men of the nation to pause a little before they put the selves on record in support of measures which will one day exhibit them in a very unenviable light, and permit themselves to aid in a just to satisfy a howling mob, sectarian prejudices of self-righteous puritans, or the greedy aspirations of a few adventurers who are prime movers in the present excitement, and whose object is political power and peculation.

MISSIONARIES AND HEATHEN.

The New York Herald has the very significant little editor which we commend to our "Christian" friends:

"An American missionary has just returned from Telugu the western coast of the Bay Bengal, where he has been laboring for many years in the religious vineyard, says: 'It is strange peculiar ideas this people (the Telugus) have of Christianity. Some good old Brahmin to me: If sons should become Christians they would then, doubtless, become drunkards like the Englishmen. It will strike the majority of people that the Telugu Brahmin had pretty level head on his shoulders and that there is a mine of common sense in the remark which creates so much surprise in the missionary mind.'

ARBITRARY, DESPOTIC AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

In the debate on the Edmunds bill which took place in the United States Senate on Wednesday, Senator Vest took constitutional and refutable exceptions to that part of the bill which proposes to deprive many of the people of Utah of the right to vote and hold office. He claimed, rightly, that "The doctrine that the right to vote and hold office in this country when once enjoyed could be taken away, without something he had never known be brached before," and he denounced it as "arbitrary, despotic and unconstitutional."

Senator Vest is the author of a bill designed to suppress polygamy in the Territories, so he cannot be rightfully charged with leaning towards the "peculiar institution." He speaks from the standpoint of a statesman and is entitled to credit for his manly and outspoken opposition to a measure that is only worthy of the rankest form of despotism. The Constitution in Article eight of the Amendments, forbids the infliction of "unusual punishments." If the disfranchising of men and women in the manner proposed is not an unusual punishment, we do not know what would properly come under that designation.