

DESERET NEWS: WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

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INDEPENDENCE DAY AND "MORMON" LOYALTY.

THERE are some people—among them the Governor of Utah—who seem to think no one can be "truly loyal" who does not celebrate the Fourth of July in the orthodox manner. The essentials of this are cannon-firing, flag-raising, procession-marching, reading of the Declaration of Independence, the delivery of an oration, boasting of the superiority of American institutions above all others on the earth, fireworks, feasting, and general jollification.

The "Mormons" of Salt Lake City have not celebrated Independence Day in this fashion for several years. Their brethren and sisters in many other parts of the Territory, however, have annually and duly gone through the forms and ceremonies and public rejoicings of the day, as may be seen from the reports of celebrations published every year in the DESERET NEWS. There is a reason why Salt Lake has not, latterly, fallen into line and acted according to the traditions in this respect. For the information of persons not familiar with the true history of Utah we will refer to a few incidents, that the whys and wherefores of Salt Lake's "disloyalty," as it is absurdly called, may be properly understood.

From the time when the pioneers, who led the way through the wilderness for the thousands of feet that were to follow, rested on the spot now beautified by this goodly city, at then Mexican soil, and unfurled to the mountain breeze the flag of their country, the honored stars and stripes, down to the year made memorable by the infamous proclamation of an Acting-Governor forbidding the militia of the Territory to take part in the national celebration, Salt Lake city made, regularly, the most imposing demonstrations on the "Glorious Fourth" of any city in the regions of the Rocky Mountains, or indeed on the Pacific Coast. For twenty-four years the People's Day was a general holiday, and the orthodox celebration was in order. Files of the DESERET NEWS will furnish the patriotic speeches and exalted sentiments uttered on those occasions.

But on the third day of July, 1871, a person with small brains but great ambition for notoriety, who was Secretary of Utah and, the Governor being absent, occupied his place, issued the proclamation which we have mentioned, and Federal soldiers were brought into this city prepared to fire upon the citizens who should attempt to march in the celebration procession as part of the local militia. On the 15th of the previous September, Governor J. Wilson Shaffer issued a proclamation against the assembling of any body of armed men in the Territory for drill, although our local militia had for eighteen years held their periodical drills, under the territorial laws and the national Constitution. In less than a month that man's corpse was carried out of the Territory for burial at his home, and his foolish and unconstitutional and entirely uncalled for proclamation should have been buried with him. During the nine months between his death and the next celebration day, two new Governors had been appointed—so brief and ephemeral was the reign of those petty rulers and inflated dignitaries—and it was on the basis of the Shaffer document that Geo. A. Black, spurred on by adventurers who desired to provoke a conflict between the "Mormons" and the Government, white-lipped and with trembling fingers, signed the proclamation for the suppression of our annual rejoicing over national independence, and demanded the aid of Federal soldiers to enforce its provisions. It was thought that the silly paper would be treated with contempt by the "Mormons," who could have easily overpowered any force at hand, and that the power of the Government could then be invoked and in the crushing out of the people who had redeemed Utah

from the desert, those needy and greedy plotters who rode the Black horse, would find the opportunities for prey suggested by their rapacity.

But the "rebellious," "seditious" and "hostile Mormons," to save the military commander from unpleasant alternatives, quietly yielded and the militia which usually formed one of the most prominent features of our annual celebration was retired, and the people here ceased to celebrate in the popular manner. To-day Federal officials taunt the "Mormons" with a want of loyalty because they do not follow the custom of the country, while but a short time ago Federal officials advised us not to do so, and it was Federal authority backed by Federal force which put a stop to the celebrations which had been as regular as the years! In the face of that proclamation and those loaded guns ready to fire on American citizens if they attempted to exercise a constitutional and lawful right, shouting for freedom, boasting of liberty, lauding republican privileges over monarchical restrictions, would be but a mockery and a sham.

When we can celebrate the day as freemen, as other citizens of our common country celebrate, and as we might do now but for the pretext it would give for those who wish to provoke strife and stir up trouble, Salt Lake City will again come to the front with her popular displays of patriotism, by the side of which the meagre but characteristic affair of Monday—the first attempt of our censors to get up a celebration since this has been a Territory—would appear but a cheap trifle and a small flash in the pan.

But we protest against the use of the term "loyalty" in any such a connection. Loyalty does not consist in loud-mouthed speeches, brag, buncombe, bunting and bravado. There were as loyal people holi day making by the lake or in the canyon or enjoying the company of families and friends on Monday as any who shout themselves red in the face over the American eagle and the ability of Uncle Samuel to whip all creation. What do these men mean by "loyalty?" Many of them understand it as support to a party; the upholding of an organization which secures to them a certain amount of bread and butter and whiskey and cigars; the honoring with the lips of certain individuals temporarily occupying exalted positions.

We say most emphatically that we have no such loyalty. We worship no men; we owe fealty to no ring or party formed for personal ends and private ambition; we recognize no masters either in Governors, Presidents or any other paid servants of the sovereign people. But the "Mormon" people are as loyal to the Constitution and to the principles which underlie the structure of American institutions as any other citizens of our majestic Union. And while we wait with patience for the dawning of our day of true freedom, which will come as sure as the revolutions of time, we will cherish in our hearts if we do not gather in formal crowds and laud with our voices, the sacred principles of civil and religious liberty for which the fathers of our country struggled, and bled and died, and for which many of our own people have laid down their lives, while we live to honor, defend and maintain them with all the powers given to us by the Great Creator.

Let those who insult us with their unjust and uncalled for accusations turn over the pages of Utah's history, and see what has become of their predecessors in office and in calumny of the "Mormons," and remember that the same Divine Providence which has blasted our defamers and prospered His people, still lives, and holds in His hands all human destinies. To Him we owe allegiance as well as to earthly government, and to Him we intend to be, always, truly loyal.

"PRIESTLY DICTATION."

"PRIESTLY dictation in civil affairs" is a phrase that has been very frequently repeated on the platform and through the press, as an intended thrust against what is popularly known as "Mormonism." That a man recognized as a priest should have anything to say on political or other secular matters, is apparently horrifying to a certain class of minds. But seeing that under our national system, all citizens are equal before

the law, and a priest or other ecclesiast has just as many legal, social and political rights as a layman or an infidel, why should there be so much concern exhibited about priestly influence in civil things? If an atheist or a society of non-religionists wields influence in civil affairs, it is considered all right so long as neither attempts to accomplish by force that which is only lawful by persuasion, argument or other rational and peaceful means. Why, then, should not a religious teacher, or recognized minister of spiritual things, be permitted to use his influence in those civil affairs in which he is just as much interested as a citizen, as the disbeliever, or the church member?

Priestly influence, if lawfully exercised, is just as proper in all secular affairs, including politics, as commercial influence, judicial influence, gubernatorial influence, legal influence, employer's influence, or the influence of any swaying, directing, guiding power or person. If a priest uses any unlawful agency to compel a course of action, he is as amenable to the law as a layman. If an ecclesiast is possessed of judgment, experience, wisdom, or other qualification recognized by others as fitting him to give advice and direction in secular affairs, what is there in the institutions of our government, the law of the land or good common sense to forbid him from imparting that counsel and giving that direction, particularly when it is sought for and desired?

This hackneyed cry of "priestly dictation" is, under the institutions of this republic, the gauziest kind of rubbish. No priest can exercise any power over an unwilling devotee, as in some parts of the world, and should he attempt to do so, there is ample protection for his victim, both in public opinion and in the law. If a priest tells voters how to cast their ballots at an election, he cannot compel obedience, and on the other hand he has just as much right to use lawful influence to induce his friends or followers to vote as he wishes, as any Federal officer, club president, political or trade boss, or other leader has or pretends to have.

To bring this right home where it is intended to apply, the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have equal right to manage a mercantile business, run a railroad, occupy an office of any kind whatever for which they may be chosen, get up a political ticket and try to have it elected, or do any other lawful act, with any person or combination of persons not endowed with religious authority or occupying sacerdotal position. Those who would deprive them and other religious teachers of that right are the real traitors to the cause of American freedom. For them should be the "scaffolds and coffins," if any, though we advocate no such means for the punishment of those "treasonable conspirators." They are the enemies of liberty who strive to "break down the Constitution," which guarantees the same civil rights to preachers and people.

Is not priestly influence, wielded in the fear of God and with wishes for the benefit of the race, as likely to be good—it is certainly as lawful—as the influence of political bums, office seekers, smoke-dried and liquor-soaked adventurers, loafers, blasphemers and infidels? Or to lift the matter nearer to a level, is not priestly influence in civil affairs as likely to promote peace, create union, secure order, establish righteousness and increase joy, as the influence of sordid though respectable secularists, whose souls are centred on the dollar or absorbed in personal aims and private ambitions?

The Latter-day Saints choose generally to follow the advice and admonitions of their Church leaders in many of the civil affairs of life, in preference to the suggestions of persons who presume to find fault with their religion and at the same time to dictate their civil and social policy. The latter are angry at their own failure and the former's success, and raise the silly cry of "priestly dictation." These comparative strangers who know nothing of our motives, history or objects attempt to undermine the confidence of the people in the well-known, tried and proven leaders whose whole lives have been a sacrifice to principle, and whose entire energies have been devoted to the benefit of their fellow men. The confidence reposed by the Saints in these veterans in our cause is represented as "bondage," as "shackles that bind a too-confiding people," and the

prophecy is put forth clad in the garments of a threat, that Utah will never be permitted to become a State until that influence is thrown off and that confidence is broken. So proclaims the Governor of the Territory on a day sacred to liberty.

Now we wish it to be distinctly understood, speaking for the masses of the "Mormon" people, that we claim the right to choose our own political and religious leaders, and our counselors in social and commercial affairs, and if we please to seek for and follow the counsel of the priesthood in all secular things, as in spiritual things, we shall do so whether or not it pleases persons who wish to rule us *volens volens*. If we choose to have "priestly influence" in politics or other civil affairs, we shall be guided by it whether this exercise of our rights as American citizens keeps us out of the Union of States or not. Our Apostles and other Church leaders are the choice of the people as well as the appointed of the Lord, and all things in this Church, according to the revelations and covenants and commandments, must be done by "common consent." *Vox populi* harmonizes with *vox Dei*, and both are needful according to our Church constitution, which is as little understood by those anti-"Mormon" orators who have the impertinence to lecture us on the subject, as the mythology of Egypt or ancient Greece is comprehended by the unlettered peasant of either hemisphere.

Now what is proposed by the freedom-shriekers and opponents of priestly influence in civil affairs? To deprive us of our rights under the Constitution so long as we, of our own free will and choice, listen to the counsel of our chosen advisers. Think of it! While those officious individuals talk about breaking shackles, they are forging them for our limbs and minds. Our freedom must be such as they provide, our liberty such as they shall dictate. We are free to be ruled by them but not to follow the lead of our chosen chiefs. Why, these arrogant persons who are forced upon us under the anti-republican system of territorial vassalage, are the self-constituted censors who seek to "break down the Constitution" and to violate one of its most glorious provisions! For while that inspired instrument forbids no priest from exercising influence in civil affairs, it does most emphatically forbid the exercise of civil authority over religious affairs. And they want to invade the sacred domain of the Church, and prevent church members from carrying out church policy when it enters into the walks of civil life.

But we care nought for their threats, we smile at their prognostications, we reject their attempted dictation, and we see through their thin sophistry and disjointed logic. And we now and here proclaim that as American citizens, although waiting for the full liberties which are unjustly withheld, we shall seek for and follow just as much "priestly dictation" as seems good in our eyes, whether it relates to spiritual or civil affairs, and will contend for this religious liberty, while God gives us life, as well as for all the rights and privileges for ourselves and others guaranteed by the supreme law of the land. And as the Lord lives and truth triumphs, we shall yet gain the victory.

THE DUTY OF THE HOUR.

THE regular annual election for territorial, county and precinct officers will take place in less than three weeks. In a few places there are tokens of preparation for the business of the occasion, but in many others there is neither sound nor sign of interest that is perceptible. It is time that the primaries were being held and conventions arranged for, so that what is done may be done wisely, and that the registered voters everywhere may be stirred up to action.

The People's Party, although so largely in the majority, cannot afford to slumber at its post. If failure ever overwhelms it in any section of the Territory, it will be through apathy and neglect on the part of its members there. Fancied security leads to sloth, and inaction courts defeat. There are portions of Utah in which the so-called "Liberals" intend to try their powers in August. They can

only succeed through the carelessness or disunion of the People. It is not only necessary that the people should be alive and exercise the franchise, and that they unite on the right men for the offices to be filled, but that they keep a sharp and close watch on the doings of the enemy. Remember the nefarious means by which Tooele was captured for a season, and the great efforts required for its redemption! The polls should be well scrutinized and measures taken to secure an honest, free and fair election.

In order to draw out the full vote of the People it is necessary not only to bring the importance of their duties at the polls before their attention, but also to gain their co-operation in the meetings at which selections of candidates are made. It is also needful that such men be selected as are adapted for the positions and likely to have the confidence of the voters.

In the year 1833, on the 6th day of August, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the word of the Lord in regard to the observance by His people of the constitutional law of the land, which they were commanded to sustain, and in that revelation the following words occur:

"Nevertheless, when the wicked rule, the people mourn;

"Wherefore honest men, and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise, whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil." (Doc. & Cov., n. e., p. 312.)

Those who bristle up like porcupines when anything approaching to Church influence in political affairs is mentioned, can make what they choose of this. We openly assert our right to seek for, and obtain if we can, divine direction in everything that concerns the welfare of mankind in every condition of life, temporal or spiritual. It should be observed that we are counseled here to *seek diligently* for honest and wise men to hold office. Care in the selection of candidates is one of the necessities. The best judgment that can be had should be obtained and exercised. Favoritism, nepotism, personal considerations and friendships should be thrust aside, in view of the good of the community. Good men should be selected. We do not want bad men in office. But goodness is not a sufficient qualification. Many a good man would make a poor constable, justice, judge, selectman or legislator. Fitness as well as goodness should be considered. Wisdom is wanted as well as virtue. Ability is necessary. Men should either be well qualified for the office to which they are nominated, or have sense and vim enough to qualify themselves by application, study and active exertion.

The time has come when "any good man" will not do for any office in the gift of the people. Public interests are greater and of more importance to-day than twenty or thirty years ago, and elements have been introduced which require more skill, wisdom and knowledge in the handling, than the harmonious and peaceful elements of former days. Hence the necessity of more care and discretion, and more general interest in the choice of men to bear the burden of public office.

We hope that the importance of this matter, increasing as it does with the years, will commend itself to influential men in all parts of the Territory, and will wake up the great body of the people to interest and action. The exercise of our power and influence as citizens is required by the laws of God and of man. If we do not take sufficient interest in things which concern us all now, we cannot reasonably expect to be entrusted with greater privileges. For he who is not faithful over a few things, will not be made ruler over many things; and he that esteems lightly the powers of citizenship, is not likely to rise to either the earthly or the heavenly dignities which the law and the gospel place within the reach of the diligent and worthy.

We trust there is no need for us to dwell upon the importance of union in our political affairs. It is recognized by every party in the civilized world. While some of them deprecate our efforts at "oneness," they strive with all their might to imitate it themselves. While they rail at the advice of our leaders, to vote as a unit, they repeat it in their own ranks. And the great motto of the country is, *E pluribus unum*, or "Out of many, one." Union should be our watchword,