

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### ITS CHARGES UNTRUE.

A late issue of the *Saints' Herald* published at Lamoni, Iowa, by the Reorganized church, contains an article headed "Work for the Dead," in which it quotes from the *DESERET NEWS'* report of the remarks of Elder, Mariner W. Merrill at the late General Conference of the Church. Elder Merrill spoke upon the work being done in behalf of the dead in the temples of the Latter-day Saints, calling attention to the fact that the present authorities have had the same spirit which inspired the Prophet Joseph, in continuing that which was commenced by the Prophet in the erection of temples and in the work accomplished therein. The *Saints' Herald* comments upon this discourse, and after sneeringly referring to Elder Merrill as being "one of the latest Apostles chosen," it says:

Those who have been desirous of passing through the endowment ceremonies, for themselves, and of attending to baptisms for their dead, have been charged a certain sum for the privilege.

The *Herald* goes on to state that "for something like forty-seven years prior to last April, sealing and baptisms for the dead relatives and friends were actively taught, and as actively practiced; the people being given to understand that the system was perfect as it came from the lips of the Prophet Joseph Smith." It then says the people here "visited the temples, received their endowments, and performed the rites of baptism for their dead, paid the fees charged for the service rendered, and went away believing the work to have been correctly done." Then it adds:

Many of these must have been shocked, and possibly seriously distressed, to be told last spring at the Conference, by President Woodruff, as they were, that much of the work the people had been doing for themselves and their dead was unavailing, the methods having been misunderstood and the work wrongly done, making it necessary that the work should be done over in some other way; and advising the people to set about it and have their work done in as short a time as possible.

Proceeding upon these texts, the *Herald* argues to establish two points thereby: 1—That when "work done under a system said to have been so grand and of such stupendous importance to the people" is discovered to be "unavailing and of no effect," "what may not the people expect if, accepting the new teaching and again repaying the charges again to perform the work once done by the advice, and under the direction of those same leaders, they shall be told that again their work was unavailing and must be done over again;" and 2—That if "the work is to be done over again, it shows that the conception of its practice was wrong in its inception—started wrong on a wrong basis—misunderstood and misapplied by the living oracle with whom it originated, or through whom

it was declared, no matter who that one was."

As is usual with the *Saints' Herald* when criticizing anything pertaining to the Church of which the *Herald* editor's father, Joseph Smith, was the first Prophet and President in this dispensation, and in whose cause he became a martyr, it makes a false statement, and then, rolling that as a delicious morsel under its tongue, proceeds to argue in support of its peculiar views. In this case the paper's opening statement that those who receive or engage in the ordinance named "have been charged a certain sum for the privilege," is utterly without foundation in truth. Hence the first point sought to be established by the *Herald* writer fails because of its falsity.

On the other proposition, it is equally untrue that President Woodruff said that work done for the dead "under the direction of those same leaders" was "unavailing and must be done over again." No such sentiment was given utterance to. If the *Herald* writer had any desire to tell the truth he could have referred to the quotation he makes from Elder Merrill's remarks, wherein it is said that a great deal of work had been duplicated, "from the fact that the people did not keep a record." A record is an essential element of the work for the dead, hence its omission by the Prophet Joseph at one time necessitated a repetition, in order to be correct. But the omission of a vital part of a ceremony does not prove the ordinance to which the real ceremony belongs to be wrong in principle, any more than the performing of baptisms without divine authority, as is done by the Reorganized church, establishes the doctrine of baptism to be an error. The omission of an essential element makes such unauthorized baptisms unavailing, and in order to receive the benefits of the true ordinance a person receiving the former would have to be baptized again by one divinely authorized to administer in the ordinance.

The statement of President Woodruff regarding work that should be done over again to be proper did not refer to anything performed "under the direction of those same leaders," but that which was done without their direction. The baptisms performed for the dead were not affected or referred to at all. To a limited extent in sealing people had proceeded in certain relationships, without fully understanding what was required. The matter coming to the attention of the President of the Church—the "living oracle" spoken of so derisively by the *Herald*—he quickly set affairs right by giving the people as emphatic and public instruction as possible, stating the word of the Lord on the subject; and when this came it was readily comprehended by the Saints. All the *Herald's* talk about "revising the economy and policy of the Church," "putting the probity of the living oracle into grave discredit," and "jeopardizing the faith and confidence of the people," is

vicious and reprehensible, because it urges an accusation wholly untrue and therefore without justification.

### FAMILY AND TEMPLE RECORDS.

The spirit of record keeping has developed to a considerable extent of late among the members of the Church. A probable reason for this is the fact that the subject has recently been agitated in the community. As a result there has been a demand for a simplified form of family record. This establishment is now in a position to adequately supply this want, in the shape of a new and easily understood style of book, by means of which each family—together with all its branches and offshoots—may keep a commendous record of all the leading incidents in the life of each of its members. The first part of the book provides for the listing of the initial family and each branch of it. It also serves as an index to the individual part of the record, indicating the page on which it can be found. The second division, as indicated, is intended to comprise a relation of incidents connected with individuals. The closing part is ruled in ordinary form and is intended for use in jotting down statements of a general character relating to the family, or for any other appropriate purpose.

The records now on sale are such as are sufficiently large for any family of ordinary dimensions. Others can, however, on short notice, be bound according to order to meet any demand of the purchaser.

When it is so desired the new family record can be bound in combination with a Temple record used for keeping an account of vicarious work done in behalf of the dead, but it is probable that, as a rule, it will be kept separate.

It is appropriate to remind the Saints that the latest Temple record is exceedingly valuable on account of its completeness and simplicity. It has no perplexing sub-divisions. All the work that can be done for any individual can be recorded opposite the name on one direct line.

### THE OLD ROMAN.

The announcement of the death of ex-Senator Allen G. Thurman seems to have come entirely unexpected to his many friends, for although the "old Roman" had reached a ripe old age, and although some time ago he met with an accident, serious at his stage of life, yet the hope was entertained that he might live for several years yet, respected and honored by his fellow citizens.

Thurman was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, Nov. 13, 1813, but came to Ohio with his parents when six years old. In 1844 he was elected to Congress and served one term. In 1866 he was a candidate for governor of Ohio, but was defeated. In 1869 he was elected to the United States Senate and was re-elected in 1874. His name is connected with a legislative measure for the purpose of compelling the Pacific roads to fulfil their obligations to the government. He has several times