

THE SAINTS' HERALD

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—John 8: 31, 32.



"There shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none."—Book of Mormon, Jacob 2: 6.

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LAMONI ITEMS.

Reverend A. E. Carhart of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was the morning speaker at the Brick Church, and his sermon was well recieved, it being along general lines, with the foundation on Jesus Christ as the dominant thought. The reverend is from Mitchell, South Dakota.

Elder Elmer E. Long was the speaker at the night service.

Our item of last week in regard to the small-pox was wrong. We should have stated that there were but two patients, as there were about five homes in quarantine.

The regular monthly sacrament-service was held in the afternoon. President John Smith requested the Saints of the branch to pray earnestly and regularly for the benefit of the coming General Conference and Conventions.

Be as careful of the books you read as the company you keep; for your habits and character will be as much influenced by the former as by the latter.—Parson Hood.

Editorial

CONCERNING DISCUSSIONS IN THE "HERALD."

We want you to read all of this editorial.

In this number will be found Bro. Weld's third article regarding section 106. This article has been in hand several weeks, but other matters have prevented its publication. The discussion of the subject having been opened up we have thought it best to give those who criticise the section in question ample opportunity to state their case. The main objections to be urged are now before the people. Probably two or more articles will be published on this subject between now and the General Conference; but we can not give space to all the articles that we have received and are likely to receive, and we ask our contributors to forbear. The discussion of this subject has been running for about five months.

A few thoughts now regarding discussion in general. There seem to be two extreme views held in the church regarding the appearance of discussions in the HERALD; and between the two the editors are in a position to acquire large quantities of valuable experience. One would have our readers given nothing but predigested foods, carefully selected by the editors,—sincere malted milk of the word, shredded whole wheat biscuits of life,—and fear that if the readers get any nuts to crack they will break all their teeth. The other would give them mince pie, pickles, sauerkraut, and nails.

In our opinion the happy medium will be found in a mixed diet somewhere between these extremes; we do not care for predigested foods and we do not like pickles. The perfect editor could always keep the happy medium (providing he had the right kind of material to use) and please everybody(?), but the perfect editor has not yet been born.

Those who hastily condemn certain articles that displease them should remember that there are others; that which displeases one may be heartily enjoyed by another. For one man to ask that the HERALD give space only to the ideas that accord with his ideas would not be right. And it is a fact that the very same day that brings us a complaint that the HERALD pages are opened too widely, brings us another charging that we are overworking the waste-basket.

Now we do not fear men's criticism nor seek their praise, but rather to do our own work in our own

way, as God shall give us light, in harmony with the best interests of his cause. Nevertheless, though we believe that the editors are in the best position to know what manuscripts are available and which ones are worthy, we are open to suggestion and any who wish to do so may write the undersigned, or any other member of the editorial staff a personal letter, stating his or her opinion regarding the way in which the church paper should be edited. If you have criticisms send them to us. Do not go behind our backs. Tell us what you would do if you were editor.

So far as we are concerned our editorial utterances in the past regarding the use of the blue pencil were directed almost solely toward that class who abuse the rights of free speech and indulge in personalities. Only that class had cause to take those utterances to heart.

On the other hand, if any have imagined that we stood for the suppression of all dissenting opinions, they are mistaken, that is all. We plead for an exchange of ideas on a higher plane. The present discussion has been rather free from personalities up to date; but it is a fact that the longer any such discussion lasts the harder it is to keep within bounds.

Some questions are timely and may be discussed with profit, providing the discussion is dispassionate. Other questions are not timely and can not be discussed profitably. Some have been agitated at length and may well rest. In the present case section 106 is important and will play an important part in the redemption of Zion. It has been discussed in certain quarters for a long time and we felt that the Saints in general might as well know what there was in the opposition. If the section will not stand investigation it ought to be investigated. If it will stand, it will emerge from the discussion stronger than before, and the fog will clear away. Publicity usually strengthens truth.

Some have expressed a fear that the discussion would injure financial interests. In the Lamoni Stake, where perhaps the interest is keenest, the tithing receipts since it has been in progress are the best in years. The stake bishopric is responsible for that statement. The bishop of the Gallands Grove District has circulated a tract on tithing within the past two months and reports very gratifying returns. The bishop of the Independence Stake says that the discussion has done no serious injury in their field. The bishop of the Southern California District says, "I am not displeased in having the issue raised . . . if this agitation will settle the authenticity of this section we will have gained an important step toward unity." The bishop's agent in the Des Moines District says, "The discussion has done us more good than harm. A few

who are looking for an excuse may stop paying tithing; but on the whole the discussion of financial questions that has been carried on will finally do us a world of good." The bishop of the Nauvoo District says, "I have not been able to trace any bad effects due to the discussion of these matters in the HERALD. I have noticed an agitation in the minds of some which I think will result in good. Discussion in the right spirit will educate, and education is what we need." The Presiding Bishop stated to us, when last we saw him, that he was not fearful of the effects of the discussion.

Speaking now in a broader way, and not of section 106 alone, it is said that an expression of so many views on the financial law may tend to confuse the Saints. We admit the full force of that statement. No one is more alive to that fact than we. And if there were space, and all the articles written on the financial law were admitted, the complaint would have even more justification. But let us state this one fact: These varied articles are not alone the cause of confusion, *they are also the result of confusion*. They reflect conditions that exist. There must come a clarity of thought on the financial law.

The Saints at large do not understand the financial law as they should. We believe that a persistent, harmonious effort on the part of bishops, counselors to bishops, and bishop's agents during the coming year to present the financial law through the HERALD and elsewhere will lead to a better understanding, and will much more than offset any evil effects that have resulted from any confusion of thought previously expressed by others in the HERALD. The spirit of inquiry aroused furnishes as fine an opportunity as could be asked for such a presentation; far better than if no one were asking questions, or writing articles, or thinking.

This part of the law, like many others, requires to be taught and retaught, told and retold. From beginning to end it has to be gone over and over, memorized, demonstrated on the board, worked out in practice.

The HERALD columns are open to those whose duty it is to teach the financial law and they will be given preference, all other considerations being equal. As an example of what may be accomplished we refer the reader to the excellent article by the Independence Stake Bishopric (see HERALD, February 24). Read it again.

Those who have not had the burden of explaining the law placed upon them (neither by the church nor by the Lord) may well hesitate a long time before undertaking the task. Yet in the absence of direct legislation to that effect the editors have no right or inclination to exclude all who are not bishops from expressing opinions or asking questions, or to exclude all opinions that do not har-

monize with what the editors think to be the position of the church. Is the church ready to say that they shall do so?

To those who are said to be about to withhold their means because of conflicting opinions on the law that have been published, if such exist, permit us to address a little advice that none will be likely to challenge: Don't do it! Few writers in these columns have ever attacked the institution of tithing itself. The difference is on the meaning of the word tithe, its application, and its relation to consecration of surplus, or on the law of surplus itself. The financial law is a divine law. It is your duty to understand and obey the law. If you withhold your means because you discover that two or more other brethren differ in opinion, you are doing what some do who refuse to be baptized because they discover that others differ concerning the *method* of baptism. They hesitate, give up the problem, hide behind a futile and foolish excuse, and are lost.

If you do not understand the financial law go to the bishop or bishop's agent in your stake or district, or write to him, and state to him your financial condition and seek his advice. He will advise and counsel you. That is his business. He is the one to whom you should go. If you can not reach him get in touch with the presiding Bishopric. It is to be supposed, of course, that at the same time you will study the scriptures and think and pray over the subject, and pledge yourself not only to learn your duty but to do it.

One brother expresses a fear that discussions in the HERALD will have a bad effect on outsiders. The HERALD is not edited primarily for outsiders. We do not think for a moment that discussion, even when free from passion, will have as good an effect as would be produced by evidences of absolute unity, with truth back of it. But what shall we do when unity does not obtain on certain questions? If we carefully conceal that fact until those outsiders are baptized, what will their feelings be later on, when they discover the true situation? Shall we stop sending our children to school for fear the neighbors will discover that they have not graduated?

No one deplures contention and controversy more than the editors. And no one uses his influence more persistently to hold such in check. But not all discussion is contention. And when opinions differ there is something worse than discussion. It is said that when a member of the dominant church in Utah expresses a protest against the position of the church or its leaders he is instantly nailed,—enter! protest! exit! The "living oracles" express their willingness to be "sustained" and thousands of hands are raised. One man in the rear of the Tabernacle rises to his feet. He thinks he is about to ask a few questions but he finds instead that the choir

is singing, "Hallelujah! 'tis done!" and he becomes vaguely aware that he is walking toward the rear door in company with an usher. A member finds the eye of authority resting upon him unexpectedly; he starts perceptibly and wonders if he has been thinking heresy.

Not many of our people have ever left the Reorganization and joined the dominant church in Utah. Why? Evidently they do not favor such methods. But it is quite possible for us to go to the other extreme. We may become intolerant of all authority. We may get into the condition where we will show no proper respect for the law, for the men who are to interpret the law, or for the God who placed those men in their office and gave them their calling.

Protest on occasion is one of the noblest functions of man; protest as a profession is the poorest business in the world.

We should not give undue concern to the fact that there is not absolute unity on all questions, providing we can maintain unity on the fundamentals. It is useless to expect that in a body of people constantly being recruited from every class of society and from all peoples in the world absolute oneness will be found immediately on all matters that may arise.

In this connection let us remember that admirable as logic and reason undoubtedly are, they are not the only means to be used in the discovery of truth and the work of establishing unity. The spirit is given to guide unto all truth. We need more of the Spirit of God. We need its presence everywhere. If that Spirit is guiding us we will all approach truth and consequently will draw nearer together.

In the expression of our convictions let us learn to be careful, deliberate, and considerate of others. It is not always necessary that we should have the last word or resent personal attacks. We can afford to forget such things. It would be interesting to keep a record of those men who have expressed an opinion, together with the facts on which it was based, and have been content to let the matter rest there, refusing to reply in kind to personal attacks, conscious that the position was safe and would stand. Such a record would constitute a roll of honor.

ELBERT A. SMITH.

Either carefulness or carelessness can soon be made a habit. What habit is the better? the habit of making mistakes or the habit of getting things right? The answer is not hard to guess. Neither is the right habit so hard to form. Every repetition of the mental act of choosing the right thing to do and the right way to do it helps to fix the habit and to avoid mistakes. Each triumph leads joyfully and easily on to the next one, just as each mistake of the careless person opens the gate for the next to slip in.—East and West.