

MORMON ELDERS.

Monday there came to our city two Mormon Elders. The object of their visit here was to explain their faith and creed. Our editor had quite an extended conversation with them, asking pointed questions which were graciously received and answered. In fact they rejoined "we want you to ask us questions." Our church has been misunderstood; we will answer all questions put to us which are intended to gather information.

As to the polygamy, they replied that the practice had been abandoned. That while the church believes the Bible justified it, still it obeyed the laws of the land, and now an attempt at it meant excommunication.

They stated that the Mormons believed in God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. That their creed upheld virtue, morality and education. That it was a great mistake that the great membership was an ignorant people. That statistics showed that Utah stood fourth in the percentals of education of population.

They likewise denied emphatically that the Mormons were responsible for the Mountain Meadow massacre. They admitted that the Mormons knew it was contemplated, and word having

been passed that Brigham Young had instigated it a runner was sent to him three hundred and fifty miles to learn from his own lips if it was so. The messenger was instructed by that great dignitary to ride at once back and spare no horse flesh. Command the Mormons, in the name of Brigham Young, to conduct this emigrant train in safety beyond the borders of Utah. But the messenger arrived too late, the terrible butchery had already taken place.

Our editor enjoyed his talk with Elders [William P.] Pratt and [William A.] Kerr. He found them intelligent, unassuming gentlemen. They claim to be traveling as Christ's disciples, without purse or script. They want to preach to our people so as to explain their doctrine. This is the country of free speech. Our Federal Constitution guarantees that. And as long as one does not violate the laws of our moral sentiment, he has a right to be heard, and The Progress believes in giving Elders Pratt and Kerr a hearing. We think it will be done. Shreveport has a tolerant community and we believe she will show it again in this instance. If the story of these elders be true; if their published articles of faith and creed and belief are sincere, Mormonism

has been the worst maligned institution under the sun. With the story of Bill Hickman and his murderous rifle, acting under instructions from Brigham Young; the Mountain Meadow massacre and the deeds of the Danites running through the feverish brains of our people generally, nearly all of us have believed that the Mormon wanted to kill all who opposed him, and that licen[tious] inclinations and greed were the predominant desires of his life. But if these be true, Elders Pratt and Kerr are endowed with the latter clause of the Savior's directed mental and psychological equipments—they are “wise as serpents.” Far too smart for our editor to grapple with.

But until he discovers that they are not sincere, he shall remember the courtesy paid the Louisiana Press Association by the Mormons when the Western Federation visited Utah two years ago.