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DESERET EVENING NEWS

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The Christmas News Editorial Page.

WHAT MEANS THE SIGNAL?

Adown Time's river, sweeping wide,
 The swift, soul-freighted barge of years
 Swings round the Isle of Christmastide
 With sounds of glad, far-ringing cheers.

For some the voyage has been wild;
 False beacons beckoned, whirlpools drew,
 And sunken rocks their death-traps piled.
 Beneath the water's placid view.

But, to all souls that ride the decks—
 Hopeless or hoping, proud or low,
 Green-laureled victors, chain-locked wrecks—
 The shores of this fair Island show

A fadeless beacon pointing true
 To havens which its signals mark,
 Though one shall sail in sunset blue,
 Or cut sharp pathways through the dark

Its bearings blazon Time's great chart,
 All mariners must pass its shore;
 What do its signals tell thy heart
 As they flash by the barge once more?

—JOSEPHINE SPENCER.

THE SECOND ADVENT.

The first advent of our Lord in the meridian of time is the great event of history. The overshadowing event of prophecy is His second advent, of which the Scriptures speak with a certainty and clearness that leave no room for doubt. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1: 11.) This is a prophetic declaration with no uncertain sound.

There is diversity of opinion as to the interpretation of Scripture passages relating to the second advent, the millennium and kindred subjects, and it is necessary to be watchful against premature conclusions and uncharitable criticisms. But, as it is a fact that the Lord will come and establish His kingdom upon this earth, it behooves the Bible student humbly to watch for the signs of His coming and to be prepared for the midnight cry.

The present time is undoubtedly the hour of God's preparation for the great Millennium. When we behold the wonderful inventions and discoveries of our age, we are forced to the conclusion that we are drawing nearer and nearer the establishment of the promised kingdom of the Lord. This is the time of the end, in which, as the Prophet Daniel expresses it, many shall run to and fro and knowledge be increased. In his comments on this text, Sir Isaac Newton wrote: "I should not be surprised if the time would come that men would travel at the rate of fifty miles an hour." Voltaire ridiculed Sir Isaac Newton and called him a poor old dotard, because he declared that he found in one of the prophecies of Daniel a prediction of speedy travel as one of the characteristics of the time of the end. But we believe Newton has been more than vindicated by the events, as we notice them around us every day.

As for the increase of knowledge, another characteristic of the period of the end, when was there a time in the history of man in which this increase was so marked as the present? Children from ten to fourteen years of age are now generally instructed upon subjects of which in former generations only few did ever dream. A century ago, barely to read and to write were deemed great achievements. Today a child that does not know something of algebra, languages, and the numerous other subjects that go to make up the studies in the common schools, is considered ignorant.

Knowledge is increasing. Man is approaching the very boundaries of the spiritual world that is manifest in the material creation. Dr. Loeb believes he has found some of the secrets of life. He has announced that he has succeeded in producing organisms showing all the essentials of animal life. Prof. Le Duc, a Frenchman, has just announced that plant life can be produced by chemical action. His "plants" have nothing of the vegetable in their make-up, but they behave after their production as do the real vegetables they resemble under natural conditions. Into the make-up of these products nothing living enters. Prof. Le Duc makes seeds in pill form, one part of sulphate of copper and two parts of glucose. These are deposited in bullion made of gelatine, to which is added 3 per cent of ferro cyanide of potassium and a little sea salt. The seeds give birth to plants resembling seaweeds and other marine plants. The plants thus produced are influenced similarly by heat and cold, as are the vegetables they resemble. The achievements of scientists are really marvelous. No prophecy has ever been more clearly fulfilled than this concerning the increase of travel and the increase of knowledge.

We are also told that one of the characteristics of the time of the end is the multiplication of "trouble." If we look about us, we think it is not hard to discern the elements from which a multitude of troubles will finally spring. We seem to be nearing the time in which human passion, human frenzy, will know no bounds, and before which law and order are threatened by complete anarchy. In Norse mythology we read of a time when:

"Brothers slay brothers;
 Sisters' children
 Shed each other's blood,
 Hard is the world;
 Sensual sin grows huge.
 There are sword-ages, ax-ages;
 Shields are cleft in twain;
 Storm-ages, murder-ages;
 Till the world falls dead,
 And men no longer spare
 Or pity one another."

If we closely study the signs of the times, we are also justified in the hope that the day is drawing near, when the blessings of the Lord shall fill the whole earth, during the millennial reign of the King of kings and Lord of lords. This expectation should invite to a deeper study of the subject and inspire the Scriptural prayer:

"Even so, come Lord Jesus." For then:
 "All evil
 Dies there an endless death, while goodness riseth
 From that great world-fire, purified at last,
 To a life far higher, better, nobler than the past."

CHRISTMAS GREETING.

Again the "Christmas News," in the spirit of the season, cordially greets its friends and patrons throughout the world. We find no more appropriate words in which to express our sentiments than the beautiful strains in which the heavenly hosts heralded the first advent of our Lord and Redeemer: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!"

The "Christmas News" has, under its present efficient management, become an important feature of Western periodical literature. It has become a power for good. It is fulfilling a great mission. The "News" was established, when Utah still was in its infancy, with the prophetic foresight that inspired the early Pioneers in all their enterprises, with a view to the glorious future of this intermountain region. It was founded to be an exponent of truth, and a champion of liberty and of every laudable undertaking for the development of these valleys. It has grown from year to year, keeping pace with the advancement which it has been its privilege to promote as well as to witness. Today the friends of the "News" regard it as one of the great journalistic institutions of the West. But its glory is that it has ever been loyal to the cause of truth, liberty and progress.

Great events have by the fates been inscribed, during the year, in the annals of history. References to these will be found in other parts of this imprint, and especially in the Greeting of the First Presidency of the Church to the readers of the "News" in both hemispheres. There are records of crime and disasters, of intrigue, and plottings against governments, and the activity of all the evil forces the triumph of which would mean chaos and death; but also of the still mightier forces that are at work for the gradual reconstruction of the "new heaven and the new earth" in which righteousness is to dwell. Congresses such as the pan-American, the trans-Mississippi, and various peace gatherings are among the signs that augur the coming of a brighter day. So is the construction of lines of communication, such as the Panama canal in the interest of which President Roosevelt undertook his unprecedented journey. Looking at the past, we find only cause for gratitude and encouragement. The two opposing powers have been in mortal combat, as ever, but the victory belongs to light and truth, to God and those who are on the Lord's side. The final outcome is not doubtful.

Let us, on this glorious anniversary and for ever, lay aside all animosity and all strife, and open our hearts and homes wide for peace, joy and that brotherly love which is broad enough to embrace all the children of the eternal Father, even those who have erred and gone astray. Let us remember the poor and needy, and the wounded whom we may find on the road to Jericho waiting for the good Samaritan. Let the season be one of giving and receiving, of joy and gladness, of helpfulness, and loving sacrifice. Someone has said that in heaven everyone wants to give everyone else all he has; in Inferno, everyone wants to take away from everyone what he has. Christmas is the season in which heaven draws near unto earth. Let us open our hearts to its influence, and make it remain with us for ever.

PROGRESS IN EDUCATION.

Christmas is essentially the children's holiday and a few lines on education would therefore seem appropriate at this time.

New courses of study recommended for the schools by leaders in educational work and more or less adopted by superintendents and principals, show a strong tendency towards industrial activity in schools and the correlation of school work with the great occupations and industries of the country. That this subject is of immense importance may be gathered from the attention paid to it by President Roosevelt in his message to Congress.

The former basis of elementary education still continues to be practised leading to proficiency in the so-called three R's, reading, writing and arithmetic; but the basis of training has been shifted. Formerly the training in these branches was mainly upon words selected from stories or literature liked by adults, with the idea that the children should be drilled into the use and meaning of these words and facts by an exercise of the memory. This principle of education is long since obsolete in theory, even if occasional vestiges of it are found to survive in practice.

The new education deals primarily with things, with facts, with laws; it uses words merely as the vehicle for expressing what has been learned by experiment and observation. This way of looking upon education as so much work to be done upon things has resulted in the establishment of the laboratory method of the colleges and the activity method—the play work development exercises—of the kindergarten.

But between the kindergarten and the college stand the elementary or common schools and the secondary or high schools.

A candid inquiry among our leading educators met by equally candid answers from them, has elicited the almost uniform declaration that neither the common nor the high schools have been fully converted in practice, at least, to the real laboratory principle; and that in some respects, the mere laboratory method is still struggling to find a foothold in most of the common and in some of the high schools.

It is not asserted that either the common or the high schools of this country do not in form recognize and practise to some extent the laboratory method; but that they do not, as a rule, put into operation what that method really signifies.

All the schools study things, to a greater or less degree, according to the genius and training of the teachers; but the trouble is that some study things as mere things and not as related to the vital, permanent, and real interests of the learner.

The high school or district school course in physiology, for example, usually deals with certain elements of the science of anatomy, the mysteries of the internal ear, the composition of bone or muscle, etc., as if the student were taking the first steps in a medical course and would next study in a college of medicine. But that is what less than one in each hundred is preparing to do, and even for that one it is doubtful whether or not such instruction would be of real value to him in his subsequent career. The relation of physiology to daily life, the hygiene of deep breathing, of slow eating, of muscular exercise, of regular and sufficient sleep, of preserving the eyesight, etc.—these are the kind of things which every student requires; and it is not so much a knowledge of them as a drill in their practice that the schools should give. High school botany, we apprehend, has little significance when it largely consists, as is generally the case, of peering through a microscope to learn the mysteries, beautiful as they are, of cell-formation and the theories of biology. The great science and art of agriculture is what botany should—not lead to, as the high school teachers explain, but what it should actually be in the school itself. The idea that any subject should not be, but should only prepare for, some other subject valuable in itself, seems to originate from the theory that the common school prepares the student not to do independently anything for himself, but prepares him for another school, the high school; that the high school, in like manner, prepares not for life, but for college; and that the college prepares for the university.

This idea will some time be recognized as a fundamental error in school work.

We might show that district and high school zoology, to be immediately practical and useful in the field of agriculture, should be something far other than it actually is; that high school physics at present is merely a preparation for engineering courses, if it is even that; and that chemistry, with all its laboratory method and the beauty and wonder of its laws, is still unrelated to the real life and interests of the people.

But indications are not lacking all along the line that the laboratory method of dealing with things will presently be changed into the idea and practice of dealing with things as they concern the daily life or the permanent interests of mankind; that school courses will not only deal with realities but with such realities as are immediately useful to the bodily, the mental, the moral, or the financial affairs of life; that the common and high schools, no less than the kindergartens and colleges, are not a preparation for life, much less a preparation for some other school or college, but are life itself; and that perfect education is simply perfect living.

We trust that nothing herein will be construed as any sort of endorsement of the mistaken idea that only work with the hand or body is "practical education;" for only that training is practical which fits for life, and life today means work with the head far more than with the hand.

We feel, however, that our schools are tending in the right direction and that the steps already taken to that end deserve congratulation and encouragement.

TESTIMONY OF EARTHQUAKES

Shortly after the establishment of the Church, the messengers of the Gospel were told: "For after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes that shall cause groanings in the midst of her, and men shall fall upon the ground and shall not be able to stand. * * * And all things shall be in commotion, and surely men's hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people." (Doc. and Cov., Section 88: 89-91.)

Some of the events of this year forcibly remind us of this prophetic forecast. It has been in a marked degree a year of commotion. The works of men have gone down to ruin in calamities such as the records of few years show. The long list opens with the outbreak of Vesuvius. From the impulse of hidden forces the very shape of the historic mountain was changed, and many homes were totally destroyed. In the heart of the South Sea, through volcanic outbursts valleys were filled up, plantations destroyed and the population driven away to seek refuge in new localities. The destruction of San Francisco belongs to the awful record of this year. The earth for miles slipped several inches, and the movement was enough to humble into the dust the proud city of the Golden Gate. Then came the doom of Valparaiso, a city which was a wealthy center of the world's commerce long before the North American ports had become world-renowned. These calamities have been monumental. Each would be sufficient to mark an epoch in the annals of disaster. But to these, numerous others must be added to complete the record. Floods and storms, famine and pestilence have visited many places. It is a year in which, as the New York Sun some time ago expressed it, "the acts of God have been made manifest."

It is curious to reflect upon the fact that we are traveling through space on this little globe of ours at a rate of speed that even imagination fails to grasp, and that the slightest derangement of existing conditions would mean instant destruction. The slightest lack of balance in our motion around the sun, the slightest shifting of the poles, would mean that the oceans would overflow the continents and wipe out every living being. A slight change of the average temperature would mean death to the entire human family. A collision with any of the other bodies that also whirl through space, and the entire globe would be reduced to fragments.

The destructions caused by volcanic eruptions, by earthquakes, hurricanes, tidal waves, floods and other agencies are but reminders of our dependence upon the almighty Power that governs the world, to whose word it owes its existence and maintenance. They are "testimonies."

THREE GREAT STATES.

Big with opportunities of future greatness, if indeed, they are not already entitled to that distinction, are the rapidly expanding states of Utah, Idaho and Nevada. In that period of time that is measured by the calendar year 1906, theirs has been an almost phenomenal growth. Surely they exemplify and emphasize the verity of the words of one who long ago looked into the times ahead and declared that westward the course of empire should make its way.

Either one of this trilogy of young commonwealths is almost an empire in extent of area. Combined they are that beyond shadow of question. Consider in that regard their united wealth of resource, industry and attractiveness, and all men will concede the title to be worthily worn. Today enterprise, capital, labor—all three, are engaged in their material development with such zeal that thinking men say their population will be doubled during the next decade. Perhaps this view may be looked upon as a little extravagant as applied to Utah, the older sister of the triad, whose people outnumber those of the other two. But as to Idaho and Nevada the prediction may come near having fulfillment owing to the larger pristine conditions that prevail in them.

At home it is a matter of widest knowledge and congratulation that 1906 will go down in history as having distributed its gifts and blessings more generously by far, than any of its predecessors. Everywhere the hum of prosperity is heard. There has been and is now plenty of work for all who desire employment, and that, too, at wages that have, in the main, been higher than ever before. Fields, farms and orchards have established new records and the mines and mills have yielded profits heretofore unreached. The livestock interests have thriven to unexpected proportions and new industries have sprung up in many places with the certainty that numberless more are to follow in their wake. In our own fair city the star of hope is not only luminously resplendent as relates to the future, but its rays are making brilliant the present. A Greater Salt Lake is assured. Its growth cannot be checked, its good name ruined or its place among the larger western cities successfully assailed. What nature did not do for it, its loyal inhabitants will. The time is not far distant when Salt Lake will assert its position so positively that the defamers and croakers must retire for very shame at their onslaught.

In the "Gem State" to the north of us are a people who are very proud of the section of the west they call their home. And they have a right to be; for its progress for several years past has, as they say in the army, been made at "double quick" step. This year the march has increased almost to a run, and the country is beginning to wonder when it will ease down to a normal gait. On every hand its manifold resources are being turned to rich account. It is a significant fact that more new homes have been built in Idaho during the past three years than in any other western commonwealth. Her fertile soil is producing crops of astonishing yield, and more of it is being constantly cultivated. Vast stretches of land hitherto unbroken by man is being made productive through the application of water by private and government reservoir and canal building enterprises and soon prolific farms and teeming gardens will supersede the waste places.

Nevada is no longer slightly referred to as the "Rotten Borough." The mighty fortunes that have been made in it of late cause men to speak of it with respect and to flock to it by thousands. In the last year new towns have been placed on its surface almost in a night, and in a few weeks or months they have become populous and fabulously rich. It is true that lurid tales have been told of Nevada's regeneration; that the heads of men "have been turned" in some cases when its marvelous mineral wealth has been recounted; and it is doubtless also true that there has been some "wildcatting" indulged in. But behind it all are actual gold and copper finds that have startled the world—finds which will do much to transform the Sage Brush State from its present physical condition to one of largely increased population and industry, and which, incidentally are pouring much of their treasure in the direction of Salt Lake, the natural and logical center of the intermountain country, and particularly of Utah, Nevada and Idaho.

The six-days' race always seems to be to the strong.

The government of Hawaii is contemplating importing Spaniards.

California realizes that the schoolmaster is abroad in the land.

While waiting for the skyscrapers why not have some crossing scrapers?

The Japanese question—What's the matter with those American jingoes?

While Christmas comes but once a year, still it is just as well to be merry at all times.

The silly season over "war with Japan" is being unduly prolonged this year.

The national debt is now something less than a thousand million dollars. It should be made nil.

The "News" never boasts, but it takes the liberty of calling attention to its Christmas edition.

The Kaiser has dissolved the reichstag. If he can't have his way he will have an election.

The House, that used to be so radical, is getting very conservative. It is decidedly opposed to spelling reform.

According to Ambassador Nobuko, Brazil would rather have a million German immigrants than the Monroe doctrine.

One thing is very plain: that President Roosevelt did not interfere in the Idaho campaign in Dubois' behalf. Hence this soreness.

Carnegie says that on the death of their poor great fortunes should go to the state. Will his example follow his precept?