

THE DESERET WEEKLY,

PUBLISHED BY
THE DESERET NEWS COMPANY.
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
Per Year, of Fifty-two Numbers, \$2.50
Per Volume, of Twenty-six Numbers, 1.50
IN ADVANCE.

CHARLES W. PENROSE, EDITOR

Saturday, July 11, 1891.

JUDICIAL PERVERSIONS.

AN IDAHO Judge some time ago rendered a decision, some portions of which are being revived and published to prejudice the public mind. We append here a paragraph which is being reproduced, with how much accuracy we are not prepared to state, for the paper in which it appears has been known to frequently misstate the words of public men, oral and written, to effect its own vile ends. The Judge is quoted as follows:

"We find the so called Mormon church to be a pure theocracy. Its laws and dealings purport to be directly from the Almighty, and to be promulgated only through the instrumentality of its priesthood. These and none else, according to its teachings, are in communion with God, and admitted, according to their grade, to divine intercourse and fellowship. Its commands are usually mentioned as its 'counsels,' but failure to comply with such counsel is treated by it as a crime. Implicit obedience to its priesthood, by its members is a first and last requirement. Liberty of individual action and judgment even in temporal things, does not exist. It claims control of all secular and temporal things, as well as spiritual things. These facts are not only proven by the evidence in this case, but they are facts also generally known to the public. We may not if we should ignore this common knowledge and the uniform teachings in sermons and otherwise of this 'so-called church,' in constructing the language of its book of doctrines. I repeat that 'counsel' of the priesthood is equivalent to a command, hence, 'counsel' of the priests to their subordinates to go through any form, to do any act, would be, and is understood as a command to be obeyed. Such 'counsel' so given has in the belief of that, as I think, misguided people, the sanction of a direct command from the Deity. The word of a priest to an inferior is to him as 'Thus saith the Lord.'"

If these statements were made officially they are simply official falsehoods. The fact that they were uttered from the judicial bench will not make them true, any more than if they were concocted in a lawyer's office for political purposes. But their adoption by a judicial officer will give them weight among the uninformed, and for that reason we notice them in these columns.

There is scarcely a word of truth in these "findings." They are simply the claims of counsel opposed to the "Mormons." They were made for po-

litical effect. The object was to nullify the "Mormon" vote and aid in the work of "Mormon" disfranchisement, which was prosecuted with such vigor before the admission of Idaho as a State.

The ideas advanced therein as "Mormon" doctrine and teaching are not only unwarranted by the books accepted by the "Mormon" Church as standards, but are contrary to the revelations contained therein.

According to the doctrines and teachings of the "Mormon" Church, all mankind may be "in communion with God." Every member of the Church is exhorted to live so as to be in this condition. And people not in the Church are urged by its ministers to seek for personal revelation from heaven, that they may know whether this Church is of divine origin. The very object of the priesthood is shown to be, that the people may be brought into communion with God for themselves; and there is no "grade" in this "divine intercourse."

The "counsels" of the "Mormon" Church leaders are simply what the word implies—words of advice. They are not "commands;" they are not so given, they are not so received, they are not so understood. The "implicit obedience" spoken of above is not a "requirement." No such thing can be found in the "Mormon" standards. No case can be cited where failure to comply with counsel has been "treated as a crime."

Liberty is one of the fundamentals of "Mormon" doctrine. Human agency, the volition of the creature, individual responsibility for personal acts, the intellectual and spiritual development of every person, male and female, the inability of any priest or other authority to answer for the sins of any other human being, the independence of every soul, are essential principles in the "Mormon" system, and it is declared therein to be contrary to the Divine will that men should be in any kind of bondage one to another.

The word of a Priest or of any officer of the Church to "an inferior" is not to him as "thus saith the Lord." No such notion prevails among the "Mormons." No such claim is made by any Priest in the Church. No man has the right to give revelation to the Church as a body but the one man who stands at its head, and his mere "word" does not have any such import as that stated by the Judge. "Thus saith the Lord" has come but rarely to the Church in later years, and it is part of the revealed polity of the Church that all things in it must be done by "common consent." If that is "pure the-

ocracy" the Church is theocratic, not without.

If the Judge who is said to have made the above-mentioned "findings" believed what he uttered, he was very much misguided by the pleadings of artful attorneys. If anybody believes what the Judge has stated, he does not understand Mormonism either in its letter or its spirit.

Judges err like other mortals. They have their prejudices and sometimes their prices. Some of the most flagrant perversions of truth, justice, and demonstrated facts have emanated from the judicial bench. We admit that such instances are rare compared with the general judicial procedure, but the history of the "Mormon" people furnishes many of them, and illustrates further the force of bigotry and the warping power of religious and political bias.

"Mormonism" makes every man and woman free before God. It requires them to exercise their own agency, to judge and decide all things for themselves, to seek for individual communion with heaven, to make personal preparation for the society of the Father and the Son by becoming like them in character and spirit. The power of the Priesthood is not to coerce, nor to proceed by any manner of compulsion, but to lead, guide, persuade, invite and exhort.

The statements made in the extract we have copied are complete perversions of "Mormon" doctrine, and if a thousand judges adopted them and all the papers in the country published them, they would not be any the less anti-"Mormon" and fabricated to misrepresent and deceive.

IT WILL NOT WORK.

THE reproduction of purported remarks of "Mormon" and non-"Mormon" public speakers years ago, by a local sheet for the purpose of blocking the wheels of present progress, will and ought to fail of its object. In the first place it is known that the original reports made by that paper were not only unreliable, but often the very reverse of what the speakers uttered. In the next place it is not what men said under circumstances that have passed away, but their sentiments under existing conditions that will count. The past has gone never to return. The living present is what live men want to deal with. And the resurrection of these old alleged remarks simply revives the public grievance, that the utterances of public speakers were and are now so garbled and caricatured by the sheet that is digging up those dead issues, that no