DESERET EVENING NEWS.

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All communications should be addressed to DESERET NEWS PUBLISHING CO.

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THE ARID LAND QUESTION.

It is to be regretted that the approaching Irrigation Congress has not aroused and is not arousing as much interest in Utah as the importance of the subject and this Territory's prominence in it ought to require. Perhaps there are good reasons for this indifference—the NEWS has heard numerous expressions of disappointment, dissatisfaction and disgust at some recent operations on the part of the convention's promoters and managers from men who have heretofore been influential and active in the movement. But the occasion seems to us to be one where men should not be too technical or sensitive, and where there should be at least a partial sinking of personal feelings in a wholesome and resolute endeavor for the public good. As a matter both of justice and of propriety, Utah is entitled to the leading place and the principal part in the deliberations of any body that discusses the question of irrigation. In order that this prestige may be claimed and maintained, it is clearly evident that there must be earnestness and unanimity on the part of Utah men—no matter whether in the past they think they have been properly treated in all respects or not.

One of the biggest problems with which past congresses have sought to deal, and one which will no doubt be prominent in future meetings also, is as to the cession of the arid lands by the general government to the respective states and territories in which they may be found. Like every other question, this one has two sides. Probably in most of our neighboring states, the drift of public sentiment is in favor of the proposition. Yet its opponents are by no means few or unimportant. The feeling in Utah is also divided—more equally perhaps than in other places. In this city there appears to be a strong inclination in certain quarters to array Utah on the affirmative side of the question. In the outer counties the leading men, with commendable conservatism, are not ready to be pledged to that line of action, while some argue decidedly for the negative side. The NEWS thinks the matter is altogether too important to be disposed of off-hand and without due study of all its aspects. For ourselves, we see many reasons why the government itself is quite as able to look after and dispose of its now arid lands to bona fide settlers on the cheapest and easiest terms as any state can do. We see much force in the argument that in this matter, geographical divisions and the contour of the country, rather than formal state boundary lines, must be considered in works for reclamation and improvement. We incline favorably to the logic that while tens of millions out of the nation's treasury are expended for the improvement of rivers and harbors, a share might well be spared for the improvement and construction of national reservoirs, waterways, etc. And we are pretty sure that while the beneficent purpose of the national land laws can at times been evaded or defeated in the interest of speculators and capitalists, there is still more danger to land state results, with increased expense and probable corruption, in the case of state governments.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the NEWS is not altogether converted to the plan, and very many of our readers are in this same frame of mind. Doubtless somebody will be argue the question, keenly and plainly, for the general public's information? Our columns are open for communications from either side. We only ask that they be short, pithy and to the point.

THE PLAGUE IN HONG KONG.

The black plague which for the past four months has decimated the population of some places in China and all but destroyed the magnificent commerce of Hong Kong is said to have its permanent home in one of the poorest and filthiest districts of the entire city. The plague came from Mongkow or from Pakhoi to Canton, and from there it spread in various directions.

The two cities mentioned are, according to all reports, situated in one of the most unhealthy localities of China. The climate is hot all the year round and the atmosphere heavily charged with moisture. Decaying matter forms a large proportion of the soil. The water is bad, generally containing as many as 1,500 grains of solids to one gallon. The population is exceedingly poor, laborers working for from 4 to 5 cents a day. They live in small, unclean hovels unfit for human beings. European visitors often become sick within a day or two after their arrival in these disease-stricken cities and villages.

Here, it is said, the black plague is a yearly visitant and has been for time immemorial. But as heretofore intercourse with the people has been very limited, the epidemic has been mostly confined to its own house. After the annexation of Tonquin by the French, the district has been opened up to commerce, and with the facilitated communication it is feared the plague will be a regular visitor to Canton and from there proceed on its deadly march to other places.

Some important facts have been learned in regard to the terrible disease. One is that the germs do not appear to travel like those of cholera or yellow fever, but to be stationary and confined to the patient and his immediate surroundings. The malady invariably, after as has been ascertained, is brought by a sick person from place to place. Another discovery equally important is that the plague microbe, whose period of incubation is from eight to nine days, seems to thrive in dilute carbolic acid, while it died when exposed to a low temperature in which other microbes would live.

The efforts made to conquer the disease in Hong Kong were crowned with success. Volunteers formed brigades and visited every house in the city. The habitations were scoured from roof to cellar and every spot disinfected. Sick, dying and dead were removed and furniture and rubbish burned. Sewers and tanks were inspected and every avenue of ingress closely watched. The deadly foe had carried off probably 10,000 victims, but it was conquered at last by the energetic and systematic application of sanitary regulations. The city had suffered immensely, however, and it will take a long time for it to fully recover. On May 3 the population was estimated at 250,000 while two months later it had scarcely 100,000. Hundreds of stores had been closed and hundreds of residences were abandoned. All this was caused chiefly by the inefficiency of the government officials and their tardiness in dealing with the matter. With more prompt action at the outset a great commercial center would have been saved from ruin.

The experience with the Asiatic plague this time and its appearance shortly after the invasion of the French in Tonquin, suggests the necessity of some international measure for the conquest of disease germs. It is well enough to open up new countries to commercial purposes and for the spread of civilization, but if such new countries are breeding places of epidemics, it should be the duty of the advancing representatives of civilization to look to it that the regions are thoroughly cleaned and drained. The black plague has not recently spread terror outside of Asia, but cholera is yearly finding its way to Europe from places where sanitary regulations are almost unknown, although they are in constant communication with the outside world. It is more than probable that with intelligent effort on the part of those concerned, epidemics could be almost stamped out from the earth, and countries like China and Asiatic Turkey ought not to be allowed forever to remain sources of danger to the rest of mankind on account of their slowness to comprehend the necessity of cleaning their cities and villages.

WHICH IS THE CHRISTIAN?

There is no class among religionists which presents more strongly an "I am holier than thou" demeanor than do the government-paid clergy of the church of England. In that country it is a subject of frequent comment, and even of adverse criticism among outspoken journals which are supporters of the Anglican church, that the scientific of the clergy is of a character, as one paper puts it, that trains them "in walk along the street as if contact with the masses must be avoided lest defilement follow." An instance showing their attitude to persons outside of their particular denomination is related in the last issue of the Millennial Star, in a correspondence from one of the missionaries at Sandefjord, Dalmarkiria, as follows: "Brother Dixon had asked a church of England vicar for the privilege of burying little daughter, who had passed away July 14, by the side of his brother's child, and was called to what denomination he belonged. When he stated that he belonged to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, permission was refused on the ground that the Mormons were not Christians."

It was not long after this that two Mormon missionaries—Elders J. W. Chandler and John W. Ford—traveling that way, called upon that ecclesiastic, in their capacity of bearing the Gospel message and testifying to all who will listen to them of the Gospel restoration in this age. They entered into conversation with the reverend gentleman, and made the inquiry as to what, in his opinion, constituted a Christian. To this he replied, "A believer in Christ," and he went on to say that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." This called out a suggestion from the Elders that professed believers in Christ could not consistently reject the divine Master's teachings regarding the necessity of being "born of the water and of the Spirit," and other principles. The vicar, however, did not believe in obeying the command to be born of the water, though he thought children should be baptized, as the jailer and his house had been all baptized. The Elders pointed out that the jailer "rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house," and as infants could not comprehend and believe, the jailer's family must have been sufficiently mature to perform that intellectual feat. Then the vicar said that anyway immersion was wrong, as the jailer's family were baptized in his dwelling, and it was not probable that there was sufficient accommodation for the ceremony by immersion. It was pointed out that the record declared they were baptized, and then the jailer "brought them into his house" and set meat before them; and to a suggestion that the baptism took place in the cell at the jail, as Paul and Silas were there, the Elders replied by the evidence of the record that the jailer "brought them out," and then asked what he should do to be saved, and later received baptism. Upon the showing made the vicar had to admit that his views were at variance with the Scriptures; and this was made more pronounced when the scriptural proof of the organization of the Church by the ordination of Apostles, etc., was brought forward.

Reverting to the ground of refusing permission to Brother Dixon's request regarding a grave for his child, the vicar was also pressed to the admission that he had acted unfairly. He said he had "not dealt good unkind of those words"—referring to his statement that the Mormons were not Christians—and offered an apology therefor. He, however, urged the Elders to "be converted and join the church" of which he was a representative, and to "not belong to such a sect" as the Latter-day Saints.

Here was a man, representative of his class, claiming to be a Christian and a teacher of Christianity—a man trained and educated in the religious profession, and paid for devoting his time and talents thereon. He refuses to grant a permit for burial of a child on the ground that its parents are non-Christians. Then when presented with the evidence that the doctrine those parents believe in is the same as taught by Christ and His Apostles, he avows himself as unbeliever therein; and urges believers to that doctrine to abandon their faith and come over to his position. If his conscience smote him so that he said not sleep well because of his first attitude, was he better able to quiet that conscience on the second occasion, when he invited to apostacy the Mormons who established their claim as Christians so firmly that he felt constrained to apologize for his first remark? Upon his own statement that a Christian is "a believer in Christ," who declares that "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also," of the two parties immediately concerned in the episode related, which is the Christian?

AN OPINION GIVEN.

Recently Mr. J. D. Thomas, of North Dakota, visited the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia, and after carefully examining the country located in Winchester, he writes to Mr. V. Richards, Land and Immigration Agent, Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Baltimore, Maryland, as follows: "I have been in nearly every state and territory of the United States, and am frank in my opinion that this valley surpasses all other sections in the Union. The lands are low in price, and produce profitable crops. I thank you for directing me here, and solicit those seeking pleasant and profitable homes to locate in this country."

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TEACHERS' EXAMINATION.

THE EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS for the district schools of Salt Lake County, will be held in the University building, corner First South and second West streets, Salt Lake City, August 24th and 25th, commencing each day at 9 a. m.

TERMINAL SCHEDULE.

The examination of candidates to attend the University of Utah as Terminal Students from Salt Lake City and County, will be held at the same time and place.

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All elementary will be furnished by the Board of Examiners.

J. F. MILLSPAUGH,
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