

guidance is available can error be avoided.

The question with the Church in all ages, has not been, What is written? but, What does the Lord say? His voice, whether through the written word or through the mouths of His inspired servants, has always been the end of controversy with the followers of Jesus. It is impossible to recognize the true authority of the written word without believing in continued divine presence and influence in the Church.

#### REV. MR. NUTTING AND THE "NEWS."

Our readers will remember that, a few days ago, there appeared in these columns a few explanatory words to the effect that a lady named Hannah M. Peaden, of Falkland, N. C., was a Latter-day Saint and had recently written to the "News" a letter bearing testimony to the truth of the work she had embraced; that her published communication had been answered by Rev. J. D. Nutting of this city, and that she had written a rejoinder to him. His letter to her and hers to him were given verbatim. Allowing the correspondence to speak for itself, the "News" dismissed it with a single comment, and without a word of censure of Mr. Nutting, although he, in his letter to Mrs. Peaden, had used some very severe and offensive language in referring to the faith and practices of the Latter-day Saints in Utah.

Mr. Nutting has addressed a communication to the "News" in which he states that he has long been a subscriber to it, that its news columns are usually clean, and that "occasional editorials have been especially timely and strong on moral questions, and I have rejoiced greatly in them and have publicly commended some of them." But he complains:

"The course of the 'News' in publishing private letters without leave seems to me clearly dishonorable. A letter which is in its nature private is the property of its author; it cannot honorably be used in any way other than he intended without his consent, unless by due course of law; how much less in direct and known opposition to his wishes, or for his personal injury, or that of his Christian work! The 'News' has done this so frequently that it is a quite unanimous belief among those concerned that some one here procures persons east to act as 'decoy ducks' in writing letters to Utah ministers for information that the honest answers may be published in the 'News' with acrimonious comment, in such a way as to prejudice Mormon readers against the faithful ministry of Christ and injure His cause here to the utmost!"

As to Mr. Nutting's letter being private: It was written to a "News" correspondent in reply to a published communication from which Mr. Nutting derived his sole acquaintance with, and knowledge of the existence of, that correspondent. It was an attack upon the religion professed by that correspondent, and upon the dominant class of the people of Utah, which religion and people it is the special province of the "News" to defend. It was an unsolicited effort, in the fullest sense gratuitous, to persuade its recipient to forsake that to which she had borne solemn testimony as being truth revealed from heaven, and it occasioned both astonishment and disgust on her part. In no sense nor degree can it justly claim the protection of privacy, and under the strictest construction of the amenities the "News" was fully justified in publishing it.

Mr. Nutting's reference to "decoy ducks" is funny to a degree that is

both remarkable and resistless. What "duck" "decoyed" him? He volunteers an offensive letter to a person whom he has never seen, and who turns the tables on him, and then he complains about "decoy ducks!" Mr. Nutting distinctly conveys the impression that the exposures the "News" has made of the duplicity of some of the sectarian clergy of Utah, has made them all fearful of "decoy ducks." They would be willing to write to persons abroad statements and sentiments they have not the hardihood to utter in Utah, but they fear that the recipients might prove to be "decoy ducks" who would forward their letters to the "News" for publication. In other words, according to Mr. Nutting, the whole fraternity of "Christian ministers" in Utah is a set of hypocrites! If Ingersoll ever made a severer charge against the clergy than Mr. Nutting, with such charming naïveté has done, it is not here recalled.

In the opinion of the "News" Mr. Nutting is too severe on at least some of his fellow laborers in the ministry. There is no earthly reason why any one of them should write to a correspondent abroad any statements of facts or expressions of sentiment regarding the Mormons, or any other people or matters in Utah, that they would object to having published in any paper in this State. If they are doing this, or are willing to do it, they deserve all Mr. Nutting has said of them, directly and by implication; otherwise he has done them a gross injustice. The "News" will leave this matter to be settled by the interested parties.

Mr. Nutting denies that he has any apology to make for the statements of facts contained in his letter to Mrs. Peaden, but admits that it was "more intensely worded than it should have been." As to the theological issues raised between her and him, he proposes a joint debate of them through the columns of this paper, a proposition, by the way, which the "News" could not consent to. He insists that his motive in writing to Mrs. Peaden "was pure," and that he is an earnest worker "for the glory of Christ," and states in effect that he has received sympathy and endorsement from among his Mormon neighbors, in his labors, and expresses a wish to co-operate with them "in all matters of temperance, morality, etc."

We do not deem it necessary to give Mr. Nutting's letter in full, as the quotations from it give its substance. We had always thought him to be an earnest worker in what he regarded as a good cause, and have understood that he was well thought of in the community by Mormon and non-Mormon alike. His past reputation for fairness was a chief element of the surprise occasioned by his letter to Mrs. Peaden, and one reason for its publication. We cannot help thinking that his distress is occasioned more by the disclosure which he did not expect than by regret at the manner in which he spoke of a community whom he acknowledges has treated him well. His letters to Mrs. Peaden and to this paper give ample opportunity for argument and satire at his expense; but the "News" has no desire to treat him unkindly. In common with his Mormon neighbors to whom he refers, we sincerely wish him both joy and success in all his efforts to promote faith in a risen Redeemer and the revealed word of God, so far as he himself has faith in them; and also in his efforts to promote morality, temperance and the Christian virtues generally. But in closing this episode we will remind him that according to his own standard of righteousness, it is not the part of either a brave man or a Christian to

say in the absence of your friends those things about them which you would not say in their presence.

#### PERSECUTION IN GERMANY.

A letter received from an Elder in the German mission tells of persecutions in Saxony and Bavaria, where the officers of the law seem to be endeavoring to put obstacles in the way of the Elders who proclaim the Gospel of salvation. It is always a matter of trial to endeavor to do good and to have to contend with prejudices; to be condemned as a doer of evil while inspired with the noblest desire to be a blessing to fellow man; but opposition is not, generally speaking, a discouraging sign. Whether it takes the form of the stirring up of mobs or the bringing into play the machinery of the law, it very often indicates that a "great and marvelous work" is about to be done. Where the doors are wide open, there often are many adversaries. Such opposition calls, nevertheless, for the courage, faith and wisdom of those who are required to face it.

Germany, once the center of religious freedom, has lately been slow in following the pace set by the rest of the Protestant world in this regard. Dissenters have had a hard struggle in that country. But in some parts of Germany better conditions now prevail. It is only a question of time when the blessings of religious liberty will find their way to all parts of the empire. In the meantime, the German government might well learn a lesson from other nations. It is not in the countries where perfect religious liberty prevails that those influences flourish which threaten the disruption of the whole social fabric. Give a nation perfect religious liberty, and the spirit of the Gospel will prove an effective antidote to the spirit of anarchy.

#### THE REPORT OF PILATE AGAIN.

The publication by a New York paper, a short time ago, of what purported to be a translation of a manuscript found in the Vatican library and supposedly containing the report of Pontius Pilate of the crucifixion, has been widely commented upon by the press of the country. It has generally been condemned as spurious.

The New York paper in question now tells how the translation came to occupy space in its columns. The document, it seems, was obtained from a London publisher, Mr. John Kensit, and formed the proof sheets of a book now on sale in England. Mr. Kensit says he purchased the "translation" of a Rev. Dr. Mahan and did not undertake to make an examination of his documents and evidences of authenticity. These bits of information make it easier to form a correct estimate of the value of the alleged translation. Mr. Mahan's effort is an old story, evidently imposed upon a London publisher as new and accepted by a New York journal.

A clergyman writing to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat says that Rev. Mahan once was a Presbyterian preacher. In 1884 he published a volume entitled, "Archaeological writings of the Shanherim and Talmuds," and among these writings was the pretended letter from Pilate to Tiberius, now given to the public as a recent discovery.

The story which Rev. Mahan tells in his book about the "manuscript" is that he first heard of it in 1856 and secured a copy and a translation in 1859. He paid \$62.44 for the copy and \$10 for the translation. Further to fortify himself he alleges that he made a trip to the Vatican and to the Jewish Talmuds at Constantinople (what-