

THE AFGHAN QUESTION.

AFGHANISTAN is a very small nation of southern Asia. It is bounded on the north by Turkestan, on the east by China and India, on the south by Beloochistan, and on the west by Persia, being thus completely inland; the nearest seaboard is on the Arabian Sea, the northern or gulf-like portion of the Indian Ocean. The little political division is scarce 500 miles in width anywhere; it bristles with mountains and has a few good-sized streams but no lakes, unless a little body of water somewhat longer than but not so wide as Utah Lake, forming a part of the dividing line with China, can be so called. It was once controlled by Persia, but has been independent for many years—that is, if being controlled by a monarch who exercises absolute sway and whose civil list embraces the entire revenue of the nation, can be called independence. It is on the overland highway from Europe to India, is the topographical key to the latter from the direction indicated, and that is about all there is of interest in it to the outside world, as it produces none of the precious metals, vegetation is more or less capricious, the physical condition of the earth's surface is broken and irregular, and the inhabitants are totally non-assimilative. Yet 9,000,000 Afghans live or rather exist in that narrow confine, mainly without caring for today or providing for to-morrow, and almost ignorant of the fact that there is anything desirable or better elsewhere, or in most instances that there is any other place under the sun. It is so completely fortified by nature on all sides that but little military skill with a good supply of munitions of war and plenty of troops make it almost impregnable. Candahar is one of the four cities of Afghanistan most earnestly sought by interested nations; it is only a few miles from the Arabian Sea Coast, and therefore more accessible to the outside world, but it, like the others, constitutes a natural fortress, and it is easier for diplomats to figure out how it can be done on paper than it is for soldiers to effect a capture by direct assault. Herat is in the extreme west, near the Persian border, and is so completely hemmed in and hedged about by huge and impassable mountains that to take it by any violent means would require skillful and expensive engineering, great pertinacity and the expense of a long and wearing siege. Yet either England or Russia would sacrifice considerable for a *casus belli* against the Afghans first and a safe passage through the frontier gorges next. For either to possess this piece of territory would be to open a commercial floodgate through which the enormous and wealthier traffic of India would pour unceasingly, enriching the coffers of the power controlling the highway to an extent that would make it as powerful financially as it now is numerically and mechanically. Both of those nations now have troops on Afghan soil, and perhaps both were waiting hopefully to hear of the triumph of the Ghilzais rebels and the consequent overthrow of the Ameer, by which a pretext would have been afforded for an occupation where terms could have been arranged with the rest of the world from within as well as without; but, if this was the design, it seems likely to come to naught, as the latest telegraphic advices from the far east announce the imminent collapse of the revolt and the return of the Ghilzais to their former allegiance, and this, after a few heads have been stricken off, would have the effect of making that absolute despot more powerful than before. The triumph of the rebellion would seem to mean effete anarchy, that of the Ameer something akin to order and the unification of all the tribes against menace from whatever source it might come.

Still, enlightenment and numbers, with wealth behind them, are stubborn forces to contend against. The obstacles interposed by nature only cause the venturesome and able to figure on how long it will take to make the elements succumb, that of the forces entrenched behind not being counted as an obstacle at all when the contest becomes an open one in a fair field, such a thought as failure does not occur to them at all, the question in chief being whether a direct movement does not involve a fight on both sides, and whether there is money enough in the treasury or at command to sustain the undertaking until, to use the language of a great many prospectors for big ventures to be launched in Utah, it can be "brought to a paying basis." And so the agitation goes on.

A TRICK OF THE CONSPIRATORS.

WHEN the DESERET NEWS speaks of the adventurers and conspirators who have continually hatched mischief and advocated the destruction of every right dear to freemen, for the subjugation of the majority of Utah's citizens and their own aggrandizement, it intends no reference to any decent non-"Mormon" who is engaged in legitimate business and not in the work of defaming and destroying his fellows.

We believe the respectable and fair-minded non-"Mormons" of this Territory understand this. We have made no war upon them. We have not interfered with their private affairs. We have not denounced them in any way. We have no quarrel with them because they are opposed to our views on religion or politics. We have always conceded their right to think and act as they consider right, so long as they do not infringe on the rights of others. We have freely acknowledged their perfect liberty to attack our faith and contend against our principles so long as they use lawful weapons. The very genius of our creed is favorable to perfect liberty. We will be found just as ready to defend the freedom of a "Gentile" as of a "Mormon."

"Liberty to every nation,
Every tongue and every creed."

That is a couplet in one of our most popular hymns. It breathes the true spirit of our religion and our politics. Our course toward the non-"Mormons" of this Territory bears out this statement. Stories to the contrary are the flimsiest of fictions.

But it is one of the perennial tricks of the clique of unprincipled plotters who stir up the agitation and poison the public mind with falsehood, to attach all we may say of their villainy to respectable people for whom such remarks are not in the least intended. They know as well as any one that their implication is utterly false. They understand their own position, and they pretend that they have the allegiance and support of men of sense and standing who despise them and their methods. And when they take the medicine compounded for their own case, and try to force it upon reputable people who are not under treatment, they exhibit audacity that is only excelled by their sickening hypocrisy.

When we express gratification at the opposition of such creatures to any movement in which we feel interest, we mean them alone. We would be pleased to see the voting population of Utah of all parties unite on some measure that would secure those liberties to this Territory which are essential to perfect citizenship. If some of them do not choose to join in such measures we do not wish to censure them. They have their right of choice. We may think them unwise and may express our opinion to that effect. But we do not wish to denounce them, nor class them with the gang of schemers who are without honor as they are without conscience.

For the latter class we have the most supreme contempt. We expect their hatred and misrepresentations and abuse. This gives us no concern. On the contrary we are always more assured of the rightfulness and propriety of any course proposed when they assail it. Their dissent stamps it as genuine. Its correctness and importance may be gauged by their wrath and denunciation.

There is one thing connected with the non-"Mormon" situation that surprises us. We cannot understand why respectable and influential men submit so tamely to the dictation of the miserable scoundrels who manufacture falsehood and persist in libelling the just. We know of gentlemen in this community who favor the latest movement for statehood, and who look upon the rant against it as so much rubbish, but who hesitate to express their true convictions. They seem to be afraid of the vituperation of the gang of libellers, and to be unable to snap the chains that bind them to their unsavory associates. Talk of the "dictation of the Priesthood," about which so much nonsense and untruth are uttered! All that has been alleged on that head does not come near to the facts of ring dictation and the dread of the lash of its literary whippers in. We are ashamed of such moral cowardice, and we have that objection against many otherwise estimable non-"Mormons."

But when we express our pleasure at the non-affiliation of certain noxious elements with the prime movers in the operations for statehood, we have no reference to the body of business men of various occupations engaged in the development of the country, nor any fair and decent person who opposes what we advocate. We mean only the disreputable and conscienceless wretches who live by lying, and base their hopes for future place and plunder on the ruin which they expect to work of the people who built the Territory and form the great majority of its citizens.

SHARP CONVICTED.

AFTER a long and wearisome trial, punctuated with pointless delays and emphasized with a lavish expenditure of cash and talent to thwart the demands of the law, the closing scene in the trial of Jacob Sharp was reached yesterday, the jury finding a verdict of guilty on the first ballot. This is one of those rare instances in which the popular and the legal verdict accompany each other not only as a whole but as to each and every portion of the charge to which it relates. The maximum punishment is ten years' imprisonment at hard labor and five thousand dollars' fine, but as the jury recommended mercy it is quite likely the labor will be omitted together with a part of the years. The suggestion

of mercy was made by the jury not so much because of extenuating circumstances or anything of like nature, but solely on account of the defendant's advanced age and severe illness, with the understanding that a long term of laborious imprisonment would be fatal, and the nature of the offense committed does not justify nor does the law call for capital punishment as an expiation thereof. Perhaps if the minimum imprisonment were imposed and it made nearly nominal, with the full extent of the financial part of the penalty enforced, it would be as near to a complete satisfaction of all demands as human justice and judgment could suggest under the circumstances.

Sharp's crime was not one of the kind that makes society totter upon its base, that brings woe, desolation or despair to any household, that involves life or even private property; not at all. He had any amount of money, and money was his god, the burden of his thoughts by day and the subject of his dreams by night. But he wanted more, more than he needed, more than he could use, more than anybody else had. The jingle of coin was to him as the tinsel union of the psalter and the lyre, and the sight of a bill of exchange payable to himself was more pregnant with joy to his heart than would have been the announcement that, unworthy and aged as he was, a child had dawdled upon his household of which he was the father. He knew no motive but gain, acknowledged no criterion but cash. In other respects he was perhaps as good as the average of his neighbors, many of whom will attune their voices to notes of sympathy because the possessor of so many millions is brought to such hardships and disgrace at his time of life—the same people who, if Sharp were dependent upon his daily labor for the support of his family, and, envied by harsh and unyielding circumstances and surrounded by scolding and taunting neighbors well-to-do in the things of the world, had been half forced to accept a bribe in the interest of an unscrupulous schemer—the same people who would be horrified at the outrage upon justice and the villainy so treacherously and deeply entrenched in society. This being the case, it should be comforting to Mr. Sharp to know that the sympathy felt for him is graded in proportion to his opulence, for that makes it very profound indeed—five million dollars' worth at least. Just think of it! Sorrow and commiseration groped up to the swelling proportions of a thousand times five thousand, and all this as a solace in the hour of his dire affliction!

This suggestion will be found timely, and is worthy the consideration of the court. The five thousand dollars' fine will be the keener of the two modes of punishment—not but what it would be willingly paid if that could be the means of securing exemption from corporal inflictions; but there would be just that much more added to the fifty thousand already expended in the useless defense of his case, and how this could have been used to bring in more, no one knows better than the noted hoodler himself.

SUNDAY SERVICES.

The Congregation Addressed by Elders Milson R. Pratt and John Nicholson.

Religious services were held in the Tabernacle, Sunday, June 26, 1887, commencing at 2 p. m., President Angus M. Cannon presiding.

The choir and congregation sang:

O Jesus! the Giver
Of all we enjoy.

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Elias Morris.

The choir sang:

Behold the great Redeemer died
A broken law to satisfy.

The Sacrament was administered by the Priesthood of the Seventeenth Ward.

ELDER MILSON R. PRATT was called to address the congregation. He stated that for the past five years he had until lately been absent from home the greater part of the time, traveling among the nations and preaching the Gospel of Christ. He had been greatly blessed in his labors and found many warm friends. He felt that the people termed heathen were beginning to realize that there were other people in the world who had more light than they. The Elders could not preach the fullness of the Gospel to them at first, but had to explain carefully the principles of truth, advancing step by step. Most of the nations to whom he referred lived in the favored portions of the earth, as, for instance, the Mexicans, among whom the speaker had traveled.

The Latter-day Saints had received light and knowledge from heaven, but there was a great deal more in store for them if they would continue to press onward in the effort to learn the truth. They had been taught how to properly approach the Almighty in prayer, and their petitions had been answered. Yet men were prone to do evil, and if they would be safe they should rely on the spirit and revelations of God. Those who followed this course would be found on the right side; and in obeying the dictates of the Holy Spirit they were entitled to the gifts of revelation, of health, of wisdom, and of everything that would be for their good. The speaker had been reared in Salt Lake City

and had listened to the Elders of Israel bear testimony of the truth. He had prayed that it might be his privilege to declare those truths to the nations of the earth, and his prayers had been answered. He had a testimony of the divinity of the Gospel, and knew that to receive the blessing of the Almighty it was necessary to obey His commandments and conform to His laws. Because the Saints endeavored to do the will of God, some people accused them of desiring to destroy the national government. This accusation was false. The true Latter-day Saint based all his actions on the foundation of truth, and sought to be honest with all mankind.

In the countries where the speaker had traveled, his labors had been chiefly among the poor, who seemed to be the only ones who were preparing to listen to the message. The time would come, however, when the Gospel would be preached to the wealthy, and this class would have an opportunity of accepting or rejecting it. The speaker was thankful for the privilege he had had of bearing testimony to the truth of the Gospel of Christ.

ELDER JOHN NICHOLSON

was the next speaker. He said he had listened with interest to the remarks of Brother Pratt, who, though young in years, was considerably advanced in experience in proclaiming the Gospel to various nations, among them the people of the republic of Mexico, of the East Indies, and of Australia. This labor of spreading the divine message was a supreme duty of the Elders of Israel. In performing it they were fulfilling the words of the Lord Jesus, who, when He was explaining to His disciples the events which would occur prior to His second advent—when He would come to earth in power and reign universally—declared that the Gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world for a witness, and then should the end come. Owing to the magnitude of the event of His second coming, His disciples were anxious to know concerning its time and the circumstances associated with it. He enlightened them on this subject, stating that there would be commotions, wars and rumors of wars, kingdom rising against kingdom, and nation against nation. One of the most conspicuous of the precursory events depicted by the Redeemer was the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom. Brother Pratt and others were among those who were fulfilling the prediction in that regard preparatory to the coming of the Son of God. The principles they taught were the same as those advanced by the Savior, and his duly authorized servants who acted in His name anciently. He gave them power, enabling them to preach as men having authority. They had power, however, not only to preach the word, but to officiate in the sacramental ordinances. Those thus commissioned to deliver the heavenly message are authorized to convey it in its fullness. They have the power, by the laying on of hands, to bestow the Holy Ghost, that will give a testimony that what is being taught is of divine origin. As Christ said, whoever would do the will of the Father should know of the doctrine. It was therefore easy to discover who was a genuine servant of God, for the message of such a one would be in accord with, and its results similar to that given by the Lord and His servants when He was in mortality among men. As it was then so it is now; the heavens, which had been closed for centuries, were again opened, and the poor and meek have the Gospel preached unto them. The Almighty is taking the seemingly weak things of the earth to confound the mighty. The proclamation to-day is the same simple, plain, message as was delivered anciently; faith in the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby men could not only regain that which had been lost and become immortal, but be prepared for a greater and more exceeding weight of glory, for man was made that he might have joy, and his chief end was to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Mankind should learn to appreciate the infinite love of the Father, who sent His only-begotten Son to die for the sin of the world, and should repent of their sins by putting them aside and taking up the truth in place of error. If they did this they would be free indeed, for truth would burst asunder every shackle. Having done this, men were prepared to take another step—baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, which, when accepted of, left them prepared for the reception of the Holy Ghost, through the laying on of hands by those having authority.

This was the nature of the message carried of the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the deliverance of which they considered no sacrifice too great. Commending their families to God and the consideration of their co-religionists, they go forth with their lives in their hands, and not a few of them have followed Christ to the death, their blood having been shed by ruthless men who knew not what they were doing. Those Elders had laid down their lives on the principle enunciated by Christ that whoever should do so for His sake should take them up again. They had sealed their testimony with their blood, and were among those whose spirits called on God to cleanse the earth.

It was a great thing for men to take upon them the name of Christ. Those who did it under the Gospel

banner were born again, and felt the full force of what Jesus said to Nicodemus, that except a man be born again, he could not see the kingdom of heaven. Nicodemus could not comprehend what was said, because he was not in possession of the Holy Spirit, and Christ further explained to him that men must be born of water and of the spirit else he could not enter into the Kingdom of God. It was in a certain sense a new birth—a spiritual birth. The burial in the water, the coming forth again, and receiving the Holy Ghost, constituted the birth of the water and the spirit. A change come over them. This change was probably not visible to the carnal eye, but a new spiritual life was opened up to him who had undergone this process, and if he did not violate its conditions he could climb step by step the ladder of progress until he reached the presence of the King of Heaven.

To properly perform this work the whole powers of man must be employed. His heart, or affectional nature must be stirred, his intellect quickened and his devotional and moral faculties aroused. In all things he must conform to the conditions prescribed, and manifest in his life the love of Him who so loved the world that He gave His Son to save humanity. While loving the truth he must adore the source from whence it came.

This was the comprehensive view of the conditions and character of the plan of salvation. It is written that God could not look on sin with any degree of allowance. Sin was the transgression of a known law, and when no law was given there was comparatively no transgression. As Jesus said, light having come into the world, men were condemned by it. Some say the world is becoming more righteous. This statement was unreasonable, for a just God would not hold those who lived in the darkness as responsible as this perverse generation to whom the light had come. To-day, notwithstanding the increase of intelligence, men were steeped in sin, and would be condemned in their wickedness. God could not look upon sin with allowance, because He was governed by eternal laws. When men infringe His laws, when they invade for instance the domain of justice by a breach of it, punishment must follow. A way was provided for the mitigation of the results by the principle of repentance. But if men sinned with their eyes open, relying, at the time of commission upon future escape by repentance, their condition was a dangerous one, and God would be slow to forgive. When Latter-day Saints sinned, the condemnation on them was greater than in the case of other people, because they possessed increased Gospel light. As an example, there was a law of the Gospel against unchastity. The Saints covenanted to keep themselves pure, and, as a whole, did so, notwithstanding charges to the contrary. There were some exceptions to this rule, as the speaker had witnessed. In some instances those who had taken upon them the name of Saints had defiled themselves, and although their crime may not for the time have been known to their associates, a withering blight had been visible upon them, and they have been shorn of their power. The Holy Ghost was one of the three persons in the Godhead. When that Spirit is obtained by a man his body becomes a temple of God. When that temple is defiled, that Spirit will no longer dwell therein, and the condition of that man was a thousand-fold worse than before he received the Gospel. This crime of unchastity in its most aggravated form, was next in heinousness to that of shedding blood, because it undermined a fundamental principle of salvation. The power of eternal increase was to be given those who were faithful and pure in all things, and God had set a seal of condemnation on those who sinned against this principle. When it was grossly violated it proved that the transgressor could not be entrusted with the power of eternal increase. So it was with the crime of murder. Mortal life was given to man to enable him to conform to the image of God in exaltation. When he was unlawfully deprived of it he was robbed of the opportunities and possibilities dependent upon the mortal state. Mortal life was the gift of God next in importance to eternal life, the former being a necessary condition leading up to the latter. From this standpoint the murderer stood in the light of an intentional thwarting of the purposes of Jehovah.

These were some of the principles revealed from heaven, as the speaker understood them. What was necessary for the Latter-day Saints was for them to so live as to increase the power of godliness against which the powers of the adversary were puerile. Their preservation largely depended on their spiritual vitality. They should be charitable and exemplify in their lives the truths enunciated practically and otherwise by the Lord Jesus.

The choir sang an anthem and benediction was pronounced by Bishop F. Kesler.

A disease similar to the horse dumber has made its appearance among the cattle in the vicinities of Bloomfield and Tomales, near Santa Rosa, Cal., and has resulted fatally where not properly treated. John Hunter, of Bloomfield, lost three cows from the disease within a few days. The successful remedies are bleeding and poulticing.