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A NEED SUPPLIED.

WE DIRECT special attention to an editorial from the *Alla California* which we publish in another column. It is uncommon in its thoughtful investigation of the religious needs of the age and in its frank recognition of some of the excellencies of "Mormonism." It shows that the writer, unlike most of the contributors to the literature of the day, has examined, to some extent at least, a religious system which is popularly but incorrectly supposed to be comprehended in peculiar marriage relations.

Religion is more and more coming to be considered a mere matter of feeling and sentiment, and its exercise to consist of prayer, praise and preaching, with ceremonies varying according to the different notions of the devotees. As a practical director of human conduct in common affairs, it is almost expelled from the minds of men and the creeds of the churches. A minister thus becomes little more than a theorizer on matters that belong to another world.

That this was not the original purpose of the Christian system, is evident from the Book which contains its history and doctrines. It was designed to enter into men's lives and influence all their actions. It was not a Sunday religion. Worship and service on the first day of the week was but incidental in its practice. It was an every day regulator. It directed men and women what to do and what to avoid in every condition of mortal existence. It gave them rules to guide them as fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, parents and children, as members of society, as rulers or subjects, as citizens or officials, as sentient beings responsible to a Higher Power for the exercise of free agency in all deeds done in the body.

The ministers of the primitive Christian Church were not only expounders, exhorters and utterers of Christian sentiment, they were workers in the field of human ad-

vancement. They were ordained to different callings and labored among the people, receiving for their services such support as was needed for their daily wants. As apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, elders, presbyters, bishops, teachers or deacons, they were not a pampered clergy, of a distinct caste or class, but mingling with the members they consulted and advised with them on all things that pertained to individual or social character and deportment.

"Mormonism" is primitive Christianity revived. It is a perfect reproduction of the original. Not only is it so in form but also in spirit. It is a practical every day religion. Strange, to say this is one of its chief objections to those who oppose it. They resent its interference, as they regard it, with people's secular affairs. They demand that it shall confine its operations to those spiritualties that belong to heaven and another sphere, and leave earthly concerns to other hands. This objection does not come from the members of the "Mormon" Church, but from their opponents who have no business with its concerns. Their modesty in this is not strikingly apparent.

But perhaps there might be some excuse for their forwardness and hostility, if what they allege on this point were correct. But neither "Mormonism" nor its ecclesiasts forcibly or dictatorially interfere with any person's private concerns. The advice they give, the counsel they offer, is sought for and desired. It is not thrust upon any one. In a general way the proper course of life is pointed out by public instruction and exhortation. In a private way instruction is given as each member's circumstances and standing may require. But no man's family or business is intruded upon, nor is coercion used in any shape to compel conformance to regulation or policy. The Teachers who visit the Latter-day Saints in their homes have no authority whatever to regulate or dictate in private affairs. They are what their title implies, simply Teachers, and when called upon by disputants are arbitrators and assistants in the settlement of difficulties between Church members.

The presiding authorities are not rulers, dominating civil, or political, or business affairs. The priestly dictation, absolutism, and theocratic power so much talked of as embodied in "Mormonism" is actually foreign to its spirit and

practice. When Joseph Smith the Prophet was asked the secret of his excellent government in Nauvoo, he replied: "I teach the people correct principles and they govern themselves." That is the essence of "Mormonism." But these principles relate to the present time and to existing conditions and circumstances. They prepare people for a future and a higher life, by showing them how to live correctly and harmoniously here and now. They affect men and women as occupants of this mortal sphere, and in every capacity thereof, whether it be public or private, but it interferes with no man's freedom of thought or action.

It is true, as the *Alla-California* says, that "Mormonism" may "well be studied not by critics but by philosophers." And among them none need to study it so much for the purpose of acquiring information as the editors of this country. If all who are interested in the general welfare would approach this question in the spirit of candid inquiry instead of captious criticism, they might learn something which would aid them greatly in the good work of human improvement. It is an individual religion. It is a social religion. It is an intellectual and a spiritual religion. And yet it is a material religion, for it has to do with human beings in their physical life and with a material environment which is at present a part of their very existence.

"Mormonism" is the religion of the century. It is a vital, energizing and potent force. It cannot be kept down nor stamped out. That which is alluded to as "a millstone round its neck," has attracted the attention of the world so much that it has come to be regarded as the system itself, while it is but a part of it, and that part misunderstood as well as magnified beyond all due proportions in the eyes of the world, who will not look at it except through the lenses of prejudice and bigotry.

It is marvellous that the thinkers, the advanced theologians, the reformers and philanthropists of the times, who deplore the lifelessness of modern religious systems and who look for something living and mighty to come, do not turn their attention to a religion that exhibits so much vitality and force and so great control over the faith and energies of its followers, as that which is known by the name of "Mormonism." But its hour will