

DESERET EVENING NEWS

Organ of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

PUBLISHED EVERY EVENING
(SUNDAY EXCEPTED.)
Corner of South Temple and East Temple Streets
Salt Lake City, Utah.

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Subscription Prices	Per Annum
One Year, in Advance	\$2.00
Six Months, in Advance	1.00
Three Months, in Advance	.50
One Month, in Advance	.15
One Week, in Advance	.05
Saturday edition, per year	2.00
Single Copies	.05

NEW YORK OFFICE
In charge of H. F. Cummings, Manager
Foreign Advertising, from our Home Office,
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SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE
In charge of F. J. Cooper, 26 Geary St.

Correspondence and other reading matter
for publication should be addressed to the
EDITOR.
Address all business communications to
THE DESERET NEWS
Salt Lake City, Utah.

SALT LAKE CITY, FEB. 8, 1902.

REASON AND REVELATION.

Some time ago we received a letter from a gentleman in this city, who has some very good words to say about the "Mormon" people and some of their doctrines. But he entertains objections to others, or rather to his own notions as to what they are. He commends the charity and brotherly love which he has seen exhibited by many Latter-day Saints, and acknowledges that, in several respects, their creed and their conduct are far ahead of those of their enemies who say so many things against them. But he says he is opposed to the idea that any man's revelations are infallible. He thinks we are wrong in claiming that "all of Joseph Smith's revelations are true." He asks if it would not be "much better to submit them to the light of reason and the Gospel that Christ taught, and reject those that cannot be proven."

He is mistaken if we think that any "man's revelations" are infallible. We entertain no such idea. We do not think any human being in mortality is infallible. The Latter-day Saints do not attach infallibility to any man's personality or opinions. But we believe, and our friend doubtless will admit, that God is infallible. If so, then that which God reveals will also be infallible. His word is truth. It is the revelations of God, not of Joseph Smith or any other great and inspired man, that we receive as truth itself. If God does not communicate His word and will nowadays, there need be no argument in relation to that which is claimed to have come from Him. If He does reveal His mind and will concerning His children on earth in the present age, those who receive His word in honest hearts will regard it as divine and therefore infallible.

The revelations of God which have come to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith, are and have been open to everybody who chooses to examine, criticize and compare them with any other truth that has come from the same source at any time. There has been no requirement in "Mormonism" that any individual should cast aside his reasoning faculties, or blindly accept a purported revelation as divine, without thought or reflection or comparison with known facts and truths. If our correspondent imagines that our religious system requires anything so unreasonable, he is very much mistaken. It is the privilege of every Latter-day Saint to "know of the doctrine, whether it is of God or of man." Christ Himself proclaimed this when on earth. He has said the same in these latter days. His word today is just as true and divine as it was in former days.

The great difficulty in the way of the people of modern times is their disbelief in the reality of present revelation from God. When a person believes that God is just as able and willing to reveal truth adapted to present conditions, as He was to manifest Himself in past ages, the real obstacle to obtaining light from duty now is removed. When the word of the Lord comes through a living Prophet, he who receives it as divine will make no quibble about its infallibility. It is only when he doubts its divinity that he will hesitate to receive it. In that case he has the right to use his reasoning powers, and to compare it with such words or principles as he regards to be divine. There is no objection that we know of to such a course.

As to comparison with "the Gospel that Christ taught," what is to be taken as the standard? What was the Gospel that Christ taught? Who is to decide? The various Christian sects differ in their views on this matter. Some of them are diametrically opposed to each other on this question. Our friends will probably answer, "The New Testament is the guide." Well, modern divines differ with each other as to the meaning of many passages in that book, and the notion that infallibility is to be attached to old writings which have been translated by uninspired men, and of which there are different versions with many contentions as to the original text, is to say the least a most remarkable idea of an infallible standard.

Now the Gospel revealed through Joseph Smith, the Prophet, is itself the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It came from Him direct. It was not taken out of books but was revealed in its purity and perfection. It is not the Gospel of Joseph Smith, nor are its precepts, commandments and ordinances the revelations of Joseph Smith. Yet when submitted to a fair comparison with what Jesus Christ and His first Apostles taught at the opening of the Christian Era, as recorded in the scriptures, they will be found exactly the same. If the notions and perversions of modern sectaries are put aside.

We say, most emphatically, there is not anything in the Gospel revealed from heaven in these latter times that

is repugnant to reason, to common sense or to that which was revealed from heaven in former times. Nor does it require any man, however devoted he may be or however skeptical, to shut his eyes and swallow down without examination that which is presented to him as a revelation from on high. This ought to be understood by all people who are in any way interested in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, whether as friends or opponents. God's truth is open to the light. It is free to all, and every soul is free to receive or reject it, but will of course have to answer the consequences when brought to account for the deeds done in the body. Let the light shine and the truth prevail, and let all people be willing to walk in its radiance!

"THE CHURCH OF THIS WORLD."

Readers of the "News" will be interested in the statement that what is practically a new church is about to unfold itself, and enter upon an energetic and systematic propaganda. The new church calls itself "The Church of This World." Kansas City is its center and headquarters. Its leader is Dr. J. E. Roberts, a former Baptist pastor and subsequently a preacher of unitarianism. He and his followers profess agnosticism. It is claimed that the movement is backed by vast capital, and that ministers of churches are anxious to join the ranks. Consequently, propaganda on a large scale is to be commenced. The agnostics are to be organized into societies. Lectures are to be given and literature distributed.

The name, "The Church of This World," is very significant. That its central stronghold should be reared in a city in Jackson county, Missouri, is perhaps no less significant, for those who believe in the Gospel as revealed in our day. Generally, the church and the world are terms signifying opposing domains, interests, and forces. This new church, evidently, aims at the elimination of all distinctions between the two. And in the proposition it succeeds in doing this, as it establishes "the world" at the expense of "the church."

"The Church of This World," should make rapid progress. If membership can be secured without repentance, without sacrifice of worldly pleasures, without yielding obedience to authority, and with no danger of persecution, millions should be willing to become "disciples." But it should be clear to all that a church of this world, in all that the name implies, can be but a poor school in which to equip God's children for a world to come.

We have read a pamphlet containing a lecture by Dr. Roberts, the head of this movement, on the text: "If a man die, shall he live again?" It is of great interest to thinkers who are not "rooted and grounded" in the doctrine of a future life. While based on the position of "I do not know," it builds up a very strong argument in support of the eternity of the life principle, and the continuation of personal identity after the dissolution of the body. It maintains the theory of pre-existence as well as of future existence, and contains many thoughts which harmonize with "Mormon" principles. It is a pity that so clear a mind has not reached the standpoint of that "knowledge of the truth," which obedience to the Gospel brings to the soul of man. There is evident sincerity in the utterances of the learned agnostic, and he may do much good in his Church of This World, in spite of its title and its "know nothing" attitude.

ABOUT MIRACLES.

Prof. Pearson, the Methodist university teacher who has created such a commotion by denying the miracles of the Bible, has sent a personal statement to the Northwestern Christian Advocate, in which he says he has nothing to retract, or qualify. He is not an agnostic, he says. He believes in a personal God and personal immortality, "and in everything that, to my mind, belongs to the Christianity of Christ." He further, says that he regards Methodism as a revival of primitive Christianity. He has not lost faith, but has, he thinks, a broader and deeper basis for belief than ever before. If he must quit the Methodist church, he will do so with sorrow, and remain united with it in sympathy.

This statement is not compatible with later published reports, to the effect that he denies the divinity of Christ and pronounces himself more in sympathy with Unitarianism than with Methodism. But perhaps he did not care to say in a Methodist publication what he may feel less reluctance about stating to reporters for secular papers. He does admit that "on some points I have not yet declared myself," and it is impossible that when the full declaration comes, it will show that the professor has entirely shifted ground.

Much surprise is expressed in Methodist circles on account of the views announced by the professor. But they are really not surprising. The position of Methodist teachers today is that divine, miraculous intervention in human affairs is no longer needed. They claim that God does not speak to His children today, as formerly. The natural conclusion is, that He never spoke in any special manner, to the children of men. And from this follows that the Scriptures are only a human composition. But if that is true, the so-called higher criticism is eminently proper, and a flat denial of the divinity of Christ is but "higher criticism" carried to its logical, inevitable conclusion. The wonder is that every honest thinker, who does not accept present-day revelation, does not also reject the claims of former-day divine messages to divine powers and authority. The pulpits orators, who are infidels as to divine manifestations in this age are shocked at the infidelity that also embraces the records of such manifestations in ancient ages. And yet, the latter are consistent, while the former are not. Is it so much better to slay living prophets and whiten the graves of the dead ones, than to deny that there ever were any prophets? Let common sense suggest the reply.

We may feel sorry that an intelligent man should deem it necessary to deny the testimonies of sacred writers as to miracles, and thus throw doubt upon their veracity. If it were understood that miracles are wrought under divine guidance, sometimes by the operation of well known natural laws, and sometimes by laws unknown to human wisdom, but always for benevolent purposes, there would be no room for such doubts.

In a great number of Old Testament miracles the natural laws by which they were wrought can be traced. In the passage of the Israelites through the Red sea, a phenomenon took place in the water receding before the heavy wind, which has, perhaps, occurred many times. But it was no less a miracle that it happened at that particular night, when it was necessary for the deliverance of the people from the hands of the pursuing army.

The going back of the shadow on the sundial of Aheh has fairly staggered commentators. But George F. Chambers proves that an eclipse of the upper limb of the sun a little before noon would have just that effect upon the sundial. That is, the shadow would sink backward for the time being, instead of steadily climbing toward the meridian. And computation has shown that on Jan. 11, in the year 639 B. C. there was a partial eclipse of the sun at 11:30 a. m., visible in Jerusalem. In this instance, science has vindicated the Bible.

A miracle singled out by Dr. Pearson as a fable, is that of the floating of an ax, accidentally lost by a theological student, in the Jordan river. But what is incredible in the narrative of that little episode? The young man had decided to build a schoolhouse and had prevailed upon the Prophet Elisha to go with them and superintend the work of cutting timber by the Jordan. One of the boys had borrowed an ax, and this fell into the stream, as he was cutting a tree. He was an honest man and felt deeply the humiliation of not being able to return the borrowed tool. In his distress he turned to the Prophet. The reputation of the school was so much at stake. The Prophet, having been shown the place where the iron fell in, cut down a limb and thrust it into the water and brought the sunken ax to the surface, so that the young man could recover it. It is useless to create difficulties where there are none. And yet, it was a "miracle." And it certainly was a much needed lesson for all times, about honesty in the smallest business transactions. It was a reminder that he who borrows must return that which he has borrowed.

Thus miracles are by no means beyond belief. They are worked on natural principles. And even when these principles are not understood, it must not be concluded, that they do not exist. It is in every case safer to believe than to deny the statements of holy writ. Even the resurrection itself will take place in accordance with God's eternal laws.

IN ANCIENT BABYLONIA.

According to an article in the London Globe, important and interesting discoveries have been made in recent times upon the site of ancient Babylon, by the German exploration party now at work there.

One of these discoveries is that of the great banquet hall in the palace, which is believed to have been the identical room in which Belshazzar held the feast on the night of the fall of the capital. It was a hall of magnificent proportions, being 120 feet long and 60 feet wide, and the walls were decorated with paintings in bright colors.

Another discovery is that of the sacred "Procession Street," which leads from the palace to the city, and through which religious processions passed on their way to the palace. This street was 75 feet wide and over a quarter of a mile long. Many of the paving stones have been found. Some are large pieces of limestone; others are smaller and of red brick, and the supposition is that they were originally laid in geometrical patterns. They generally have an inscription which reads:

"I am Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, Son of Nebopolassar, King of Babylon. The Highway of Babylon for the Procession of Merodach with blocks of stone the products of the mountains I paved the street. May the great lord Merodach grant me everlasting life."

Along this sacred thoroughfare the triumphant procession of Nebuchadnezzar, carrying the spoils from Jerusalem and the Temple, undoubtedly passed. Other mighty world-conquerors, as Cyrus, Darius, and Alexander, have undoubtedly passed that road, too, after successful campaigns.

The discoveries made in this center of ancient world-culture have disclosed much of its nature, which once was entirely unknown. It appears that the ancient Babylonians were great on festivals and religious pageants. Chief among their many celebrations was that which was held at the beginning of the new year, and lasted for eleven days. That, particularly, was the time for "wise men and soothsayers," as is gathered from the following inscription, said to have been made by Nebuchadnezzar:

"I made bright the place where they eat destinies, the Chamber of Assembly wherein on the Feast of the Beginning of the Year the Divine King of Heaven and Earth taketh his seat, and all the gods of Heaven and Earth with reverence submit to him as they stand before him, the King of everlasting days for my life may they cast."

In explanation of this festival, the contributor to the London Globe says:

"When the Chaldeans were a race of farmers and agriculturists and had not sunk deep in the intoxicants of war and conquest, the New Year's festival came in the fall of the year, when the farmers' work was ended, and a new year began; but with the rise of the Babylonian empire and its great imperial policy, the New Year became a festival of the national god in the spring month Nisan, corresponding with the sacred year of the Jews. Before the procession started from the great temple of E. Sagila, the temple of Belus of the classics, a service was held there of which we have in the British Museum many of the hymns. One of these has a beautiful ending, almost equal to the Hebrew psalms:

Look favorably upon thy house,
Look favorably upon thy city.
In another:
Look favorably upon the people of Babylon.
Whom thou lovest, thy people.

"The New Year's festival commenced on the first of the month and lasted at

least eleven days. It was called Akitu, a word cognate with the Hebrew Hag and the Arab Hagg, meaning the pilgrimage or "going up" for on that occasion all the people went up to Babylon for the feast. It was from this Babylonian custom of "going up" to Jerusalem for the feast. Not only the people went up, but from all the temples in the land of temples flocked priests in rich robes bearing the emblems of their god, to pay homage to Merodach, the national god. Hence at this period of the city Babylon was crowded with priests and officials, and with the populace who came "to the merrymaking of Merodach." It was a time of gladness, of music, and being at a time when the land was bright with sunshine after winter rain, flowers—for it was in the month of spring "accompanying the whole land brightened by the sun." Not only the people but many others. Deputations from the temples arrived each day, and when all had gathered in the great "Chamber of Assembly" began. Led by the temple guards—musicians, singers and dancers—with incense and flowers, it started from the great temple. One after the other the minor deities of the god, with its four horses, and the sacred boat borne on high, and last the shrine of the god, with his image, clothed in rich array. Priests, scribes followed, the king and his officials were there, and all passed along the roadway which now, after long centuries, has been brought to light. They were happy days; we know from the inscriptions it was a public holiday, food and wine were distributed and all was joy and gladness, and many were those who wished long life and joy "in ancient Babylon, when Nebuchadnezzar was king."

It is an interesting story that which is told by the relics that fall into the hands of patient investigators. And the results obtained in Asia should encourage to similar efforts on the American continent. Here, too, is a wonderful civilization buried under the dust of ages. A comparatively short time ago, Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia, except for the scanty historical data preserved, were as much unknown as to their ancient civilization, as is still, for instance, the ancient Maya empire that once flourished in the western hemisphere. But research has been amply rewarded. It would be so here, as is proved by the remarkable finds made by the few who have devoted time and energy thereto. And researches here should be exceedingly interesting, and important, since there is ample reason for the supposition, that these continents contain the original home of mankind, the first center of civilization, from which it spread to other parts of the world.

Iowa is a prairie state, but her growth of cabinet timber is beginning to be large and extensive.

The trouble with the cooks, waiters and restaurateurs seems to be that too many cooks spoil the broth.

The Senate having confirmed his appointment, Postmaster Thomas no longer needs to sing, "When I Can Read My Title Clear."

Irrigation in the arid West is as much entitled to the government's fostering care as rivers and harbors in the abundantly watered East.

Every one will accept as facts Governor Taft's statements about the Philippines, but it cannot be denied that they are beginning to go to great lengths.

As the parliamentary candidate, in "Pickwick" kissed all the children that he should make no mistake, so Uncle Sam should buy all the islands lying between North and South America for the same reason.

All the members of the Twenty-second ward of this Stake should be present at the meeting tomorrow evening when the Presidency of the Stake will consult with them about dividing the ward.

Yesterday afternoon King Edward received Charles M. Schwab, head of the Steel trust, in audience. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business?" he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men."

The Governor of Connecticut has refused to attend a banquet at which Admiral Schley was to be a guest. Every man, woman and child in the United States knows who Schley is, but who in thunder is governor of Connecticut?

A member of the Chicago federation of labor is of the opinion that all men over forty-five years of age should be shot. Herein the federalist differs from Uncle Samuel, who will not accept a man to stand up and be shot at after he is forty-five.

The students and ex-students of the L. D. S. U. had a great parade yesterday, tooting their horns to perfection. That's right, students, for you will find that in this world if you want your horns tooted you will have to toot it yourselves.

Attention is directed to a communication from Prof. J. H. Paul in this issue of the Deseret News in relation to eighth grade pupils of the district schools. We commend his explanations to their attention, and that of their parents and guardians.

All the courts in the land may decide that Admiral Sampson was in command at the battle of Santiago, but all the courts in the land cannot alter the fact that he was not present at the battle, no more than all the king's horses and all the king's men could put Humpty Dumpty on the wall again.

Germany, it appears, did not send a written reply to Spain's note requesting concerted action by the powers in the Hispano-American trouble, but a verbal one. This enables her to place her attitude at the time in the most favorable light. Written replies are often as disagreeable in diplomacy as in politics.

A "church plot" has been newly discovered. This time it is not a scheme to defeat the Democrats; that old fad is worn out. It is rather difficult to discover what the new "plot" is designed to accomplish. But as the mention of it answers the place of reason and reply to unanswerable facts and irreverent arguments, it may serve the purpose designed in its fabrication—with a few unthinking people who do not investigate and cannot see an inch beyond their noses.

Hosts of people in Utah will be sorry to learn of the death of "Archie" Gard-

ner, formerly Bishop of West Jordan ward, a pioneer worker in the building up of this commonwealth, a sturdy farmer, mill-builder, practical man in all stations, and a faithful, devoted friend and servant of the Lord. Particulars of his death are given in another part of this paper. The funeral will be held in the Fourteenth ward meeting house on Wednesday next, at 1 p. m. He lived to a good old age and has gone to a well-deserved rest.

A correspondent of the New York Evening Post, from Phoenix, Ariz., says experiments are about to be made in the culture of the olive and the Smyrna fig in that territory. Prof. A. J. MacClatchie, a government expert, has been sent to Southern California, and will probably later go to the Orient, to secure the best varieties of olive and fig trees, and to study the culture which makes the Old World's products superior to those of this country. The department of agriculture believes that conditions in Arizona and southern New Mexico are almost identical with those in the lands about the Mediterranean sea, and that under close study and proper cultivation the products of that country can be excelled in America.

ON RELIGIOUS TOPICS.

New York Mail and Express. The process of "dropping off" is clearly revealed by the inquiries of the Federation of churches. Few people are found by the canvassers of the federation who deny all religious faith, and few who hesitate to mention some particular denomination when they are asked "what they are." But when they are questioned as to their present direct affiliation, a vast proportion are unable to establish any. In one ward of Brooklyn four hundred families of one religious denomination were found to be in the hands of no church whatever. That is to say, plenty of people are found ready to call themselves Methodists, or Episcopalians, or Catholics, or what not, who do not go to church and who have no connection with any church.

The Chautauquan.

Spiritual conditions throughout the country at the beginning of the year 1902 are satisfactory. The leaders of hardly one religious body, in most large cities ministers are saying that never before was it so hard to get people aroused and interested in spiritual matters. This condition obtains West and East alike. Something is expected from the financial giving, for spiritual blessings usually follow self-denial, but the outcome of which no man can tell. Within their dissatisfaction with existing conditions prevails, there is some lack of harmony, and missionary causes are poorly supported.

The Watchman.

The theory that men may be won to the spiritual life by ministering to their physical necessities, and by providing for them amusements and social opportunities, is not to be entirely discarded. But today, as in the times of our Lord, the eyes that are largely fastened upon "the loaves and fishes" are not apt to discern the heavenly vision. The chief spiritual value of this ministry is that it serves as a mode for manifesting human sympathy and for interpreting the divine love. Sometimes, as in the case of the desperately miserable, it is the only avenue through which they can be reached. The vast majority of people, however, can be most directly and effectively reached by the clear and loving presentation of the gospel.

Christian Intelligence.

The causes which turn young men from the church and the Sabbath are many and complex. In the cities a chief cause is the strenuousness of business life. Conditions of living have changed greatly within a generation. Home has in many instances become a mere sleeping-place. Pressures to meet trains and exacting engagements have overthrown many family altars. Athletics, clubs, and society absorb time and strength and money. Sunday has become less sacred. From a holy day it has come to be regarded by multitudes as a holiday. Fashion sets the example with Sunday entertainments and Sunday golf, and the young men with little other time for recreation go on the Sunday newspaper, and the habit of church-going, if ever acquired, is speedily lost.

Northwestern Christian Advocate. A few years ago everybody was envying Barney Barnato, the diamond king of South Africa. To an intimate friend he once said: "It's a hard job to be a millionaire. People envy my money, but they don't know what it is to be hunted about from morning to night, never to have a moment to yourself, to feel that you must go on, that you can't stop, that other people won't let you stop and give you nothing to look forward to but work and worry." Possibly Barnato had other things to worry him besides what he has named. But the concluding words of his plaint are characteristic of those who have sought the world's peace. How pathetic it is after all. The diamond king sought comfort finally in suicide.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

The February number of The Progression opens with an article in which the author declares that the nebular theory is wrong. Other subjects contained are: "Prometheus and the Planets," "Nobis Sunbeams," "Astronomical Diagrams," "The Rings of Saturn," etc. The little magazine is "devoted to science," but it evidently cares but little for the verdict of orthodox science.—215 Stimson Block, Los Angeles, Cal.

The Juvenile Instructor is always an excellent magazine, and its current number is fully to the standard. It opens with a description of "Guatemala's Great Festival," in which the author gives a vivid picture of South American life. This is followed by "Another Testimony," a short article well worth reading. In "Some of Our Composers" a very good portrait and a biographical sketch of Prof. C. J. Thomas will be found. "The Orange Industry" is a selected piece. "Our Boys" contains some good suggestions by "A Young Mother." There is a full-page picture of the Christiania Sunday school, accompanied with text by H. A. Pedersen. "Helping Santa Claus" is the title of a paper by Martha J. C. Lewis. This is followed by a piece of poetry, "Christmas in Sweden." The editorial department contains many valuable instructions. President Joseph F. Smith writes about "Our Missionaries," giving much information that should be of little help to Church members, and others interested in the missionary work of the Latter-day Saints. In "Topics of the Times" a subject is treated that needs earnest consideration. "Can Character Be Developed from a Photograph?" is a question discussed by N. Y. Schofield. Miss Josephine Spencer contributes a poem. There is a full-page picture of the ad-

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T. G. WEBBER,
Superintendent.

vanced theological department of the Twenty-first ward Sunday school, and the department "For Our Little Folks" is as usual filled with reading matter suitable for the younger readers. On the last page is a hymn words by W. W. Phelps, music by J. G. Jones.—Salt Lake City.

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