

## THE DESERET NEWS: WEEKLY.

### THE BETTER CIVILIZATION.

A CLERGYMAN, writing from the east, makes inquiry respecting a contrast which he had seen in an eastern paper, and which was said to have been drawn by President Young, between the civilization which exists here and that which prevails elsewhere. He says he wants to know the truth.

"If you have a better civilization than ours," he says, "you must have a better religion, we ought to adopt it; for civilization is modulated by religion. And so, on the other hand, if ours is better than yours, why not adopt ours? I confess that our civilization is far from what it ought to be, and that our religion does not affect (directly) one-fourth of our population."

This confession is a candid one, and though truthful, is one that preachers will rarely make. But it embodies many strong points, and points, too, which should never be lost sight of nor shunned by reflecting men. The Founder of the Christian religion uttered a simple, but great truth, which the experience of ages has corroborated, where he said "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." A good religion will bring forth a good civilization; a corrupt religion will produce a base and an inferior civilization. This gentleman states correctly, that if we have a better civilization here than exists elsewhere, we must have a better religion. Many will readily admit this in the abstract; but bring them to the point, and they argue that our civilization is not better than theirs, or if we have features in ours superior to theirs, that they are not the fruits of our religion; they are the results of the circumstances which surround us.

When men can acknowledge that their civilization is far from what it ought to be, and that their religion does not affect one-fourth of their population, they are in a good condition to look around them, and examine with care and without prejudice any system that promises better results. Such a civilization needs purifying, and the statement is correct which makes its improvement dependent upon an improved religion. One of the great objections to the religions which Christendom acknowledges as orthodox is that they are content to sit side by side with everything that is vile. Contact with the wickedness of the most abandoned character they do not shun nor shrink from. On the contrary all their teachings recognize it as necessary and even indispensable. Their ministers, instead of battling fearlessly, persistently and with giant strength against wickedness in every form and in every class, discourse in silvery accents, in such a mild, placid manner upon its heinousness that men are lulled into the sleep of security, instead of being aroused to a sense of their peril. The orthodox religions of the day are popular religions; their ministers court popularity; they cannot afford to forfeit the good opinion of the wicked. The result is, wickedness thrives and flourishes under their auspices; it permeates their civilization, and they are powerless to prevent its development.

This is illustrated in the towns which mark the progress of the great continental railroad. Men of God, servants of Jesus Christ, would soon finish their labors among such people as throng the line of the Pacific railroad. They would either bring about a change in the conduct of those folks, or they would, like Lot at Sodom and Gomorrah, leave them to their fate. No true servant of God could long labor among the corruption with which the very atmosphere reeks in those places. If they did not change, he would be compelled to shake the dust off his feet as a testimony against such people, and to take his departure. But popular ministers can dwell among them and sanction by their presence these foul blots upon their civilization, and, in the midst of orgies the most disgusting, talk to them about Jesus, and the blood that washes away all sin! Who can reflect upon these things and not entertain a feeling of contempt for men who thus profane so holy a name in such a connection, and who degrade themselves, while professing to have so sacred a calling, by dwelling amid such surroundings?

The system believed in by the Latter-day Saints is perfect: but its believers are not. The aim of its ministers is to

make themselves and the people as perfect as the religion. Of course, when this is accomplished sin will be subdued. Contrast what has been done under the civilization which it has produced with what exists elsewhere. Two facts alone speak volumes in favor of its superiority: One is, young men grow to manhood, and when they marry, their brides find them pure and virtuous; the other is, a case of secret disease is not known among the Latter-day Saints in Utah. These alone are proofs sufficient to satisfy every reasonable, thinking person of what our religion has done here, without mentioning the entire absence of intemperance and other evils.

### THE HIGH WATERS WEST, AND THEIR REMEDY.

THE article on "Stagnant Waters," which appeared in the NEWS of last Saturday week, has elicited some further information on the subject, which claims attention. We had a call from Br. Edwin Rushton, of the 6th Ward, and received a note from Col. J. C. Little, both of whom have been interested in the subject and engaged in efforts to thoroughly drain the land referred to. From the visit and note, and subsequent interviews with Col. Little and Bro. Rushton we have obtained the information to which reference is made.

As we believe, the draining of the land between this city and the Jordan is not so difficult an undertaking as might be imagined. Colonel Little entered upon the work of draining last Spring with his accustomed energy, means having been raised for the purpose, and cut a canal from the west end of north Temple Street to Hot Spring Lake, to drain the bottoms of the water accumulating there. There is a fall of seven feet and two inches, from where the canal commences to its terminal point at Hot Spring Lake, which is perfectly sufficient to carry the water off; and the work was prosecuted with such energy that it was almost completed, when the high waters of the past season rose and compelled those laboring upon it to suspend operations before the canal was finished. To carry away the entire volume of water that should go in this channel, however, the canal will require to be widened, so as to allow City Creek to find an outlet in that way instead of emptying into the Jordan as at present.

To preserve the road running west for the travel in that direction, a levee was thrown up by the Territorial authorities on the west bank of the river, so that, when swollen by the spring floods, its waters might be prevented from overflowing in that direction. But this forced the water over the east bank on to the bottom land between the river and the city, and along on the east side of the river, doing a vast amount of damage and increasing very largely, if not entirely forming, the stagnant waters to which reference has been made. To remedy this the public made donations of a considerable amount of means, and a large amount of work has been done in throwing up a levee on the east side, between the 6th Ward bridge and the Church pasture, as well as in making the canal alluded to. This levee is not however completed, there being a gap in it still to fill up, and it is estimated that it will require something like \$600 to fill this gap. There should also be a levee thrown up between the 6th Ward bridge and the Jordan bridge, on which work has already been done to the amount of \$200. The owners of land between the two bridges would be willing to aid liberally in constructing this latter levee. With the canal widened, and with these levees built from the pasture to Jordan bridge, the land on the east side of Jordan in the vicinity of the river would be kept free from water, and would be very valuable, as it is perhaps the best soil in the county.

The importance of this matter is beyond question, whether or not the desired object can be gained in the manner pointed out, and as cheaply as estimated. However opinion may run with regard to the water west of the city being a cause of disease, scarcely any one could be found who would object to even a supposed source of sickness and mortality being removed, even if the expense were considerable. The less philanthropic reason, of bringing the ground into available use, also has its weight. And we hope the liberality of the public will be directed towards the widening of the canal between Jordan bridge and the Hot Spring Lake sufficiently to carry off the full volume of water that can be taken in that direction, and the completing of the levees now partly constructed. The Territory, the county and the municipal author-

ities, we have no question, would cheerfully aid in the accomplishment of so desirable an object, should it be deemed the best thing to do; and we understand considerable means has been received from this source for the furtherance of work already done.

It has been suggested to take out a part of the water of Jordan on the west side, about a mile above the 6th Ward bridge, and carry it to the White Lakes, thence through the Three Mile Hollow to Box's Slough, and from there to Salt Lake; or to take it out at Jordan Bridge and convey it to the Lake. But there is a serious objection to this. The water of Salt Lake is found by actual survey to be nine feet higher than formerly, and the tapping of Jordan at either of the places named and carrying the water towards the Lake, would result in the submerging of a very large and valuable tract of land. Should the water of the Lake continue to rise and the mountain streams running down the east side of this valley increase in volume, as they have for a year or two past, serious difficulty may have to be encountered from the backing of the waters. But as this is a contingency which may or may not arise, it is needless discussing it now. We hope, though, that the work of draining the land in the neighborhood of this City will be prosecuted with energy, for sanitary and pecuniary considerations; and that the owners of land in that neighborhood, the municipal, county and Territorial authorities, with the public at large, will unitedly adopt such measures and carry them into effect, as shall accomplish the greatest possible good in the matter.

### "THE MORMON QUESTION."

WE hope our readers will not be startled at the heading of our article. We think the subject is not altogether new to them; they have heard of it before. A contemporary in Nevada—the *Recess River Reveille*—has discovered some new features in the question. He promises us a greater share of attention than he has heretofore bestowed upon us. He says:

"Now that we are about to be freed from the perplexing legislation attending the suppression of the rebellion, we will be in a situation to devote a little more time and consideration to our 'Mormon Brethren.'" This is consoling to us, and we think it will be a relief to the readers of its columns. It will be a refreshing change after being surfeited with the long and dreary leaders on political topics which have been its principal matter for months. We are somewhat in the position of a blacksmith of whom we once heard. He was a burly, stalwart fellow, but rather good tempered. His wife was rather small, but what she lacked in size she made up in temper. She was a vixen; her chief delight seemed to be when angry, to vex and torment her good-natured spouse. She even went so far sometimes as to strike him. One of his friends undertook to remonstrate with him for submitting to such abuse, and asked him how he could endure blows from a woman without losing his temper. He replied that as it amused her, and did not hurt him he did not think it worth while to get angry about it.

Now, if it will amuse the *Reveille* and its readers to bestow time and consideration upon their "Mormon Brethren," as it will not hurt us we feel assured that the "Brethren" will have no objection.

In the *Reveille's* judgment it will require something more than the completion of the overland railroad to solve this knotty problem of "Mormonism." It thinks those who have looked forward to its solution through that means are over sanguine. We are happy to find the *Reveille* agree with us on this point; that has always been our opinion. We could not think much of a system of religion, the perpetuity of which should depend on the non-construction of a railroad; and it is certainly satisfactory to know that the *Reveille* has a better opinion of our system than to think it one of that kind.

The *Reveille* is evidently splenetic, and the cause of it we can best state in its own words. It says:

"It is now becoming manifest, that the President of the Mormon Church, a mere ecclesiastical authority, has power to control its laity in their relations of trade and traffic, even to their pecuniary disadvantage. He has issued an edict against their trading with Gentile merchants, and the decree is obeyed more implicitly than is a Firman from the Grand Pasha of Turkey."

It is too bad, perhaps, but we cannot sympathize with the *Reveille* in thinking this a bad condition of things. The "Mormons" have always been just that

kind of people. If they would have been controlled by what appeared to be to their pecuniary advantage, they would never have come to Utah. They certainly had, first in Missouri and afterward in Illinois, what did appear to be at the time a better thing. Perhaps it is unconstitutional, perhaps it is criminal for a "mere ecclesiastical authority" to exercise influence over people to induce them to adopt a policy that may seem prudent and wise; but if it is so, we have failed to get that understanding of it. We do not think the *Reveille* would object to being placed in possession of influence sufficient to induce the citizens of Austin to follow its lead in political matters and to vote for the nominees of the party of which it is an organ. Its editor is doubtless a modest gentleman, but we think we do him no discredit when we say, that to wield such influence would not shock his modesty in the least.

The *Reveille* shows what it would do with those who differ from it. Because we will not trade where, it says, we can get goods cheaper than anywhere else, it has a punishment prepared for us. Now, we always supposed that every citizen had a constitutional right to trade where and with whom he pleased—in New York, San Francisco, or even Austin, and with Jews or Gentiles in all or any of those places to suit his own convenience and taste. If the *Reveille* be correct, we have been mistaken in our ideas; for it threatens us with a penalty for not trading to suit its notions. It acknowledges that our refusal to patronize a certain class is a question full of perplexities, and that it does not feel itself competent to indicate a line of policy adequate to the occasion. But one suggestion occurs to it, and it puts it forth for what it is worth. To be candid we must say that we do not think it worth much. It is the partition of our Territory.

Wyoming Territory is established, and it is almost without population, let the southern line be extended as far west as Salt Lake City, thence running as far north as may be deemed practicable. Then a portion of our southern border might be in time, if not immediately, united to a portion of territory taken from New Mexico and Colorado, and a new Territory created. This course of policy would forever, as it appears to the *Reveille's* view, deprive the Mormon Church, as an Ecclesiastical body, of obtaining or wielding political power to any extent. Whatever of political influence we might acquire would be divided instead of concentrated as at present.

A very pretty arrangement truly—on paper, always pre-supposing also that we are to sit still and allow the programme to be carried out. Does the *Reveille* think that it is the soil that gives political power? Suppose we were to be divided up into two or three Territories, who would be the people? Why, if the "Mormons" would be in the majority, as they undoubtedly would be in each of these Territories contemplated by the *Reveille*, instead of sending one Delegate to Congress, as at the present time they would send two or three. Not long since Nevada's Senators thought they would relieve everybody from all further trouble about us, and solve the problem themselves, and they proposed to annex Utah to Nevada. An influential gentleman sent a telegram to Washington that possibly had some influence in producing a change in their views. They found such a move would suit us too well. We might become a State, and a power in the nation when they least wished it. The scheme received no further attention. The *Reveille's* plan is opened to similar objections, and it must conclude, upon reflection, that the "knotty problem" can not be solved in the way it proposes.

But, why make that a problem which is no problem at all? This whole subject is a simple one and easy of solution. The people of Utah mind their own business. This is their creed. They do nobody any harm. If they withhold their patronage from their enemies and bestow it on their friends, that is their indefeasible right. Others do the same without question. It is this meddling, dictatorial spirit that has made us all the trouble we have ever had, and it is that which makes us a problem. Let us alone and we are no knotty problem; but plain, simple, loyal folks, who love God and our country, and who are trying our best to honor One and develop the other.

The mineral product of Great Britain and Ireland in 1867 was valued at £48,480,002 or \$217,000,000 in gold.