

# DESERET NEWS: WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

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## IS IT COMPUSSION?

THE calling of missionaries at the recent General Conference in this city has attracted more than usual attention, and comments are being made upon our missionary system by many public journals which have hitherto said little or nothing about it. Great prominence has been given to our faith and principles by the crusade that has been inaugurated against them, and in this we discern the hand of Providence which guides the issues of all things.

In the discussion by the press of our methods of proselytism, the same lack of knowledge is exhibited which characterizes the treatment of other parts of the "Mormon" question. It is assumed that there is coercive force exercised here both in ecclesiastical and political affairs. The compulsion supposed to exist by which the "Mormons" are brought to unity at the polls is imagined to prevail over the Elders called to go on missions to preach the Gospel. It appears to be difficult for persons not of our faith to comprehend the voluntary union which draws our people to vote alike, and the willing obedience which our Elders render to the combined voice of their leaders and the people in a General Conference.

This is not to be wondered at. There is so much division in the world—among professing Christians as much as among non-religionists, and selfishness prevails to such a wide extent, that free union and general voluntary self-sacrifice are something extraordinary. And yet these exist almost universally among the Latter-day Saints, and that which is popularly attributed to some mysterious force exercised by a few men over the multitude is nothing more nor less than spontaneous devotion springing from deep-rooted and abiding convictions.

The Brooklyn (New York) Times says:

"The answer of the Church of the Latter-day Saints at Salt Lake City to the anti-Mormon legislation of Congress, is the selection of 200 missionaries by the April Conference recently held at Ogden. Of these missionaries 33 have already set forth on their arduous enterprise, and the remainder will follow without delay.

This is a mistake. The selection of missionaries to various parts of the world is no "answer to anti-Mormon" legislation, or anything to do with it in any shape. Missionaries are called at every General Conference in the same manner. Our system is essentially missionary. The command of God to the whole Church in its beginning was, "Let every man that is warned, warn his neighbor." This "gospel of the kingdom" is to be preached to "all the world for a witness" of the approach of "the end." It is for this reason that all the members of the Church hold it to be part of their duty to aid in the dissemination of its principles, and duty is in their estimation far above personal desire or individual temporal interest. Indeed the sayings of the Savior on this subject are to them living commands, not a dead letter, or a matter of mere sentiment. And this constitutes one great difference between them and the people who arrogate to themselves the exclusive title of "Christians."

The Times further says:

"Every male adult member of the Latter-day Church is, according to the Mormon theory, a priest after the order of Melchisedek." Every Mormon is, therefore, competent to discharge all the functions of priesthood and is liable, as the Society of Jesus also are, to summary conscription for missionary service."

This is another mistake. No man has a right to discharge any of the functions of the Priesthood until

called or ordained to it, and his duties are confined to those specially included in the particular office to which he is appointed. It is true that a very large number of the male members of the Church occupy some position in the Priesthood and are therefore ready to act in their callings whenever required. But every "Mormon" is not "competent to discharge all the functions of priesthood," and no one is a priest simply because he is a "Mormon."

We make another quotation from the Times:

"When the nominations are confirmed by the Conference, there is no further appeal, and the luckless missionaries must needs say goodbye to their families and set forth with as good grace as possible on their arduous journey. Any symptoms of recalcitrance or hesitation are promptly punished, and the devout Mormon, knowing the mysterious terrors involved in the threat of being 'cut off from Zion' and 'held as a heathen man and a publican,' seldom ventures to complain of the mandate of the Conference."

Wrong again. There is no compulsion of any kind in the call or the "confirmation by the Conference." Every man is free to do as he will. Neither is there any "punishment" for "recalcitrance" except such as may exist in the man's own bosom who refuses to perform a duty required by his religion. Any Elder called to a mission may decline. Indeed none are wanted but the willing. And if it is seldom that any one refuses, it is not because he is forced to go, but because his conscience will not allow him to remain when called of God in the combined voice of the leaders and the people.

The Times adds:

"It must be admitted, if the spirit of the missionaries may be judged by the result of their labors, that most of them take up the work to which they are assigned with genuine zeal and the true missionary spirit. They are sent forth as were the early Christian evangelists, as sheep in the midst of wolves, carrying neither purse nor scrip and laboring with their own hands for their necessities."

Now if this is the case, and it is true in the main, how can it be reconciled with the idea of compulsion? Could men, compelled to perform such service, take up the work with the genuine zeal and true missionary spirit which are manifested by "Mormon" propagandists? We throw not. Their path is often a thorny one and they do not lie on a bed of roses; as the Times acknowledges:

"They are not always assured of hospitable treatment in the field of their missionary labors, for not only in Tennessee and Georgia, but in many of the European countries, it is considered quite in order to mob the Mormons, but they carry on their work with a fidelity worthy of a better cause, and they seldom fail to gather in large numbers of disciples."

All this we submit is evidence that the supposed compulsion of these missionaries is imaginary and that there is some stronger impulse at work in the hearts of these men, laboring in an unpopular cause in the face of so many difficulties; and the success which attends their ministry is evidence of the sincerity and devotion which animate them in their labor of love. And it appears to us not a little strange that in view of the facts, thinking men who write for the public do not depart from the beaten track, in which sectarian preachers and slipshod writers have walked so long in pursuance of a solution of the "Mormon" problem, and take some other path. The motive-power behind this "Mormon" movement has never been understood. In the very nature of things it cannot be compulsion exercised by a few over the many. It is irrational to think so in the case of "Mormon" missionaries; it is equally unreasonable in relation to "Mormon" marriages and "Mormon" voting. And he who wishes to comprehend it must look in a different direction to that which has hitherto drawn the common attention.

The Times thinks it probable that the effects of the Edmunds bill will be different from those expected, and will be followed by a "Mormon revival like that which followed the Nauvoo persecutions," and concludes as follows:

"Whatever we may think of the delusions or impostures of Joseph

Smith, however bitterly we may reprobate the curse of polygamy, it is difficult to withhold a tribute of admiration to the unflinching courage of the Mormon Church, to the fidelity of its disciples to their convictions, and to the self-denying ardor of its missionaries. It is a thousand pities, in this age of selfish ambitions and narrow aims, that these noble qualities cannot be enlisted in a worthy cause."

We invite the writer of these sentences to an examination into the probabilities that "the cause" which enlists the energies and self-denying ardor of so many people of all nations, is, after all, a "worthy" one. It is easy to cry "delusion" and attribute "imposture" to that which we do not understand. But a system which holds together its votaries with the unity and fidelity and self-sacrifice which is shown in the history of the "Mormons," must have something in it worthy of impartial consideration and may be altogether different to that which has been represented. And we can assure those who thus investigate, that the noble qualities, unflinching courage, genuine zeal, enduring patience and missionary spirit so noticeable in the "Mormon" people, are the consequences of engagement in a cause which evolves them and tends to cast down and suppress that which is ignoble and selfish and vile. Such a system must in itself have something of good which has not been recognized by the multitude of its opponents, and it might be that he who looks with unprejudiced eyes may joyfully discern therein the "one thing needful," the "pearl of great price."

## ANOTHER CANAL SCHEME.

DE LESSEPS, the great ditch digger, having started his scheme for the Panama canal, so far as to organize a financial company for its construction, has turned his attention to another big project in the line of his peculiar genius. He now proposes to cut a channel through which the sea may flow into the Desert of Sahara, restoring it to its alleged ancient condition as a great salt water lake. The benefits expected to result from this scheme are a southern sea coast to Algeria and Tunis, a change which will be of great advantage to France, and of value to the surrounding country by reason of the moisture, which is expected to make fruitful a region now arid and incapable of cultivation.

The idea is not new. De Lesseps does not figure as an originator of ideas so much as a practical organizer of means to give long considered ideas effect. The Suez Canal, which he built and which has proved successful, was talked of for scores of years before he took hold of the work of digging the great ditch which has made such a change in the world's commercial navigation. The Panama canal has engaged the attention of both Europeans and Americans for a long period, but he has taken hold of it in earnest as something to be done. And so with his latest scheme, which he has managed to impress upon the minds of his countrymen enough to enlist the aid of the French Government.

The Desert of Sahara spreads out below the level of the sea and it is claimed was once a great saline lake fed from the ocean, communication with which was cut off by accumulations of sand, and evaporation without supply caused the transformation into a dry and cheerless desert. De Lesseps proposes to cut a channel from the Gulf of Gabes, in Tunis, to the desert and turn in the waters of the Mediterranean. Of course the plan has its opponents. The theory of the former inland sea is denied by some scientists, and others declare that if the scheme should prove so far successful as to flood the desert, it would not prove of any practical use, but would merely be a succession of vast marshes which would dry up enough to become stagnant pools, breeding disease, instead of a sea or lake on which vessels could float, or from which the surrounding country would receive the benefits suggested.

Whatever may be the result it is quite likely that the project will be started, and that France will find the millions necessary to perform the latest work laid out by its world-famous engineer, and thus turn a desert into a sea by turning the sea into a desert.

## CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.

Wednesday, April 26.

At the morning session which commenced at 10 o'clock, the preamble and articles of the Constitution were read by sections up to and including a portion of article six.

In section nine in the article on Bill of Rights, Mr. Bryan moved to insert the words "or her" after the word "his."

Mr. Penrose objected and stated that man embraces women, and there is a specific law in the statute book which makes the masculine include the feminine. The motion was lost.

Mr. Thoreson moved that the words "State of Deseret" be placed in the Constitution in place of the words "State of Utah."

Mr. Hatch replied that we are known throughout the world as Utah, and the expenses would be great on making necessary changes for legal purposes.

Mr. Penrose was not proud of the name Utah. It is derived from a dirty, thieving band of Indians; Deseret sounds euphonious and signifies a honey bee and the name is suggestive of industry, and is redolent of blossoms and of flowers.

Mr. Stout said we started out with the name of Deseret for our original organization; Congress had refused us that name, and it seems that we want them to take water.

Mr. Caine said we have tried three times to get admission as a State under the name of Deseret and failed, and he wanted to try the name of Utah. Deseret may be a sweet name but it has a sting.

Mr. Mack was in favor of the name of Utah.

Mr. Baty first learned to love the name of Utah from the words of a hymn composed by Mr. Penrose and he loved it still.

Mr. Tanner favored the name of Utah, and said that people can honor a name though a name can do no honor to a people.

The motion to change the name was lost.

In section 6, article 4, on suffrage, Mr. Bryan moved to insert the word "male." He was opposed to bringing the names of our wives, sisters, or daughters, into common use by hoodlums, drunkards and professional politicians. We love gentleness, modesty, and retirement in women. Wanted the convention to assert that it did not sanction women assuming the role of men.

Mrs. Kimball replied that she found in every phase of life the sexes were improved by associating together, and she knew of no reason why woman should not have a voice in making the laws for her government as well as man.

The motion was lost.

Mr. Rawlins moved an additional section to article four, providing that each qualified elector may cast as many votes for one candidate as there are representatives to be elected in the county or district. This is a provision for what is known as minority representation. He said it is in the interest of good government for all sentiments and views to be heard. An opposition minority can not control a majority, but may offer judicious suggestions. In every country where the majority had unlimited and undisputed sway, errors in legislation had crept in. The motion was lost.

Amendments were offered and adopted to article six, when the convention took recess till 2 p.m.

2 p.m.

At the afternoon session, a discussion arose between Messrs. Rawlins, Stout, Penrose, Richards, Booth, Thurman and Tanner on the powers conferred upon the legislature in reference to the judiciary, and a sub-committee of five, consisting of Messrs. Rawlins, Richards, Booth, Sharp and Thurman were appointed to consider sections 1 and 6 of article vi. Pending the reading of subsequent articles, the committee returned with an amendment giving power to the legislature to extend limited common law and chancery jurisdiction to other than the circuit courts; adopted.

The Constitution had been considered as far as the XV Article at the time of our going to press. The adjournment will be till 10 a. m. tomorrow.

Thursday, April 27.

At the session of the Convention this morning, Sidney Hudson sent in a petition asking for some changes in the constitutional form of government. Laid on the table.

An amendment was made to Section 4 of Article 17, relating to the jurisdiction of courts on persons and the subject matter of cases arising thereunder.

The motion of Mr. Card for changing the representation appointment in the Constitution voted down yesterday afternoon, was taken up again and reconsidered. Several of the members gave different views on this subject, and a motion at last prevailed increasing the representation of the northern counties, and decreasing that of some of the southern.

Mr. Sheeks offered a motion to submit to the people an article to be numbered Article XVII, but Mr. Wells stating that the matter had been fully considered in the revision committee and not adopted, the motion was not carried.

After an amendment by Mr. Wells to section 2 of the Bill of Rights, the committee rose and the report of the committee of the whole was adopted.

Mr. Riter moved that three copies of the Constitution be engrossed and signed by the members of the convention; carried.

The Constitution of the State of Utah was read by its title and passed; 59 ayes, 13 members being absent.

On motion of Mr. Richards 5,000 copies of the Constitution, the list of names of the committees, and the minutes of the Convention were ordered printed for distribution.

Messrs. Wells, Caine, Richards, Penrose and Winder were appointed a committee on memorial; and the same gentlemen were authorized to act as an advisory committee until after the election for the ratification of the Constitution.

Convention adjourned until the 6th of June, at 2 p. m.

## LOCAL AND OTHER MATTERS.

FROM FRIDAY'S DAILY, APRIL 23.

Burglary at Santaquin in. — Last night, the Santaquin, Utah County, co-operative store, was burglarized. The robbers got away with a hundred dollars in cash and two on checks on the Utah Forwarding Company for twenty-five dollars each. No clue to the perpetrators of the deed.

Died in Kansas. — By letter from J. F. Doxford, written at Salina, Salina County, Kansas, we learn of the death there, on the 20th inst., of R. A. Baird, a former resident of this city. He ceased was born Marion, Perry County, Ala., Nov. 21st, 1833. He was the son of Samuel Baird and Matilda Rutledge was a member of the Church many years, living at Salt Lake City. On the 3d of Oct., 1876, he left for California, and finally drifted to Kansas, where he was found by the Elders last fall, and then rebaptized a member of the Church.

Accident at Carbon. — The forenoon's train brought in from Carbon the almost lifeless body of Gus Leal, a coal miner who last evening fell down the shaft in one of the coal mines situated at that place. The accident occurred about 6 o'clock last evening. The shaft down which the unfortunate was precipitated was about thirty-five feet deep, and he brought with him in his fall a quantity of rocks, timber and dirt.

Dr. Maghee attended Leal and discovered in his examination of his injuries that the poor fellow had his collar-bone broken, his head badly bruised, and had also sustained some rather severe bodily injuries. — Laramie Times, April 26th.

Painful Accident. — The Ogden Pilot learns that J. Hale, foreman of a pile driver on the eastern division of the Oregon Short Line Railroad, met with a serious accident last Saturday, by having his right hand caught in a sheave of the pile driver. His hand was drawn and mashed in a terrible manner. The place where he was at work was forty miles from the end of the track and the nearest place where relief could be obtained was Evanston, to which point the unfortunate man was conveyed. Mr. Hale suffered greatly and Dr. Hocker, the assistant of Union Pacific surgeon T. E. Mitchell, of Ogden, on Tuesday (last) amputated three fingers of his hand. Mr. Hale is now doing as well as could be expected under the circumstances.

The Arizona Trouble. — A gentleman who resides in Arizona, and who lately arrived from that part of the country, states that the reports