

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

THE BOOK OF MORMON.

Recently an attack has been made on the Book of Mormon from a somewhat unique point of view. It has been argued that because the translation did not appear in the most elegant English language, but, on the contrary, contained grammatical errors, therefore it could not be given through inspiration. Divine inspiration, it is claimed, would not only exclude every possible error, but produce a perfect work, as judged by classical standards.

It would seem a little late in the day to urge such an objection, in view of the fact that thousands—and among them men entitled to be regarded as scholars—have accepted the Book of Mormon as being all that is claimed for it, with full knowledge of its contents and peculiarity of style. Common sense and regard for truth would suggest the propriety of giving due consideration to this fact in a discussion of the authenticity of the record.

The question involved is an old one, and one upon which various opinions have been expressed. It is this, whether when the Almighty selects a human instrument through which to communicate with mankind, the individual so chosen, while under the special divine influence, loses all voluntary action or not. This was the view held among the ancient pagans as well as the uninspired Jews. The first Christian authors said but little on this point, but with the Reformation it was found necessary to examine the doctrine of inspiration closely, both on account of the claims of papacy and the claims of the Reformers that the Scriptures are the ultimate authority.

Some arrived at the conclusion that the divine Spirit dictated the sacred Scriptures word for word, as we have them in the original languages. But this theory has not found favor. It has been shown to be inconsistent with facts and with the claims of the inspired writers themselves. We are not aware that the Prophet Joseph ever claimed for the translation of the Book of Mormon any other kind of divine inspiration than that which guided the ancient Prophets, Evangelists and Apostles when they communicated the will of God to men. This the assailants of his mission are sometimes apt to lose sight of.

With regard to the ancient Scriptures, it is perfectly clear that the writers, while under the divine influence, were allowed the full use of their own faculties, their mental peculiarities, their own amount of knowledge and modes of thinking. We find the sacred authors engaged in "diligent research." We find them give different accounts of the same event; they quote from inspired authors and even from uninspired documents; diversity of style, arising from differences in social surroundings or educational influences, is noticeable throughout; even provincialisms and barbarisms are found in the sacred writings of the Bible. This is positive proof that the mental faculties of the authors were not removed and divine faculties substituted while under divine influence; it is a proof that God simply made use of the powers with which His servants were endowed when it was His infinite pleasure to communicate with man in this way.

And how could it be otherwise? When the word of the Lord came to His ancient servants with a command to write, this did not mean that the

Lord was to supply miraculously the writing materials, making a good pen out of one already unfit for use; nor did He guide the hand that wrote to the extent that a bad handwriting became a perfect specimen of penmanship. As little did He miraculously guard against grammatical errors. What He did was this: He enlightened the minds of His servants in regard to the truths He desired to communicate to men and entrusted to them to give this communication through the channels of which they were the guardians. Their knowledge, their mental faculties, their accomplishments were at the service of the divine Master; that is, they were inspired.

If we remember what divine inspiration is as seen in the sacred writings of the Bible, there can be no reasonable objection to the alleged imperfections of the Book of Mormon translation given through the Prophet Joseph. They only prove that the Spirit of the Almighty operated through him in the same manner as through Isaiah, Ezekiel, John or Paul. That he at the time he was chosen as translator of the Book of Mormon, stands among the noble assembly of inspired men as the illiterate youth does not in any way lower the immense value of the work he brought to light, while under divine influence. On the contrary, the very peculiarities are one proof of its truth. If in the lowly fishermen from the shores of Galilee, whose rural dialect was a matter of contempt to the scholars of their age, we can see the exalted Apostles of the Lamb of God; if in the carpenter's son of Nazareth, who died as a malefactor on a cross, faith can behold the Ruler of the heavens and the earth, it is a small matter to acknowledge in the illiterate boy, Joseph, a servant of the Most High.

THE QUEEN OF DENMARK.

The present year will be noted in history as one in which an unusual number of noted persons are removed from this sphere of action by death. Another name, that of the queen of Denmark, has been added to the list. She has been ill for some months but her condition has not been made known to the public, so the announcement of her demise is to some extent a surprise.

For the last thirty years Queen Louise has exerted a secret influence upon European politics quite remarkable when all the circumstances are considered, and entirely out of proportion to the rank of her country in the family of nations. By skilful diplomacy she succeeded in establishing relations with the most powerful courts of Europe. Princess Alexandra became the wife of the Prince of Wales, and Princess Dagmar the empress of Russia, while Prince Wilhelm was made king of Greece. It is no secret that Russia's policy during the reign of Alexander was largely shaped at Copenhagen, where the late Russian emperor and his Danish consort were frequent guests.

It is probably no misstatement of fact to say that the queen has been the actual ruler of Denmark, and that but for her intelligence and strong will King Christian's path as a ruler would have been everything but smooth. At the beginning of their reign they had the misfortune of losing Schlesvig and Holstein to Prussia after a brief but heroic war. Since then, the country has enjoyed peace and made wonderful prog-

ress towards prosperity. Of late years the mighty currents of democracy have swept over the country, and were apparently stemmed only after a long and bitter struggle directed from the throne. The death of the queen is sure to be followed by changes in the political life of the country in the interest of government by the people.

OLD AGE.

A court somewhere recently decided that a man was old at the age of 65. This has about as much of instructiveness in it as the expression "as large as a piece of chalk," or "as long as a string." Some men are younger at 65 than others are at half that age, and some at 35 are as old as others are at 70. There are plenty of men who are only 40 who have furrowed brows, gray hair, weak knees and the other evidences of decay much more pronounced than many who have passed the milestone of life indicated by the court's ruling. The fact is that as a general proposition, in this respect, we are largely the architects of our own life structure. With reasonable health and in the absence of casualties of any kind, a man should be vigorous, sprightly and capable at the age spoken of, and there should be no impairment of his faculties for many years following. Of course some were born to longevity and some to brief periods of life; such cases are not being considered.

The late President Woodruff was in his ninety-second year at the time of his death and was not at all in a state of mental or physical decline when the summons came. Of Gladstone the same may be said with the exception of a few years in favor of the latter; also of Bismarck. Men and women who live to be 100 are not at all rare. The New York World has unearthed a man who was born in 1800 and gives every promise of seeing the century out that brought him in; besides which his experience is pronounced the most remarkable of which any man in Texas can boast. His name is "Uncle" Dick Fitch and he lives at White Mound, ten miles southeast of Sherman. He has almost lived to see three centuries. Born in Claiborne county, Tenn., he went to Texas and located on his present home on July 16, 1844. He has seen Texas under three forms of government, a province of Mexico, a republic and a state of the Union. He tells many interesting stories of the early days of Texas. The once wilderness of the Lone Star state has been opened to civilization, and with tomahawk and flint-lock musket Uncle Dick Fitch helped to blaze the way. He graphically recounts scenes of waving tomahawk and Indian war-whoop when Indian life-blood drenched the ground and red men fell before the paleface. Uncle Dick carries a cane, but can walk well without it. He once used glasses, but now reads with perfect ease without them. He has not a tooth in his head, but eats regularly three meals a day, exclusively vegetable diet. He retires early and arises before daylight, a custom which has been his since childhood. He says he wants to live to see the twentieth century. If one could depend upon appearance it would no doubt be safe to say that Uncle Dick Fitch would live beyond that age.

It has remained for England to cap the climax in the matter of longevity. The Lowestoft Journal tells of a case which seems hitherto to have escaped attention. It was observed on the chancel wall of the ancient church of Goring in Oxfordshire. The inscription is as follows:

"Here lyeth buried the body of Hugh