

"JUGGLERY AND GAMMON."

THE eastern papers still make notices of the utterances on the "Mormon" question of "President" Sam Small, as he now delights to style himself. He informs us that, "The proclamation of the Mormons that they will obey the United States laws and drop polygamy, is a delusion and a snare, mere jugglery and gammon." He uses other and similar elegant expressions which show that he is as coarse as he is ignorant. This Small traveling religious mendicant knows nothing whatever of "Mormonism" or the "Mormons," except what may have been told him during a few days' sojourn at Ogden, and his sources of information were not of a kind likely to convey the unadulterated truth. But Small permits his imagination to play a large part in his utterances, and being so well acquainted with "jugglery and gammon" in his adventures for the pious purpose of gathering money, he naturally attributes to others the motives and the sentiments by which he is prompted himself. As a dealer in religious "jugglery and gammon," "President" Sam Small is a notorious wholesale merchant.

THE JEWISH NATION AT THE FIRST ADVENT OF CHRIST.

THE religious condition of the Jews, at the time of the first advent of our Lord, was one of spiritual confusion. It resembled, in many respects, our own age and gave, in its state of corruption, evidence of the necessity of the appearance of a Savior before the whole economy had passed beyond the possibility of salvation.

For a period of almost four hundred years, from the days of Malachi, there had been no inspired prophet among the people. They had gathered up the ancient sacred manuscripts and counted every letter, every iota, therein, but the true meaning of the Word was hidden to them. They had, notwithstanding their adherence to the letter of the Law, strayed so far away as to have forgotten Him who gave it. And so, when the time came for God again to reveal Himself, they did not recognize His voice. He did not find any of the priests, who had charge of the sanctuary and of the sacred things, willing or worthy to be His messenger, but He had to commission one whose voice was heard in the wilderness. And this messenger,

sent to prepare the way for the Savior, was rejected by those who called themselves the servants of the Lord, and finally was put to death, because he testified against sin and corruption. John the Baptist, the herald of the first advent of Christ, was received no better than Joseph Smith the Prophet, the mighty herald of His second advent.

The lack of the voice of inspiration among the Jews had resulted in their breaking up into numerous factions. The Pharisees were the leading sect at the time. Not only were they in a majority, but they were held in high repute among the common people. The members of this sect professed to be eminently holy and pious. Their name is probably derived from the Hebrew word "pharash" meaning "separated," and was applied to them because they held themselves to be above everybody else. They are often noted in the New Testament as they came in contact with our Lord, and they received from Him the severest rebukes. And well they deserved those rebukes from Him, who could see how far they in reality were from what they professed to be. It is known that they treated not only strangers, but the poor and the unlearned among their own people as an "accursed" mob, unworthy of the mercy of God; they were strict observers of the Sabbath as far as the ceremonial law was concerned, while they had no idea of worshiping God in spirit and in truth; they took oaths, but held that they were not bound by them, if there had been a mental reservation to the contrary; they accounted their evil desires of no importance; nor did they feel condemned for indulging in avarice and extortion, so long as they paid a little tithing of mint and anise and cummin and other equally insignificant herbs: in the words of a modern divine, they thought they could justify their stealing of a goose by giving the intestines to the Lord; their whole religion consisted in outward ceremonies. Mosheim observes that their whole system was founded on hypocrisy. Yet, they had such an influence over the people that they were able to exercise some influence on the direction of the public affairs. And they did this, leading the blind mass on to destruction. For to their fanaticism is to be traced the events that led to the last desolation of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Jewish polity.

With all their faults, with all their hatred towards Jesus, it must be said to their credit that they took hardly any part in the cruel condemnation and death of the Lord. The honor of this must be laid utterly to the priests of that age. The Pharisees were no friends of the priests, who were presided over by a Sadducee, appointed by the Romans. They had, therefore, a double cause for hating the priests. These reverends of the Jews had, besides, through their avarice, defiled the temple by introducing various branches of business therein for their own profit, and it is known that this was one of the points of quarrel between the Pharisees and Sadducees. When our Lord cleansed the temple, his act was, no doubt, endorsed by the Pharisees and the majority of the people. But it gained for Him the deadly hatred of the priests, and they swore to take his life, although they had to be somewhat cautious about their proceedings, just on account of the opposition among the people. And they probably could not have succeeded in their dark deed, had they not had the assistance of the Roman power. As long as our Lord wandered about in Palestine, His most bitter opponents were the Pharisees; but it is not known that they attempted to assassinate Him. As soon as He had defied the priests, these turned against Him and murdered Him.

We have mentioned the Sadducees. This sect was not so numerous as the Pharisees, but many of the wealthiest Jews belonged to them. The origin of them is traced back to about 250 years before Christ, to a president of the Sanhedrim, named Sochæus. He taught that man should serve God from a purely disinterested feeling and not in order to gain any reward or to avoid any punishment. This doctrine was later perverted into a denial of the existence of eternal rewards and punishments as well as of the existence of the spirit after the death of the body. And from this, there was only another step to the denial of the existence of everything spiritual, also of God, and of the resurrection.

Having arrived at these views, they had necessarily to deny the authenticity of the Scriptures, as they did, excepting the five books of Moses. But these they adhered to merely as a code of civil laws, for the political guidance of the people.

Strange to say, even the Saddu-