

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

JOSEPH THE PROPHET.

It is especially appropriate at this time to contemplate the life-work of a man who, during a brief but eventful career, wrote his name in indelible characters on the annals of the world. Tomorrow, Sunday, December 23, is the anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Joseph, who was born on that date, 1805, in Sharon, Windsor county, Vermont.

To say that the mighty messenger from God to man in this century was the greatest Prophet ever raised up among men, the Son of God excepted, is now startling only to those who are accustomed to look to the gray antiquity alone for their ideals; or to those who have never seriously considered what the teachings of Joseph, the Prophet, were. To a similar class, the announcement by our Savior that John the Baptist at his time held the foremost position among men was bewildering, when they remembered a Moses, a David, an Ezra, all mighty men of old. However, the position held by John the Baptist as the forerunner of Messiah, the connecting link between the old dispensation and a new of exceeding glory, more than justified the placing of him above any of the leaders of the Old Testament. In the same way the mission performed by the great Prophet of this dispensation had such far reaching results that it is no exaggeration, nor merely vain boast, to say that he has not been surpassed by any of God's messengers in any age.

If we were to look upon Joseph only as the founder of a Church in this age, his wonderful achievement would place him on a level with a Wesley, a Knox, a Luther, a Calvin, a May, even as a church builder, his work would be more amazing than that of these men. For they did not encounter the world, grappling with the problems before them, until they had secured the qualifications considered necessary. They met learning with learning. They had eloquence, skill in dialectics, influential friends, some of them operating under the protection of kings and princes. Joseph had neither. An inexperienced, almost friendless boy, he faced an opposing world, to all human appearance unprepared for the battle that was to follow. And yet the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today is the admiration of leading ecclesiastical men, for its wonderful organization, testifying to the more than human wisdom to which it owes its origin.

But Joseph the Prophet was not merely a church builder a reformer. His work above all, was that of bringing harmony among the scattered children of men. This was the purpose for which Christ on Calvary shed His blood. Reconciliation between man and man as well as between God and man; the union of the hearts of fathers and children, children and fathers, was the ultimate object of the atonement; and to carry this work on was Joseph's special mission.

As John the Baptist was the forerunner of the New Testament era, so

the Prophet of this age was the herald of the still more glorious millennium in which this unity of mankind shall be consummated. To qualify him for this work he received the most wonderful revelations. At a time when the entire Christian world had lost the knowledge of their heavenly Father, and acknowledged that both the Father and the Son are incomprehensible, he was enabled to reveal the true God, thereby making a return of the children of men to their eternal Father possible. Further, to his views the past of the world was unveiled and the mysteries of continents solved. The connecting links between nations in different parts of the globe were traced, bridging the way to union between children and fathers. And still more, the veil of eternity was lifted by the revelations he received and communicated to mankind. Salvation was shown to extend to living and dead and to be obtainable through the loving efforts of children longing for reunion with those who have gone before them. The contemplation of this work is overwhelming. By obedience to the requirements thereof the glory of heaven fills the soul, as the atmosphere of celestial palaces permeates the sacred temples dedicated for that work. The "shhekina" of the Tabernacle in the wilderness was but a shadow as compared to the reality in this dispensation, for the revelation of which the children of God are indebted to the subject of this sketch, as an instrument in the service of the Almighty.

Well has John the Revelator described this mighty messenger as an angel standing upon the sea and the earth, encompassing the whole world, and declaring by a solemn voice, heard to the uttermost parts of the globe, that from now on "there should be time [or delay] no longer; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants, the Prophets."

Joseph was crowned with the diadem of a martyr. Still he lives, and his work goes on. The world of inspiration indicates troublesome times on the earth. They will be of comparatively short duration, however, and, as a fruit of the work of Joseph the Prophet, as an humble servant of the Redeemer, salvation will be brought forth, and mankind enjoy Millennial happiness. Perhaps not until then will the real significance of the mission of the martyred Prophet be fully realized.

CRIME OR STARVATION.

Occasionally a story is told of an individual driven to desperation by want who commits a crime in order to obtain the shelter and sustenance afforded by prison life. A case of this kind occurred in San Francisco on Monday last. A middle-aged man, named James Watson, applied at the police station and asked for a night's lodging and a cup of coffee. He was an upholder by trade, but for three months

past had not been able to obtain work, and was reduced to starvation. His request was denied and he left. Two hours later he stopped near two police officers, drew a piece of brick from his pocket, and hurled it through the large plate glass window of a store. Then turning to the officers he said: "I am the guilty party. I intended to break that window. Now you will have to take me in. An empty stomach knows no conscience, and that is about the fix I am in."

He was arrested, plead guilty to a charge of malicious mischief, and was sent into the jail where a short time previously he had been refused admission. His reasons for committing the offense may be told in his own words: "I spent all the money I had earned and I have lived more like a tramp than a human being ever since. Hunger and cold made me desperate enough to break that window, I could not get shelter in the prison, and I turned over in my head whether I would rub -om- ore or smash a window. I thought that the window would be the best. If I had known that this window was so costly I would have sent the brick through a smaller one. I saw the officers when I threw the brick, and intended they should see me. This is bad business I know, but starving is worse."

The operations of an industrial system capable of such an illustration as this, in a country like ours, sufficiently stamp it as wrong in some of its material aspects. Here was a working-man, so honest that he would commit a minor offense with the certainty of imprisonment rather than a more serious one with a chance of escape, and even then regretted he had not selected a cheaper pane of glass to break. It was bad business, as he said, but none will contradict him when he says that starvation is worse. It is emergencies of this kind that government should provide for. When an honest man has exhausted his means of gaining a livelihood and is reduced to the alternative of starving or committing crime, the alternative should be removed by the government in its own interest. Such a person is as justly entitled to the benefits of public charity until he can be set on his feet again financially as are those who are rendered incapable, by age, infirmity, or other means, of honestly obtaining the necessities of life. Not every one would make the same choice this man did. It is the province of good government to supplement the industrial system by measures which would exclude the possibility of such a situation.

BURNS'S TALK AND IDEAS.

John Burns is recognized as a labor representative in the British Parliament. As such he has been received with open arms by the workingmen of this country, and when attending the labor convention in progress this week at Denver has been shown every consideration and courtesy. In return for the hospitality exhibited toward him, he has been talking to the laboring men. Doubtless he considers this his duty under the circumstances, and no one would wish to prevent his enjoying himself in that line, for Mr. Burns