

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

## MORMONISM NOT A PROBLEM.

The Presbyterian Banner, Pittsburg, Pa., commenting on the progress of Mormonism in this country and foreign lands, observes that the results of the labors of the missionaries of the Church are "wonderful," and adds:

"The Mormon problem is by no means solved; its solution is one of the difficulties now staring the people of the United States in the face, and it has been greatly intensified by permitting Utah to become one of the states of the Union."

Even a casual reader of this quotation will perceive that the Banner is wrong in several particulars. There is in fact no Mormon "problem" in any other sense than there is for instance a Presbyterian or a Lutheran problem. All that is problematic about Mormonism exists in the imagination of opponents generally destitute of all knowledge as to its principles, doctrines and scope. It is especially true that the particular religious system mentioned presents no problem "staring the people of the United States in the face," that is, it offers nothing at which the nation as such must feel alarmed; it is no menace to the institutions of this country or any other country. Its votaries teach and practice loyalty to the established governments, and have done so even in the face of oppression and persecution. Standing on the fundamental principles embodied in the Constitution, Mormonism only asks to be accorded the rights therein granted, equal with other religious systems. As did Luther and other champions of religious liberty, it respectfully asks for a hearing and to be judged by reason or the Word of God. It has no problems for the state to solve.

Enemies of the religion of the true and living God have nearly always fought that faith on the pretense of its disloyalty to the state. It was so in the case of the Babylonian nobles who contrived to open the lions' den to Daniel, the Hebrew. They found that his success was greater than theirs and that, no matter how closely they watched him, they could find no plausible cause for action against him. Here was a problem indeed! Yet it was solved by an imperial decree, the purpose of which the emperor himself was far from suspecting.

The Son of God was treated much in the same way. His death was decreed, if we mistake not the lessons of sacred history, chiefly because He interfered with the scandalous traffic within the precincts of the Temple, in which the mighty family of Annas was interested. But even false testimony was insufficient for conviction. Another terrible problem! At last ingenuity misinterpreted His teachings and made Him a pretender to the throne of David, then in the hands of Caesar, and the purpose was accomplished by the very crowd that, according to ancient testimony, themselves were the conspirators.

It is the same with Mormonism. Those who have prejudged it and decreed its destruction have also been responsible for the so-called "problem" it has been said to involve. But the real problem, or rather mystery, is this, that people conversant with the letter of the Scriptures can see the "wonderful" work performed by the Mormons, the manifestations of Almighty power that has sustained them during more than half a century of faithful and heroic struggle for their own salvation and that of their fellow-

men from the bondage of sin, and yet deny the finger of God in that work. That is an enigma—a mystery of inquiry.

## A CHANGE—OR RUIN!

Every now and then it behooves individuals, as it does corporations, to try to strike a balance, showing their condition financially, and the change, and the causes thereof, that may have ensued since the last previous examination. Comparisons furnished by such a study are nearly always beneficial, if not always satisfactory; it is sometimes as profitable to know where and how and what we lost, as it is pleasurable to know how much we gained. Uncle Sam is an individual who, with all his might and energy and resources, can still not afford to neglect the occasional balance-sheet which private persons and even large business concerns find necessary in the intelligent management of their business. His accounts run into large figures, but that is only a greater reason why he should study them carefully. On the last day of last month, for instance, his interest-bearing debt amounted to the snug sum of \$847,365,620. Four years ago the first of last March it was \$585,034,260; so that during these last fifty-seven months of peace, with no unusual reason for extravagant outlay, he has increased his bonded indebtedness \$262,331,360, or at an average of a little over \$4,600,000 per month. Worse than that, he is running behind right now nearly twice that amount each month, his outlay every thirty days being about \$9,000,000 more than his income. This policy long continued will naturally ruin any kind of a business, and our venerable uncle can expect no other fate unless he can institute a change.

But his wise men came together in Washington this week, and he ought to insist on their knowing exactly his condition, with a view to helping him find a remedy. There are two plans which the commonest intellect will be able to suggest: one is to increase the revenue, the receipts, the income; the other is to reduce the disbursements, the outlay, the expenses. An increase of revenue means increase of taxes, increase of tariff on imports, or increase in some of the various indirect ways in which the people's money pass to the government coffers. In the present condition of things is anyone going to have the hardihood to offer a resolution and enact a law to do that? To almost every citizen of the Republic it must be evident that the people are already taxed nearly to death. The only alternative, then, is to cut down the outlay—and surely this is possible. Expenses can be reduced all along the line. Millions are squandered needlessly every year. Political friends must be sumptuously provided for at public expense. Trades and jobs are planned and carried out, by which the treasury is almost looted. And if perchance a small economy is introduced in one branch of government, it appears to be only a tiny saving at the spigot to make more abundant the waste at the bunghole. Incidentally, too, it may as well be known, as it doubtless is to the wise men referred to, that under our impolitic and selfish laws a great deal of money that the people pay as cheerfully as possible in the expectation that it is needed for and is going to the legitimate expenses of government, is cleverly diverted into the strong-boxes of the pets of legis-

lation, and thus keeps not only Uncle Sam but also the great majority of his progeny with their much-worn noses close to the hard, unyielding grindstone.

Not soothsayers, but firm, truth-speaking, honest and clear-headed advisers are needed in the present moment of national business trouble. The Congress which has just convened has opportunity for the display of all its wisdom.

## A SLANDERER, FAIR YET FOUL.

Elder Fred B. Brook, writing from Indianapolis, December 4th, states that one Miss Rose Glen Webster, representing a Baptist missionary society, is lecturing about Mormonism in eastern cities. The correspondent attended one of these lectures held at a private home on Fletcher avenue, Indianapolis. The same lecture was delivered, it appears, at Franklin, Indiana, at a Baptist church and was reported by a paper of that place, which stated that her object is to talk of the labors of the Baptist home missionary society and "attract additional interest in the work." In her Fletcher avenue talk, according to Elder Brook, the lecturer prefaced her effort with the statement that she had been laboring in Provo and that what she was about to relate was founded upon personal observations.

It would serve no useful purpose to publish here the entire report of the lecture, but a few extracts may be given in order to show the general tenor of it. Miss Webster said among other things:

"The Elders do not know what the Bible is, and one of them was handed a book on electricity to find a certain passage of Scripture, and after hunting for some time said he could not find it, but could do so if he had the Mormon Bible. The Mormons do not teach from the Bible but from poems and books of their own manufacture."

Brigham Young was quoted by this lecturer as having said:

"I care not for the Bible or any other book; I have just received a revelation from God which is more beneficial to us than any book."

Miss Webster has met with several other extraordinary things in Utah. Thus, she had found a young girl painting the picture of Naomi on the wall, in the form of a man, and afterwards praying to the picture. This girl, the lecturer said, had just been married to a polygamist. She had also found several boys from 9 to 12 years old, who had never heard of Christ, there being no Sunday schools in Utah outside of Salt Lake City and Ogden.

Concerning the missionaries in the field Miss Webster said they were men who could not make a living at home and therefore went abroad to live on other people. In this connection she is quoted as having given utterance to the following concerning Utah's young men and women:

"It is a common thing for young men and women to congregate, sitting and lying on the lawn, drunk and smoking cigarettes, while young ladies of high society boast of being intoxicated."

After this it is no surprise to hear that the lecturer closed her oration by saying:

"If it was not for the missionaries of the Baptist church, Utah would today be the most wicked State on the face of the earth."

Within the limits of the same space it is doubtful if ever truth was more cruelly assassinated than in the quotations given. If Miss Webster were a