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IN ADVANCE.

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A WORD FOR CHRISTMAS.

The beautiful custom of gift-giving at Christmas is becoming so mercenary and exacting a process in this advanced age that many people are almost of the humor to desire that it be honored rather in the breach than the observance. The habit of giving numerous and costly presents, far beyond the pecuniary ability of the donor, and hence coming far short of causing the pleasure to the recipient which a simpler token of affection would inspire, is to blame for this lamentable decadence in the year's best holiday. But no one likes to be considered mean, or stingy, or ungrateful, and therefore every one thinks it his duty to follow in the wake of the heedless throng, buying presents which he can ill afford or incurring debts which may take him weeks, perhaps even months, to pay.

The latter-day Saints are not given to following after the patterns of the world, and here is an occasion where they have a fine opportunity to show sturdiness and independence. They can, if they will, rescue Christmas from the unpopularity into which it is sinking. The News appeals to them to do it. We shall not undertake to multiply words or advance dry arguments; but if each one will give to the subject a moment's calm and honest thought, we are convinced there will be little money spent frivolously, leaving the more to alleviate a neighbor's distress and to work other deeds of real charity. We would not discourage the custom of remembering the children and one another in the time-honored way; but we would like to see excess and extravagance checked, so that the joys of the occasion may not be marred by regretful or reproachful afterthoughts. In a word, we should like to see the old idea of Christmas revived and the day honored in its true spirit.

ON TRIAL FOR HERSEY.

The spectacle presented to the country in the trial for heresy of the two eminent Presbyterian divines, Dr. Briggs and Dr. Smith, is somewhat unique. It partly recalls the faint outlines of incidents of bygone ages when it was considered a crime to have an independent thought and to give expression to it in public.

The trial of Dr. Briggs has already been in progress about a year, and the only thing brought out so far seems to be that the accused is in the art of dialectics the superior of his judges. He is one of the most prominent biblical scholars in the Presbyterian church, and in 1890 he obtained the position

as professor of Biblical Theology in the Union Theological Seminary, New York. In his inaugural address he criticized the Westminster Confession and made, among other statements, the following: "It is the testimony of human experience in all ages that God manifests Himself to men and gives certainty of His presence and authority. There are three great fountains of divine authority—the Bible, the church and the reason."

A committee appointed to investigate the rumors of heresy which had their origin in this address found that this statement meant that the church and reason were asserted to be equal in authority with the sacred Scriptures. Seven charges were formulated, among which was that he teaches "a doctrine of the character, state and sanctification of believers after death which irreconcilably conflicts with and is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the standards of the Presbyterian church."

The doctor denied that he taught the doctrine of a future probation and this charge was left out. To the remaining ones he plead "not guilty."

The question now before the judges to decide is whether the assertion that God manifests Himself in His Church and through human reason is contrary to the Scriptures and to the standards of the Presbyterian church. Here is evidently an unpleasant dilemma. The doctrine may be contrary to the church standards and yet in full accordance with the Scriptures. The defendant may be able to prove that he is strictly on Bible ground, while the prosecution may be able to prove that he has abandoned the ground taken by the church. The conviction of Dr. Briggs may lead to the discovery that the Presbyterians in all these years have held as doctrines of faith what cannot be sustained by the "Word of God Written." With this possibility staring the judges in the face, there is no wonder that the whole trial is more or less a muddle.

To one whose reasoning faculties are not bound by narrow confessions of faith it would seem but reasonable to expect that God will continue to manifest Himself in His Church as He according to sacred history has done in former ages. And the Bible itself certainly sustains the view—whatever may have been the opinion of the reverend framers of human confessions of faith—that wherever there is a true Church there are revelations and spiritual gifts.

As to Dr. Smith, his case has hardly attracted as much attention as that of Dr. Briggs. The gentleman was accused of and suspended, we believe, for holding among other things that the Bible is not a verbally inspired record, a theory long ago abandoned by the ablest theologians. It might do to the fifteenth century, when classical learning had just commenced to wake up from its long slumber, to assert that every word in the Bible as now extant was inspired by God. But in our age with the knowledge we have of the history of the Bible, how it has been copied and re-copied, paraphrased, translated and undergone innumerable changes since the first copies left the hands of the authors, it is nothing short of presumption to preach the verbal inspiration theory.

The sympathy of the enlightened

public seems to tend toward the defendants in these two cases, and an impression is being created that the Presbyterians need very much a revision of faith.

A GOLDEN SOLUTION.

There is many a truth spoken in jest. A more or less jocular communication from Parowan in Saturday's News indicated the possibility of escape from the financial enthrallment which the single standard conspirators have thrown upon the Great West and thereby the whole land; the means savor somewhat of the realms of Utopia, but would be eminently efficacious if carried out. Briefly, the correspondent announced or intimated that at the rate at which gold was being discovered in southern Utah it would be so plentiful as to become the secondary metal, whereby, naturally enough, silver would bound to the fore and the goldbugs be clamoring for a standard whose unit of value would be the "dollar of our day" with even less metal in it than there now is.

It would decidedly be a great thing in two important respects if such a consummation could be reached; first, the natural enrichment of the Territory which such finds would bring about, and second, the accomplishment of tardy and well-earned justice. There is no more reason or rightfulness in the course which the financial sharks of the world have taken toward silver, than there is in the people principally affected by it submitting without protest or action. That its inferiority in comparison with gold is the merest fiction, at least beyond a certain defined limit, has been shown so often and so thoroughly that it is at this time idle to discuss it; in fact, we are disposed to believe that it is useless to engage in any further contests over the matter and that when our delegates to Brussels return home they might as well remain and leave the British and continental financiers to work out their own redemption. If, through dishonest legislation, the purchasing power of a class of money more largely circulated than any other is curtailed and its value thus reduced in comparison with some other kind which alone is made receivable for debts, naturally enough the obligations of the debtor class are increased to exactly the extent of the depreciation, while the holder of the liability has had his notes, bills or what not increased over what their face calls for to a corresponding extent. Of course the men who avail themselves of such means of increasing their gains are as dishonest as is the legislation by which the transaction is legalized. It is only robbery, without excuse or provocation, for silver is as royal and intrinsically valuable now as when it was stricken down and its power to pay debts destroyed. It was done in order that usury, which is oftener than otherwise an euphemism for petit larceny, might be accomplished by a more circuitous and in a less apparent manner.

But why argue with such men when they hold the whiphand over us? They have the lawmaking power on their side, because those necessary to the