

It is well directed, well organized and its councils and conventions are conducted with a pomp and pageantry calculated to influence the common people, while there is a matter of fact aspect of religion that impresses the thoughtful.

There is at present in session at Washington an important religious conference. It is known as the Second Ecumenical Council of the Methodist Church. There are 500 delegates from all parts of the world in attendance. It convened on the morning of October 7th. The first gathering of this kind was held in London, England, ten years ago. At that time leading Methodists regarded the council as of doubtful necessity. Today the sentiment is overwhelmingly in favor of it. What is more significant in this council is the fact that delegates of all shades of Methodism are present, and the programme classifies the different denominations according to nations as well as sects.

A JUST AND FEARLESS JOURNAL

THERE is published in Austin, Texas a journal with the significant title of *The Iconoclast*. It is edited with unusual force and ability, and is what its name implies—an image smasher. In one of its latest issues it follows up, in a commendatory way, some just and favorable statements made a short time since by the New Orleans *Picayune* in reference to the "Mormon" people and their religion. In order to show how vigorously *The Iconoclast* falls into the same line as its New Orleans neighbor, we take pleasure in presenting some extracts from its article:

"It is refreshing to find a daily newspaper with the courage to speak of the Mormons without belittling and belying them. These earnest and honest people have probably been subjected to more malicious misrepresentation, more deliberate, systematic vilification by the press and pulpit than any sect that ever departed from the beaten paths of orthodoxy in search of the Savior. Ever since Joseph Smith established his first Church, the Christian world, so-called, has been upon its trail with rifle and faggot, thumbscrew and tar bucket. In days gone by Protestants and Catholics persecuted each other; the High Churchman gibbeted the Puritan and the latter vented his religious venom by boring holes in the tongues of Quakers or bounding Baptists into the trackless forests. Now these righteous people, these 'Children of God,' these 'followers in the footsteps of the lowly Nazarene,'—who turned the other cheek to the smiter and prayed for his brutal assassins while perishing upon the cross—are making common cause against the Mormons, pouring out the vials of their wrath, opening the sluice-gates of their vindictive hatred upon the heads of the 'Latter-day Saints' because they insist on going to heaven or hades in a manner not strictly orthodox, in traveling a path not mapped out and graded for them by

certain ecumenical councils or logic-chopping synods!

The Mormon creed affirms that man will be punished for his own sins, not for the transgressions of a mythical ancestor. Is not this an improvement on the old soul-killing dogma of original sin? The Mormon creed teaches faith in the Lord Jesus, repentance and baptism. So averse are the Saints' to intoxicants that they substitute water for wine at the eucharist. The Mormon creed declares that the word of God is recorded not only in the Book of Mormon and the Bible, but in all good books, evidencing a spirit of liberality that contrasts strangely with the narrow views of the average Christian dogmatizer. Nor does Mormon liberality stop there; *absolute liberty of private judgment in matters of religion* is expressly insisted upon. Very remarkable is this doctrine when compared with that which prevailed for so many centuries in Europe and was transplanted to the Western world by the Puritans, where it is still demanding that liberty of conscience be not tolerated; that every man who dares to differ from the majority be cast into prison or scourged beyond the confines of civilization! It is generally believed that the Mormon hierarchy is intent upon establishing a mighty theocracy and casting off allegiance to the Federal government; that it fosters resistance to secular authorities and will raise the standard of revolt should it ever become powerful enough. The same cry was raised against the early Christians,—is heard to this day against the Catholics. Thousands of good Protestants are firmly convinced that should the Pope call upon American Catholics to take up arms against the national government they would do so instantly. The Mormon creed as well as the Catholic church teaches submission to the powers that be. The fourteenth and last article in the Mormon creed is worthy careful study and adoption by every sect. It reads: 'We believe in being honest, true, chaste, temperate, benevolent, virtuous and upright; also that an idle or lazy person cannot be a Christian, neither have salvation.'

"Whatever may be the shortcomings of the Mormon faith, certain it is that wherever that sect has settled they have been distinguished from their neighbors by their greater thrift, industry, temperateness, and all that pertains to desirable citizens. Even their enemies bear testimony to this. At Kirtland, Nauvoo, Independence—wherever Mormon settlements were made—arose the busy hum of industry, temples and schools sprang up as if beneath the enchanter's magic wand, and peace and sweet content reigned supreme until fanatical 'Christian' neighbors swept down upon the happy homes with rifle and faggot; until ministers of God, professing the forbearing spirit of Christ, raised their voices in vindictive denunciation of the 'heretics' and incited midnight marauders to plunder and butcher their betters.

"One of the darkest pages in the world's history, one of the most damning disgraces recorded in the blood-stained annals of Time, is the brutal treatment the Mormons have received from the so-called Christians of this enlightened land. Oh, what a disgraceful mockery, what infamous hypocrisy is our boast that in this land, so favored of the Gods, religious liberty is the birthright of every man; that here beneath the banner of the free all God's children may worship Him as they will, with none to molest them or make them afraid! Religious liberty! Here in this land first settled by religious exiles flying from the persecutions of intolerant bigot; in this land where Puritan and Huguenot, Catholic and Quaker raised their peans of praise

in the primeval wilds, fearing savage beasts and still more savage men less than their bigoted brethren, we find them all making common cause against a people daring to disagree with them, bounding them from place to place, murdering their teacher and driving them like cattle half across the continent.

"The idea so industriously promulgated that Mormonism is a false religion, founded by an impostor to subserve his own selfish purposes, is not tenable. False religions do not make men true, do not thrive and wax strong in the face of bitter persecution, do not withstand the searching eye of an advancing civilization before which shams fade like nocturnal vapors under the terrifying glare of a tropical sun; do not make people happy and content, console the living and comfort the dying. Impostors do not brave poverty and persecution, the proud world's scorn, persist despite discouragement and lay down their lives for what they know to be a falsehood."

We agree with our Texas cotemporary in its reference to the remarks of the *Picayune*—that "it is refreshing to find a daily newspaper with the courage to speak of the Mormons without belittling and belying them." For this reason we admire the fearlessness and justice exhibited by *The Iconoclast*.

PROSPEROUS MEXICO.

BROADSTREETS of October 3rd has a very instructive article on "Financial and Economic Conditions in Mexico." The government finances, it is said, are in a very satisfactory condition. The general revenue for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1891, exceeded by \$1,000,000 that of the preceding year. A new tariff scheme goes into effect November 1st next, and by this it is expected that the revenue from customs will be largely increased. In his address at the opening of Congress, a short time since, President Diaz dwelt on the benefits likely to arise from this new tariff law. He said that it was drafted with a view of stimulating the international trade of Mexico, without, at the same time, conflicting with the interests of the treasury.

The President's remarks about the economic condition of his country were reassuring. He said that the usual resources of the treasury were equal to all the expenses decreed in the budget, and to the interest on the interior and exterior debt. There are also ample funds for meeting payments due abroad, as well as for discharging all the expenditures of the administration.

The banking system of the country is operating satisfactorily. The volume of business is increasing, but there is no fear of a crisis, because the circulation of notes is so restricted that disaster seems impossible.

There is at present, and has been for some time past, a movement on foot in Mexico having for its object tax reform. A conference of representatives