

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

A DIVINE MESSAGE.

Unquestionably the great problem confronting the world at the present time, causing so much uneasiness and, in some minds, apprehension for the future, have been before mankind from time immemorial. The labor question, for instance, is probably as old as some of the pyramids in Egypt, or the "hanging gardens" of Semiramis. Other modern issues are of equally respectable antiquity. Time and again they have demanded a solution, and the sages of mankind have repeatedly tried to meet this demand, well knowing that there is a point beyond which the pressure cannot be allowed to go with safety, as is demonstrated by the empires and civilizations of which only the scattered ruins and other archaeological evidences are left.

But while the problems remain essentially the same, new phases are constantly presented, owing to the ever changing conditions, and threatening a repetition of former disasters. Can there be a clearer demonstration of the inability of the human race, so far, to bring about the desirable condition in which each individual is fulfilling the measure of his or her existence on earth and, consequently, enjoying happiness? The matter is one that nations especially must consider; for the discontent of the millions is already heard like the rolling of distant thunder, or the roar of a battle, yet far off but apparently drawing nearer. As already intimated, the conditions new to this late century must be met.

The time is past, at least in the more advanced countries, when the toiling masses bow in humility before their masters, accepting their position in poverty and misery as a divine decree. They have received some education and with it a self-consciousness of individual rights and strength. They calculate and form conclusions. If, for instance, a machine is invented by means of which a manufacturer can produce 4,800 yards of cloth a week with the same amount of personal labor formerly required for fifty yards, and, consequently, many laborers are turned adrift, while the manufacturer keeps nearly all the profit to himself, they argue that Providence is not responsible for their misfortune. They find that the ancient philosophers were mistaken, who predicted that the invention of machinery would ultimately emancipate all men and women and create a golden era, making the terms "slaves" and "masters" obsolete, and they will naturally take their cause in their own hands for the purpose of inaugurating that golden age. The greatest need of our time is therefore a philosophical or religious system by which differing interests can be harmonized and peace given the scepter on earth.

The people that first settled this region were formerly considered peculiar, but anyone acquainted with their tenets will admit that their peculiarity was merely a firm belief, practical and enthusiastic, in their mission to proclaim to the world the

eternal principles by which every vexed problem of mankind can be solved. Briefly stated, they held, and hold, that the Constitution of the United States is higher than a mere human document, inasmuch as its framers in forming it were actuated upon by the Spirit from on High, for a special purpose. It follows, in their belief, that the faithful adherence to that Constitution in all civil affairs would result in a perfect state, as nearly as that can be obtained on earth. To this view of the great charter of liberty, they add the firm belief that in all matters pertaining to spiritual things, man must have access to the counsel and guidance of the Father who is above all. These two great principles comprise Mormonism. By it this mountain region has been transformed into what it is today; its adherents have been made happy beyond expression, and by it all the world might be blessed. Mormonism is God's message to His children in this age.

REDEMPTION OF MAN.

A curious item has appeared recently in several newspapers, purporting to give a general idea of the probable number of souls now inhabiting the regions assigned to the two classes of mankind, after death. The statistics were first published in the English *Freethinkers' Magazine*, and were evidently compiled for the purpose of holding up to ridicule the doctrines of Christianity. The writer arrives at the conclusion that the population of hell now amounts to two hundred billions against one billion eight hundred millions of souls in heaven. That is to say, for every saved person, there are in his calculation over one hundred lost ones. But the premises on which the figures rest are twisted out of all semblance to truth and prove nothing, if not the author's absolute ignorance about the subject with which he deals.

His argument runs somewhat like this:

In round numbers the earth has a population of 1,800,000,000, of whom 800,000,000 are professed Christians, the other 1,000,000,000 being Mohammedans, Buddhists, pagans and heathens. The whole race was condemned to eternal punishment for the sin of Adam. There was and is no redemption save through the death of Christ. Biblical chronology gives the earth a period of 6,000 years. From Adam's time down to the date of the birth of Christ was 4,000 years, during which time all human souls were lost. The population of the globe during that 4,000 years averaged, we will say, 1,000,000,000. Three generations, or 3,000,000,000, passed away each century. Forty centuries, therefore, consigned 120,000,000,000 human souls to eternal fire. In the 1,900 years which have elapsed since the birth of Christ 57,000,000,000 more of human beings have lived and died. If all the Christians, nominal and real, who have ever lived on the face of the earth have been saved, they would not number more than 18,000,000,000.

Now, if we deduct the latter number from the grand total of 177,000,000,000, the number which have been born since the creation, we find that 159,000,000,000 of souls are now suffering the torments of hell against a possible 18,000,000,000 who have escaped. But this is not the whole truth. Say that 10 per cent of the so-called Christians have been saved, which is very doubtful, then heaven contains a population of less than 1,800,000,000, while that of hell aggregates upward of 200,000,000,000.

To anyone familiar with Scripture doctrine on the subject the absurdity of the above is so plain as to need no refutation. But it well illustrates the general principle that wilful ignorance about Christianity is nearly always responsible for infidelity, just as ignorance about Mormonism has been a distinguishing feature of its virulent opponents. It has been the case from Celsus of ancient fame, down to the present age.

Holy writ emphatically declares that the number that will be lost ultimately is comparatively small. Peter had a special revelation on the subject that "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." One of the promises of the eternal Father to His beloved Son is thus expressed in holy writ: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." And consequently at last He will indeed be the King of kings and Lord of lords. All enemies shall be subdued by Him, death not excepted, and Hades itself shall surrender its inhabitants in order that the dead may be judged "according to their works." That the "mercy of God endureth for ever" and that His work of salvation, consequently, extends even beyond life on earth is also clearly taught. Peter says: "For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."

The gloomy doctrine of the all but total victory of evil over good has no foundation in Christianity. Everywhere in God's Word, both ancient and modern, the declaration is made that power and dominion and glory belong to Christ for ever and ever, and it is always been as a heavenly light in the darkness of error and sin, that these are not always, to prevail but must give room for truth and righteousness. The final victory of the Son of God is foreshadowed all through the Old Testament, from the first promise made to fallen man. Gradually the visions of crowning triumph become clearer and the New Testament closes with a wonderful representation of earth redeemed. In harmony with this are the hopes and promises held out to the ancient inhabitants on this continent, as recorded in the Book of Mormon. But that truth is still more clearly revealed in this age through God's inspired servants. The doctrine of atonement through Christ formed, as it were, the luminous center of the theology of the first apostolic church. The redemption of the human race from misery, from sin, from death,