

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

UNBELIEF IN DEITY.

Within the past century a great wave of unbelief has swept down upon Christendom, and its force is still unexpended. Infidelity is steadily gaining control in the hearts of the children of men, who are giving attention to material things to the exclusion of that which relates to God and their spiritual welfare. In this regard the people of today have gone even farther than did the Jews at the time Christ came among them. The children of Judah believed in a God. It is true they wanted Him to conform to their idea of how affairs should be conducted, and were unwilling to accept His guidance. They were pleased to indulge in forms and ceremonies, but would not give practical submission to the Divine will. Therefore His Spirit was withdrawn from them and they failed to recognize the One who came as a Deliverer, and whose advent their nation had prayed for and prophesied about for generations. But in all this they believed in God as the almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth.

The unbelief of the present age, however, is devoid of even this redeeming feature. Not only is there manifest a disinclination to worship God, or to acknowledge His hand in the affairs of men and nations, but the very existence of a living, intelligent Personage, a Being who is the Father of the spirits of all men, is denied. This condition is a natural result of bringing the erroneous teachings of secularism into contact with the freedom of thought that characterizes the present age. People have been told that God is a Being without body, parts or passions, and they are realizing that this description is that of a nonentity. They have been led also to believe that communication from heaven has ceased; that revelation, and prophecy and the ministration of angels, belong only to the past, and that the voice of God is no longer heard "as one man speaketh to another;" and with the feeling engendered by these impressions they are becoming imbued with the idea that a being to whom there is no access, and who is so inconsistent as to refuse to hold direct communication with his children under any circumstances, does not exist as an all-powerful and merciful ruler of the universe.

In view of this condition in the world, it might seem impossible to stay the progress of the flood-tide of infidelity; and so it would be, so far as the power of mortal man is concerned. But the Lord has promised that in the latter days a time shall come when infidelity shall be not only banished from earth and a belief in God be universal, but that all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest. To effect this purpose it will be indeed necessary to perform a "marvelous work and a wonder," but the result is to be achieved through the Gospel of Christ, which has been restored to earth in this age.

No doubt the unbelief of the people of Judea in the divine mission of Jesus of Nazareth was considered a

great obstacle in the way of inaugurating a Gospel dispensation. When John the Baptist, son of the Priest Zacharias, came as the messenger before the face of the Lord, the teachers and leaders among the Jews did not receive him with open arms; their synagogues and places for public gatherings afforded no room for him; it would seem that even the gates of the city were closed against him, for he had to do his preaching in the wilderness beyond Jordan. And when the Lord of whom he testified came, He was hunted and persecuted and finally nailed to the cross. Yet by the very means through which the unbelieving Jews sought to overthrow the work of God, He wrought out the great atonement which broke the bonds of death, and finally accomplished the work of that dispensation.

In the present age the Gospel message meets with opposition similar to that which it encountered eighteen centuries ago. But as the unbelief of the Jews in the divinity of Christ failed in its object and returned in judgment upon the people that rejected Him, so will the unbelief of this age fail in achieving the victory, and will bring condemnation to those who submit to its sway; for the power of the Almighty to fulfil His designs has not grown less. He has left a witness in the world's history of His existence and power, and the person who ignores this and drifts into infidelity will not find justification in the "deceptive teachings of uninspired men."

The Latter-day Saints should maintain their earnest endeavors to stem this tide of unbelief in God. Their children should be trained from their earliest years to discern the evidences of His existence and to comprehend His true nature. The Saints have received a testimony of Him, and their conduct should be a standing witness that they know that God lives. They cannot afford to neglect this testimony and fall short of fulfilling their calling to prove to the world that there is a God in Israel.

AN EARLY EXPERIMENT.

The following appeared in the telegraphic dispatches of this paper three or four weeks ago:

WASHINGTON, Oct. 23. — Governor Hughes, of Arizona, had an important conference with Minister Romero, of Mexico, touching improvements of the Colorado river, which would add to its importance as a channel of commerce. The governor represented to Romero that Colorado was the second largest stream on the Pacific coast. He said that with secure jetties at the mouth and with some dredging along the course of the stream it could be made navigable for 900 miles, far up into Arizona and Nevada, tapping rich mineral deposits in the mountains and fine agricultural and horticultural regions in the lower country. He pointed out that Mexico along the Gulf of California possesses large forests of fine timber and immense deposits of coal in both of which the southwestern portion of the United States is deficient. Governor Hughes thinks

the government of the United States would make improvements necessary within its boundary, if the Mexican government would undertake to do as much within Mexican territory, the lower 150 miles of the river being in Mexico. Minister Romero was very much impressed with the representation made by the government. He said he would recommend his government to give the matter attention. He thought the best way to proceed would be for the two governments to join in the appointment of a commission to investigate the whole question.

The item recalls an interesting attempt on the part of the Mormon people nearly thirty years ago—pioneers as they were then, and of pioneering spirit as they always have been—to utilize the great Colorado for purposes of navigation. It was before the days of the railroad, before the days even when there was any tangible prospect of the trans-continental highway being cast up in the near future. The difficulties of travel across the plains, and the enormous expense connected with the bringing in not only of supplies but of people also, early led the prominent minds of the community to seek a remedy that should result in more rapidly building up this country and in easing the burdens of the people. Southern Utah had been colonized, and there was a growing feeling that the southern route into California—with all its disadvantages—would still become the popular one during the greater part of the year. What more natural, therefore, than that the Mormon people should have given much thought to the opening up of this water-route, by means of which necessary imports could be more cheaply brought into southern Utah, and thence possibly sent to California! Indeed, at one time the bringing in of the whole Mormon emigration was seriously thought of via the Gulf of California and the mighty river that flows into it.

The late Anson Call of Davis county was the man chosen to make the requisite explorations and proceed to the establishment of a post at the point that could be regarded as the head of navigation. He was called upon this mission at the October conference, 1864; and on December 25 of that year he sent a report of his explorations to Church Historian George A. Smith, through whose courtesy it was published in the DESERET NEWS. Several accounts of the place selected were printed in the NEWS, the first being on January 18, 1865. This first report gives the date of the arrival as December 2, 1864, and describes the head of navigation of the river as being "one mile below the Narrows and just above the mouth of Black canyon." About two and a half miles below this point are shoals and rapids, but these were not thought sufficient to interfere very materially with navigation.

The next report was sent by Isaac Hunter to Bishop A. H. Raleigh, and was dated Calville—the name given the new station—February 4, 1865. In this the writer describes the warehouse then being built there as up to the square and likely to be finished in two or three days, as also the residence of Anson Call, a building 18 x 20 feet, which would be completed about the same time.

On March 8, 1865, the NEWS, "speak-