

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### ORIGIN OF RELIGION.

The reasoning employed by a certain class of modern philosophers for the purpose of accounting for man's religious beliefs well illustrates the facility with which sophistries may be substituted for sound arguments in the interest of favorite theories. "Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools" is an observation made nearly two thousand years ago, and it is still applicable to many of the sages of the world.

The school referred to starts with a supposition. Primeval man is pictured as but little higher in the scale of intelligence than an animal. Chance, or surrounding circumstances, raised him, and to the same influences his further development is left. In his first condition he took but little interest in the unchanging events of daily life. Health, light, food were looked upon as matters of fact or the products of his own exertions and could inspire no feelings of thankfulness to anybody. Hostile disturbances he fought as best he could, until he encountered sickness, death and destructive natural phenomena against which he was powerless. Then fear was excited, and this feeling developed a desire to find the causes of the evils mentioned, and the result was a belief in the existence of evil spirits, or powerful supersensual beings, inimical to man.

The first religious awakening in primeval man, after a long existence in absolute darkness, according to this philosophy, was the recognition of the existence of demons. In the course of the evolutionary process, fear was slowly refined into reverence and thankfulness, and in such feelings originated the belief in good spirits. The next step was to assign to these beings places of abode. Stones, trees, flowers, etc., were selected as such, and fetish worship resulted, from which root grew religion in its multitudinous forms.

It is needless to follow the argument any further. The necessary inference from it is that religion itself, no matter with what splendor it is surrounded, is but an inheritance of that supposed period in man's history when he was groping in absolute darkness about himself and his surroundings in nature. Religion, according to this view, rests on false conceptions and is about as valuable in the search for truth as a child's notion that the "dome of the sky" touches the mountain tops is to geography and astronomy.

Fortunately, however, this attempt to account for the origin of religion exposes its own absurdity. As stated, it commences by a supposition, taking for granted a proposition that never has been proven, one that contradicts all the facts known about the human family. It is a fact, for instance, that no uncivilized tribe on this earth, as far as its history goes, ever rose either by chance or by its own exertions to a degree of civilization, unless it was brought to them from external sources. It is another fact that the tendency of nations, as of individuals,

is to retrograde from civilization, unless the struggle for advancement is steadily kept up. It is another fact that history is positive in the statement that primeval man received instructions from God and that all civilization, including religion, has its origin in such instruction—in revelation. History and experience agree on this point and contradict the wholly unsupported supposition that man when first appearing on earth was left to his own limited intellectual resources.

Contrast with this philosophy the teachings of religion—that man in the image of God, his Eternal Father, came to earth, an abode prepared for him, in order to learn that which is necessary for a higher existence hereafter; that God from the beginning led his steps on the road to advancement and is still leading him through the various means adopted by Providence for that purpose; that although some of the children of men fail to accept the counsels of their heavenly Father and, consequently, go astray, yet at last the purposes and plans of the Almighty shall be accomplished to His glory and the eternal happiness of all who submit to His commandments—make such a comparison, we say, and is it possible to contemplate these grand doctrines without feeling their truth? With the force of the quickening rays of the sun, they burst upon the darkness of doubt and infidelity and falsely-called philosophy, dispelling its ever-changing phantoms. They appeal to the unprejudiced reason, the conscience and the heart, accounting for man's existence in the only rational way conceivable.

### NOW FOR THE BATTLE.

As a result of the work of the Democratic convention in Ogden yesterday, another State ticket was completed, and the two principal parties are now regularly and formally aligned for the approaching fray. Each party has named its standard-bearers, each has drawn up its declarations of confidence in its principles, also its pledges, and its expressions of regret and denunciation concerning the opposition. Each professes the profoundest confidence as to success, and is already showing sympathy with the "victims" on the other side. Yet from the preparations already made and in prospect, neither appears to think it can afford to neglect any opportunity or throw away any chances of advantage; the remotest outposts are not going to be overlooked, any more than the headquarters of center of the camp is going to be left unguarded. All this promises a hot, aggressive and interesting campaign, in the result of which the glorious element of uncertainty cuts no small figure.

In both tickets there are many features of unquestioned strength, but neither is altogether free from weaknesses. The point of view of each holder will have to determine these various judgments—we cannot undertake either to commend without qualification, or to criticize in detail.

Where there is more or less of a scramble for recognition and more or less of a deference to geographical or political expediency, it is inevitable that some men should be swept down to defeat who in all genuine respects are superior to those who are winners. In every convention where many candidates had to be named this has been the case and it doubtless will continue to be; for the victory of the ballots is what the contestants are struggling for, and no element that can in any way contribute to party strength can afford to be alienated. Hence, while ideal candidates are numerous enough, ideal tickets are scarce; there is usually a mixing of the strong and the weak, and every party has real cause to congratulate itself if its share of the former is greater than of the latter.

We are pleased to express the sincere opinion that in both the tickets now before the people, the strong largely predominate over the weak. If to a disinterested observer one of the tickets is far better than the other in certain respects, it will have to be admitted by such an observer that in other respects the comparison as to superiority is reversed. Generally speaking, therefore, we should say that inasmuch as the voters are pretty thoroughly identified with one or the other of the parties, one ticket or the other in its entirety will be successful. Which of the two will have that happy experience, neither we nor any one else at this time can tell.

### CITY AND COUNTY SCHOOLS.

After a careful reading of Mr. Moffat's letter regarding the separate maintenance of city and county schools, which appears in another part of this issue, the NEWS fails to discover any reason for changing its view, formerly expressed, upon this subject. The Constitution confirms the separate maintenance and control, by boards of education, as now, of schools in first and second class cities; but it does not inhibit the Legislature providing a system of taxation for a State school fund from which county schools may receive support as at present.

Schools in the cities are to be maintained and controlled apart from the counties, by the cities themselves; yet they receive support from the State school fund. The means of maintaining county schools is left to the Legislature, with the direction that support therefor comes from the State school fund, which, "together with such other means as the Legislature may provide, shall be distributed among the several school districts according to the school population residing therein." This would seem to leave the matter just where it is now, except that there is a constitutional provision against city schools depending on the county funds for maintenance or being subject to the control of the county outside of municipal limits. Certainly the first section of article 10 of the Constitution, or the fourth section, cannot be rendered imperative to give a special construction to section 6. The provisions for establishing and maintaining a uniform school system are to be made by the Legislature. It would be a strained construction of the Constitu-