

ARTICLE IV.

SOURCES OF DANGER FROM MORMONISM. ✓

BY THE REV. ROBERT W. BEERS.

THAT there is any real danger to the church from Mormonism is not recognized by the great mass of Christian people in a way so as to take fast hold of their minds and hearts and urge them to aggressive, vigorous action against it. That it is a vile, degrading, blasphemous system they believe without knowing very much about it. Charles W. Penrose, one of the ablest men in the Mormon Church, the editor of their official church paper, in the introduction of his little book entitled "Mormon Doctrine," has truly said: "There is no subject of popular comment on which there is so little general information as that called Mormonism."

That it is not a weak, empty, insignificant thing, which will fall to pieces of its own accord, and never make much headway, must be quite obvious to any one who sets himself seriously to account for its origin, its growth, and its present position and influence. There must be more in the system than is popularly supposed; otherwise the organization would never have grown to be what is, nor could it now stand up so persistently and even prosperously in the presence of such universal opposition. In ten years from its origin its devotees numbered thousands, and its founder predicted that it was to be the religious faith of the western continent. And to-day its membership numbers its hundreds of thousands, having more than doubled in the last decade. In numbers, in wealth, in influence, and in

aggressiveness the Mormon Church is far greater to-day than ever before in its history.

HISTORY OF THE BELIEF.

I have no space to dwell upon its marvelous history. I shall assume that all my readers are sufficiently well informed in regard to its unique character. I merely need to say that it not only affords to non-Mormons clear evidence of inherent strength in the Mormon system, but by Mormons it is regarded as incontestable evidence of its divine origin. Long ago this was referred to by the leaders of the Mormon people. Parley P. Pratt, in the preface to his book, "A Voice of Warning," first published about ten years after the church was organized, referring to its rapid progress amid great opposition, wrote: "What but the arm of Omnipotence could have moved it forward amid the rage of mobs, having to contend with the prejudice of the ignorant and the pen of the learned; at war with every creed and craft of Christendom, while the combined powers of earth and hell were hurling a storm of persecution unparalleled in the history of our country." And that statement has been emphasized tenfold by the subsequent history of the Mormon people. Their entire history certainly shows that there must have been elements of strength in the system—that in some way it must have met the needs or desires of the people. And its danger to the Christian Church cannot be comprehended, or the right remedy applied, until its inherent strength is recognized, and its outbranching evils are dealt with at their roots.

WRONG IMPRESSIONS.

There are many mistakes afloat to-day concerning Mormonism. One which is held by many is that polygamy and Mormonism are synonymous. Some Christian missionaries even write as if polygamy was the fundamental

tenet, about which and upon which the whole theological and practical system of Mormonism is constructed. But the history of the Mormon Church shows conclusively that polygamy is not fundamental. For ten years after the church was founded it was not heard of, and it was not openly taught for twenty years. If polygamy could be absolutely stamped out by law and supposed revelation, Mormonism, with its preposterous claims, its absorption of things political in things ecclesiastical, its theological ideas, some of them intensely heathenish, its intensely secular spirit, its standard of morality lamentably low—Mormonism, in some of its worst phases and in which it is most damaging to souls and fullest of peril to our republic—would still stand unscathed.

And then in strict accord with that false notion is the idea that the Mormons are "a mere horde of sensualized barbarians," who should be dealt with in the most severe manner imaginable; whereas, the fact is, that the great mass of Mormons do not practice polygamy and never have done so. It is true that as a people they are chargeable with the gravest crimes, among which the Mountain Meadows massacre stands out prominently as a foul blot upon their name. And yet these crimes have been perpetrated by the few, while the many have been and are devoted to what they believe to be the true and the right. They are a devoted, industrious, thrifty class of people. Their industry has been made manifest wherever they have gone. And while it is true that they are an ignorant and superstitious people in the main, yet many of the same class can be found in every State in the Union, and in some States they are far greater in number than in Utah. The fact is that very few of the States of the Union show as small a proportion of illiteracy as Utah.

Another mistaken idea concerning Mormonism is that it is an exotic—an importation from the Old World, and es-

pecially that the pollutions of polygamy may justly be charged to the English, Swedes, and Danes. This is not true. Facts compel a conclusion far less flattering. Joseph Smith and his system are essentially a New World product. Mormonism had its rise in a region lying between the birthplace of the Rochester Rappings, from which modern Spiritualism sprang, and the seat of the Oneida Community. It had much in common, too, with the great Campbellite movement, which antedated it only five or ten years, and from which it received a large number of important accessions. Millerism and Shakerism were also near relatives and neighbors. We must go even farther and say that in Mormonism, like its antipodal heresy, Christian Science, we have an obnoxious plant which sprang from Puritan seed (according to the flesh), though it first took root in New York. Joseph Smith, its founder, and Brigham Young, its greatest leader, were both born in Vermont. At least ninety per cent of the converts gathered during the first ten years (1830-40) were of New England descent. In 1860, out of a population in Utah of some 70,000, it is affirmed that 10,000 were born in New York and 20,000 in New England; while in the Legislature consisting of thirty-six members, thirteen were born in New York, six in Massachusetts, and five in Vermont. And in an editorial written as late as 1883, the official Mormon Church paper stated that "of twenty-eight men constituting the general authorities of the church, twenty-four were born in the United States, and eighteen were of New England birth or origin. Of twenty-seven stakes of Zion, twenty have presidents born under the Stars and Stripes, and a large majority are of New England parentage. The founders were mostly descendants of the Pilgrim fathers; the leading minds are nearly all of Puritan blood." It is, however, some comfort to know that since polygamy was accepted and proclaimed, recruiting from among the sons

of the Pilgrims has not been as successful as formerly; and yet it is well for us, who are so boastful of what Puritan thought and energy have accomplished for America, to remember that this great abomination of our land is also a product of the thought and energy of the descendants of the Pilgrims—an institution, therefore, essentially American, though utterly lacking the true American spirit.

It is also commonly supposed that about nine-tenths of the Mormons are foreigners rather than Americans. But this has not been true at any time of their history. In their early history the great majority were Americans, and this was true of the greater part of their history. The census of 1880 gave Utah a foreign-born population of 43,933 and a native-born population of 99,974. And the census of 1890 showed that there was a native-born population of 154,841 and a foreign-born population of 53,064, just about the same proportion as in Massachusetts and New York. The foreign-born population in Utah in 1890 was not nearly so large proportionately as that of Wisconsin or Minnesota or California. The data on this point in connection with the last census have not yet been formulated by the Census Bureau, but it is probable that the proportion will be about the same as in 1890. Making due allowance for the probable preponderance of the native element among the Gentile population, and allowing for the thousands of children born of foreign parentage in Utah, it would still be likely that the native population is at least equal to the foreign in the general aggregate. It is certainly true that so far as personal prominence goes, if not in numbers, the native element has always been, and is now, predominant.

CHRISTIAN IDEAS INCORPORATED.

Our minds need to be disabused of all these mistaken ideas concerning Mormonism before we can see clearly its

sources of danger to the church. Perhaps they may be summed up under five different heads:—

1. The large number of Christian ideas which have been incorporated into this system of error and blasphemy. The Mormons claim to be the only true Christians. All others are at fault. They claim to accept the Bible and to believe in its literal interpretation, asserting that the various Christian denominations have wrested the Scriptures from their true meaning. The last chapter of the little book by Parley P. Pratt, to which I have already referred, is entitled "The Contrast between the Doctrine of Christ and the Doctrines of the Nineteenth Century." The contrast is shown in parallel columns, by which it is made to appear that the Christian denominations of to-day have departed widely from the doctrine of the New Testament. Thus, wishing to inculcate the doctrine of miracles still, he quotes from the New Testament as follows: "These signs shall follow them that believe." "In my name they shall cast out devils. They shall speak with new tongues." And then in a parallel column he gives the "doctrine of men" as follows: "These signs shall not follow them that believe, for they are done away and no longer needed. In his name they shall not cast out devils. The gift of tongues is no longer needed." And, again, in order to establish the doctrine of continuous revelation, he quotes from the doctrine of Christ: "There is nothing secret that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known." And then in a parallel column he sets forth "the doctrine of men": "There is no more revelation, for all things necessary are already revealed." Wishing to set forth the necessary unity of the church, he quotes from the New Testament: "By one spirit are ye all baptized into one body." And then in a parallel column he gives "the doctrine of men": "By many spirits are we all torn asunder into different bodies." And thus through a whole

chapter of the book the disparity between the teaching and the practices of the various Christian denominations and New Testament literalism is strikingly set forth. It is calculated to mislead many and to captivate those who are discontented with their denomination, or who look at the various Christian denominations through blue spectacles to discover only their faults.

But not only do the Mormons catch the unwary by this ruse of literal scriptural interpretation. In addition they deceive people by setting forth in a smooth way the doctrines which they hold, or pretend to hold, in common with the various Christian denominations. In the thirteen Articles of Faith which the Mormons promulgate as their creed, there is very little but what could be subscribed to by some Christian denomination. And people are thus led to suppose that the religion of "the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints" is true Christianity. Their missionaries, as a rule, do not mention their peculiar anti-Christian doctrines about God as an exalted polygamist, about celestial marriage, about the divine authority of their priesthood, about the necessity of sin as a step toward exaltation, about baptismal regeneration, about baptism for the dead, about the divine claims of Joseph Smith, and many other doctrines. They first use Christian bait to allure the people, and then, when they have them in their net, they feed them upon the errors which they have incorporated into their system, and even pervert the Christian doctrines by their false interpretations. A more deceptive system than the Mormon system can hardly be imagined. They talk of "God" and "love" and "faith" and "charity," but they do not mean by those terms what we do. By "God" they mean Adam, for they say that he is the only god that has anything to do with this world. By "love" they mean devotion to Mormonism. By "faith" they mean faith in the priesthood, and by "charity" they mean

charity for the conduct of the Mormons. The scriptural statement "The last shall be first and the first last," is interpreted by them to mean that the Mormons are the last to whom the eternal truths are revealed, and that they only can enter into the kingdom of heaven. "Mary hath chosen the good part" they interpret to mean that she chose to become a polygamous wife, which is the better part, as the polygamous wives only attain to celestial glory. "There be gods many and lords many" is interpreted to mean that every Mormon is to be a god and to create as many worlds as he has wives, who will reign over these creations as goddesses.

Thus this nineteenth-century heresy bears much the same relation to Christianity to-day that Gnosticism and Manicheism did to that of the early centuries. On the true foundation of the Old and New Testaments it has built a structure of wood, hay, and stubble. Their arguments are based almost entirely upon the Bible. Proof-texts are quoted by the thousand. It is the Christian element in the system, which it holds out as bait to its would-be converts, that is its chief source of strength. If its strength came from its heathenish doctrines it would naturally follow that its converts would be gathered mainly from heathenism, whereas ninety-nine proselytes in every hundred have been obtained from Christian churches. A little less than fifty years ago swarms of Mormon missionaries were sent to China, Japan, India, Australia, South America, and the Society and Sandwich Islands; and they fondly hoped that many converts would be obtained. But in less than five years they had all returned, completely baffled and disgusted. They reported that the devil was far too lively in these lands, and that among the Hindus especially, stupidity and awful depravity were universal. Since then we have heard of no more attempts to evangelize the pagan world until a few months ago it was decided

at a meeting of the Mormon hierarchy in Salt Lake City to open a mission at an early day in Japan.

From this it seems clear that it is the Christian element in the Mormon system which, though mingled with a vast deal of error, gives it its real strength. And this fact not only furnishes a decided clew to the vitality and persistency of the system, but may also open our eyes to the remedy to be applied. Hundreds of the Mormon people have not thoroughly accepted all of the grosser doctrines of the Mormon system, but are far better than the system. And, therefore, it is manifestly unfair to denounce the entire Mormon people as vile heathen. Perhaps some of our missionaries in the past have made this mistake and have not attempted to meet the Mormon people on common Christian ground, as they might have done with many, using their "Articles of Faith" as the basis of their intellectual, if not their ecclesiastical, fellowship.

CONVERSION OF MORMONS.

The question is, How to get rid of the erroneous doctrines of Mormonism? If only the truth can have a fair chance at error it will ultimately prevail, but in the past it has not had a fair chance. The Mormons have been angered and welded together by the wholesale denunciations of some of the Christian missionaries. In consequence a very small number of converts from Mormonism has been obtained. Rev. Dr. R. G. McNiece, of Salt Lake City, in a personal letter to me fifteen years ago, said, that three hundred would be a large estimate of the total number of adult converts. And in a letter received recently he says that the number of converts from Mormonism to Christianity in the last thirty-five years is about one thousand. That number includes both children and adults. Perhaps a change of method from open and direct antagonism to the whole Mormon system to a more generous

recognition of the Christian elements in the system, and an attempt to reform it—to purge the gold from the dross—might be more successful. There has been for years a younger and more liberal element in the church in favor of reforms. If the Christian missionaries should strive to increase the power of that party, as well as to secure proselytes, much good might be effected. In this way one of two results might follow, viz., either the church would be reformed, or it would be split into pieces by divisions in its ranks.

And, in addition to this change of method, another change might be made, so that all the Mormon people would be reached with gospel truth regularly. In the past a large portion of the Mormon people have not been reached. The Mormon priesthood have endeavored to isolate their people from Christian civilization. More than three-fourths of the Utah settlements have never had any stated gospel privileges at all. It is claimed there are more than two hundred thousand unreached Mormons in the inter-mountain region. These should be reached by the truth. And the Utah Gospel Mission, with headquarters at Cleveland, has undertaken this great work. It is to be an interdenominational work, which of itself would be a striking object-lesson to the Mormons. The plan is a combination of colporteur and evangelistic work, carried on by trained workers, who would live in gospel wagons and travel wherever Mormon families could be found. The colporteurs would do personal Christian work and leave specially prepared literature in every Mormon home. It is estimated that twelve such workers could in this way reach every Mormon home once a year from Canada to Mexico. And then about a month after the colporteurs had visited any town, and the truth had time to take hold of the people, the evangelistic workers would visit it, and hold a series of outdoor or school house meetings, preaching and

singing the true gospel straight at the hearts of the people. Doubtless large numbers would attend such services who could not be induced to enter a church. It is believed that a few years of such work, supplementary to the regular missionary work, if it were prosecuted thoroughly and judiciously, so that every Mormon home would be reached with the proper kind of literature each year, and every considerable Mormon settlement be reached by a series of evangelistic meetings each year, would be fruitful in large results. It is certainly full of hope, and could be carried on with very little additional expense.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

2. Another source of danger to the church from Mormonism is its appeal to the self-conceit of ignorant people. It tells them that they have the very latest and best revelation that God has given to man. The Mormons believe that they are the Latter-Day Saints—the only saints on earth at the present time. They believe that what is good in Christianity they have, but they have far more. They have the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. And these last, being later revelations, they regard as superior to the Bible. They believe that they have an enlarged and expanded Christianity.

The evangelists Moody and Sankey held a series of meetings in Salt Lake City some years ago, and the official Mormon paper said in an editorial on Mr. Moody's preaching: "There is not a man among the whole fraternity of evangelists who can present anything of any value to the Latter-Day Saints which they have not already received; and there is no preacher of them all who, if he were desirous of learning the truth as it is in Jesus, but could learn very many valuable lessons in the things of God from the members of our Young People's Improvement Associations, and even from our Sunday-school children. 'Believe in

the Lord Jesus Christ' is a saying the full meaning of which is appreciated by the Latter-Day Saints. To exhort them to faith in Christ is the work of supererogation." And shortly after the same paper said: "So far as the institutions of modern Christendom are concerned, we candidly confess our lack of confidence in their power to do anything for us. We have got so far beyond them through the revelations of the Almighty vouchsafed in these latter days, that we look upon their teachings as a man reverts to the alphabet of his school days, and we remember their powerless forms and spiritless ceremonies as mere playthings compared with the higher things of the kingdom to which the system they call Mormonism has introduced us."

This idea is quite captivating to the more ignorant mind, and leads their people to give up gradually the old Christian ideas, which served as bait to lure them into the Mormon fold, for the newer ideas which have come through later revelations. Thus are they led to place the Bible and Christianity on a back shelf, so that, if they find that the Bible conflicts with any of the later revelations of the church, the later revelations are to be their guide. They, therefore, regard themselves as superior to all other Christians.

Consequently, when the missionary talks to the Mormon about the Bible, he will be apt to say that he has a later revelation better calculated to suit his case, and so the missionary has not been much more successful in winning the Mormon people away from their belief than the Mohamedan people, who have a similar idea that the Koran is later, and therefore superior to the Bible.

What is the remedy to apply here? I know of no remedy effective except to bring before the minds of the Mormon people the falsity of these so-called later revelations, and to show them the superiority of Bible Christianity over their own as set forth in actual life. To this end the isola-

tion of Mormon settlements should be broken up by a system of Christian colonization. If a Utah Christian colonization society should be founded, and be efficiently worked, Christian families might be placed in sufficient numbers for this object-lesson in every Mormon town.

AGGRESSIVE WORKERS.

3. A third danger from Mormonism lies in its aggressiveness. One of its doctrines is that the latter-day gospel must be preached to all men. Until it is accepted no one can be saved. And so from the earliest days zeal for propagandism has been a marked feature of this sect. Indeed, the marvels of their missionary efforts cannot be surpassed anywhere in the history of missions. Obeying the Saviour's injunction literally, for many years they went forth, two by two, without scrip or purse, working or begging their way. And yet they penetrated nearly every country on our globe. In later years they have not entirely depended on their own resources while engaged in mission work, their system of compulsory tithing giving the church officials a large amount of money, some of which has been used for establishing and operating a tremendous propaganda. But the missionary is never given more than is absolutely necessary for his expenses after he has exhausted his other resources.

The Mormon zeal in missionary effort should put to shame our Christian denominations. They have now about two thousand missionaries in the field, or one to every one hundred and fifty of their communicants. How does that compare with our Presbyterian Church or our Methodist Church? It is because of this missionary zeal that the Mormons gained so rapidly in their early history. And it is because of an increase in missionary zeal, due to the admission of Utah as a State, that they have been making such great headway in the last few years. They

have sent forth hundreds of missionaries in all parts of our country, who have worked with great zeal and with great deceptiveness to capture unwary Christians, and they have met with remarkable success. The census of 1890 showed that they had 1,396 communicants in California, 1,762 in Colorado, 1,058 in Nebraska, 1,540 in Michigan, 1,336 in Wyoming, 1,106 in Kansas, 5,303 in Iowa, 14,972 in Idaho, and 6,500 in Arizona. And in the last decade, especially since 1896, when they obtained statehood for Utah, they have been more aggressive than ever, invading the States east of the Rocky Mountains with hundreds of missionaries, getting their converts to go West if they could, and if not, organizing them into local churches. They now have congregations and centers of influence in many of the Eastern and Southern cities. The Mormon Church paper in March, 1899, reported 147 missionaries laboring in the Eastern States Mission, with headquarters in Brooklyn, and 443 laboring in the Southern States, with headquarters at Chattanooga. During the previous year the missionaries in the Southern States Mission were reported to have walked 146,080 miles, visited 287,716 families, held 69,190 meetings, and distributed 778,350 tracts and books. They also established ten new branches of the mission, organized forty-six new Sunday-schools, and baptized 1,228, more than in Great Britain, Scandinavia, and Switzerland combined. That surely is a remarkable showing for one year in the Southern States alone. There are now more than seven thousand Mormons living in that section. How many converts they have succeeded in obtaining from the work in the Eastern States Mission I do not know, but they have met with considerable success in New Jersey and in Maine. They have recently been very active in New York, where Mormonism had its origin. In Troy and Cohoes they have been disseminating their literature, and endeavoring by house-to-house visitation to find some discontented

ones ready to listen to their plausible setting forth of the superior merits of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. If they only told "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," the danger would not be great. They could not then obtain converts among respectable people. But, as I have already stated, the so-called Articles of Faith which they circulate are deceptive, hardly touching upon any of the distinctive doctrines of Mormonism, and leading one to suppose that it is thoroughly Christian. Thus do these deceivers lure innocent souls into the toils of the Mormon priesthood, who have no more idea of advancing the cause of Christianity than has Satan himself. By this deceptive method the Mormon missionaries have succeeded in increasing their church-membership during the last decade more than a hundred per cent. Their membership is now estimated at the least calculation to be three hundred thousand.

LITERATURE SHOULD BE CIRCULATED.

What is to be done? Is the Christian Church going to sit idly by and just send missionaries to Utah to try and convert the Mormons after they have been gathered together into the very stronghold of the Mormon priesthood, where they can bring all their power to bear upon apostates with telling effect? No; as prevention is far better than cure, the Christian Church should put forth definite coöperative efforts to nullify the efforts of the Mormon missionaries who furnish the new recruits each year. It could, and should, be ascertained where the Mormon missionaries are laboring, and either precede or follow their deceptions with the truth. Literature should be circulated by house-to-house visitation, setting forth the real nature of Mormonism.

There are two tracts which seem specially adapted to this end. One was prepared by the Presbytery of Utah,

entitled, "Ten Reasons why Christians Cannot Fellowship the Mormon Church." Rev. Dr. McNiece, of Salt Lake City, wrote me in regard to it as follows: "It has been found that a few copies of that tract circulated in any community where the Mormon missionaries are operating completely paralyzes their efforts. It serves as complete moral dynamite, for it quotes directly from their books and is unanswerable." The other tract, which seems at least equally good, was prepared by the Secretary of the Utah Gospel Mission, and is called "The True Mormon Doctrine." This tract takes up one by one the professed Mormon "Articles of Faith" and explains them according to the Mormon ideas by means of literal quotations from Mormon publications. If these two tracts, which can be obtained for \$2.50 per thousand, were left in every home where the Mormon missionaries were operating, or were likely to operate, they would doubtless render their efforts futile.

THE MORMON PRIESTHOOD.

4. Another source of danger from Mormonism lies in its appeal to man's earthly, selfish nature. I cannot dwell upon this point, but the Mormon system is permeated with these appeals, both in its doctrines, its organization, and the social and industrial life of the people. I have said that the Mormon people are, in the main, sincere, religious enthusiasts, to be dealt with tenderly. I cannot say the same in behalf of the Mormon priesthood. The best I can say of them is that they are exceedingly shrewd, and have concocted a vast organization for their selfish purposes, which they hold together by a combination of religion and worldliness. And its worldly elements give it great strength when it is opposed only by purely spiritual organizations working along spiritual lines.

Its scheme of salvation is not based upon regeneration

and a life of holiness and purity. It is a system of legalism, which has always been more in accord with human nature. It allows a person to "work out salvation" by complying with various forms and ordinances. If a Mormon is baptized and has the hands of the priesthood laid upon his head, and pays his tithes and obeys the priesthood, he will be saved. The doctrine of polygamy is a part of this system of legalism. If it is practiced, a person thereby attains a greater height of exaltation, both in the church here on earth and in the world to come. This is the reason why women (and some men too) have practiced it, and will continue to do so, either openly or secretly, for some time to come at least. It is because of this belief that women in Utah have been, and are now, stifling the finer sentiments of womanhood and enduring domestic martyrdom. They believe they will thereby work out their eternal salvation and attain a high degree of exaltation.

Then, again, in its organization Mormonism appeals to human nature. There is probably no system on earth which has a more cunning and complete organization than the Mormon Church. And one of the most cunning things about it is the large number of its officeholders. There is about one officer to every three men. In this way the leaders are constantly kept acquainted with the affairs of every member of their church. And each of these thousands of officers is kept faithful to his superiors by the hope of promotion. If any one of them is disposed to criticise or become dissatisfied with the system, the prospect of future promotions, as well as the office which he holds, acts as a bribe to his submission and acquiescence. Thus the hope of earthly reward is one of the great sources of strength to the Mormon system, holding it intact.

Then, again, in the everyday life of the people it appeals to selfish human nature. The fact is that the Mormon

Church is a great business corporation, a great industrial enterprise, which has given large dividends to the directors of it; and the Mormon people share to some extent in the surplus earnings of the business. Brigham Young was the real leader in this great business corporation. It is a large system of coöperative colonization. The Mormon leaders have bought up large tracts of land for farming purposes, not only in Utah and the surrounding States and Territories, but also in Canada and Mexico, which they intend to colonize and develop through their converts, to their own material advantage and also to ~~the~~ worldly advantage of their converts. This expectation of bettering their worldly condition is what has drawn most of their converts away from their homes. It is a very rare occurrence for a person in good worldly circumstances to attach himself to the Mormon Church and emigrate to Utah or to some other Mormon settlement. Nearly all the converts are from the poorer classes of society. The Mormon Church holds out to them the bait of betterment of their earthly condition, and all it asks in return is obedience to the priesthood.

And then, having allured their converts by this bait of earthly advantage, they keep them from loneliness by having them go in colonies having a common fellowship of religious and industrial feeling. And they keep them from discontent by catering to their social instincts, supplying them with all kinds of entertainments. The church and the dance hall are sometimes the same building. Dances are a regular weekly amusement, often led by the Bishop. And dramatic and musical entertainments are often given in the Sunday-school room.

Thus does the Mormon Church shrewdly appeal to the various worldly elements in human nature and secure a firm hold thereby upon its people. How can this be counteracted by the Christian Church? Certainly it cannot descend to the position of a worldly institution, but it can do

much by showing more of the spirit of brotherhood and helpfulness—by striving to better the condition of its members in temporal things as well as spiritual, and by realizing and endeavoring to fulfill its mission to the social world. Robert E. Speer, at a recent reception held at the Young Women's Settlement in New York City, said: "The way in which people are looking elsewhere for what the Christian Church ought to provide is the saddest sight of the day." The Christian Church has much to do with the solution of the social problems of the present day. Why could not a scheme of Christian coöperative colonization be carried on (not by the Christian Church, but by Christian business men) as successfully as the Mormon Church? Could not Christian people furnish the capital and efficient business management? The Mormon Church has found that their scheme has paid large dividends. It is the source of their immense wealth. Why would not a similar scheme by Christian business men net them as large returns, and at the same time offer the poor and discontented element of society the same opportunity that the Mormon Church does, without its attendant evils?

THE CHIEF DANGER.

5. And now, finally, the great source of danger from Mormonism lies in its central doctrine—the divine authority of the priesthood, and compulsory obedience to its commands. All the evils in the Mormon system emanate from that doctrine. They teach that persons who disobey the priesthood will be damned, and that the authority of the priesthood extends to all matters, temporal as well as spiritual. Its authority is absolutely unlimited, and has the right to direct the political, social, industrial, and domestic life of the Mormon people, as well as their religious life. Brigham Young claimed that his people could do nothing without his approval, "even to the ribbons a

woman should wear." It must be plain to any one what an absolute despotism the Mormon system is, and what a source of evil a corrupt and selfish priesthood might be. Under the penalty of eternal punishment, the people must surrender, at the dictation of the priesthood, their own private judgment, and even their moral sense, and implicitly obey them. They are absolutely infallible. Why was it that the Mountain Meadows massacre was perpetrated? Because it was commanded by the priesthood. Why were blood atoners formerly active? Because they were commanded by the priesthood. Why was, and is, polygamy practiced? Because it is commanded by the priesthood. Why did witnesses perjure themselves in the trials of the Mormons? Because commanded by the priesthood. It is this doctrine which makes the Mormon Church anti-American as well as anti-Christian. From its very beginning it has shown its opposition to American principles, and has more than once been forced into subjection by United States troops. And it is as anti-American to-day as it ever was, constantly dictating in civil affairs as in all others. Its political power to-day is greater than ever before. It absolutely controls Utah, and has more or less control of Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico, so that the Senators and Representatives from those States and Territories do not feel free to oppose Mormonism lest it might interfere with their election. Its spirit toward our government was made clearly manifest by the fraudulent way in which it secured statehood for Utah. The Mormon Church through its infallible priesthood entered into a solemn compact with the American Government never to teach or practice polygamy. But no sooner was statehood obtained than polygamy was openly practiced; and they even had a polygamist elected to be sent to Congress to represent them. Even the President of the Mormon Church, though he declared on his oath that the manifesto

of 1890 prohibited unlawful cohabitation with polygamous wives, as well as the ceremony of taking additional wives, is to-day living with his ninth wife, whom he married when he was sixty years old and she a girl of fifteen. When a complaint was made against him in 1899, charging him with adultery, the District Attorney refused to prosecute. And nearly all the church officials, either by example or precept, or both, are urging upon the people of Utah the rightfulness of polygamy as a divine institution. I have in my possession a little book on "Mormon Doctrine," by the editor of the Mormon official paper, in which the doctrine is very clearly set forth, though the imprint of the book bears the date 1897, the year after statehood was obtained. Their teaching of the doctrine, therefore, is not only private, but open and public, in direct violation of the solemn compact which the Mormon Church made with our government. They even went so far, a few months ago, as to pass a law by the Legislature of Utah practically legalizing polygamy by preventing prosecution for it. But the Governor vetoed the bill and it could not be passed over his veto. But why was it vetoed? Because the Governor feared that its passage would so rouse the country that Congress would be compelled to pass a constitutional amendment forbidding polygamy in all its possible forms anywhere within the United States.

A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

This gives us a hint of the true remedy to apply. Nothing short of such a constitutional amendment will effectually stop the practice of polygamy, with its attendant debasement both of manhood and womanhood. No theoretical ideas in regard to state rights should be allowed to stand in the way of a speedy passage of such an amendment, which the vast majority of our people would heartily indorse. Even this might not immediately remove the

abominable practice. But if the law were vigorously enforced it would speedily prevent its open practice, and by sending the leaders of the church who practice it either into prison or into hiding (as was the case some years ago under the Edmunds law) the power of the priesthood would be materially weakened. In addition to this the liberal party in the Mormon Church would thereby be greatly strengthened, and with the other remedies applied, which have been already mentioned, and a much more vigorous prosecution of mission work in Utah, both along the line of Christian education and gospel evangelization, we might hope that ere many years the despotism of the Mormon Church would be broken, and that truth would win the victory over error.