

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

THE MARTYRDOM.

The anniversary of the martyrdom of Joseph, the Prophet, and Hyrum, his brother, who were slain at Carthage, Ill., on June 27, 1844, will be kept in solemn remembrance by Latter-day Saints as long as the divine message they were sent to deliver continues to influence the private and public acts of this people. It was a great event in the brief history of the Church. Some time it will be recognized as an epoch-making occurrence in the annals of the world.

History in general, and that of the Church of God in particular, must be viewed from a spiritual standpoint and in the light of revelation; else much of it is unintelligible. When the son of God was nailed to the cross and His few followers were scattered, full of fear and sorrow, it appeared for a brief moment as if the powers of darkness were triumphant in victory. Yet Calvary was but one stepping stone to celestial glory, and the power of Christianity was manifested from the moment the dying Savior, conquering death, announced His *Testament*—It is finished! The following outpouring of power from on high and the conquest of paganism had been impossible had it not been for the departure of the Savior. As far as a comparison may be made, in all reverence, between the martyrdom on Calvary and that at Carthage, it is evident that the latter, too, although planned and executed by enemies of God, was made a part of the training of the Church for the mission it has in this world as the bearer of light and truth and the foundation builder of a millennial kingdom.

This becomes plain when it is considered that servants of God, although removed from this sphere of action, still live and labor for the cause that was theirs on earth. There is on record how the Prophet Elijah, several years after his departure in a chariot of fire, sent a flaming letter to the idolatrous King Jehoram, exhorting him to repentance. The same prophet in company with Moses came forth from behind the veil in glory on Mount Tabor to confer with Jesus and His three followers concerning the work of atonement. Christ appeared to Saul in the interest of the sorely persecuted Nazarenes. And in this dispensation, John the Baptist, Peter James and John, and Moroni, have appeared with instructions regarding the re-establishment of the Church. There is, indeed, a close communion between the faithful Saints behind the veil and those engaged on earth; between the work here and yonder. As may be gathered from the Apocalypse, and from other inspired witnesses, the plans and designs of the heavenly councils are visible in their results on earth—from all of which is clear that the martyred Prophets, although temporarily removed from the circle of their brethren, continued their work commenced here, and will still continue it, until it shall have been consummated and as a result, Jesus shall be acknowledged the Savior and the

King throughout every part of the earth.

Tertullian originated the saying, so often since his time repeated, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. It has proven so in the case of the Latter-day Saints. Yet, it cannot be denied that periods of persecution have their disadvantage as well as blessings. Violent opposition has a tendency to strengthen the faith, where it is genuine, and develop brotherly feeling and fellowship, so essential to followers of Jesus. On the other hand it tends also to retard progress in some directions. It is a remarkable fact that the age following the first Apostles is chiefly characteristic of confusion, mediocrity and ignorance. It is almost impossible to form a correct idea of the theology of that age from the writings of the apostolic fathers and church fathers of the first three centuries. The traces of the cruel Roman persecutions are clearly seen in this, for by them the Christians were deprived of many opportunities of intellectual advancement, and the ground was prepared for errors, at first insignificant but later bearing fruit in apostasy.

The Latter-day Saints at present are enjoying peace and prosperity. This is a time in which to improve in knowledge of all things divine and to carry it out in lives of righteousness; to lay in the hearts of the children a sure foundation for belief in the Gospel; to advance and carry the divine message to the uttermost parts of the world, thus growing in strength and in faith and in knowledge, glorifying the Son of God, in whose service the modern Prophet and Patriarch bravely gave their lives.

MORMONS IN CALIFORNIA.

The San Francisco papers have been giving considerable attention of late to the Latter-day Saints in their California mission. With regard to these references it is pleasing to state that there is a manifest disposition to deal fairly by the Mormons, and while inaccuracies appear in the publications they are of a character which do not indicate a desire to misrepresent. Among the papers to thus note the work of missionaries there are the *Call* and *Examiner*, which have been quoted from by the *News*, and the *Chronicle*, which has an article to its issue of Tuesday, June 25, the opening paragraphs of which say:

The California mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, known as the Mormons, has moved its location. The Sunday services are now held at Calanthe Hall, 909 Market street, instead of 927 Mission street, between Fifth and Sixth, as formerly. The mission has been further reinforced by a very good-looking young Elder, H. S. Tanner, who is president of the California mission. Mr. Tanner is tall, dark-haired and blue-eyed. He has broad shoulders and a very frank, honest face. The ministers of the city are rather taking him up and extending to him the glad hand of brotherly welcome.

The congregations at the little Mormon

church run from forty to seventy-five. There is a Sunday school at 10:30 a. m., and services at 2 p. m. and 7-7:45 p. m. Since Elder Tanner came there have been about twelve converts. Usually Elder Tanner preaches at the services, but occasionally some of the other Elders take a turn.

All the new converts have to be baptized, even if they have already gone through that ceremony in another church, for the Mormons believe in the apostolic succession and only those who have the proper sort of authority from God are permitted to administer baptism.

The article further recites particulars regarding the calling of missionaries, and the methods employed in California to get their message before the people. Altogether it breathes a spirit of kindness and courtesy which will be highly appreciated by the Saints, and which suggests that as intelligent newspaper men are brought in immediate contact with Mormon Elders they become, as is usually the case with acquaintances, impressed with the feeling of sincerity and pure Christian love that impels the missionaries to go forth and proclaim the Gospel freely for the salvation of mankind. And those Elders who have the privilege of passing before the people, through newspapers as well as other means, authentic information regarding the true Gospel proclaimed by the Latter-day Saints, without invoking unnecessary antagonism or engaging in unprofitable disputes, are to be commended in embracing the opportunities thus offered.

THE FIELD OF THE FLAG.

The San Francisco *Chronicle* points out that the forty-four stars now in the field of the American flag present a very jagged appearance, and suggests that there does not seem to be any way to arrange them in equal rows; nor will there be any uniform arrangement while there is the expectation that the number will be shortly increased. In this connection it is stated that no change can be made until 1898, as the law requires that additional stars shall be added only on the Fourth of July succeeding the admission of new states. In all probability Utah, and perhaps New Mexico, will be admitted next winter, which will increase the stars in the field to forty-six. But even then there will be almost the same irregularity, though the field will be more nearly filled up and will appear less jagged than now.

The suggestion is made that forty-eight stars could be arranged so as present a perfectly regular appearance, and this number will be reached when Arizona and Oklahoma are admitted. The ideal number, however, is placed at forty-nine stars in the field. Then, "up, down, and diagonally, there would be rows of seven, the mystic number." To complete this arrangement it is stated that, as Alaska hardly can be considered a possible state, it might be added to Washington or even to California, and with the Indian Territory admitted, the whole affair could be satisfactorily arranged, and the limit of states in the Union be definitely fixed at forty-nine. If Hawaii should be received, the number could