

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

SPECULATIONS AS TO THE FUTURE.

Probably never before has the subject of eschatology—a theological term for the doctrine of a future state—claimed the attention of intelligent men and women more earnestly than at the present time. As the feeling becomes more and more general that the world is approaching a crisis, the interest in all that pertains to the last things becomes more intense, and greater light is sought for and obtained. When revelations on these matters were first given to Joseph the Prophet, they were accompanied by an admonition not to show "these things unto the world until it is wisdom in Me," on the same ground that Jesus at first enjoined the Twelve from proclaiming the fact that He was the Messiah. This precaution is no longer needed. The inquiry has been started and the honest in "the world" demand the truth on the subject. Philosophers and scientists are equally concerned, for it is clear enough, if there is an "unseen universe," a world whose phenomena are above and beyond the powers of perception as exercised through the five human senses, no philosophic system is complete as long as it does not recognize this all important fact.

The doctrine of "eternal" damnation has of late years been reviewed by theologians, and although many have taken a firm stand amid the burning and smoking sulphur and brimstone of orthodoxy, yet others have not hesitated to pronounce in favor of reason and revelation. The truth has gained ground all the time. This was seen when, some time ago, the question came up for discussion in the regular council of the Swedish Lutheran church. Not less than twenty votes were raised against the term "eternal." Nine more votes would have erased the doctrine from the confession of that church. Among those who protested were ex-Minister of State Gunnar Wennerberg and ex-Governor Treffenberg, the latter declaring that if he were compelled to believe that Christianity really teaches infinite torment for finite crimes, he would feel under obligation to turn away from Christ and try to get along in the light of reason alone. The mere fact that a discussion of this character could take place in so stubbornly conservative a body as the council of that Lutheran church, is sufficient evidence of the power with which the subject at present penetrates the Christian world.

Three great currents of thought concerning the future may be traced back to the early centuries of our era. One, with Augustine at the head, condemns the vast majority of mankind to everlasting perdition. They were preordained to never-ending torment, "for the glory of the Creator." Revolting as this idea is, it forms the basis for the orthodox view that still stands in the old creeds of the world, with various modifications. It denies the saving power of God. It overestimates the influence of the Evil one and it perpetuates the notion of the

Greek Tartarus instead of the doctrines of Christ. Another doctrine is that all are to be restored after having been sufficiently purified. Origen is the great expounder of this view, and his reasonings come much nearer the truth. The third view looks upon immortality as a gift of God, bestowed upon man as a reward for his belief in Christ. According to this, the unbeliever has not the immortality which everlasting torment presupposes. He is simply annihilated as to his consciousness. With death his fate is settled. The advocates of this doctrine claim on their side Justin Martyr and Irenæus and also writers of such fame as Locke and Whateley.

To those who are familiar with these different attempts at solving a great problem and the insurmountable difficulties involved in each, the clear statements made by the inspired servants of God in this dispensation ought to bring conviction. The light thrown on the subject in the Doctrine and Covenants and the verbal teachings of Joseph the Prophet and his successors is, when contrasted with the speculations of the theologians, as the glorious rays of the mid-day sun compared to the dim luminations of the early dawn. These teachings comprise all that is true in each system. They harmonize with the doctrine preached by Jesus as understood by His Apostles and explained in their writings, and prove that the same divine Spirit inspired them. Only by accepting them is the veil drawn that hides the view of the future. To him that believes them, death has no sting, nor the grave any victory; for as the mercy of God endureth forever, it will follow His children beyond the grave, in the very shadows of death.

TEMPLE LOT SUIT.

The following will be of interest to many local readers, especially to Church veterans of Missouri and Illinois days. It is taken from *The Saint's Herald*, the organ of the "Reorganized Church," published at Lamoni, Iowa: "The Temple Lot case was opened in the United States circuit court at Kansas City, Missouri, February 7, before Judge Phillips. The judge directed counsel for complainant and respondents to file their evidence, which he would go through at his leisure. It is not likely that a decision will be reached for several months. This we glean from a lengthy statement of the suit published in the *Kansas City Journal*, of February 7. "The *Journal* article also contains these statements:—

"The main point at issue in the present legal fight is the determination as to which of the contending branches is the real church, and upon that point alone hinges the ownership of the property in question.

The whole question hinges upon which branch of the church is the genuine one. The lot is now held by the Hedrickite branch, and the Iowa, or

Josephite, branch is seeking to get possession of it. The question for Judge Phillips to decide is which is the original church of the Latter-day Saints. The entire day yesterday was devoted to arguments of counsel in the case. It is not likely that a decision will be reached for several months, for there are many intricate points to be weighed and determined."

THE FIRST UTAH BOY.

When the *News* about ten days ago asked for information as to the name of the first white male child born in Utah after the arrival of the Pioneers, it was in error in stating that whereas Whitney's History gave the date of the birth and the name of the first child—a girl—it omitted any mention of the first boy. A correspondent has since called our attention to the mistake, and cites us to page 367, Vol. I of the History, where, in connection with a dramatic Indian experience of one of the Pioneer women, Harriet Page Wheeler Young, appears the following footnote concerning her baby: "Lorenzo Dow Young, junior, born September 20th, 1847—the first white male child born in Utah." This would seem to be an authentic statement, not only by reason of the fact that no earlier date has been given as the birth of any boy baby, but also because there is on record a poem addressed to the young pioneer by "Aunt" Eliza Snow, who bailed him in appropriate terms as Utah's young prince, and who could scarcely at that time have been mistaken in the identity of the one entitled to such distinction.

In this same connection we publish the following, not that it controverts the foregoing—its will be seen by a comparison of the dates—but because it contains an interesting item of history that may not be generally known:

• TAYLORSVILLE, Salt Lake County, February 10, 1894.

Editor *Deseret News*:

I see in the *News* a question asking who was the first son born in Utah Territory after the Mormon immigration. I have previously reported, both to Bishop Whitney and to Andrew Jensen, that William H. Harker, son of Joseph and Susannah Harker, was born September 26, 1847, in Weber canyon, at 2 o'clock in the morning.

I also built the first log cabin on the west side of Jordan river, in November, 1848. Please publish and oblige,

JOSEPH HARKER.

From Brother Harker's own date it will be seen that his son was six days younger than "Uncle Lorenzo's." Furthermore, we are inclined to think the question originally referred only to the first white male child born in the Valley—that is, the final stopping place of the Pioneers and the following immigration. There may, or may not, have been boys born en route during the exodus, earlier than either of these mentioned, but the birth of such children, if there were any, would hardly be deemed as answering our correspondent's query. Again, the boundaries of Utah were immensely different in those days to what they are now; the Saints traveled many weary days after entering the Territory before they reached their destination here.

Summing up, we are accordingly