

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

MORMON DOCTRINE.

A special from Chambersburg, Pa., dated June 5th, and published in the New York World, mentions a conference by Latter-day Saints recently held at that place. The writer states that it was in the Cumberland valley that the Rocks, R. Hinson, Smiths and other families now prominent among the Latter-day Saints first became converts to the religion founded by a Vermont farmer, and then goes on to say:

But the present effort to evangelize the people of this region by Mormons is peculiarly bold, for the majority of the population is composed of Scotch and Irish Presbyterians strong in their faith.

The correspondent further says that the spacious floor of the large building, a barn belonging to Farmer Rock, was crowded by a thousand persons and as many more lounged under the trees of the surrounding orchard. From a platform decorated with wild flowers Elder A. P. Kestler of Brooklyn, N. Y., president of the Eastern States mission, and Elder L. A. Kelch of Chicago, president of the Northern States mission, and others addressed the meeting.

Concluding the address, the following remarks were made:

There was little mention of Mormon doctrine and less talk of Church history, but a determined effort to win converts, and this was so successful that funds were pledged to build a stone structure to be called "Fairview Church," and six converts were on Monday baptized (on immersion backwards) in the waters back of Farmer Rock's big dam. Thus has a foothold been gained in Pennsylvania by the followers of Joseph Smith.

The correspondent then furnishes some information concerning the missionary work of the Latter-day Saints of which the subjoined paragraph is a fair sample and indicates how imperfect is the information of many on the subject. He says:

Their missionaries are young men, for Elders past the prime of life cannot endure the hardships resulting from the rule that compels Mormon evangelists to journey on foot. The young Mormon who enters the ministry is obliged also to sell all his property and to start upon his work with the funds thus raised, leaving behind his wife and children.

There is one point in the above quotations to which we wish to call special attention. The writer says that "there was little mention of Mormon doctrine" in the addresses delivered. An impression seems to be prevalent that "Mormon doctrine" is something distinct, some teaching different from the principles taught in the sacred books of the Bible. It should be understood that "Mormon doctrine" comprises everything that is true, both that which has been revealed or discovered in past and present dispensations, and that which possibly may be revealed in the future. Every preacher of every denomination, so far as he teaches the eternal truth, promulgates some part of the "Mormon doctrine," and so Elder of the

Church who speaks on faith, repentance, baptism, or any other of the first principles of the Gospel, or on any principle pertaining to life and salvation, expounds "Mormon doctrine."

It is not denied that the Latter-day Saints believe in some principles, the truth of which other denominations as yet fail to recognize. This class is, however, becoming more limited gradually, because the Christian world is all the time being influenced by this "Mormon doctrine," and it produces conviction in the minds of many who perhaps are unconscious of the source, or unwilling to acknowledge it. "Mormon doctrine" is not part of the truth, but the truth, and he who preaches the truth preaches that doctrine.

SHOULD BE ACCURATE.

The Fruitman's Guide, New York, of June 5th, devotes a large amount of space to an article headed in Fertile Utah, furnished from this city. It also has excellent illustrations of Saltair, Black Rock, and scenes in Salt Lake City. The main portion of the article, which has appeared in other publications, some of them of a somewhat local character, is a glowing yet not overdrawn description of Utah as a place for the investment of capital and a mecca for industrious home-seekers, though the following remark may appear to some as containing a fine vein of irony:

Happily, Salt Lake did not suffer from the great real estate boom of a few years ago. Our people are conservative and did not go wild, and the result is that while other western cities are bending under a great load of mortgage indebtedness, we are practically free from such a burden.

Even that might be forgiven to the enthusiasm of describing the beauties and resourceful advantages of this locality as a home, and is the fact that by comparison other places are much more heavily burdened and have much greater cause to complain at high taxes than have the people here. But in the introduction to the article, following an announcement of the great Pioneer Jubilee, is an assertion which has been made frequently of late but which contains a misstatement of history which should not be allowed to go uncorrected:

Brigham Young, their [the Mormons] great leader, conceived the idea that on the other side of the Rocky Mountains the toil, patience and faith of the Mormon people could accomplish more for themselves and humanity than elsewhere in the Republic, so he organized the first band of Pioneers and made the journey which will ever be memorable in the history of the United States.

It does not add to the fame or greatness of President Young to attempt to give to him the credit that belongs to others. The magnificent character of his life's work enrolls the name of Brigham

Young high on the scroll of the ablest and best men the world has known, not only in modern but in ancient times. He was the Moses that led modern Israel across a desert to this goodly land; he organized the Pioneer band that made the journey, and under the genius of his leadership a whole people was transferred to these valleys and established therein to peace and prosperity. But he did not conceive the idea of the Mormon people coming to the other side of the Rocky Mountains from where they had been the victims of mobocracy. Their destination had been announced years before, by the predecessor of President Young in the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Joseph Smith.

Upon this particular point the statement entered in the Prophet Joseph's Journal under date of August 6, 1842, regarding an address he had made, is often quoted:

I prophesied that the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains; many would apostatize, others would be put to death by our persecutors, or lose their lives in consequence of exposure or disease, and some of you will live to go and assist in making settlements and build cities and see the Saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains.

The idea of the Saints making a home in the West was made known to the leading men especially even earlier than that, though the people generally did not seem to realize fully what it meant. Some years before the Prophet's death, a hymn was written by the late President John Taylor, in which occur the lines:

In Upper California, O that's the land for me;
It lies between the mountains and the great Pacific sea.

This had direct reference to the locality where the Mormon people settled over five years later. The general destination was known; the precise place of location was shown to President Young in vision, while he was conducting the Pioneer expedition. In this respect, as in others, he was the successor of the Prophet Joseph Smith, carrying out to the very letter the plan outlined by that great Prophet of latter days, whose predictions regarding the Latter-day Saints reach much farther into the time that was future at his death than the period now attained. Writers on this subject, especially from this locality, should endeavor to be accurate both on the plan of the Mormons coming to the Rocky Mountains and on the stupendous work of leading and gathering them hither.

INTERESTING FROM DR. LE PLON GTON.

The NEWS already has made two references to the discovery at Fairfield, Iowa, of what was claimed to be an ancient Aztec manuscript, but which we pointed out could not be such, whatever else it might be. On this particular point, and another of still greater interest, the following letter, written by that most eminent living American archaeologist, Dr. Au-