

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

## SAVINGS OF CHRIST.

The question whether in the four Gospels we have all the records of the sayings of Christ, or whether some of them have been preserved in other writings, has recently been investigated and the results set forth in an article in the Columbus Theological Magazine. None of the Gospels professes to be a complete record of all the words or deeds of our Lord. On the contrary, the Gospel by John expressly states that there are many things necessarily left out, and this is true also of the other biographical sketches. Whether it is possible to recover from other sources any of the thousands of sayings and teachings not recorded in the New Testament is the question the author endeavors to answer.

He argues that some of the oldest writers of the Church, Justin the Martyr, Origen, Clement, and others have incorporated in their writings such sayings of the Lord, a statement which is not improbable, if it is remembered that many of these must have been handed down to them from those who followed Christ during His ministry on earth. Such sayings are called "agrapha," or not written, in contrast to the "engrapha," or those recorded in the Gospels. It is claimed that such "agrapha" are found in great numbers, and that they are even incorporated in the Talmud. Some of the parables and every petition in the Lord's prayer are paralleled in Jewish writings, and the conclusion is thought well founded that they were appropriated by Jewish rabble.

As instances of sayings of our Lord not recorded in the Gospels several are given. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," is expressly quoted by Paul as one of them, and he must certainly have picked it up from the traditional store house of the primitive Christians. How many more of such agrapha may be incorporated in the New Testament, without being expressly ascribed to Jesus, we have no means of knowing. It is possible that we have in the Pauline and other writings quite a number of Christ's sayings which we no longer recognize as such. It is certain that there were collections of such sayings in the early Church which have since been lost.

Another saying reads: "Be good money-changer; prove all things, hold fast that which is good, abstain from every form of evil." The latter part of this is found in I Thess., 5: 22, 23. Origen states that it is the quotation of the words of our Lord, and it is therefore thought that Paul made use of a saying so familiar among the Christians as not to need any reference to its origin.

"He who is near unto me is near unto a fire; he who is far from me is far from the kingdom," is ascribed to Christ by Origen in His sermon on Jer. 30: 3, and is also mentioned as such by Didymus of Alexandria. Origen introduces it with the words: "I have

somewhere read this Word of the Lord."

"For the sake of the weak, I became weak; for the sake of the hungry I have hungered, for the sake of the thirsty I have suffered thirst," is also claimed by Origen, to be a saying of the Lord.

"Let not the sun go down over your wrath." These words are indeed found in Eph. 4, 24, but not as a dictum of the Lord. In "Apostolus," "Dialoge Concerning the True Faith," they are ascribed to Christ, and his claim is reiterated by other early Christian writers.

A German scholar has made a collection of such agrapha, of which these are a few specimens. The subject is of much interest as throwing a new light over the literature of the early ages. Whether or not it is possible to identify the words of which Christ is the author, the presence of them all through the New Testament and the early Fathers cannot be doubted, and this fact proves that even at a time when inspiration is given the Church, it centers round and draws its teachings from Him, the fountain of life, the main spring of divine wisdom.

## PROPHETIC TIMES.

A St. Louis clergyman calls attention to an Apocalyptic declaration, according to which, he thinks, the ancient capital of Palestine, Jerusalem, is likely to be wrested from the Turkish government in the year 1897. The present upheaval all over the Ottoman empire is of so remarkable a nature as to command the anxious attention of the world and render even surmises as to the immediate future of interest.

The passage in the Revelation of John referred to reads:

Rise and measure the Temple of God and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the Temple leave out, and measure it not, for it is given unto the Gentiles. And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. (Rev. 11: 1, 2)

The point is that the holy city, Jerusalem, is said to be given over into the possession of "Gentiles" for a period of forty-two months. If it were expressly stated how many common years a prophetic month is, and also from what year this possession, by Gentiles, was to begin, it would be possible to predict the exact year of its termination. These two points, however, are left to be ascertained.

Many of the great commentators agree that in the prophetic hieroglyphics—if the term be permitted—a "day" stands for a year of 360 common days. The opinion is founded on very plausible arguments. In Numbers, 14: 34, we read:

After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even for forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities.

In the book of Ezekiel, the same thought occurs:

For I have laid upon thee the years of

their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. (Ez. 4: 5.)

Forty and two months of thirty days each would then give 1,260 years as the period assigned for the desolation of Jerusalem. It is the identical period assigned for the rise and fall of Antichrist in Dan. 7: 25, and the reason for this time limit may perhaps be sought in the fact that the ministry of the Son of God was rejected during a period of three years and half, or 1,260 days. The analogy bears this out: "Your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years.....each day for one year."

So far the meaning seems to be plain, but the question remains, From what time are we to count the commencement of the 1,260 years? Is it from the year 637, when the city of Jerusalem was taken possession of by the Mohammedans under Khaliph Omar, or in 1073, when it came into the hands of the Turks? Or is even an earlier date the probable one? If 637 is the first year of the prophetic period, then this will certainly end in 1897; but we do not believe it possible from ancient predictions alone to determine the times and seasons. Even after prophecy has been fulfilled, it is often impossible to fix the exact dates. An illustrious instance is furnished in the captivity and return of Judah from Babylon. The captivity was to last seventy years, but it may cover either the period from the carrying away of Daniel to the decree of Cyrus; or from the destruction of the Temple to the decree of Darius to restore it, or, as Prideaux remarks, from the first deportation by Nebuzardan to the dedication of the Temple. If such uncertainty clouds the clearness of events already fulfilled, it is needless to say that care is necessary in dealing with events yet to come.

However, that important events are near at hand is tolerably certain. The Latter-day Saints have good authority for the belief that the world is about to enter upon a remarkable epoch of its history, and that the Holy Land and the Holy City will be central points of interest cannot be doubted.

## THE SCHOOL ELECTION.

After all the hurrah and the partisan protestations of out-partisanship by newspaper organs, the school election has come on and passed by. The result is that every member of the old board except one (and he was not a candidate at all) has been re-elected. Before the first move was made in the campaign, the News advised that the present board be retained in office, the voters, regardless of politics, being invited to make the vote unanimous. The idea was far more popular with the people than with the politicians—the latter feared to lose a chance to gain party advantage. So they forced the fighting, had their caucuses and conventions, their campaign performances and insufferably tedious reformulations in the papers, their expenses and disappointments—and now that it is all over they fish up exactly where they began and have had their trouble for their pains. We regret that the party houses were not more