

KORESH AND VICTORIA GRATIA.

From the Detroit News Tribune.

A religious and economic settlement that promises to rival Dowie's in size and importance has sprung up in Florida. The founder is Dr. Cyrus T. Teed, who does not claim to be a second prophet, but who does claim to possess more brains and knowledge than the majority of even our so-called learned men. The basis of the sect seems to be purely material. His religious cognomen is Koresh, which is said to be the Hebrew word for Cyrus. He claims to have discovered the secret of man's redemption, not through miracles, but through scientific processes. What these processes are has not been disclosed to a vulgar and profane world that might scoff. His scientific system, if it may be called such, is known as the Koreshan Universology, and it denies pretty much everything our scientists think they have demonstrated. For instance, it is claimed that we are dwelling in the center of the earth rather than upon the exterior of a sphere. All our astronomy and other sciences are said to be wholly wrong.

No religious vagary is too wild to attract adherents, and, of course, Dr. Teed has his disciples who are giving up their wealth to help found their settlement in Florida. They are said to have hundreds of square miles of land on the seacoast, and they have started a small community called Estero City, which they hope to make the largest city in the world. The way they have laid it out and the flattering terms in which they advertise their venture make it all sound like a real estate speculation, but it is claimed that the city will be run on the communistic plan. The city as incorporated includes a larger area than that of Greater New York.

In their communistic life the Koreshans sustain some resemblance to the primitive Christians, who held their possessions in common. Their secular organization is called the Koreshan Unity, which is incorporated according to the laws of the State of New Jersey. The properties held by the Koreshan Unity are owned in common by the members. In Lee County, Fla., alone they own about eleven square miles of land.

The founder of Koreshanity manifests many of the elements of simple life; but his simplicity is interwoven with a complexity of character and the elements of possible achievement and high attainments.

He is a man of great determination, which is easily observable in the protruding chin and the clear, steady look of the eye. He has promulgated his system for many years, and has labored patiently in the building up of his institutions.

The government of the Koreshan Unity as a body distinct from its political and secular relations, is vested in an imperial head, called the pre-eminent, who constitutes the executive power of the system. The governing body is called the pre-eminent concilium. The pre-eminent presides at the meetings of this body. The title of the pre-eminent is "Victoria Gratia" Koresh, signifying "Victoria by the grace of Koresh."

The woman who is thus honored with the title and executive office of the Koreshan Unity was originally Mrs. Anna G. Ordway, recently of Chicago. Mrs. Ord-

way is about sixty years of age. Victoria Gratia is a forceful character of great executive ability, a splendid disciplinarian, and is greatly beloved by her people. She is well calculated to enforce the government of a scientific and religious body, having for its aims the highest good not only of its own society, but the improvement of the conditions of the entire world.

The secular government of Estero City is entirely distinct from the government of the religious colony. The municipality is regulated by the statutes of the State of Florida, having its town officials elected by popular voice through the function of the ballot; and the incorporation will be conducted upon the basis of liberality, carried out in all of the details of an economically adjusted business system.

The basis of the Koreshan cosmogony is that all life is cellular, originating in cells, all living structures being composed of cells and propagating cells; whence the conclusion that the universe, the great aggregation of all cells, must itself be a cell, the material walls of which are comprised of the shell of the earth.

Recently the scientific staff of the Koreshan Unity undertook the work of demonstrating the truth of the cosmogenic conceptions by actual experimentation. They claim to have found by geodetic survey of the gulf coast of Florida that a rectiline extended over a portion of the earth's or water's surface, which is the chord of a concave arc, and not a tangent to a convex curvature; and that the surface of water, from the basis of visual and other tests over long distances, cannot possibly be convex.

For instance, on canals, lakes, and the Gulf of Mexico, targets on the water were viewed at such distances from the targets as would be seemingly impossible if the waters presented a convex surface.