

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

ELDER STEVENSON'S DEATH.

The demise of Elder Edward Stevenson on Tuesday night, January 27th, removes from this stage of existence one of the pioneer settlers of Utah, one who, previous to his entry into this valley in 1847, already had displayed his firm adherence to the right, and who, as a young man, had progressed well along on the way to a career that brought to him the confidence and esteem of his fellowmen and the blessings of the Lord, for whose cause in the earth he was a most devoted and zealous advocate. By his death there is created a vacancy in one of the quorums of the general authorities of the Church, he having been a member of the First Council of Seventies for more than three years past.

Elder Stevenson has spent much of his life in missionary labors, both at home and abroad. He has traveled extensively in this nation and in foreign lands, besides the home missionary duties he has performed among the people in these valleys; and he never shrank from his duty as a servant of the Lord in declaring the sacred message of the restoration of the Gospel in this dispensation, nor has there been any wavering in his testimony of that glorious fact. It was his delight to act as a special messenger of the Lord to declare His Gospel for the salvation of mankind.

In the course of his experience, Elder Stevenson made himself familiar with many of the scenes of early Church history, and has given much information to the public in relation thereto. He was also associated with many of the early members of the Church, and took a deep interest in the notable events with which they were connected. Among those with whom he discussed events of vital importance in Church history in this dispensation were the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, and his record of what those witnesses testified to him was given wide publicity, so that all might know thereof and verify the accuracy of his declarations. Regarding the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon, illustration may be made in their case as to Elder Stevenson's record of them, by brief quotations from his extended mention thereof. He says of Oliver Cowdery:

I have often heard him bear a faithful testimony to the restoration of the Gospel by the visitation of an angel, in whose presence he stood in company with the Prophet Joseph Smith and David Whitmer. He testified that he beheld the plates, the leaves being turned over by the angel, whose voice he heard, and that they were commanded as witnesses to bear a faithful testimony to the world of the vision that they were favored to behold, and that the translation from the plates of the Book of Mormon was accepted of the Lord, and that it would go forth to the world, and no power on earth should stop its progress.

He said of David Whitmer in 1886, after recounting previous testimonies he had listened to from him:

David Whitmer is now just past 81

years of age. In this his last testimony he said to me: "As sure as the sun shines and I live, just so sure did the angel appear to me and Joseph Smith, and I heard his voice, and did see the angel standing before us, and on a table were the plates, the sword of Laban, and the ball or compass."

Concerning Martin Harris, Elder Stevenson wrote:

In the year 1809 I was appointed on a mission to the United States. Having visited several of the Eastern states, I called at Kirtland, Ohio, to see the first Temple that was built by our people in this generation, while there I met Martin Harris, soon after coming out of the Temple. He took from under his arm a copy of the Book of Mormon, the first edition, I believe, and bore a faithful testimony, just the same as that I heard him bear thirty-six years previous.

August 19, 1870, in company with Martin Harris, I left Kirtland for Utah, and on the 21st he was with me in Chicago, and at the American hotel bore testimony to a large number of people of the visitation of the angel, etc.

Elder Stevenson has gone to meet his reward, that of an earnest, humble, diligent worker in the cause of humanity—the Gospel of the Lord. We regret to miss his presence, to realize that in mortality there shall be heard no more his voice in firm testimony; and we sympathize deeply with the family who have loved, honored and revered him as their head, for the virtues he possessed and exemplified in his life. But we rejoice that in passing through the gate to the spirit world he is attended by the record of a noble, righteous life which will give to him the Master's welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant." May the comforting influence of the Holy Spirit rest upon the bereaved ones; and may the testimony and example of the departed one be an inspiration and encouragement to them to emulate his good works, and a blessing to those who learn and love the truth.

NO SUCH INFERENCE INTENDED.

The NEWS received today the following communication dated at Boise, Idaho, January 28:

To the Editor:

Dear Sir:—You will please pardon me when I suggest that the casual reader when reading your editorial of the 22nd inst., entitled "No Church interference in Idaho," might readily infer that I was one of the persons referred to who had been endeavoring to use Church influence in Idaho in the manner suggested, my name being the only one mentioned. Whether you so intended, or that you even entertained such an idea, I am not disposed to say. I trust, however, that no such impression was intended, as I am ready to handsomely reward anyone who can say truthfully that I have ever attempted at any time in my life to use Church influence either to enhance or defeat any political measure.

THOMAS E. BASSETT.

We do not discern wherein the editorial remarks referred to can convey the idea mentioned. Certainly no

such thought was entertained here. The NEWS had no information as to who had sought to use Church influence, or, indeed, that there had been any actual effort to use it. But such effort was alleged, and called for the telegram which mentioned State Senator Bassett's name as the person to whom the dispatch was addressed. In this case the fair presumption would be that the telegram was sent to the senator because he was above such methods as were condemned, and therefore would have influence against them. The NEWS has such confidence in Senator Bassett's integrity upon this point that it would not have believed an ex parte statement against him if it had been made. But there was no intimation of that kind, hence no thought of it. And we are further of the opinion that the allegation of attempts to Church influence was based upon rumors that had no foundation in fact, but were circulated by designing persons, of whom there are always plenty connected with political disputes.

GIVE US THE TRUTH.

There is something extremely pathetic in the efforts of the religious press of the country to ward off the effects of the alarm sounded by some prominent evangelists regarding the status of the professedly Christian churches of the present day. As stated in these columns recently, Mr. Moody some time ago drew a dark picture of the decay of faith and general breaking up of the moral forces of our civilization. Another reverend gentleman joins Mr. Moody and makes the following statement:

It is but too easily obvious that never in the history of these nineteen centuries has the world more encroached upon the church or the church been more assimilated in the world. The amazing decline in doctrinal soundness, the decay of vitality and spirituality, the godless extravagance prevailing even among disciples, the abounding conformity to the world, the practical denial of Christian stewardship, the neglect of private prayer, the growing indifference to public worship, the vastness of the unoccupied field of missions, and the utter inadequacy of present means and methods to overtake the destitution—these, and many other evils and perils now confronting us, demand such a new standard of holy living and giving, praying and preaching, denying of self, and serving of God, as can never become actual without a new Pentecost from above.

As already remarked, the efforts to neutralize the effects of such open confessions of failure are almost touching. "Are we indeed so bad as that?" asks the Cumberland Presbyterian. "Is it true that, having emerged from the dark ages, we have been plunged into a darker age? Seriously, what good can come from such gloomy views, and, more serious still, are they correct?" The editor of that journal hopes they are not correct, and suggests that what the world needs is more confidence in the Supreme Being.

A Boston Journal published in the interest of Methodism exclaims in horror: "Is the Christian church apostate?" and then goes on to declare that Mr. Moody is woefully mistaken. He "fails to see