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THE BASSETT CASE REVERSED.

BY TELEGRAM from Washington, D. C., Dec. 22, we learn that the Supreme Court of the United States has reversed the decision of the Utah Courts in the case of W. E. Bassett, sentenced for polygamy.

The case was argued before the higher court by Hon. F. S. Richards, and a synopsis of his able argument was published a short time ago in the DESERET NEWS. We expressed the opinion at the time that the Court would reverse the decision, for the points presented by Mr. Richards were so clear and forcible and his argument was so legal and logical as to carry conviction with them.

The case turned on confidential communications alleged to have been made by Mr. Bassett to his then legal wife and the admissibility of her testimony. The courts below admitted this as evidence, and conviction followed based chiefly if not entirely upon this testimony. This was error, and henceforth such testimony cannot be admitted in trials under the laws of Congress against polygamy and kindred offenses. Thus law and justice once more prevail over extreme judicial rulings in Utah.

RELIGION AND MORALITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

ONE of the chief objections to the public school system of this country is the exclusion therefrom of religious instruction. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and education that is not founded in godliness is built upon an inadequate foundation. We believe this defect is the principal cause of the opposition to the public schools that comes from some portions of the clergy.

That early impressions are the most permanent is universally conceded. That faith in a Supreme Being, and accountability to Him for all the acts of life, should be taught as soon as the infant mind is

capable of sensing in any degree their importance, will be a generally admitted by all who are truly religious. If such subjects are kept out of the schools, the pupils will be likely to grow up with part of their being undeveloped. The spiritual is as essential a portion of the person as the physical or the intellectual, and needs cultivation in an equal degree. Education is therefore incomplete where religion does not enter into and form an important part of it.

Those who oppose religion in the school will say that parents who believe in religion can teach their children at home, and the Sunday schools of the churches will answer every other necessary purpose. To this we may reply, the argument in favor of teaching children anything in school instead of or in addition to instruction at home, applies just as much to religion as to arithmetic, and the relegation of religion to the Sunday school would give secular training at least five days in every week as against one day for religious training, thus making the former five times as important as the latter.

Of course where the schools are open to children whose parents hold opposite views as to creed, denominational tenets must be excluded. That needs no extended argument. The Jew does not want his children taught the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Catholic does not want Protestantism instilled into the minds of his children, nor does the Protestant want Papal ideas inculcated in the schools. Therefore all forms and creeds and observances peculiar to any church or sect, must of necessity be banished from the public schoolrooms.

The public school system is established. It is an existing fact. Taxes are levied and schools are supported by taxation. In Utah, as in many other parts of the Union, education is made compulsory by law. So it is useless, perhaps, to say much in reference to the system itself, unless it be to point out how some modifications might be made without doing violence to any one's feelings.

We think the existence of a Supreme Being as the Creator and Ruler of the universe, and the necessity of reverence for and obedience to Him, might be taught without entering into the questions of His nature or of anything doctrinal or denominational. The number of persons who really believe there is no such creative and over-

ruling Power, is so insignificant as to cut scarcely the shadow of a figure in the great sum of humanity. Therefore it need not enter into these considerations when we view them in their vast importance.

Morality, the difference between right and wrong, between honesty and its opposite, between truth and falsehood, courage and cowardice, highmindedness and brutality, and the cultivation of those qualities which make up refined and civilized society, and cause boys and girls to grow up honorable, self-controlled and moral men and women, might and ought to be taught in the public schools, and need not involve the introduction of any tenets or the peculiar views of any religious denomination.

There is no true religion which does not embrace morality. And so far as it goes, true morality is part of religion. A religion that does not inculcate moral action is not deserving of the name. And all moral precepts are really religious in their spirit and tendencies. But morality can be taught and illustrated to the juvenile mind without connecting it with anything sectarian, or ceremonial or credal.

It may be said, if you teach morality you will have to teach religion, because morality is founded in the divine law and is defined as "conformity to divine will." It is true that "right" as applied to morals is defined as "conformity to the constitution of man and the will of God." But, as we have shown, belief in Deity can be taught without entering into the question of His characteristics, as jangled over by sectaries, and veneration of the Supreme Being may be inculcated without touching on any particular form of worship. And thus morality, with that much of universal religion, can form a proper subject for public school tuition, because it does not necessarily include anything that would be objectionable to the devotees of any particular creed or ecclesiastical system.

One thing it is certain can be done. That is, every influence contrary to religion and antagonistic to a special form of it, may be and ought to be vigorously excluded from the public schools. If religion or religious morality must not be introduced, no teacher should be permitted to foster irreligion or infidelity or immorality, or proclaim or insinuate anything against a given form of faith. If Catholicism may not be taught, anti-popery must not