

to sell to private parties water procured for the people with the people's money. The City Council has power to furnish the people with water, but not to deprive them of it. No authority has ever been conferred, by even the remotest implication contained in any expression of the legislative will upon the subject, to take from the citizens their water supply. To sell to Jones *et al.* the water supply of the city would be to do this very thing, for it would be to convey to them a title to that which now belongs to and is possessed and enjoyed by the people.

As an injunction would lie to prevent the City Council from disposing to private parties of any of the principal streets of the city, which are necessary for the convenience and traffic of the citizens, so the same remedy would lie to prevent the acceptance of the proposition of Witcher Jones "and associates." There is, therefore, no need for citizens to be uneasy over this matter. The Jones scheme is entirely impracticable, whether viewed from a standpoint of law, equity or public opinion.

#### ANOTHER INDICATION.

THE power of the Catholic Church in politics is indicated by a dispatch from Milwaukee, which states that the Republicans throughout Wisconsin are "paralyzed at the sweeping victory of the Democrats." This result is attributed to the determined fight made by the Catholic and Lutheran priests against the Bennett compulsory education law.

As a matter of fact, the Democratic victory is due mainly to the efforts of the Catholic clergy, the Lutherans cutting only a small figure in the controversy. The Bennett law is a republican measure, and the result of the late elections in Milwaukee gives a fair idea of the power with which political parties will have to contend since the Catholics have determined upon an aggressive policy. They propose to support their political friends and get their enemies down.

The effect produced in Wisconsin is but a hint of what is coming. It remains to be seen whether either or both the great political parties shall court or contend against the growing religious power that is seeking to place its iron grip upon the country.

Boston, April 7.—Colonel Long, the financier, died suddenly this afternoon.

#### THE VITAL QUESTION AT ISSUE

THE bill for the admission of Idaho as a State in the Union has passed the House of Representatives by a strict party vote. The Democrats, however, with one exception, refrained from voting. This may have been done for a purpose which will be developed later.

The result, so far, was anticipated when the intention of the Republican party was made manifest. There is one characteristic of that party which is entitled to some respect. That is, when a policy is defined, it is lived up to and worked for with unwavering perseverance and fidelity. The party does not back down or recede. It may change front when necessity seems to require, but that change is effected as a body, and by common consent, and without fear as to consequences.

The chief obstacle in the way of the admission of Idaho was the "Mormon" question. It is true that Idaho has not the necessary population under the rule, namely, the number to entitle a district to one Representative in Congress. This would be in round numbers about a hundred and fifty thousand. The most sanguine supporters of the measure only claimed a hundred and twenty thousand, and that this was a great exaggeration everybody familiar with Idaho affairs is aware. Little attention was paid to the ordinary qualifications necessary for the admission of a State. The "Mormon" question was the overshadowing issue.

From the debates in Congress it is very clear that the root of this matter was not reached except by a few speakers on the Democratic side. The subject was treated as though polygamy and polygamists were the point of assault in the peculiar constitution submitted by the Territory of Idaho. The point was continually projected and the object in doing so was accomplished. The average member imagined that in recording his vote in favor of the measure he was aiming a blow against polygamy and doing something for the political discomfiture of polygamists.

This gross error ought to be exploded. It should be understood that the effect of the anti-"Mormon" clauses of the Idaho constitution will not disfranchise or debar from holding office any practical "Mormon" polygamist. All such persons have been effectually debarred from voting or holding office. That was effected eight years ago by the so-called Edmunds act. The

aim and intent of these clauses are simply, but fully, to legislate against a certain religious belief and the free exercise of that religion. And by this we do not mean the exercise of religion in violation of law, but the exercise of religion against which there is no law.

To illustrate: The Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints preach to the world that, as necessary to salvation, men and women must believe in God the Eternal Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of their sins, be baptized for the remission of sins and receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands of men authorized of God. If any man in Idaho should believe this and receive these ordinances of baptism and confirmation he would thus be made a member of the "Mormon" Church. In doing this he would violate no law, he would not do anything immoral or against the peace and good order of society. Yet under the Idaho Constitution he would for this belief and the exercise thereof be debarred from the elective franchise, from holding any public office and from serving as a juror.

Take another case. The children of "Mormon" parentage are as a rule baptized when eight years old and thus initiated into the Church. When they arrive at manhood if they should happen to live in Idaho, because of this membership they would be shorn of all political rights and privileges. Partaking of the Sacrament or contributing to the good of the poor in that Church would be sufficient to shut them out from the polls.

Observe. This has nothing to do with polygamy. These members may not even believe in the rightfulness of polygamy. In being baptized into the Church, the repentant believer is not required to subscribe to any polygamous agreement or tenet. It is the belief in and the practice of the plainest Gospel principles enunciated in the Christian New Testament against which the anti-"Mormon" clauses of the Idaho Constitution are framed. And therefore, in voting for it, the House of Representatives of the United States have given vitality to a law respecting an establishment of religion and prohibiting the free exercise thereof. And this is expressly and in terms forbidden in the Constitution of the United States.

The ruling of the Supreme Court of the United States in a recent case will be cited as a reason for the ac-