

EDITORIALS.

WHOSE OX IS GORED NOW?

THE new prohibition law in Kansas it is said, forbids the use of wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, punishing the minister who offers it to the communicant with two years' imprisonment in the penitentiary, and closing the church where it is used, as a public nuisance. At least this is the interpretation of the law as rendered by Rev. Dr. Beatty, rector of the Episcopal Church at Lawrence, Kansas.

The minister who thus understands the statute announces his intention to disregard and resist it. He recently administered the sacrament according to the rites of his church, and in doing so, said:

"We are willing to render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, but we will still give to God the things that are his. I say, as did Peter, 'Judge ye whether we should obey men rather than God.' Of one thing you may be assured, we shall never recognize for a moment the attempts of human legislation to destroy the great sacrament of the Christian church."

It is probable that Mr. Beatty may have strained his interpretation of the law beyond intended limits; this we cannot decide upon, not having the text of the law. But his view seems to be entertained by others, and trouble is predicted in a conflict between the Church and the State. The New York Tribune remarks:

"It is probable that the Rev. Dr. Beatty's action will be imitated by other clergymen and the result is hard to predict. It will be argued that the State cannot permit the prohibition law to be openly violated by clergymen without arousing a storm of opposition from those to whom its enforcement is a pecuniary loss, and, on the other hand, that to consign the Rev. Dr. Beatty to prison and close his church as a nuisance would place sharp weapons in the hands of those who want to see the new law hewn down root and branch."

We notice that the Reverend defier of the law is applauded in his course by his ecclesiastical conferees and by such papers as the *Christian Union*. How is this? The Latter-day Saints are expected to conform to secular law when it impinges upon their religious institutions, and are berated by the ministers of the orthodox churches for placing "religion above law." It is a poor rule that only works one way. If the State has the right to interfere with one "establishment of religion," why not with another? Why should not law for the "Mormons" be law for the Episcopalians? Using the same argument as our "Christian" friends have applied to us, we might say, you Episcopalians may believe that wine should be used in the sacrament, but you must not administer it in Kansas, for that is against the law. Religious belief is free, but overt acts can be restricted and punished by the State. What is "sauce" for a "Mormon" religious ceremony is "sauce" for an Episcopal religious ceremony. If not, why not?

Marriage is just as much a sacrament of the "Mormon" Church as the Lord's Supper is of the Episcopal. The ordinance of matrimony has been held as a religious rite from time immemorial. Before the dawn of the Christian era it had been held as a religious institution for many centuries. Since that time it has been continued as a sacrament and has been so held by the Catholic Church, co-equal with the sacrament of the Eucharist. If the secular law can restrain or suppress one, it can restrain or suppress the other.

It may be objected that the Catholic Church does not solemnize plural marriages. Very true, but that does not affect the question. Plural marriages were solemnized by religious rites before the Catholic Church had an existence. And even if they never were before the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints it would not affect the argument a particle. If the sacrament of marriage is a religious ordinance, the question of its administration and extent is a religious matter, to be settled by each ecclesiastical organization for itself, and may be a subject of controversy between sects or theologians, but is not rightfully a matter for the con-

trol of a government restricted by its constitution from interference with an establishment of religion, and barred from "prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

It will be contended by some that marriage has nothing to do with religion. If their position is good, others may contend with equal propriety that drinking a little wine has nothing to do with religion. Let other people have the right to decide what is or is not a man's religion, and very soon there would be none at all in the world. Marriage has a great deal to do with the religion of the Latter-day Saints. It is, in their view, "ordained of God." This was the declaration of ancient Prophets and Apostles. The ceremony of marriage is with us purely religious. The whole matter of matrimony is a holy and sacred affair, under divine direction. It is established by virtue of revelation from God, solemnized by those holding divine authority, and regulated as "an establishment of religion." Every argument that can be adduced to prove the sacrament of the Lord's Supper a matter of religion, can be brought forward with equal—nay stronger application, to prove that marriage, in all its bearings, is also a matter of religion.

And here we repeat the warning which we gave to the various sects when the anti-religious decision of the Supreme Court of the United States was delivered, much to the satisfaction of those societies: The same rule and reasoning which give authority to suppress by law one religious institution because it is unpopular, can be used against any other on the same principle. If religious liberty under the Constitution only extends to matters of faith and not to actions prompted by that faith, then the sacrament of the Lord's Supper may be suppressed; so may baptism; so may circumcision; so may any religious ceremony that happens to come under the ban of a people growing in a disregard, not to say contempt, for religious observances, and in disbelief of any actual divine interference in human affairs.

We now have the right to say to "Christian" ministers, who clamor for the enforcement of the law against "Mormon" plural marriage, and who go so far in their zeal for the law that they advocate the disfranchisement and even the extermination of all who prefer their religion to a law enacted against it, ladies and gentlemen, sustain the Kansas law, and call for the imprisonment of every clergyman in the State who administers wine in the sacrament, and the closing of all churches where wine-drinking is part of the services; for the law must be observed, you know, and this idea of "obeying God rather than man" is nothing but rank "Mormonism," and must not be allowed to have weight for a moment. Take this course, anti-"Mormon" priests and people, or else put your hands on your mouths when you next want to cry out against our revival of the ancient order of divine marriage!

Now, let it be understood that we Latter-day Saints do not concede the right of the State of Kansas to interfere in the administration of wine in the ceremonies of the Episcopal Church. We do not use wine ourselves in the sacrament, but we accord to others the full liberty to do so, and so far as we have the power will contend for the Episcopal right to its use as much as for the "Mormon" right to abstain. We believe in the right of all religious societies and individuals to worship and obey God—their god or gods—in their own way, so long as they do not infringe upon the rights of others. We believe that any departure from this principle is contrary to the Constitution of our country and dangerous to the cause of religious freedom. And though professing "Christians" will join with the irreligious in an attempt to suppress an essential part of our religious system, we will not join in any attempt to interfere with theirs, but on the contrary will be found, all the time, on the side of the fullest liberty, civil and religious, that is compatible with the common rights of humanity.

A DISGRACEFUL EXHIBITION.

THE dead-lock in the United States Senate is a disgrace to the country. It is caused by shameful motives and reflects darkly upon men making such great professions of patriot-

ism. Instead of proceeding to the transaction of the business which required their extra attendance at Washington, they have been jangling over place, contending for office for favorites, and placing party consideration above the welfare of the nation. They have also descended to the plane of the demagogue, and wasted the people's time in personal reflections upon each other, in fuming, threatening, attacking and defending private character, and blocking the way to the consideration of any measure of public benefit.

The United States Senate has been generally considered one of the most sedate and properly conducted political assemblies in the world. The House of Representatives being the popular branch of Congress has been accorded a little more license, and the same degree of deportment has not been expected as of the more dignified Upper Chamber. But the scenes of the past two or three weeks have brought the Senate down from its height of reverence in the public mind, and have exhibited it in a very degrading light before the whole civilized world. We regret exceedingly that a body from whom so much is reasonably expected has shown itself so little deserving of the people's respect.

THE LAST OF THE THREE WITNESSES.

WHEN the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, the divine promise was made to Joseph Smith the Prophet that three witnesses should be permitted to see the plates and receive a manifestation from God concerning the record, that they might be able to bear testimony concerning this work to all nations. This promise was fulfilled, and Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris were the persons chosen to receive this revelation. Their testimony, as published to the world and translated into different languages, is as follows:

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people unto whom this work shall come, that we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken; and we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for His voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true; and it is marvelous in our eyes, nevertheless the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen."

OLIVER COWDERY,
DAVID WHITMER,
MARTIN HARRIS.

In the history of Joseph Smith an account of the circumstances and manner of this manifestation is given, and this has been corroborated many times by each of the witnesses, to the effect that in answer to their prayers, an angel of God appeared before them and turned over the plates leaf by leaf, so that they saw the hieroglyphics there inscribed, and the voice of God spoke to them from the heavens, bearing testimony that the record was correctly translated. At first they received no answer to their prayers, and Martin Harris withdrew himself from the circle; on his departure, the manifestation was received by Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and

David Whitmer. The Prophet then went to where Martin Harris was praying alone, and joined with him in supplication to God, and the vision was repeated, to Martin Harris' perfect satisfaction and great joy.

These three persons, after some years' membership in the Church, were severally excommunicated for disaffection or transgression. Their disconnection with the Church has been cited as evidence against the Book of Mormon. To us it is very strong proof in its favor. If there had been any collusion between Joseph Smith and them, he would not have dared to withdraw fellowship from them, for fear of exposure. And after they were cut off from the Church, their testimony concerning the Book of Mormon and this divine manifestation to them remained the same. It never wavered, never changed. Among friends or among foes, they maintained their integrity so far as this was concerned, and nothing could induce them to retract a syllable.

Oliver Cowdery returned repentant to the fold, again lifted up his voice in defence of the truth, and died still testifying to the divinity of the Book of Mormon and the witness he had received. At this time the Church was in the midst of difficulties, having been driven from civilization and not having yet established itself in the midst of the mountains. Martin Harris re-joined the Church, and came to Utah, where, before his decease, he also lifted up his voice in many places, clinging to his original testimony. David Whitmer is still living, and so far as we can learn, has never faltered nor been shaken in his attestations of the same facts. He is not connected with the Church, does not endorse the doctrine of plural marriage nor some other principles introduced by the Prophet Joseph, under divine commands, but has repeatedly testified to the angelic vision as at first, up to a very recent date.

A copy of the Richmond *Conservator*, of March 25, has been handed to us by Brother Samuel Russell, who is acquainted with David Whitmer and with the persons whose names are given below. It contains a statement by the last of the three witnesses which will be interesting to our readers, and we reproduce it with the exception of some paragraphs not directly bearing on the subject of the manifestation, and which contain remarks that we have not the space now to discuss. Following is the "notice":

Unto all Nations, Kindred, Tongues and People, unto whom these presents shall come:

It having been represented by one John Murphy, of Polo, Caldwell County, Missouri, that I, in a conversation with him last summer, denied my testimony as one of the three witnesses to the "Book of Mormon."

To the end, therefore, that he may understand me now, if he did not then; and that the world may know the truth, I wish now, standing as it were, in the very sunset of life, and in the fear of God, once for all to make this public statement:

That I have never at any time, denied that testimony or any part thereof, which has so long since been published with that Book, as one of the three witnesses. Those who know me best well know that I have always adhered to that testimony. And that no man may be misled or doubt my present views in regard to the same, I do again affirm the truth of all my statements as then made and published.

"He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear;" it was no delusion; what is written, is written, and he that readeth let him understand.

"And if any man doubt, should he not carefully and honestly read and understand the same before presuming to sit in judgment and condemning the light, which shineth in darkness, and sheweth the way of eternal life as pointed out by the unerring hand of God."

In the spirit of Christ, who hath said: "Follow thou me, for I am the life, the light and the way," I submit this statement to the world. God in whom I trust being my judge as to the sincerity of my motives and the faith and hope that is in me of eternal life.

My sincere desire is that the world may be benefited by this plain and simple statement of the truth.

And all the honor to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which is our God. Amen!

DAVID WHITMER, SR.

Richmond, Mo., March 19, 1881.

We, the undersigned citizens of Richmond, Ray County, Mo., where David Whitmer, Sr., has resided since the year A. D. 1838, certify that we have been long and intimately acquainted with him and know him to be a man of the highest integrity, and of undoubted truth and veracity.

Given at Richmond, Mo., this March 10, A. D. 1881.

A. W. Doniphan,
Geo. W. Dunn, Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit.

T. D. Woodson, President of Ray Co. Savings bank.

J. T. Child, editor of *Conservator*.

H. C. Garner, Cashier of Ray Co. Savings Bank.

W. A. Holman, County Treasurer.

J. S. Hughes, Banker, Richmond.

James Hughes, Banker, Richmond.

D. P. Whitmer, Attorney-at-law.

Jas. W. Black, Attorney-at-law.

L. C. Cantwell, Postmaster, Richmond.

Geo. I. Wasson, Mayor.

James A. Davis, County Collector.

C. J. Hughes, Probate Judge and Presiding Justice of Ray County Court.

Geo. W. Trigg, County Clerk.

W. W. Mosby, M. D.

Thos. McGinnis, ex-Sheriff, Ray County.

J. P. Quesenberry, Merchant.

W. R. Holman, Furniture Merchant.

Lewis Slaughter, Recorder of Deeds.

Geo. W. Buchanan, M. D.

A. K. Reyburn.

The *Conservator* makes the following editorial comments on the "notice":

"Elsewhere we publish a letter from David Whitmer, Sr., an old and well known citizen of Ray, as well as an endorsement of his standing as a man, signed by a number of the leading citizens of this community, in reply to some unwarranted aspersions made upon him."

There is no doubt that Mr. Whitmer, who was one of the three witnesses of the authenticity of the gold plates, from which he asserts that Joe Smith translated the Book of Mormon, (a *fac simile* of the characters he now has in his possession with the original records), is firmly convinced of its divine origin, and while he makes no efforts to intrude his views or beliefs, he simply wants the world to know that so far as he is concerned there is no "variableness or shadow of turning." Having resided here for near a half of a century, it is with no little pride that he points to his past record, with the consciousness that he has done nothing derogatory to his character as a citizen and a believer in the son of Mary to warrant such an attack on him, come from what source it may, and now, with the lilies of seventy-five winters crowning him like an aureole and his pilgrimage on earth well nigh ended, he reiterates his former statements and will leave futurity to solve the problem that he was but a passing witness of its fulfillment."

These testimonies to the character of David Whitmer, strengthen the record that he bears of the Book which is a stumbling block to this generation and a joy to the humble seeker after divine truth. It will be remembered that Apostle Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith visited the aged witness to the Book of Mormon, while on their latest mission to the East, and again received his testimony, their account of the visit and conversation being given to the public, on their return, through the *DESERET NEWS*.

We are pleased to give place to Mr. Whitmer's vindication, and honor him for his fidelity to the truth, while we regret his blindness to the further manifestations of the power of God and revelations of light and knowledge for the salvation of mankind. The Book of Mormon is a divine work and the testimony of the three witnesses will assuredly confront the people who reject it, when they stand before the bar of eternal judgment.

RESIDENCE AND NATURALIZATION.

ONE of the requirements of the law for the naturalization of aliens in this country is that they must make it appear to the satisfaction of the Court admitting them to citizenship