

THE THATCHER MATTER.

From Hon. E. G. Woolley, of St. George, Utah, his name in this city received the following letter a few days since. It presents a clear and forcible view of a matter which has had some discussion of late in this State, and may be read with profit by the entire community. It first appeared in print in the Tribune of Sunday, and is reproduced in these columns for the reasons above given:

ST. GEORGE, November 28, 1896.—My Dear Son, Gordon, Richard and Frederick—Since writing you last, and on the same day I wrote you about the Thatcher matter, we received yours of the 22nd, and also had the Sunday and Monday Herald, so that I have the letters between Brother Thatcher and President Snow, and also have the articles of the Tribune on the matter, as well as the NEWS articles up to the 24th. The mail did not connect yesterday, so I have nothing later, but I think I have enough to size up the situation fairly well.

An "outsider on reading" the letter between Thatcher and Snow will very naturally think that Thatcher has not had fair treatment from the fact that the Quorum would not formulate any charges for him to plead to, and dealt with him without giving him a chance to be heard in self-defense. Under a legal procedure, or in common business transactions, this view would undoubtedly be the correct one, but to one who is somewhat familiar with the principles of the Gospel, the organization of the Church and its quorums of the Priesthood—the matter assumes a different aspect.

The statements of the members of his Quorum made at the last Conference throw considerable light on the trouble, even though nothing definite was said as to the particular points of difference between him and the others of the Twelve. That he stood alone, as opposed to his Quorum in any matter of church discipline, and refused to put himself in harmony therewith, after a fair time had been given him, is in itself enough cause for his being placed outside the Quorum, as it is impossible for a body of that kind to do its proper work with disunion in its midst; and while the people generally may not have known all the matters of difference, still Thatcher's usefulness in his place as an Apostle would be impaired, and he could not do his duty in his high and holy calling. This being so, it was his plain duty to place himself in harmony with the others of his Quorum, or, failing to do that, he should have resigned, and not have been a stumbling block in the way of the progress of the cause which he professes to think so much of.

It may be said that the matters of policy and discipline were such as he could not conscientiously sustain, and that therefore he is justified in refusing to endorse or work for them. Admitting that to be the case, he has no right to his place in the Quorum to give his views in as strong a manner as he felt necessary, and urge upon the others to adopt them; but when he had done that and the majority was against his ideas, to say nothing of there being in this case the entire

eleven against one, then he must acquiesce in their decision, yield his judgment to the others, and do his best to make the policy decided upon a success; if it were not possible to give it his fullest sanction, he should at least not do anything to oppose or obstruct the workings of the Quorum, for the minute he does such a thing he is not fit to hold his place in that Quorum, and must make way for some one who can and will work in harmony with the heads of the cause.

It is not a supposable case that the eleven of the Quorum and the three of the First Presidency are all going to take a course which is opposed to the good of the Church, and that one man is the one who is right, especially when that one man is only one of twelve of equal authority, with another quorum of three still over them. While in ordinary cases of trial for fellowship the accused has the right to have charges preferred against him to which he may answer and rebut if he can, this is another kind of a case; it is simply a matter of harmony and fellowship between a member of a quorum and the quorum itself, and consists of differences of opinion and opposition to the decisions of the quorum, with which all are acquainted and which need no formal charges to acquaint the party out of harmony with what he is expected to make right so that he may be in fellowship with the Quorum.

It is not a matter where the eleven should go to him and make the differences right, but it is for the one out of harmony to come to them and set himself straight; or, failing to do so, to resign his place; so that the cause may not suffer from the want of union among the leading quorums. You will see from this the difference between a case where a member of the Church has committed some act against the laws or discipline of the Church, and the case of a member of a quorum being out of harmony in his own quorum. In the first case the party who is accused of a wrong must waive the charges specified; must have the opportunity of being confronted with his accusers, and of producing any evidence he may have, to rebut the accusations against him; then by the law and the testimony only can he be condemned.

No one can know and understand better than Thatcher these principles of order in the organization of the Church and when he calls on the members of his Quorum for specific charges against himself he must have shown that he was requiring something out of order, something which they would not have been justified in making, and to all appearances he was only doing this to make a record by which he could claim that he had been unjustly dealt with, in being deposed without a hearing, depending on the ignorance of "outside" people and many of the "inside" ones as well, to justify him in his course, and by this means gain popularity and make a schism in the Church, or at least to ride into political power by his show of independence of the Church.

While his letters seem to exhibit a meekness of spirit, still there is something of a studied effort at posing for

future effect, so that he might have the quorum at a seeming disadvantage when the matter became public. A careful reading between the lines will make this plain to a spirit of discernment.

He exhibited the cloven hoof the moment he announced himself a candidate for the Senate on a platform opposed to the rule of the Church, and this was done even before he had been deposed, and while he still pretended to expect to hold his position. What further proof can be wanted of his disposition to try and gain political power and prestige among the class called "Young Utah"? Of course he knows that there is a large class of the young of this Church which does not have a very good understanding of the Church order and discipline, and he evidently thinks he can work up in the sympathies of that class by pretending not to have had a fair showing to defend himself, but when the young, and many of the older ones, too, who have not understood this, have time to think the matter over, they will not see the thing in the light that at first seemed to be so clear to them, and Thatcher will stand where he belongs in their estimation.

While Thatcher may be an honest man, and a man whom any one would be disposed to like, still there can be no doubt that he has allowed his ambition, mixed probably with his personal feelings toward some of the leading men, to have such an influence over him, that he has thrown away a position which is the highest and most honorable in the world.

While there may have been many mistakes made by Church authorities, and may be many more made in the future, it is no justification for a man in Thatcher's position to take the stand he has done, and his duty was to try and learn by the errors committed, and endeavor to have them avoided in the future. No man is perfect, and although there are men holding high places who are entitled to the spirit of the Lord to teach them how to act so as to bring about the best results for the cause they represent, still they may at times commit errors in judgment and even do things through selfish principle, not in keeping with their professions and high calling; so that we should not tie to any man so far as our faith in the principles of the Gospel and our ideas of right are concerned, but endeavor so to live that we may have the spirit of discernment and truth to guide us aright on all subjects.

A few weeks since it would have been considered by many as almost a sacrilege to have questioned anything which Brother Thatcher might have said or done, but his fall shows how fallible is man, and that any one of those now in full standing may go the same way, for no man is of himself safe for a day or an hour. I desire to keep enough of the spirit of the Lord in close communion to enable me to judge between right and wrong, as I consider that of the greatest of God's gifts to man.

There is one thing we should bear in mind regarding those high in authority, and that is that they are placed on a kind of a pedestal, where their