

EDITORIAL SECTION.

LIVING ISSUES FOR PULPIT TREATMENT.

The Old Ox.

By REV. W. J. DAY, SOMERVILLE,
MASS.

But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or woman, the ox shall be stoned, and the owner also shall be put to death.—Ex. xxi. 29.

LAW is a necessity. The condition of the earth before the Divine fiat was pronounced that called into being existing worlds was supreme disorder, confusion, and chaos. "Order is Heaven's first law." As soon as Divine power was manifested order sprang into being. Arrangement, form, position manifested themselves. There came to be light and darkness where there had been only darkness; day and night where there had been only night. Successive seasons were inaugurated, each producing in its order its appropriate scenes, activities, and evolutions. No less important is law in human life. The sacred writer says, "God setteth the solitary in families." Here at once is an evolution. Evolution means law at work. With this evolution of the single individual into families we get another, that of families grouping themselves into societies, men coming together to form communities, communities growing into provinces, cantons, or States, and these into kingdoms, empires, nations; and thus we have the grand consummate flower of the individual plant—the outgrowth of law working from the individual upward and outward. Man must be under law. There must be a system or code of government in the family, a recognized head and controlling hand ruling and guiding in the home. What sort of a home is that where there is no recog-

nized authority? On a larger scale there must be laws governing communities, and again a higher law governing the State, the nation, or the kingdom. The first form of government God instituted was the patriarchal or family form, then the tribal, then the national. From the solitary being placed in families has come the great and glorious nations of to-day, with all their noble institutions, wonderful achievement, and consummate prosperity. Law, then, is a necessary factor in human life. Without it there can be no order, no progress, no permanent and abiding institution. Every man left to do as he chose, with no restraint upon him, with no laws calling him to regard the interests of others, would be a condition of affairs the most savage and barbarous. Even the rude, uncultured, unlettered, degraded cannibal has some sort of law by which he is governed.

In the system of jurisprudence given to Israel one cannot fail to notice the special regard given to life, in the provisions made to guard it and bring the transgressor to punishment. The Pentateuch is full of matter precise and concise respecting human life. Laws for its preservation and for proceeding against the criminal are many. The penalty inscribed against criminal carelessness or passion that results in injury or death is severe. In case of death it is the forfeit of the criminal's life. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." A prominent instance of this regard for human life is the law relative to house-building. "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house if any man fall from thence." In those Oriental countries the roof, being flat, is largely the living place. It is at once parlor, sleeping room, and sanctuary. Of course there