DESERET EVENING NEWS.

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TO THE SAINTS:

To the Officers and Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in General Conference assembled:

Dear Brethren and Sisters—Every Latter-day Saint will recognize the value of union, not only in action but in unison of faith and discipline. As to the rights and authority of the Priesthood of the Son of God, it is of the highest importance that there should be no difference of opinion among the officers and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Feeling the necessity of a correct understanding of this principle, we deem it proper at this sixty-sixth anniversary of the organization of the Church in these last days, to prepare and present a statement on the subject, embodying the doctrine which has always prevailed in the Church, and our views upon it. We are prompted to adopt this course at the present time because of events which have happened during the late political contest. A great diversity of opinion on the subject has been expressed, and even by leading Elders in the Church, which latter fact has naturally led in some instances to considerable division of sentiment.

It is of great importance that we understand each other and that there be harmony in our teachings. It is especially important that these teachings shall be in accordance with the rule and regulations and doctrines which have been taught and which have prevailed from the beginning until the present time, having not only the sanction of undisputed usage, but the approval of all faithful leaders in the Church and of Him in whose name and by whose authority they act.

In the late exciting contest, to which reference has been made, the prevailing authorities in some instances have been misunderstood. In other instances they have been misrepresented, which has led to a wrongful conception of their real views. It has been asserted, but freely, and without foundation, that there has been a disposition on their part to interfere with individual liberty and to retake in some men a course which was applauded in others. In a word, that they were appealed to desire to assert and maintain an unjust and oppressive control over the actions of the members of the Church, and in this doing have endeavored to effect a union of Church and State. In the heat of political discussion, sentiments have been made and arguments and answering to the public mind a false idea concerning the position of the officers of the Church, and leaving the impression that there has been and was now being made an attempt to accomplish the union above referred to. Now that the excitement has passed, and calmer reason has resumed its sway, we think it will not be out of place, so that all may understand, the exact position occupied by the leading authorities of the Church.

In the first place we wish to state in the most positive and emphatic language that at no time has there ever been any attempt or even desire on the part of the leading authorities in office in the Church to take the Church in any manner or form upon the rights of the State, or to attempt to control the individual action of the one with those of the other.

Political organizations have surrounded the people of Utah. For many years a majority of them in every position of the Territory belonged to the Church, every equitable member of which was entitled to hold and did hold some ecclesiastical office. It is easy to see how, to the casual observer, it might appear singular that so many officers of the Church were officers of the State; but while this was in fact the case, the distinction between the Church and the State throughout these years was carefully maintained. The President of the Church held for eight years the highest civil office in the community, having been appointed by the national administration governor of the Territory. The first secretary of the Territory was a prominent Church official. An Apostle represented the Territory in Congress as a delegate during two terms. The members of the Legislature held most offices in the Church, this was inevitable, for the most suitable men were selected by the votes of the people, and, as we have stated, every Republican was in the entire community, held some Church position, the most scientific and capable naturally holding positions. This is all natural and plain enough to those who consider the circumstances, but it furnished opportunity for those who were disposed to mislead the people of the Territory to charge them with attempting to unite Church and State. A fair investigation of the conditions will abundantly prove the charge and show its utter falsity.

On behalf of the Church of which we are leading officers, we desire again to state to the members and also to the public generally, that there has not been, nor is there, the remotest desire on our part or on the part of our co-religionists to do anything looking to a union of Church and State.

We declare that there has never been any attempt to curtail individual liberty—the personal liberty of any of the officers or members of the Church. The First Presidency and other leading officers did make certain suggestions to the people when the division on party lines took place. That movement was an entirely new departure, and it was necessary, in order that the full benefit should not be lost which was hoped to result from this new political division, that people who were inexperienced should be warned against hasty and ill-considered action. In some cases they were counseled to be wise and prudent in the political steps they were about to take, and this with no idea of winning them against their will in either side. To the contrary, and we further, was anything said or done upon this question, and at no time and under no circumstances was any attempt made to say to voters how they should cast their ballots. Any charge that has been made to the contrary is utterly false.

Concerning officers of the Church themselves, the feeling was generally expressed in the beginning of the political division spoken of that it would be proper for leading men not to accept of office at the hands of the political party to which they might belong. This counsel was given to men of both parties alike—not because it was thought that there was any impropriety in religious men holding civil office, nor to deprive them of any of the rights of citizenship, but because of the feeling that it would be better under all the circumstances which had now arisen to avoid any action that would be likely to create jealousy and friction. An era of peace and good-will seemed to be dawning upon the people, and it was deemed good to non everything that could have the least tendency to prevent the consummation of this happy prospect. In many instances, however, the pressure brought to bear upon efficient and popular men by the members of the parties to which they belonged was of such a character that they had to yield to the solicitation to accept nomination to office, or submit themselves to the suspicion of hold back in their party affiliations. In some cases they did this without consulting the authorities of the Church; but where important positions were held, and where the duties were of a responsible and exacting character, some did seek the counsel and advice of the leading Church authorities before accepting the political honors tendered them. Because some others did not seek this counsel and advice, thinking was unpublished, and under any political sensitiveness was stimulated, misunderstanding readily intervene, and as a result the authorities of the Church were accused of bad faith and made the subjects of bitter reproach. We have mentioned that in the case of men who hold high positions in the Church, whose duties are well defined, and whose ecclesiastical labors are undefined to be continuous and necessary, it would be an improper thing to accept political office or enter into any relation that would distract or remove them from the religious duties resting upon them, without first consulting and obtaining the approval of their superiors. We believe that in making this statement we are in accordance with the very teaching of the Church that no officer whose duties are of the character referred to has the right to engage in any partisan, political or otherwise, that will divide his time and remove his attention from the calling already accepted. It has been the constant practice with officers of the Church to counsel—or, to use our language, to advise—with their brethren concerning all questions of this kind. They have not felt that they were sacrificing their manhood in doing so, nor that they were submitting to improper dictation, nor that in so thinking and acting upon the advice of those over them, they were in any manner doing away with their individual rights and agency, nor that to say improper designs were their rights and duties as American citizens being abridged or interfered with. They realized that in accepting ecclesiastical office they assumed certain obligations; that among these was the obligation to magnify the office which they held, to attend to its duties in preference to every other labor, and to devote themselves exclusively to it with all the zeal, industry and strength they possessed, unless released in part or at a time by those who preside over them. Our view, and it has been the view of all our predecessors, is that an officer of our Church, especially those in high standing, should take a course in which the long established practice. Better that Mormon II, and decline himself by his actions definitely independent of Mormon sies and his co leaders, it has always been held that it would be better for a man to resign the duties of his Priesthood; and we entertain the same view to-day.

In view of all the circumstances to which reference has been made, and to the diversity of views that have arisen among the people in consequence, we feel it to be our duty to clearly define our position, so there may be no misunderstanding in regard to our attitude upon the subject.

First—We unanimously agree to and promulgate as a rule that should always be observed in the Church and by every leading official therein, that before accepting any position, political or otherwise, which would interfere with the proper and complete discharge of his ecclesiastical duties, and before accepting a nomination or entering into engagements to perform new duties, said official should apply to the proper authorities and learn from them whether he can consistently with the obligations already entered into with the Church upon assuming his office, take upon himself the added duties and labors and responsibilities of the new position. To maintain proper discipline and order in the Church, we deem this absolutely necessary; and in assuming his duty, we do not consider that we are interfering in the least degree upon the individual rights of the citizen. Our position in that case being accepted the hearts and allegiance of ecclesiastical office in the Church cannot properly of his own volition make those hearts subordinate to or even coordinate with new ones of an entirely different character; we hold that unless he is willing to consult with and obtain the consent of his leaders in church and priesthood offices in the Priesthood, he should be removed from all religious preeminent with the latter, before accepting any new position.

Second—We believe that in making these qualifications of ourselves and our brethren in the ministry, we lead in the least degree to chaos in church concerning their duties as American citizens, or to interfere with the affairs of the State; rather do we consider that to the remotest degree we are seeking the union of Church and State. We have been here requisite the [illegible] that there is no ever has been an attempt by our leading men to impose upon the people occupied by the State, or that there has been or is the wish or intent to any member any of the latter kind.

Your brethren,

WILFORD WOODRUFF,
GEO. Q. CANNON,
JOS. F. SMITH,
First Presidency.

LORENZO SNOW,
F. D. RICHARDS,
BRIGHAM YOUNG,
FRANCIS M. LYMAN,
JOHN HENRY SMITH,
GEORGE TEASDALE,
HEBER J. GRANT,
JOHN W. TAYLOR,
MARRINER W. MERRILL,
ANDREW H. CANNON,
Apostles.

JOHN SMITH,
Patriarch.

SEYMOUR B. YOUNG,
C. O. FOLSOM,
B. H. ROBERTS,
GEORGE REYNOLDS,
JONATHAN G. KIMBALL,
JULIAN S. WEAKS,
EDWARD STEVENSON,
First Council of Seventies.

WM. B. PRESTON,
H. T. BURTON,
JOHN R. WINDER,
Presiding Bishopric.

SALT LAKE CITY, APRIL 6, 1896.

NOTE—The reason the signature of Apostle Anthon H. Lund does not appear in connection with those of his associates is because he is absent, preaching over the European mission. He, on record, will be given the opportunity of appending his signature when he returns home.

THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST.

The candidacy of Secretary Carlisle, which was recently spoken of in the News, has been given renewed prominence by means of another letter from him on the subject, this one being addressed to Charles B. Long, chairman of the Democratic State committee of Kentucky. Summed up briefly, the letter amounts to "Carlisle is willing" that the secretary, while not in full pursuit of the distinction, will not run in another way and give it double about catching him if it wants to. The conditionary Sale editorial endorsement from the pounding pen of Henry Watterson, of the Courier Journal, and this amounts to an added impetus which is not to be despised. Clearly, Mr. Carlisle is in the race, and being so is at least equal to a dark horse with the almost certainty that the official destination of the President would get him fairly in the lead.

The time approaches when both the great parties must name their standard bearers, and at no time within our recollection has there been so much uncertainty and so little speculation as to the result on either side. There will be several very strong candidates brought before the Republican convention; and if the Democratic organs with their forces are all present arranged, or disarranged, the first ballot should, we think, be more scattering than an old fashioned bowling place. It seems, however, to be a growing case of Carlisle against the field.

It is not, though, so much the question of men as of measures that obtain the greatest consideration. In both the conventions there will doubtless be a decided harmony regarding one of the greater issues—the tariff—which it is well assured that on the other—the financial plank—there will be trouble from start to finish, which it is easy to see that in either case there will be a decided majority in favor of the system at present in vogue, with at some some difference as to more detail. The principal reason why the matter will not be settled easily and at once is because the minority are a power in the land and a growing one, and the party which thrusts this sentiment out of doors it quietly is in danger of not only losing it but having it go to enlarge the other, because the president will undoubtedly be chosen in doubtful and close plan supporters in a general way to all factions sought. To go to far in either direction is to give Republicans to those who incline in one way, while a throw of platitudes intended to be all things to all men and dodging or "straddling" the great issue made at this time to write that anything else than silver could be in a very honest question.

It is a very honest question, and that we will have more immediately discussed to be seen.

THROUGH THE POWER OF GOD

At the closing meeting of the Y. M. C. C., held in the Fort Douglas Chapel, Church, in this city, last evening, members of national and local organizations of reputation expressed the Fire assembly. One of these was Dr. D. Hackey, the composition to evangelistic work of Mr. D. L. Moody, and whose exact songs are familiar to Christians in every land. Another was Mr. William Shaw of Boston. The latter is the national treasurer of the Christian Endeavorers.

Mr. Shaw opened his remarks by reference to the Celebration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The speaker had been interested by the vast multitudes gathered in the Tabernacle and the Assembly Hall, and to be here place with the thought in his mind that "if the men could start a movement like Methodism without the power of God, what could we do with the same industry and the assistance a Almighty God?" Mr. Shaw placed himself on record as seeking the divine hand in the greatest religious movement of the age. To what agency, then, does he ascribe the work for the reformation of men?

We have also had occasion to speak a kind word for the work of Christian Endeavorers, and will do so again, because, unlike the work of Mormonism, Latter-day Saints acknowledge the work of God in all that has a tendency to good and light and truth, no matter from what source it flows. As to the principles of the Gospel and the purposes of the Church, they have been misunderstood and misrepresented before and they will be so hereafter, but whatever misconceptions that fact justifies are rather opposite to the view expressed by Mr. Shaw; for if Christ Himself and His Apostles and their work were to be judged by the opinions of a vast majority of the great and good men of their time, Christian Endeavorers today would have but little justification for their endeavors. They would be wrong if, if possible, than the Mormons, for was it not stated of the Master in whom they believe, that He were was gathered through the power of the evil one and that His associates were the outcasts of society?

The fact is that the existence of Mormonism today is an overt demonstration to the world—whether men may like it or not—of the manifestation of divine power on earth. People see, if politics is one, the finger of the Almighty in the growth of material forces; it is one family to a great nation, and in its deliverance from bondage and its preservation now from being the offspring of the mighty kingdom or the world through its deadly [illegible] we trace the work of Providence in the growth of Christianity from its insignificant beginning to its mighty pages religions with which it comes in contact. But history has no more striking witnesses of Divine power than that furnished by the results of the preaching of the "new doctrine," as it was called, by the youthful Prophet Joseph Smith. The organization to which Mr. Shaw belongs is an emanation. That nominated no opposition to its side of. Men of it if it be so and wealth to all positions of its success and cares for it from the beginning. The case of Mormonism is different. From the first, like the work of our Lord, it was everywhere contradicted. Religious influences were brought to bear against it, as then political. Its first opponents were few and impotent; its party equipped to face the world in opposition, yet they went forth conquering all obstacles. The work has grown to the south. Like the mighty oak that becomes the more firmly rooted the more it is exposed to the rage of the elements, so Mormonism today is more firmly established than ever. To say that this has come to pass without the power of God is to admit an impossibility. Through Mormonism ancient prophecy has been fulfilled; precious new truths have been revealed and truths formerly known have again been declared; through its instrumentality thousands have found peace and happiness and eternal salvation, and the Lord can point to this and say it by signs and wonders as to ancient days and by converting it and strengthening it to this time to time.

Mormonism should not be judged rightly. Its advocates desire to stand good, but this work is of God, and will not be taken a stand on doing good.

Pension the Blind

[illegible]

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WANTED—AN AGENT

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Men's Silk Handkerchiefs 50c to $1.25.
Men's Suspenders 20c to $1.50.
Men's Ties from 25c to $1.50.
Men's Suits from $10.00 to $15.00.
Men's Overcoats from $15.00 to $25.00.
Men's Hats from 75c to $3.00.
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