DESERET EVENING NEWS: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1905.



Entered at the Postofiles of Sait Laks Oty as second class matter seconding to the Act of Congress March 2, 1879. BALT LAKE CITY, - NOV. 3, 1905. "CHURCH INFLUENCE."

The faction which is reaching out to grasp the reins of civic power in Salt Lake City frantically exhort the citizens to ignore party lines and come over into their camp of the Phillstines. But at the same time they raise a great outcry against Republicans and Democrats if they endeavor to persuade the public to do the same thing, that is, to vote for candidates regardless of political affiliations. That is just about as much consistency as the un-Americans exhibits in all their clashing contentions and self-reluting facts.

We are not offering any argument in favor of the proposition that members of either party should leap over the bounds between their respective camps. but merely drawing attention to the kind of reasoning indulged in by the common enemy. At the same time, we believe that the true policy in local government is to select and support the best and most suitable men for public positions, regardless of their partisan connections. That is simply our opinion. It is shared, however, by millions of people in different parts of this great country. A notable instance is that of Secretary Root in supporting Attorney Jerome. City officials are elected on a basis entirely different from that upon which national politics is founded. We see no good reason why a similar policy would be wrong here.

However, we have no advice to offer on that score, nor is there any instruction or direction or "tip," as claimed by some over-zealous partisans, on poli tical matters from the Church authoritles. We have to repeat this and emphasize it, in consequence of reports that reach us, many of which no doubt are exaggerated or misunderstood by people who claim to have been ap-

proached in that way.

There is still much talk about "Church influence" and which way it is likely to be turned in the city election. People who use the term ought to define fis meaning in their minds. Every party having candidates in the field would be glad to gain the support of "Mormon" voters. We use that phrase with reluctance, because it ought not to enter into the political vocabulary. It should have been expunged long ago and would have been but for the advocates of "bitter hatred of Mormon Church leaders."

Legal voters who are "Mormons" in religion have just as many rights under the law and in justice as people have who are not of their faith; no more and no less. Their votes count the same according to numbers as these of Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists or Atheists. They are divided as to parties. Their influence in either party is political, not religlous. To talk of "Church influence," then, in either party is absurd, so far as the so-called "Mormon vote" is conerned. They vote as they choose. They are not coerced or even advised by any Church influence as to which party they shall belong to, or what ticket they shall support. They are as free as any citizens can possibly be. No one has the right to use influence in the name of the Church to persuade them one way or another.

As to the right of every citizen to ask advice in regard to men or to measures, we have always taken the ground that it is his privilege to seek for it on his own volition wherever he chooses. It is as much his right to ask the opinion of a Church official in whose judgment he has confidence, as to seek it from a lawyer, a political manipulator, a friend or an enemy of any calling or profession. If not, why not?

By this we do not mean to assert that any citizen is under obligation. or requirement, or advice to ask for opinions or views as to political matters from any ecclesiastical authority. And we assert most positively that if he should approach the President of the Church on political matters he would receive no encouragement or counsel, but would go away empty. That gentleman has kept aloof from political affairs from the very day of his accession to the office which he holds, and that is known to the people over whom he presides. So far as he is concerned, "Church influence" is nil

Is it not about time that all this nonsense about "Church Influence" should be buried out of sight and scent? There is nothing in it but foolish talk and effort to array class against class, to promote strife and bitterness, and play into the hands of political gamblers and tricksters and keep up an unfounded prejudice, which does more harm to non-"Mormons" in this state than to the "Mormons" themselves. In

