

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### A STATEMENT FROM PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW.

The following correspondence needs neither explanation nor comment, save the suggestion that President Snow's letter is deserving of, and doubtless will receive, the most careful consideration of all Latter-day Saints:

SALT LAKE CITY,  
Nov 28, 1896.

Elder Lorenzo Snow, President of the Twelve Apostles:

Dear Brother—As there has been much discussion over the correspondence between Moses Thatcher and yourself, and some of our own people are at sea in regard to the primary cause of Brother Thatcher's lack of harmony with your quorum, leading to his excommunication therefrom, in behalf of a number of such persons we pen you this communication.

We are aware that the difficulty mainly rested with the Twelve and one of its members; also that when action was taken in the case there was no need of your making further explanations. We can appreciate your abstinence from controversy, on a purely Church matter, through the public prints. But seeing that there appears to be a misapprehension of the facts in the case, and that many good people are liable, in consequence of that, to form incorrect conclusions, we respectfully ask you, if it be not inconsistent with any rule of the Church or of the Council over which you preside, to make some public statement which will serve to place this matter in its true light before the Saints, and clear away the mist which, to some at least, seem to surround the subject of Moses Thatcher's deposition. As he has given to the world the private correspondence that passed between you and him in a Church capacity, is it fair, even to yourself and your associates, to leave the matter in its present condition and open to so much misconception? If you would make an explanatory statement through the DESERET NEWS, we believe it would be highly esteemed by many others, as well as

Your brethren in the Gospel,  
NEPHI L. MORRIS,  
ARNOLD G. GIAUQUE,  
ARTHUR F. BARNES,  
R. C. BADGER,  
T. A. CLAWSON.

SALT LAKE CITY,  
November 30, 1896.

Elders Nephi L. Morris, Arnold G. Giauque, Arthur F. Barnes, R. C. Badger and T. A. Clawson:

Dear Brethren—In response to your esteemed communication of the 28th inst., I have determined, after conference with several of the Apostles, to offer some explanations on the case of Moses Thatcher and comments on the correspondence to which you refer, through the columns of the DESERET NEWS.

The Apostles did not view the publi-

cation of the letters that passed to and from Brother Moses Thatcher and them as calling for any controversy on their part. Nor did they think it a proper thing to give those ecclesiastical communications general publicity through secular newspapers. The letters bearing my signature were not prepared with a design for publication—whatever the others might have been—and were regarded as Church matters for the consideration solely of the respective parties. It is only because those letters have been given to the public, and because it seems, from what you say, that an improper impression has been made upon the minds of some people thereby, that I comply with the request to meet some of the statements they contain.

The evident purpose in publishing these communications was to excite public sympathy; and the unnecessary and superfluous appeals they contain convey the impression that they were concocted for that purpose. They were not relevant to the issue involved. Moses Thatcher was not on trial for his fellowship. Specific charges were not preferred either in public or in private. The question was solely as to his standing as one of the Apostles, in consequence of his lack of harmony with the Quorum of the Twelve of which he was a member. That question he could have settled at any time if he had so desired, and that without a formal trial. By placing himself in harmony with his Quorum, in the spirit of humility and conformity with its rules, of which he was not in ignorance, he could have saved himself all the trouble and deprivation of which he complains.

In his review of what he calls his case, he lays great stress on the matter of the Declaration of Principles, which he refused to sign after it had received the endorsement of the First Presidency, the Apostles (excepting himself), the Patriarch, the Seven Presidents of the Seventies, and the Presiding Bishopric, comprising the general authorities of the Church. His excuse is that he had only about an hour and thirty minutes in which to consider it. Usually men do not require much time to consider a matter which they have always held to be right. There was nothing new in that document as it relates to Church discipline. It contains that which has always been an established doctrine of the Church. When the committee which prepared it submitted it to the other Church authorities, they signed it after reading without hesitation and without requiring time to deliberate. It embodies so manifestly a conceded and necessary rule that every one in harmony with the Church authorities accepted it at once, and the Church as a body has received and adopted it as an essential rule. Why should Moses Thatcher alone, of all the Church authorities, feel that he could not sign it, as he alleges, "without stultification?" Was not that in itself evidence that he was and had been out of harmony with his brethren? And are they not men as little disposed as any one living to stultify

themselves, or to assent to anything wrong that is of vital importance to them and to the Church?

He charges that his letter refusing to sign the Declaration was "suppressed." There was no suppression in the matter at all. The letter was not addressed to the Conference nor to the public. Out of mercy and compassion to him no reference was made to his contumacy at the April Conference, but his name was simply dropped from the list of authorities presented. How could he have been sustained under the circumstances? There are six of the Twelve now living who voted for his appointment to the Apostleship. Not one of them would have sustained him for that position if it had been known that he then entertained views entirely out of harmony with those of that body. The letter addressed on April 6 to his associates was a deliberately composed communication showing that he was able to understand the document which he refused to sign, and his prompt publication of that letter, in a secular newspaper, shows that he had a deliberate intention to oppose the Declaration and defy his brethren who promulgated it. But if he did not have sufficient time to consider the Declaration at the April Conference, what about the six months which elapsed before the October Conference? Was not that time enough? During that interval he was visited by many of his brethren, some of them Apostles, and no change was effected, but he failed even to attend the October Conference or to manifest a disposition to conform to the principle of the Declaration.

It is true that he was in poor bodily health during that period. But he was not too ill to upbraid brethren who tried to impress him with the danger of his position, nor to accuse some of them of having "blanketed their conscience" in signing the Declaration.

He states in his letters that he would have attended the October Conference if it had not been for the "assurances and reassurances" he had received that nothing would be done concerning his standing until his health should be restored. He then complains bitterly of the explanations given to the Conference as to his position and seeks to convey the impression that they were a breach of good faith.

The "assurances" to which he refers were faithfully fulfilled. He was left in statu quo. Every time it was shown that the condition of his health would not admit of his meeting with his quorum the question of his standing was postponed. But meanwhile he and his friends were not slow to talk about his associates and to convey unwarranted impressions concerning their course in his "case." So much misunderstanding was thereby created that it became absolutely necessary to make some explanations that the Latter-day Saints might not be deceived. President Woodruff was so strongly impressed with this that he addressed the Conference on the subject and his statements were endorsed by several of the Twelve who followed him.

This was no "trial" of Moses Thatcher. It was simply a necessary explanation of his status. It involved the question of his lack of harmony with the Church authorities. His claim that he was publicly accused