

counsels. Besides, the spirit of instruction and counsel is something which every Elder should seek for, as there are times in the history of God's people when it is just as necessary that words of reproof and warning should be uttered—that reproof be administered when iniquity and wrong exist, and that notes of warning be raised, calling upon the people to give heed to their ways and avoid certain things lest destruction come upon them—as it is to speak comforting words to them. This has been the case always when God has had a people upon the earth. It has been the office and calling of all the Prophets and Apostles to speak as moved upon by the Holy Ghost. It is no sign of disintegration then, no sign of alarm because the Elders thus teach the people and warn them, and perhaps reprove them, and speak in tones of sharpness, and perhaps at times severity, concerning their condition.

There is no feature in our polity so desirable as union. Without it we are an exceedingly weak people; with it we are strong, strong in the Lord, because the Lord acknowledges us as His people, when we are united; He places His seal upon us, and stamps us as His own. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that the Elders are led to talk about the importance of union. It is of the first importance that we should be united; and it is no sign of alarm, it is no evidence that the Elders who thus speak are in fear concerning the result of this work, or the effects of the attacks of our enemies upon this work, because they talk in this manner to the Saints assembled in Conference, or to any other public gathering. In some respects I think we are an exceedingly united people. But owing to circumstances—the absence of many of the leading men, and the great labors which have devolved upon those that are free and able to go about—the people have not been visited for some years, as was formerly the case; and therefore many things have grown up and sprung into existence, which need the attention of the leading Elders, of the Presidents of Stakes and their counselors, the Bishops and their counselors. And it requires a good deal of exertion at the present time to lay these matters before the people as they should be. But we ought to be a united people, and we cannot dwell too much upon the importance of union. When we are divided we are very weak; when we are united we are very strong, for God is with us.

God has given to us an organization which, if we maintain, as we should, will preserve union, will preserve complete harmony and strength in the Church. Therefore, we should do all in our power to maintain that organization, which is complete and perfect. Although others may deery the Priesthood and the influence of the Priesthood, and may oppose it, and censure us because we give heed to the counsels of the Priesthood, it is for us to listen to the voice of our God, to maintain in its integrity the organization He has given unto us, to beware of every spirit not of God,

that it does not have place within us, but that under all circumstances we will be guided by His Holy Spirit, and the counsels of His servants. That which we witness today throughout this Territory; that which we have witnessed wherever the Latter-day Saints have settled—the deliverances that have been wrought out, the prosperity that God has given unto us, is due to the fact that we have had His servants in our midst, and that the people have listened to their counsels. Shall we turn our backs upon that authority which God has thus blessed, which He has sustained, and shown His approval of by giving His blessings unto those who have obeyed their counsels? We should not do this. We should avoid it; and we should be humble, meek and lowly in our walk and conversation; in all our associations with each other, and do all in our power to maintain in its entirety the organization which has been given unto us.

In conversation some years ago with a gentleman by the name of Haskell, of Kansas, who was a Member of Congress, and who is since deceased, he said to me: Mr. Cannon, I have paid some attention to your organization, and I think it the most magnificent organization that exists on the earth—how did you succeed in getting it? I told him I did not suppose, if I were to tell him all about it, that he would be prepared to accept my statement as true; but I told him, of course, that the organization had come from God, and that its perfection was due to divine wisdom. I mention this as the testimony of a man of considerable experience and observation and extensive reading, as a high tribute to the strength, power and surpassing superiority of our organization. It is, my brethren and sisters, strikingly manifest to every one who reflects how God has blessed us in this respect. And we should be proud of it—that is, we should be thankful for it, and not be ashamed of it.

I have felt for some time that some of the Latter-day Saints were beginning to manifest a disposition to feel ashamed of the Priesthood, and ashamed of seeking counsel at the hands of the Priesthood, as though it were a forbidden thing, as though it were something that we did wrong in practicing; that to come and ask counsel of the servants of God was something so contrary to public opinion that some men shrink from doing it, and feel ashamed of asking counsel of God's servants. If such feelings as these were to prevail among the Latter-day Saints, it would be a most deplorable thing; I think the result would be disastrous to us. If I knew a man who has the counsel of God, and I wished to obtain counsel, I feel as though it would be the greatest blessing I could have given unto me, under the circumstances, to be able to go to him to ask counsel concerning the course I should take. This has been my course throughout life, and I know it has been attended with blessing. Suppose the world deride it; sup-

pose the world attack it; suppose the world accuse us of one-man power, of joining church and state; they will accuse us anyhow, no matter what we do, no matter how correct our lives may be; and shall we deprive ourselves of the benefits that God has given unto us in the hope that we will conciliate the world, and that we will prevent the world from talking about us? If that be our idea we delude ourselves most egregiously. The man who entertains the view, that by taking a certain course that is not exactly in accord with the will of God, he is going to gain the favor of the world, makes a great mistake. I do not think we should be unwise in these matters; wisdom should be exercised in all that we do. But do not, my brethren and sisters, deprive yourselves of that light which God has placed within our reach for our guidance and for our safety, because of any fear we may entertain concerning public opinion in relation to that method of doing.

The cry has gone forth that we join church and state. A greater libel was never made concerning any people than that concerning us. Owing to our peculiar position all our eligible men bear the holy Priesthood. It was not possible for us to obtain suitable men in our Territory, in by-gone days, who were not members of the Priesthood. There was no other choice left for us but to select the best men we had regardless of their position in the Church. Because we did this it ought not to be thought to follow that we blended church and state, or that we looked upon the Church as an institution to be associated with the civil government; not at all. I do not think it possible to find another people, situated as we were for so many years in these valleys, who would have drawn the lines of distinction so clearly between church and state, as we did.

We have always looked upon civil government as entirely distinct from church government; and our views upon this subject ought to be so well known as not to leave room for accusation even. It has been proclaimed by Joseph Smith; it has been proclaimed by Brigham Young; it has been proclaimed by John Taylor; it has been proclaimed by Wilford Woodruff, and all the leading Elders associated with them, that God intended to organize a Kingdom on the earth that should not be composed of Latter-day Saints alone, but that members of that Kingdom should belong to other religious denominations, as well as to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This has been a cardinal doctrine in this Church—that is, with the Elders who have had experience and knowledge concerning that which is to come and that which the Prophet Joseph believed in and taught. In fact, he set the example on one occasion, and those familiar with it know about it. He showed unto the brethren before he died that the Kingdom of God, when established, should throw its protectingegis around the infidel,