

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

PRESIDENT WOODRUFF'S ADDRESS

The Semi-Annual Conference of the Church closed yesterday afternoon (Wednesday) with brief but impressive remarks from President Wilford Woodruff. These have already been distorted and misconstrued in some quarters, and in certain circles it is understood there is considerable flurry and distrust—in most cases due, we believe, to a misunderstanding not only of what was said but more particularly of what was meant. It is therefore a pleasure to the "News" to give herewith the full official report of the sentences uttered by the venerable leader. His remarks were as follows:

It is time to close this conference; but before closing I want to say a few words to the Latter-day Saints. I have attended conferences under the presidency of Joseph Smith during his life time, from 1833; I have attended conferences under President Brigham Young nearly forty years, from the time of the death of Joseph Smith until his own death; I have attended conferences under the presidency of John Taylor, and I have attended conferences as President of the Church myself since that period. That responsibility has rested upon me, and rests upon me today. Sixty-four years of my life have passed away as a member of this Church. I do not know that I shall ever address you again; I cannot tell anything about this; but I feel strongly impressed to say a few words to you upon principle, although it is late.

I want these Latter-day Saints to lay to heart what has been said to you by the Apostles and Elders who have spoken at this Conference. I want to say another thing. I prophesy, in the name of Israel's God, the day has come when the mouths of Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, and these Twelve Apostles, should not be closed because of the opinions of the children of men. There have been feelings that these men holding high positions—the Twelve Apostles and Presidency—should say nothing about politics. I want to say to you here, the day has come when God Almighty requires at your hands to unite together in your temporal business, and in your politics, so far as it is wisdom. I do not care whether a man is a Republican or a Democrat, in that he is free; but it is your duty to unite in electing good men to govern and control your cities, your local affairs, and I will state that when you do not do this you are losers of the blessings of Almighty God. I want to tell you this upon this occasion. My mouth shall not be closed upon these principles. I know it is the duty of the Latter-day Saints to unite together in your local affairs, the election of your city councils, the election of men to act for you in the affairs of state. Lay aside your extremes in democracy and republicanism, as far as is wise in that matter, and in other than local matters as Latter-day Saints unite together within your party lines and appoint good men. When you do that, God will bless you. You won't all be taxed to death and lose your property, if you will appoint good men and pursue this course.

I take the liberty, as President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, of making these remarks. No matter what the feelings of men may be towards me; I shall not stay in this country very long. But I realize very well that this people are groaning under poverty, under affliction, under

taxation, and in positions that they ought not to be if they would only unite together and do their duty. And this idea of a person being afraid of somebody because he is a Democrat or a Republican, it is all wrong. I feel like saying to you, as the President of this Church, and do state, that it is your duty to unite together and appoint good men to act in every capacity for the public welfare. Therefore let us do our duty, walk uprightly before the Lord our God, and leave the consequences with Him. "Do what is right, let the consequences follow," which may God grant, for Christ's sake. Amen.

As already stated, certain classes claim to have discovered in the foregoing an utterance of counsel to the Latter-day Saints to depart from and sweep away political party lines in all their elections. We now ask all such persons candidly to state whether a fair perusal and an honest construction of President Woodruff's words will justify the conclusion referred to.

In common with thousands of the thinking people of this community, his mind was filled with reflections upon the sad and straightened condition in which the residents of this city find themselves through municipal misgovernment. In common, too, with thousands of others, he holds views and desired to express and did express them in disapproval of the idea that hide-bound, closely-drawn, partisan politics should be insisted upon in purely local affairs. Men of all forms of religious and political belief hold and express these same views. But do they, or does he, proceed from that basis to advise or expect that there shall be a wholesale or even a partial disintegration of parties, a wiping out of the lines on which national or state issues are fought for and decided? Not at all—and it is not only absurd but dishonest to make any such charge. Not only his own utterances as quoted here, and his counsel and views as many times published before, but the equally emphatic remarks of others on the same subject, prove in the most ample manner that no such thought is entertained. One of the most forcible discourses delivered during this very Conference was especially strong in discussing this identical question; the speaker expressed his pleasure that national party lines had been drawn in our State, he believed in the movement when it had its inception, he believed in it now, and he urged the people to be true to their party convictions and loyal in their support. It was a part of the spirit of the Conference, as it has been and is the desire and counsel of the leaders of the Saints all the time.

If it is a crime or treason or heresy for a man of prominence and experience to advise the people to select only good men for office, the standard of political morality is surely in bad need of elevating. If it is a crime, President Woodruff is only one among millions who can be accused. Why, the parties themselves are prone to indulging in the same advice—"vote for the best men for office—you will find them on our ticket!" His sole thought was the betterment of local conditions—indeed the betterment of politics itself. Isn't it wise and safe at all times to warn against extremes in politics, and partisanship? Is it any better to be a fanatic or a bigot in politics than to be a fanatic or a bigot in religion or anything else?

A moment's reflection in a

spirit of candor and with a regard for the conditions which exist in this city at present will convince every one that there is not a sentiment or a thought in President Woodruff's remarks which need cause a fear or a suspicion of the kind which some people ignorantly and carelessly, and others, we fear, maliciously, have sought and may seek to put upon them. He spoke as a wise father of his people, a true citizen of State and Nation, a tried servant of the Lord in promoting human salvation—he spoke as an honest, upright man; and those who deny his right thus to speak, or who do not approve of his views when thus fairly explained and properly presented, can make the most of it.

WHERE DOES SILVER COME IN?

The Democratic opponents of the citizens' non-partisan movement have, in some mysterious way, seen a sign that there was danger to the silver question in the proposition to eliminate party politics from city government. The whole scheme, some of them assert, is to break down the force of the silver sentiment and to administer to it a wound in the house of its friends. A respectable number who really believe in non-partisanship in municipal affairs candidly admit that this fear or suspicion is the only thing that deters them from joining heartily in the reform.

Of course there is not a scintilla of foundation for such a suspicion, not a speck of ground on which to base such a charge. Any candid man must realize that the government of this city has nothing to do, even in the remotest degree, with the price of silver or the nation's policy regarding its free coinage; just as every truthful man must admit that disregarding party lines in this fall's city campaign need not in the least degree impair the virility and activity of the respective parties when the question is one of state or national officers where national policies and issues are proper subjects of party distinction. The fear alluded to is puerile, and quite unworthy of those who surrender themselves to it.

But if the silver issue is one which the Democratic party must adhere to and reaffirm in every kind of a campaign—municipal, school, and judicial, as well as county, state and national—what are our good friends going to do about the action of the great Democracy of New York city and state? The most potent political organization in the world—an organization, by the way, which has had its share of scandals and has the very first reputation in Spoilsdom—is the concern known as the Tammany society. Only a few days ago Tammany had its Democratic city convention and put up its ticket. Did it stand by the silver issue as defined in the Chicago platform? Not much. In as positive a manner as it knew how it repudiated that issue entirely. In fact its platform is as silent as the grave on every national question—on Bryan, free silver, 16 to 1 and every other issue of last year upon which Mr. Bryan's admirers so vehemently required a deliverance.

Now no one can safely accuse Tammany of going back on Democracy. Please note, however, that that great beacon light of party fidelity scorns to notice the one essential, all-overwhelming feature which smaller fry politicians here in Salt Lake insist must be nailed to the mast-head, day in and day out, in every kind of a campaign, at every little petty local election, and ground into the people until the very thought of politics makes their stomachs turn. The would-