

ELDER JOHN W. TAYLOR.

The Written Word Insufficient, Prophets Raised up at Different Periods,—God has Revealed Himself also in these Last Times.

Dear brethren and sisters and friends: I pray that the Spirit of the Lord may direct me in what I shall say this morning. I feel to bear testimony, to commence with, to the truth of the remarks that have been made by those who have preceded me. I desire to draw the attention of this congregation to a statement of Elder Merrill wherein he said that the living oracles are of greater importance than the written word. I desire to dwell somewhat upon this point, in order to bear testimony to this position; for it is a sweeping assertion. As Elder Merrill made this remark, my mind reverted back over the history of the world and the dealings of God the Eternal Father with the children of men ever since the days of our father Adam. We find in the beginning that the children of men multiplied from our forefather Adam and became very numerous upon the earth, and they had in their midst the written word of God. But they departed from it. What was needful under these circumstances? Why, it became necessary for the Lord to raise up a prophet, and he inspired His servant Noah to call the people unto repentance. I mention this fact to show you that while they had the written word of God in their midst, yet they had all departed from it. They needed the living word. As the prophet says, "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Another ancient prophet says, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." Under the circumstances that I have alluded to, it was necessary for the Lord to raise up a mighty prophet, and Noah therefore began to preach the Gospel of repentance unto that people. He preached for about 120 years—with what success you all know who have read the scriptures. Eight souls, including himself, were saved in the ark.

Then when these eight souls began to multiply and replenish the earth and they became a great and numerous people, while all the dealings of God with His people were carefully

recorded and the word of God, as far as it was written, was handed down to them, was that sufficient to save and to guide them? No. It was necessary for the Lord to raise up another prophet; and various prophets in turn were raised up. But the people went so far away from the truth that they became idolatrous and offered human sacrifice. While the Lord had given them commandments concerning the principle of atonement by the blood of animals, etc., they began to enlarge upon God's law and instituted the practice of offering human sacrifices. The Lord was very much displeased with this. Nevertheless they had the written word before them, but they gave no heed to it. It became necessary to raise up a mighty prophet. Therefore, the Lord came down in the midst of these idolaters and appeared unto Abraham, who was the son of Terah by his second wife. The Lord had respect to Abraham, for he was a good man, and He said unto Abraham:

"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:

"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

The Lord commanded Abraham to leave his father's house, because his father, Terah, was preparing to offer him as a sacrifice unto his god.

Here is another instance where you will see the necessity of the Lord revealing himself and raising up a prophet, because all the children of men had gone into idolatry and had gone astray from the plan of life and salvation which the Lord had previously revealed unto them. Nevertheless they had the written word in their midst. Did the written word save them? No. Would the written word have accomplished the object of turning that great people from idolatry? No. What was necessary? It was necessary to do just what was done—for our Father in heaven to come and make a personal visit to Abraham.

Afterwards the Lord said, in speaking of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Therefore, He pronounced upon him the great blessing—that his posterity should become as innumerable as the stars in heaven and as countless as the sands upon the seashore. When the children of God understand true wealth and that which will make them as God, they will find it in presiding over their posterity in their turn, as our Father is now presiding over His, and in the fact that they have wives and children, their posterity increasing and multiplying, and the principle of the continuation of lives committed unto them for ever and ever.

I desire to pass along a little further. The children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob began to increase and multiply upon the face of the earth, and became a great people. Nevertheless they fell short of keeping the commandments that the Lord had given unto them. But they had the written word in their midst. Did that save them? No, it did not. They went into bondage unto the Egyptians. What was the matter? Was it that there was nothing written in regard to the dealings of God with His people prior to their day that they were in this dreadful condition? No. It was because they had transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, and had turned away from the laws of life and salvation. Under these circumstances, what was necessary? It was necessary to raise up a man who could communicate with God the Eternal Father. Again the written word failed to save the people. The Lord appeared unto Moses in the burning bush, and commanded him to go forth and call to his assistance his brother Aaron, and say unto Pharaoh, in the name of the Lord, to let His people go forth into the wilderness. Would the written word ever have prevailed upon King Pharaoh to release the people of Israel? No. It was necessary for the Lord to show forth His mighty power in bringing upon that people the plagues of the earth, according to the voice of His servant Moses, whom He had inspired. It was necessary also for the Lord to

smite down the first-born of all the Egyptians. Would the written word have accomplished that? Moses went forth, after having conversed with God, filled with a portion of His Spirit and power. He did not go forth with the written word of something that had transpired in the days of Noah, saying, Behold, Noah was called of God to preach righteousness, and the people did not repent; therefore they were destroyed with a flood. . . . King Pharaoh undoubtedly was acquainted with the history of the world, but that had no more effect upon him than the blowing of the wind. But when the Prophet Moses came into his presence, and the plagues were poured out, one by one, upon the people, according to the will of God as predicted by His servant Moses, he began to soften in his heart. Finally, when the firstborn of Egypt were destroyed, the Israelites had time enough to get out into the wilderness; but they had no sooner got out than they were immediately followed by the hosts of Pharaoh.

I mention this to show you the necessity of another prophet being raised up. I tell you there might have lived in ages past hundreds and thousands of prophets, but that is not sufficient for the day and age in which we live. I will pass on rapidly, for I have only four minutes left in which to speak; but I desire to talk to the subject as well as to the "mark" while I am on my feet.

There is another remarkable circumstance I wish to refer to. The Lord our God desired that a mighty temple should be built unto His high and holy name, after the days of which I have spoken. Was there anything in what the Lord had said to the Prophet Noah, or to the Prophet Abraham, or to the Prophet Isaac, or to the Prophet Jacob, that would teach the children of men how to build a temple unto God? No; there was no written word of this kind. What was necessary, therefore? It was necessary that the Lord our God should reveal His mind and will unto His servant the Prophet, that he might know how to build a temple; and He raised up a man to build a temple unto the name of God. This was King Solomon. A little later on we find an-

other peculiar circumstance which transpired, verifying the ideas of Elder Merrill in his testimony here today. We find that King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream concerning some of the future history of this world, portraying what the mind and will of God was concerning some things down even to the day and age in which we live. But the dream went from him, and he wanted this dream brought back to his mind with the interpretation thereof. Could he by reading the instructions of God to Solomon as to how to build a temple learn how to bring that dream back again to his mind? No; it was necessary for the Lord to call upon His servant Daniel, who went forth, and by the power of the Holy Ghost he told the dream and gave its interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar.

I tell you the changing scenes of life are such that we need men, living men, that are inspired of God. As Christ said to the devil, when he tempted Him, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." I desire, my friends, to bear this testimony unto you. Let me quote from the 12th chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, and pass by all the remarkable circumstances wherein God the Eternal Father had to continually keep raising up Prophets and Seers, in order to straighten the people out; for the history of this world shows that just as soon as the people have a little time to multiply and to increase, they have turned away from the word of God. When Christ came, He instituted a peculiar system among the children of men, and Paul speaks of some things that He established in His Church.

"God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul also speaks on this subject. He says:

"And he gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers;

"For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

We are told also in the same epistle that God has placed these in the church "till we all come in the unity of the faith." I ask you, my friends, have we come to a unity of the faith in the world? We are divided, and subdivided, into hundreds of sects and parties. Then what is necessary? Why, as in the other circumstances to which I have referred, it is necessary that the Lord our God should raise up a mighty prophet, to correct the children of men in this great error which they are making all over the world. And in accordance with this necessity, the Lord has in this time, as in all ages, come to the rescue, and He has raised up the Prophet Joseph Smith, as a prophet, seer and revelator. He came down and communicated His mind and will unto the Prophet Joseph in person, as He did unto our father Abraham, and unto Jacob, and unto Moses; and He has commanded, as President Woodruff has said here today, that this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come. Is not all the sectarian world today praying, "Our Father who art in heaven, thy kingdom come, and thy will be done?" Let me say unto you, my dear friends, when it does come it will come with apostles, with prophets, with inspired men, with men who are raised up as men were in olden times. Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." In those days they spake not as the Scribes and Pharisees, but as men having authority. They spake not according to the will of man, but whatsoever was revealed unto them that spake they unto the children of men.

God bless you, my dear friends, and lead you into the ways of all truth. May He pour out His Holy Spirit upon every soul that is in this Conference, that the Latter-day Saints may be made to rejoice, and that those who are not of us may be pricked in their hearts and come to a knowledge of

the truth, that we may all be saved and exalted in His kingdom, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER GEORGE TEASDALE.

The Doctrine Preached by the Saints the Same as that which was Taught by Christ.

I am grateful unto God our Eternal Father for the privilege of attending this Conference. I think the Latter-day Saints may congratulate themselves in the testimony that hath been given unto us, that has relieved us from all doubt or anxiety concerning our spiritual welfare today or in the future. The doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ is different to anything else. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is to believe in His doctrine. If we believe in His doctrine, we believe in the ordinances of the house of God. We understand somewhat concerning our relationship to our Father in heaven. He taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." This is the sentiment of the Latter-day Saints—those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, who have accepted the doctrine of Jesus Christ, who worship the living and true God, who have repented of their sins, who have been baptized by immersion, by one having authority, for the remission of their sins, who have been sanctified in the precious blood of Christ, which follows the water, and who have received the witness of the Spirit in the gift of the Holy Ghost that was given unto them by the ordinance of the laying on of hands. The principles that we advocate are the principles advocated by the Lord Jesus Christ in His day; and are the only way to be saved from death, hell and the grave.

We have our missionaries, in large numbers, preaching this everlasting Gospel, who are taking the glad tidings of great joy to the inhabitants of the earth, testifying that God has again spoken from the heavens, that He hath restored to the earth His Church, that He hath living Apostles and Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, for the work of the

ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. We also testify to the truth of these principles, because in our experience as individuals we know that the signs follow the believer; we know that the path of counsel is the path of safety; for whenever we have followed it we have always been well satisfied. The ways of God are not the ways of man, neither are His thoughts their thoughts; but as the heavens are above the earth, so are His thoughts and His ways above ours. Men for ages have had the Scriptures. They have had the dealings of God with the inhabitants of the earth in the records that we have. But have they been enabled to understand the philosophy of salvation? Have they been enabled to understand why it was necessary that all men must repent, and be baptized (immersed) for the remission of sins? Have they been enabled to understand why it was essential that they should be born of the water and of the spirit, or they could in no wise inherit the kingdom of God? These principles are made plain to us, because the Lord has revealed them. He has restored His new and everlasting covenant. He has restored His holy Gospel. We are His witnesses of this, and we testify that which we do know, and we bear testimony to that which we have seen and that which we have felt.

But the world will not receive our testimony. We take the Bible and show that these principles are in harmony with those taught by the ancient Apostles. It is no new doctrine. It is the old doctrine. It is the straight and narrow path that leads to eternal life. And we are endeavoring to train our children and the people to have faith in God, to trust in the Lord, to honor Him, to reverence His name, to love Him, and to keep His holy commandments. In our Sabbath schools we show the children what has been done by faith. In our exhortations to the people we refer them to what has been accomplished by faith; believing in God, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, believing in His ordinances, and practicing them, that they may make their calling and election sure. We are striving to do this ourselves, simply