

ELDER JOHN H. TAYLOR

Of the First Council of the Seventy

Recently I had the pleasure of visiting the Texas Mission. President Peterson was ill and has since been released to return home. It is regrettable that it becomes necessary every once in a while to release missionaries on account of the condition of their health.

President and Sister Peterson have certainly done excellent work in the Texas Mission. They have the love and confidence of the Saints and the missionaries. The Saints have been greatly blessed by the Lord in having such fine people to preside over them.

There were two things that interested me particularly while in the mission field. The first was the integrity and the good spirit manifested by the Saints in trying to do what they could in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They are interested in having the message go to other people, and they give of their time, and their energy, and their money, in order that they may be helpful in the progress of the Lord's work here upon the earth.

In one field I found a man, formerly from Wyoming, who, in order to go to Sunday School, found it necessary to travel thirty miles each way. He got into his car with his family, and as they proceeded up the valley they picked up other members of the Church and drove thirty miles in order to worship the Lord on the Sabbath day.

I not only had the privilege of attending the district conferences, but I had the opportunity of visiting in some of the very small towns where the missionaries have been sent to labor, and where they had found some investigators, and where a few Saints live.

In going to one of these very small places the presiding Elder of that district asked me if I would accept an invitation to eat in the home of one of the Saints. I told him I would be very delighted to visit among the people. He said, "Well, Brother Taylor, I would like to say this, before you accept the invitation, the place where you are going is a very humble home, and they haven't been blessed with all of the comforts that other people have been blessed with." I told him I would like to go and would be delighted to visit with them.

When I went to this home it was indeed a very humble place, with but few of the usual comforts that men and women are entitled to. When I went into the house I found that one of the men was very much interested in carrying the message of the Gospel to other people and had a supply of tracts. He would go out in the day time and perform his usual labor, and then at night he would go out and leave tracts and do regular missionary work among the people.

When we sat down to a meal, it was very humble, but good. The table was small, and it was necessary for some of the family to stand up. Because I was visiting among them they went out and purchased a few cup cakes. I am doubtful whether they had had cup cakes in the house for a long time.

In the course of our conversation, this good man who was doing so much for the Church, and loved those who had been appointed to preside in certain places in the Church, said that tomorrow he and his brother expected to lose their jobs, and yet he was entertaining me as one of the servants of the Lord, and also going out day and night in order to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As I traveled among the people I found the same spirit, a spirit of sacrifice and of helpfulness.

The other thing that came to my attention was the attitude of the people toward the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or toward Christianity in general. They still have the same opinions that they had in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith, that as long as they have a desire to worship the Lord and are doing the best they can, eventually the Lord will take care of them when they get on the other side. So to them the Gospel only means doing some of the finer things that men and women should do, and somehow they just cannot understand that in religion there must be a certain way of worshiping God the Eternal Father, a right way, a correct way.

It seems to me that in this enlightened age when perhaps we think better and reason better, the people of the world ought to be able to understand that if there is a right way of doing everything else on the earth, that there could only be one right way of worshiping God.

You remember when Joseph Smith, as a boy, had been to church and had gone home to reason things out for himself, that even he, as a young boy, could see and understand that there must be a certain way of worshiping God. In his reasoning he said: "I will go and ask the Lord which of all the churches is right." He also said: "Or are they all wrong together?" He could see that there must be a right way, a true church on the earth, or else perhaps that all the churches might be wrong.

If the Prophet Joseph Smith, as a boy, could reason that way, it seems to me that other men and women, with the intelligence and development that they have, ought to be able to understand that God also has a correct way of worshiping Him. If they think they can find this way by reading the Bible, they will be disappointed because the Bible isn't complete enough for anyone to find the correct way. There are too many things in the Bible that are not plain and will not explain the way of the Lord in its fulness.

When the Lord spoke to Joseph Smith, He did not send him to the Bible and say: "Organize my Church and develop it, and use the Bible for your standard." That was not sufficient. Joseph Smith could not have done it, because the holy scriptures, as we have them today, are not sufficiently clear in many details. So the Lord gave Joseph Smith the Book of Mormon, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Doctrine and Covenants, in order to avoid the confusion that had resulted from men trying to organize a church with only the Bible as their guide.

Even in our day, with the four standard works of the Church, we are not successful in our worship of the Lord, without our prophets, seers and revelators to receive inspiration and revelation from God day

by day, in order that we may constantly know the Lord's mind and will concerning us.

May the Lord bless us, my brethren and sisters, and help us to appreciate the Gospel and the fine things that have come to us, that we may serve him in spirit and in truth, I pray, in Jesus' name, Amen.

ELDER HAROLD W. PRATT

President of the Mexican Mission

My very dear brethren and sisters, I deeply and sincerely appreciate the opportunity of mingling with you in this great Conference. I believe that perhaps I appreciate it more greatly due to the fact that after having been here continuously for three years or two years and a half, I was unable to attend the last Conference, and thus I come this morning to this Conference with a renewed interest, having realized what it means to be absent.

I sincerely and humbly pray, this morning, for an interest in your faith and prayers, that I may be guided in what few words I say and what little time I occupy, to say something that will be of benefit to all of you, and that will help us, as members of this great Church, to more fully discharge our responsibilities to the world.

Sister Pratt and I are greatly enjoying our labors in Mexico, for since the division of the mission in July of last year we have moved our headquarters to Mexico City, and we are greatly enjoying our labors there. There is just one point of regret, and that is that this move prohibits us from enjoying the association of the great number of the youth of Zion who came and labored with us in the border states, among the Mexican people; for in Mexico we are not permitted to bring missionaries from the stakes of Zion, and our few missionaries are made up of young people from the Juarez Stake and from the membership of the mission itself. We feel thus that we are deprived of a great pleasure in association with a cross section of the youth of Zion coming from the different stakes.

We have been told during this Conference, my brethren and sisters, of the picture that seems to be forecast as to conditions in the world and what is about to happen. This is a rather gloomy picture. Perhaps we who are in foreign missions—I might say especially in Mexico, where the connection with Spain at the present time brings the battlefield so very close—see and realize the possibilities of the development of this gloomy chaotic picture that has been painted for us. We realize that it can, with very great difficulty, be averted. The world seems bound headlong for a chaotic, dark state of night, where darkness and confusion indeed will, as they in fact do today, cover the nations of the earth.

I feel, my brethren and sisters, that we, the Latter-day Saints, have a great responsibility in this time of darkness and confusion, a responsibility that was given to us in a direct charge by our Master two thousand years ago, in which he said: