

peace and progress. In the presence of a master mind, penetrating, logical, and luminous, I stand with an admiration that almost approaches reverence. I want to think, I want everyone to think, for thinking is the better part of study. I believe, however, our thoughts may be disciplined without stultification of our intelligences and with infinite peace and happiness to ourselves.

A CAUTION AND PROMISE

In conclusion, my dear young brothers and sisters, I issue to you another caution with a promise. I believe that an observance of it will be more potential than anything I have mentioned in the preservation of your faith. It is this: Never depart from the teachings of the Church; keep every commandment,—do not be persuaded that you can violate any one with impunity; honor God—and I promise you you will never lose your faith in him. Amen.

ELDER JOHN H. TAYLOR

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I am very happy, my brethren and sisters, to be with you today.

A few months ago I came across a book with the heading "What Can We Believe?" It is not my intention to discuss the problems within the book, but the reading of its statements brought to my mind some of the conditions that are perhaps very similar to those which we have in the Church. The book brings up the question of the higher and the lower criticism of the scriptures. It states that in about 1900 we had what is called the lower criticism of our scriptures, and then later we had what was referred to as the higher criticism.

We are quite familiar with the discussions and methods entailed in this type of work. The thought back of this investigation was that the Bible needed a certain type of explanation and correction so that it might be more reliable and correct because of more modern discoveries and methods. But because the reviewers were sometimes more concerned with the letter than they were with the spirit of the Book, there was created in the minds of a number of people a disbelief, or at least a skepticism, in the scriptures themselves. A revision of scripture is not necessarily wrong provided that the necessity is there and the men chosen are inspired by the Lord especially in the matter of doctrine and stated facts.

In our anxiety to place our own scriptures, including the Bible, before the people, especially the young people, we will, if not very careful, bring about a loss of faith because as soon as we commence to analyze in a critical way many of its statements and make the prophets such very ordinary, common men in order to show reason for some of their statements, we arouse in the hearts and minds of men and women the question: "Well, what can we believe in the scriptures?"

I can see no objection to analyzing the scripture in a way that will help people understand some of its statements. But we should be careful

that we do not go to the extreme in our Church that other men and women have gone in this analysis, stressing words and losing the spirit of the message. The Lord has said that he spoke to his prophets and they wrote and spoke as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost.

Some explanations and change of viewpoint may be needed because of recent discoveries, but at the same time we must not let anyone get away from the thought that men were speaking and writing by the inspiration and power of God and that the scripture is the word of the Lord, and was given to us by him.

A while ago I heard the thought expressed that the Church should begin a revision of the Book of Mormon because of the many apparent mistakes in it pertaining to the division of chapters and verses, also in the language and doctrine, and that through a careful, modern revision the book could be more easily understood and be freer from outside criticism. In my opinion, if we continue to move along those lines we may gain a little in the correctness of words but lose considerable in our attitude towards the book, as well as bring doubt into the thoughts of men and women concerning the inspiration of our sacred scriptures. Sometimes in our anxiety to develop faith we develop disbelief.

Criticism may be helpful or detrimental, helpful if it increases our knowledge of the revealed word, detrimental when it insists on an interpretation that is not in harmony with the whole message of the book or the accepted doctrine of the Church. For instance, a man said to me the other day: "Do you know where the Lost Tribes are?"

I said: "Well, no, I do not know where they are."

"Well," he said, "do you think they are at the North Pole?"

I said: "No, I do not know if they are up at the North Pole."

(Of course the Russians and others were flying back and forth.)

"Do you think they are down to the South Pole?"

I told him, "No, I think perhaps they are not there."

He said: "Do you think they are up in some star or some other place?"

I said: "I do not know where they are. All that I can tell you is what President Grant has said—that they are lost."

"Well," he said to me, "I do not think they are lost. They are found."

Then he made the explanation that they are all safely located over in Europe, and that they are gathering here in Zion and bringing their records with them. (He was referring to their genealogical records.) I might have argued, "I understood that the ice was going to flow down in their presence when they came forth."

Likely he would have answered, "But the ice is flowing down from the north all the time."

Then I thought of the idea that if Christ left his message in Jerusalem, along with a written record by his disciples of his life and teachings, and then came to America and left his message here, and the Indians had a record and a tradition still existing among them concerning the visit of the Christ, undoubtedly the Lost Tribes whom Christ said he

was going to visit would at least have a tradition about his visit among them and also, I believe, a written record as in the other two cases.

Well, that thought is going the rounds. We are not satisfied to leave things as they are and wait for additional revelation from the Lord. To many it is embarrassing to talk about a lost people when to all appearances the earth has been thoroughly explored. In order to harmonize an apparent discrepancy, we assume an explanation instead of waiting for revelation on the subject. This bewilders people and makes them think that perhaps Joseph Smith was wrong in his statement concerning the Ten Tribes.

Another criticism that I heard the other day was about the Word of Wisdom, which indicates how prone we are to want to debate the word of the Lord to the point of finding fault with the emphasis the Authorities of the Church place on this revelation.

A man said, "Why is it that we preach the Word of Wisdom all the time? Why do we not get up-to-date and have new lines and new methods, new arguments for the Word of Wisdom, instead of doing the way we have been doing all these many years? Why, we have been preaching and preaching; you never go to a meeting but what you hear about it, yet today there are more people in the Church using liquor and breaking the Word of Wisdom in other ways than we have ever had before." He was thus indicating that we have not been accomplishing anything in the Church so far as the Word of Wisdom is concerned and that our methods have increased the breaking of the commandment instead of decreasing it.

My thought in mentioning these matters is that we have so many things in the Church that are established by the word of the Lord and that are plain and easy to be understood under the Spirit and inspiration of the Lord, and when we try to complicate these things or the doctrines and principles in the Church, we only confuse the minds of men and women and help to destroy the very thing we are trying to build up in the hearts of these people. I know we have to study, we have to be up-to-date, we have to progress, we must not be static. But why discourage people unnecessarily in their faith in the scriptures and their faith in their leaders?

All I am trying to say is that we ought to believe and follow the thing that we have so plainly written for us by the servants of God, and when we cannot understand it because no more is written, let us be satisfied, and keep this faith Brother Richards has been speaking of deep within our hearts and be willing to accept it until God in his wisdom and mercy someday makes things more plain to us.

May the Lord bless us and help us to do this, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

BISHOP SYLVESTER Q. CANNON

Presiding Bishop of the Church

I rejoice, my brethren and sisters, in being present with you at this important Conference. I have enjoyed the spirit of this meeting and