

## ELDER JOHN H. TAYLOR

*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

I have certainly been interested, my brethren and sisters, as you have been, in the very splendid remarks and counsel that have come to us so early in our Conference.

## ADMONITION TO PROVE ALL THINGS

The other day I was reading the words of Paul where he gave us the admonition to "prove all things, and to hold fast to that which is good."

When I was a young boy my Sunday School teacher gave us this information. He said, "The flies are God's scavengers. You have noticed that just outside of the kitchen door the flies collect around the dishwasher and other materials that may be thrown onto the lot and if it weren't for the flies eating up the waste material, we would all get sick." Of course this information was undoubtedly as good as could be had by him, or perhaps others, in regard to this matter. The fact that this had been told to us in Sunday School and by a man we all very much loved was no indication that the thing was right. Later in life we found that we could not hold fast to it because newly discovered evidence had proved it untrue.

If we follow the admonition of Paul and put sufficient time into proving all things we will be able to find the things to which we should hold fast. In the various scientific fields this has been followed extensively, and it is the only method that can be followed in order to arrive at the truth. I have this thought in mind: that we are very much concerned and we spend considerable time in proving scientifically whether things are right or wrong, eventually arriving at a basic truth, which always remains a truth and as such helps in arriving at other truths.

In the things that have to do with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I am quite sure that we are not using this method to the same extent as we might use it in proving all things, and then in holding fast to that which is good. I heard one of our speakers say that we were on very poor ground when we thought our testimonies were sufficient in regard to some of the things that we declared that we knew. He said that very frequently, even when it came to testimony, we should put it on one side so that we might prove it right again. I can see no more advantage in eliminating the truth and the testimony that God gives us in religious things than I can see in continually disregarding basic truths of science. In arithmetic we might say that two times two are four is always correct, we prove it daily by its use. We get no place, we are confused when, in order to re-prove this proposition, we say two times two are five. It seems to me that this is the thing we do every once in a while with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## THE VALUE OF A TESTIMONY

The Lord in His mercy gives to us a testimony and demonstrates

it to us in such a conclusive way that we know that we do have a basic religious truth for our testimony. For example, we know and we testify individually and collectively that God is a personal being and that we are made in His image. If our experiences and investigations, and His inspiration to us have proved this to be a basic truth, we should hold fast to it because it is good.

Men in the past have not been able to understand our conception of God. They cannot see that anything in the shape of man could be able to have the ability, the power, and the majesty that dwell in God the Eternal Father. As we move through life we do have men who in a measure assume the qualities and majesty of God, and feel that they are quite necessary to the affairs of life, but these men are gradually eliminated as was the house that was built upon the sand. Perhaps the only trouble is that they are able to do so many wicked and bad things before the waves come.

We have the same proposition in relation to the Word of Wisdom. We know the fundamental truth of the Word of Wisdom is based on a truth that cannot be eliminated or removed by any type of argument or reason. For instance, in coffee we have caffeine that is harmful, yet we sometimes reason that the same thing that makes coffee objectionable may not be so objectionable when it is used in some other way. It just indicates that we have not proven the thing so thoroughly that we have been able to hold fast to that which is good and make it a part of our lives.

#### THE SCRIPTURES MAKE CLEAR THE TRUTH

The Lord has said: "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Thus we have a way of finding the truth regarding God and His relations to us. We have a way of establishing the truth so thoroughly in our hearts that we will be able to hold fast to it. Perhaps if we had had the same interest and used the same time and the same thoroughness in searching the scriptures of the Lord as we have used in the field of science, we would find that we were growing in the ability to hold fast to that which is good, and not let it get away from us.

We have practically the same advice given to us in the Book of Mormon, but we seldom have a desire in our hearts to know whether this book is right or wrong. If we will go to this book, according to Moroni, and read it in a prayerful way, with faith, desiring to have a testimony and to find out as to its truthfulness, by the inspiration of God and the power of the Holy Ghost we shall know the truth.

We who have taken this admonition, we who have accepted this way of proving the things of God, have readily found out, if we have done the thing sincerely, that the Book of Mormon is true, and that God gave it to His prophet, Joseph Smith.

#### SAFETY IN KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS

There are so many things in life that are vital to us. If we would

go where we want to go, if we would have the blessings that we would like for ourselves and our loved ones, we must find out the things of God and then hold fast to them and never let them get away from us, either in times of tribulation or temptation, or times of joy and happiness.

May the Lord bless us and help us to guard His word in that light and live sincerely the precepts and the admonitions given to us, for the Lord has said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Perhaps at the end of our lives we will have demonstrated how much love we have for God by the number of commandments that we have kept and held fast to. May He so bless us, I humbly pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The *Singing Mothers* sang "Songs My Mother Taught Me," by Dvorak. Sister Permilla Bean directed the Chorus.

### ELDER RICHARD R. LYMAN

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

Since we are living at a time when wars of the greatest known magnitude are being fought between some of the most powerful nations of the world, very naturally we are wondering what the results are going to be and particularly what part our own country will play in this intense and most disheartening conflict. We are all extremely anxious to know whether or not our government is so constituted that it can endure indefinitely, or whether the time is now approaching when government of the people and by the people and for the people is to perish from the earth.

Dr. Andrew D. White, great scholar, wise diplomat, historian, and the first president of Cornell University, said many years ago that since all the republics of the past have failed, he had made a careful study for the purpose of determining whether in our republic there is any element that did not exist in those republics which have not endured. His conclusion was that the only new and outstanding characteristic of our republic is its public school system and he expressed the view that if our nation is to endure indefinitely it will be because of the broad democratic training and education in our public school system that we are giving to all the citizens of our nation.

#### PUBLIC EDUCATION NOT ENOUGH

But there are those who have strong convictions that public school education alone is not enough to preserve indefinitely and in peace, the life, the liberty and the prosperity of this our beloved country, the United States of America. Many are of the opinion that other elements are necessary. Religion, morality, righteousness! These are elements which must be factors in the make-up of any nation, it is said, if that nation is to endure indefinitely.

Experience has taught that morality is the life of a nation and religion is the life of morality. "Arming a country with guns and tanks and airplanes is not enough," says Roger W. Babson. Selecting men for the army, the navy and the air force on physical fitness alone will