

## ELDER JOHN H. TAYLOR

*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

I am very happy, my brethren and sisters, to have the opportunity of speaking to you this afternoon. Along with the other brethren, I have been very much interested in the remarks, counsel and instructions that have come to us. I trust my Heavenly Father will bless me, that I may be helpful in my remarks, so that our faith and testimony may be increased.

## DREAMS AND VISIONS

In reading in the Book of Mormon my attention was attracted to the statement of Lehi, wherein he gives an account of his vision of the iron rod. I was attracted first because, in the words of Lehi, he said: "I have dreamed a dream; in other words, I have seen a vision." It occurred to me that the dreams that one has, if they are at all worth while to the individual, or to the Church, they must be associated with that other word "vision." When one has dreams, and they are of value, they must be associated with vision from God, the Eternal Father.

We do have people in our day, who are dreaming dreams, and they, in some instances, feel that they are very vital, and that they belong in some way to the revelations of the Lord. As a general rule, such dreams have to do with personal desires for things,—perhaps things they should not have. They may be caused by worry or nervousness or an unbalanced ration.

I had an uncle, who was a bachelor, and a lady came to him and said she had had a dream that she should marry him. My uncle said, "That is all right, but will you wait, please, until I have had the same dream?"

There are people who, in order to have the things that they want, assume that they are dreaming, and that these dreams are coming from God. It is only a way of disregarding the word of the Lord, and doing the things that they want to do, whether they be right or whether they be contrary to the word of the Lord.

## THE TREE OF LIFE

In this dream of Lehi's he said that he saw the tree of life and that it was the most precious thing above all other things, because "it sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of all the children of men." An angel who was standing by Nephi as he was receiving the interpretation of his father's dream said, "Yea, and the most joyous to the soul."

The love of God, in the explanation that we have in the scriptures, is the tree of life. The love of God is more precious than anything else, and we can readily judge how much we love God by the way we keep His commandments. We may say we love God, but if we haven't the strength, the faith or the courage to make sacrifices for the truth, then surely we are not loving God as we should love Him.

## THE IRON ROD AND THE GREAT BUILDING SEEN BY LEHI

The other thing that attracted my attention was the rod of iron which ran along the bank of a river and led to the tree of life. In the interpretation to Nephi he was made to understand that this rod of iron was the word of God, the Eternal Father, and that many men and women, hosts of them, started on their way to reach the tree of life, that they might partake of this fruit, which was precious above all other fruits. As they came and partook of this fruit, some of them, in looking around, saw a building that seemed to be standing, as it were, in the air. There was a multitude of people in this building, and they were mocking those who had come to eat of the fruit of the tree of life. Many of these people who came and had eaten of the tree of life, because of the attitude of the people who were in this spacious building, felt ashamed of the thing that they were doing, and wandered away and were lost.

## RIDICULE OFTEN THE CAUSE OF TURNING FROM THE RIGHT

So the thought has occurred to me that often we partake of the fruit of the tree of life, or we become acquainted with the love of God, and His mercies, and then we are made ashamed by the attitude of other people. I dare say that the majority of our young people who begin to smoke or to drink, do so because in some way other people have made them ashamed of the word of the Lord, as if it were something lacking in value and need not be held to. Because of the mockery and because of the words of ridicule, our young people turn away and commence to do things that other people do. Then it becomes a habit, which makes it that much harder to find their way back again to the road that will lead them to the tree of life.

We have people who fail to go into the house of the Lord because they have been made ashamed of its ordinances and ceremonies and of its requirements in the matter of dress. The argument is used that it is all absurd, that it is foolish and of no importance; therefore boys and girls and other people are made ashamed of the things that we have in the holy house of God, because they lack understanding and courage and because they have not loved God enough. They would rather have the things that seemingly are comfortable and easy for them, and which require no sacrifice. Thus they turn away from the love of God and the path of righteousness.

Awhile ago I came in contact with a man, a young fellow who, attending one of our places of learning, was told that patriarchal blessings were on the same plane as fortune telling and crystal gazing, that there was no truth back of them that would be helpful to anyone. So that young man's faith in one of the precious privileges of the Church was shattered.

May the Lord bless us and be helpful to us. May we seek after the tree of life. May we get hold of the iron rod and as we go through the destructive mists of darkness, may we hold tight to this rod and not be lost in the wilderness, and so be able to reach the tree of life, and love God as we should love Him. I humbly pray for these things. Amen.