

ELDER MARK E. PETERSEN

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

When the Prophet Isaiah forecast the coming of the Savior, he said this:

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (*Isaiah 53:3-6.*)

DESPISED AND REJECTED

When the Savior came in the flesh and labored among men, this prophecy was literally fulfilled. He was despised and rejected of men. The people did turn their faces from him, and they did go their own way. They rejected him as they rejected his teachings, and it grieved him. One day as he stood in their capital city, he said,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (*Matt. 23:37-38.*)

When the Lord used that one little expression, "ye would not," he described the stubbornness, the wilfulness, the selfishness, of a people who would not obey the divine truth, but who turned their faces from him, each one going his own way.

Oh, that stubbornness! If only they could have realized what it did to them.

When he first began his ministry, he healed their sick; he even raised their dead. He fed them by the thousands in a miraculous way. But when he asked them to keep his commandments, the crowds melted away. Those who followed him were there no longer. So great was that falling away that he asked his Twelve:

. . . Will ye also go away?

Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. (*John 6:67-69.*)

But the people rejected him. In their blindness and in their stubbornness, as he offered to bless them and take them into his arms as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, they turned away. And in doing so, according to the words of the Savior himself, their house was left unto them desolate.

WILFULNESS OF MEN

As I have read that scripture from time to time, I have often wondered about its application to us who live today. I have often

wondered whether the Lord cries out to us, disappointed at our disobedience, saying, "How oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." (See Matt. 23:37.) How many of us are stubborn? How many of us are selfish and wilful, and turn our faces from him, and would rather not obey him?

This sort of thing applies in various phases of our lives. It applies in our own homes, sometimes with our own children. Have you sons or daughters who are wilful and stubborn and selfish, and who turn their faces from you, you the loving parents who would take them into your arms and nurture them even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings? Do they reject you, these children in their wilfulness? Some of you have them, and you know how they break your hearts.

And then there are some in the Church who ought to know better, who have the commandments of God, but will not repent, but are wilful and stubborn. Even though the blessings of God are offered to them, they turn their faces, and each one goes in his own way. We reject God as we refuse to obey him. We must remember that faith without works is dead. There is no salvation except through the Lord Jesus Christ. He has said:

. . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. . . .
 If ye love me, keep my commandments. . . .
 He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me
 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings. (*John 14:6, 15, 21, 24.*)

OBSERVANCE OF COMMANDMENTS

You know whether you keep his sayings or not. Do you observe the Sabbath day? Do you uphold the Authorities of the Church? Do you pay a full and honest tithing? Do you fast on fast day and pay a proper fast offering? Are you honest? Do you pay your debts? Are you morally clean? Do you keep the Word of Wisdom? You know whether you keep these things or not. If you do not, contemplate your disobedience and remember that the Lord calls out to you and says, "How oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

Sometimes in our communities we reject the Lord. Have you ever wondered about the community in which you live? Here in the state of Utah the Latter-day Saints are definitely in the majority. The Latter-day Saints have the commandments, and among them is the Word of Wisdom. Judging from our state records, do we accept the Word of Wisdom as God has given it to us? To what degree do we break the Word of Wisdom and thus reject the word of God

EXPENDITURES FOR LIQUOR AND TOBACCO

Ten years ago in the state of Utah, eleven million dollars was spent for alcoholic beverages and tobacco. In 1950 that figure was up three hundred percent. It reached nearly thirty-four million dollars. In 1948 the figure reached nearly thirty-five million dollars.

What will thirty-five million dollars buy? The last temple built by the Church was that at Idaho Falls. A temple like that could be built in forty-two states of the Union with the amount of money that is spent in the state of Utah in one year alone, for alcoholic beverages and tobacco.

The amount of money spent here each year for tobacco and alcoholic beverages is almost identical to the amount we spend in this state for education. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 1950, \$35,653,000.00 was spent for operating our school system and maintaining our school buildings in the state of Utah. Think of it! We spend as much in Utah for "booze" and tobacco as we spend for education! It is almost incredible.

The amount of money we spend each year in Utah for alcoholic beverages and tobacco is greater than the combined assessed valuation of the cities of Provo, Logan, and Brigham City.

The amount of money we spend in Utah every year for alcoholic beverages and tobacco is nearly twice as much as we spend for the construction and maintenance of our state highway system.

In Utah we spend one hundred times as much for liquor and tobacco as we contribute each year to the American Red Cross.

In Utah we spend two hundred times as much for alcoholic beverages and tobacco as we contribute to fight the dread disease of poliomyelitis.

About half of our state expenditure for alcoholic beverages and tobacco is spent right here in Salt Lake County. Do you know that in Salt Lake County we spend fifty times as much money every year for alcoholic beverages and tobacco as we pay into the Salt Lake Community Chest?

In view of all this, what do you think about the scripture that the Lord gives us: "How oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?"

CONDITION OF THE NATION

What about the nation? A century ago the Lord offered the American people a blessing if they would repent. In a revelation given over a hundred years ago, the Lord said concerning the American people:

... I will gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens, under her wings, if they will not harden their hearts;

Yea, if they will come, they may, and partake of the waters of life freely. (D. & C. 10:65-67.)

It is estimated that the total crime bill for the United States last year reached twenty billion dollars. According to the records of the F.B.I. last year, a serious crime was committed in the United States every eighteen seconds. In an average day last year, 301 persons were feloniously killed or assaulted; 146 robberies were committed; 1129 places were burglarized; 468 cars were stolen; 2861 thefts were committed.

The criminologists of the United States are of the opinion that in the last few years, a great moral depression has come to the United States.

J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the F.B.I., in speaking on March 26 of this year before a special committee to investigate organized crime, said this:

Those who engage in widespread vice activities and rackets could not long survive without their ally, the political renegade. No community in the land is contaminated by rackets and corruption without the assistance of local interests which hold law enforcement in restraint. Law enforcement officers are the people's representatives. They are not persons with unlimited power. They must obey those under whom they hold office. If they are dominated by criminal-aligned politicians, ruthless rackets and vice are inevitable.

To what extent does America obey the God of the land?

What about the world at large? In their blindness, the nations cry for peace but at the same time they reject the teachings of the Prince of Peace. The Lord spoke to the nations in a modern revelation and said this:

O, ye nations of the earth, how often would I have gathered you together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not! How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants, and by the ministering of angels, and by mine own voice, and by the voice of thunderings, and by the voice of lightnings, and by the voice of tempests, and by the voice of earthquakes, and great hailstorms, and by the voice of famines and pestilences of every kind, and by the great sound of a trumpet, and by the voice of judgment, and by the voice of mercy all the day long, and by the voice of glory and honor and the riches of eternal life, and would have saved you with an everlasting salvation, but ye would not!

Behold the day has come, when the cup of the wrath of mine indignation is full. (*D. & C. 43:24-26.*)

POSITION OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Latter-day Saints, what is your position? Are you willing to hearken unto the Lord your God who cries out to you and would nurture you and gather you together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings? The Lord said something to you also about this:

Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the Great I Am, whose arm of mercy hath atoned for your sins;

Who will gather his people even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, even as many as will hearken to my voice and humble themselves before me, and call upon me in mighty prayer . . .

For the hour is nigh and the day soon at hand when the earth is ripe; and all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that wickedness shall not be upon the earth;

For the hour is nigh, and that which was spoken by mine apostles must be fulfilled; for as they spoke, so shall it come to pass;

For I will reveal myself from heaven with power and great glory, with all the hosts thereof, and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years, and the wicked shall not stand. (*Ibid.*, 29:1-2, 9-11.)

I declare to you in all seriousness that I, too, know that God lives. I, too, know that George Albert Smith was a prophet of Almighty God. And I know that the man who will take his place is likewise a prophet and that he holds all the keys, powers, and authorities that were ever restored to the Prophet Joseph Smith in these last days.

When he takes up the reins of office here in this Church, he will preside by virtue of all the powers that were restored through angelic ministry in these the last days.

God will speak to you through him, and he will say to you: "How oft will I gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if ye will not harden your hearts." (*Ibid.* 10:65.)

May we humbly follow him and obey the Lord our God, I earnestly pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Elder J. Reuben Clark, Jr.:

We have just listened to Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve.

As the closing song of this session the Brigham Young University combined choruses will sing, "The Lord Bless You and Keep You," conducted by Elder Crawford Gates.

The closing prayer will be offered by President E. Garrett Barlow of the Inglewood Stake, California.

After that the conference will stand adjourned until seven o'clock tomorrow evening when, in accordance with the general custom of the Church, a General Priesthood meeting of the Church will be held. Only those holding the priesthood are invited to be present. Persons not holding the priesthood will kindly refrain from attempting to enter the building. That session will not be broadcast.

The session at ten o'clock Sunday morning, will be broadcast over KSL at Salt Lake City and, by arrangement through KSL, over the stations named in the first session of the conference. That session will also be televised over the KSL television station, channel five.

The *Church of the Air* broadcast, on which Elder Stephen L. Richards, of the Council of the Twelve, will be the speaker, will begin at 8:30 Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats by 8:20 a.m.