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ELDER JOHN W. TAYLOR'S SERMON

Following is the full text of the sermon delivered at the Tabernacle on Friday, October 7, 1898, by Elder John W. Taylor, the transcript being furnished by the stenographer who reported the speaker:

My Brethren and Sisters: I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will direct what I may say unto you. I have had great pleasure during this Conference in listening to the counsels of the brethren, and I feel that the importance of the question brought to our attention by President Smith can not be overestimated. We are a blessed and a prosperous people today. What has made us so? It is the fact that the leaders of this Church have given a similar kind of counsel for the past forty years to this people.

I desire myself to refer to another phase of our religion for a few moments, as we are reminded we are dual creatures. I have felt fed in my soul from the first hour this Conference opened. I have been delighted beyond expression with the beautiful singing that we have in this house, and I rejoice to associate again for a short time with the Saints during Conference, for if I know my own desires, it is to build up the kingdom of God upon the earth and to do my humble part wherever I am called to labor.

Now I have been abroad preaching the Gospel to the world—preaching repentance. We are commanded by our Heavenly Father to preach repentance, for it is a day of warning and not a day of many words, and nine times out of ten, when I speak, I cannot help talking upon this subject, because the commandments to the Elders are so plain regarding it. Now, brethren and sisters, all these temporal things that have been spoken of are of great value to us, and we should all learn the lessons of patient labor. I never in my life, in office work, or in the field, or wherever I have labored with mankind, allowed a man to do a better day's work than I have done myself. Anyone who has labored with me in any capacity will understand this to be the truth. I speak of this to hear testimony of what has been said. But there is another thing that weighs heavily on my mind. Our feelings are very much influenced by what we hear. A gentleman stepped up to me at the Woods Cross station yesterday morning and told me he was going to move to the rural districts and take up land. I want more land, he said, but there is one thing that I do not like to move for, and that it is in the settlement I am going to is in Rhode's valley, or Kamas prairie; and I don't like to go for one reason, and that is that I was informed that eight out of every ten of the marriages there have been of such a character that the wives have had children before they were married. Now, I CAN NOT BELIEVE that in Rhode's valley the Latter-day Saints are so rotten, as this man stated. I CAN NOT BE-

LIEVE that they have so thoroughly rotted in the valley: Now, this is a question that I want to speak of a little, because there are things that we need to speak of to the Latter-day Saints. It is said by the Prophet that we should be like watchmen on the towers of Zion, and that if we see the enemy approach, and we warn not that city, that their blood will be upon our heads, and as far as I am concerned as an individual, I propose to rid myself of it.

Another thing I am going to refer to: We as a people always put the imperfections of our people out, and we do not cover them up, slick them over and varnish them, but we expose them like the physician that takes the knife and cuts out the ulcer in order that the whole body may be saved. This has been the practice of the Latter-day Saints from the beginning, because we are told that God does not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. I was told by a very prominent gentleman in this city, that when he was driving his buggy down Main street late one Saturday evening, several gentlemen stepped up to the carriage. (I regret to say that we have some girls in our city as they do in other cities of the world, that promenade the streets late at night, paint their faces, and put on all they can get upon their backs and heads to make them attractive unto the men.) The gentleman referred to is here to verify what I say, you all see him that have eyes looking this way. These three young men say: We have been looking at these girls that are wandering up and down the streets, and there were dozen of them, and they said: We have information to convince us, that nine out of ten of these girls are immoral, and have lost their virtue. This gentleman said to the young men: These are the girls you have to chose your wives from, aren't they? Yes, I suppose, if we ever get any, was the reply. I CANNOT BELIEVE BUT THAT IT IS FALSE. I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT SUCH HORRIBLE IMMORALITY EXISTS right here in the center Stake of Zion; and I want to say to the girls that wander up and down these streets with nothing to do, late on Saturday night, that you are looked upon as being immoral women. While conversing with this gentleman another man came up, whose word I could not doubt, and he said: "I was informed by a lady in Salt Lake who keeps a rooming house, that after the close of practices by the Tabernacle choir, several members come to her rooming house for immoral purposes. I thought to myself is this possible? Is it possible that we can look upon the beauty of this Salt Lake Tabernacle choir and have a suspicion hanging over them like this? I cannot believe these things. Nevertheless, I say unto you my brethren and sisters, that I fear there is a disposition among some of our people to become careless and lax in their morals, to look lightly

upon men and women who infringe upon the moral law. I feel strongly impressed to read the vision of Nephi the Prophet. If this is true, if there is a portion of truth about these EXAGGERATIONS how must you feel, fathers and mothers when your sons and daughters come to learn and sing the songs of Zion; when you send your daughters to trade and obtain the necessities of life to hear that your daughters are viewed in this light by the young men of Zion. The several young men referred to are here and you can see them all of you. But I want to say to you that these things are NOT TRUE in their entirety, but I do believe there is some truth regarding these things. I want to read the vision of Nephi, the Prophet, to show you how the people of God have wandered away in every age of the world—how it was with Lehi's family. I say unto you brethren and sisters, the wealth we will have in the morning of the resurrection will be our sons and daughters; and while it is necessary to move and live and have an interest on this earth, when we come before the bar of God in the morning of the resurrection, what will we have? We will have our sons and our daughters, or we will be the poorest persons there; we will be barren and unfruitful, and will be under condemnation, if we have not taught our sons and daughters in the principles of righteousness. The account of Lehi's dream as recorded in the eighth chapter of 1 Nephi, is as follows:

"And it came to pass that we had gathered together all manner of seeds of every kind, both of grain of every kind, and also of the seeds of fruit of every kind.

And it came to pass that while my father tarried in the wilderness, he spake unto us, saying, Behold, I have dreamed a dream; or in other words, I seen a vision,

And behold, because of the thing which I have seen, I have reason to rejoice in the Lord because of Nephi and also of Sam; for I have reason to suppose that they, and also many of their seed, will be saved.

But behold, I am and Lemuel, I fear exceedingly because of you; for behold, methought I saw in my dream, a dark and dreary wilderness.

And it came to pass that I saw a man, and he was dressed in a white robe; and he came and stood before me.

And it came to pass that he spake unto me, and bade me follow him.

And it came to pass that as I followed him, I beheld myself that I was in a dark and dreary waste.

And after I had traveled for the space of many hours in darkness, I began to pray unto the Lord that He would have mercy on me, according to the multitude of His tender mercies.

And it came to pass after I had prayed unto the Lord, I beheld a large and spacious field.

And it came to pass that I beheld a