

preserve them for the generations to come. America must not fall from the standards of truth and righteousness that underly the structure of her government.

So, I say to you that Joseph Smith has made the greatest contribution toward proper conception of civic government that has ever been given by any man in all these years of history. We are indebted to him, so are all our fellow citizens though they know it not.

Do we love America? Why! We worship the sacred principles upon which America and her government stand. There are no truer Americans, there are no Americans who have a broader, more comprehensive view of the righteousness of government, than do the Latter-day Saints, and I make the statement with deliberation, knowing that it is true.

God bless us that we may keep these sacred principles inviolate, sustain the government, engender respect for law, and uphold the mighty Constitution, that lies at the basis of all our institutions. We could repeat with propriety the prayer of the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Kirtland temple, which prayer, he said, was given by revelation from God:

"Have mercy, O Lord, upon all the nations of the earth; have mercy upon the rulers of our land; may the principles, which were so honorably and nobly defended, namely, the Constitution of our land, by our fathers, be established forever."—Doc. & Cov. 109:54.

### ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE

Wherever I go among the Latter-day Saints, as my duty calls me, meeting them in the various wards and stakes and in the missions, I find them imbued with a spirit of deep earnestness, hopefulness, confidence, trust and faith, mingled with concern and serious thought. They are happy; nevertheless, their happiness is more than levity, for in their rejoicing there is thoughtfulness and deep interest as to their present and future.

We rejoice that the work of God is progressing, that through the ages "one unceasing purpose runs"; that all that is past has been in preparation for that that now is, and is for that which is to come; that there was a beginning, even as there shall be an end, to this particular phase of the Lord's purposes concerning his children.

#### THE PURPOSE IN THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

The earth was created primarily for the carrying out of the divine purposes respecting man. The astronomer regards it as one of the stellar units; the geologist looks upon it as the field for his investigation; but beyond such conceptions we regard it as one of the many spheres created with definite purpose, in which the destiny of the human race is the chief element and was the principal concern of the

Creator, in bringing it into existence. We read, as the Lord revealed unto his friend and servant, Abraham, that before the earth was framed the Creator and those immediately associated with him looked out into space and said: We will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these unembodied spirits may dwell; and we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them.

CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EARTH AND MAN

Now, that being the purpose for which this world was created, we can readily understand that there is a very close relationship between earth and man. We read that when the transgression in Eden was passed upon by the voice of judgment the Lord said unto Adam: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; \* \* \* Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; \* \* \* In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

This seemingly dire pronouncement would be nothing but fiction did it not mean that a great change came upon the earth itself under the curse; and the Scriptures reveal a very significant relationship between the development of earth processes and that of mankind. Indeed the earth has been personified. Righteous Enoch, we are told, regarded it as a being conscious and sentient, for we read:

"And it came to pass that Enoch looked upon the earth; and he heard a voice from the bowels thereof, saying: Wo, wo is me, the mother of men; I am pained, I am weary, because of the wickedness of my children. When shall I rest, and be cleansed from the filthiness which is gone forth out of me? When will my Creator sanctify me that I may rest, and righteousness for a season abide upon my face?" (Moses 7:48).

Following further revelation unto this prophet and seer, concerning the then future development of the human race and the purposes of God concerning such, he cried out in anguish to the Lord: "When shall the earth rest?" It was then shown unto him that the resurrected Christ would return to the earth in a dispensation to be known as the last, the dispensation of fulness and restitution; and that he, the Lord, would inaugurate the millennial reign of peace. "And the day shall come that the earth shall rest, but before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve."

Has it not been made known unto us that we may sanctify the earth or defile it according to our acts? There is a close connection between the righteousness or sinfulness of mankind and the occurrence of natural phenomena, benign or malignant as we regard them, good or bad, preserving or destroying as the case may be. Now the gross materialist may say there is no relationship between the righteousness of man and earthquakes, or between man's probity and floods. But there is!

## MAN AND EARTHLY PHENOMENA

Touching this matter, I read to you my own words, including scriptural citations, spoken on an earlier occasion: We learn from Scripture that Adam's transgression brought about a fallen condition, not of mankind alone, but likewise of the earth itself. In this and in numerous other epochal events, wherein the direct interposition of Divine action is affirmed, nature is seen to be in intimate relation with man.

Thus the sins of mankind may produce calamity in the form of destructive phenomena, which we may properly call natural because deserved; and human righteousness may invoke peaceful and beneficent cooperation of the elements.

"Cursed is the ground for thy sake" was the Divine fiat to the first man. In contrast, note the assurance given to Israel that by faithfulness the seasons should be made propitious, that nurturing rains should come, bringing such harvests that the people would lack room to store their products. (See Mal. 3:8-12).

Abject apostasy from the laws of God in Noah's time brought about the Deluge, in which "were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows [more properly flood-gates] of heaven were opened."

Enoch, who lived before Noah, was sent to proclaim repentance to the degenerate race, and so great was the power and authority vested in him that "he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course." He foresaw the coming of the Noachian flood, and the events of history, including the Savior's ministry, down to the days of the Lord's second advent, when "the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth." (Moses 7:13, 61).

As a fit setting for the tragedy on Calvary, a pall of darkness fell about the place, and, when the crucified Lord expired, "the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." (Matt. 27:51).

## DISRUPTION SIGNALIZED THE SAVIOR'S DEATH

On the Western Continent, widespread disruption signalized the Savior's death; and destruction befell the wicked who had flouted prophetic warnings and inspired admonitions to repentance. Many of the Nephites had forgotten the signs and wonders by which the fact of the Lord's birth had been made known, and had fallen into abominable wickedness. Then, at the time of the crucifixion, great and terrible tempests broke over the land, with thunderings, lightnings, and both elevations and depressions of the earth's crust, so that mountains were sundered, and many cities destroyed by earthquake, fire, and the inrush of the sea. For three hours the unprecedented holo-

caust continued; and then thick darkness fell, in which it was found impossible to kindle a fire. The awful gloom was like unto the darkness of Egypt in that its clammy vapors could be felt. This condition lasted until the third day, so that a night a day and a night were as one unbroken night; and the impenetrable blackness was rendered the more terrible by the wailing of the people, whose heartrending refrain was everywhere the same: "O that we had repented before this great and terrible day!" Then, piercing the darkness, a Voice was heard, proclaiming that destruction had befallen the people because of wickedness, and that those who had lived to hear were the more righteous of the inhabitants, to whom hope was offered on condition of more thorough repentance and reformation. (3 Nephi, Chap. 8).

#### MODERN PROPHECY ON THE SUBJECT

As was foreseen, aye, and foretold, by the Christ himself and by his prophets who lived before his mortal birth and by those who lived after, in the earlier ages, and by the prophets of the present dispensation, great destruction has come and shall come upon the earth because of the sins of the human race. In section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants, that section known unto us as the "Olive Leaf" as named by the prophet who received the word from the Lord and gave it unto the people in 1832, December 27, it is thus declared:

"For not many days hence and the earth shall tremble and reel to and fro as a drunken man; and the sun shall hide his face, and shall refuse to give light; and the moon shall be bathed in blood; and the stars shall become exceedingly angry, and shall cast themselves down as a fig that falleth from off a fig-tree.

"And after your testimony cometh wrath and indignation upon the people.

"For after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes, that shall cause groanings in the midst of her, and men shall fall upon the ground and shall not be able to stand.

"And also cometh the testimony of the voice of thunderings, and the voice of lightnings, and the voice of tempests, and the voice of the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds.

"And all things shall be in commotion; and surely, men's hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people."

#### THE RECENT CALAMITY IN JAPAN

What has been called the greatest calamity in history is fresh in our minds. Hundreds of thousands of human beings have lost their lives in the great seismic disturbances in Japan. I have only to say that the occurrence of such earthquakes is in accordance with predictions. The Lord forbid that I should assume to pass judgment upon those who are immediately affected, upon those who have lost their lives through such catastrophies. It is beyond the wisdom of men to correctly deduce results by applying general laws or causes to individual cases; and whenever the judgments of the Lord are permitted to fall upon the earth and upon its inhabitants, there are many

of the innocent who suffer with the guilty. Many go down who are not personally culpable and who are not directly responsible for that which has come.

#### RIGHTEOUS AND CULPABLE SUFFER TOGETHER

We know the Lord does permit these calamities to come upon those who, according to our means of judgment and powers of analysis, may not have deserved the fate, but death, remember, is not finality. It is that which follows death with which we should have concern. Many are allowed to die in tempest and earthquake, whose death is but a passage into the blessed realms, because they are deserving of blessings; while unto others death does come as a judgment; and the Lord knows who fall because of their sins and who are permitted to fall because of their righteousness.

We have an instance in point concerning the connection of affliction and distress with individual culpability. You remember the Lord and his apostles once came to a blind beggar upon the street near the temple gates; "And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Incidentally let us note that those who asked that question had an understanding of premortal existence, for surely the man could not have sinned in the flesh and brought upon him blindness at birth as a result. But the explanation given by the Lord is the important point for us to consider: "Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." The Lord's purposes were worked out in the case, for the man was healed, and the instance stands as a testimony for or against those who have become acquainted with the circumstance.

Incident to a period of cruel intolerance in religious matters among the aboriginal people of this continent, we read that evil-hearted persecutors put to death many women and children by burning, thinking that by this means they could terrify the rest into a denial of their faith. The Prophets Alma and Amulek, were forced to witness the awful scenes. Though themselves in bonds they were brought there to witness the agony of the victims; and Amulek with zeal and righteous indignation desired to invoke the power of God to save those innocent sufferers: "But Alma said unto him: The Spirit constraineth me that I must not stretch forth mine hand; for behold the Lord receiveth them up unto himself, in glory; and he doth suffer that they may do this thing, or that the people may do this thing unto them, according to the hardness of their hearts, that the judgments which he shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just; and the blood of the innocent shall stand as a witness against them, yea, and cry mightily against them at the last day." (Alma 14:11).

#### NATIONS AS WELL AS INDIVIDUALS HELD TO ACCOUNT

The Lord deals with individuals; and salvation is an individual affair; but, nevertheless, he deals also with nations, for he is the God

of nations, which are set up or put down, are preserved or destroyed, according to their fitness; and all this is done in the Lord's due time and way. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord," sang the psalmist. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people," declared the author of the book of Proverbs.

It has been pointed out that a distinguishing feature of the last days and of the imminence of the second coming of Christ would be the proclaiming of the gospel amongst all nations. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come," said the Lord himself in the flesh on the very eve of his great sacrifice. So also in these latter-days the Lord has made plain the fact that nations shall be held to account. In a commandment to the elders of his Church, given in February, 1831, and recorded in section 43, he said:

"Lift up your voices and spare not. Call upon the nations to repent, both old and young, both bond and free, saying: Prepare yourselves for the great day of the Lord;

"For if I, who am a man, do lift up my voice and call upon you to repent, and ye hate me, what will ye say when the day cometh when the thunders shall utter their voices from the ends of the earth, speaking to the ears of all that live, saying—Repent, and prepare for the great day of the Lord?

"Yea, and again, when the lightnings shall streak forth from the east unto the west, and shall utter forth their voices unto all that live, and make the ears of all tingle that hear, saying these words—Repent ye, for the great day of the Lord is come?

"And again, the Lord shall utter his voice out of heaven, saying: Hearken, O ye nations of the earth, and hear the words of that God who made you.

"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!"

In another revelation, section 84, we read:

"For I, the Almighty, have laid my hands upon the nations to scourge them for their wickedness.

"And plagues shall go forth, and they shall not be taken from the earth until I have completed my work, which shall be cut short in righteousness—

"Until all shall know me, who remain, even from the least unto the greatest, and shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord."

Yet further:

"And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn, and with famine and plague and earthquake and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of

an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed hath made the full end of all nations. (87:6).

Now, I do not believe in trying to explain away the words of God that predict calamity, but are nevertheless full of assurance unto the righteous, be it a righteous man or a righteous nation. We should awaken to their dread import. The Lord is dealing with the nations of the earth, and his Spirit has departed in large measure from nations that have defied him and his commandments, and as a result, they, being left largely to themselves, war with one another, and seek all means by which they can destroy one another most expeditiously. Now, the Lord is not the author of these evil things; the nations are bringing these inflictions upon themselves, and there shall be a consummation brought about as the Lord hath decreed, which shall mean an end of all nations as such, if they will not observe the law and the commandments of the Lord their God.

#### THE WAY OF ESCAPE

Is there any way of escape? Yes, there is. The Lord sent word by his prophets unto the wicked city of Nineveh, and the cry was raised in her streets: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Then from the king upon his throne, down to the heggarr in the streets, the people wailed because of their wickedness, and opened their hearts to the warning voice. They fasted and prayed, and confessed their sins before the Lord, and Jonah, the prophet who had been sent unto them, looked on to witness the destruction of the city, and seemed indeed to be disappointed because he was denied a view of the spectacle he awaited. But the Lord reasoned with the prophet in this wise: The people have turned to me, and have repented of their sins. Shall I destroy them when they have turned unto me?

Even now, if the nations will turn unto the Lord it shall be unto them as it was unto Nineveh—they shall be spared; but if they will not, then the Lord will permit the predicted judgments to come upon them until they are brought to a realization of the fact that they do depend upon the Lord God of heaven and of earth. The forces of nature are co-operating and are permitted to wreak destruction and the end is not yet. Latter-day Saints, remember the admonition of the Lord: "Stand ye in holy places," and we cannot do that unless we are holy. "Stand ye in holy places, and be not moved," but await the working out of the Lord's purposes, the while living lives of righteousness and crying repentance unto the people of the world.

#### THE TIME OF CHRIST'S ADVENT IS NEAR

This is the day of consummation, and the coming of the Lord is nearer than we are willing to admit. Let us not seek to set times or dates, for such we are told shall never be made known until the day of the Lord's coming; not even the angels in heaven are to know before-

time. Therefore, away with all attempts to fix times for the Lord. But he has told us that the time of his advent is near; and it is over a hundred years nearer than it was when he spake first to his prophet in this dispensation. I pray that we be prepared, and that we be found ready for the consummation of the ages, the coming of the Lord in his might and majesty to rule and reign. I ask this in his name, Amen.

### ELDER JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

I feel dependent this morning upon the Spirit of the Lord to guide me, in what I shall say. Nor is this an uncommon feeling, for when I stand before the people I have a spirit of timidity and feel my weakness.

#### EVENTS OF A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

A number of the speakers have referred to topics in relation to those most important events which occurred one hundred years ago, and I desire to add one or two thoughts in this direction. In the year 1820, when the declaration was made to Joseph Smith by the Father and the Son that the truth was about to be restored, that youth was fourteen years of age. Nevertheless his story created a good deal of consternation and ridicule in the world, and brought upon him much criticism, and even persecution. It seems to the world a strange thing, and an impossible thing, that the Lord would call upon a youth, inexperienced, untrained, lacking in the education of the world, to stand at the head of any great marvelous work; and also a very strange thing that any one with such a common name as Joseph Smith should be called. When the elders go forth to preach the Gospel, and bear witness and testimony to the truth of his words, the people, in ridicule, state: "Surely the Lord would not call upon anyone by that name. It is so common." It did not have even the aristocratic "y" in it. (Smyth). I suppose the Lord desired to try the faith of the people, at any rate we do know that his ways are not the ways of men. Perhaps, if Joseph Smith had been named Martin Luther, or John Calvin, or John Knox, or John Wesley, or some other John, it might have had more weight with the disbelieving world. But to be an ordinary, common, every-day Smith was more than they could stand. And yet this is the way the Lord works. The world, I suppose, has an idea that anyone with such a name, if he has any qualifications whatever, those qualifications would be what the name might suggest—the qualifications of brawn and muscle, and not of spirituality and intelligence.

#### JOSEPH SMITH'S CONTRIBUTION TO SPIRITUAL THOUGHT

It has been stated here this morning that Joseph Smith gave to the world the greatest contribution in civil government that the world has ever known since the days of our Redeemer, and I can