

is only twenty-five hundred, or three thousand dollars. What would happen if that sum were increased by twenty or even forty percent all around? Even if you cannot imagine the result, do you realize what it would be like to feel no need of locking doors and windows, no fear of leaving your car unprotected, no danger that your wife or daughter would be insulted, or you yourself sandbagged if you went out at night, no fear that you would have any uncollectable bills except through accident or unpreventable misfortune, no fear that in political election there would be any bribery, or in politics any graft, and no fear that anyone anywhere was trying to 'do you'—can you imagine all that? It would almost be heaven on earth. Of course, it cannot happen" (someday it will have to happen) "... and yet if all the destroyers of civilization could be eliminated, and if the traits of the rest of us that come from destructive strains could be eliminated, an approach to such a state some hundred years hence is by no means inconceivable."

Spiritual awakening in the hearts of millions of men and women would bring about a changed world. I am hopeful, my brethren and sisters, that the dawning of that day is not far distant. I am conscious, as I hope all of you are, that the responsibility to try to bring about such a day rests upon the priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ

and upon the membership and upon husbands and wives and upon children in Mormon homes.

May that message be felt throughout the conference that we are now holding. We cannot just come and meet and talk about good things and then go home and express our feelings, the feelings of our carnal nature.

My faith in the ultimate triumph of the gospel of Jesus Christ assures me that a spiritual awakening must come. It will come through the acceptance of Jesus Christ and obedience to his gospel and in no other way completely. I believe there never was a time in the history of the world when there was such a need for a united, determined stand to uphold Christ and the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith as there is today.

God bless you here assembled that we may sense as never before the efficacy of the restored gospel and that we hold as a duty our application of spiritual traits in our daily association with one another in home, in business, in society, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Spencer W. Kimball.

## ELDER STERLING W. SILL

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

Since the last general conference it has been my privilege, in company with President and Sister Henry A. Smith, to tour the Central Atlantic States Mission. Our travels took us to Jamestown, Virginia, where during this past year some \$25,000,000 has been spent to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the establishment of the first English settlement in America. During this 350 years, there has been built upon this continent the greatest nation, having the highest standard of living, ever known in the world. I have thought many times, what a wonderful invest-

ment this \$25,000,000 would be if it could help us to understand the source of our blessings and what we might do to preserve them.

As I stood at Jamestown thinking of the wonderful advantages of living in this land of freedom and opportunity, my mind went back to make a comparison with the ancient Hebrews being established in their promised land. Before they crossed the Jordan, God said to them,

Thou shalt inhabit cities which thou didst not build, and thou shalt eat from vines which thou hast not planted, and

Friday, April 4

First Day

thou shalt drink from wells which thou didst not dig. (See Deut. 6:10-11.)

Every American is in that same situation. Certainly there is no one within the sound of my voice who doesn't eat from vines which he did not plant.

Then the Lord said something to the Hebrews that is particularly appropriate to us. He said, "But when thou hast eaten and are full, beware lest thou forget the Lord, thy God." (See *ibid.*, 6:11-12.)

There is a stimulating power derived from remembering our blessings and the source from which they come. Nations, like individuals, in the past have fallen when they have forgotten God. Certainly the greatest danger facing America as we pass this important milestone in our history, is not inferior armaments, and it is not a lagging industrial production, and it is not an inadequate food supply. In fact, it has been said that our national problem is surplus; our national disease is overweight; our national sin is forgetfulness. And the greatest need of our lives is to remember the source of our blessings.

To help ancient Israel remember, the Lord instituted among them the custom of wearing phylacteries. That is, they were required to write out the most important passages of their scripture upon pieces of parchment and then bind them across their foreheads and between their eyes and upon their wrists and around their necks, so that no matter where they were, or what they were doing, these passages would always be in their sight, and consequently in their thoughts.

One of these phylactery passages is recorded in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, wherein the Lord pointed out their need by saying:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

And then he added:

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. (Deut. 6:5-8.)

I suppose that a modern adaptation of this idea would be one that is familiar to some of you husbands. When your wife has wanted you to remember some particular thing, she may have tied a red string on your finger, with a bow on the top so that no matter where you went, or what you were doing, you would always be conscious of the string on your finger and be reminded of the particular thing to be done. We need to make some of our own adaptations of this idea to help us remember God and what he requires at our hands. Our eternal lives depend upon it.

Kipling once wrote what might be called a phylactery prayer, entitled, "The Recessional," in which he repeated over and over this important phrase,

"Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget, lest we forget."

That is, there are certain things that we must remember if our lives are to be successful. One of these is that man's greatest need is for God. And for that reason God made our relationship with him the subject of the first and the greatest of all the commandments. And if we would retain our national and our individual blessings, we should make every day of the year a Memorial Day. To help us understand, and to help us remember, the Lord in our day has given us three great volumes of new scripture. One of these has particularly to do with our land and those who have occupied it before us. In this great American volume of scripture, we learn of the decrees of God which have governed this land and which must always govern the lives of those who occupy it. Without this important information, we are largely strangers in our own land, not being aware of the laws governing our own welfare.

George Washington is often referred to as the "Father of his country." But I would like to suggest the name of another man who might qualify in a more real sense as the "Father of America." After the flood waters had receded from off the face of this land, a little group of people were led by the Lord from

the confusion of tongues at Babel, back to this land of promise, to repeople and to restock America with plant and animal life. The Lord said to the brother of Jared, who, under his direction, led this little colony to this new beginning,

... I will go before thee into a land which is choice above all the lands of the earth. (Ether 1:42.)

The Lord gave to the Jaredites many divine decrees concerning this land: that it should be preserved forever as a sanctuary of freedom, that there should be no kings upon this land, that he would be the God of this land, and that whatsoever nation should possess it, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the only true God, or they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them. The Lord said that the fulness of his wrath would come upon them when they were "ripened in iniquity." (See *ibid.*, 2:8-9.)

I would just like to note in passing, that these decrees have never been revoked.

The Jaredites became a great nation and flourished upon this land for approximately nineteen hundred years, or almost the exact length of time that has elapsed since the birth of Jesus to our own day. It was also more than five times the length of the period from the beginnings at Jamestown to the present. The Jaredites loved this land and enjoyed its blessings, as we have done. The Lord promised them that there should be no greater nation on the earth than the one which he should raise up for them upon this land. The Jaredites lived contemporaneously with Babylon, Assyria, China, and the other great nations of that day.

But after they had eaten and were full, they forgot God, and they were destroyed. Other cultures upon this land followed the same pattern and met the same end.

As I stood at Jamestown, I thought how grateful we ought to be in America for this new beginning, this last chance to serve the God of this land, and how carefully we ought to study the divine decrees that control our blessings and destiny. Certainly no one can be familiar with the history of our great

nation to date without being acutely aware of the special providential favor which has attended this land from the very beginning. Abraham Lincoln pointed out this remarkable fact in his Thanksgiving Day Proclamation of 1863, which sounds as if it had been dictated by one of the great Book of Mormon prophets who knew, even better than Lincoln, of the special relationship existing between God and this land. President Lincoln said:

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown.

Then he indicated our perennial problem, and he said,

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand that preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts that all of these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom or virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God who made us. It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended power, to confess our national sins and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

But in spite of our many weaknesses, and in spite of the mild chastenings that God has administered from time to time in the interests of our reformation, he has still blessed us with the highest standard of living ever known in the world. It is said that in the United States, with some 6 percent of the world's population, we have approximately 50 percent of the telephones, the radios, the automobiles, the television sets, and the other devices of civilization.

But the crowning event in the blessing of America came in the early spring of 1820, when God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, reappeared upon this continent in what is probably the greatest divine manifestation ever given in the world. They came to re-establish among men a belief in the God of Genesis, a belief in the God of this land. They came to establish the gospel

Friday, April 4

First Day

on this earth for the last time, and to let us know that these timeless decrees of God still govern in this land which we presently possess.

What an important beginning. What an inspiring way to open this age of wonders and enlightenment and opportunity and abundance and freedom, which we know as the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times! Most of the conflicting religions of the present day have been imported into America. They have been brought from Italy and England and Switzerland and Scandinavia and Scotland, Arabia and China and Japan and India. But the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was born in this chosen land of America to open the greatest and the last of all the dispensations.

But America was a divinely favored land before Columbus and before Jamestown and before the Mormon pioneers. We know, by means of divine revelation, that the Garden of Eden was established in this land. This was the home of many of the greatest prophets who have ever lived. But the greatness of America is not all in the past. This will also be the place of the new Jerusalem. The tenth Article of Faith says that ". . . Zion will be built upon this [the American] continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; . . ." with one of his capitals in this western land, ". . . that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory." This earth will eventually become the celestial kingdom of God. (See D & C 88:25-26.)

Then even those who have lived here but who have forgotten God, must be cast out; they must live some other place. But those who are entitled to live upon this earth when it is celestialized will then not only enjoy the highest standard of living, but also the highest standard of happiness ever known by man. But all of this is based upon our ability to remember and serve God.

On this important anniversary, we need to remember that we are not the first but the fifth culture that has lived upon this land, each of the other four having been destroyed because they have forgotten God. We must forever keep in mind that our national as well as

our individual welfare has been put in our hands, and the law governing our welfare has been clearly stated to us.

We not only have the greatest blessings, but we also have the greatest responsibilities. We have the responsibility to carry the message of the gospel to "every nation and kindred and tongue and people." We have the responsibility of putting the gospel in force in our own lives. We must exercise a kind of leadership corresponding to our opportunities and our blessings. Certainly we must not be content to dwell in the house built by the Pilgrims and the Pioneers. We must make history ourselves. The highest standard of living is important, but it is far more important to have the highest standard of honor and the highest standard of obedience and the highest standard of "remembering." Then our country will be safe and our freedom and our happiness will be secure. Then we may earn the right to live forever in this favored land upon this celestialized earth.

I close with the inspiring poem of Henry Carey,

#### "America"

My country! 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing;  
Land where my fathers died,  
Land of the pilgrim's pride,  
From every mountain side,  
Let freedom ring.

My native country, thee,  
Land of the noble, free,  
Thy name I love;  
I love thy rocks and rills,  
Thy woods and templed hills;  
My heart with rapture thrills  
Like that above.

Let music swell the breeze,  
And ring from all the trees,  
Sweet freedom's song;  
Let mortal tongues awake,  
Let all that breathe partake,  
Let rocks their silence break,  
The sound prolong.

Our father's God! to thee,  
Author of liberty,  
To thee we sing;  
Long may our land be bright  
With freedom's holy light,  
Protect us by thy might,  
Great God, our king!

That we may always remember the source of our blessings, and that we may prove ourselves worthy of him who is their Author, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

The congregation will now join with the Combined Choruses of the Brigham Young University in singing, "We Thank Thee, O God, For a Prophet."

The congregation and the Combined Choruses united in singing the hymn, "We Thank Thee, O God, For a Prophet."

President David O. McKay:

We shall now hear from Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder John Longden.

## ELDER SPENCER W. KIMBALL

### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My beloved brothers and sisters, first I should like to acknowledge the goodness of the Lord to me.

As I heard the President speak of the converts of the past year, I tried to visualize four huge tabernacles, or one twice as wide and long, as this one, full of all new converts from last year only.

I am conscious this morning of three empty places among our Brethren. I am thinking today of Brother Oscar Kirkham, a great man who has influenced youth tremendously and has given a long life of service. I am remembering Elder Thomas Evans McKay as one like Nathanael, a man without guile. And my mind returns to Elder Adam S. Bennion, our very close colleague, and I think of the scripture which says, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke 2:40.) And then when they went down to Nazareth, it was said of the Lord, again, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God." (*Ibid.*, 2:52.) An already great man, Elder Bennion increased in wisdom, greatness, spirituality. We express to the families of these three men our affection and our sympathy.

In the moments allotted to me may I address my remarks to any here and in the radio and television audience who have not experienced the glow, the warmth, the peace which come to those who see the eternal path clearly and know positively of its correctness, and who are courageously toiling toward those eternal goals.

In experiences of mortality we sometimes suffer from optical illusions; we hear noises that do not exist; we experience nocturnal adventures quite unreal, and distorted; but in the spiritual realm one can have positive certainty, for the Lord has repeated numerous times the definite promise here expressed:

If any man will do his will, he shall *know* of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:17. *Italics added.*)

In courts of law the witness is asked to take an oath that the information he is about to give is "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," and the statements made are called his "testimony." In spiritual matters, we may likewise have a testimony. This sureness of the spiritual is unique and pertains to the realness of a personal God; the continued active life of the Christ, separate from but like his Father; the divinity of the restoration of the organization and doctrines of God's Church on the earth and the power of the divine, authoritative priesthood given to men, through revelations from God. These can be known as surely as that the sun shines, by every responsible person, and to fail to attain this knowledge is to admit that one has not paid the price. Like academic degrees it is obtained by intense strivings. That soul who is clean through repentance and the ordinances receives it if he desires and reaches for it, investigates conscientiously, studies, and prays faithfully.