

standard is kept, where the challenge is great, where much is required, where the gospel is lived.

I bear witness that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that he is the Lamb of God, crucified that men might live. Though we suffer mortal death, through the blood of the Lamb we have amnesty from spiritual death if we keep the commandments of the Lord, for it shall pass over us and not slay us. This witness may come to you even in your youth. On the basis of this personal testimony I commend to you the Word of Wisdom, which is not only a code of health, but quite as much a key to spiritual wisdom—a principle with a promise—in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We have just listened to Elder Boyd K. Packer, Assistant to the Twelve.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "For The Beauty Of The Earth." After the singing we shall hear from Elder Ezra Taft Benson.

Selection by the Choir, "For The Beauty Of The Earth."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of Twelve will be the concluding speaker.

ELDER EZRA TAFT BENSON

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: . . ." (Prov. 14:34.) This statement of eternal truth from Proverbs appeared on the flyleaf and the last page of a booklet at each plate at the President's Prayer Breakfast in the Grand Ballroom of the Mayflower Hotel, February 7, 1963 in Washington, DC. This annual breakfast is sponsored jointly by the US Senate and House of Representatives Prayer Breakfast Groups and the International Christian Leadership Conference.

As I listened to the prayers, readings from the Old and New Testaments, and messages from government and non-government leaders, I reviewed hurriedly our spiritual background as a nation and today's spiritual needs.

For, truly, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." (*Idem.*)

The beautiful old print which hangs in Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia, came to mind. It is captioned "The First Prayer in Congress, September 1774." It depicts most of the members of that Congress on their knees with our first President as leader.

I recalled the terrible winter at Valley Forge and General George Washington on his knees in the snow, praying for

divine aid. I thought of the words of Lincoln during another time of crisis as he said humbly: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."

George Washington acknowledged God's direction and stated: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. . . . Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." (Washington's Farewell Address.)

Lincoln knew that God rules in the affairs of men and nations. He solemnly declared: "God rules this world—It is the duty of nations as well as men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow . . . and to recognize the sublime truth that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord."

The founding fathers knew that ". . . where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Cor. 3:17.) The United States of America began and lives as a result of faith in God. The

Sunday, April 7

Bible has been and is the foundation for this faith.

"It is impossible to govern the world without the Bible," said George Washington.

"The Bible is the rock on which this Republic rests," Andrew Jackson proclaimed.

The fathers of our country had to turn to religion in order that their new experiment make sense.

As I left the prayer breakfast, bidding good-bye to many warm friends, I thought of the greatness of America—the world's greatest power. During World War II she outproduced both her enemies and allies—"the American Miracle."

But I also recalled the latest FBI reports revealing the ever-increasing crime record—over seventeen percent increase in the nation's capital in 1962 alone. I recalled our shockingly defiant record of drunkenness and immorality and the fact we have become a nation of pleasure-seeking Sabbath breakers.

My thoughts turned to our homes and families—our ever-increasing divorce rate—the alarming increase in sexual sin—infidelity—yes, even adultery. We live in a day of slick, quiet, and clever sins. It is made easy to cover up.

I recalled the solidarity of the homes of long past when family prayer, daily devotion, the reading of the scriptures, and the singing of hymns was a common practice in American homes—a practice which, I am sorry to say, has all but disappeared today.

I became saddened as I reviewed evidence of a lessening of moral stability, honor, integrity, love of country—a seeking for the honors of men, of something for nothing—the tendency to lean more and more on government, the result of our ever-increasing demands, even though often economically, socially, and spiritually unsound.

There has been a nation-wide erosion of individual character. Jefferson's words still ring true: "Material abundance without character is the surest way to destruction." I recalled how proudly in generations past, we spoke of the "American way of life."

Then, I saw thirty million door knob hangers being distributed by the Boy

Scouts, setting forth our political and economic rights in an effort to stimulate patriotism in this choice land. As I read this message from Freedom Foundation and the Boy Scouts of America, I thought of our basic American concepts, our constitutional government, based on a fundamental belief in God.

I became alarmed as I reviewed what has happened in our schools under so-called "progressive education." What about the loss of patriotism, faith in God, and the teachings of character building principles once so much a part of our education? We have all but "forced Americanism out of the classroom to make way for temporary trivialities." (DeLove.)

I remembered President Joseph F. Smith's warning of the three dangers to the Church from within, viz., the flattery of prominent men, sexual impurity, and false educational ideas. (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 312.)

Then there came to me the words of that courageous American patriot J. Edgar Hoover: "Today as never before, America has need for men and women who possess the moral strength and courage of our forefathers—modern-day patriots, with pride in our country and faith in freedom. . . ."

"Too often in recent years, patriotic symbols have been shunted aside. Our national heroes have been maligned, our history distorted. Has it become a disgrace to pledge allegiance to our flag—or sign a loyalty oath, or pay tribute to our national anthem? Is it shameful to encourage our children to memorize the stirring words of the men of '76? Is it becoming opprobrious to state 'In God we Trust' when proclaiming our love of country?"

"What we desperately need today is patriotism founded on a real understanding of the American ideal—a dedicated belief in our principles of freedom, and a determination to perpetuate America's heritage. . . ."

Are we slipping from our moorings, becoming soft, carelessly drawing away from the course which has brought us such priceless blessings in days past?

David Lawrence, editor of the *U.S. News & World Report* has said: "The destiny of the world is in the hands of

well be that our government and its free institutions will not be preserved except at the price of life and blood. . . .

“ . . . the paths we are following, if we move forward thereon, will inevitably lead us to socialism or communism, and these two are as like as two peas in a pod in their ultimate effect upon our liberties. . . .

“We may first observe that communism and socialism—which we shall hereafter group together and dub Statism—cannot live with Christianity, nor with any religion that postulates a Creator such as the Declaration of Independence recognizes. The slaves of Statism must know no power, no authority, no source of blessing, no God, but the State. . . .

“This country faces ahead enough trouble to bring us to our knees in humble honest prayer to God for the help which He alone can give, to save us. . . .

“Do not think that all these usurpations, intimidations, and impositions are being done to us through inadvertency or mistake; the whole course is deliberately planned and carried out; its purpose is to destroy the Constitution and our Constitutional government. . . .

“We have largely lost the conflict so far waged. But there is time to win the final victory, if we can sense our danger, and fight.” (*Deseret News*, “Church Section,” Sept. 25, 1949, pp. 2, 15.)

Thus spoke the ever forthright and courageous President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.

And finally, and most important of all, I turned in my review to the counsel of our beloved leader who has been an inspiration to me since boyhood, President David O. McKay, God’s mouthpiece on the earth today. “During the first half of the twentieth century,” said President McKay, “we have traveled far into the soul-destroying land of socialism and made strange alliances through which we have become involved in almost continuous hot and cold wars over the whole of the earth. In this retreat from freedom the voices of protesting citizens have been drowned by raucous shouts of intolerance and abuse from those who led the retreat and their millions of gullible youth, who are marching merrily to their doom, carrying banners on which are emblazoned

such intriguing and misapplied labels as social justice, equality, reform, patriotism, social welfare.” (*Ibid.*, October 18, 1952, p. 2.)

“The fostering of full economic freedom lies at the base of our liberties. Only in perpetuating economic freedom can our social, political, and religious liberties be preserved. . . . We must not let complacency blind our eyes to the real dangers threatening to destroy us.” (*Ibid.*, March 2, 1952.)

“Communism is antagonistic to the American way of life. Its avowed purpose is to destroy belief in God and free enterprise,” declared President McKay. “In education for citizenship, therefore, why should we not see to it that every child in America is taught the superiority of our way of life, of our Constitution and the sacredness of the freedom of the individual. Such definite instruction is not in violation of either the federal or the state constitution. . . .

“I love the Stars and Stripes, and the American Way of Life. I have faith in the Constitution of the United States. I believe that only through a truly educated citizenry can the ideals that inspired the Founding Fathers of our Nation be preserved and perpetuated.”

Then President McKay listed as one of the four fundamental elements in such an education the “Open and forceful teaching of facts regarding communism as an enemy to God and to individual freedom.” (*Ibid.*, March 13, 1954, p. 3.)

President McKay has called communism the greatest threat to the Church today. (Press Conference, Hyde Park Chapel, London, Feb. 24, 1961.)

Because the latest words of God’s prophet are of extreme importance to the Latter-day Saints, let me in conclusion, quote very briefly and humbly from the counsel given by President McKay in the last three general conferences. In October 1961 President McKay gave a stirring opening address on our American way of life and the communist threat. He expressed grief and shock over a Supreme Court decision and stated that the enemies to our Republican form of government are becoming more blatant.

At the close of the general conference

those statesmen who can interpret faithfully the commands of the Almighty.”

Can our national leaders do this? Can they interpret faithfully the commands of the Almighty? Can we as citizens of this blessed land? Can we as people of the free world? Do we believe that “righteousness exalteth a nation,” that there is safety only in righteous living?

Fortunately, today we are not left in darkness. We have a guide, not only the Holy Bible, but added modern scriptures. And of the utmost importance for us today, we have the counsel and direction of living oracles. This counsel, this direction—in fact the message of the fulness of the restored gospel is being carried to the world by 12,000 ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And what is this message? It is a world message of the utmost importance. It is that God has again spoken from the heavens. The priesthood and authority to act in his name has been restored again to men on the earth, following centuries of darkness. The fulness of the everlasting gospel is here with all of its saving principles. To these facts I bear humble witness.

The prophets of a new gospel dispensation have counsel for us today—counsel on matters which concerned the Founding Fathers—freedom, liberty, righteousness which “exalteth a nation.”

Do we believe and accept their counsel, or have we drifted away from those basic concepts and principles, without adherence to which, no nation can be exalted. Elder Albert E. Bowen, said: “That which is right does not become wrong merely because it may be deserted by the majority, neither does that which is wrong today become right tomorrow by the chance circumstance that it has won the approval or been adopted by overwhelmingly predominant numbers. Principles cannot be changed by nor accommodate themselves to the vagaries of popular sentiment.” (*Conf. Rep.*, April 4, 1941, p. 85.)

As a fitting conclusion to my review I sought the words of modern-day prophets. They have said much by way of counsel and warning for our guidance today. I turned to one who has been called “a seer in the area of government” and who has stood closest to the

prophet of the Lord—the President of the Church—longer than any other man in Church history. I speak of President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., and I quote: “There always comes a time when unpleasant truths must be retold, even though the retelling disturbs the ease and quiet of a luxurious error. Today seems to be such a time. On such occasions, the criticism, slander, misrepresentation that one gets, are of no consequence.” (“Some Elements of Postwar American Life”—1-24-45. Address to the Utah Woolgrowers Ass’n.)

“... today government has touched our lives so intimately in all their relationships and all these governmental touchings have been so tabbed as political, that we cannot discuss anything relating to our material welfare and existence without laying ourselves liable to the charge that we are talking politics.” (*Deseret News*, “Church Section,” June 16, 1945, p. 4.)

“I have been preaching against Communism for twenty years,” said President Clark, over twenty years ago. “I still warn you against it, and I tell you that we are drifting toward it more rapidly than some of us understand, and I tell you that when Communism comes, the ownership of the things which are necessary to feed your families is going to be taken away from us. I tell you freedom of speech will go, freedom of the press will go, and freedom of religion will go.

“I have warned you against propaganda and hate. We are in the midst of the greatest exhibition of propaganda that the world has ever seen, and all directed toward one end. Just do not believe all you read.” (*Conf. Rep.*, October 3, 1941, p. 16 and Ward Teaching Message, July 1961.)

“The plain and simple issue now facing us in America is freedom or slavery. . . .

“Our real enemies,” said President Clark, “are communism and its running mate, socialism. . . .

“And never forget for one moment that communism and socialism are state slavery. . . .

“... one thing seems sure, we will not get out of our present difficulties without trouble, serious trouble. Indeed, it may

last April President McKay emphasized that "men are rapidly classifying themselves into two groups: believers and nonbelievers." Then he quoted J. Edgar Hoover's warning: "This nation is face to face with the greatest danger ever to confront it, a sinister and deadly conspiracy, which can be conquered only by an alert, informed citizenry. It is indeed appalling that some members of our society continue to deplore and criticize those who stress the communist danger. Public indifference to this threat is tantamount to national suicide. Lethargy leads only to disaster. Knowledge of the enemy, alertness to the danger, everyday patriotism are the brick and mortar with which we can build an impregnable fortress against communism." (*Conf. Rep.*, April 8, 1962, p. 125.)

In the last October [1962] conference President McKay said: "In these days of uncertainty and unrest, liberty-loving people's greatest responsibility and paramount duty is to preserve and proclaim the freedom of the individual, his relationships to Deity, and the necessity of obedience to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Only thus will mankind find peace and happiness."

He finished his address by urging us "to support good and conscientious candidates of either party who are aware of the great dangers inherent in communism, and who are truly dedicated to the Constitution in the tradition of the founding fathers." (*Ibid.*, Oct. 5, 1962, p. 8.)

We cannot say that the prophet of the Lord has not warned us. President McKay has emphasized the dangers to our God-given freedom again and again. Will we heed his counsel? Are we in harmony? Do we appreciate his repeated warnings? Every Latter-day Saint has spiritual obligations in four basic areas: his home, his church, his job, and his citizenship responsibility. Each of these areas should receive consistent attention although not necessarily equal time. Are we doing our duty in these important fields? What about our citizenship responsibility—our obligation to safeguard our freedom and preserve the Constitution?

The Prophet Joseph Smith said the

time would come when the Constitution would hang as it were by a thread. Modern-day prophets for the last thirty years have been warning us that we have been rapidly moving in that direction. Fortunately, the Prophet Joseph Smith saw the part the elders of Israel would play in this crisis. Will there be some of us who won't care about saving the Constitution, others who will be blinded by the craftiness of men, and some who will knowingly be working to destroy it? He that has ears to hear and eyes to see can discern by the Spirit and through the words of God's mouthpiece that our liberties are being taken.

The enemy is amongst and upon us. Zion must awake and arouse herself. We, the elders of Israel can be and should be, the leaven in the loaf for freedom.

Years ago, President Brigham Young stated, "We all believe that the Lord will fight our battles; but how? Will he do it while we are unconcerned and make no effort whatever for our own safety when the enemy is upon us? . . . it would be quite as reasonable to expect remission of sins without baptism, as to expect the Lord to fight our battles without our taking every precaution to be prepared to defend ourselves. The Lord requires us to be quite as willing to fight our own battles as to have Him fight them for us. If we are not ready for the enemy when he comes upon us, we have not lived up to the requirements of Him who guides the ship of Zion, or who dictates the affairs of His kingdom." (*Journal of Discourses* 11:131.)

May we as a free people face courageously the challenging responsibility which faces us. "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." (Edmund Burke.) We are not here to sit by complacently while our birthright of freedom is exchanged for a mess of socialist-communist pottage.

I love this great land—the Lord's latter-day base of operations. I love the free world. I love our Father's children everywhere.

God bless us in our stewardship. May we be at least as valiant for freedom and righteousness, here and now, as we were when we fought for these principles in the pre-existence.

Sunday, April 7

Third Day

There is no other safe way. For "Righteousness exalteth a nation: . . ." (Prov. 14:34.)

I bear you this witness, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of Twelve has just been our concluding speaker.

We shall conclude this sixth session of the 133rd Annual General Conference of the Church with the Tabernacle Choir singing, "Now Thank We All Our God." Following the singing the benediction will be offered by Elder John D. Warner, formerly President of

the Finnish Mission. This Conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

We express appreciation to the owners and managers of the many television and radio stations who have offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this Conference available to millions throughout North America, South America, Europe, and many other areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn, "Now Thank We All Our God."

Elder John D. Warner, formerly President of the Finnish Mission, offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until 2:00 p.m.

THIRD DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

The concluding session of the Conference was held in the Tabernacle Sunday, April 7 at 2:00 p.m., with President David O. McKay presiding and conducting the services of the meeting.

The Tabernacle Choir was present again this afternoon and furnished the choral music.

President David O. McKay:

Members of the Church are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in the seventh and concluding conference session of the One Hundred Thirty-Third Annual Conference of the Church. This afternoon 22 radio stations throughout the western part of the United States will carry the proceedings of this session. Television stations in Utah, Idaho, and Montana will also televise this concluding session.

The session this morning was carried "live" from the Tabernacle by 56 television and radio stations from Denver to the West Coast. You will be interested, also, to know that this morning's session was beamed by short wave over facilities of Station WRUL of Boston in Spanish to the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and South America,

and in English to all parts of Europe, Africa and parts of Asia. Also, the proceedings of both sessions today will be re-broadcast to far distant places by radio Station KSL from one o'clock to five o'clock Monday morning.

The General Priesthood Meeting, which was the fifth session of this Annual Conference, was held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, with an overflow meeting in the Assembly Hall. The proceedings of this Priesthood Meeting were relayed by closed circuit wire originating in the Tabernacle, to members of the Priesthood assembled in 359 locations in all parts of the United States, including Alaska, and in Canada. It is estimated that 50,000 men and boys participated in this meeting by direct wire. Elder Harold B. Lee was speaker in the first hour of that Priesthood meeting. He gave a very impressive address.

We extend a cordial welcome to all present this afternoon—special guests, educational leaders, stake presidencies from near and far, temple presidents, bishoprics, members of the General Auxiliary Boards, members of the Church and friends listening in by radio and television.

The music for this session will be