

Thursday, April 6

First Day

spiration and prophetic office of President McKay, and his predecessors. May the Lord bless our President and strengthen and sustain him, and each of us in our homes, in our counsels with our families, in our private and public performance; and lead us to know the truth, to live it; and help us in the struggle to become strong and improve and repent and refine ourselves so that we may face our Father and his Son our Savior, straightforwardly, when the summons comes to each of us, as we must leave this life, so that we will be comfortable where they are.

A line from Albert Camus comes to mind: "We have nothing to lose—except everything."

God help us to live so as to have a happy homecoming always—here and

hereafter, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

This inspiring message to which you have just listened is by Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve. Elder Evans is also the International President of Rotary International. We appreciate Elder Evans.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," after which Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve, will address us.

Congregational Singing: "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder Sterling W. Sill

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

One of the outstanding memories carried over from childhood is my recollection of the Sabbath day. Back in those early times out on the farm, Sunday was a day completely set apart from the rest of the week. From Monday through Saturday, our attention was centered in the heavy labor involved in making a living by the muscle power of men and animals.

But Sunday was different—it was the Sabbath. It was the day of rest. It was the day of the Lord. On Saturday night the horses were turned out to pasture and all work was suspended. Saturday was also a kind of special housecleaning day to get things and people ready for Sunday. The final act of the work week was concerned with that important ancient rite known as the "Saturday night bath." This was supplemented by a parental issue of properly mended, clean clothing, all laid out, ready for Sunday.

Sabbath, the crown of the week

A thorough physical and spiritual preparation also served as our acknowledgment of the Creator's intention that the Sabbath day was supposed to be the high point of the week. It has been

said that our civilization would never have survived for half a century if it had not been for this one day in seven. This is the day when we are expected to live at our best, when we put on our best clothes, read our best books, think our best thoughts, and associate with the people who mean the most in our lives. And after we have laid aside the cares that have concerned us during the other six days, we go to the house of prayer and let our minds reach up and try to comprehend the things of God.

The unit of life is the week, and each week has been fashioned after that memorable first week, which was the week of creation. As the scene opens on that first day, we feel the brooding, unbroken darkness covering the deep, and thrill at that first forward step when in the march of progress God first said, "Let there be light." (Gen. 1:3.) We follow the other creative acts to the crowning scene, which took place during the sixth day, when God created man in his own image and endowed him with his own attributes and potentialities. Then in summarizing the accomplishments of this period of creation, the holy record says, "Thus the heavens and the earth were

finished, and all the host of them.

"And on the seventh day, God ended his work, which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day. . . .

"And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Gen. 2:1-3.)

Then in programming the world's mortal or temporal existence, God gave it a time allotment of 7,000 years (see D&C 77:6-7), 1,000 years to represent each of the seven days of creation. The first 4,000 years began at the fall of Adam and ended at the birth of Christ. To this have been added the 1967 years that have passed since that time, so that on the divine calendar we are now living in the year of the world 5967, which is the late Saturday evening of the world's history. This divine time table as well as God's signs of the times indicate that the earth's Sabbath, which is the seventh 1,000-year period, is about to be ushered in.

After the creation, God looked out upon his handiwork and called it very good. The earth was then a paradise of beauty, peace, and plenty. Our first parents were placed in the beautiful Garden of Eden, where everything had been provided for their benefit. But at the fall of man the earth also fell. And in announcing the penalty for man's disobedience God said, ". . . cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

"Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee." (Gen. 3:17-18.)

We may think of this earth as a pretty wonderful place just as it is, but for nearly 6,000 years it has been operating in its fallen condition as a telestial world. Not only has it brought forth thorns, thistles, and noxious weeds out of the ground, but lawlessness, corruption, and every kind of disobedience have flourished upon its face. Its surface has been made unproductive by deserts and waste places, while enmity and hate have been festering in the hearts of both men and beasts; and during all of this long, sad period, sin, suffering, and death have been the general portion of all mankind.

But the next one-thousand year period will be the earth's sabbath. This will be the period when the earth will

rest and enjoy its sanctified state. For this period the earth will be renewed and regain its former status as a terrestrial sphere, with all of its paradisiacal beauty, glory, and righteousness fully restored. But first the earth must be cleansed. During its long history of sin and trouble our earth has become soiled and dirty. And it must have its "Saturday night bath," and be dressed in fresh clean clothing in which it can appropriately live its best 1,000 years.

On several previous occasions God has attempted to cleanse the earth: once by a flood of waters in the days of Noah, and on other occasions he has used wars, famines, pestilence, and disease, trying to rid the earth of that wickedness that defiled its face. But in preparation for the earth's sabbath, God has indicated that fire will be the cleansing agent, and every corrupt thing will be consumed. (D&C 101:24.) Anyone who as a boy objected to having his ears scrubbed might look forward to this coming experience with special anticipation.

Preparing for the millennium

Through Malachi the Lord has said, "For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." (Mal. 4:1.) Then will follow the long awaited seventh 1,000 years. This will be a millennium of peace when Christ will reign personally upon the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. This change in the earth's status will be initiated at the glorious second coming of Jesus Christ, and after its purification, the new king will remove the curse from the earth and reinstate its former terrestrial magnificence.

This great millennial period with its perfect government has been a favorite theme of the prophets since time began. It should also be one of the most motivating influences in our lives. Over 3,000 years ago the Psalmist looked beyond the apostasy, the dark ages, and the wickedness and disbelief of our own day and said, "Our God shall come,

and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

"He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

"Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Ps. 50:3-5.)

For this final 1,000-year period many sweeping changes will take place in the earth itself, as well as in the lives of the people who live upon it. The delightful paradisiacal condition of the earth with its Garden of Eden beauty will be restored. Its deserts and waste places will disappear; Satan will be bound; and there will be no more corruption, death, or disease, as we now know them.

About this event, John the Revelator said, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

"And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years are fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed [for] a little season." (Rev. 20:1-3.)

The time of good will

During this millennium, the enmity among men and beasts will cease. Isaiah says, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

"And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

"And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

"They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isa.

11:6-9.) Then no one will say that God is dead, or that his revelations have ceased, or that life has no purpose.

Many years ago Harry Emerson Fosdick wrote an interesting book entitled *It's a Great Time to Be Alive*. He pointed out some of the miracles and wonders that have made our age the most exciting since creation. And yet the magnificence of this coming 1,000-year period will make our day of wonders and miracles seem like the dark ages by comparison.

Of course, the Lord is not coming to the earth alone. As Paul says, "He will come with his mighty angels in flaming fire." (See 2 Thess. 1:7-8.) And many of the righteous dead will then be resurrected and caught up to join the Lord and his company in the air. In speaking of this event, Paul said to the Thessalonians, ". . . I would not have you . . . ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep. . . .

"For . . . them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. . . .

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, [as] with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4:13-14, 16-17.) What a great time this will be to be alive!

And what a great time it will be when success, happiness, and peace shall cover the earth, and children will grow up without sin unto salvation. How meaningful will then be the Lord's promise through Zechariah, saying, "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord." (Zech. 2:10.)

Isaiah says, "And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

"They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

"They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear.

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." (Isa. 65:21-25.)

And transformation

Then men shall no more die and sleep in the earth, but they shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye and shall be caught up, and their rest shall be glorious. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.

What a great time to be alive, when Christ himself will be our lawgiver and righteous men and women, from both sides of the veil, will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years. On the other hand, what a tragic time it will be for those who fail to qualify. Suppose that we should find ourselves among that group mentioned by John the Revelator when he said, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until

the thousand years were finished. . . ." (Rev. 20:5.)

A modern-day revelation says, "For . . . the Lord shall utter his voice out of heaven; . . . and the earth shall tremble, . . . and [he] shall say to the sleeping nations: Ye saints arise and live; ye sinners stay and sleep until I call again." (D&C 43:18.)

At the end of the seventh 1,000 years, Satan will again be loosed for a little season before evil is completely banished forever. After the millennium the status of the earth will again be increased to reach its final destiny as a celestial sphere on which the elect will live forever as members of that exalted order to which God himself belongs.

May God grant us success in this greatest of all of earth's enterprises, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop of the Church, will now address us, and he will be followed by Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve, who will be our concluding speaker.

Bishop Vandenberg.

Elder John H. Vandenberg

Presiding Bishop

The story is told of a teacher who was quizzing her students about the products being manufactured in a nearby building. "Who can tell me what is manufactured in that plant?" she inquired, pointing toward the factory visible from the classroom window.

Quickly a small lad raised his hand and named a number of products. The teacher, amazed at his answer, said, "That is correct, but how did you know?"

"That's easy," replied the boy. "My father works there, and that's what he brings home in his lunch pail every night."

This may seem humorous, but it carries serious consequences; for the boy

had unwittingly disclosed the dishonest act of his father, and by its repetition had already erroneously been taught by example that such an act was all right.

Honesty

Recently a newspaper carried an article entitled, "What Is Honesty?" The question is akin to "What is truth?" In this article an inquirer wrote: "My husband and I have a friend whom we have both idolized because of his high standards of conduct. We have always felt that not only did he try to persuade others to live the truly good life, he did this himself. He has been an inspiration to us.