

by being thrifty and living within one's income, as well as by using our means wisely.

May each of us this night commit ourselves to incorporate these great principles into our lives.

Brethren, how glorious it is to know that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, and also to know that the gospel in its fulness has been restored, together with the power to act in the name of God, through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that there is a living prophet at the head

of the Church today, our beloved President Spencer W. Kimball. I pray that we may have the good judgment to follow his counsel. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has addressed us.

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our next speaker.

President Marion G. Romney

I would like to direct my remarks to the Aaronic Priesthood particularly. What I have to say I think would be applicable to all of us, however. I would like to start with Alma's testimony to his son. He testified "that whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day" (Al. 36:3).

Word of Wisdom

I plead with you young Aaronic Priesthood bearers—and all of us—to determine now, in your youth, to put your trust in the Lord, and by obeying his commandments learn the right to receive the specific blessings he has promised for specific types of living—those given in the Word of Wisdom, for example, when he said that "all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

"And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

"And shall run and not be

weary, and shall walk and not faint.

"And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them." (D&C 89:18-21.)

This reference to the destroying angel passing by the children of Israel refers to the occasion when, to persuade the Egyptians to let Israel go, "the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.

". . . and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." (Ex. 12:29-30.)

But in his death-dealing mission the destroying angel passed by the homes of those Israelites who had marked their door lintels and side posts with the blood of a lamb, as directed by the Lord.

It appears from the Word of Wisdom and other scriptures that there are destroying angels who have a work to do among the peoples of the earth in this last dispensation.

Saturday, March 31

First Day

The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1831 that because all flesh was corrupted before him, and because the powers of darkness prevailed upon the earth, these angels were "waiting the great command to reap down the earth, to gather the tares that they [might] be burned" (D&C 38:12).

In 1894 President Woodruff said: "God has held the angels of destruction for many years, lest they should reap down the wheat with the tares. But I want to tell you now, that those angels have left the portals of heaven, and they stand over this people and this nation now, and are hovering over the earth waiting to pour out the judgments. And from this very day they shall be poured out. Calamities and troubles are increasing in the earth, and there is a meaning to these things." (*Improvement Era*, Oct. 1914, p. 1165.)

Now, my beloved brethren, in view of this revealed knowledge and understanding which the Lord has given concerning what is transpiring about us, is it not a glorious thing to have the assurance that if we will clothe ourselves with bodies purified through observance of the Word of Wisdom, these destroying angels will pass us by, as they did the children of Israel, and not slay us? Well, this is one of the blessings to follow observance of the Word of Wisdom.

Tithing

The promised blessings for obedience to the law of tithing are just as specific as are those for obedience to the Word of Wisdom. One of them has to do with the productivity of the soil. I remember being impressed with this thought many years ago as I listened to the remarks of Elder James E. Talmage, who was one of our great apostles when I was young. "Do you know," said he, "that the soil can be sanctified by the tithing of its products? The land

can be sanctified. There is a relationship between the elements and forces of nature, and the actions of men." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1929, p. 68.)

This statement is in harmony with the sentiments of President Brigham Young. "Talk about these rich valleys," said President Young, "why there is not another people on the earth that could have come here and lived. We prayed over the land, and dedicated it and the water, air and everything pertaining to them unto the Lord, and the smiles of Heaven rested on the land and it became productive." (*Journal of Discourses*, 12:288.)

Another reward for paying tithing sounds almost like crop insurance. Listen.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the fields, saith the Lord of Hosts." (3 Ne. 24:10-11.)

President Grant's boundless faith that the Lord would prosper those who were liberal with their means in building his kingdom has had a distinct effect upon my life. Many years ago I heard him tell about attending a fast meeting at which his bishop made an appeal for donations. President Grant, though a very young man, had fifty dollars in his pocket which he intended to deposit in the bank. But he was so impressed by the bishop's appeal that he tendered the whole fifty dollars. The bishop took five dollars and handed him back the forty-five, stating that five dollars was his full share. President Grant replied, "Bishop Woolley, by

what right do you rob me of putting the Lord in my debt? Didn't you preach here today that the Lord rewards fourfold? My mother is a widow and she needs two hundred dollars."

"My boy," queried the bishop, "do you believe that if I take this other forty-five dollars you will get your two hundred dollars quicker?"

"Certainly," replied President Grant.

Here was a demonstration of faith which the bishop could not withstand. He took the remaining forty-five dollars.

President Grant testified that on his way from that fast meeting back to work, "an idea popped into" his head, acting upon which he made \$218.50. Speaking about this incident years later, he said, "Someone will say that it would have happened anyway.

"I do not think it would have happened. I do not think I would have got the idea, . . ." he said.

"I am a firm believer that the Lord opens up the windows of heaven when we do our duty financially and pours out blessings upon us of a spiritual nature, which are of far greater value than temporal things. But I believe He also gives us blessings of a temporal nature." (*Improvement Era*, Aug. 1939, p. 457.)

A further reward for paying tithing is a guarantee against being consumed in the burning which is to accompany the second coming of the Savior. In the eighty-fifth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord explains that his purpose in tithing his people is "to prepare them against the day of vengeance and burning," (verse 3) and in the sixty-fourth section he says, "Behold, now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming" (D&C 64:23).

Personally, I have always considered tithing to be the law of inheritance in the land of Zion, for the Lord said when he gave the law that all those who gathered to Zion should observe it or they should not be worthy to abide among the inhabitants of that land (see D&C 119:5).

Be morally clean

And now, the third specific commandment to which I direct your attention is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (D&C 42:24).

You will recall, of course, Alma's teaching his son Corianton that unchastity is the most serious offense there is in the sight of God, save murder only (see Al. 39:3-5). You will remember, too, these words from Paul's epistle to the Corinthians:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." (1 Cor. 3:16-17.)

Some years ago the First Presidency said to the youth of the Church, "Better dead, clean, than alive, unclean" (In Conference Report, Apr. 1942, p. 89).

I remember how my father impressed the seriousness of unchastity upon my mind. He and I were standing in the railroad station in Rexburg, Idaho, in the early morning of November 12, 1920. We heard the train whistle and knew that in three minutes I would be on my way to Australia to fill a mission. In that short interval my father said to me, among other things, "My son, you are going a long way from home. But your mother and I, your brother and sisters, will be with you constantly in our thoughts and prayers, we shall rejoice with you in your successes, and we shall sorrow with you in your disappointments. When

you are released and return, we shall be glad to greet you and welcome you back into the family circle. But remember this, my son, we would rather come to this station and take your body off the train in a casket than to have you come home unclean, having lost your virtue."

I pondered that statement at the time. I did not then have the full understanding of it that my father had, but I have never forgotten it.

I can think of no blessings to be more fervently desired than those promised to the pure and the virtuous. Jesus spoke of specific rewards for different virtues but reserved the greatest, so it seems to me, for the pure in heart, "for they," said he, "shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). And not only shall they see the Lord, but they shall feel at home in his presence.

Here is his promise—the Savior's promise: "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God" (D&C 121:45).

The rewards for virtue and the consequences of unchastity are dramatically portrayed in the lives of Joseph and David.

Joseph, though a slave in Egypt, stood true under pressure of the greatest temptation. As a reward he received the choicest blessings of all the sons of Jacob: he became the progenitor of the two favored tribes of Israel. Most of us take pride in being numbered among his posterity.

David, on the other hand, though highly favored of the Lord (he was, in fact, referred to as a man after God's own heart), yielded to temptation. His unchastity led to murder, and as a consequence, he lost his families and his exaltation (see D&C 132:39).

Live worthily

And now, my brethren, I shall not say more except to renew my

plea that we all believe in and live worthy of the promises of the Lord. Let us not be like some people were in the days of Malachi. They argued that it was unprofitable and vain to serve God because, as they saw it, the proud were made happy, the wicked set up, and they that tempted God were delivered (see Mal. 3:14-15). Let us have the good sense to realize and remember that today, as well as in the days of Malachi, a book of remembrance is written before the Lord for those that fear him and think upon his name, and "they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

"Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

"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.

"But," says the Lord in a glorious promise to the righteous, "unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." (Mal. 3:17-18; 4:1-2.)

Keep the commandments

Oh, my beloved brethren, believe in and live for the promises of the Lord by keeping his commandments. If you will do this, even though you do not now have full confidence in these promises, I assure you that that confidence will come.

"Never be weary of good works, but . . . be meek and lowly in heart; for such shall find rest to their souls.

"O, remember, . . . and learn wisdom in thy youth," said Alma; "yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God.

"Yea, and cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever.

"Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day." (Al. 37:34-37.)

That it may be so with all of

you and all of us, I humbly pray. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing, "Come Ye Children of the Lord."

After the singing, we shall be pleased to hear from President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn, "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

President N. Eldon Tanner

This is an inspiring sight indeed—the greatest body of men which could be assembled anywhere on the earth, and for the greatest reason. I am always awed by looking out at this audience as I think of all you priesthood holders gathered together in 1,547 buildings throughout the world.

Army of the priesthood

What a great army of the priesthood with the power of God delegated to you to act in his name! I feel a tremendous responsibility as I contemplate the purpose of this gathering.

It seems fitting to recall the words of a song entitled "We Are All Enlisted." Since these words fit into the theme of my message tonight, I should like to repeat some of them as they apply to us as priesthood holders:

*We are all enlisted till the conflict is
o'er. . . .*

*Soldiers in the army, there's a bright
crown in store;*

*We shall win and wear it by and by.
Haste to the battle, quick to the field,
Truth is our helmet, buckler, and
shield.*

*Stand by our colors—proudly they
wave. . . .*

*Hark! 'tis our Captain calls you
today;*

*Lose not a moment, make no delay!
Fight for our Savior, come, come
away! . . .*

*Fighting for a kingdom, and the
world is our foe. . . .*

*Glad to join the army, we will sing
as we go;*

*We shall gain the victory by and by.
Dangers may gather—why should we
fear?*