

We are pleased to welcome the servicemen who have come from Europe and elsewhere to attend this conference; and also the Manchester Choir and members of their families, who flew in on a chartered plane from England, which choir gave a very successful concert Wednesday night to a standing room only audience.

The singing this afternoon will be furnished by the Ricks College Combined Choirs, conducted by Chester W. Hill and Inga Johnson, with Robert Cundick at the organ.

We are exceedingly pleased to have these young students with us this afternoon, and extend a hearty welcome to them.

We shall begin this service by the choir singing, "Greater Love Hath No Man," with Inga Johnson and Richard Robison as soloists, following which the invocation will be offered by Elder J. Peter Loscher, formerly president of the Austrian and North German Missions.

As an opening number the Combined Choirs sang "Greater Love Hath No Man."

The invocation was offered by Elder J. Peter Loscher.

President Joseph Fielding Smith

The chorus will now favor us with "Let the Mountains Shout for Joy," after which Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve, will be our speaker.

He will be followed by Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Selection by the Combined Choirs, "Let The Mountains Shout for Joy."

Elder Delbert L. Stapley

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I take my text from a conference statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith. He declared: "The chief business of our lives is to build a house that will bear the weight of eternal life."

To build a house for eternal life

You will note that this statement is profound with its important content and challenge. It suggests we are the architects and builders of our own fate. Our God-given free agency will permit us to choose the pattern we wish to follow; hopefully the gospel will furnish the blueprint for the eternal house we are now building.

Also involved in this statement is a challenge to obtain knowledge of God's plan for our whole existence, both now and eternally. There are opposing evil forces who would tempt us to forsake the teachings of our God and encourage adults, and youth particularly, that everything can be explained

on the basis of conditioned reflexes. They say that by removing our inhibitions and reverting to an animal existence, everything will turn out all right, which philosophy, of course, is false. Of such writers, Robert South observed: "He who has published an injurious book sins in his very grave, corrupts others while he is rotting himself."

We must be careful not to succumb to the insidious forces of evil, for they will divert us from the path which leads to immortal glory.

Lehi said to his son Jacob:

". . . it must needs be that there is an opposition in all things. . . .

"Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil;

for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself." (2 Ne. 2:11, 27.)

What to avoid

The Savior taught: "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders,

"Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

"All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7:20-23.)

The apostle Paul, writing to the Romans about the sins of the flesh, admonished:

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourself unto God, . . . and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Rom. 6:12-13.)

What to include

By comprehending what to avoid, we will understand that which we must do. Our first step is to make certain that our thoughts are clean and pure. Then we can give attention to our bodies, since they house a spirit child of God both here in mortality and in eternity. The spirit of man should have ascendancy and control over the physical body, for the spirit is the power that quickens and animates the body and gives it life and intelligence.

We have the challenge; we ought now to concentrate on developing and improving our present physical house, which tabernacles a spirit child of God, and prepare it for eternal glory.

As his earthly mission neared its close, Jesus revealed this knowledge to his disciples:

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. . . . that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2-3.)

In his infinite wisdom and concern for all mankind, Jesus opened a vision wherein we get a glimpse of the heavenly house and its mansions being prepared for us to inhabit. Each one of us is inexorably building an eternal home, the mansion we will occupy in our future everlasting life.

Brigham Young said:

Prepare to live

"Prepare to die, is not the exhortation in this Church and Kingdom; but prepare to live is the word with us, and improve all we can [for the] life hereafter, wherein we may enjoy a more exalted condition of intelligence, wisdom, light, knowledge, power, glory, and exaltation. Then let us seek to extend the present life to the uttermost, by observing every law of health, . . . and thus prepare for a better life." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 186.)

Also, the words of President Heber J. Grant:

"Upon our lives here is predicated the degree of perfection in which we shall rise. . . . A man will not awake on resurrection morning to find that all that he neglected to do in mortal life has been put to the credit side of his account and that the debit side of his ledger shows a clean page. That is not the teaching of the gospel.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.' He whose every act has fitted him for the enjoyment of eternity will be far in advance of the man whose all has been centered on the things of this life." (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 66, March 31, 1904, p. 201.)

It is worth all the effort we can muster to obtain the highest degree of glory—a promise given only to the faithful. We are not without divine teachings as to how this glorified state can be attained.

Lay up treasures that endure

The Savior gave this counsel:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth

Saturday, September 30

Second Day

corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, . . .

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:19-21.)

Treasures earned here are credited to our account in eternity and, if sufficient, will build for us a house that will bear the weight of eternal life.

Alma informs us that this life becomes a probationary state, a time for men to prepare to meet God. (See Al. 12:24.)

President David O. McKay has added this wise counsel:

God, the head of the house

"Let us make God the center of our lives. That was one of the first admonitions given when the gospel was first preached to man. To have communion with God, through his Holy Spirit, is one of the noblest aspirations of life. It is when the peace and love of God have entered the soul, when serving him becomes the motivating factor in one's life and existence. . . .

"When God becomes the center of our being, we become conscious of a new aim in life—spiritual attainment. Physical possessions are no longer the chief goal in life. To indulge, nourish, and delight the body as any animal may do is no longer the chief end of mortal existence." (*The Improvement Era*, June 1967, pp. 109-110.)

In these latter days we are surrounded by demons. We can identify some of these demons; they are those who promulgate the uses of deleterious items that are not good for the body—all the habit-forming drugs that are foisted upon us by seductive advertising and designing persons who would lead us down the paths of sin to degradation and destruction, or, in the vernacular, "on trips" through LSD, heroin, marijuana, morphine, and other habit-forming and harmful drugs detrimental to the maintenance of a healthy body in which to house our eternal spirit. We are thus encircled about by the angels of him who seeks to destroy our souls; but thanks to the Lord, the days of probation are still

with us. However, we cannot afford to procrastinate the day of our salvation. We should be anxiously engaged in building a house that will support and delight us in the eternal life to come.

Nurture qualities of the spirit

If we nurture the finer qualities of the Spirit that come from the presence of God, the Spirit will gain ascendancy over the carnal body and subject the flesh to its will.

There is much conquering of self and overcoming of bad habits before the soul of man can be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. We should determine now the kind of body or house we want our resurrected being to occupy throughout the eternities of time. Shall it be clean and pure, worthy to receive glory in the eternal mansions of our God, or shall it be one that cannot abide that glory and thus will be assigned to a kingdom of lesser glory or to a place without kingdom or glory?

The choice is ours to make. The Lord has said, "For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in no wise lose their reward." (D&C 58:28.)

Vision of heavenly abodes

Now I call your attention to one of the greatest visions ever granted to any prophet of God respecting the future status of this earth's inhabitants. This revelation describes the three degrees of glory and is without doubt one of the most profound revelations given in any dispensation. It encompasses the knowledge, wisdom, and light that our Heavenly Father feels is expedient for us to have in relation to the hereafter and the future destiny of his children.

Perhaps no other scripture furnishes us with such direct knowledge on this subject as does this wonderful revealing vision. I direct your attention to the essentials in each of these degrees: the celestial, the terrestrial, and the telestial. To further support this latter-day vision, I quote the apostle Paul, who likened the highest degree of glory unto

the sun, which is the most radiant of all God's planets; the second is likened unto the moon, which is a much lesser light than the sun; and the other is likened unto the stars; and as one star differs from another star in glory so also is the resurrection of the dead. (See 1 Cor. 15:40-42.)

An understanding of this revelation enables one living in mortality to examine himself and his mode of life and to personally determine whether it fully satisfies his need. He can change his life if additional time is spared him and set his sights on a higher goal. This knowledge enables him to see more understandingly the purpose of life here and now, and makes perfectly clear that the nature and quality of the life he pursues in this existence will determine his destiny in the eternities to come.

From this vision of the three degrees of glory given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, we learn the various punishments and rewards meted out to all persons according to their worthiness.

The celestial

The conditions for entering the celestial glory for those who come forth in the resurrection of the just are as follows: They are the ones who receive the testimony of Jesus and believe on his name and are baptized in his name that they might be cleansed of their sins, that they might receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands of those possessing this authority. They are they who have overcome by faith all things and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, and into whose hands the father has given all things. They are priests and kings of the most high and receive of the fullness of God's glory. They are they who will glory in God and not in man. They shall dwell in the presence of God and Christ forever. They are men, made perfect through the atonement of Christ, whose bodies are celestial and whose glory is as that of the sun. (See D&C 76:50-70.)

The terrestrial

The terrestrial glory differs from that

of the celestial kingdom, as the moon differs in glory from the sun. Those who achieve this glory are they who died without law. They are the spirits of men kept in prison. They are the ones who did not receive the testimony of Christ in the flesh, but who afterwards received it. They are the honorable men of the earth made blind by men's craftiness. These will receive of Christ's glory but not of his fullness. They will receive of the presence of the Son but not the fullness of the Father. Their bodies are terrestrial. (See D&C 76:71-79.)

The testial

In the vision, they then beheld the glory of those in the testial kingdom, which is the least of the three degrees of glory. Its glory differs from that of the other two, as the glory of the stars differs from those of the sun and the moon, and as the glory of one star differs from that of another star in glory.

Those in this kingdom received not the gospel of Christ nor his testimony, yet did not deny the Holy Spirit. They are thrust down to hell. They will not be redeemed from Satan until the last resurrection, until the Lord, even Christ, the Lamb, shall have finished his work. Those of the testial glory will not receive the Lord's fullness of the eternal world, but of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the terrestrial, and the terrestrial through the ministration of the celestial. (See D&C 76:81-87.)

Such are the degrees of glory in Christ's many mansions. They provide the knowledge necessary to understand the goals toward which we are to strive in order to enjoy the blessings of our God in whatever kingdom we may merit, be it great or small. We cannot inherit a higher glory than that which our bodies are prepared and conditioned to receive.

A guide for morality

This enlightening revelation in the 76th section of the Doctrine and Covenants should be prayerfully studied in its entirety and understood fully, for it is a safe guide to one's life here in

mortality. The goal for every person is to build a house by good works, to attain the highest degree of the celestial kingdom of God. Anything short of this, with the light and knowledge we possess, would be settling for a great deal less than our Lord offers us.

By careful study of the revelation, each person can determine the degree of glory he will inherit hereafter. Understanding this, he should project himself and his thinking into the eternal world and picture himself there according to the pattern of life he is now living. If he does so, I wonder if he would be happy with what he envisions his future inheritance to be?

Saving power of knowledge

Knowledge is necessary to salvation. The Prophet Joseph taught: "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." (D&C 131:6.) Knowledge is power, the power to aid us to adjust to the various conditions and circumstances of life in which we find ourselves at any moment of our lives.

Imagine a builder attempting to construct an edifice of any kind, without knowledge, plans, and specifications to guide him. We all know it cannot be done successfully. Therefore, when building mansions for our souls, the greater our knowledge concerning them, other things being equal, the more glorious our mansions will be. It must, of course, be knowledge of the right kind, divine knowledge, knowledge that comes through inspiration or revelation to us from God or through his anointed servants. Knowledge, then, is the first requisite for building a house that will bear the weight of eternal life.

Thus equipped, we are to observe the laws associated with the knowledge God has provided us, and keep the commandments he has so abundantly given to help implement that knowledge.

Vision

To do all this we need vision and insight, for as is recorded in Proverbs, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Prov. 29:18.)

This means that without the type of

vision given to our prophets, people in general will lack the information necessary to discover divine truth. It also has a personal application, for any man lacking vision or insight into truth is slow to progress in spiritual things.

One with active vision will seek understanding of God's commandments and will find ways to obey and keep them. From such knowledge gained he will realize that his body is the tabernacle of his immortal spirit, that the temple of the spirit should not, in any manner, be defiled. It must be preserved in purity—physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual purity. This is why the Lord has given us the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the Word of Wisdom, the temple ordinances, and persuasive instruction from his prophets and servants. This is why he requires that we resist and overcome all evil, all immorality, all baseness. This is why he urges us to live righteously before him. Those who observe his physical or temporal laws shall receive health in the navel and marrow to their bones, and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures. (See D&C 89:18-19.)

Physical health and spirituality

There is a close relationship between physical health and spiritual development. All excesses are wrong and ultimately lead to disaster. When one's physical health is impaired by disobedience to God's eternal laws, spiritual development will also suffer.

The same is true of the intellectual phase of life. Intellectual dishonesty disquiets and curses the lives of those guilty of such deceit. Can the spirit of the Lord activate one guilty of intellectual dishonesty? How glorious our society would be if all those who make up that society were intellectually honest.

Sources of strength

The quotable gem from Tennyson's beautiful character, Sir Galahad: "My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure." What strength? Not only physical strength,

but moral strength, the strength that resides in purity of life, that faces danger, disaster, abuse, false witness, and accusation undaunted; the strength that comes from doing right and living righteously before the Lord, that knows no "new morality," but only the one, the true, the eternal morality instituted by God and preserved in the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes.

Brothers and sisters, be not deceived and led astray by the wiles and seductive "charms" of those advocating that which they call the "new morality." There is no such thing. It is a name only, given to an old evil whose ultimate effect is to destroy man, the thing it has done under other guises through the centuries. It will never permit you to build a house that will bear the weight of eternal life.

The truly spiritual person is the one who finds joy and happiness and true purpose in the things of God, such as prayer, humility, selfless service, kindness, virtue, chastity, obedience to God's will and laws, love unfeigned, nobleness of soul, regard for that which is sacred and holy—in short, all the attributes God would have us acquire and exercise here in mortality. We may never know all of them in our brief mortal sojourn, but implementing those we know will help us wisely build that structure which will bear the weight of eternal life.

Truly life on this earth is brief indeed, but the worth of it can be priceless. By vigorously seeking God's help,

by striving for true knowledge, the knowledge of God's eternal plan will become ours to live by.

Obedience and eternal life

God has given this promise: ". . . if you keep my commandments and endure to the end, you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God." (D&C 14:7.)

The renewal and sanctification of our bodies by the power of the Holy Ghost is obtained by living the gospel. Our treasures of good works that precede us are building our eternal mansions. To project one's thinking into the eternities under the influence of the spirit will stretch one's mind and give clear vision of God's plan, which will help chart a true course back to his presence. Keep eternity always before you here in mortality and base your acts and judgments and decisions upon God's eternal laws. We should educate ourselves not only for time but also for eternity.

My brothers, sisters, and friends, I hope we will always remember and keep uppermost in our minds and never forget that in all our doings, the chief business of our lives is to build a house that will bear the weight of eternal life. I bear witness to the truthfulness of these things. They are things we should know and never forsake. May God give us the courage to walk humbly before him, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bishop John H. Vandenberg

Presiding Bishop of the Church

The apostle Paul, in advising Titus of those things which would be of most value to teach the saints, said:

Counsel for civic order

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

"That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness,

not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

"That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

"To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

"Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded." (Titus 2:1-6.)