

establish his church in all its fulness, even as Peter prophesied when he said,

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

“Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19-21.)

Power of church in its theology

No, the power or vitality is not in the programs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is in the theology. You cannot have the fruits of Mormonism without having the roots of Mormonism, and the root is a testimony—a witness borne by the Spirit to our hearts. It is not the program, but *people* with a certain knowledge of God and their relationship to him burning in their hearts that bring about success in the activities of the kingdom. *This is the strength and vitality of Mormonism.*

I am a witness that these things are true. I know that they are true. I know that God is our Father, that he lives, and that he hears and answers prayers. I know and bear witness to you that Jesus

is the Christ and that he lives, that this is his true church, for he has reestablished it upon the earth in our own day and time through his great prophet Joseph Smith, wonderful man that he was, and that we have a prophet of God on earth today.

Yes, Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of the living God, and he makes the decisions in the church and kingdom of God and gives forth the mind of the Lord and the will of the Lord just as he has done in this conference.

I bear witness that if we follow the prophet, we will have blessings unnumbered and that the programs of the Church will work, for they will bring people to an understanding of their responsibility to their Heavenly Father as well as to their fellowman, and they will love to carry out these assignments. This is the church of Jesus Christ and he runs this church. I bear this record in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr. of the First Council of Seventy has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder William H. Bennett, Assistant to the Council of Twelve.

Elder William H. Bennett

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

A few months ago I read with considerable interest an article that appeared in one of the issues of *Scouting* magazine under the title “Be Prepared for Life.” That took me back to my boyhood days, and I remembered that I could hardly wait for the time to arrive when I would be old enough to become a Boy Scout. Finally that time did arrive, and I came under the influence of some very dedicated leaders. They taught me what it meant to say, “On my

honor I will do my best.” And I learned that the Scout motto, “Be Prepared,” meant that I should strive diligently on a continuous basis to try to so develop myself physically, mentally, socially, morally, and spiritually that I would be prepared for whatever came my way.

Those were choice days, those Scouting days, and I had the opportunity to participate in many exciting activities. They were teamed up with some very choice spiritual

experiences in my home and in Church, particularly in the Aaronic Priesthood, the Sunday School, and the MIA. As a result, the horizons of my understanding were pushed back and I gained a more complete understanding than I had had up to that point on the purpose and meaning of life.

Prepare for eternal life

I learned that this life is not the beginning, neither is it the end of our existence, for we lived before we came to this earth in a preexistent world as spiritual children of our Father in heaven. And we came to this earth to obtain mortal bodies and to prove ourselves by demonstrating that we would keep the commandments and be obedient, no matter how difficult the tests in life might be. Now with this broadening, my brothers and sisters, of the base of my understanding, I came to realize that the most important business of this life is to prepare for eternal life, which, as the Lord has said, is the greatest of all of God's gifts to his children. (See D&C 14:7.)

Let me share with you some of the words of the Nephite prophet Alma on this matter:

"For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.

"And now, as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore, I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed." (Al. 34:32-33.)

"And we see that death comes upon mankind, yea, the death which has been spoken of by Amulek, which is the temporal death; nevertheless there was a space granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore this life be-

came a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead." (Al. 12:24.)

Conditions in latter days

Now, the Book of Mormon contains some comments and some very significant predictions of the prophet Nephi relative to conditions that will exist in these the latter days. Let me share some of his statements with respect thereto. Nephi said: "There shall be many which shall teach . . . false and vain and foolish doctrines . . . and their works shall be in the dark." (2 Ne. 28:9.)

He also said that in these latter days Satan would "rage in the hearts of . . . men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

"And others he will pacify and lull away into carnal security, . . . and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

"Others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell . . . [and] no devil, . . . and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from which there is no deliverance. (2 Ne. 28:20-22.)

I should like to emphasize, my brothers and sisters, that those words of Nephi apply to some members of our Church today and not just to some individuals who are not members of our Church. May I suggest that all of us do some soul-searching on that matter and make whatever corrections are necessary to get back on course.

Example of athletic events

It has been said that when the time to perform arrives, the time to prepare has passed. Now, while that is true in many situations, it is not universally the case. Those of you who have taken part in athletic competition, particularly in track-and-field events, know that while an individual goes to great pains and

puts in many hours of hard work trying to build a strong base from which he might be able to perform at his best, preparation actually continues during the competition and right during the performance time. So we need to keep that in mind, too. This is not just a once-over deal; it is something that can be added upon from time to time.

Those of you who have participated in jumping or throwing events in track and field know that a competitor is not eliminated after one attempt. He gets three tries at a certain height, or three broad jumps and so on, before his competition has ended. And those who take part in distance racing go around the track a number of times before the race is ended. May I suggest that the foregoing also applies to our opportunities to prepare for eternity, provided we do not procrastinate our repentance until the end.

Learn in youth

In life we can alter our course through repentance, get back on course, and proceed vigorously toward that great goal of eternal life. Let me emphasize that if we are to qualify for eternal life we must perform righteously in this life. We must strive diligently to make the most of our mortal lives and to be valiant in the service of the Master. Let me emphasize that the sooner we get started on making the most of our mortal life, the better it will be.

This, of course, brings into focus the important roles and responsibilities that parents, teachers, and leaders have with respect to getting young people started out right, because it certainly is true that "just as the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined." (Pope, "Moral Essays.") But this also points out the responsibility that each individual has to chart a course in life that is in keeping with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Not one can begin to serve the Lord too early. Alma, in counseling his son Helaman, said this: "O, remember, my

son, and learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God." (Al. 37:35.)

Hans Christian Andersen, a great story writer, said this: "Time is so fleeting that if we do not remember God in our youth, age may find us incapable of thinking of him."

Youth is the time to build a strong physical, mental, moral, and spiritual base, to prepare for missionary service and temple marriage, to establish challenging goals, and to experience the satisfaction that comes from worthy achievement.

Responsibilities to others

Preparation is not just a personal matter. Every individual, of course, has the responsibility to put his or her own life in order, but we have responsibilities to others also: teachers do, leaders do, and certainly parents do. Parents have the responsibility to put their households in order and to prepare those family members so that every member can qualify for eternal life. Family preparedness in all of its aspects, spiritual and temporal, is of the utmost importance because the family is eternal, and exaltation in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom will actually be family exaltation.

Some individuals seem to feel that there is no need for haste in the observance of gospel principles and in keeping the commandments. However, those who refuse to serve the Lord early are forsaken in their hour of trouble. In the Doctrine and Covenants, section 101, verse 7, we read the following: "They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble."

Starting point is now

Let me conclude, my brothers and sisters, by emphasizing that no matter who we are, no matter what our age or

circumstances may be, we all have the same starting point as of right now. And that starting point is *now*. I have always appreciated the words that are contained in our Latter-day Saint song "Improve the Shining Moments."

*Time flies on wings of lightning;
We cannot call it back;
It comes, then passes forward
Along its onward track;
And if we are not mindful,
The chance will fade away;
For life is quick in passing,
'Tis as a single day.*

Hymns, no. 73

President Joseph Fielding Smith, in his April 1969 conference message, said that procrastination as applied to gospel principles is the thief of eternal life.

Do we want to gain eternal life, my brothers and sisters? To be exalted in the highest degree in the celestial kingdom? If so, are we willing to pay the price? And what is the price? Elder McConkie covered that beautifully in his wonderful presentation here today. We must keep all the laws, all the commandments. I want to emphasize that, because I feel it is important, my brothers and sisters, that each of us have a personal interview with ourselves periodically and check up on ourselves and get back on course.

Rededicating ourselves

As I have visited the stakes and toured some of the missions, I have noted some danger signals which indi-

cate to me that we have many people in the Church, and perhaps most of us would be in this category at least to some extent, who are not doing as well as they could do, should do, and must do if they and their loved ones are to gain eternal life.

I testify to you that the things we have heard in this conference, including the things that I have said, are true. The gospel of Jesus Christ is true. It is to be lived. It is my humble prayer that all of us will rededicate ourselves to doing the kind of job we are capable of doing in attaining the joy and happiness in eternity that are there for us if we will just do our part. And this I do in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder William H. Bennett has just spoken to us. The congregation and Choir will join in singing, "O How Lovely Was The Morning." After the singing, Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, will address us.

The congregation and Choir sang the number, "O How Lovely Was The Morning."

President Romney

Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Paul H. Dunn of the First Council of Seventy.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful for the privilege of attending this inspirational conference, and I am confident that the answers to many of today's pressing problems are to be

found in the messages being given by our leaders.

Christian world's Easter

A week ago the Christian world