

church, we jeopardize our capacity to merit and claim the preserving and protecting blessings from the Lord.

Enduring strength in Christian service and obedience

For those who keep the trust placed in them and who do not yield to the pattern of the times, and for those who have made or are making their way back from dark paths, I have the most profound admiration and gratitude. You are our shining hope. You are our real strength. You will make a significant difference in the final outcome of things. You are the last great counterforce against the evil that is engulfing the earth. God bless you for this!

As I view the days that lie ahead, I am hopeful because of the Lord's promise, and I know his kingdom will prevail, but I tremble as I read his declaration to us:

"For this is a day of warning, and not a day of many words. For I, the Lord, am not to be mocked in the last days." (D&C 63:58.)

Elder LeGrand Richards

Brothers and sisters, in the many times that I have spoken from this pulpit in a general conference of the Church, being a missionary, I have usually spoken to the nonmembers of the Church to try to convince them that we have the only true church upon the face of the earth today—not built upon the wisdom of men, but committed directly from heaven by heavenly messengers.

"Many don't know what this Church stands for"

Today, as I have thought of what I would like to say, I thought I would like to speak to the inactive members

The enduring strength of the kingdom is not to be found in the number of its members, the rate of its growth, or the beauty of its buildings. In God's kingdom, power is not equated with body count nor with outward routine compliance with prescribed performances. It is found in those quiet uncharted acts of love, obedience, and Christian service which may never come to the attention of official leadership, but which emulate the ministry of the Lord himself.

It is a time for us to assess our own spiritual vital signs in those essential areas that take us beyond the information on the charts. "For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

of this Church, those who ought to be active because many of them come from good Latter-day Saint families; and then to those of you who have inactive family members in the Church.

The Lord, speaking through Moses, said, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.) This being so, the Lord should provide a way for us, his spirit children, to know what his program is, in order that we may be able to obtain immortality and eternal life—and he has: that is the mission of this great Church.

I think that many of our people don't really know just what this Church stands for. Jesus said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39.)

And then, speaking of those who would be judged of him at the time of his return to the earth, he said: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:22-23.)

When John the Revelator was banished to the Isle of Patmos, a voice from heaven said, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." (Rev. 4:1.) The angel of the Lord showed John many wonderful things. He showed him the coming of a new heaven and a new earth when there would be no more sickness and no more pain, no more sorrow and no more death; when we would no more need the sun by day nor the moon by night, for the glory of God would be upon the earth; when no man would say, "know ye the Lord," for every man would walk in the light of the Lord his God. (See Rev. 21:1, 4, 23-24.)

When John saw all of that, he wanted to kneel down and worship the angel who showed it to him. And the angel said, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets." (Rev. 22:8-9.)

Long hereafter versus brief present

Earlier, the angel had showed him the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened and every man was judged according to the things written in the books, according to their works. Death and hell delivered up the dead that

were in them. (See Rev. 20:12-13.) Then the angel said, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God . . . and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6.) Wouldn't that be a wonderful thing, to be worthy to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection?

But the angel didn't leave it there. He said, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." (Rev. 20:5.) Is there any clear thinking man who would want to gamble on being left in his grave a thousand years when the Son of Man shall come in the clouds of heaven with all the holy angels, and those who have died in him shall be brought forth from the grave, and those who are living in him shall be caught up in the air and changed in the twinkling of an eye? I like the statement of the philosopher Cicero. He said he was much more interested in the long hereafter than he was in the brief present.

Today in our natural, routine patterns of life, our children go to school as we did for twelve to twenty years, to learn how to have a richer life here in mortality, to earn a better living and enjoy the cultural and refined things of life. If it is worth spending twelve to twenty years to prepare for a life of seventy-five to a hundred years, what is it worth to prepare for a life that never ends?

The Prophet Alma in the Book of Mormon said that this life is the time to prepare to meet the Lord. (See Alma 34:32.) And I think we ought to be more interested in the long hereafter than we are in just the brief present. I wonder if we ever stop to figure how long that long hereafter really is.

You have probably heard me tell this before, but when my wife and I had been married thirty-five years, I said, "Mommy, what do you think we will be doing in thirty-five million years from today?"

She said, "Where did you get that crazy idea? It makes me tired to think of it!"

I said, "Well, you believe in eternal life, don't you?" I said, "We are told that time is measured only to man, that with God there isn't such a thing as time. It is one eternal round." (The Prophet Joseph illustrated this by taking a ring. He said, "When you cut it, there is a beginning and there is an end, but as long as you don't cut it, there is no beginning and there is no end.") Then I said, "Now, Mother, if you believe that, you and I ought to be pretty well acquainted with each other in thirty-five million years from today."

Isn't that what Cicero meant when he said he was much more interested in the long hereafter than he was in the brief present?

Parable of the talents

During the ministry of the Savior, He gave us many parables and statements to prepare us for his second coming when he would come with power to reign upon the earth. I would like to give you a few of his statements.

I give you first his parable of the talents. You remember the parable about the man who went on a far journey and gave to his servants his talents. To one he gave five; and to another two; and to another one. And after a time he returned to hold an accounting with those servants. And the one who had been given five talents said, "Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more." And he gave him the ten talents. And the Master said: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." (Wouldn't that be wonderful, to be made a ruler over many things?) "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. 25:20-21.)

The one who had received two talents (and we don't all get the same) won another two talents, and he got the same plaudit for faithfulness over his two talents. But the one who had received the one talent hid it in the earth. He said, "I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

"And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine." (Matt. 25:24-25.)

And what did the Master say? "Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

"For unto every one that hath shall be given. . . but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 25:28-30.)

Would anybody like to look forward to that time that never ends, that long hereafter, and be assigned where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth?

Parable of the ten virgins

Now I give you another of the Savior's parables about preparing for his coming, and that is the parable of the ten virgins. You remember that five of them took oil in their lamps, and five of them had no oil. When the call came, "The bridegroom cometh," the five with oil went to meet him; the others wanted to borrow, but there was not enough to share, so they went to purchase oil. The ones with oil went into the wedding feast; and the others, when they returned, found the doors were already closed. (See Matt. 25:1-13.) Why do you think Jesus gave us a parable like this if he didn't feel that those who were inactive need to come into activity in his Church?

Rich man and Lazarus

The next parable I give to you is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. You remember how Lazarus ate the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and how the dogs licked his sores. Then the rich man and Lazarus both died. Lazarus went to the bosom of Abraham—that is, he was received with honor. And the rich man went to a condition of torment. The rich man looked up and saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom and he cried out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

But Abraham said, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot." (Luke 16:24-26.)

Then the rich man's thoughts turned to earth where he had five brothers, and he said, "I pray thee therefore, father [Abraham], that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

"For I have five brethren; . . . lest they also come into this place of torment.

"Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. . . .

"And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:27-31.)

"Whosoever heareth . . . and doeth"

Jesus also said, referring to the time of his coming: "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

"Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left." (Matt. 24:40-41.)

How would one feel to see his associate taken, and to be left for a thousand years?

Now Jesus didn't give us all of those beautiful parables for nothing. He said: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

". . . And the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

". . . And the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Matt. 7:24-27.)

Who would want to build their house upon the sand, so that it would not withstand the storms of adversity?

Prepare for Christ's coming

That is my plea here today, that we prepare ourselves for his coming.

You remember the words of the prophet Jeremiah. He said the day would come when it should no longer be said, "The Lord liveth, that brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel . . . from all the lands whither he had driven them" (Jer. 16:14-15) and that he would send for many fishers and they would fish them, and for many hunters and they would hunt them from the hills and from the mountains and from the holes in the rocks (see Jer. 16:16). That's the thirty thousand missionaries scattered throughout the world gathering in scattered Israel.

Jeremiah said, "Turn, O back-sliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." (Jer. 3:14.) What a covenant! Isn't it wonderful to think that if we will heed the promptings of the Holy Spirit, it will be like a relationship of being married unto Him?

Then Jeremiah adds, "And I will

take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” (Jer. 3:14-15.)

Search your histories of the world. You can't find anywhere else where people have been gathered one of a city and two of a family like they have to these valleys of the mountains and where they have been given by God the Eternal Father pastors after his own heart such as you have listened to here in this conference today, and as you will on the morrow.

Now, that is my testimony to you, and I pray God to keep you and your families with the harness on, using your gifts and talents for the building of our Father's kingdom, and I leave you my love and blessing in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will

convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 7:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the Primary children's choir. We are grateful for the presence of you children and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to this meeting.

The choir will now sing in closing “Families Can Be Together Forever” and “I Love to See the Temple.” Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Robert L. Backman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang “I Love to See the Temple” and “Families Can Be Together Forever.”

The benediction was offered by Elder Robert L. Backman.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 7:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 3, 1981.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Hinckley

Brethren, President Spencer W. Kimball has been enjoying the proceedings of this conference through television in his hospital room, and has asked that I conduct this session.

For the information of the brethren in the outlying areas who are participating in this meeting by closed-circuit transmission or direct wire, President Kimball is gaining in strength from his recent surgery. He asked that we extend his love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.