

clouds of glory to reign personally upon the earth.

We need not fear for the future. This is the Lord's work; it is his kingdom; and he governs its affairs as he chooses. The keys, having been committed to man on earth, are now vested in those of his own choosing.

And as the Lord lives, and as Christ is true, and as truth will prevail, I testify that this work shall roll forward until it fills the whole earth, and until the knowledge of God covers the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Now, this testimony I bear for myself and for all the faithful elders of the kingdom, and for all the sainted

sisters who stand so valiantly at their sides, and above all I do it in the sacred and holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even so, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Royden G. Derrick

Facts in the drama of life

William Shakespeare was insightful when he wrote: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" (*As You Like It*, act 2, sc. 7, line 139). Let me set the stage for a drama that is not fiction, but is reality. The drama is founded upon certain facts.

It is a fact that God lives. It is a fact that Jesus Christ was and is a divine being. It is a fact that the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove. It is a fact that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. It is a fact that God revealed his will through his prophets in biblical days, and that he does so today.

Script for the drama of life

The script for this drama was written before the world began. The script writer has revealed clues about future scenes to individuals who have shared them with all who would listen.

For example, twenty-six hundred years ago, one of the important characters in the drama was shown some scenes of "what shall be in the latter

days" (Daniel 2:28). Daniel the prophet was shown the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, from which he related, "And in the days of these kings," referring to the latter-day scenes, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

The scenes relating to these clues are now on stage, front-center.

Joseph Smith's scene

At fourteen and one-half years of age, Joseph Smith went into the woods and prayed to our Heavenly Father, wanting to know which church of all the churches was true. There appeared before him God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. The Father said, "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17). Then Jesus Christ told that fourteen-year-old boy that the true church of God was not on the earth, and that he had been selected to be an instrument in the hands of God in restoring the church of Jesus Christ

and the true principles of Jesus Christ. In the scenes following, "the God of heaven set up a kingdom" about which Daniel the prophet said, "[it] shall never be destroyed."

Joseph Smith permitted manuscript pages of the translation of the Book of Mormon to fall into the hands of others, and they were lost. This was displeasing to the Lord, who said to him, "The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught" (D&C 3:1).

"Remember. . . that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men" (D&C 3:3).

"Behold, thou art Joseph, and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord, but because of transgression, if thou art not aware thou wilt fall" (D&C 3:9).

Had Joseph not measured up, the Lord would have made a change in the cast by appointing another to take his place. But he did measure up, as attested by further revelations from God which commended him for his faithfulness.

The Lord said that this kingdom, which would be established in the latter days, "shall never be destroyed." We needn't question whether this church that God has set up is going to fail. It will not! For God has so decreed!

Daniel further prophesied that "the kingdom shall not be left to other people" (Daniel 2:44). We cannot join any ecumenical movement, for if we do so, we will be required to compromise principles. We cannot do that, for the Lord has established the principles upon which his church is built, and we have no right to change them.

Eighteen months after the Church was organized, and following heavenly visitations during which the authority to act in the name of God was given to Joseph Smith, the Lord declared that "the keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth," and that the kingdom "shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth" (D&C 65:2).

Jesus Christ is the star

Clues to other scenes in the drama have been given to other prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and John the Revelator, as well as others from biblical history; and Nephi, Alma, Helaman, Mormon, Moroni, and others from Book of Mormon history.

The star of the cast is Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind. Many events in his life were the fulfillment of scenes previously shown to former-day prophets. Tomorrow, we commemorate the most important scene of all—the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who suffered and died to atone for the sins of men and women.

Cast—"inviteth them all to come unto him"

The number of people in the cast is unlimited. "If ye have desires to serve God," the Lord said, "ye are called to the work" (D&C 4:3). To pass the screen test, one must repent, be baptized, and keep God's commandments. Anyone is welcome to participate, for the prophet Nephi said, "He inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile" (2 Nephi 26:33).

The acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ is affected by attitude. William James, a famous author and psychologist, wrote, "The greatest discovery of my age is that men can change their circumstances by changing the attitude of their minds" (Richard L. Evans, *Richard Evan's Quote Book* [Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971], p. 161).

In the book of Proverbs we read, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Henry David Thoreau sustained that concept when he said that a man becomes what he thinks about all day long. (See *Familiar Quotations*, ed. John Bartlett, 14th

ed. [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968], p. 682.)

We have our agency. It is the decision of each of us as to the character we play in this drama—as to what kind of person we are or will become.

When President David O. McKay was a young missionary in Scotland, he was homesick, discouraged, and low in spirit. As he walked down the street with his companion, he noticed an inscription chiseled in a stone lintel of an unfinished building which read, "Whate'er Thou Art, Act Well Thy Part." From that moment, he began to act the part of a good missionary and became a great one. This was a learning experience that helped him in numerous important callings he received later in life. (See *Cherished Experiences from the Writings of President David O. McKay*, comp. Clare Middlemiss [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955], p. 174.)

Strive to become like Christ

If we want to be a person of integrity, we act as if we have integrity and we will be a person of integrity. If we want to be a person of charity and love, we act as if we have that characteristic and we will be that person.

The Savior alluded to this principle when he asked, "What manner of men ought ye to be?" Then he answered his own question, "Even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

We should strive to become like him by acting as he would act.

God does not select the type of life we live. We make that selection by what we think. If you want to play the part, just act the part. What role are you playing now? Are you a valiant supporter? Are you a half-hearted member lacking conviction? Are you a bystander? Or are you one who fights against the Church of God.

Valiance equals eternal family, priesthood leadership, missions

There is a reward for valiancy in this drama of life. The Savior said, "And . . . you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7). It is difficult to conceive of eternal life being a place of joy and happiness without those we love in this life. Based upon our valiance, our future life will include our wife or husband, our children, our parents—yes, our posterity as well as our progenitors.

What can I do for my children to help them qualify for eternal life? Several years ago, the Missionary Department made a professional survey to determine what happens to returned missionaries. The survey included those missionaries who had returned from one to ten years previous and was claimed to be accurate within 3 percent. It disclosed that their faithfulness was most exemplary and praiseworthy. It was a revealing report that was much more favorable than one could expect.

A few weeks ago, I visited a stake consisting of young families. I asked the priesthood leaders how many of them had filled a mission. I was surprised when every man raised his hand. The next week I visited a more mature stake which was one of the outstanding stakes of the Church, and asked the same question. Every man in the meeting, but two, raised his hand.

The conclusion? Not that every man has to be a returned missionary to be a priesthood leader, but that those who fulfill an honorable mission develop an understanding of the gospel and a self-discipline that results in dedication and commitment to what they know to be true.

We should organize our family plans to result in a mission for each of our sons, and temple marriage for each of our sons and daughters. Planning missions for our sons might begin at birth when we start their own missionary savings program which will assist significantly in their being financially,

morally, physically, and mentally prepared when they reach mission age. However, we should, above all else, teach our children "to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28).

Preparations for Second Coming

What can I do for my progenitors to help them qualify for eternal life? I can help my parents and grandparents to understand the gospel, to be baptized, and to receive these saving ordinances in the temple of God. I can make certain that my deceased parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and as far as I can go in my genealogical research, have received in person or vicariously the temple saving ordinances necessary for them to gain eternal life. By doing these things for our posterity and for our progenitors, a forever family can be established, resulting in a dynasty of righteous lives that will bring joy and happiness "in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory" (Moses 6:59).

The final scene of this great drama is near at hand. The kingdom of God is going forth preparatory to the second coming of Christ when the curtain will fall and the Savior will say to each of the valiant, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21). And thus the kingdom of God will continue forever through the eternities to come. As the prophet Daniel said, "And it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44), with you and I having received judgment and reward according to the role to which we have been faithful in this life—to which I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr.

"Will a man rob God?" (Malachi 3:8). This must be one of the most pointed questions ever asked in the holy scriptures. The implications are that an affirmative answer would mean that those who rob God will be cursed by God and burned as stubble at the Lord's second coming. (See Malachi 3:9; 4:1.)

Tithing—critical judgment criterion

This query was made of ancient Israel through the prophet Malachi, but it didn't apply only to ancient Israel. It quite obviously applied to the Nephites and Lamanites on this continent, too, for the resurrected Lord repeated it to

them when he visited them in about A. D. 34. (See 3 Nephi 24:8–9.) I presume modern Israel is also included under the same injunction, for surely the Lord used almost the same words when he warned of the burning that would precede his second coming, and tithing seems to be the critical judgment criterion. (See D&C 64:23–24.)

On the other hand, those who do pay tithing (give the Lord *his* tenth) are promised that the windows of heaven will be opened to them and their blessings will exceed their ability to receive. (See Malachi 3:10.) Further, the Lord "will rebuke the devourer for [their] sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of [their] ground" (Malachi 3:11). This is a blessing of great magnitude.