

May this be our universal blessing,
I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Arise, Shine, Thy
Light Is Come" without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has addressed us, followed by the choir singing "Arise, Shine, Thy Light Is Come."

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

President Monson has reminded us that this is a worldwide church. I once received a clipping from a newspaper in India reporting something I had said to young people at this pulpit. Among those who now listen, or who may later read what we say, are young men and women, in many lands, struggling through those wonderful, worrisome teenage years. I meet teenagers all over the world, in perhaps seventy countries by now. I have stayed in the homes where you live—from tiny houses propped up on poles in the jungle to luxury city apartments.

I am about fifty years farther down the road of life than you are, but my memory is pretty good and I haven't forgotten entirely how it felt to be where you are. And my children and grandchildren renew my memory of how it feels to be a teenager.

Some years ago we stopped at a small restaurant. The young woman who served our meal was courteous but very sober. When she handed me the check, I said, "Can you tell us which road we take to get out of town?" Suddenly she burst into tears and said, "Mister, I don't even know how I got into this town."

I have wished more than once that we could have gone to a table in the corner and talked. Perhaps we could have helped her.

Teenage wishes

Teenagers, even young men, sometimes feel like bursting into tears and say-

ing, "Mister, I don't even know how I got here." You wonder *who* you are and *why* you are and how you got to *where* you are.

I know that you sometimes feel that life isn't fair; why can't you have things that others have. You even wonder why you can't be somebody else and exchange your body with someone who appears to be more beautiful or handsome or talented or brighter or stronger or thinner; or change personalities with someone who is not so shy or blundering or frightened as you are.

Sometimes you wonder why you can't trade your parents for some better ones. No need to apologize; they sometimes wish they could trade you for someone easier to live with.

But parents and grandparents make allowances for those feelings. After all, we are just teenagers who have evened out a few of our frustrations so that they don't show as much as they did when we were your age. And someday, soon enough, *you* are going to be *us!*

A different world

I wish we could promise you that the world will be safer and easier for you than for us. But we cannot make that promise, for just the opposite is true.

There are temptations beckoning to you that were not there when we were teenagers. AIDS had not been invented when we were young, and drugs were something a doctor prescribed. We knew

about opium from reading mysteries, but steroids, pills, and crack and all the rest belonged to future imaginations.

Modesty was not mocked then. Morality and courtesy were fostered in books and films as much as their opposites are today. Perversion was not talked about, much less endorsed as a life-style. What was shunned then as pornographic, you see now on prime-time television.

Your challenge is *much* greater than was ours. Few of us would trade places with you. Frankly, we are quite relieved that we are not back where you are. Few of us would be equal to it.

But, oh, what a wonderful time to be young! You have knowledge of many more things than we needed to have. It is my conviction that your generation is better and stronger than was ours—better in many ways! I have faith that you young men and young women can meet the world on its own terms and conquer it!

The black knight

Alfred, Lord Tennyson told of Gareth, a prince and a knight of King Arthur's round table, and of his quest. The fair Lady Lyonors had been stolen away by the horrible black knight, who held her in his castle. Many young knights tried to rescue her but failed. They returned defeated and broken, with tales of the awesome power of the black knight; they begged Gareth not to go.

But Gareth went to the castle with the drawbridge, the tower, and the window where "Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and wept" ("Gareth and Lynette," *Idylls of the King*, line 1360). Then, "high on a night-black horse, in night-black arms, with white breast-bone, and barren ribs of Death," a laughing skull engraved upon his helmet, "in the half-light—thro' the dim dawn—advanced the monster," more awesome, more terrible even than Gareth had been told (lines 1346–47, 49–50).

The black knight lowered his lance and thundered forward. Gareth, who had been defeated in more than one tournament, sensed his terrible fate. Every logic and emotion shouted, "Flee for your life!"

But he could not turn away. Not, that is, and keep his honor. Gareth lowered his lance and met the charge.

And then, to his surprise, Gareth unseated the black knight and tore his helmet away. There in that black armor with the bones engraven on it sat a little boy who began to cry and beg for mercy.

Young women, young men, no matter how many tournaments you lose along the way, no matter how monstrous your challenges may be, if you will learn a few simple lessons, it can be with you as it was with Gareth on that bridge before the castle of the black knight.

Of royal birth

Gareth was only a prince. You are more than that. You are a child of God. He is the father of your spirit. Spiritually you are of noble birth, the offspring of the King of Heaven. Fix that truth in your mind and hold to it. However many generations in your mortal ancestry, no matter what race or people you represent, the pedigree of your spirit can be written on a single line. You are a child of God!

You are a dual being, a spirit clothed in a mortal body. Your body is the instrument of your mind and the foundation of your character. Take nothing into your body which may harm it or disturb the functions of your mind and spirit. Anything that is addictive is dangerous.

Within your body is the power to beget life, to share in creation. The only legitimate expression of that power is within the covenant of marriage. The worthy use of it is the very key to your happiness. Do not use that power prematurely, not with anyone. The misuse of it cannot be made right by making it popular.

Your spirit operates through your mind, but cultivating your intellect is not enough. Reason alone will neither protect nor redeem you. Reason nourished by faith can do both.

The dark side

A warning: there is a dark side to spiritual things. In a moment of curiosity

or reckless bravado some teenagers have been tempted to toy with Satan worship. Don't you ever do that! Don't associate with those who do! You have no idea of the danger! Leave it alone! And there are other foolish games and activities that are on that dark side. Leave them alone!

There is a courage far greater than Gareth needed to face the black knight. It is the courage to run away from unworthy things when you will be mocked for doing so. That courage is laced with wisdom. We had to gain it from experience; you need it now.

You have an alarm system built into both body and spirit. In your body it is pain; in your spirit it is guilt — or spiritual pain. While neither pain nor guilt is pleasant, and an excess of either can be destructive, both are a protection, for they sound the alarm "Don't do that again!"

Be grateful for both. If the nerve endings in your hands were altered so that you couldn't feel pain, you might put them in fire or machinery and destroy them. In your teenage heart of hearts, you know right from wrong (see 2 Nephi 2:5). Learn to pay attention to that spiritual voice of warning within you. Even then, you will not get by without some mistakes.

Forgiveness

Those who make one serious mistake tend to add another by assuming that it is then too late for them. It is never too late! Never!

While your temptations are greater than were ours, that will be considered in the judgments of the Lord. He said that "his mercies [are suited] according to the conditions of . . . men" (D&C 46:15). That is only just.

A great contribution to Christian doctrine is the explanation in the Book of Mormon of how *justice* and *mercy* and *repentance* and *forgiveness* work together to erase transgressions (see Alma 42).

The discouraging idea that a mistake (or even a series of them) makes it everlastingly too late, does not come from the Lord. He has said that *if* we will repent, not only will He forgive us our transgres-

sions, but He will forget them and remember our sins no more (see Isaiah 43:25; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17; Alma 36:19; D&C 58:42). Repentance is like soap; it can wash sin away. Ground-in dirt may take the strong detergent of discipline to get the stains out, but out they will come.

The end of the world

Teenagers also sometimes think, "What's the use? The world will soon be blown all apart and come to an end." That feeling comes from fear, not from faith. No one knows the hour or the day (see D&C 49:7), but the end cannot come until all of the purposes of the Lord are fulfilled. Everything that I have learned from the revelations and from life convinces me that there is time and to spare for you to carefully prepare for a long life.

One day you will cope with teenage children of your own. That will serve you right. Later, you will spoil your grandchildren, and they in turn spoil theirs. If an earlier end should happen to come to one, that is more reason to do things right.

However limited your body may be, it is a precious gift.

One of you may be well-born and well-formed while another is not. In either case, there is a testing. That is what mortality is all about. The poorly born may lack self-esteem, or the well-born infected with pride. Pride is the most deadly spiritual virus. In the eternal scheme of things, who is to say which is the most favored?

Listen carefully from the Book of Mormon: "If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27).

There may be more justice in who we are and what we have or do not have than we ever suppose.

You are a *child* of God!

What a wonderful time to be young. You will see events in your lifetime that will test your courage and extend your faith. If you will face the sunlight of truth, the shadows of discouragement and sin and error will fall behind you. You must never give up! It is never too late! There is no knight in black armor with such power as you may have if you live righteously.

He calls to you: "Wherefore, lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins, and take upon you my whole armor, that ye may be able to withstand the evil day, having done all, that ye may be able to stand.

"Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, which I have sent mine angels to commit unto you;

"Taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked;

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of my Spirit, which I will pour out upon you, and my word which I reveal unto you, and be agreed as touching all things whatsoever ye ask of me, and be faithful until I come, and ye shall be caught up, that where I am ye shall be also" (D&C 27:15-18).

God bless you young women and young men who struggle through the worrisome teenage years. Some of you may not yet have found yourselves, but you are *not* lost, for Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, our Savior and Redeemer. The gospel has been revealed and restored. Of Him I bear witness as I pray His blessings upon you, our youth, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Jesus, Savior" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has addressed us, followed by the choir singing "Jesus, Savior."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Come, Come, Ye Saints," following which we shall hear from Elder J. Richard Clarke, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

Elder J. Richard Clarke

Importance of family history work

My brothers and sisters, since last October it has been my blessing to be associated with the Family History Department of the Church. It enables each of us to experience the joy of the covenants and the ordinances of the temple as we make them available to our loved ones.

Famous *Roots* author, Alex Haley, once said: "In all of us there is a hunger, marrow-deep, to know our heritage—to know who we are and where we have come from. Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning. No matter what our attainments in life,

there is still . . . an emptiness, and the most disquieting loneliness."

Through family history we discover the most beautiful tree in the forest of creation—our family tree. Its numerous roots reach back through history, and its branches extend throughout eternity. Family history is the expansive expression of eternal love. It is born of selflessness. It provides opportunity to secure the family unit forever.

Families of heaven

Moroni told young Joseph Smith that Elijah the prophet would come and reveal