

President Monson

We will now be pleased to hear from President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Following Brother Packer's remarks, the choir will sing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," with soloist Liriel Domiciano.

It will then be our privilege to hear from President Gordon B. Hinckley, our beloved prophet, who will be our concluding speaker at this session of conference.

Following President Hinckley's remarks, the choir will sing "Faith in Every Footstep." The benediction then will be offered by Elder James M. Dunn of the Seventy. The concluding session of this conference will begin at 2:00 this afternoon.

President Boyd K. Packer

We need not fear for children's future

A few weeks ago our youngest son and his wife and family stopped to see us. The first one out of the car was our two-year-old grandson. He came running to me with his arms outstretched, shouting, "Gwampa! Gwampa! Gwampa!"

He hugged my legs, and I looked down at that smiling face and those big, innocent eyes and thought, "What kind of a world awaits him?"

For a moment I had that feeling of anxiety, that fear of the future that so many parents express to us. Everywhere we go fathers and mothers worry about the future of their children in this very troubled world.

But then a feeling of assurance came over me. My fear of the future faded.

That guiding, comforting Spirit, with which we in the Church are so familiar, brought to my remembrance what I already knew. The fear of the future was gone. That bright-eyed, little two-year-old can have a good life—a very good life—and so can his children and his grandchildren, even though they will live in a world where there is much of wickedness.

They will see many events transpire in the course of their lifetime. Some of these shall tax their courage and extend their faith. But if they seek prayerfully for help

and guidance, they shall be given power over adverse things. Such trials shall not be permitted to stand in the way of their progress but instead shall act as stepping-stones to greater knowledge.

As a grandfather and as one of the Twelve, I will give you some counsel, some caution, and a lot of encouragement. I could do this much better if the grandmother in our family, my wife of 57 years, were standing beside me. Mothers know much more about life than fathers do, but I will do the best I can.

We do not fear the future for ourselves or for our children.

Warning from the Book of Mormon

We live in dangerously troubled times. The values that steadied mankind in earlier times are being tossed away.

We must not ignore Moroni's words when he saw our day and said, "Ye [must] awake to a sense of your awful situation" (Ether 8:24).

We cannot take lightly this warning from the Book of Mormon:

"The Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him . . . , doing all things for the welfare and happiness of his people; yea, then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their

God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity.

“And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, yea, except he doth visit them with *death* and with *terror*, and with *famine* and with all manner of *pestilence*, they will not remember him” (Helaman 12:1–3; italics added).

Have you noticed that word *terror* in that prophetic Book of Mormon warning?

The moral values upon which civilization itself must depend spiral downward at an ever-increasing pace. Nevertheless, I do not fear the future.

World War I ended only six years before I was born. When we were children, the effects of the war were everywhere present. World War II came only 15 years later. And dark clouds were already gathering.

We had the same anxious feelings that many of you do now. We wondered what the future held for us in an unsettled world.

Protect children from spiritual diseases

When I was a boy, childhood diseases appeared regularly in every community. When someone had chicken pox or measles or mumps, the health officer would visit the home and place a quarantine sign on the porch or in the window to warn everyone to stay away. In a large family like ours, those diseases would visit by relay, one child getting it from another, so the sign might stay up for weeks.

We could not blockade ourselves inside our homes or stay hidden away to avoid those terrible contagions. We had to go to school, to employment, to church—to life!

Two of my sisters were stricken with very severe cases of measles. At first they seemed to recover. A few weeks later, Mother glanced out of the window and saw Adele, the younger of the two, lean-

ing against a swing. She was faint and weak with a fever. It was rheumatic fever! It came as a complication from measles. The other sister also had the fever.

There was little that could be done. In spite of all of the prayers of my parents, Adele died. She was eight years old.

While Nona, two years older, recovered, she had fragile health for most of her life.

When I was in the seventh grade, in a health class, the teacher read an article. A mother learned that the neighbor children had chicken pox. She faced the probability that her children would have it as well, perhaps one at a time. She determined to get it all over with at once.

So she sent her children to the neighbor's to play with their children to let them be exposed, and then she would be done with it. Imagine her horror when the doctor finally came and announced that it was not chicken pox the children had; it was smallpox.

The best thing to do then and what we must do now is to avoid places where there is danger of physical or spiritual contagion.

We have little concern that our grandchildren will get the measles. They have been immunized and can move freely without fear of that.

While in much of the world measles has virtually been eradicated, it is still the leading cause of vaccine-preventable death in children.

From money generously donated by Latter-day Saints, the Church recently donated a million dollars to a cooperative effort to immunize the children of Africa against measles. For one dollar, one child can be protected.

Inoculation from spiritual diseases

Parents now are concerned about the moral and spiritual diseases. These can have terrible complications when standards and values are abandoned. We must all take protective measures.

With the proper serum, the physical body is protected against disease. We can also protect our children from moral and spiritual diseases.

The word *inoculate* has two parts: *in*—“to be within”—and *oculate* means “eye to see.”

When children are baptized and confirmed (see D&C 20:41, 43; 33:15), we place an *eye within them*—the “unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost” (D&C 121:26). With the Restoration of the gospel came authority to confer this gift.

The Book of Mormon gives us the key: “Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. . . . Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you [and your children as well] all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

If you will accept it in your mind and cradle it in your feelings, a knowledge of the restored gospel and a testimony of Jesus Christ can spiritually immunize your children.

The family is the best protection

One thing is very clear: the safest place and the best protection against the moral and spiritual diseases is a stable home and family. This has always been true; it will be true forever. We must keep that foremost in our minds.

The scriptures speak of “the shield of faith wherewith,” the Lord said, “ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (D&C 27:17).

This shield of faith is best fabricated in a cottage industry. While the shield can be polished in classes in the Church and in activities, it is meant to be handcrafted in the home and fitted to each individual.

The Lord said, “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” (D&C 27:15).

Have faith; do not be fearful

Our young people in many ways are much stronger and better than we were. They and we should not be afraid of what is ahead.

Encourage our young people. They need not live in fear (see D&C 6:36). Fear is the opposite of faith.

While we cannot erase wickedness, we can produce young Latter-day Saints who, spiritually nourished, are immunized against evil influences.

As a grandfather who has lived a long time, I counsel you to have faith. Things have a way of working out. Stay close to the Church. Keep your children close to the Church.

Study the doctrines of the gospel

In Alma’s day “the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it . . . had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God” (Alma 31:5).

True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior.

Put your homes in order

Find happiness in ordinary things, and keep your sense of humor.

Nona recovered from measles and rheumatic fever. She lived long enough to benefit from open-heart surgery and enjoyed years of much improved health. Others spoke of her newly acquired energy. She said, “I have a Cadillac engine in a Model T frame.”

Keep your sense of humor!

Do not be afraid to bring children into the world. We are under covenant to provide physical bodies so that spirits may enter mortality (see Genesis 1:28; Moses 2:28). Children are the future of the restored Church.

Put your homes in order. If Mother is working outside of the home, see if there are ways to change that, even a little. It may be very difficult to change at the present time. But analyze carefully and be prayerful (see D&C 9:8–9). Then expect to have inspiration, which is revelation (see D&C 8:2–3). Expect intervention from power from beyond the veil to help you move, in due time, to what is best for your family.

Remember the Atonement

Alma called the plan of salvation “the great plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8; see also 2 Nephi 11:5; Alma 12:25; 17:16; 34:9; 41:2; 42:5, 11–13, 15, 31; Moses 6:62).

Each of us came into mortality to receive a mortal body and to be tested (see Abraham 3:24–26).

Life will not be free from challenges, some of them bitter and hard to bear. We may wish to be spared all the trials of life, but that would be contrary to the great plan of happiness, “for it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11). This testing is the source of our strength.

As an innocent child, my sister Adele’s life was cruelly interrupted by disease and suffering. She and all the others so taken continue the work of the Lord beyond the veil. She will not be denied anything essential for her eternal progression.

We also lost an infant granddaughter. She was named Emma, after my mother. We receive comfort from the scriptures:

“Little children need no repentance, neither baptism. . . . Little children are alive in Christ” (Moroni 8:11–12).

Remember the Atonement of Christ. Do not despair or count as forever lost those who have fallen to the temptations of Satan. They will, after the debt is paid to “the uttermost farthing” (Matthew 5:26) and after the healing which attends complete repentance takes place, receive a salvation.

Follow Church leaders

Follow the leaders who are called to preside over you, for the promise is given: “If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place” (D&C 124:45).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will go forward “until it has filled the whole earth” (D&C 65:2) and the great Jehovah announces that His work is done (see *History of the Church*, 4:540). The Church is a safe harbor. We will be protected by justice and comforted by mercy (see Alma 34:15–16). No unhallowed hand can stay the progress of this work (see D&C 76:3).

We are not blind to the conditions in the world.

The Apostle Paul prophesied of “perilous times” in the last days (2 Timothy 3:1), and he warned, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Isaiah promised, “In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee” (Isaiah 54:14).

The Lord Himself encouraged, “Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of

me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come" (D&C 68:6). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Wasn't that absolutely magnificent? Thank you, Liriel Domiciano and the choir. What a great declaration of faith—"I know that my Redeemer lives." Thank you again for that stirring and wonderful music.

May I first say to all the Church, and to others, thank you for your great kindness to Sister Hinckley and me. You have been and are so gracious and generous. We are touched by all you do for us. If all the world were treated as we are treated, what a different world it would be. We would care for one another in the Spirit of the Master, who reached out to comfort and heal.

These are perilous times

Now, my brothers and sisters, President Packer has spoken to you as a grandfather. I should like to pick up a thread from the tapestry he has woven. I too am now an old man, older even than he, if you can imagine that. I have been around for a long time, I have traveled far, and I have seen much of this world. In hours of quiet reflection, I wonder why there is so much of trouble and suffering almost everywhere. Our times are fraught with peril. We hear frequently quoted the words of Paul to Timothy: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Timothy 3:1). He then goes on to describe the conditions that will prevail. I think it is plainly evident that these latter days are indeed perilous times that fit the conditions that Paul described (see 2 Timothy 3:2-7).

But peril is not a new condition for the human family. Revelation tells us that "there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

"And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:7-9).

What a perilous time that must have been. The Almighty Himself was pitted against the son of the morning. We were there while that was going on. That must have been a desperately difficult struggle, with a grand, triumphal victory.

Concerning those desperate times, the Lord spoke to Job out of the whirlwind and said: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4, 7).

Why were we then happy? I think it was because good had triumphed over evil and the whole human family was on the Lord's side. We had turned our backs on the adversary and aligned ourselves with the forces of God, and those forces were victorious.

But having made that decision, why should we have to make it again and again after our birth into mortality?

I cannot understand why so many have betrayed in life the decision they once made when the great war occurred in heaven.