

ELDER DAVID O. McKAY

Of religious gatherings this is one of the most thrilling sights in all the world, and the most inspirational. To address this vast audience is indeed a weighty responsibility. I pray therefore for your sympathetic, prayerful help and for the inspiration of the Lord.

Our children are our most precious possessions; and the proper training of youth is the most important duty and obligation of society. Impressive and earnest have been the admonitions and instructions in this conference to the people properly to educate their children.

TRUE EDUCATION

True education does not consist merely in the acquiring of a few facts of science, history, literature or art, but in the development of character. True education awakens a desire to conserve health by keeping the body clean and undefiled. True education trains in self-denial and self-mastery. True education regulates the temper, subdues passion and makes obedience to social laws and moral order a guiding principle of life. It develops reason and inculcates faith in the living God as the eternal loving Father of all.

I desire to call attention this afternoon to three groups in society on whom the responsibility rests to give this true training to the youth of the land, and I should like to consider this responsibility in the light of revealed religion.

We heard this morning from President Nibley a most timely and authoritative declaration regarding the restoration of the Gospel and the Priesthood of God on earth. In the year 1820 the Prophet Joseph Smith received that authority, and ninety-eight years ago last Friday the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was officially organized. Thus there was at least one man who had direct authority to represent God in giving to mankind principles of salvation and peace. We heard this morning that before that day there was no such authority either by apostolic succession or by reformation. Granting now, that Joseph Smith received that authority, that he established the Church for the salvation of the human family, I ask you, can you find a safer guide in the education of your child than through the revealed word of God to his prophet?

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS

To parents is assigned the first responsibility for the training of children. The Lord through the prophet says:

"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the Living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents."

Direct responsibility could not be assigned more emphatically and clearly than it is assigned in that paragraph. Parents, there is the word

of the Lord to us regarding the proper training of children. Education commences at the mother's knee, and every word spoken in the hearing of little children tends towards the formation of character. Let parents always bear this in mind. Victor Hugo says, "There are no bad herbs and there are no bad men—there are only bad cultivators." If we could have parents who are good cultivators in our homes, which are the gardens of the Lord, our civil officers would have little difficulty in maintaining order, and the violations of law would be less frequent.

There are parents in the world—I hope there are very few in the Church—who say they will leave the educating of their children in religious matters until the children themselves arrive at years of accountability. They will permit their children to choose which Church or which principles of religion the children desire to accept. The Prophet Joseph gives no intimation that any parent has a right thus to leave the religious training of his children until they arrive at the years of accountability.

Coleridge once met a man who made that same statement, and Coleridge said, "I took him and showed him my garden, and told him it was my botanical garden." "How so," said he, "it is covered with weeds." "O," I replied, "that is only because it has not yet come to its age of discretion and choice. The weeds you see have taken the liberty to grow and I thought it unfair in me to prejudice the soil toward roses and strawberries."

The application is clear. It is said that Plato one day, seeing a child do mischief, called immediately and reprimanded the child's father. He, too, recognized the fact that one of the great potent factors in the education of childhood is the parent. "Whatever parent gives his children good instruction and sets them at the same time a bad example, may be considered as bringing them food in one hand and poison in the other."

RESPONSIBILITY OF PRIESTHOOD QUORUMS

The second group upon whom the responsibility of training children rests by divine revelation, is the quorum of the priesthood and other helps in government. A few years ago when I was attending conference in the Carbon stake, President Horsley and I discovered a little child that was lost. President Horsley wiped away the little one's tears, and carried her to his home and placed her in the hands of Sister Horsley, through whose gentleness and tenderness the child soon fell asleep. Efforts were made to discover the parents, and at about five o'clock in the afternoon, the distracted mother was found. Her tear-stained eyes showed what anguish she had passed through since the little one had wandered from her side. But she was at peace when she found her darling sleeping by the fireside.

I think this incident illustrates the relation of the quorums to the parent. There are boys and girls wandering from the parental hearthstone. In the world, outside the Church, hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands of them are crouching today behind steel bars.

Even here in our own stakes some are wandering carelessly, aimlessly away from the influence of home standards and home teachings. It is the duty of quorum members to extend the hand of fellowship, the hand of guidance to these young men and young women wandering towards the downward path. Can you find any more potent influence in all the world than the quorums as established in the Church of Christ? Time will not permit me even to define them for you. You all know, and while I am speaking you have in your minds the quorums of Deacons, one thousand or more; you have in mind over nine hundred groups of Teachers, and approximately an equal number of groups of Priests, young men between the ages of seventeen and twenty. Seventy thousand young men thus grouped, whose duty it is to extend the glad hand to those of their companions who have not glimpsed the privilege given to these members of quorums.

QUORUM POTENCY

I wonder how many parents have stopped to realize how potent these quorums are in the lives of boys! In the first place, quorum membership awakens in the boy the pride of fellowship and membership. Entrance into that group means that the boy has attained to certain standards of excellence of character, and the more distinctive we can make these entrance requirements the greater will be the pride in the young boy's heart.

Second, the quorum influence arouses or satisfies the call of the boy for the inspiration of the group. Have you heard of the gang spirit? Have you seen the boys out on the ditch bank gathering in groups in answer to the call of their souls for companionship? Then can you see the wisdom of God in gratifying this natural inclination by grouping the boys under an influence that is educative in the highest sense of the term?

Third, that group throws upon the youth responsibility. Tell a young boy that you trust him, and you have one of the greatest means of guiding him uprightly that can come into your hands. Young boy, I trust you! To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved. Boys are few indeed who will not hold inviolate an implicit trust.

Fourth, grouping in a quorum offers service. The Presiding Bishopric, holding a presidency over these seventy thousand young men, have outlined as they have hitherto done, a plan of service into which these young men are invited, not just on Sunday, but on every day of the week.

Finally, into that group is introduced faith in God the Father, in his Son Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world, and their service and acts are all done under the cognizance and realization that God is approving of their acts. It is sublime. It is divine. Fathers and mothers, let us unite with the priesthood in extending the influence of these groups.

I have mentioned only the Aaronic Priesthood, but our fathers are grouped in like manner, and we have one hundred and thirty thousand

men and boys working for the true education, working to train the youth in parenthood and faith in God and in the restored gospel. I tell you, this grouping in Priesthood Quorums has the mark of divinity. It is divine. And Joseph Smith, a young man not twenty-five years of age when he gave that revelation, gave it by the inspiration of God for the salvation of the youth of Zion.

OTHER CHURCH EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

Now I cannot say anything this afternoon about the other educational factors furnished by the Church for the education of our boys. Our Church schools—O, what they mean in true education! Our seminaries, correlating as they do the gathering of facts in science, literature and art, introducing these high elements, faith, integrity, obedience to law, respect for order, purity of life. Our Religion Classes, the Sunday Schools, the Mutuals, the Primary—I cannot do more than merely mention them, because I want to pass to the third group very seldom mentioned as a means of influencing youth. I find reference to it in the Doctrine and Covenants in these words:

“We believe that all governments necessarily require civil officers and magistrates to enforce the laws of the same; and that such as will administer the law in equity and justice should be sought for and upheld by the voice of the people.”

COMMUNITY INFLUENCE

You will recognize this third group in the influencing of boys is the community—our civil officers and social functions. It is said the pulpit only *teaches* to be honest; the market-place *trains* to over-reaching and fraud; and teaching hasn't a tithe of the efficiency of training. Christ never wrote a tract, but he went about doing good.

The press dispatches this morning report the results of a survey made recently by W. F. Burton of the Department of Education of the University of Chicago. Many of you no doubt saw it. He made a survey of thousands of young children in the sixth grade in our public schools. That means the boys and girls ranging approximately from ten to twelve years of age. He said the six things they all know most about, in their order of knowledge, are “bootlegging, divorce, alimony, sheriffs, juvenile courts, jail and jury.” Now you may say of course they were in Chicago, but the same examination was given to the children of the schools of Salem, the capital of the state of Oregon, where 63% of the people own their own homes. The result was exactly the same. “Next in order,” Burton averred, “the children know most about mayors, elections, polling places, ballots, taxes, and insurance; and third, bank deposits, rents, bankrupts, pioneers, and sanitary inspectors.” We do not know just how these questions were given to the children. Perhaps they were so worded as to call forth these answers, but I think it is significant that the fundamental things in education are not named—not even mentioned.

I call attention to this merely to drive home the fact that our com-

munity is a great factor in the teaching of our children. Our officers, public servants, are teachers of the youth and they carry the responsibility of teachers. It is our duty, therefore, as citizens of this great republic, to exercise our right at the ballot box. It is our duty to see that men in both our great parties are chosen who will teach not only by precept, but by example, obedience to law; that these men so elected will appoint men under them who will not scoff at the law against liquor, who will not themselves indulge in bootlegging, or who will not in any way protect those men or women who violate moral laws.

I said that the greatest obligation upon society is the proper training of youth. The home, our quorums, our officers in the community are three great educational factors, and all three subject to our sentiment, our approval.

"It matters not what I shall gain
By fleeting gold or fame,
My hope of joy depends alone
On what my boy shall claim.
My glory must be told through him,
For him I work and plan—
Man's greatest duty is to be
The father of a man."

And each one of us may be the father of a man, as Paul spiritually was of Timothy, and Peter of Mark, who as a young man undoubtedly was a witness to Christ's betrayal, and who, if he did not see him resurrected, wrote in after years:

"Ye seek Jesus who was crucified; he is not here, he is resurrected."

God help us to get our young boys to feel and to know not only that Christ has risen, but that he has appeared again to men, and restored the gospel of Christ, the power of God through which youth and all mankind may receive salvation and peace. Amen.

ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS

Senior President of the First Council of Seventy

My brethren and sisters, in all the conferences of the Church that I have attended, I cannot recall a time when I have felt that we have had a greater spiritual feast than we have had at this conference, because of the outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord upon his servants. The spirit of testimony has been very strong, and it appears to me that it has been colored by the spirit of testimony as exemplified in the declaration of the Christ upon one occasion—that occasion when he taught the mysteries of the new birth to Nicodemus. After his explanation about the second birth, and having expressed some surprise that Nicodemus, a teacher in Israel, was not acquainted with these truths, the Savior said:

"We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

And then he appears to have been under the necessity of saying this rather sorrowful thing:

"And ye receive not our witness."