

The congregation sang the hymn, "We Thank Thee, O God, For A Prophet."

Elder Charles E. Rowan, Jr., President of the Provo Stake, offered the opening prayer.

The congregation joined in singing "Sweet Is The Work."

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord (D. & C. 68:28.)

This command leaves no question as to the responsibility of parents to teach their children—a responsibility too frequently shifted to the shoulders of the Church, public schools, and officers of the law.

FOUR ESSENTIAL BULWARKS

In the present worldwide struggle to defeat cruel, ambitious war lords in Europe and in the Far East there are four essential bulwarks, viz.:

1. *The Battle Front* where men in uniform are facing the enemy in death-dealing conflict.

2. *The Essential Industries Front* where men and women are furnishing tanks, airplanes, bombs, bullets, and all necessary war equipment and weapons for their sons, brothers, and sweethearts fighting on land, on sea, and in the air.

3. *The Agricultural Front* upon the success of which depends not only the morale, but the very life of our armed forces, and the subsistence of millions of non-combatants.

4. *The Home Front*—stabilizing force of the world in war and peace.

THE BATTLE FRONT

This morning, as during several months past, the battle fronts seem to be progressing favorably for the Allies. Many lives are being sacrificed it is true. The very flower of young manhood is being crushed under the wheels of the juggernaut of war, but there is now no alternative but to push relentlessly forward until the murderous dictators are apprehended, and their ruthless power and subversive doctrines forever overcome.

WAR INDUSTRIES

The stupendous accomplishments of the United States industries in the short space of two years in building ships and airplanes, manufacturing munitions, and in shipping supplies to allied countries, are little short of miraculous—a record unparalleled in the history of the world!

AGRICULTURISTS

Farmers, horticulturists, and dairymen are putting forth herculean efforts to hold their line. However, man-power has been so depleted on

this front that farmers by the thousands have had to work twelve, fifteen, and even eighteen hours a day to mature and garner the much-needed crops. They have been greatly handicapped, too, by depreciating and non-replaceable machinery. Reinforcements should be sent to this production line. Young men of draft age now in uniform and who know something about farming should be assigned to raise more food. Increased acreage, more products, and better distribution are crying needs of the hour. Yet notwithstanding handicaps, the United States farmer and stockmen are carrying ably and heroically their responsibility in this great struggle.

THE FAMILY

Not so confidently nor so praiseworthy can we speak of the fourth essential bulwark. The Home Front seems to be cracking! It is of this I am going to speak this morning.

Out of the homes of America go the future citizens of the republic. Upon properly ordered households and the uplifting moral atmosphere of home life depends more than upon any other phase of the social life the happiness of the human family. *Home*, not the state, is the natural protector of childhood. *Parents* more than teachers, more than officers of the law, are the molders of children's moral natures.

One of the foreboding indications of the weakening of the Home Line is the waning influence of parenthood as shown in the increasing delinquency among the young. Too many parents seem to be neglecting to teach their children "to walk uprightly before the Lord." A few weeks ago Inspector Rolf T. Harbo of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, told national officers, chairmen, and state presidents of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers that "Delinquency among girls under 21 has risen 64% in the first half of 1943"; and "this increase comes on top of an increase of 95% for the year 1942, and in contrast to a general decrease in juvenile delinquency for boys under 21. They blame the rise of youthful crimes on the breakdown of family ties, the irregular working hours of adults because of the war, with the resultant lack of supervision, the gangs of juveniles formed for unwholesome acts, and a general laxity on the part of adults."

In Utah, as well as throughout the United States, delinquency, particularly among young girls, is increasing. The report of the juvenile court of this city for 1942 shows an increase of 38.5% over 1941. Among young girls sex offenses total up 53.5% in 1942 over 1941, up 95% over last year, and up 200% since Pearl Harbor. Fifty-two percent of the delinquents are from broken homes!

For much of this delinquency, we must hold parents responsible. True, the wisest parents sometimes lose control of one or more of their children. Secret indulgences in sinful practices, false teachings, and ideals inculcated by pseudo-philosophers, sometimes counteract wholesome home influences. Even the Lord Himself had one-third of His family on one occasion reject the divine Plan of Salvation. But after recognizing all this, the fact remains that "Homes are the nursery of all domestic virtues,

and without a becoming home the exercise of those virtues is impossible." McCulloch in *Home, the Savior of Civilization*, says:

During the first twelve years of a child's life he is in school 3,240 hours; in Church and Sunday School 416 hours; in the home, not counting 12 hours for sleep daily, 52,560 hours. In other words, the child, during the first twelve years of his life, spends sixteen times as many waking hours in the home as in school, and puts one hundred twenty-six times as many hours in the home as in the Church.

Since it is during those early years in one's life that character is largely made, it is not difficult to see the relative value of the educative process in school, Church, and home. If the child's home life is neglected or impoverished during this period, it is absolutely impossible for the school or Church, or any other institution to compensate for this fatal loss

Of all the factors that enter into the environment of the child, or of anyone else for that matter, the home is by far the most powerful, so much so that one may say that home either makes or mars character. The child from the day of his birth, for at least twelve years, is so dominated by the influences of home, whether good or evil, that he is absolutely helpless to resist them. What a heart-moving responsibility, then, rests upon parents to see to it that the home influences are all that they should be.

How apt, then, the divine admonition, "And they shall teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord."

RESTRICTED FAMILIES

Another and very ominous indication of the cracking up of American homes is the decreasing birth rate. In the *Reader's Digest* for October there is an article which states that "in the United States at large 42% of the married women have no children whatever or only one child."

That in the United States at large "approximately only one-third of the married women have a sufficient number of children to keep the population of the country even at a stationary level."

That in the United States at large "the urban birth rate has fallen so shockingly low that all American cities of one hundred thousand and over would, in three generations, or one hundred years, fall to one-third their present size if left without accessions to their populations outside."

That in the United States at large "the professional classes in American cities are reproducing themselves only sixty percent."

That "in many local areas conditions are even far worse. Note, for instance, the city of Chicago. More than half its families have no children whatever—to be exact 534,125 out of its 842,578 families are without a single child of their own. And there are many American cities that have even a worse birth rate than Chicago

"The one large group of people that remains least affected by the scourge of artificial birth control is our rural population. Were it not for them America would already be headed down the speedy slopes of decline."

Seeking the pleasures of conjugality without a willingness to assume the responsibilities of rearing a family is one of the onslaughts that now batter at the structure of the American home. Intelligence and mutual consideration should be ever-present factors in determining the coming of children to the household. When the husband and wife are healthy, and free from inherited weaknesses and diseases that might be transmitted with injury to their offspring, the use of contraceptives is to be

condemned. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, March 21, 1942, said in a broadcast to the world:

One of the most sombre anxieties which beset those who look ahead is a dwindling birthrate in thirty years. Unless present trends alter, a smaller working and fighting population will have to support and protect nearly as many old people. In fifty years the position will be still worse. If this country is to keep its high place in the leadership of the world and to survive as a great power that can hold its own against external pressure, our people must be encouraged by every means to have larger families.

Former president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, said:

The severest of all condemnations should be that visited upon wilful sterility. The first essential in any civilization is that the man and woman should be the father and mother of healthy children so that the race will increase and not decrease.

The Census Bureau on January 31, 1941, declared:

If the present birth and death rates continue, the non-white population of this country will, in the long run, increase at the rate of about seven percent per generation, while the white population (including the Mexicans) will decrease at the rate of about five percent per generation.

The principal reason for marriage is to rear a family. Failure to do so is one of the conditions that cause love to wilt and eventually to die.

DIVORCE INCREASE

Another indication of the weakening of the Home Front is the increasing rate of divorce. At the beginning of this century (1900) there were in the United States 75 divorces per 100,000 population; 41 years later there were 200 per 100,000 population. Today here in the United States there is one divorce out of every 6.37 marriages. Out of every one hundred couples married in this country, twenty are wrecked on the shoals of divorce. It is reported that in about half of these, children are affected by the decree.

It is pleasing, brethren, to note, that the divorce rate in the Church including civil and temple marriages is only one-half that generally throughout the United States. The temple marriages fall way below that.

Except in cases of infidelity or other extreme conditions, the Church frowns upon divorce, and authorities look with apprehension upon the increasing number of divorces among members of the Church.

A man who has entered into a sacred covenant in the House of the Lord to remain true to the marriage vow is a traitor to that covenant if he separates himself from his wife and family just because he has permitted himself to become infatuated with a pretty face and comely form of some young girl who flattered him with a smile. Even though a loose interpretation of the law of the land would grant such a man a bill of divorce, I think he is unworthy of a recommend to consummate his second marriage in the temple. A separation because of infidelity is another matter.

When we refer to the breaking of the marriage tie, we touch upon one of the saddest experiences of life. For a couple who have basked in the

sunshine of each other's love to stand by daily and see the clouds of misunderstanding and discord obscure the lovelight of their lives is tragedy indeed. In the darkness that follows, the love sparkle in each other's eyes is obscured. To restore it, fruitless attempts are made to say the right word, and to do the right thing; but the word and act are misinterpreted, and angry retort reopens the wound, and hearts once united, as two dewdrops that slip into one, become torn wider and wider asunder. When this heartbreaking state is reached, a separation is sought. But divorce is not the proper solution, especially if there are children concerned. Far better to follow the wise admonition of William George Jordan:

Life is too short and love too great to sacrifice one hour through pettiness. What matters it whose the fault or whose the forgiveness? It is a very poor brand of personal dignity that dares to throw its desecrating shadow between them and the joy of reconciliation and new bonds of love.

When the realization of the waning of love comes, the two should seek to forget for a moment the differences, the saddening changes, the cemetery of dead memories and buried emotions, and try to get back somehow to some common ground of unity and understanding. They should seek to gather together the trifles of sacred things not yet lost. In the thought of these there may be a vitalizing flame of old love flashing out from the dull gray of the ashes that will burn away the dross of discord and misunderstanding.

Love is the most valuable cargo on the ship of life. It is the greatest thing in this world, and the only thing that will make the next worthy of the living. The ebb-tide of love is the saddest thing in a true individual life. It is a life's folly to let love die if aught we can do will keep it real and living.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO STABILIZE HOME LIFE

1. Instruct the youth of both sexes that the foundation of a happy home is laid during pre-marital days. Keep the spring of life pure by conforming their youthful lives to the single standard of morality. When that is done, the bride comes to the man she loves a stainless, priceless jewel. He in turn receives her not as a cheat, but as a man who can meet his bride on the high plane of moral integrity.

I know there are people in the world, some perhaps who are listening to what I am saying, who consider such an ideal old-fashioned, behind the times! They dub those who entertain such ideas as "reactionaries," "stand-patters," and "anti-progressives," etc. Well, all I can say is that nature herself is "old-fashioned," as old as love itself; for since history began man has wanted the woman he loved to be his and his alone. But aside from this, the couple who come to each other in the eyes of the Creator, as true lovers should, have no hidden secrets to break forth at a future time to cause embarrassment and perhaps to destroy the temple of love that has been in process of building for years.

2. Teach the young people that marriage is not merely a man-made institution, but that it is ordained of God, and is a sacred ceremony, and should receive their gravest consideration before they enter upon a contract that involves either happiness or misery for the rest of their lives. Marriage is not something which should be entered into lightly, terminated at pleasure, or ended at the first little difficulty that might arise. The least young people can do is to approach it with honest intentions of building a home that will contribute to the bulwark of a noble society.

3. The ceremony should be consummated not in secret but in the presence of friends and loved ones. Let the marriage be solemnized as far as possible at the place of residence, which will minimize the evils of runaway marriages. For members of the Church, the temple should be the chosen place in which this sacred obligation is assumed. For the future of Latter-day Saint homes, young men and young women should so live that they will be worthy to consummate their union for time and all eternity in the House of the Lord. Regarding this any intelligent person who believes in the persistence of personality after death, in the immortality of the soul, will recognize at once that love, the divinest attribute of the soul, will also persist. Death cannot dissolve the union founded by love when that union is sealed by the power of the holy Priesthood. Couples having sealed upon them the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant may continue in joy and exaltation throughout the eternities to come.

Under the present stress and commotion of social and political groups today, because of the exigencies and horrors of war, the Home Front may seem to be somewhat unstable, but the divine institution of marriage must and shall be saved.

CONCLUSION

Would you have a strong and virile nation?—then keep your homes pure. Would you reduce delinquency and crime?—lessen the number of broken homes. It is time that civilized peoples realize that the home largely determines whether children shall be of high or low character. Home-building, therefore, should be the paramount purpose of parents, and of the nation.

One of our boys in Australia who was in those terrible battles in North Africa writes of his feelings upon returning home as follows:

It was the most joyful experience I can ever recall. Hours before we sighted the Australian coast, the ship's decks were crowded by returning soldiers looking for that first glimpse. I shall never forget that great thrill which came over us all when dimly through the distance we first saw land and home. Gosh! how we did roar and cheer! There were about 22,000 troops in the convoy and you could hear the cheering coming across the distance which separated our ships. My!—after three and one-half years of roaming about the battlefields, living like nothing on earth, it was really good to be home again! As we neared land I couldn't help getting a lump in my throat. I think almost every hard-bitten soldier felt the same as I did, especially as we realized that we were the lucky ones to return. There were many of our fine boys who stayed behind forever!

There are a million men and more on the battle fronts offering their lives in defense of the ideals of liberty vouchsafed by the constitution of the United States. They are praying and fighting for the preservation and permanency of the homes they left behind.

It is the duty of everyone to strive to make it possible that no soldier now dreaming of a happy homecoming may return only to find a broken home or its ideals shattered by the sinful indulgences of a member of the family.

One of the highest ideals of life is to keep secure and free from sorrow the homes of the Church and of the nation.