

## CHURCH OF THE AIR

The *Church of the Air* broadcast was presented Sunday morning, April 3, from 8:30 to 9:00 over radio station KSL and the Columbia Broadcasting System.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of J. Spencer Cornwall, furnished the music for the service, with Dr. Frank W. Asper at the organ. Richard L. Evans was the announcer.

The Choir sang the anthem, "My Redeemer Lives"—Gates.

Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve was the speaker, his subject being "Our Homes—Divinely Ordained."

## ELDER EZRA TAFT BENSON

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

Americans, from the very inception of our nation, have been lovers of home. It has been our primary educational institution and the center of economic, social, and cultural interest. Our homes have been the bulwark of the nation and the most fundamental institution of society. What fond memories and emotions have surged up in our hearts at the mere mention of home, family, parents, children, brothers, and sisters! Some of the sweetest, most soul-satisfying impressions and experiences of life are associated with home and family ties.

## THE AMERICAN HOME

But all is not well with this most basic institution, the American home. In fact, it is in grave danger, if not in deadly peril. There is convincing evidence that a creeping rot of moral disintegration is eating into the very vitals of this temple of American civilization. It gives cause for serious concern.

Marriage, the home, and family are sacred institutions. They are not man-made, but have been established by a kind Providence for the blessing of his children. In the record of that first marriage recorded in Genesis, the Lord makes four significant pronouncements: first, that it is not good for man to be alone; second, that woman was created to be a help meet for man; third, that they twain should be one flesh; and fourth, that man should leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife.

Later, as though to re-enforce the earlier statement, the Lord said:

. . . What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder  
(Matthew 19:6);

also

Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her  
and none else. (D. & C. 42:22.)

Children are likewise counseled in holy writ in their duty to parents. Paul the Apostle wrote:

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Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.  
Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with  
promise),

That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the  
earth. (Ephesians 6:1-3.)

#### RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS

Regarding the divinely appointed responsibility of parents, the  
sobering counsel is given that

. . . they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly  
before the Lord. . . . And . . . inasmuch as parents . . . teach them not to  
understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ, the Son of the  
living God, . . . and the gift of the Holy Ghost . . . the sin be upon the  
heads of the parents. (D. & C. 68:28, 25.)

These and other similar scriptures make crystal clear the divine  
origin of marriage, the home, and family, the heaven-imposed re-  
sponsibilities resting upon the parents and the penalties imposed  
when laws governing these hallowed institutions are disregarded.

History reveals that the early pioneers of America recognized  
and honored these obligations. They were blessed in their homes  
and families for so doing. Does our record today merit like bless-  
ings? If we fail to accept these obligations and to keep the Ameri-  
can home morally and spiritually sound, the very future of the nation  
will be in jeopardy. The choice is ours as parents and citizens.

#### WEAKENING INFLUENCES

The facts are not reassuring as we soberly appraise them. Far-  
reaching changes, resulting from industrialization, concentration of  
populations, commercialization of recreation, and other activities  
once performed in the home, all tend to lead away from home asso-  
ciations.

Accompanying these changes, and in some measure resulting  
from them, has been a marked increase in pleasure seeking; the  
mad rush for money and other material things; the unwarranted in-  
dulgence of personal gratifications; the insidious inroads of tobacco,  
liquor, gambling, and many other tendencies in our complex modern  
civilization. All these have exerted a pulling power away from the  
home and have weakened its structure.

There seems to be a tendency for many married people to be-  
come soft and to seek a life filled with ease and the pleasures of the  
moment. They invite the pleasure of conjugality but often refuse  
to shoulder the responsibility of parenthood. Reliable reports indi-  
cate that approximately forty percent of the married women have no  
children whatever or only one child.

#### DIVORCE RECORD

The divorce record continues upward at an alarming rate.  
Fifty years ago there was a ratio of one divorce to every sixteen

marriages; by 1946, one to every three. In some American cities divorces nearly equal marriages. Reports show that two-thirds of those seeking divorces have no children.

Frequently in homes where no formal divorce has occurred, there is unhappiness due to infidelity and lack of harmony and filial affection. It is largely from such broken, bad, and neglected homes that our youthful delinquents come. According to J. Edgar Hoover, director of the F.B.I., "The actions of the majority of them were—and are—directly related to the conduct of their parents." Yes, crime begins at home.

In view of these and other well-known but distressing facts, what should be done? Can we safeguard the home and stabilize family life? Can the deterioration in home life be checked and corrected? If not, what is our future?

No nation can rise above its homes. The church, the school, and even the nation, stand helpless before a weakened and degraded home, in building character. The good home is the rock foundation—the cornerstone of civilization. If this, our nation, is to endure, the home must be safeguarded, strengthened, and restored to its rightful importance.

#### UNCHASTITY

To do so, we must start with youth—our boys and girls. They must know that the foundation of a happy home is laid during pre-marital days. Their relationships should be on a happy but high plane. There is grave danger in loose and promiscuous relations of young people. The harmful effects of unseemly familiarities are carried over into married life and tend to weaken the structure of the home. Unchastity is the most damning of all evils, while moral purity is one of the greatest bulwarks of successful homemaking. Happy and successful homes cannot be built on immorality.

May I, as a member of a large family of children and a grateful father of six, say to the young men and women of America, keep the fountains of life pure. Guard your virtue as you would your lives. Reserve for the marriage relationship the sweet and soul-satisfying intimacies of life. The God of heaven, who instituted the marriage covenant, so intended. He has commanded purity of life and a single standard for men and women. If you fail as young people properly to restrain yourselves, you will pay the penalty in heartache, disappointment, and loss of self-respect. Do not reach out too eagerly for the excitements and thrills of life or they will turn to ashes in your hands. They will come in their own due time in the sacred bonds of marriage. Youthful sweethearts, be true to God's holy laws. Remember, they cannot be broken with impunity. If you would be happy and successful in your early association, courtship, and homebuilding, conform your lives to the eternal laws of heaven. There is no other way.

## IMPORTANCE OF EXAMPLE

As parents, what is our attitude regarding the sacred obligations of parenthood? One of the two major purposes of marriage is children. "Multiply and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28) was among the earliest commandments given of the Lord. Nations which refuse to accept this God-given obligation, sink into oblivion. Will our sons and daughters want children because of our attitude and example?

Marriage, designed to be an eternal covenant, is the most glorious and most exalting principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ. No ordinance is of more importance and none more sacred and more necessary to the eternal joy of man. Faithfulness to the marriage covenant brings the fullest joy here and glorious rewards hereafter. The abuse of this sacred ordinance despoils the lives of individuals, wrecks the basic institution of the home, and causes the downfall of nations.

The future homes of America will be fortified as parents uphold the Christian virtues before their children. If parents love and respect each other, and if in their sacred partnership there are full support and unquestioned fidelity, these essentials will be translated into the homes of tomorrow. Conversely, if there are bickering, quarreling, and lack of harmony at home, and participation in the dangerous practice of flirtations with others when away, then the homes of tomorrow will be weakened thereby.

Parenthood carries with it peculiar responsibilities. If these are accepted without quibbling, while enthroning motherhood as the highest calling of women, our children—the parents of tomorrow—will be properly impressed and encouraged in the establishment of like homes.

## FAMILY PRAYER

The homes of America need also the blessings which come from daily communion with God. Devotion in the home, which has been such an anchor to youth and parents alike, has all but vanished. A few generations ago it was a common practice. Then families knelt together in prayer; the scriptures were read aloud; and households joined in the singing of church hymns. This practice, if revived, would contribute much to the strength of the home and the nation. The differences and irritations of the day melt away as families approach the throne of heaven together. Unity increases. The ties of love and affection are re-enforced and the peace of heaven enters.

In such homes secret prayers are said night and morning by members of the household. Individual and family problems are approached with confidence after invoking the favor of heaven. Young people participating in such a family devotional have hearts freed from evil intent as they leave for an evening of entertainment.

These will be the restraining influence in the group when gilded temptations arise. Parents who surround their children with the refining influence of daily devotion are making their contribution to the safeguarding of the American home.

#### MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

America's homes need, also, the stabilizing influence of a closer relationship between parents and children. Every boy and girl needs the safeguard which an intimate association with mother or father will provide. The failure of parents and children to understand each other weakens the framework of the home. This relationship must be built upon love and mutual confidence. Then when the problems of life arise, father and mother will be the first sought for counsel. Herein is safety.

Such an atmosphere can be created as parents plan for recreation and diversion together with their children. An evening at home in wholesome activity; a picnic in the mountains or nearby park; or a project for fathers and sons and mothers and daughters—these will all tend to increase filial affection and love in the home, and strengthen parent-children relations. Time thus spent yields big dividends. Love at home and obedience to parents increase as the bonds of home are made secure.

Parents in this close association have no difficulty teaching virtue, honesty, industry, the principles basic to our American way of life and the dangers of foreign philosophies and ideologies. Effective parental guidance—the greatest need of the home—is here provided to the profit of the individual, the home, the community, and the nation.

#### PRESERVATION OF HOMES

Herein, then, lies our path of safety. Our homes must become bulwarks of strength through enthroning righteousness and bringing into them the peace, unity, and unselfishness engendered by personal purity, unquestioned fidelity, and simple family devotion. Parents must accept marriage as a divine institution, and honor parenthood. Children must be inspired by precept and example in preparation for marriage, to guard against unchastity as against a loathsome disease, and to practice the other fundamental Christian virtues. Love and mutual confidence must be safeguarded to strengthen parent-children relationships. Home must become the abiding place of the Spirit of God because the pure in heart dwell therein.

Yes, America's homes, if this great nation is to endure, must be fortified and preserved. They must be morally and spiritually sound. There can be no satisfactory substitute for the home. Its foundation is as ancient as the world. Its mission has been God-ordained.

May God grant that the builders of American homes may have the courage and wisdom to fulfil faithfully their divine obligations, to

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inspire young people with a conviction of the importance of these God-ordained institutions of marriage, the home, and family, that the marriages of our boys and girls may be consummated under a spiritual influence in the presence of friends and loved ones, thereby laying a safe foundation for their homes of tomorrow.

And so today, in this the greatest of all nations, in this land choice above all others, we pay humble tribute to the home, for a modern prophet declares,

. . . that someday the divinely ordained home is to be the very foundation of the kingdom of God.

May a kind Providence bless the homes of America, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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The Choir then sang an anthem, "He Watching Over Israel"—Mendelssohn.

The service was concluded by the Choir singing the hymn, "The Morning Breaks"—Careless.