

YOUNG WOMEN'S MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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with all members of the Board as at present constituted

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with all members of the Board as at present constituted

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

My brothers and sisters, I stand before you this morning to make a few remarks with a hope in my heart that the Lord will bless me and direct me in what I shall say and that I may be aided by your faith and prayers. With those prayers coming to me in my behalf, I shall be blessed, and you also.

ABSENCE NOTED

I think I would like to begin by noting the absence of a man who was with us for forty-seven years as an Apostle, as President of the Quorum, and as President of the Church; a man who had as great love for his fellow men as any man I have ever met; a man who left with us, or left with me, two great sayings—"We are all children of our Heavenly Father," and "Keep out of the devil's territory"—fundamental principles. I am referring, of course, to President George Albert Smith.

In this Church there never is an interregnum. So soon as one President dies, the Twelve take over; then, on their proposal, a President of the Church is chosen and sustained. And always, the powers and authorities, the prerogatives of the one who has passed descend to the one who comes. Those powers and authorities, responsibilities, have descended upon our present President, David O. McKay, who is administering the affairs of the Church with wisdom, with understanding, and inspired by the revelations of the Lord's mind and will.

THE FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

During this conference much has been said about a subject that has been running in my mind for several months, and notwithstanding that it has been discussed so much, I should like to add a few words during the time I shall address you, of my own feeling about it. I am referring to the home and the family relationship.

The family, looked at broadly, is as nearly basic to the principles and plan of the restored gospel as any principle of which I know. We have a Heavenly Father and Mother, the eternal parents of the spirits of us who are here. And those spirits were created that they might come to this earth and receive mortal tabernacles, so that in the due time of the Lord we shall lay away the mortal tabernacle; then in due time we shall resume it and become the perfect soul, the body and the spirit reunited.

The Lord has created, so he has told us, worlds without number, and I am sure for this same purpose.

That, I repeat, that family relationship is fundamental, because without it we cannot reach out to the destiny which our Heavenly Father has provided for us. When Adam came, he was alone. And the Lord said, "It is not good that the man should be alone." He said to Adam, "Multiply, and replenish the earth." (Gen. 1:28.) Eve came, then the command was given that a man "shall cleave unto his wife," leaving father and mother, "and they twain shall be one flesh." (Matt. 19:5.) That was reiterated by the Savior replying to the query of the taunting Pharisees. And out of that union came ourselves, our mortal tabernacles. In our day the Lord has revealed another element, and that is the sealing of man and wife for time and for all eternity, and out of that union they twain beget blood and flesh.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS

And I would like you to reflect upon the fact that our children came to us with spirits that did not ask us to bring them, but with spirits, through some operation of which I am not aware, that are assigned to us; and they come to us as our guests. We are responsible for the mortal tabernacling of that spirit; and I should like each and every Latter-day Saint to get that fact into his heart, that the child which is his, or hers, comes at the invitation, virtually, of them who beget it, and then I would like you to reflect upon the responsibility which that brings home to each and every man and woman who is a parent. Yours is the responsibility to see that this tabernacled spirit loses no opportunity, through you, to prove his worthiness and righteousness in living through his second estate.

Now the point that I wish particularly to emphasize is this—you parents cannot shift that responsibility to anyone else. It is yours; you cannot divest yourselves of it.

You cannot give it to the state, and you ought not to give it to the state, for when the state takes over the direction, instruction, and rearing of its youth, then passes out, as the whole history of the world shows, the great principle of free agency, and not only that, but all the sacred principles of chastity and morality, with a

host of other virtues which belong to a free society and are inherent in the governing principles of the kingdom of God.

You cannot entrust your children, in the sense of having them take over your responsibility, to our schools. They cannot do your work. They may aid, and, sometimes, they may detract and defeat. I have referred before to pernicious doctrines which are appearing in our schools, not only political doctrines, which I would like you to note, but moral. The doctrine that the sex urge is like the urge for food and drink, is born of Satan, and the man or woman who teaches it, is Satan-inspired. Every effort you can make to prevent the spread of this doctrine, you should make.

You cannot entrust your children to society. That will never do. Society is too tolerant of wrong, too ignorant of matters of right living, too easy to betray and debauch.

And lastly, the Church cannot take over the responsibility which is yours to train your children. The Church can aid, and should be the greatest aid; and we are derelict if we do not, as Church members and as Church organizations, provide that assistance. But beyond the Church—the Sunday Schools, the Mutual Improvement Associations, the Primary, the Relief Society, and all the priesthood organizations—beyond that is the family, and it is our responsibility as parents to see to it that we fully perform our duties in this respect.

THE MOTHER'S PART

Now, brethren, at best we are somewhat clumsy at leading and directing our children. We are away from home, of necessity, a great part of the time, our thoughts are along other lines, we have to battle for our existence, for the livelihood of our families. Those of us who hold Church positions are absent in the evenings, in addition to the days that we spend getting our livelihood. I repeat, we are a little bit clumsy. And so to the sisters of the Church, the mothers of the Church, they whom the Lord has designed and planned should be the immediate instrumentality of perpetuating the race and of bringing spirits to this earth, providing bodies for them, to them we must primarily look for the rearing of our children.

Sisters, when you think of what a child is, the mortal tabernacle of a spirit created by our Heavenly Father, a mortal tabernacle which you, with all the sacrifice that it has entailed, with all the danger that has been involved of going down into the valley of the shadow of death to bring the child forth, when you think of that, do you not sense how urgent, how immediate, how great is the responsibility which you have assumed? And, oh, how well the great bulk of the sisters, the mothers of the Latter-day Saints are performing that, going on through their whole lives sacrificing

for their children, for their grandchildren, and sometimes for their great-grandchildren! The Lord will bless you sisters, out of the abundance of his blessings, for every sacrifice which you make for these children. And do keep close to them! And above all, you, yourselves, lead lives that will be an example to these little ones that you have brought into the world. After all, perhaps that is your greatest responsibility—to live righteously before the Lord.

NOT BEYOND TEMPTATION

One thing other I would like to mention for a moment, and that is—I hope that none of you will feel that your children are beyond the reach of temptation or transgression. The more firmly you feel that, the greater the danger to your family. No one is safe from the wiles and the persuasions of Satan. He reached Adam and Eve before mortality came. He reached into the family of Adam, and Adam's family produced the first murderer. All down through history he has reached into the families and to the persons of those who are in high and responsible positions. Satan reached David, a man after the Lord's own heart, who committed the great sin which he committed; the great Solomon, and stole his heart away. And in modern times we have too many illustrations of where children of our leaders do not live just as we would wish. So I beg of you, do not assume, my dear brothers and sisters, that your children are beyond the reach of Satan, but always go forward, always conduct your family life, always be parents, fathers and mothers acting on the fact that Satan stands at the elbow of your dear one to lead him astray. Never forget that, my brothers and sisters.

A LIGHT TO GUIDE

Now, in conclusion, I am reminded that Moses, herding his father-in-law's sheep at Mount Horeb, saw one day a flaming bush, and the flame did not consume. Being curious, he started to walk toward this flaming bush, and the voice of the Lord came out of the bush forbidding him to come farther, for, said the Lord, ". . . the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." (Ex. 3:5.) So I think that in every Latter-day Saint home the Spirit of the Lord is a flaming, non-consuming fire, there to light our way, to guide us, to protect us, and to help us do our duty, and every inch of space in that home is holy ground. We should never forget it. Always remember, and always live so that we shall not defile in any way the holiness of the home which should be ours.

May God bless the Saints in their trials and in their tribulations, may he help them to guide and direct their children, may he give them the power to rear their children in righteousness, so that this work of ours shall fulfil its destiny and roll forth and fill the earth; this blessing I ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.