

brethren, this Sabbath day, as the sun rises over those distant embattled shores and you gather together to worship in the name of him whose peace must come, if peace is to come at all, even Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Joseph Fielding Smith:

We have just listened to Elder

Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop of the Church, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve.

Bishop Vandenberg:

Bishop John H. Vandenberg

Presiding Bishop

Under the heading of "Vital Statistics" in the daily newspaper, there are listed the names of those happy men and women who have received licenses to enter into the holy state of matrimony. There are also listed under the same heading those unhappy individuals who have failed in matrimony and are now suing for divorce. Oftentimes, this is a longer list. One wonders what happened in the latter cases that brought their status from bliss to chaos.

The following excerpt from a letter written by a 16-year-old girl tells how family trouble may start:

"My dad and mother are good people, and I love them very much. We have family prayer but not very often any more because Mom and Dad are always fighting about money. We have lots of bills to pay each month, and my dad is working two jobs to make more money. I am wondering if it is all right for me, since I have a job at a drive-in, to give my money to my mother and skip tithing for a while?"

The young lady should be commended for her desires to help her parents, but the matter would not be helped by diverting her tithing to the cause.

Management of money

The answer to this family's problem is not necessarily more money. The need for more money is merely the symptom. The malady is excessive debt, caused by uncontrolled credit purchasing. The cure is a reappraisal of the income after allowing God's due, a survey of the amounts needed

for the real necessities—shelter, food, clothing, health—and a calculation of the residue of income for the amortization of other indebtedness, with a resolve by all that no further credit purchases be made. It may even mean the forfeiture of some luxury items that should not have been purchased in the first place. Here I would caution people against borrowing more money to consolidate debts, thereby increasing their interest rates and extending their bondage.

Unwise indebtedness

Unwarrantable indebtedness is one of the curses of this day and age. It causes many people to live their lives in bondage. The lure of buying on time under the "easy payment plan" too often puts the millstone around the neck of the purchaser; and when once in the credit rut, it is very hard to get out. Sorrow, grief, divorce, and delinquency are all perpetuated by such foolishness.

When a family finds itself too far in debt, the atmosphere of discouragement enters the home, relationships become tense, tempers become short, and marital troubles begin to erupt. To meet the indebtedness, the mother may frequently leave her children to themselves while she finds employment out of the home. Irregularities in the home follow: service to God is disregarded, tithing is neglected, prayers become less frequent, persons begin to feel separated and apart from God and church, and the condition explained by Isaiah ensues:

"... the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither

his ear heavy, that it cannot hear;

"But . . . iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." (Isa. 59:1-2.)

Some weeks ago, discussing this subject at a stake conference, a judge said to me that from his experience on the bench, financial problems were, in the majority of cases, the real cause of marital failure.

A study was undertaken at one of our universities some years ago concerning the relationship of divorce with financial matters. It revealed that steady employment is a real factor in the success of marriage, that marriage becomes increasingly less stable when there is a disturbance in the family income, such as unemployment and work layoffs. (William J. Goode, *After Divorce* [Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1956], p. 54.)

Marriage and money management

Anyone contemplating marriage should certainly recognize that an adequate income is paramount. Young people need to prepare for this responsibility. Then the wise handling of that income would be to see that the outgo does not exceed the income, with a designated amount for reserve. Family financial disturbances come from inadequate planning, overbuying, poor vision, emotional immaturity, and lack of self-discipline. Getting in debt is largely an emotional decision rather than a rational one. Major purchases should not be made in a hurry; take a few months or years to think and plan. Marriage is a partnership arrangement between two individuals. Decisions should be made by the husband and wife jointly. They should talk financial matters over freely.

Because the home is the basic unit of society, its stability, sanctity, and harmony should be maintained. Our objective should be to help eradicate anything that tends to upset the equilibrium of the family unit.

Avoid debt

The admonition of our Church leaders has always been to stay out of unwarrantable debt. We should "shy

away from debt as we would a plague" was the counsel of the late President J. Reuben Clark, Jr. He also warned: "To buy on the installment plan means to mortgage your future earnings. If, through sickness or death or through loss of work, the earnings cease, the property bought is lost, together with what has been put into it." President Joseph F. Smith said: "It is highly proper for the Latter-day Saints to get out of debt."

We ought not to allow financial problems to enter our homes to cause the family unit to deteriorate. We ought to hearken to the Savior as we build and establish our homes. I think his advice is a trustworthy guide for us today, for he said:

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

"Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

"Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." (Luke 14:28-30.)

Organize within income

The principle here is: be sure you have a program to pay your way before you buy. It was sound 2,000 years ago; it is still a sound practice today.

Admittedly, there are so-called economists who plead for liberal use of credit. But as Charles Neal states in his book, *Sense with Dollars*: "If you fall for this hogwash and get yourself into financial trouble, the same economists will chide you for being 'economically illiterate' and hint that you are a threat to the free enterprise system, and the truth is, you would be." (Charles V. Neal, *Sense with Dollars* [Garden City, N. J.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965].)

Costly credit leads to bondage

Our society has been pommelled with so many "easy credit" signs, and the lure of such has made many a covetous people. The Lord decreed on Mount Sinai: "Thou shalt not covet." Covet means, according to my

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dictionary, "Eagerly desirous, especially inordinately desirous of possessions or wealth; grasping, avaricious, often eager to possess that to which one has no right." If you cannot pay for an article, you have no right to it.

Young couples should discipline themselves with the thought, "Don't try to get everything at once. Rome was not built in a day." And again, they should be reminded that there is no such thing as an "easy payment." All payments are hard-cash payments. Unwarrantable installment buying is a pit into which those who covet fall. Debt is the tyrannical master.

We read with abhorrence that years ago, in many parts of the world, it was a practice to place people in bondage and bring them to America to serve as bonded servants to their masters for a specified period of time. All their work and energies were used for the benefit of their master. The citizens of this country could not tolerate such a practice for long. It was this attitude for liberty that gave birth to this nation, a nation in which its citizens could be free from bondage. Yet, today many of our citizens are slaves to unwarrantable credit practices. They can free themselves if they will. Naturally, it isn't easy to break old habits, but obedience to the gospel principles should give an adequate incentive to get out of debt.

Productivity a valuable resource

Most individuals are endowed with production power. There is no substitute for personal production. True wealth is termed production, and there is only one basic, proper way to live: upon the fruits of one's own labor. Enjoyment of life comes through such a practice. Jesus stressed this principle in his parable of the talents when he said:

"... he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverdst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained besides them five more.

"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many

things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matt. 25:20-21. Italics added.)

Money wisdom learned at home

Providing for one's self and family is a sacred charge to the husband, for if he does not, he is considered by God worse than an infidel. To provide indicates that parents will teach their children, early in life, self-reliance, to abhor debt as a plague, how to earn income through industry, how to receive proper value for money expended, how to build reserves for schooling and missionary service, the value of interest rates, what it costs them when they pay, what it earns for them as they build their reserves. There seems to be only one place for children to learn these lessons, and that is in the home. Sylvester Kellerman, U. S. referee in bankruptcy at Louisville, Kentucky, calls to our attention:

"What we need is a basic course in economics for everybody. Money management should be taught in grade schools. Schools can teach children French in the second grade, but they can't teach them interest rates.

"People seldom see how much an item costs any more. It's how much a week. When people have trouble meeting their credit installments, they begin traveling from loan company to loan company. That's like trying to drink yourself sober."

Impossible to borrow oneself out of debt

It is impossible for anyone to borrow himself out of debt.

The declaration made by the Church that "work is to be . . . the ruling principle of the lives of church membership" should settle any questions we may have about the ever-growing feeling and belief that people can live off the public without laboring. (*Welfare Plan Handbook*, p. 1.)

Perhaps many of us need to take a good look at our own financial situation and philosophy, because I fear that many Latter-day Saints are being swept into the rising tide of financial insolvency. The virtues of thrift and saving need to be taught in our families. In accordance with the teachings of the Church, let us try to be free

of debt and have an adequate reserve of food, clothing, and money to meet an emergency. Remember the adage: "A family out of debt is out of danger."

Wise budgeting and tithing

Wise family budgeting begins with obeying the law of tithing, for the payment of tithing puts the mind at ease and alert to cope with other essentials of family financial matters. Publilius Syrus said: "When the mind rules wisely, money is a blessing"; hence, wisdom in spending can be a blessing to any family. Failure of a married couple to handle wisely and efficiently the thousands of dollars they receive and disburse during marriage may lead to the chaos and disaster of divorce and the listing of their marriage failure in the "vital statistics" column of the newspaper. This must not happen.

Since marriage is a fulfillment of a

divine command, we should take God into our partnership with the implied promise that we will sustain him and his truth. Our homes must foster the lasting virtues of honesty, thrift, work, self-discipline, sacrifice, economy, obedience, production, and freedom from debt. These are important facets of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. . ." (Rom. 1:16.)

May we catch its visions and blessings, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Joseph Fielding Smith:

We have just listened to Bishop John H. Vandenberg of the Presiding Bishopric.

Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, will be the next speaker.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

The "weak" and "simple" to proclaim the restoration

During the early history of the Church the Lord, in revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith, explained that the fullness of his gospel would be restored and that it would be proclaimed by the weak and simple unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers (D&C 1:23), that he required their heart and a willing mind, and that they should not weary in well-doing. (D&C 64:33-34.)

And inasmuch as they are humble, they would be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time.

They would have power to lay the foundation of this Church and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness. (D&C 1:28, 30.)

In these revelations the Lord explained his use of weak and simple instruments to proclaim his gospel. However, he gave them commandments that they might possess understanding and knowledge, receive

power and become strong, thereby qualifying themselves to be effective servants.

The Prophet a witness

The Prophet Joseph Smith is the chief example. He was weak insofar as the learning of men is concerned; but because he was humble, obedient, and possessed a willing mind, he became a mighty and strong leader and witness of the divinity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In all ages this has been the pattern for those who would succeed in the work of the ministry: humility, prayer, dedication, and a desire and willingness to learn the will of the Lord.

With the development and application of these qualities come knowledge, power, and strength.

Members become witnesses

Membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints provides many opportunities to participate in