

TABERNACLE CHOIR

Isaac M. Stewart, President
 Richard P. Condie, Conductor
 Jay E. Welch, Assistant Conductor

TABERNACLE ORGANISTS

Alexander Schreiner, Chief Organist
 Robert N. Cundick
 Roy M. Darley
 Frank W. Asper, Organist Emeritus

President Hugh B. Brown

The voting is unanimous in the affirmative.

President Alvin R. Dyer

We acknowledge, my brethren and

sisters, the sustaining vote of the conference.

Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker this afternoon, and he will be followed by Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Council of Seventy.

ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

Of the Council of the Twelve

The hallowed singing of these children's voices suggests the words of another song:

"I think, when I read that sweet story
 of old,
 When Jesus was here among men,
 How he called little children like
 lambs to His fold,
 I should like to have been with Him
 then.

"I wish that His hands had been
 placed on my head,
 That his arms had been thrown around
 me,

That I might have seen, His kind look
 when He said,

'Let the little ones come unto Me.' "

—Jemima Luke

With our minds turned to our Savior, one of his most sobering sayings comes to mind:

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,
 "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Matt. 18:2-4, 6-7.)

Responsibility for teaching children

The innocence with which children come into the world is one of the awesome responsibilities of all who, in any way, influence their lives. And to see such unstained innocence neglected or abused, or exposed to evil or unwholesome influence, or warped by bad example, or by false teaching—or by failure to teach—is a sobering concern.

There are many who have responsibility for teaching children: parents, teachers, friends, anyone who in any way enters their lives, including the makers and promoters of products, of

policies; creators of entertainment, and the whole community, publicly and privately. And children in their innocence have a right to be protected from exploitation and from evil influence.

As to teachers, the following is cited from a significant source: "The personal influence of the teacher, in molding the character of the pupils, is the most important element in their education. . . . In morals, a teacher cannot teach what he is not. If he talks what he is not, it were better not said, for his life talks more forcibly and is sooner believed, both by children and adults." (W. M. Welch, *How to Organize, Classify and Teach a Country School.*)

Always we must remember that the teacher teaches himself. As Henry Adams said it: "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." (*The Education of Henry Adams*, ch. 20.)

People who speak of their private lives as a thing apart from their professions would well remember this sentence from Stanford University's Dr. David Starr Jordan: "There is no real excellence in all this world," he said, "which can be separated from right living." (*The University and the Common Man.*)

Patronizing the cheap or trashy side

Now a comment on another question that concerns the whole community: It would be well if young people, parents, and all others who are concerned with decency would not patronize anything that tends to lower people's lives or lead their minds down to the cheap or trashy or harmful or suggestive side.

Quite apart from the personal effect on the one who partakes of a harmful product, or who witnesses an immoral or suggestive or obscene picture or play (through whatever medium it may be presented), we well would remember that whenever we patronize an immoral or unclean performance, or use a harmful or unwholesome product, we are helping to make evil profitable. Whatever other motives there may be, immoral entertainment or unwholesome products are produced to make money. And as a people, as parents, as citizens of a great, beloved land, we ought to be

committed to the principle of not making evil profitable. The more profitable it is, the more evil will be offered.

One might well wonder about the term "adult entertainment." Could it be that something unclean or immoral which is not fit for children is wholesome for adults? Is "adult evil" acceptable? How consistent is it to have a double standard?

Or how would anyone be so short-sighted as to partake of that which would impair his physical or mental or spiritual capacity, and say to himself, "It's not good for children, but it's all right for me"?

If the content of a magazine encourages loose morals and low-mindedness and permissive, degrading attitudes and practices, should we buy it? Should we read it? Should we have it around the home?

If a book is filthy, should we buy it? Should we read it? ". . . books," said Thomas Carlyle, "are like men's souls." (*Inaugural Address*, Edinburgh, 1866.)

Should we keep a television or radio presentation exposed to viewing or listening if it is one of crudeness or brutish violence or indecent suggestion—or even if it is simply trashy or trivial?

"Unless virtue guide us," said William Penn, ". . . our choice must be wrong." (*Some Fruits of Solitude: Temporal Happiness.*)

The commandments of God have not been repealed. The laws of cause and consequence are still in force.

Honest and wise men needed

The creators of community influence and environment and example—which is all of us—would well remember the words of our Savior concerning whosoever "shall offend one of these little ones"—or older ones—or whosoever devotes his life to the production or promotion or support of mind-corroding, soul-destroying evil in any of its forms.

"Liberty," said Horace Greeley, "cannot be established without morality, nor morality without faith."

". . . honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should ob-

serve to uphold . . ." (D&C 98:10)—and this would seem to suggest that qualified and able and courageous people should prepare themselves and make themselves available for public and civic service, and not be indifferent or complacent or resigned to sitting on the sidelines. Even at personal sacrifice there ought to be a sufficient number who will make themselves available for public service.

Obligations of parents

Now what of our obligations as parents? We cannot safely leave the teaching and molding of our children to chance. We cannot altogether count on others to teach our children. The first responsibility is ours. We must build our own internal strength.

There is more and more evidence that the basic attitudes and capacity and character of children are molded at a very early age. "No curious scientist," said an eminent authority, "ever had as great curiosity as a youngster from eighteen months to three years of age," all of which confirms the importance of implanting the truths of life early—and always.

"My life is my message," said Mahatma Gandhi. It is so with each of us. The impressions of what we are and do and feel and believe and live and teach are carried over to our children.

If we depart from principles, may we reasonably expect our children not to depart?

Many a parent who has criticized sacred things or principles he should support wonders why his children later depart further from principles.

Those who follow bad examples don't always know where to stop, and parents who indulge themselves "in moderation" may have children who indulge themselves to excess.

There should be no double standard. Constantly others are learning from us, feeling from us, reasoning their course of conduct from our course of conduct. And if we get a little over the line, our children, our young people, may get a long way over the line.

Within the week I have read this comment from a neighboring country: "It is not the policeman's responsibility . . . to substitute for the family. Respect for law, . . . begins with respect for parents . . . respect for the rights and privacy of brothers and sisters and of playmates." (*The Royal Bank of Canada Monthly Letter*, January and March, 1969.)

World no better than its homes

"Law itself," said Samuel Smiles, "is but the reflex of homes."

This world will be no better than its homes. This country, this community, this Church, will be no better than the strength and effectiveness of our homes and families.

Example and love and sheer goodness of life do more for children than can be calculated.

The integrity and effectiveness and affection of the home and family are first.

In a well-known work, Dostoevsky had this to say: "The soul is healed by being with children."

Healed, yes—and also searched. Perhaps we are never more open to penetrating scrutiny than when the eyes of a child are upon us. And so often we underestimate their understanding. Children have a way of seeing inside. And our teaching must be more than talking. "[Boys] know truth from counterfeit as quick as the chemist does," said Emerson. "They detect weakness in your eye and behavior . . . before you open your mouth. . . ." (Emerson, *Compensation*.)

Innocence of children

Don't try to hide your heart from a child. They come here clean and sweet and teachable, from the Father of us all. Innocent they come, and innocent they are, until environment or example is otherwise.

One can scarcely conceive of corruption or cruelty to children.

"The child's grief throbs against its little heart as heavily as the man's sorrow," said Edwin Chapin.

Saturday, April 5

Second Day

"I love these little people," said Charles Dickens, "and it is not a slight thing, when they, who are so fresh from God, love us."

"Be ever gentle with the children God has given you," pleaded Elihu Burritt. "Watch over them constantly; reprove them earnestly, but not in anger."

"The first duty to children is to make them happy.—If you have not made them so, you have wronged them.—No other good they may get can make up for that." (Charles Buxton, English author.)

To quote a sentence from Arnold Glasgow: "The best thing to spend on children—is your time."

We need more mothers at home—and fathers. We need more faithful observance of home evenings—more unity and faithfulness in marriage, and devotion to duty, and happiness at home.

We need to feed the minds of our children when they are most receptive. We need to give them happy, wholesome memories.

Sometimes when you have said something to a child you didn't intend to say, or were more severe than the situation called for, have you ever gone back and looked at that same youngster when he was asleep, and felt terribly humble and terribly small? And, with a little extra moisture in your eyes, have you ever uttered a fervent prayer that you would be the kind of parent you ought to be?

O how sweetly, how often we have heard them sing:

"I am a child of God,
And He has sent me here,
Has given me an earthly home
With parents kind and dear.

"Lead me, guide me, walk beside me,
Help me find the way.
Teach me all that I must do
To live with Him some-day."

—Naomi W. Randall

Learn and live gospel

Parents, learn the gospel; live it. Be a living sermon in the home. Take time for your children. What better can you take time for?

"... I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth." (D&C 93:40.)

Let every parent, every teacher—and all of us—teach truly so that no one whom we should have taught can ever, here or hereafter, accusingly say, "Why didn't you teach me? Why didn't you tell me?"

"They are idols of hearts and of households;

They are angels of God in disguise;
The sunlight still sleeps in their tresses,
His glory still gleams in their eyes;
These truants from home and from Heaven,

They have made me more manly and mild;

And I know now how Jesus could liken
The kingdom of God to a child."
—Charles M. Dickinson, *The Children*

May heaven help us to help all children, our own and others, worldwide, to be loved, to be fed, to be taught, to be close to our hearts, and to be uncorrupted, unoffended, to have happiness and faith and hope.

In the wonderful words of Alma: "... may the peace of God rest upon you, and upon your houses and lands, and upon your flocks and herds, and all that you possess, your women and your children, according to your faith and good works, from this time forth and forever." (Al. 7:27.)

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

President Alvin R. Dyer

Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Council of Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Eldred G. Smith Patriarch of the Church.