

President N. Eldon Tanner

First Counselor in the First Presidency

Those two beautiful songs, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," and "Arise, Shine, Thy Light is Come," together with that comprehensive prayer, have made me feel this morning to bear testimony to the world that I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, who came and gave his life for us. Though he gave us the plan of life and salvation, he was crucified. Through his resurrection it is possible for us to enjoy eternal life. Prophets of God have always been persecuted, and many of them killed when they taught the word of the Lord. What a serious situation to think of!

Also, I wish to bear my testimony to you today that his Church, with the gospel in its fulness, has been re-established through one of his chosen prophets; that the Church of Jesus Christ is here upon the earth today; and that Jesus is directing his Church through a living prophet, Harold B. Lee. I would appeal to men everywhere to listen to the word of the Lord as given unto us by the voice of his Prophet for the salvation of all mankind. Do not ignore, ridicule, or try to destroy.

Role of womanhood

Today I should like to speak about the role of womanhood in this Church, where we have such a great body of wonderful women—wives, mothers, and single women engaged in the work of the Lord and in the service of their fellow men. They are affiliated with the Relief Society, the principal women's organization; the Primary, where our children are instructed; the Sunday School, where the gospel is taught to all members; the MIA (Mutual Improvement Association), which is the activity and social organization for youth and

adults; and in various other capacities our women serve with dedication and skill.

After discussing business matters with some men the other day, the conversation took on a more personal, informal note, during which one man said: "I have the most wonderful wife in the world." Another said: "That's what *you* think. I think *I* have the best." A third man said: "Isn't it a great blessing to have a wife you love, who loves you, one who is a good mother and homemaker, with high ideals, who believes in God and wants to help her family accept and live the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ?"

What woman could want any greater glory or tribute than that which comes from an appreciative and loving husband? The applause and homage of the world fades into insignificance when compared with the approbation of God and expressions of love and appreciation which come from the hearts and lips of those who are nearest and dearest to her.

From the beginning God has made it clear that woman is very special, and he has also very clearly defined her position, her duties, and her destiny in the divine plan. Paul said that man is the image and glory of God, and that woman is the glory of the man; also that the man is not without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord. (See 1 Cor. 11:7,11.) You will note that significantly God is mentioned in connection with this great partnership, and we must never forget that one of woman's greatest privileges, blessings, and opportunities is to be a co-partner with God in bringing his spirit children into the world.

Present-day allurements

It is of great concern to all who

understand this glorious concept that Satan and his cohorts are using scientific arguments and nefarious propaganda to lure women away from their primary responsibilities as wives, mothers, and homemakers. We hear so much about emancipation, independence, sexual liberation, birth control, abortion, and other insidious propaganda belittling the role of motherhood, all of which is Satan's way of destroying woman, *the home, and the family—the basic unit of society.*

Some effective tools include the use of radio, television, and magazines where pornography abounds and where women are being debased and disgracefully used as sex symbols—sex-ploited, some call it. Immodest dress, drugs, and alcohol daily take a tremendous toll through the destruction of virtue and chastity and even lives. With modern electronic devices of communication and speedy transportation, much more is being heard throughout the world by many more people than would be possible otherwise, and it is having its degrading influence and effect.

Yes, pornography, drugs, and alcohol are available to young and old in alarming quantity, and are destroying the moral values, and further deteriorating the minds and thought processes of those who succumb to these devilish wiles.

Effects of pornography

President Dallin Oaks recently said to the student body at Brigham Young University: "We are surrounded by the promotional literature of illicit sexual relations on the printed page and on the screen. For your own good, avoid it. Pornographic or erotic stories and pictures are worse than filthy or polluted food. The body has defenses to rid itself of unwholesome food, but the brain won't vomit back filth. Once recorded it will always remain subject to recall, flashing its perverted images across your mind, and drawing you away from the wholesome things in life."

It is so important that our young girls keep themselves from this kind of pollution. The girls of today will be the women of tomorrow, and it is necessary that they prepare for that role. Can you imagine the kind of world we will have in the future if the girls of today are weakened morally to the extent that virtue will not be taught in their homes, and their children, if any, are not nurtured within the walls of homes sanctified by the holy laws of matrimony?

Challenging responsibilities

Marriage is ordained of God, and we must do everything we can to strengthen the ties that bind, to strengthen our homes, and to prepare ourselves by exemplary living to teach our children the ways of God, which is the only way for them to find happiness here and eternal life hereafter.

As we enumerate the many important responsibilities a woman has in connection with her duties as a wife, a mother, a homemaker, a sister, a sweetheart, or a good neighbor, it should be evident that these challenging responsibilities can satisfy her need to express her talents, her interests, her creativity, dedication, energy, and skill which so many seek to satisfy outside the home. It is impossible to estimate the lasting influence for good a woman can have in any of these roles. Let me remind us all of her primary responsibilities.

Co-partner with God

First of all, as I mentioned before, she is a co-partner with God in bringing his spirit children into the world. What a glorious concept! No greater honor could be given. With this honor comes the tremendous responsibility of loving and caring for those children so they might learn their duty as citizens and what they must do to return to their Heavenly Father. They must be taught to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ and to accept and live his teachings. As they understand the purpose of life,

why they are here and where they are going, they will have a reason for choosing the right and avoiding the temptations and buffetings of Satan, who is so very real and determined to destroy them.

A mother has far greater influence on her children than anyone else, and she must realize that every word she speaks, every act, every response, her attitude, even her appearance and manner of dress affect the lives of her children and the whole family. It is while the child is in the home that he gains from his mother the attitudes, hopes, and beliefs that will determine the kind of life he will live, and the contribution he will make to society.

President Brigham Young expressed the thought that mothers are the moving instruments in the hands of Providence and are the machinery that give zest to the whole man, and guide the destinies and lives of men and nations upon the earth. He further said, "Let mothers of any nation teach their children not to make war, and the children would not grow up and enter into it." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 199.)

An helpmeet for man

When the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet . . .", he meant just that, and so presented Eve to Adam. (Gen. 2:18.) We are taught that a man should leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and that they should be one flesh, and thus is described the relationship that should exist between husband and wife. (Gen. 2:24.) It is said that behind every good man there is a good woman, and it is my experience and observation that this is generally true.

It is interesting to note that when executives of companies look for new employees, or are planning promotions for their experienced ones, they always want to know what kind of wife a man has. This seems to be very important. In

the Church when men are being considered for new priesthood offices, the question is always raised about the worthiness of the wife and whether or not she can give him full support.

Women, you are of great strength and support to the men in your lives, and they sometimes need your help most when they are least deserving. A man can have no greater incentive, no greater hope, no greater strength than to know his mother, his sweetheart, or his wife has confidence in him and loves him. And men should strive every day to live worthy of that love and confidence.

Influence of women

President Hugh B. Brown once said at a Relief Society conference: "There are people fond of saying that women are the weaker instruments, but I don't believe it. Physically they may be, but spiritually, morally, religiously, and in faith, what man can match a woman who is really converted to the gospel! Women are more willing to make sacrifices than are men, more patient in suffering, more earnest in prayer. They are the peers and often superior to men in resilience, in goodness, in morality, and in faith." (Relief Society Conference, Sept. 29, 1965.)

And girls, don't underestimate your influence on your brothers and your sweethearts. As you live worthy of their love and respect you can help greatly to determine that they will be clean and virtuous, successful and happy. Always remember that you can go much further on respect than on popularity. I was reading the other day of a report of a conversation between two young prisoners of war in Vietnam. One said: "I am sick of war, bombers, destruction, prison camps, and everything and everybody."

"I feel much like that myself," said the other. "But there is a girl back home who is praying that I will come back. She cares, and it really helps me endure all these atrocities."

A heritage of virtue

To mothers, daughters, and women everywhere, let me stress the fact that because of your great potential and influence for good in the lives of all of us, Satan is determined to destroy you. You cannot compromise with him. You must have the courage, the strength, the desire, and the determination to live as the Lord would have you live—good clean lives. Girls, keep yourselves virtuous and worthy of a fine young man who has likewise kept himself clean, so that together you can go to the House of the Lord to be sealed in the holy bonds of matrimony for time and all eternity, and prepare a home where God will be pleased to send his spirit children. Then you will be able to face your children secure in the knowledge that your own example is the way to happiness and eternal progression. They are entitled to this heritage. I humbly pray that you will so live as to give it to them.

The whole purpose of the creation of the earth was to provide a dwelling place where the spirit children of God might come and be clothed in mortal bodies and, by keeping their second estate, prepare themselves for salvation and exaltation. The whole purpose of the mission of Jesus Christ was to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. The whole purpose of mothers and fathers should be to live worthy of this blessing and to assist God the Father and his son Jesus Christ in their work. No greater honor could be given to woman than to assist in this divine plan, and I wish to say without equivocation that a woman will find greater satisfaction and joy and make a greater contribution to mankind by being a wise and worthy mother raising good children than she could make in any other vocation.

The Lord has promised us great blessings if we will do our part in this divine plan. President Herbert Hoover gave this incentive: "If we could have but one generation of properly born, trained, educated and healthy children,

a thousand other problems of government would vanish. We would assure ourselves of healthier minds, more vigorous bodies, to direct the energies of our nation to greater heights of achievement." (Quoted by President David O. McKay, Conference Report, April 1931, pp. 79-80.)

The Church program

How fortunate we are to have the Church of Jesus Christ established in these latter days, with a prophet of God upon the earth to receive divine revelation and direction for the children of men! We are blessed to know the personality of God, his attributes, and his characteristics. We have been given the plan of life and salvation. We are continually directed as to how we should live so we may have happiness here and eternal life hereafter. We have organizations set up to instruct and educate us in all matters pertaining to our temporal and spiritual welfare.

One of the finest programs the Church has instituted is what we call Family Home Evening, where all members of the family are called together once a week. It is quite thrilling to me when I contemplate that each Monday evening all over the Church throughout the world our families are gathered together in their homes, and the father, where possible, as head of the house, is directing his family in a discussion of all problems pertaining to their spiritual and temporal welfare, using a manual which has been carefully prepared and distributed to each family in the Church. Where these gatherings are held regularly and properly, they are of inestimable value to the family unit, as is evidenced by the many testimonies we receive. I wish to urge every family to follow this program, and I can promise you that as you do so you will be greatly blessed in unity, love, and devotion, and delighted with the outcome. Of course, family prayer should be a significant part of this evening, as well as regular family and individual prayer every day.

An ideal home

I can think of nothing sweeter than a home where a man is living his religion, magnifying his priesthood, with his wife supporting him in every way, where love and harmony exists, and where together they are trying to raise a family of righteous sons and daughters whom they can take back into the presence of their Heavenly Father. This may sound like an impossible dream, but I can assure you that there are thousands of such families within the Church, and it is something that can be a reality for every one of us as we accept and live the teachings of Jesus Christ. How fortunate a child is to live in such a home, and how great will be the joy of the parents in their posterity!

I repeat: Satan is trying to keep us from the full enjoyment which comes from keeping the commandments of God. We must never forget, and we must teach our children to know, that Satan is real and determined to destroy us. He knows the importance and significance of the family unit. He knows that entire civilizations have survived or disappeared depending on whether the family life was strong or weak. We can keep him out of our homes by living and teaching our children to live the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, thereby resisting temptation when it comes, as it surely will.

Roles of mothers

Girls, prepare yourselves to assume the roles of mothers by gaining knowledge and wisdom through a good education. We teach that the glory of God is intelligence, and so we must all be aware of what is going on around us and be prepared to thwart Satan in his attempts to divert us from our divine destiny. With knowledge, wisdom, determination, and the Spirit of the Lord to help us we can succeed.

We also believe that women should involve themselves in community affairs and in the auxiliary organizations

of the Church, but always remember that home and children come first and must not be neglected. Children must be made to feel that mother loves them and is keenly interested in their welfare and everything they do. This cannot be turned over to someone else. Many experiments have been made and studies carried out which prove beyond doubt that a child who enjoys mother's love and care progresses in every way much more rapidly than one who is left in institutions or with others where mother's love is not available or expressed.

Responsibility of fathers

Fathers, too, must assume their proper role and responsibility. Children need both parents. While they are at home fathers should assume with mothers the duties attendant upon the young children, the discipline and training of the older ones, and be a listening ear for those who need to discuss their problems or want guidance and counseling. Through love establish a good relationship and line of communication with your children.

I would urge all husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers to show our great respect and love and try to be worthy of the women who are our wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, and sweethearts. There is no surer way for a man to show his lack of character, good breeding, and quality than for him to show lack of respect for woman or to do anything that would discredit or degrade her. It is unchristianlike, unfair, and displeasing to God for any husband or father to assume the role of dictatorship and adopt the attitude that he is superior in any way to his wife.

At the Area Conference in Munich, Germany, President Lee said: "If you husbands remember that the most important of the Lord's work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own home, you can maintain close family ties. . . . If you will strengthen your family ties and be mindful of your children, be sure that home is made a

strong place in which children can come for the anchor they need in this day of trouble and turmoil, then love will abound and your joy will be increased."

Importance of home and family

As women realize the importance of the home and family, and with their husbands keep the commandments of God to multiply and replenish the earth, to love the Lord and their neighbors as themselves, to teach their children to pray and to walk uprightly before him, then will their joy be increased and their blessings multiplied to the extent that they will hardly be able to contain them.

These blessings will be joy and rejoicing in our posterity of healthy, happy children, which blessings those who reject this way of life will never know. There will be peace and satisfaction in the accomplishments of children who succeed, and in turn make their own contribution to making this a better world for generations yet unborn. What a joyous privilege and blessing it will be for those families who, through obedience and love, have prepared themselves to go back into the presence of

our Heavenly Father and have it said of each of them: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matt. 25:21.)

May this be our privilege and blessing I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Without announcement following President Tanner's address, the Choir sang "Glorious Is the King."

President Harold B. Lee

We have just listened to President N. Eldon Tanner, first counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, who has delivered a message that should be heralded to the far ends of the earth, a message that would help combat the ugliness that is being portrayed in such a vicious way to downgrade the place of women in the home.

The Tabernacle Choir has just sung "Glorious Is the King."

We shall now hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Of the Council of the Twelve

Last evening in our priesthood meeting President Lee recalled some of the blessings that came from the recently completed great Munich conference. In my mind one of the highlights of this conference came in sharing the heartwarming statement and spirit of a beautiful young adult Latter-day Saint lady.

She was neatly dressed, with her head held just a little higher than would seem to be usual. Her eyes were still dropping meaningful tears following the soul-stirring closing Sunday afternoon session. In her best

limited English—and incidently I don't know now and I didn't know then from which country she came, and it made no difference then, it makes no difference now except to say that she was one of us—as she shook my hand she said, "President Lee has lifted my soul to new heights. I feel I can now walk in strength beyond my own."

This touching declaration reminded me of a similar quotation found in the book of Mark: ". . . Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose." (Mark 9:27.)