

Home, and the Building of Home Life

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MY brethren, you do not count for much here today, and you sisters of the Relief Society, the greatest organization of women in the world, the oldest national organization in this country, I come before you at the request of your presidency with a hope and a prayer in my heart that I may say nothing that will mar the wonderful spirit of this meeting, and, on the other hand, if the Lord blesses me, I may add something, perhaps, to what has been said.

Relief Society Building

I should like, first, to congratulate you upon the nearer approach of the building of a house that shall be yours. I do not know how many of you know just what happened to a building that was erected for you once before. That is the building of which you now occupy a small part. You have heard the story of the camel, which, being on the outside of the tent with a great sandstorm coming on, put his nose under the edge of the tent and asked the master to let him keep his nose there. It was pretty bad outside. Then the camel put in his head, and his ears, and then his front quarters, and finally his whole body, when he kicked the master out.

That is almost an exact duplication of what has happened to you sisters in the building of which you

now have a part. Originally yours, the brethren began to move in on you, and then they moved farther and farther, but by dint of hard work and earnest struggle, you still maintain a part of it.

I charge the brethren who are younger than myself, and who will come along after us who are now in charge, that they see to it that no such thing as that happens to this new building, but that when it is built, and you get into it, that they leave you alone and let you enjoy it.

Home Life

The sisters of the presidency came to me and asked me to speak, and more or less gave me the topic about which they would like me to talk. They said it was my turn this time. There did not seem to be any way of my getting out of it, so I came along. I am not going to say anything new or startling—well, I may say something startling, I do not know, but I am not going to say anything that is new.

Instead of thinking of this as an address to you, I would like to think of it as sort of counseling together with you about the subject which I finally picked as covering what the sisters wished me to say: "Home, and the Building of Home Life." I am going to recall to you a number of elements that go into

the building of home life. I repeat, you have heard them all before.

In the first place, I would like to remind you sisters again of your divine calling. You are created and placed on the earth to be the mothers of the spirits that were created by our Heavenly Father to come to this earth and prove themselves whether or not they could obey all the commandments which the Lord, their God, should give them. That is your great mission. Everything else is subordinate to that.

Hostesses to Children

Then I would like you to know that no daughter nor no son of yours has ever intruded himself into your family. You invited him in, you invited her in, they are your guests, and you owe to them all that a good hostess owes to her guests. I think we cannot hold that too firmly in mind.

I would like, then, to suggest to you that as a host, not only are you furnishing them a body, but you are also supposed to furnish them a healthy body. I know that among the best, the most perfect homes, and from the most perfect bodies, there comes, sometimes, a malformation. I know that. Somewhere, I suppose, way back beyond the reaches of our memories or our knowledge, some mother or some father committed a wrong which passes down.

But this you can do, and this I think it is your responsibility to do: you yourselves can so live that nothing of that sort shall come to your children as the result of your misdoing. What comes from the past you cannot control; but what comes

to the future, in that you may have a large part. Do not forget the law of heredity, sometimes laughed to scorn by the learned; but I am as persuaded as I am that I am talking to you, that there is much in heredity.

Do not forget, either, that there is a very close relationship between the physical body and the spirit. I do not know the relationship, but my observation teaches me that the debauched, polluted body almost never gives a housing to a spirit that is not touched by that pollution. Such a debauched body and a healthy, growing spirit seem not to go together.

So live wisely, live as the Lord commanded, obey his commandments, and then you will do your part, and whatever may come to your loved ones will not be your responsibility. Motherhood is the highest type of service of which we mortals know.

Right Kind of Home

In building your homes, there are a number of things that you know as well as I, should be there.

If you are going to build the right kind of a home that shall be a place in which you can train in the ways of God, these spirits whom you have invited to come to you (they are not intruders), then there must be in that home, love. There can be no real home life where there is no love.

Next, there must be prayer; a prayerless abode is not a home.

There must be in that home, honor. We must be honorable as among ourselves, as parents, as children, as brothers and sisters.

There must be mutual respect. We must respect one another. Even love will not take the place of respect.

There must be example. We, the parents, must set the example. Do not forget that. You young parents, particularly, do not think that your children will walk the straight and narrow paths, if your lives make detours. Live as the Lord has commanded.

There must be obedience, not by force, that is, not by physical force. There must come obedience from the spirit, imposed by the spirit of the father and the mother, and that imposition is one of love and kindness.

There must be seemliness in the home, and by seemliness I mean that the home conversation must not be on low and vulgar levels. A vulgar story has no place around the home fire, around the table, no place in the sitting room. It is wholly out of order. A vulgar story is a cheap kind of amusement.

Bring into your home the best of culture, of education. They must be in the home. I would have you reflect for a moment upon the fact that a tremendous amount of the modern art, of the modern literature and music, and the drama that we have today is utterly demoralizing—utterly. Scarcely an "ad" in the paper (that is an exaggeration), but too many "ads" in the paper are sexy, designedly so. Your music—well, I do not know how far above the tom-tom of the jungle it is, but it is not too far. And your drama, plus music—some of it came out of the voodoo huts. You know the names that some of your

choice dances had when they were first introduced; maybe you have rechristened them, given them a sort of respectability.

These things you must watch. They all have their effects on the children. Make your home life as near heaven life as you can.

You fathers and mothers, keep track of the recreation, amusement, of your children. I know I am proposing a very difficult thing. But every parent should try to learn this from the girl or boy who goes out for the evening: where, with whom, at what. Try to bring that nearness between yourselves and your children that they will be able to repose in you the confidence which it is necessary that they should have in order to give you the answers to those questions. I repeat, I know I am giving you a hard task.

Chastity—a Sacred Possession

The sisters asked me, particularly, to say something about chastity. I am going to talk about it. I hope you will pardon the plainness of it, but in order that I might be reasonably sure that I meant what I said, I have written that out.

I wish to conclude my remarks with some observations about chastity, the most sacred possession of youth or age. It is more precious than life itself.

I shall speak with great plainness, yet as delicately as I can. But gross abominations must be called by their right names, and our attacks against them must be direct and as forceful as we can make them.

Before proceeding with that dis-

cussion, I wish to say a very few words on the subject of marriage.

The patriarchal blessings given to our people show that a very great preponderance of them belong to the tribe of Joseph, most come in through Ephraim, though some come through Manasseh. The Lord enjoined upon ancient Israel that they marry only among themselves, "For," said the Lord, "thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 7:6).

I have not seen where the Lord has released us, as members of a tribe of Israel, from that law. I earnestly urge the youth of modern Israel strictly to observe that law and to marry only as by that law provided. This is the Lord's decreed way. The same dangers that beset ancient Israel from intermarriage, the mixing of blood with the nations among whom they lived, also beset us—the danger of infection with the heresies, the iniquities, and sinfulness that exist among unbelievers.

Fuel Added to Flames

Returning to the law of chastity: Many influences (more than ever before in my lifetime) are seeking to break down chastity with its divinely declared sanctity. The schoolroom, the press, authors, poets, artists, dramatists, musicians—all, consciously or unconsciously, are adding fuel to this flame of sexuality that is sweeping over the world.

In schoolrooms the children are taught what is popularly called "the facts of life." Instead of bringing about the alleged purpose of the teaching, that is, the strengthening of the morals of youth, this teaching seems to have had directly

the opposite effect. The teaching seems merely to have whetted curiosity and augmented appetite. Never before, in my lifetime, has immorality had the tolerance and the prevalence it has today among youth and the middle-aged.

Reports, too frequent and well-authenticated to be ignored, are that some teachers in our colleges—some near and some farther off—are teaching their unmarried students that the sex urge is like hunger and thirst and is to be satisfied at their wills. I have spoken about this on other occasions. I now repeat: He who teaches this depraved doctrine is acting as an emissary of Satan. No amount of ridicule, sarcasm, no trifling pettifoggery with scientific truths, no atheistic sophistries, can change this fundamental fact.

There are other abominations that go along with this. With genuine apologies, I will mention some by way of warning.

The person who teaches the non-sinfulness of self-pollution is in the same class with the teachers who prostitute the sex urge.

So also the person who teaches or condones the crimes for which Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed—we have coined a softer name for them than came from old; we now speak of homosexuality, which, it is tragic to say, is found among both sexes. I wonder if you girls have ever reflected on the thought that was in the mind of the man who first began to praise you for your boyish figures. Not without foundation is the contention of some that the homosexuals are today exercising great influence

in shaping our art, literature, music, and drama.

I forebear to more than mention that abomination of filth and loathsomeness of the ancients—carnal knowledge with beasts.

Mothers Warned

Mothers in Israel, do not, for the sake of your daughters, nor for the sake of your sons, take it for granted that they are uninfluenced, untouched by all this, for if you do, some mother will someday have a rude awakening from her complacency, and that someone might be you. Never forget that Satan stands at the very elbow of each of your sons and daughters, he awaits outside the threshold of every home, every minute of the day, watching for, seeking for the slightest weakness in the armor of righteousness with which you have clad your loved ones, with which you have surrounded your home; so that against that weakness he may bring to bear every vile, every stratagem, every base feeling and appeal—and he has every evil at his command—to the end that he may destroy your loved ones. I have said all this before.

Mothers in Israel, in that home which it is in your power and which it is your duty to build, that home of bodily well-being, that home of love, and prayer and precept and example, of harmony, of seemliness and respect, and education and culture, bring into that home such an understanding and reverence for chastity as shall preserve your children—your own flesh and blood—from the second greatest of all sins, unchastity.

I will read you the words of the great prophet, Alma—his words, not mine—when he was speaking to his son Corianton, who had deserted his missionary field and gone astray. Alma said:

And this is not all, my son. Thou didst do that which was grievous unto me; for thou didst forsake the ministry, and did go over into the land of Siron, among the borders of the Lamanites, after the harlot Isabel.

Yea, she did steal away the hearts of many; but this was no excuse for thee, my son. Thou shouldst have tended to the ministry wherewith thou wast entrusted.

Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost? (Alma 39:3-5).

So spoke the prophet Alma.

You mothers in Israel, it is your divinely given opportunity and responsibility carefully to teach your daughters and your sons the enormity of the sin of unchastity. There are cases, too many in the aggregate—one such case is too many—that come to the attention of your presiding sisters here, of young girls, brought to the depths of disgrace and despair, because, uninstructed by their mothers, they suffered themselves to be led into transgression, and are to give birth to babes begotten out of wedlock. However long these poor, wayward ones live, they never quite outlive the stigma. Their friends, the members of the ward, their parents, of course, and the Lord, if they repent, will forgive, but mem-

ory lasts and scars the happiness of all the years that follow.

Teach the Truth

Mothers in Israel, let no lack of teaching on your part lead to such a tragedy. Teach your daughters and equally your sons, the truth about this transgression. In our Church there is no double standard. Instil in them from earliest childhood a reverence for the unpoluted body, bring them to know the divine purpose of sex—the urge to provide bodies for the spirits yet to be tabernacled. See that they understand the glory of the chaste body and of the child born without taint. Do not fail in this, that you may stand before God in the day of judgment, unafraid, unabashed, free of blame.

I would not be misunderstood. To the young girl or young man who transgresses there is full opportunity to rise from the despair that comes after the transgression. The Lord has said to the rest of us:

I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men (D. & C. 64:10).

This we must do—forgive and hold nothing against the transgressor, and then forget, too—if we can. To the repentant transgressor the Lord has promised his forgiveness also, and has declared:

By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them (D. & C. 58:43).

To such repentant sinners the Lord extends his boundless, infinite mercy and love, and in his judgment thereafter, he will, I am sure,

impose the least of penalty that justice requires.

All you repentant transgressors come, partake of God's all-wise divine justice and of his boundless, infinite mercy and love. To transgressors, yet unrepentant, the Lord calls:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matt. 11:28-30).

I quote again from Alma, this time his counsel to his son Helaman:

And now, O my son Helaman, behold, thou art in thy youth, and therefore, I beseech of thee that thou wilt hear my words and learn of me; for I do know that whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day (Alma 36:3).

God bless you mothers in Israel, and give you wisdom and understanding, patience and charity, and courage also, that you may not falter. May he bestow upon you that rare and priceless gift of discernment, that you may mark the betrayer long before he strikes and so frustrate him; that you may sense, even before your loved one is aware, that Satan is slyly whispering waywardness into the innocent ear so that you may drown that whispering with the voice of counsel dictated by love and wisdom.

God be with each and every one of you always, that you may meet to the full your divine calling of motherhood in Israel, I pray, in Jesus' name, Amen.