

## BRINGING UP CHILDREN IN LIGHT AND TRUTH

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Stockholm Area Conference

Parents' Session

Saturday, August 17, 1974

(not delivered)

I am grateful for this privilege of speaking to parents in the Church and have some matters of surpassing importance for all of us to consider.

We have in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the most perfect system of matrimony known to man. It is celestial or eternal marriage. All of us either have entered this holy order or we long for the day when we shall become inheritors of its blessings—the greatest blessings which can come to any of us in time or in eternity.

We have accepted the gospel so that we may “enjoy the words of eternal life in this world,” and be inheritors “of eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory.” (Moses 6:59.) Eternal life is the name of the kind of life which our Eternal Father lives. We are his spirit children. We dwelt in his house, saw his face, and felt his influence before the foundations of this earth were laid. He then endowed us with agency, taught us the truths of his gospel, and provided the way whereby we may become like him.

It is his work and his glory “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man,” (Moses 1:39.) We are now taking the tests of mortality to see if we shall be accounted worthy to be raised not alone “in immortality” but “unto eternal life.” (D&C 29:43.) If we gain eternal life we shall be like him and live in the family unit as he does. Thus our greatest goal in life, the supreme desire of our hearts, is to create for ourselves eternal family units of our own patterned after the family of God our Heavenly Father.

Now I invite your attentive consideration to a course of action which in my Judgment will do more to speed us along the path to eternal life than any other single thing we can do. I speak of the privilege and responsibility we have to bring up our children in light and in truth. I think that if we do what the Lord expects of us where our children are concerned, it will have the affect of preparing us for salvation and, hopefully, of leading those nearest and dearest to us to the same high status.

Our Eternal Father has entrusted us with the care and custody of some of his own spirit children, some of his choicest children, children reserved to come forth when the gospel was on earth, children whom he loves, loves so much that he gave his Only Begotten Son to ransom them from death and make everlasting life available to them on conditions of obedience.

Our responsibility to do all that we should where these children of our Father are concerned is so great—and he desires so much that we shall succeed in it—that he promises us eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God, as a reward for our successful performance. That responsibility is to bring them up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4) so that they, with us, may merit the fulness of our Father’s kingdom.

Let us now turn to his Holy Word and see what our instructions are. In the very beginning of the peopling of the earth, “the Lord spake unto Adam, saying: Inasmuch as thy children are conceived in sin [meaning born into a world where sin abounds], even so when they begin to grow up, sin conceiveth in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good.

“And it is given unto them to know good from evil; wherefore they are agents unto themselves, and I have given unto you another law and commandment.

“Wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there ....

“Therefore I give unto you a commandment, to teach these things freely unto your children, saying:

“That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven.” (Moses 6:55-59.)

There is more, much more, along this line, all of it showing that the Lord expects—nay, commands!—parents to teach the plan of salvation to their children. In other words he commands us to teach our children those great and eternal truths which will enable them to gain peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come. And the chief and foremost place for teaching the gospel is in the home, in the family unit, in the day to day intimacies of mother and daughter and father and son.

The great lawgiver Moses gave the same type of counsel. After summarizing and repeating before all Israel the whole body of the law which the Lord had then revealed, he said: “Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, [even] all the words of this law.” Now note how important he considered this course. “It is not a vain thing for you,” he said, “because it is your life.” (Deut. 32:46-47.) That is, their whole life’s work was to keep and do the Lord’s law and see that their children did likewise.

As part of the same summary of the Law, Moses also said: “These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” (Deut. 6:6-7.)

Surely this is divine counsel to ponder the doctrines of salvation eternally in our hearts and to speak of them continually to our loved ones!

Good King Benjamin, of Nephite fame, addressing himself to those that “have come to the knowledge of the glory of Cod,” those who “have tasted of his love,” and received a remission of their sins, gave this inspired instruction: “Ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil. But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another.” (Mosiah 4:11-15.)

In our day the Lord has been very express. Parents are to teach their children “to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands when eight years old,” or the “sin” shall “be upon the heads of the parents. . . . And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.” (D&C 68:25-28.)

Later the Lord spoke of the disobedience that prevails among the children of men generally, because of the false traditions of their fathers, and said to parents in the Church: “But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth.” Then he called the presiding officers of his Church by name, and said such things as this:

“You have not taught your children light and truth, according to the commandments; and that wicked one hath power, as yet, over you, and this is the cause of your affliction. And now a commandment I give unto you—if you will be delivered you shall set in order your own house, for there are many things that are not right in your house.”

Following this and similar expressions, the Lord said: “What I say unto one I say unto all.” (D&C 93:39-50.) That is, he will prosper all his saints, temporally and spiritually, if they keep the commandments and set their houses in order.

This, then, is our situation, and the course we should pursue is clearly marked, late are the spirit children of God our Heavenly Father—that glorious, exalted and eternal Being who is the Creator of all things. And he has provided the way and ordained the laws whereby we may become like him and thus be inheritors with him of eternal life.

We have his law; we know his will; the gospel is our choicest possession; through it we have power to return to his presence and enjoy again the light of his countenance as members of his eternal family.

He has entrusted us with the care and keeping, here in mortality, of some of his choicest spirit children. The work we do where they are concerned is the most important work we have to do on this earth. And if we are true and faithful, we shall save ourselves and our children and be inheritors with them of eternal joy in the mansions that are prepared.

Speaking in general terms, we are all pursuing the same course, the gospel course, the course of family love and unity and obedience. Speaking in specific terms, each of us must gain the wisdom and inspiration to chart the particular path we must pursue to reclaim and perfect those who are our own. We must teach them the truths of salvation in such a way that they will believe and obey and, in due course, create for themselves eternal family units of their own, so that they can then repeat the same process of bringing up their children after them in light and in truth. I know of no better way to teach the gospel than to take it out of the standard works of the Church, without change or dilution, and to do it under the influence and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now I have spoken plainly, and you have heard the words and realize the importance of the truths involved. May I remind you, in conclusion, of these words of Him whose witnesses we are: After his presentation of some powerful and wondrous truths to the Nephites he said: “Go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand.” (3 Ne. 17:3.)

I hope that my words, and the other words spoken in this great conference, will not die out when the last amen is said, but that instead you will ponder them in your hearts and teach them to your children.

There now remains but one thing more for me to do—to testify of the truth and divinity of the great work in which we are engaged; to bear record that the doctrines here taught are true; and to pray that the teachings and testimonies of this conference will be in our hearts forever, so that we may continue to have peace in this life and gain eternal life in the world to come—all of which I do in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.