

President Joseph Fielding Smith:

We have just listened to Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve.

The congregation and chorus will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," conducted by Sister Madsen.

After the singing, Bishop Victor L. Brown of the Presiding Bishopric will be our speaker.

Congregational Singing: "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

We will now hear from Elder Victor L. Brown, second counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. He will be followed by Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church.

**Bishop Victor L. Brown
Of the Presiding Bishopric**

The laws of Utah prohibit the use of firecrackers. In a neighboring state they are permitted. This summer, while visiting in this neighboring state, our 12-year-old son, with his friends, had great fun with his fireworks. We told him it would be necessary for him to dispose of all of the firecrackers before going home. This seemed rather silly to him. If it were legal in one town, why not in the next, only a few miles away? He finally complied.

Upon arriving home, he found a neighbor boy who still had some. The temptation was just too great, so he bought a few from his friend. What could it possibly hurt? Firecrackers aren't much fun unless you do something with them, which these boys set out to do.

This happened while his mother and I were away for the evening. Through some strange coincidence, a police officer found out about it, picked the boys up, and returned them home.

Can you imagine being 12 years old and having a policeman return you home for breaking the law?—particularly after having just graduated from Primary, where you had learned the twelfth Article of Faith, "We believe . . . in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law," and having just been ordained a deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood, at which time you promised your bishop you would honor the priesthood, and also having just become a Boy Scout.

This was a traumatic experience indeed, and I am sure one that will never be forgotten by either of us.

As he sat there waiting in our living room for us to return home, the thought of having let down the bishop, his parents, and, above all, his Heavenly Father weighed heavily upon him. He wanted to tell us himself. He didn't want us to hear it from anyone else.

Notwithstanding the disappointment at his disobedience, which resulted in his breaking the law, my heart swelled with pride that he had the courage to voluntarily tell us of the trouble he had been in. There was no desire to deceive or mislead us.

A strong 12 year old takes responsibility

During the very serious discussion that followed his disclosure, it was implied that he had let others lead him and had not been strong enough to stand on his own feet. Then he said, "This is my responsibility. No one else is to blame."

It was only after I had assured him that the only purpose of relating this experience was to try to help someone else learn from his mistake that he gave his permission for me to use it today.

Respect for law, evidence of maturity

It seems to me that there are at least two lessons to be learned from this sad experience. The first one is quite obvious—the need to obey the law, no matter how small or unnecessary it may appear to be. In today's society, there are many who teach the philosophy that we have a right to break

those laws we do not agree with. If each segment of our society were to adopt this attitude, anarchy would run rampant, and chaos would reign.

One of the basic tenets of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is found in the twelfth Article of Faith, written by the Prophet Joseph Smith on March 1, 1842: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." This, then, leaves no room for personal preference as to which laws we will obey.

Parents share responsibility

The second lesson is perhaps not quite so obvious, but it is, nevertheless, vitally important, and that is: as parents, we share the responsibility for the actions of our children, whether their actions be for good or ill. I suppose there are none of us who wouldn't acknowledge the successes of our children and perhaps feel some pride in having had something to do with their achievements, but what happens when they make mistakes? Quite a different reaction takes place. Too often we give vent to feelings of anger. Whereas we had a hand in their success, we deny, through our actions, any part in their failure.

Make truth-telling and honesty unselfish

What is the first thing that generally happens when a child or young person confesses a wrongdoing to his parents? Many times, a serious rebuke or perhaps even physical punishment results. This, of course, is the best way in the world to insure that hereafter the child will not confide in his parents. Seldom do we first think of the child's feelings and how the problem affects his life, but rather we feel that our pride is hurt or our reputation is damaged. I wonder how many mothers and fathers have said, "How can I possibly face my friends after this?" *Are our feelings and actions for the benefit of the child or ourselves?*

Becoming a parent is one of the greatest blessings and opportunities in life. With this blessing comes grave responsibility. The home is the most

important unit in all society, and parents to a great measure establish the spirit of the home. No responsibility is greater than the rearing of our children. Sometimes no responsibility is more difficult. When they do as we wish, there is no problem, but when they are rebellious and disobedient, there is a problem. Sometimes this problem requires all of the patience, understanding, and long-suffering it is possible for parents to muster. This does not mean that wise discipline is not necessary; on the contrary, it is absolutely necessary.

There are those parents who will in effect abandon a child in trouble. Perhaps they have been rebellious and unruly and have caused many heartaches. When do they need a greater measure of love and reassurance that all is not lost? Certainly when they are in difficulty, particularly if it is serious.

Children in trouble are not alone

We parents need to examine our reaction to these children who get into trouble. If we are to display true love, we will think of the child's needs first and ourselves last.

I wonder about the judgment whereby we will be judged. You will recall the lesson taught us by the Savior regarding the prodigal son, who, after having wasted his life with riotous living, decided that he would return to his father's household.

"And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

"And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it: and let us eat, and be merry:

"For this my son was dead, and is alive again: he was lost, and is found . . ." (Luke 15:20-24.)

Saturday, October 1

Second Day

No one is "an island"

In a recent editorial in the *Church News*, a letter to the editor was published that to me has great significance in parent-child relationships. It reads:

"I had an experience a few nights ago which I feel I should mention to you.

"We had spent the evening at the cabin of some friends in upper Ogden Canyon, and as we drove home we found it necessary to telephone back to our friends at their cabin.

"Accordingly we spent a half hour or so looking for a telephone. While I was making the call, an attractive young girl approached my wife sitting in our car in the parking lot, and asked if we would give her a ride to Ogden [Utah].

"It developed that she had been offended and frightened by her boy friend at a picnic ground lower down in the canyon. She left his car and walked alone up the dark canyon looking for a telephone to call some friends to come for her.

"Being unsuccessful, and becoming more and more afraid, in desperation she approached a total stranger, my wife, for help.

"In the course of her conversation, she had said that she was afraid to call her parents as they would 'die' if they knew she was in this situation.

"She said, 'We are awfully religious: I don't suppose you are LDS, are you?'

"When my wife told her that I was a bishop, she exclaimed in relief: 'O, I did come to the right car, didn't I?'

"Two or three things impressed us about this experience:

"First, the long-shot coincidence of a bishop stopping at a public telephone booth around midnight in upper Ogden Canyon, and finding there a lovely LDS girl seeking help.

"Second, and more to the point, I was impressed by the fact that she was afraid to call her parents.

"Here was a girl of obvious courage, having dared to leave the car of her boy friend and walk up the dark canyon and approach a stranger for help, but yet without the courage to let her parents know of her danger and her need.

"It reminded me of how a friend some years ago told me that he had taken his daughters to one side and told them: 'Any time you need my help, wherever you are or under whatever conditions, all you need to do is call and I will come to you.'

"I have told my own daughter this, and the result has been that I have done a good deal of taxiing her and her friends around, but I have enjoyed every minute of it.

"I wonder if an effective editorial might be written urging parents to let their children know they love them and that they are ready to help under any conditions, and urging children to confide in their parents, and call on them whenever they may need help.

"Also, of course, young people should be cautioned to avoid getting into such situations in the first place." (*Church News*, September 10, 1966, p. 16.)

How to cope with maturing children

Dr. Dana L. Farnsworth, in an article entitled "Six Rules for Parents Who Want Their Youngsters to Grow Up Secure and Self-reliant," says:

"Whenever I talk to parent groups about their adolescent youngsters, one complaint invariably occupies much, if not most, of the discussion: 'Our children never tell us anything!' When communication lines break down between parents and children, unhappiness and even tragedy may result. For their part, parents may think and do all the wrong things and thus build a wall between themselves and their children that may never be removed. As for teen-agers, they may develop antagonism toward their parents that can trigger all sorts of things, such as a rush into too-early marriage to escape unhappiness at home. When they grow into adulthood, youngsters may always regard all persons in authority, such as bosses, with fear or mistrust.

Helpful rules

"In every case of broken communications, the trouble started many years before the child's adolescence. Unwittingly, parents themselves had begun snipping the wires when the children were young. You can keep

the lines intact, so that messages (and understanding) can move freely between the generations, in these ways [I shall quote only two of them]: . . .

"2. By curbing your temper. Frequent displays of great anger can so terrify a child that he withdraws emotionally from you. Justified irritation at something he does wrong is acceptable, and even beneficial, but uncontrollable rage is something else."

"6. By disciplining him properly and fairly when necessary. I know of no better way of showing a child he is truly loved than by firm discipline. And a child who knows he is loved is not likely to draw too far away from his family." (*This Week Magazine*, June 19, 1966.)

Now to conclude my story: Several days after the incident with the police officer, my son and I were discussing some of the social problems he would face in his first year at junior high school.

After explaining some of these prob-

lems, I expressed my faith in him that he would have the courage to withstand these temptations. He said, "You really have faith in me, even after I got into trouble with the law?"

May the Lord bless each parent with vision and understanding in their early years of parenthood so that they do not find it necessary to experiment on four or five children before arriving at an understanding of how to rear them wisely.

I know that God lives, that this is his Church and that he is the Father of the spirits of these choice children who have come to bless our homes. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Joseph Fielding Smith:

Bishop Victor L. Brown of the Presiding Bishopric has just spoken to us.

Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy.

Patriarch Eldred G. Smith Patriarch to the Church

Since the dawn of history, civilizations have fallen or been destroyed when the people became ripened in iniquity. It seems that when we, as mortals, follow the path of least resistance, our moral standards fall rather than rise.

Wickedness in history

Genesis tells us of the conditions which preceded the flood. The book of Moses gives more detail. Noah preached to the people, calling them to repentance, but they mocked him and refused to listen. The Lord sent the flood in his anger against the wickedness of the people. Only Noah, his wife, and his three sons and their wives were saved—and that because of their righteousness.

Time and again throughout Bible and Book of Mormon history the wicked multitudes have been destroyed and only those who were the more righteous remained. Does this mean that God does not strive to help his

people and to teach them? No! His prophets are preaching the word of God. Enoch preached to the wicked people with such success that they became righteous—so righteous, in fact, that the entire city of Zion "was not, for God received it up into his own bosom." (Moses 7:69.)

It is said that history repeats itself. If this is true, and I believe it is, then the Book of Mormon should be one of the most valuable records we have. It gives us a record of a people from their small beginning, through many generations, through growth and decay.

Here, then, we should find the answer to all the national problems of peace and war. What do we find? Look at the over-all story and we find a continual wave of peace with righteousness on the one hand and wars accompanied by, or the result of, unrighteousness on the other.

Promise to the righteous

The Book of Mormon early in the history records a great promise refer-