

impart of your substance . . . to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith.” (Al. 34:28.)

A perfecting law

Yes, the law of the fast is a perfect law, and we cannot begin to approach perfection until we decide to make it a part of our lives. When you start and stop the fast is up to you, but wouldn't it be nice to culminate it and be at your spiritual peak for the fast and testimony meeting?

How much you give the bishop as a donation is also up to you, but isn't it thrilling to know that your accounting with the Lord has been paid willingly and with accuracy?

Satisfaction comes with obedience

Why you fast is also up to you. But suppose the main reason was simply that you wanted to help someone in need and to be a part of “pure religion undefiled.” Wouldn't your faith be lifted and sanctified? Of course it would. And incidentally, have you ever noticed how satisfying it is way deep inside each time you are obedient to Heavenly Father's desires? There can be no equal to the peace of mind that always comes as the reward for obedience to truth.

The world needs self-discipline. You can find it in fasting and prayer. Our generation is sick for lack of self-control. Fasting and prayer help to instill this virtue.

The world's future depends upon an

urgent return to family unity. Fasting and prayer will help to guarantee it. Each person has greater need for divine guidance. There is no better way. We all have need to overcome the powers of the adversary. His influence is incompatible with fasting and prayer.

Joy in helping others

There can be no greater joy than in helping others, for “inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” (Matt. 25:40.)

And now, my dear brothers and sisters, although not as worthy perhaps, but equally enthusiastic in the cause we represent, I join my testimony with Alma of old when he declared: “. . . Behold, I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety?

“Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit. . . .” (Al. 5:45-46.) In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

Elder Victor L. Brown of the Presiding Bishopric will now address us, and he will be followed by Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve, who will be our concluding speaker.

Bishop Victor L. Brown

Of the Presiding Bishopric

President David O. McKay has said: “The home is truly the first unit of society, and parenthood is next to Godhood. The relationship of the children to the parents should be one which would enable those children to carry out ideal citizenship as they become related to the state and to the larger

forms of society. The secret of good membership in the Church or good citizenship in the nation lies in the home. If and when the time ever comes that parents shift to the state the responsibility of rearing their children, the stability of the nation will be undermined, and its impair-

ment and disintegration will have begun. . . .

"Would you have a strong and virile nation?—then keep your homes pure. Would you reduce delinquency and crime?—lessen the number of broken homes. It is time that civilized people realize that the home largely determines whether children shall be of high or low character. Home-building, therefore, should be the paramount purpose of parents and of the nation." (*The Improvement Era*, April 1963, pp. 252-53.)

Troubled parents—troubled children

As I travel about the Church and discuss various problems of youth, I invariably get the response: "If we did not have trouble with the parents, we would not have trouble with the children."

A national Explorer leader emphasized this point when he said, "One of our greatest problems is to know how to teach boys to be honest when their parents are dishonest."

Today I should like to direct my remarks to parents.

If I understand the teachings of the Church, one of the greatest of all responsibilities we have as members is that of parenthood. We hear this statement repeated frequently: "The family is the most important unit in time and in eternity." This I accept as truth.

Through the eyes of youth

There probably is not a parent in the Church but who would be offended if accused of not loving his or her children, and yet, when looking at parent-child relationships through the eyes of a teen-ager, many questions arise.

Take, for instance, the young man who had almost reached the state of incorrigibility when he came to a counselor for help. He was drinking excessively; he was a chain smoker; he was continually in trouble with the law; and yet he came from a good LDS home. I'm sure his parents loved him and would have done anything in the world to help him, but let us see

what the counselor discovered.

When asked if he liked the taste of liquor, the boy replied that he hated it. When asked if he enjoyed smoking, he said he detested the taste of tobacco. When asked why he was constantly in trouble with the law, he answered that he really didn't want to do many of the things he did.

The counselor delved deeper and found that the boy's bedroom was in the basement, directly under the living room. When his father walked across the room, the boy could hear his footsteps overhead, the sound of which made him acutely nauseated.

Further interviews revealed that the boy loved his father but felt that he was a total failure in his father's eyes. You see, he simply could not satisfy him, no matter how hard he tried. His father was a perfectionist, and no matter what the son did, the father pointed out how he could have done better. Never did he compliment him. The result: a boy lost in a confused, frustrating, and difficult world with no one to help him.

His father was a good man, active in the Church. I am sure he loved his son, but did he really? Was his love unselfish? Was it the kind of love that gave nourishment and encouragement to those less able than he, or was it the kind that demanded perfection to satisfy himself?

Analyze relationships with children

Parents, I believe it behooves us to analyze closely our relationship with each of our children to see if our actions reflect true love. Do we want to teach and train our children to take their proper places in society and become better parents than we are? If so, we must be aware of our shortcomings and overcome them. You see, this father had had the same kind of strict, overbearing father himself. Like father, like son. Surely, we must encourage our children to develop their talents and to achieve to the greatest extent of their ability. I hope, however, our motive is for their own development, growth, and happiness and not to satisfy our personal pride.

A few months ago I had a most revealing interview with a lovely young college student. This young lady was the youngest in her family. All her brothers and sisters had married and left home. Her father was a farmer. She had worked on the farm each summer plowing and doing other farm work generally done by boys and men. This she did not mind, but now she was 19. She said she loved her parents with all her heart and would never do anything to hurt them. She said, "Bishop Brown, my folks expect me to come back home this summer and help on the farm, but I have simply got to find out if I am really Susie Jones or just Brother Jones' little girl, as I have always been. I have got to find out if I am a real person, if I can stand on my own feet and make decisions, or be totally dependent upon my parents."

Here was a lovely young lady loved by her parents—there is no doubt about that because of the respect and love she had for them—but in the process of growing up, it would appear that decisions she should have been making for herself were made by her parents. Had their love smothered their daughter? Were they preparing her for the day when she would, of necessity, have to make decisions on her own?

Give children training and experience in decision-making

There are some parents who feel their children just are not capable of making decisions. How can children ever develop this capacity if, as they grow up, they are not taught and given wise guidance?

Of course, good sense must be used in determining how far to go in letting a child make his own decisions. Recently, I visited with a young woman who is having marital difficulty with her third husband. This young lady has a mother who is still making her decisions for her.

In taking responsibility

Parents, may I suggest that we analyze our relationships with our

children. Are we teaching them in such a way as to prepare them for the responsibilities of life, or are we protecting them to the point that when they find themselves on their own, they are lost?

I should like to quote a few excerpts from a discussion Dr. Dana L. Farnsworth had with Lester David regarding parent-child relationships:

"Your prime goal as a parent is to help your child grow up with the good inner feeling that he or she is a perfectly capable, worthwhile human being, able to stand on his or her own feet."

Here are some of the rules he gives toward accomplishing this objective:

"Give emotional support"

First: "*Give them emotional support when they need it most—right at the start of their life.*"

"A baby comes into the world utterly dependent upon other human beings. If the help he needs is forthcoming promptly and consistently, accompanied by love, he learns very early one of the most important lessons of his entire life—that he can rely upon people. The baby whose first basic needs are met begins to develop a positive, confident outlook essential for later emotional health. Chances are that through life, he will have the feeling that things are going to work out well for him.

"If parents are not warmly responsive to an infant, he is apt to develop a suspicion and a mistrust of people. He may later withdraw from them, refusing to be their friend, in order to protect himself from hurt. Such a person cannot become a warm and loving wife or husband.

"Of course, when I suggest parents respond to their infants' needs, I certainly do not mean that babies must be hovered over and entertained every minute. Strike a happy medium."

"Early start to independence"

Second: "*Start them early on the road to independence.*"

"Once I watched a very small child trying to button his coat. His mother,

suddenly aware he was having difficulties, quickly said: 'Here, let Mommy fix it.' And she did. But she also did nothing to help her son feel capable. . . .

"You can help [a child achieve] balance by permitting him to try his own wings, while at the same time protecting him from real dangers. Let him stand, walk, climb, do as much as possible for himself, and praise him for his accomplishments. Have you seen the smile of triumph that lights up a toddler's face when he's done something all by himself—fixed a toy, carried a package or even just stood up? He glows inside, too, with a wonderful feeling of 'I can.'

"As he grows, the child becomes more and more concerned with doing useful things. The things he achieves himself become crucially important to him. He gains confidence by trying and succeeding. So let him try out his basic knowledge and skills. Let your son try to climb that fence, build a tree house, manage his affairs. Let your daughter arrange her own social activities, even plan her own party.

"Be sure, of course, that you do not expect too much of your child, criticize him with undue harshness, or permit activities that are unsafe at his age. . . ."

"To make up their minds"

Third: "*Teach children to make up their minds.*"

"A twelve-year-old boy came home from school one day and told his mother he wanted to run for class president, but wasn't quite sure. That evening at dinner, while the boy sat quietly, his parents debated whether he ought to make the race, discussing the pros and cons and, finally, deciding that he should not because his schedule for the next year would be too heavy.

"Too many parents do all or most of the problem-solving for their children. As a result, the child never learns how to make up his mind about things, crucial for good mental health. Every human being must make decisions all through life, and those who never learn how are seriously handicapped.

"A child can be taught to make decisions by allowing him to do so as often as possible and to profit by his mistakes. In all of his day-to-day problems, let him understand you have faith in his ability to unravel them. Listen to and discuss the facts with him. Suggest approaches and give the child the benefit of your wisdom and experience. But avoid taking over his independent right to decide upon the clothes he should wear, school problems and the like.

"Common sense should dictate the kind of problems best left to a child's judgment. Those with potentially serious consequences, of course, must still be decided by Mother and Father."

Foster understanding

Fourth: "*Keep the lines of understanding open. . . .*"

". . . [Realize] that each of your children is an individual, with his own abilities, personalities and needs. Don't expect one to match another's accomplishments; rather, help him take pride and pleasure in what he does well.

"[Be] courteous to your child, listening when he speaks, respecting his rights and feelings.

"[Present] logical arguments for your decisions. 'Because I say so' is a poor reply when a child asks why he is required to do something. Giving sensible reasons makes you a fair and reasonable person in your child's eyes. He may not acquiesce gracefully, but inwardly, in most cases, he will probably see your point. . . ."

Commendation for doing well

Fifth: "*Commend them for what they do well instead of condemning them for what they don't.*"

". . . A 21-year-old college co-ed, under treatment for a severe neurosis, told her therapist: 'If I came home from kindergarten with two stars, Mother wanted to know how come I didn't get three like the day before. If I got four marks over 90, she wondered how come the fifth was only 80.

"Psychiatrists know that many persons with personality problems report they too seldom received praise at home

for their accomplishments. Rather, their areas of weakness were constantly being pointed out. Over and over, they say, 'I grew up feeling I couldn't do anything right.' . . .

"Many parents feel guilty when their children do not turn out as well as they think they should. This is not justified unless they really haven't tried to train their children or haven't loved and respected them. Even then it is of no help unless it motivates efforts to try to learn how to develop better relations with them. Being a parent is not easy and mistakes are always made: they will not be too harmful if love and respect prevail. . . ." (*This Week*, June 19, 1966.)

Sacred responsibility to children

I pray that we as parents will accept the sacred nature of our responsibility to our children and that we will endeavor to apply love in a wise and intelligent manner, and, of course, to do this, the first requirement is that there is love and harmony between mother and father. Our homes must be a bulwark against the confusion and trials of the world. If this generation is to fulfill its destiny, it must be

strong in the most important of all places and that is the home, for in Proverbs we read, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6.)

I leave you my testimony, my brethren and sisters, that God lives, that this is his Church, and I do so in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

The passage of time requires that we request Elder Benson to speak at our next session of conference.

The Singing Mothers from Canada will now render "The Omnipotence."

Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Truman G. Madsen, formerly president of the New England Mission; after which this conference will stand adjourned until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

The Singing Mothers sang as the closing number, "Omnipotence," following which Elder Truman G. Madsen offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until 2:00 p.m.

FIRST DAY

AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second session of the Conference convened at 2:00 p.m., Friday, September 29.

President N Eldon Tanner, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the services.

The Singing Mothers from the stakes in Canada furnished the choral music for this session of the Conference. Alexander Schreiner was at the organ console.

President Tanner made the following introductory remarks:

President N. Eldon Tanner

Members of the Church are con-

vened in the tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in the second general session of the 137th Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President McKay is not with us this afternoon in person, but in spirit, yes. He is presiding over all of these conferences and he will be watching the proceedings of this session by television.

Through the generous cooperation of their owners and managers, over 200 television and radio stations will carry to practically every state in the Union, and to many foreign countries, the proceedings of some of the sessions of this conference. The names of the stations carrying the proceedings of this session were announced