

they reach the point that they need us, I pray that we might not let them down.

". . . 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:

"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. . . ." (Luke 15:20-22, 24.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

President Joseph Fielding Smith

Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker at this session.

Elder Delbert L. Stapley

Of the Council of the Twelve

● My brothers and sisters and friends: The scriptures teach us that our God is a God of love. It is the greatest thing God can give us and the greatest thing we can give him. The true measure of loving God is to love him without measure. His love toward us was manifested when he sent his Only Begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. (See 1 John 4:9.)

A degree of the love between the Eternal Father and his Only Begotten Son has existed between other fathers and sons. We should not feel that such love is beyond our ability to receive and to give. We may not be able to match the perfect love shown to us by the Savior, because Christ is the epitome of this God-given quality, but it is a goal toward which all of us should strive.

Need of the world

The most important need of the world today to remedy its follies and problems is for man to return to God in love and obedience to his will. Without love, the world will continue in turmoil with worsening conditions until it is steeped in wickedness and sin, at which time the judgments of God will fall upon the unrighteous of the earth. The cures for all the ills and wrongs, the cares, the sorrows, and

the crimes of humanity lie in one word—love.

Love, if used in its proper context, will hold the peoples of the world together in understanding and peace. Today the most trampled-upon ingredient for a happy and joyous life is the **word love**.

If the tender, profound, and sympathizing love practiced and recommended by Jesus were paramount in every heart, the loftiest and most glorious ideals of human society would be realized and little would be wanting to make this world a kingdom of heaven. Love is indeed heaven upon the earth, since heaven above would not be heaven without it.

What love is

The apostle Paul calls love the bond of perfection and peace. It is the old, the new, and the great commandment, for love is the fulfilling of the law.

Love is manifest in charity of the soul. It is made up of many things, all of which lead to a high idealism in standards of living, personal behavior, and purpose. It is expressed in Christ-like example, in words, in actions, in thoughtful attentions and kindly deeds.

Love is not real when one demands attentions and fancied needs, then is not appreciative of them and gives nothing in return for the favors re-

ceived. That attitude is one of pure selfishness and reflects a lack of gratitude, decency, and respect. Such a person is self-centered and cares not for his failure to acknowledge courtesy or express thanks and appreciation.

Love is the purification of the heart. It strengthens character and gives a higher motive and a positive aim to every action of life. The power to love truly and devotedly is the noblest gift with which a human being can be endowed. True love is eternal and infinite. It is equal and pure without violent actions and demonstrations, which are so much in evidence today.

Love begins in the home

Love begins in the home by congenial parents bestowing affection and loving care upon their children. They deal in kindness and understanding, seeking the love and confidence of their sons and daughters. They also show concern about the welfare and happiness of their children.

The apostle Paul gave this wise counsel: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. 5:8.)

Physical and temporal needs for children do not fulfill their most pressing wants. Parents' righteous teachings and good example are so important. The family should be unified by a close-knit relationship, doing things together, loving each other, and enjoying each other's companionship.

The first emotion a child learns and needs is love. The first emotion he expresses is love. A child reacts to love—or to the lack of it. What is sweeter than having a child put his arms around your neck and saying, "I love you." Love is the real basis of life.

Insecurity of children

If parents are immature and cannot settle their differences without anger, fighting, and name-calling, a child becomes most insecure, and as he grows older he is apt to take up with the wrong type of friends just to get away from an unhappy home environment.

Let us look at some undesirable things that can happen when a growing child feels unloved and neglected at home. He is often found with questionable companions—persons with lower standards than his own—simply to feel that he is somebody. Unfortunately, that person rarely brings others up to his standards of living, but usually lowers himself to the level of his so-called friends.

Girls particularly who feel unloved are more willing to give of themselves to the smooth-talking boy. They will sacrifice chastity just to get love. Where does the real blame of this tragedy belong—with the girl who so desperately needs to be loved or with the parents who failed in their responsibility to make their love known to her?

And what about the boy? What kind of teaching and love has he received in his home? How will he treat and protect the girls he dates, as a result of his home life?

When children are left to fend for themselves, it often destroys the spiritual and orderly environment of the home. If children feel that their parents really care, they will respond to their wishes. When there is mutual love and respect in the home, there is a desire to please. Girls and boys would probably dress in a more modest way if they felt their parents cared about how they look.

Lack of dress standards

Recently in Australia I noticed most of the girls were wearing extremely short miniskirts that left nothing to the imagination. The appearance was most immodest and scandalous, but the girls seemed unashamed, unembarrassed, and at perfect ease. Obviously these girls have no one interested enough to guide them in their mode of dress. Perhaps it is because their mothers also are clad in miniskirts and fail to set a personal example of modesty. These same conditions prevail also in our own country.

Shortly after the miniskirt came into vogue, a woman dress designer was asked in a radio interview if the miniskirt was contributing to the moral

delinquency of young girls. She answered with a positive yes. The statistics of unwed mothers has proved this statement to be true. Will mothers and daughters continue to wear immodest clothing, or is it time to get out the sewing machine and attire themselves in respectable standards of dress?

A family discussion of dress standards in a weekly family home evening could change these improper dress styles to those of modesty—and this applies to boys as well as girls. In the spirit of love and wise parental teaching, many of the problems of today's youth can be corrected.

Responsibility of parents

Former President Joseph F. Smith gave this warning: "... parents in Zion will be held responsible for the acts of their children, not only until they become eight years old, but, perhaps, throughout all the lives of their children, provided they have neglected their duty while they were under their guidance. . . ." (*Gospel Doctrine*, 1966, p. 286.)

Often the duty parents neglect is failure to correct and discipline their children. Permissiveness does not show love—nor can you buy a child's love. You cannot ignore his misdeeds and let them go unnoticed. When a child does wrong, he should expect to be punished accordingly. However, this should not be done in anger. Often a parent can better communicate with his child following the punishment. A loving arm about the child manifests the love the parent feels, and often opens the door of communication between them. When children are ready to talk, that is the time for parents to listen, regardless of the hour.

Solomon counseled: "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction:

"For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." (Prov. 3:11-12.)

Unsupervised activities

When parents think only of their own pleasures and friends, where does this leave the child? When they en-

deavor to keep their "social standing," the child is left alone while parents participate in other activities away from home. They give the child full use of the home with all kinds of refreshments and feel that if the child has some of his friends in, it can compensate for their not being with him.

Then what happens? Children are alone for an evening—often until the wee hours of the morning. What do they do when they get bored? The answer may shock and upset many neglectful parents.

Mutual service

Our beloved late President David O. McKay has said: "Another element which makes for a happy home life is *mutual service*, each member of the home working for the other. . . ." (*Treasures of Life* [Deseret Book Co., 1965], p. 330.) That home is most beautiful in which you find each person striving to serve the other. A child has the right to feel that in his home he has a place of refuge, a place of protection from the dangers and evils of the outside world. Family unity and integrity are necessary to supply this need. He needs parents who are happy in their adjustment to each other, who are working happily toward the fulfillment of an ideal of living, who love their children with a sincere and unselfish love; in short, who are well-balanced individuals, gifted with a certain amount of insight, who are able to provide the child with a wholesome emotional background which will contribute more to his development than material advantages.

No real home without love

One of the soundest and safest bulwarks of society that is being undermined today is the family. Modern life is disintegrating the very foundation of the home. In the well-ordered home, where confidence and love abide, you will find life at its best. There is no real home without love. Homes are made permanent through love.

"Love, it has been said, flows downward. The love of parents for their children has always been far more

powerful than that of children for their parents; and who among the sons of men ever loved God with a thousandth part of the love which God has manifested to us?" (Hare.)

Parents and youth are forgetting what pure love really means. The meaning has not changed; but, like so many other virtues accepted as essential to proper standards of behavior, it is being chipped away until the real meaning is so adulterated that hate is becoming more and more a substitute.

Breaking of marriage vows

How can a man or woman say they love each other and become sexually involved with someone else? How is it that by our actions we hurt those whom we should love the most?

What about parents who break up their homes? Who suffers most, the parents or the children? The selfishness of some people is appalling. The breaking of marriage vows and covenants does not seem to be significant or meaningful.

It is most important that parents remain together and hold their family in an ideal relationship. Parents, do not fail to hold the weekly family home evening. It will draw your children closer to you and you to them. Pray with your family. Establish the traditions of righteousness in your home. Develop love, companionship, and unity. Watch trends—are they up or down? Remember, where family ends, delinquency begins.

How blessed is the family where love abides. How blessed are the children whose fondest memories are those of a happy childhood and youth. Parents, take time to give your children these happy years and happy memories. The world is moving fast. The pressure upon one's time is consuming. Many fathers neglect families. Working mothers with children at home do likewise. Find the time to do things together as a family.

Charge from devoted mother

I wish to share with you, in part, a testimony of Sister Davidina Bailey, a devoted mother, looking into the future for the care, welfare, direction, and

happiness of her children. This was written 16 years before her death this past July. It is a most beautiful tribute from a mother who truly loved her children.

"I have lain awake tonight and cannot sleep, which is unusual for me as I am a good sleeper. I wish to leave this message to you, my children. . . . If you love me . . . keep the commandments of God, for my sake, if not for your own, as I would want you to be with me unto whatsoever glory your father and I attain to.

"I charge you . . . do not stray from this gospel if I am not here to look after you in this life. Do not be jealous of one another, as I have loved you all the same. I have tried to be fair to all of you. . . . Do not reprove each other. . . . Do not look for worldly pleasures. Be alert to the powers of Satan and his angels, for his power is mighty and not to be forgotten.

"Always remember, I love you all. You are the spirit children of God. Your father and I have been entrusted in this mortal life to be your parents, so live that we can once again be a family throughout the eternities."

Prayer for parents and children

May God grant us parents the love, wisdom, and good judgment to plan effectively for the care, welfare, and happiness of our children. May we help them to live righteously, to love truth, and to do good.

May God bless youth to follow the wise teachings of loving and exemplary parents and all live together in understanding, harmony, and peace.

I humbly pray, my brothers and sisters, that we shall teach the gospel, its principles, its standards, its ideals to our children, and set the kind of example that we can say to them, "Come, follow me and do the things you have seen me do."

I love the Church. I know it is true. I know the gospel is the plan of life the Lord has given to guide and direct us as we meet all the conditions present in the world today. May he keep us firm and steadfast and true in the path of righteousness, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○