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his work, after having his prophets prophesy of it, through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The account of its beginnings I have read to you, and that testimony is true, and this Church now, with its million and a half people, stands as a witness. Each one of us in this audience knows for himself, not because of what somebody says, but in his own way and for himself, by the whispering of the Spirit, that indeed it is true.

I bear you that testimony and add to it that I know that President McKay is a prophet of the Living God, a seer,

and a revelator, as are his counselors, and the twelve, and the patriarch, and I uphold them as such. I commend them to you as being what I have witnessed. I ask a blessing upon us all, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve. He will be followed by Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson.

ELDER STERLING W. SILL

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

After the Last Supper, Jesus was giving some final instructions to his disciples. He was trying to prepare them for the heavy load of responsibility which would soon rest upon them. He talked with them a great deal about his own mission, his association with his Father and what their relationship with God ought to be. During the discussion Philip said to Jesus, “. . . Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” (John 14:8.)

This question points out what is probably the greatest responsibility of our lives—not only to know God but also to understand the plan of the gospel and to live in harmony therewith. The proper relationship between men and God gives life its purpose. It doesn't matter very much whether we ride in an oxcart or on an interplanetary missile if our journey is purposeless.

Think how important it is that we understand that Jesus is the Redeemer of the world, that he expressed the divine will to men, that he was literally begotten of the Father. Jesus tried to help his disciples to understand the Father by understanding the Son who was in the express image of his Father's person. (Heb. 1:3.) To Philip he said, “. . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; . . .” (John 14:9.) As it was with the disciples, so it is with us. Our relationship to God involves the greatest rewards and the most important responsibilities that ever come to

men and women in mortal life, and it is perfectly natural and proper that we should join Philip in his request to “. . . shew us the Father.” (*Idem*, 8.)

That is, the greatest need of man is for God. God created us. It is his Spirit that “. . . giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; . . .” (D&C 84:46.) Every day he sends us food, energy and vitality from the sun. That is, our world is not an independent world. If the sun's rays were shut off for a very short time no life could survive upon this earth. Not only does God literally give us each day our daily bread, but he is also responsible for our mental and spiritual vitality. (*Ibid.*, 88.)

It is because our greatest need is for God that the first and most important commandment centers in our maintaining a proper relationship to him. And the most serious sins are our abuses of that relationship, wherein we turn away from God. Satan sinned in the presence of God, which sets the high water mark for sin.

Occasionally we ought to ask ourselves, how effective we are—individually and collectively—in this all-important relationship. We may be able to get a clue from some interesting statistics recently broadcast over the radio. A survey indicated that ninety-five percent of all of the people in America claim to believe in God. Eighty percent of those surveyed said they accepted the Bible

as the authoritative word of God. Each year in America we spend over a hundred million dollars for Bibles. A bigger percentage of Americans presently claim membership in some Christian church than ever before in our history. Yet paralleling this great upsurge in religion is a corresponding upsurge in crime, delinquency, and actual spiritual illiteracy. This survey indicated that only thirty-five percent of all of those questioned even knew the names of the four Gospels. And over one-half said that religion played no significant part in their business or political affairs.

Last summer in Madison Square Garden, Billy Graham indicated one of our problems when he said, "For all of our talk about religion there is tragically little actual personal Christian commitment in America today." It is very easy for us to get disturbed when we hear about the Russians closing up their churches or trying to banish God from their country and the lives of their people. But what Russia has done officially millions of people are doing privately and individually. That is, what does it profit that our churches are open if we are not in them, or even if we spend a billion dollars for Bibles that we do not read? One thing is sure, and that is that not one of us can afford to fail to observe properly the first and most important commandment. Our eternal lives depend upon it.

It should stimulate us to remember that when Jesus was born in Bethlehem there was no room found for him in the inn. But there is a strange foreboding in this thought. "No room" was the Master's experience throughout his life. There was "no room" for his doctrines, "no room" for the spirit of his mission. We must not allow history to repeat itself because we make no room in our country or our lives for the Savior of the world. Nor have we discharged our obligation to God and our own souls by thoughtlessly saying, "We believe in God," and then let it go at that, without understanding either God or the specific nature of our responsibility to him.

Teachers of religion who "call themselves" to the ministry and then "teach their own doctrines" must bear an awful share of the responsibility for our

unfortunate world situation. Even Jesus did not teach his own doctrine. He said, ". . . My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." (John 7:16.) How much confusion and actual harm would be avoided if every religious teacher would follow the example of "the great Teacher."

Recently I read a book written by a popular minister, in which he attempted to analyze the great Christian doctrines as taught in the Bible, and then he made comparisons with some of the doctrines currently being taught.

For example, he said that the God of the Bible is a personal God—there can be no question about that. But he said, "We don't believe that any more." And then to substantiate his statement he quoted answers to direct questions about what some prominent ministers had said about their conception of God. One minister said, "No one can possibly know about God. He is absolutely immeasurable, undiscoverable and indiscernible. He is not limited to boundaries and we can be sure that he has no body or shape." Another minister said that "God is an eternal principle." Another said that God is "a giant electronic brain." Another said that God is "a mobile, cosmic ether." This minister pointed out how completely contrary these concepts were to those of the scriptures. He said, "Imagine Jesus praying to a mobile, cosmic ether. Jesus prayed—. . . Our Father which art in heaven. . . ." (Matt. 6:9.) He said to Mary, ". . . go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and to your God." (John 20:17.) That statement must be perfectly clear to everyone. And yet this great minister said, "We don't believe that any more."

Then he discussed the resurrection. He said that those who wrote the Bible believed in a literal bodily resurrection. There could be no question about that. The body of Jesus came out of the tomb and ministered among men for forty days. He said to Thomas, ". . . Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." (*Idem*, 27.) Then he read the paragraph in which Matthew said, ". . . And the

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graves were opened; and many of the bodies of the saints which slept arose,

"And came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." (Matt. 27:52-53.) But this great minister also disposed of this particular doctrine by saying, "We don't believe that any more."

There are those who through their teachings would deprive God of his body, deny his personality, take away his senses, faculties, and feelings. They would leave him sexless, thoughtless, and helpless, without boundaries, shape, identity, or location. Some indulge the hopeless absurdity of merging three into one, and then in some mysterious, incredible way, expanding the result to fill the immensity of space.

These false doctrines have contributed greatly to the indifference and unbelief of our day. That is, much of the current disbelief in God is not a denial of God but a denial of the false and unbelievable ideas about God. In the light of this tragic situation the importance of Philip's plea for understanding God takes on an urgent and compelling significance. What more important request could our generation make than a united, sincere, wholehearted prayer saying, "Show us the Father."

The work and message of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is centered in the literal physical fulfillment of Philip's request in our own day. In the early spring of 1820, in answer to this important need, God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ reappeared upon this earth to re-establish among men a belief in the God of Genesis, a belief in the God taught by Jesus, a belief in the God of the Bible, a belief in the Father of spirits whose will is that not one of his children should perish. (Matt. 18:14.) The voice of the Father was heard at the baptism of Jesus; (*ibid.*, 3:17) and again at the transfiguration. (*Ibid.*, 17:5.) But in our own day he has manifest himself with a complete literalness which cannot be mistaken, misunderstood, or disregarded. In speaking about this important manifestation the Prophet Joseph said:

"... I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head above the brightness of

the sun which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"... When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages whose brightness and glory defy all description standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other, 'This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!' " (Joseph Smith 2:16-17.)

In the midst of the persecution which followed, the Prophet said:

"... I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of the light I saw two Personages and they did in reality speak to me. And though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true. And while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led in my heart to say: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God? Or why does the world think to make me deny that which I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision. I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it; neither dared I do it." (*Idem*, 2:25.)

What a thrilling message! What a tremendous testimony! How eagerly it should be welcomed by every child of God as a solid basis for his faith. During the long dark night brought upon the world by apostasy, there may have been room for many doubts. But now these doubts could be dispelled. There was now someone in the world who had actually seen God and who knew for a certainty, not only that he lives, but the kind of Personage that he is. It was now possible to know that above the dictators and above chance and above circumstance, there is God our Heavenly Father to whom all mankind is responsible, and from whom all of our blessings come. How important that everyone should investigate and learn the truth. If one should err in believing the gospel of Jesus Christ to be true, he could not possibly be the loser by the mistake. But how irreparable is his loss who should err in supposing the gospel of Jesus Christ to be false.

Benjamin Disraeli once said, "The secret of success in life is to be ready for success when it comes." How un-

fortunate when one is not ready, especially when the matters involved are so tremendously all-important. The worst tragedy of the last two thousand years is that the testimony of Jesus concerning the Father and himself has largely gone unheeded. That tragedy is being repeated in our day in that so many are still not ready. We are so much involved in ourselves that we tend to crowd God out of our lives.

Life in this world is not man centered—it is God centered. As so many are doing in our day, the prodigal son squandered his inheritance because his world was centered in himself rather than in God. The greatest possible accomplishment of our world is to know God, and to believe in God, and to obey God.

Philip said, “. . . shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” The overwhelming importance of that plea was emphasized by the Master himself when on that last fateful night as he prayed to his Father he said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3.)

How tremendously important it is, therefore, that both of these great Personages have reappeared to men upon the earth in our own day, that we may know for ourselves.

I would like to close with a quotation of one of the most important utterances ever made in the world. After Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon had

received an informative and glorious heavenly manifestation at Hiram, Ohio, on February 16, 1832, an account of which is recorded in the seventy-sixth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, they wrote these thrilling lines:

“And now, after the many testimonies that have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: that he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

“That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.” (D&C 76:22-24.)

To this I would like to add my own personal testimony, that I know that God lives and that his priesthood and his Church, teaching his doctrines, are now upon the earth, that we may in very deed be his disciples. May God help us to avail ourselves of this tremendous opportunity I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve. Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson of the Presiding Bishopric will now speak to us. Our concluding speaker will be Elder Harold B. Lee.

BISHOP THORPE B. ISAACSON

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

President McKay, President Richards, President Clark, my beloved brothers and sisters:

I always need the blessings of the Lord when I am called to this position. I could hardly proceed without the assurance of those blessings. I shall be grateful for your prayers, your patience, and your understanding. After much fasting and much praying, I trust that the Lord will sustain me. We do believe in praying, and we believe in fasting, and I testify to you that therefrom comes great strength to us.

I am sure we were deeply touched this morning by this wonderful choir, both at the broadcast and at this session. They are a great credit to us, a great credit to themselves and to the Church. Truly, they are regarded as wonderful servants, and they are not alone wonderful singers, but they are wonderful people.

Regarding the divinely appointed responsibility of parents, the sobering counsel is given to us that “. . . they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.”