

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.”

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(D&C 68:28.) These and many other scriptures make it crystal-clear the heaven-imposed responsibilities of teaching our children properly. If we fail in our duty toward them, we are weakening the foundation of our own influence.

Marriage is the gateway through which a man or woman obtains personal experience in human relationships. Parenthood is the opportunity for putting that experience to heavenly and practical use. It is a God-given right for parents to have children so that they can give them intelligent, mental, moral, and spiritual training. Parent love is beautiful, but parent love combined with intelligent discipline is the force that turns children into great characters. Misdirected and misguided offspring result in one of civilization's appalling wastes and present-day problems. Good citizens are necessary to civilization, but good parents are obligatory if civilization is to continue.

We hear very little nowadays about the strength of character that our forefathers drilled into their children. In those days, a boy grew up with the understanding that he could get somewhere in this world through hard work, rather than looking for short-cuts. Promotion was considered on performance, results, ability, and talent. Parents implanted in their children a desire for sound knowledge and a yearning for excellence and a willingness for hard work. The sense of personal responsibility was as basic as love itself.

Somewhere in our recent past, many of us have adopted the idea that a father's firm influence is not essential in the raising of children. All too often father's role in family discipline has been dismissed to, "You ask your mother." This may be all right with daughters, but with a son, it is an invitation to disaster. A boy who grows up unable to look to his father for guidance and decision and help will not have much respect for authority whatever its source.

Ninety percent of the youngsters who have had troubles are the products of homes where the father's influence was lacking. As unattractive as the task may seem, a father is the guiding director of the family, and when he fails in his job, there can be only chaos and trouble.

Should a father surrender to his wife his own position as head of the household, then the results may be the same.

Faithful parents are entitled to the inspiration of the Lord. What would we do as parents without that inspiration? But sometimes parents do not have the courage to follow that inspiration, and they yield, when they should stand firm.

There should be well-established rules of behavior for growing boys and girls. The word "no" is now practically obsolete. Is it wrong for youngsters to have to toe the line? Discipline—why, we all need discipline! Someone has said that respect is no longer a part of the everyday living. The lack of discipline will bring a lack of respect. Are parents smart to give in? Would we not be better parents if we put our "foot down"? Youngsters are still youngsters, perhaps immature. They need so much help and so much counsel. They have a lot to learn, but as parents we should not be afraid to teach them.

Perhaps we should let our youngsters know that they are supposed to achieve—they will be required to work, and that celebration comes only after victory, accomplishment, and achievement. A sensible youngster does not necessarily want his freedom. All he wants and needs is love, and he knows deep down in his heart that the people who love him the most are the ones who will have the courage to say "no." Discipline—yes, it is necessary to save our youngsters from themselves!

There is no strength comparable to the strength of a nation whose people know the meaning of sacrifice. Some parents say, "We do not want our youngsters to sacrifice." Young people should be taught the meaning and the law of sacrifice. They will have to pay a price for success. The price of success is high, but it is not nearly so high as the price of failure!

There are so many unwholesome outside influences working against us today, that it is a challenge to all parents to teach their children properly and watch over them carefully.

During the last year, many of us have become increasingly alarmed by the fact that prolonged exposure to television is having a disastrous effect on

our children. Many times, parents use television as a built-in substitute for parental guidance.

According to Edward R. Murrow, and I quote:

"As a child's mind and character is shaped by what he sees and hears and as TV trends continue, the nation faces the danger of mass imbecility."

Television has taken the place of reading, studying, and true family life in many homes. If this continues for another generation, we may be shocked at the results.

During the past year, the greatest wave of crime and horror shows of all time has deluged this nation.

Last fall, a prominent magazine stated that networks were devoting twenty-four hours a week to violence. Of the thirty-one new programs introduced (and that number has now increased), half are devoted to violence. It also states that one week's television programs showed 160 murders, 500 percent more than five years ago; 60 justifiable homicides; 192 attempted murders; 83 robberies; 15 kidnappings; 24 conspiracies to commit murder; 21 jail breaks; 7 attempted lynchings; 6 dynamitings; 11 extortions; 2 cases of arson; and 2 cases of torture; plus an unaccountable number of fights, sluggings, maulings, etc.

I wonder if we realize what effect this is going to have. It seems a shame that children should be subjected to such atrocities. What we need are more producers and sponsors who are interested in educational programs and character building.

Judge Frank J. Kronenburg of New York says that "television is an instrument of undue pressure that convinces the immature mind that violence is an accepted way of life. . . . The results will best be known by posterity. . . ."

James V. Bennett, director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, states: "The increasing number of prisoners young and old whose crime closely parallels what they have seen on television is a matter of great concern to me. The impressionable maladjusted or emotional young person sees these crimes and re-enacts them."

Since all of us are so deeply concerned, it is up to us to encourage and

suggest to sponsors, stations, public officials, radio commissioners, newspapers, and magazines, new and different programs; and patronize good programs. Television is a great modern invention. It can be so educational, it can be such a help in character building. Many programs are already very excellent, and we should support them.

The proper use of leisure time is very important, and the proper use of it has been the means of helping many young men and women to greatness.

I recently heard someone say, talking about television, that it was a good way to kill time. Then I thought at that time of what Thoreau once said: "As if you could kill time without injuring eternity."

Of course, we as parents cannot blame all juvenile delinquency on television. We must take the responsibility in the home. Make no mistake about that. Most parents love their children and want them to have as much freedom as is necessary, but as Sam Levenson says, "We don't want the Bill of Rights to turn into the rights of Billy."

"It is a fulltime job to be decent"—to be decent to everybody all the time. To be decent is to cease bitterness, jealousy, and hate, to refrain from gossip, refrain from backbiting, and from passing on untrue comments and unreliable stories about another, to be considerate, thoughtful, and sympathetic. After all, everyone that I know of already has a very heavy load to carry.

Referring to the life of Jesus, there was no hate in him, but only gentleness and patience. Through him, it was not just a religion that was born. It was man reaching out for something clean and good, yearning for something decent and dignified. Men had known for centuries that happiness did not evolve from violence and injustice, not even from power. They knew cruelty always defeated itself.

Jesus taught that respect and love should be the primary guides of human behavior and human decency. There is an eternal hope that this can be a good world, that nations can live in harmony, that people can produce and trade and serve, each for the profit of

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the other. It is a beautiful thing that man after all his tragic experience with war, brutality and despair, can hold to this wonderful belief.

Remember, young people, there is a price for success, but the price of success is not nearly so high as the price of failure. Remember, young people, that you are holding our hearts and your future in your hands.

I want to bear my testimony to the Lord for his kindness and mercies to me, for his blessings, for his help and his guidance. I know that this is the true Church of Jesus Christ. I know that God lives, that he is our Father. I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, our beloved Savior and Redeemer.

I wonder how near we can get to our Heavenly Father and to our Savior. I know from my own experience that when I can become humble, it is possible for me to get very close to the Lord. I know that there is divine in-

spiration and revelation in the Church today. I know that our beloved President David O. McKay, a prophet of God, is at the head of the Church. I know he is inspired of the Lord. I know that the priesthood is in the Church today, and that inspiration and revelation in the Church today is as strong or stronger than we have ever known it before.

May God bless us that we may live up to the standards of this beautiful gospel, to this Church which is our life, which makes our life as it is, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President David O. McKay:

Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson of the Persiding Bishopric has just addressed us. Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

### ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

#### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

I am prompted in the subject of my few remarks by a recent saddening experience, which I had with some young people of Latter-day Saint parentage who have allowed their faith to dwindle while they have sought for higher education in the so-called secular fields, and I am encouraged in discussing some of these matters by what has appeared to be the theme of this session of our conference. I therefore seek for the sustaining of your faith and prayers for these next few minutes.

Some two years ago I came across a report in the *New York Times* of a statement made by Dr. O. H. Mowrer of the University of Illinois, psychologist and former president of the American Psychological Association. This statement came out of a symposium on the relationship between religion and mental health at the sixty-fifth annual meeting of the American Psychological Association held in the Statler Hotel in New York City. This is what Dr. Mowrer says:

"Psychology does not know enough about religion, psychology does not have

all the answers. In fact," he observed, "it has not even asked all the right questions—the great soul-shaking questions of life and death which lie at the very heart of human experience and existence." Dr. Mowrer further said: "It is striking how many psychologists are themselves going back to church, or at least carefully sending their children to Sunday School." He concluded then by saying: "This symposium is far from an occasion for celebration, but rather a call to labor in a vineyard which we psychologists have rather systematically neglected and despised."

It has been a source of great satisfaction for me to have observed in my contacts with men in various fields that other great men in other fields are likewise seeking for the answers to the soul-shaking questions, as he put it, which lie at the heart of human experience and existence.

Some time ago I was privileged to have a telephone conversation with one of the religion editors for a great national news chain. He was preparing an article that was to precede the show-