

PRESIDENT ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My beloved brethren and sisters: It is a pleasure for me to stand before you and bear my testimony in this General Conference. I have been delighted with the spirit of the Conference thus far and with the messages we have heard. I am more than pleased that our beloved President is able to be with us and that God has given him the measure of health which he enjoys. I want to assure him that my prayer for him daily is that God will prolong his life so long as it is sweet for him and within the purposes of God that he should stand at the head of the Church. I enjoyed the message of each of his Counselors, and recommend to all of us that we carry those messages in our hearts and strive to live their import and purpose.

I was very much pleased with what President McKay gave us this morning, with the message of cheer and comfort. He indicated that while we should be cheerful we should recognize the presence of certain evil practices within our midst. Some of those practices have come down to us from the past, and one hundred years of our life have not been sufficient to eradicate them from our midst.

LATTER-DAY SAINT BELIEF REGARDING GOD

In all our history we have claimed the right to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience, and we have added we extend to other people the same privilege. We have done that, we have offered in many instances the facilities of the Church for the worship of other denominations. We are a tolerant people, but I wish to suggest this morning that in the idea of toleration which we foster we should never think of adopting the practices of other people which are not according to our standards and beliefs.

We can never for a moment fail to recognize the fact that we do worship God in a different manner from most people; that the type of God to which reference was just made is not the one we worship. We must always teach our children that the revelation to Joseph Smith of the identity and personality of God and Jesus Christ was real, and that as Latter-day Saints we should accept it as such. We should always teach them the necessity of living the standards of the Church—honesty, uprightness, integrity and virtues of many kinds, and chastity.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG SHOULD BE TAUGHT

Many people believe that naturally and inherently we know the difference between right and wrong. I am not a psychologist, but I have grown up with the belief that we have a God-given conscience that teaches us to do what we know to be right and restrains us from doing what we know to be wrong, but I am a firm believer in the fact that our idea of right and wrong has grown out of the revelations of God to mankind, and that it is established in the minds of our children by the teachings of their mothers and their fathers. If they fail to learn through our neglect that

certain things are wrong and do them, there is then the responsibility lying at the doors of their fathers and mothers. It is our duty as fathers and mothers to teach them frankly these things. It is our duty as leaders in the Priesthood quorums to discuss these things, to come to a mutual understanding of what is right and what is wrong, and to avail ourselves of public opportunity to teach our children so that no child growing up in our midst can say he has never been taught.

I reiterate what I said here at one time, that when a person can go to an officer of the Church and say, "Nobody has ever taught me that a certain grievous sin that we decry is a sin," somebody is at fault, for every man and woman in our communities should know that adultery and fornication and kindred practices are sinful in the sight of God and in the sight of this community. And in all our liberality and in all the concession that we may make to the belief of other people, allowing them to worship how, when, where, and what they may, we can never recede from our standards and adopt theirs, and be true to the trust that God has placed in us, and true to the heritage that we have received from our fathers and our mothers.

A TESTIMONY OF THE GOSPEL ADDS STRENGTH AGAINST TEMPTATION

I believe it is a fortunate thing and a truth that we are superior in our private lives to our ancestors, and I believe that superiority has grown out of the testimony that has been handed down to us from our parents, and through the inspiration of God our Heavenly Father that this work is true, that it has given us a devotion which other people lack for the standards of righteousness and uprightness, of truth and integrity.

I believe that we should stress them more, I believe that we should lay special stress upon the necessity of honesty in our dealings one with another, for the love of a man for his fellowmen cannot be fostered when he takes advantage of him in business relations or social contact.

I pray that God will give us His Holy Spirit, that we may live these standards, that we may keep them dear to our hearts, that we may have the grace and the gift of appealing to our young people with confidence. When a boy comes to me and says, "I have done a certain thing, but I could not tell it to my father; I could not tell it to my Bishop," I feel that there has been a barrier raised between those people and him that ought to be removed, that never should have existed. And when another boy comes to me and says, "I have stopped this practice because my Bishop and came to me and put his arm around me, he is my friend," I know that in that instance at least there was no barrier and the Spirit of God had full play between those two, and that boy is well upon his way. That is my feeling, brethren and sisters, I believe it sincerely and honestly. I believe we should teach these things more carefully, more intimately in our homes, in our quorums, and in our contacts socially one with another. I may even be the keeper of my neighbor's son in that respect, and if I see an opportunity to help I have an obligation and duty to do so.

May God help us to meet these responsibilities fully, completely.

honorably, that the generation that grows up at our feet may call us blessed because of the light that we have held to them in the battle of life, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN

Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

I sincerely trust, my brethren and sisters, that the Spirit of the Lord will guide and direct me in my remarks this morning.

THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION INSPIRED

As the Bible is referred to as "the law and the testimony" in a religious sense, the Constitution of the United States is "the law and the testimony" of American democracy. Its framers were inspired men, and the membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accepts it as such in view of the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith indicating that the Lord had a hand in the framing of this great document. I quote from Section 101 of the Doctrine and Covenants, Verse 77, wherein the Lord declares:

According to the laws and constitution of the people, which I have suffered to be established, and should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles.

The American Constitution or Bill of Rights was paid for with the life blood of our Revolutionary fathers, and men for generations before them fought kings, died in battle, suffered imprisonment, and in some instances were executed in order to win personal freedom.

EVENTS FORETOLD BY JEFFERSON

The chief author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, was not only an inspired man in what he advocated, but I believe he was blessed with the gift of prophecy. I should like to read a Jeffersonian prophecy to you:

The spirit of the times may alter, will alter. Our rulers will become corrupt, our people careless. A single zealot may become persecutor, and better men be his victims. It can never be too often repeated, that the time for fixing every essential right, on a legal basis, is while our rulers are honest, and ourselves united. From the conclusion of this war (of the Revolution) we shall be going down hill. It will not then be necessary to resort every moment to the people for support. They will be forgotten, therefore, and their rights disregarded. They will forget themselves, but in the sole faculty of making money, and will never think of uniting to effect a due respect for their rights. The shackles, therefore, which shall not be knocked off at the conclusion of the war, will remain on us long, will be made heavier and heavier, till our rights shall revive or expire in a convulsion.

AN APOSTASY FROM TRUE DEMOCRACY

And as I view conditions today in the light of Jefferson's prophecy,