

is back of this work, to sanctify to the good of His cause the efforts that are put forth in sacrifice and in devotion, that we see in evidence in all the stakes and wards of the Church.

May God help us that we may appreciate these things, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My dear brethren, if I say anything to you that will be worth while this afternoon, I shall need your faith and prayers, so please extend them in my behalf.

INTERESTING VISIT TO MISSION

Most of the month of September I spent visiting the North Central States Mission, in company with President Richards, his wife, and my wife. I bring to you, who are the fathers of those missionaries, their greetings, and the report that they are all well and happy, and doing an excellent work.

I went into that mission to find, as I went from place to place that I was asked to meet people who are not of our faith, in numbers equal, almost, to those of the converted members resident in the branches. I was faced with the problem of explaining to them why we are there, and why we are working in the world as we are.

I wonder if it would be well for us to think occasionally about ourselves in that light, what we want to tell the world. Many of you who are here today are missionaries in the stakes of Zion, and you are faced with that problem likewise.

As I faced those audiences, I felt impressed to bear testimony to the restoration of the gospel in this day and age. I remembered that Christ told Peter that he would found His church upon the testimony that He is the Son of God. I remembered also that when the Prophet Joseph Smith was alive that the world appeared to have a very hazy idea as to the personality of God. They were shocked and surprised when that lad told them that he had gone into the woods to ask God for wisdom, and that both God the Father and Christ His Son had appeared to him, in vision, and that he saw them as glorified Beings.

PERSONALITY OF GOD

The world was shocked to think that God, after all, might have a personality of that kind; and generally speaking, I believe, that idea is not to this day accepted, for they rely upon a certain scripture in the New Testament which says, "God is a God of spirit," and they say: "All the world knows that spirit is immaterial."

I called to their attention the fact that the Prophet Joseph Smith teaches that there is no such thing as immateriality in the world, and that even spirit is matter, and substance; and if God is a God of spirit, and

if spirit is matter, then God is material, and thus can have a definite form. The scripture which says that God created man in his own image, is a real and true scripture, and when the Prophet Joseph Smith was given that wonderful blessing, he saw God in His true form.

While we worship God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, we have a different idea as to their personality and being from that which the world at large possesses. It was the restoration of that truth, among others, that was essential at that time. When we tell the world that they have gone astray, we do nothing more than quote the word of Christ our Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and there is no egotism on our own part when we say it. We accept the responsibility of that announcement in humility and faith.

I found that there are many people who are blessed with that interpretation of God, even among those who are not of our faith. They are pleased with the thought that God can be real, that there is no confusion in that scripture, after all, but that he is a definite personality. I taught them our method of faith in that type of God.

I believe as our many friends who have come amongst us here inquire as to why Mormonism, that that, perhaps, shall be our first explanation: that God is real, and truly a being, and that he has restored the gospel.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE GOSPEL NECESSARY

Then I taught them that the Priesthood of God was restored through the instrumentality of heavenly beings, and that we are the custodians of that Priesthood, as we were told by Brother Richards in his address here at this Conference. I taught them faith and repentance and baptism.

The law of repentance is a law that is ever active among us. I read that there is nothing so apparent to man as his own imperfection, that life is a struggle to reduce that imperfection. No man can compare himself with his ideals and be proud or haughty. The proud and the haughty are only they who compare themselves with more unfortunate people than they. There is no place in the heart of man for pride or arrogance, and there is room, every day that we live, for repentance on the part of man.

Repentance is the recognition of improper ways of living, the resolution to depart from them, and the final putting in the place of those bad ways of life the correct and superior methods of doing things. And if there is ever a day in the lives of anyone of us when that type of repentance does not have place, I will be surprised.

When God told certain of His servants, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, that the thing they could best do for their own spiritual welfare was to cry repentance to this generation. He knew exactly what He said, and repentance is the thing that we most need, all of us, every day of our lives.

Along with the law of repentance comes a law of forgiveness. We are told that though our sins shall be as scarlet, if we repent, honestly and sincerely, and do them no more, we shall be washed as white as wool.

Now, repentance brings that forgiveness. There are too many of

us, however, who, when we say that we forgive, forget that forgiveness means the washing away of our remembrance of those things. Forgiveness availeth a man nothing, so long as we who pretend to forgive hold before our eyes when we consider him, his past record. If we are going to forgive a person, being convinced of his sincere and honest repentance, offer reinstatement and forgiveness, we must forget. We must accept him as of today, with a clean heart and an honest motive, and we must give him his opportunity.

I believe that it is in that spirit that God accepts of us through repentance, and that He will actually forget our offenses against Him if our repentance is sincere, and our future conduct honorable and upright, such as to justify His confidence. Wherever you go, you find the past record of people following them from place to place after we have forgiven them. I would ask your indulgence to give them an honest "break." That is what repentance means to me.

And then we have to teach those people in the world the necessity for baptism, and our method of baptism, which is not unique with us at all, because it was one established by Christ, and it has persisted in certain quarters of the world. But baptism by immersion for the forgiveness of sin, the remission of sin, is a cardinal principle with us. The why and the wherefore, we leave with God, for Christ has said it is necessary. "Whomsoever ye baptize shall be saved," and whoever is not baptized and rejects the teaching will be damned. It is essential, because Christ has said so.

The symbolism is an interesting study, and means much to us. It is only necessary because Christ has said so, and God established it from the beginning as a principle of redemption for mankind.

These and many other things we had the pleasure of testifying to these good people, and we hope that we did them good. We know full well that we ourselves were benefited and blessed, and I feel that these are cardinal things that we should contemplate every day of our lives. If we are sincere in our testimony, such contemplation will benefit and bless us, and make us better.

STRENGTH IN TESTIMONY

The strength and the power of this Church is in the testimony of its members, for Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church"—upon the testimony that He is the Son of God. In every generation and every place where the Church has been established, it has been introduced by that testimony, and so long as that testimony was retained in the hearts of the members and followers of Christ, strength and power and vigor characterized the organization.

If there ever comes a time that the members of this Church shall fail in that testimony, the Church will go down to destruction. Fortunately, Christ has told us that He will never take it from the earth so long as we are faithful, and my faith leads me to believe that there is the power within this Church to maintain that testimony in vigor and strength; and that God will keep us all firm in it, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer. Amen.