

We testify with John the Baptist, who, as he saw the Lord approaching to him, saith:

... Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29.)

Not just a man of human warmth, but the Lamb of God.

We bear witness with Nathanael, an Israelite in whom was no guile:

... Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. (John 1:49.)

Not merely a great teacher, but the very Son of God.

We testify again with John the Beloved, who seeing Jesus on the shore, said with conviction, "It is the Lord!" not only a great humanist, but the Lord God of heaven.

And with Simon Peter, who, when asked by the Lord, "But whom say ye that I am?" said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," (Matt. 16:15, 16), and received this statement from the Savior:

... Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 16:17.)

And finally, we bear witness with the Prophet Joseph Smith who was willing to give his life for his testimony, which comes to us in his own words as follows:

I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two personages, and they did in reality speak to me; . . . I have actually seen a vision, and who am I that I can . . . deny what 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, at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation. (*History of the Church, Vol. I, pp. 7, 8.*)

I repeat my testimony:

I know that Jesus, through eternities past and future, is the Creator, the Redeemer, the Savior, the Son of God. I bear it in his holy name. Amen.

ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

It is a thrilling sight, my brothers and sisters, to stand before you on this occasion, and I trust that you will give me your faith and prayers, that the short time I occupy, my words may be directed by the Spirit of God.

It is two weeks today since Sister Ivins and I finished a tour of the East Central States Mission which was the third mission that I had inspected during this season. I have met the sons and daughters of many of you, and I bring you, from them, a good word. I want to tell you that they are interested in their work, they are devoted to

it, and they are striving to the best of their ability and their utmost power to teach and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I pray that you will have faith in them, that you will have no misgivings as to their future, for they are in the hands of God and are striving to do his work. It was interesting to study with them their problems, and to strive to help them in the solution of these problems. One of the questions that they confront most often, is the statement of many people, "We could accept your teachings and the principles which you advocate, if it were not for the supernatural conditions that you allege surrounded the birth of your organization."

WORLD'S RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT MODERN REVELATION

Brother Kimball has told us in the address which he has just finished, of the mission of Jesus Christ, of his appearance to the Prophet Joseph Smith. That seems the hardest thing for Christian people to accept when they think of us, for we allege in that statement that Christ is actually the Son of God, that God is a separate and distinct personage from Christ, and that man is made in their image. That statement topples the Christian idea which prevailed at the time of the Prophet Joseph Smith; it had prevailed for ages before him, and it still prevails. It is the most difficult thing for them to accept. It is miraculous that God and Christ should appear to a human being. At the same time, they will tell you that they accept without reservation the statements of the Bible, and some of them will go so far as to tell you they believe every word that is in it. When we read it, we find that one great prophet of God, Jacob, wrestled during the night with an angel from heaven. That doesn't seem difficult to them. We come down through history, and we find the Israelites in bondage in Egypt, their liberation necessary. We find that God, through the faith of those people, turned back the waters of the Red Sea, so that they walked through on dry ground, and the hosts of Egypt which followed were overcome by the returning waves, and the people were thus liberated. They accept that; it doesn't seem beyond their powers of belief. Those people wander on into the desert, and they find themselves thirsty. They want water, and Moses strikes a stone with his rod, the water gushing forth to quench the thirst of that unhappy people. They accept that. Then they find themselves hungry, and God causes them to be fed from heaven with divine food; and they accept that. Again we find a prophet who is able to call down from heaven fire to consume those who are obstructing the work of God. And thus it goes. We find the Savior himself, praying to his Heavenly Father in Gethsemane. These are all miraculous things, and people accept them more or less as in the ordinary events of the work of God, but they say, "Now why should there be a miracle in our day?" I can't bring myself to believe that those people were in any greater need of divine help than are people in our day. I can't bring myself to believe, either,

that they were any more dear to God their Heavenly Father, as his children, than we and our fathers and grandfathers. And I can't bring myself to believe that we are any more unworthy of the aid of God than they were. So to me, it seems a more or less proper thing and a natural thing, that God should so manifest himself.

PERSONALITY OF DEITY AGAIN REVEALED

To me that is the great and underlying reason for the restoration of the gospel in the latter days—the fact that people had come to misunderstand the personality of God; they had come to question his power of intervention in the affairs of men, and it was necessary that they should be taught again the things which they were taught in the testimony that was given at the baptism of Christ, and in the testimony that was given in the appearance of Christ to the Nephites. They were again to be taught that Christ is the Son of God. It is one of the most difficult things for sectarian peoples to accept because of the indoctrination that they have received over these many generations. That is one of the problems that your boys and your girls, young and old, have to present to the people in the mission fields.

Many of them have gone out, not knowing too well these things, sometimes because we at home have failed to do our full duty in explaining these truths to them. Some of us perchance depend upon our Sunday Schools, our Mutuals, and our priesthood quorums entirely for such instruction. But I feel that it is the duty of every father and every mother in Israel to see that their son and their daughter know these things, and to qualify them to testify to the world that it is true, that God came back and visited the Prophet Joseph Smith, and spoke to him thus bringing back to the world the testimony as to the true personality of God. I believe that they should further teach them the various and sundry teachings of the Church, regarding these things; baptism, repentance, faith in God, charity in their lives, chastity, and all the virtues that go to make fine men and women, so that those who may be called for missionary service shall go into the world fully convinced in their hearts that God lives; that he is the Father of their spirits; that he is the guardian of them all; that he actually has personal interest in our welfare; and that he can be sought in prayer for aid and assistance. If they go into the world understanding these things, they will be effective and efficient missionaries for the Church.

SPECIAL CALLING OF THE SEVENTIES

I represent the great body of the priesthood, whose purpose by ordination is to disseminate these truths. Many of those men have family obligations which prevent them from actually going into the world themselves to do this preaching, but they frequently have sons and daughters who can represent them, and I feel it is their duty,

after preparing those boys and girls, young men and young women for that work, to present them, even at a sacrifice, if you want to call it such, to the Church for the short period of time that is required in the mission field. That is the work of the seventy, to testify to the restoration of the gospel; and if they can't do it personally, why can they not do it through their sons and their daughters?

It is a pleasing thing to me that there is an increasing percentage of men in the missions of the world. It has been our experience in the stake missions, that as the percentage of men decreased, the hours required for baptism increased. It seems that there is a power in the priesthood of God that is necessary to the ultimate conversion of men. And I would like to see this percentage increase beyond its present status, both in the foreign missions and in the stake missions. When our stake missions began, we had a percentage of sixty from the seventies quorum, whose special duty it is to teach, and today that percentage is as low as thirty-five. I personally would like to see that restored to its original percentage, or better, so that the seventies of the Church will actually be doing the work for which they are set aside by ordination.

Now, that is our duty; it is the duty of the Church to break down the unfounded traditions of the past and to teach the restoration of the gospel. Every man who is warned should warn his neighbor. We are doing a valiant work, but we are likely not doing all we could and all we ought to do in this capacity.

I pray that God may give us a proper appreciation of our obligations to each other and to the world, that he may give us a proper understanding of the principles of the gospel, that may enable us to teach our young men and young women, our boys and our girls, our sons and daughters, the doctrines upon which they should rest their faith, in such a way as to build up in their hearts an undying faith regarding this great work in which we are engaged; so that at such time, when the Presidency of the Church sees fit to ask them for a service, they may be ready for it. May he bless us all, that we may live more near to him, that we ourselves may understand better our obligations to each other, that we may be able to purify our thoughts and our emotions and our actions so as to be worthy recipients of the Spirit of God, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Combined Choruses and the congregation sang the hymn, "Redeemer of Israel," by Phelps, (Hymn Book, page 194; L.D.S. Hymns, No. 231.)

ELDER JOSEPH F. MERRILL

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brethren and sisters: In the few minutes allotted me, I shall not deliver a sermon or make an address or a speech. I propose to make a few remarks relative to a few current matters that I be-