

And a final word from the Lord:

Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power; and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments of which I have spoken, of which in the smallest, yea, even in the least degree you have tasted at the time I withdrew my Spirit. (D. & C. 19:20.)

May the Lord bless us all that we may continually carry in our hearts the true spirit of repentance and forgiveness until we shall have perfected ourselves, looking toward the glories of exaltation awaiting the most faithful, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir and the congregation sang the hymn, "O Say, What Is Truth?"

ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My brethren and sisters, I believe that I have enjoyed this conference thus far to the fullest extent that a nervous man can. The testimonies that have been given have been wonderful, and we have heard much that is worthy of our remembrance and reflection. It is my desire to bear you my testimony as to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and if in doing so, I can say any little thing that will comfort any of us or give us greater courage in living the gospel of Jesus Christ then I shall be happy.

INFLUENCE OF JOSEPH SMITH

Not long ago, as I was leaving the office, I met a man who told me that he was a prominent lecturer. I have never heard him, but he alleged that he is a prominent lecturer. He had in his hand a pamphlet, "Joseph Smith Tells His Own Story." He said he was looking for the best printed picture of the Prophet Joseph Smith, for purposes of his own, of course. He was a man, I presume, of Jewish faith, for he said he was a Jew. As he showed me that picture, he made this remark: "Joseph Smith is not dead. He is no more dead than Abraham and Moses and Christ. His influence has extended throughout the whole world. It is felt wherever one goes." I said, "I hope that is true," and he said, "I know it is true. I have been around and felt his influence."

I am glad that I have faith in the Prophet Joseph Smith and the story that he told us. I believe implicitly in the gospel of Jesus Christ, as interpreted by the Church, and the prophets who stand at its head. If I have any doubts, it is only as to my ability to properly understand and properly interpret that gospel in my life.

FIRM FOUNDATION

Not very long ago, also, I sat at a banquet table next to one of our good sisters. During the conversation she told me of two teenage boys, brothers they were, who had just left the Church and had become affiliated with another. In explaining it to her, they said, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has nothing to offer us." It seems to me that that is a strange thing for a young man born in the Church to be able to say, and of course I don't believe a word of it, that is, I don't believe that it is true, because it came perhaps out of the ignorance of those two boys as to the Church and its teachings. We have sung "How Firm a Foundation" is laid for us. I believe that foundation is of such a peculiar nature and so thoroughly and deeply laid that any man or any woman who comes to understand it should accept it and appreciate it. Every man who worships should know the God he worships. Some people who teach tell us that the glorious thing about God is that men cannot understand him; but Christ said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God." (John 17:3.) He implies there, and I infer, that it is possible to come to know God if we will worship him well; and the great thing, as has already been intimated this morning, that came back to us through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith was the clear definition as to the personality of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ. That is the great and basic foundation stone, so far as my faith is concerned, and it came back to the world through the Prophet Joseph Smith. That is why we go to Christian people to teach the gospel, because at the time of the Prophet Joseph Smith there was not, and there is not today, so far as I understand, another Christian denomination which teaches the true personality of God. How can you worship really, honestly, and sincerely without knowing it?

THE PRIESTHOOD

There is another foundation stone that he was instrumental in bringing to us, which was represented last evening in the gathering of twelve thousand people on this block, and that is the priesthood of God. It is the greatest power, the most desirable thing in the world.

When I was in Tennessee one time, a good Methodist asked me if we thought we were the only people, to which I replied that God loves all people and will reward them as they live. We are, however, the custodians of his priesthood, and that priesthood is essential to the performance of the ordinances that he has set up as essential to our exaltation in his kingdom. Without it one cannot even be baptized into the Church. I hope that our friends who are not of us will not be offended when I use an illustration that I read in a letter from a young man who wrote from Barcelona, Spain, recently. He said, "I have come to realize that baptism into the Church of God is es-

sential. I believe that the Catholic baptism is ineffective and Protestant baptism is still worse." Now, I have no enmity toward them. I say this only to show that people do believe, as we do, that baptism is essential. It is set forth in the scriptures unequivocally, but it must be performed by a man who holds the corresponding priesthood to do it. So then, we have another reason for going to even Christian peoples with the message which we bear. That priesthood brings us the privileges of our endowment in the temple. It brings us the privilege of being sealed to our wives for time and all eternity, that our children may be born under the covenant and be ours through eternity if their lives justify it, than which no greater blessing could ever be given to man. If those three things are not something to offer to the people of the world, what do they want? Getting past that, we have other things that were restored. We have the true manner of the administration of the sacrament of Christ. There is no other place in the world that you can find stated the blessings that must be used on the water and the bread, than in the revealed scripture of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You find it in the Doctrine and Covenants. You find it in the Book of Mormon.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Church fosters education as no other religious organization in the world, I think, has ever done. The dominant church boasts the oldest college, I believe, in the world, located in Mexico. It is true that it is old, almost as old as the discovery of America, but what was it used for? It was used to educate a few people who could minister to the masses, but it was never made available to the masses of the people, not even desirable, some writers say, that the masses should be educated, but the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints offers an educational program to young and old, the like of which no other church has ever done.

We have our youth program, which is being copied by many today, which is an offering to the young that they should not consider lightly.

One could go on, if time permitted, to enumerate the many benefits and blessings that come from membership in the Church, so that one wonders why anybody should let trivial things drive him from it.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

I heard the other day of a man who left the Church because his son was denied entry into the temple—I imagine, justifiably so. You find people who leave the Church because, sometimes, they think the bishops and stake presidents do not understand them. They do not think of these broad and basic things, faith in God; faith in the revealed word as it has come from the Prophet Joseph Smith.

that he was actually an inspired servant of God; faith in the appointed leaders who have followed him with an unbroken line of authority to minister in these things. They are the important things, it seems to me, brethren and sisters, and when we think Mormonism, if you want to call it that, when we think of the gospel, it seems to me that those basic things are the ones that we should think of and appreciate, and we should not worry too much about the prohibitions that it gives us. There is not a single one of them that is not set up for the benefit and blessing of men. It is true that many men are frail and have great difficulty in observing all of those things, but they should not let their failure to observe them, their lack of power to observe them, drive them out of the Church, because in other sections they are given liberty and license that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints cannot condone.

HIGH MOTIVES OF OFFICERS

The Lord has to use human elements in the guidance of this great work, and it is not to be expected that any bishop or any stake president or any of the leaders shall be absolutely perfect in his life, but I would have you understand that it is my belief that those who stand as the presiding officers of this Church have nothing but high and holy motives in the things which they do and that they constantly and continuously and always seek the spirit of God to prompt them in the decisions they make, the programs they suggest.

Brethren and sisters, the Church offers a program that should be attractive to all, because it is through the observance of that program that men will not only live better and more righteous lives here on the earth and gain while they live here greater joy and greater happiness and greater satisfaction, but it also paves the way to exaltation in the presence of God, our Heavenly Father, when this mortal sojourn shall end.

It is my testimony to you that I feel, deep down in my heart, the truth of these things, that because I sense this, I am willing to devote my life to their teachings as one of the great missionary forces to which President McKay has referred today. I only hope and desire in serving you that I may do it with full love and fellowship, without hate, in my heart, toward any man, that when men come for advice God may inspire me to give them the advice that will encourage them and comfort them, that in all my ministry the spirit of God may characterize my acts.

May God bless us, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.