

I bear you my humble witness that I know these things are true, and the Lord has spoken and is speaking to us today in a way that he has talked to his people in every dispensation, and I bear it humbly in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

#### *Of the First Council of the Seventy*

My beloved brethren and sisters, as I stand before you this afternoon to bear my testimony to you, I am reminded that it is twenty years ago this month since I first had this privilege, if you will call it such, and I find it no easier today than it was then. Why it shouldn't grow easier, I don't know, except that one comes to understand greater the responsibility of the office that he holds.

#### TWENTY YEARS' SERVICE

During those twenty years it has been our purpose, that of Sister Ivins and me, to serve you faithfully. She has stood by my side, done everything that she possibly could to help me in what I have to do. That whole time she has never made a complaint because I have had to serve or placed an obstacle in my way. I appreciate her, and I want you all to know it.

In that service I have become acquainted with many, many fine men and women, and if in it all I have been of any aid or any comfort to anyone, it is all the blessing—all the compensation I would ask. I have never ever had any other major purpose since coming to this Council than to serve you to the best of my ability. I have had the privilege of serving under three presidents of the Church, and I want to bear you my testimony that in that acquaintance I have come to love them dearly, and I have never seen anything in their actions that I have felt to complain over. I bear you my testimony that they are in the service of God, and they are called of God; that their motives are high and holy and pure; that their whole service is in your interest and in the interests of the Church.

Now we are gathered here today to give our testimony to each other and to stimulate our faith in so doing. If we can leave this conference feeling a little more loyalty to the Church, with a little stronger resolution to do our duty, those of us who have cause for it, and a little greater determination to repent and correct our lives, even though there be but a few that need that last admonition, the conference will be well worth while. I trust that we may have just that result, that as we go away we may know better our duty and have a greater determination to serve.

#### FAILURE TO APPLY GOSPEL

We worry about the conditions of the world, and they are not

to our liking, that is true. We would like to know the causes and the cures for them. It seems to me that the major reason for the unsavory things that are happening in the world is the failure of men to apply the gospel of Jesus Christ to their lives. First, we must know him, know what he would have us do, and then do it.

I remember that soon after my father passed away, I found in going through his papers a magazine published by the Jewish Israel Movement in which there was a purported interview with a Jewish rabbi who had cast upon Christianity the blame for all the persecutions that his people had suffered and who finished by saying that Christianity is a failure in the world. As I read it, I thought of the Crusades, and I thought of the suppression of learning of the Middle Ages, and many other things which people don't like which they say form part and parcel of the history of Christianity; but it appealed to me that it is not Christianity but the failure to apply Christianity that we are looking at, and those evils come not from its observance but from its non-observance.

#### THE WORLD'S NEED

If we could teach the world the proper concept of God and Christ and our relationship to them, and do it in such a way that it would sink into their hearts and impel them to study the teachings of the Savior, then apply them in their lives, all these troubles that we worry about now would cease. But the trouble is, men are avaricious; they are selfish; they are ambitious for power. They have nearly all of the attributes which, if left unbridled, lead to these terrible consequences. It is only the Spirit of God and Christ coming into the heart of man that can change his nature so that he will serve properly his fellow men. That, I think, is the purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that we should learn that great commandment of God, the second, that we should love our fellows as we love ourselves. If we love God and serve him, we will serve our fellows because serving them is the only way we can manifest to him that we are willing to serve him.

#### THE PLACE TO BEGIN

Now, we are a small group. It is a tremendous task to think of remaking the world, but if we are going to have any influence on it, where must we start? I think that we must start with ourselves individually first, then in the family. During the conference of the Relief Society, which ended yesterday, we listened to some very wonderful talks on the family, how it should be organized and its purpose. Right there, it seems to me, is the place where we should begin to clear up these things. If every family in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were a model family, if every family were presided over by a man holding the Melchizedek Priesthood, a man who is understanding as to his responsibilities, who

has the power of leadership with his children, we could form such a strong body that all the rest of the world would eventually have to take notice of it and recognize its power, and its influence in the world would be good.

But I learn in studying the records of the stakes I visit that perhaps not more than seventy or seventy-five per cent of the families of the Church have a man standing at their head who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood. Then out of that seventy or seventy-five percent, as the case may be, there are many who make no effort to magnify this priesthood. They accept it for certain reasons, but they make little effort to magnify it.

#### MARRIAGE FOR ETERNITY

I have visited stakes where there were as few as thirty-two percent of the families represented in the Melchizedek Priesthood, others where it ran as high as ninety-seven percent, and there I think, brethren and sisters is the place we ought to start to correct our ills. Those of us who have children at the age where they should pair off should be tremendously careful to impress upon their minds the value of a proper family organization, the value of marriage in the temple of God for time and for all eternity. We should impress upon our children the fact that when they go to that temple they should go prepared to make it a lifelong and eternal undertaking, and that they should be serious and sober in the selection of their companions. I believe, if the proper attitude were taken toward marriage, the divorce problem which we face would be mitigated, if not abolished within the Church. There is an opportunity, there is a responsibility to teach young people the values of that institution. It is one of the characteristic things of the Church; it is the only place in the world where a marriage of that kind is celebrated; and it is desirable because it is a true institution ordained of God; and if people enter into it with the proper spirit, it is the greatest safeguard for their future conduct that has been given us by God.

We should not only teach these young people that they should go into that relationship with the determination that it is going to endure, but we should also teach them that they should expect it to endure because they are clean and pure and wholesome when they begin, and they are going to stay that way throughout. There are too many of us who miss right there. We don't seem to appreciate those things. Now is it possible to teach young people these things so that they will appreciate them? I believe it is. Sister Ivins for a number of years was a guide over at the Lion House. One day there came a group of fine young people there to visit. During that interview she took occasion to teach them this thing. After it was over, one young woman, who had expressed, on the way in, that she was not going to be married in the temple, came back with the

statement that she had enjoyed the visit and she was going to insist upon a temple marriage. Can we teach them that? We can if we will, I believe, and I believe it is one of the greatest duties of fathers and mothers.

#### PARENTS TO SET EXAMPLE

To begin with, of course, parents should have been married there themselves, and they should be true to each other. They should observe the standards of the Church so that the example they set will be above reproach to their children, and there ought never to be a thing happen between husband and wife that would abash or embarrass a son or a daughter, so that when those sons and daughters grow to maturity they can say as I can testify to you today, "My father never did a thing that I was ashamed of or gave me an instruction that I had to blush for." That's your privilege and your duty, you fathers and mothers, to teach young people, these things as plainly as you can; then if we can build that kind of family, the family that grows up under that influence will go into a ward organization with the same type of loyalty, and passing through the ward organization will approach the stake organization with the same loyalty and desire to conform. And, of course, out of your strength in your families, your wards, and your stakes grows the strength of the Church.

#### DAILY REPENTANCE

The place to begin, brethren and sisters, is with ourselves and our own, and if we can come to realize the imperfections of our own practices and change them, God will bless us. That is nothing more nor less than repentance, which all of us should practice daily.

Now I hope that out of this conference there will go a determination on our part to better our lives, starting with ourselves, to develop in our young folk a loyalty to their fathers and mothers, to their ward organizations and their stake organizations and the Church. That loyalty will reduce the adverse criticism that there is. There are many of us that find fault with the things that those of us who stand here try to do in the interest of the people, but loyalty would reduce that, and we would be happier even if we should not realize perfection in sustaining the policy of the Church.

God grant us help in it, I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

#### BISHOP JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN

*First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric*

I sincerely trust, my brethren and sisters, that I might enjoy an interest in your faith and prayers during the few moments that I shall stand before you.

With you I have been deeply moved and inspired by the pro-