

## ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

**M**Y BELOVED brethren and sisters: My wife once asked Father, "Do you ever get over being nervous when you speak to the conference?" And he said, "I haven't yet." And neither have I.

I seek an interest in your faith and prayers, that the testimony which I may endeavor to bear may be directed by the Spirit of our heavenly Father. We have listened to some wonderful testimonies today. I hope that mine may be in full harmony with what has been said.

There are many things for which I am truly grateful, especially the testimony that I have as to the reality of the Sonship of the Christ, that he lives, that he has done a wonderful service for you and me and that he has prepared the plan for us, which, if followed, will give us the joy for which the Book of Mormon says that man exists, and will bring us back into the presence of God with the ultimate possibility, if we attain to perfection, of Godhood.

There are many things requisite to that. President Richards referred to one of the most important of them today, and that is the family organization entered into with the approval and under the authority of the priesthood of God, sealed by a servant of God and under the holy spirit of promise.

It should be our purpose, brethren and sisters, as we approach this situation, to do it in all seriousness, understanding its tremendous potentialities and responsibilities, with a determination in our hearts that we will do everything we possibly can to make it a success and to enjoy in that relationship the Spirit of God, our heavenly Father.

One of my friends, one day, in talking to me, said, "You know, Antoine, if I were God, I would have done things differently," and I said, "How?" "Well,"

he said, "in the first place I would have fixed it up so that whenever a man married a woman, he would have been happy."

I prefer to think he was talking from observation rather than experience, but it is a fact that throughout the world a tremendously large proportion—too large a proportion—of the marriages that are entered into do not produce the desired happiness. In order to guarantee it there must be a proper foundation for it. I have been trying today to think of some of the foundation stones; and who should lay them, as well as when the laying of them should begin.

It seems to me that the purpose of the family relationship is to furnish bodies to spirits who are waiting the opportunity to tabernacle in the flesh. I have come to think that when we assume the obligation of offering such a tabernacle, we should be equipped, if possible, to produce a perfect one, and to that end our lives must be well-nigh perfect as to chastity and moral purpose.

I believe the foundation should be laid in the beginning by the parents who, when entering into marriage, should give due consideration to their anticipated children. Those of you who are beginning now, and those of you who are in the process of rearing families, should bear that in mind for it is incumbent upon you to lay the foundation stones for the happy marriages of your children, to teach them the responsibility of it, so that as they approach that age, an age when there are certain urges developing within the human body, that they should have a high moral and religious purpose and be able to dominate those impulses, bringing them under absolute subjection, so that when the time comes, the contracting parties can enter into the temple of God and make the promises that are made therein to each other, realizing that they have a right to

do it. There is nothing that will tend to make a marriage happier than faith in each other, and there is nothing, I think, that will produce greater faith than the testimony of each to the other, of a pure previous life.

The physical dangers from the non-observance of the law of chastity can well be overcome, but I have never yet found anybody who could say that the moral effects of its infringement could be entirely overcome and forgotten. It is true that there is a law of repentance and forgiveness and all that, but how much better it is when we begin life in that capacity, if we do not have to invoke that law for that particular offense. I believe it is possible for fathers and mothers, if they set the example, and teach under the Spirit of God, to get close enough to their children to lay such a foundation.

After having laid the stone, then they must build upon it, and that building must be the reflection of a chaste, virtuous, honest, upright life on the part of the father and mother of the family. You know and I know that does not always exist, but it should always exist, when a family starts out.

Children should be taught that there is a greater likelihood of success if the contracting parties have community of interests. It may not always be imperative, I presume, that they should belong to the same church, but the chances are better if they do. It may not always be necessary that they have the same background, but the chances are better if they do, and the chances are always better if they do not rush into the union thoughtlessly, not understanding each other. Then they should be taught that there may be obstacles to surmount as they move along together in married life; that victory over these obstacles is what develops strength and power and ability. I do not know whether we would have been so much better off if He had made it so there would never have been any sorrow come into a family organization because I think that is one of the ways God has of testing us and mellowing

us. When we survive them, when we can put our arms around each other in a mutual feeling of faith and of trust and reliance, then we develop from those obstacles. That, brethren and sisters, I believe, is our duty to our children, to teach them so that when they enter into this relationship they will be sweet and clean, with faith in God, realizing that the marriage they celebrate will not end with this life, but that it is to be for all eternity, and, consequently, it should be properly done and done under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Then, I believe, it would always be safe.

But after having gone that far, brethren and sisters, we are not always safe. There are too many cases where older people fail. Many of the things which disrupt families are trivial in the extreme, and many of them come about, just because people cannot bring themselves to acknowledge that the things they do they ought not to do and to try to make adjustments for them with each other.

If we could, under the inspiration of our heavenly Father, find a few of the solutions as we grow older, it would be much easier for many of us. The court-records tell us that these things do happen. They ought never to happen in a good Latter-day Saint family.

Our efforts should be to so live that we will have claim upon our heavenly Father for his Spirit to help us over these rough places, so that the example we set to our growing children, and to their children, when they come along, will be one above reproach.

The family, we have been told, is the foundation stone of our society. It is not brought together just that we may enjoy each other's association here. As I have suggested, it has a higher, more spiritual purpose, and the relationships that are entered into in the family should always be directed by the Spirit of God. If that could be, we would always be happy in that relationship, and then we would have a solidarity in our organization that would astound the world.

Sunday, April 4

Second Day

I do not want to say more today, but I plead, brethren and sisters, for an effort on our part to so instill in the hearts and minds of growing children, who are our responsibility, a desire to make this the highest social relationship that there is, a grand, glorious religious privilege entered into with the approval of the priesthood of God, with a determination that nothing under heaven shall ever disrupt it.

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

**President David O. McKay:**

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Antoine R. Ivins, of the First

Council of Seventy. The Choir and Congregation will now join in singing, "Redeemer of Israel," following which we will hear from Elder LeGrand Richards.

The Choir and congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Redeemer of Israel."

**President David O. McKay:**

Elder LeGrand Richards, of the Council of the Twelve, will now speak to us. Elder Richards will be followed by Elder Ezra Taft Benson.

## ELDER LEGRAND RICHARDS

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**I** FEEL humble, my brothers and sisters, as I occupy this position. I pray that I may enjoy the Spirit of the Lord for the few moments that I am here. Since our last conference, I have had the privilege, by appointment of the First Presidency, of visiting the islands of the Pacific, and now I think I can understand why Brother Matthew Cowley loved those colonies and people as he did, because I found the love they had in their hearts for him. It was while I was in New Zealand that I received the word of his passing. Those people truly love him, and as you travel through the Church and you feel the faith and the spirit of the members in whichever land you happen to go, be it in those lands, or in the Hawaiian Islands, or in Europe, you cannot help but be impressed with the words of the Apostle Paul, when he said:

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:26-28.)

And that to me is one of the marvelous things about this Church, about which President McKay spoke this morning, when he told of the announcement the Lord made to the Prophet Joseph that a marvelous work was about to come forth among the children of men. The faith and the unity and the oneness that exists among the Saints of God wherever you find them, whatever their color might be, is a wonderful thing to me.

And another is the marvelous feeling of faith that the Lord plants in the hearts of the missionaries. I have seen missionaries in the field who would gladly have given their lives for the testimony of the truth that the Lord had given to them.

We had a missionary in our mission, who was on his second mission, and he told of when he was on his first mission. While at lunch, two men rode up on horseback and said, "Aren't you holding a meeting this afternoon?" and he said, "No, we hadn't planned on it." "Well," the man said, "there is a whole group over at the chapel waiting for you, and they expect you to come." So the missionary said, "We will be right over," and when they arrived they