

God, his great message of eternal truth, and it is our responsibility, my brethren and sisters, to proclaim it.

As one visits the missions of the Church, he becomes impressed more than ever with the need of our fulfilling the purposes for which the Lord has placed us here, bearing witness of the gospel as it has been restored in this day, not preaching anything new, not changes, merely changes because men perchance have changed in their own

minds, but the eternal truths being the same.

May God help us to fulfil our obligation in this great work, I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**President David O. McKay:**

Elder Clifford E. Young, Assistant to the Twelve, has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder Antoine R. Ivins, member of the First Council of Seventy.

## ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

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

**M**Y BRETHREN AND SISTERS, I hope you will unite your prayers with mine that what I say may perchance carry a helpful and useful message.

Before I start to bear my testimony, however, the remarks of the morning have prompted me to recount an experience that my father and I had about sixty years ago, in the hope that the point may be understood.

We were driving off Kaibab Mountain one beautiful day behind a fine team in an Arizona buckboard. Father said, "Antoine, down at the foot of the mountain there is a trail that cuts right straight across the Pipe Springs and crosses the Kanab wash, in a convenient location. We'll take that trail, and we won't have to go up to Kanab and ride over from there."

Then he proceeded to read a book as he always did when he was traveling and turned the lines over to me. It was not very long until his head was nodding, and he was asleep, and I have to confess that by the time we got to that turn-off I was asleep, too. When we waked up, we were five miles beyond the place where we wanted to turn off and believe me the detour turned out to be a rough one. We did not go to Kanab. We took the turn-off.

When they were talking about detours this morning, I wondered if many of us might not be sleepwalkers; if we do not walk around in our sleep, and all at once wake up to find out that the team has taken us off on the wrong road. Then we have to turn around. I

believe, in the straight and narrow road there are no chuckholes. If they are there, they are the chuckholes that we ourselves have built for ourselves.

Brethren and sisters, it is sixty years ago since father and I had that experience. It is about fifty-nine years ago since we went to Mexico. During that time I have had opportunity to watch the Church and its directing Authorities and to note its progress. It is twenty-four years since I read in the newspaper one day that I had a new assignment. During those twenty-four years Sister Ivins and I have been moving about among the stakes of the Church and in the missions, trying to kindle or rekindle the Spirit of God in the hearts of the members of the Church.

We don't make pretense to tremendous success in it, perhaps, because we have no way of measuring our success, but we have been devoted to your service and devoted to the Church. It has given us the great opportunity to watch its progress, and as I sat in the priesthood meeting Saturday night, where we had reports that 25,000 brethren heard the proceedings of that meeting, I was reminded that in the year the LDS gymnasium was put in operation, if my memory is correct, the Assembly Hall held the priesthood congregation.

So there has been growth. There has been growth in membership as well as in faith and service, I believe, in the Church. The purpose in coming here today—one of the major purposes—is to see if we cannot stimulate the feeling

Monday, April 4

Third Day

of spirituality among the people, for, we who are here, perhaps most of us, have the responsibility of carrying back the spirit of this conference to the people who could not come, to increase spirituality among the people.

I have seen attendance at our conference meetings grow and grow and grow, until today nearly every place we go, the attendance is limited by the capacity of the accommodations we provide. I take it to indicate, and I believe I am right in this, that it does denote a definite increase in spirituality among the people.

Now we have heard that term used many, many times. It is not an easy thing to define this idea of spirituality. I get no satisfaction from the dictionary. The interpretation there is one given by people who perhaps do not understand their true relationship to God and his work.

Since we are the spirit children of God, I take it that the primary manifestation of spirituality is an acknowledgment that we are the sons and daughters of God, and that Jesus Christ is our Elder Brother, and it is not surprising to me, knowing that that testimony exists in the hearts of our people, that people not of our faith coming into the community, as reported by President McKay the other night, sense an unusual feeling and spirit among the people. The recognition that we are the sons and daughters of God, spiritually born of him, it seems to me, is a starting place if you are going to try to define spirituality. Then it seems to me to be a feeling of nearness to God, our Heavenly Father, a devotion to his cause, and a determination to acquit ourselves to the utmost of our ability, of the responsibility he has given us in life.

I wonder if that is a fair definition of spirituality? It seems to me that it could be. And then it's our problem to do what we can first with ourselves, and then with people who may be inclined to listen to us, to instil in their hearts the same consciousness that they are the sons and daughters of God, and that God had a definite purpose in bringing us here into this life of mortality.

When you teach men that, then there

is a greater purpose in life, of course. There is a greater incentive, there is a greater motive for righteousness, and perhaps spirituality could be measured by the degree of righteousness of the lives of people. It is a difficult thing because we do not know or read the hearts of people. Frequently we misjudge them. If we could know their hearts, perhaps we could form a correct estimate of their spirituality, of their feeling toward God. That is difficult, and from what has been said today I gather that there are many people who have not the same understanding of it, who feel that spirituality and the ordinary pursuits of life are separated by a rather wide space, and sometimes we feel that a man who devotes himself assiduously to the practical purposes of life, rendering his share, of course, in Church service, may not be as spiritual as a man who does not do that, but who spends his whole time dreaming about the uncertain things for which there has been no answer.

I believe we are wrong, brothers and sisters, if we try to make that separation, for I believe it is the purpose of God that every honest member of the Church, every honest man for that matter, should have a vigorous, active, potent testimony that Jesus is the Christ, that God is our Father, and then should come, through his prayer and faith, to an understanding of the plan of salvation, and you know, when I look before me and see the men who plow the fields, who ride the ranges, and manage the stakes, I feel justified in suggesting, brothers and sisters, that to put one group on one side and the other group on the other side, as to spirituality, is a dangerous thing, for I have worked with and slept with men who handle the practical things of life, and at the same time apply a spiritual interpretation to everything that is done.

I believe, as the Doctrine and Covenants says, that God has given us no law which is not a spiritual law, and the law of life is a law of action. I believe it would be possible, with the exercise of due faith for a man to apply the spiritual interpretation to every legitimate act of life, and it is our purpose—it should be our purpose, brothers

and sisters—in our relationships with each other to strive for that spiritual aspect.

If you will pardon the reference to my father, I would like to tell you that one time I walked into the biggest bank in this city. Its president, who was not a member of the Church, called me over, and he said: "Mr. Ivins, I pay tribute to your father. He came the nearest to combining religion and business of any man I ever knew," and then he said: "Do you know, I cannot do it. I have to be a hard-boiled businessman." But he some way or another came to realize that under the influence of the gospel of Jesus Christ such a combination is possible, not only possible, but to be highly recommended.

Now brethren and sisters, it should be our purpose so to combine the Spirit of God with our daily undertakings that we can ask upon everything we undertake to do, the blessing of God, our Heavenly Father; that we may never take advantage of another; that we may always yield full service for the compensation that we receive; that our brethren and our sisters will never have cause to say that we may have taken undue advantage of them. When we come to apply that in our lives, this idea of spirituality will then be more or less a tangible thing.

Spirituality is not a thing that you

can go to the market and buy with dollars and cents and carry home in a basket, but it is a thing which you can absorb in a gathering like this. It has to be absorbed. It cannot be bought. It cannot be done up in packages and handed to a neighbor. It must be absorbed by him through the emanations of our own spirits.

Let us strive for it, brothers and sisters. Let us seek the blessings of God in all we do, then Zion will shine as a light on a hill which all the world can see.

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

#### President David O. McKay:

Elder Antoine R. Ivins, one of the seven presidents of the First Council of the Seventy, has just concluded speaking. The congregation will now sing "Praise to the Man who Communed with Jehovah," conducted by Elder Richard P. Condie, assistant director of the Tabernacle Choir. Following the singing, we will hear from Elder Alma Sonne.

The congregation and the Brigham Young University Combined Choruses joined in singing the hymn, "Praise to the Man Who Communed with Jehovah."

### ELDER ALMA SONNE

#### *Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**M**Y BRETHREN AND SISTERS, I assure you at the outset that I will keep my eyes on the clock. I know my brethren will also keep their eyes on the clock. I ask you for an interest in your faith and prayers. There is so much to say on an occasion like this, and there are so many to say it that time becomes very precious.

A week ago I stood before a group of high school students in one of the stakes not far from here. I urged them on that occasion to accept as a project the reading of the Gospel according to Matthew in order to familiarize themselves with the life of Jesus Christ. I recall years ago reading about Lew Wallace who

wrote the great story, *Ben Hur*. It appears that while he was writing this book, he was visited by a certain well-known and gifted agnostic. The agnostic encouraged him to write the book. "But," said he, "do not emphasize the divinity of Jesus Christ. Treat this character as you would any other character in history." But Lew Wallace had studiously read the Gospels and formed his opinions of the Master on the record left by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

We have heard many things during this conference, and during this Easter time, about Jesus, the Christ. His perfect life has been extolled. His teach-