

Saturday, October 6

Second Day

God help us to live consistent with this great truth. I bear my humble witness that this is true; that this is the living Church of God restored to the earth, based upon revelation, and that revelation is operative now and will continue so; that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the Living God, who associated with God and heavenly beings and was taught by them during many years; and I bear witness that the keys of the Holy Priesthood, the power for the salvation of the human family, abides in the President of this Church today, and that no man can bypass this Church and find salvation. No man can bypass Joseph Smith and receive salvation. God honors his servants. I bear this humble witness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

MY BELOVED brethren and sisters, it is not an idle hope that I express when I ask you to join your faith and prayers with mine. It is the only way, I believe, that I can say a word to you today that may be helpful and inspire an effort to approach more nearly the life that our Heavenly Father would like us to live.

Before I talk about what I had in mind, I would like to say to the singers today that I appreciate very much the music which they have rendered, and I have great interest in their group for two reasons: One is that my grandfather was chosen by the President of the Church to carry the gospel to Scandinavia; another is that I discovered in reading the genealogical history of one line of my heritage, that it was carried back to the Norsemen who came into England such a long, long time ago.

Now I admit that this student in carrying it back had to use ten-league boots over some of the stretches, but I hope it is true nevertheless.

I had thought that I would begin today by bearing my testimony to the restoration of the priesthood, the organization of the Church, and to a return of a true interpretation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

President Richards has done that

President David O. McKay:

Elder George Q. Morris of the Council of the Twelve has just addressed us. After the singing by the Congregation, "High On the Mountain Top," Elder Antoine R. Ivins will address us.

The Congregation will sing.

The Combined Choirs and the congregation joined in singing the hymn, "High On The Mountain Top."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Antoine R. Ivins of the First Council of Seventy will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder John Longden.

so beautifully that all I will ask is that you let me incorporate his testimony in mine, because I believe from the bottom of my heart that what he has said is true.

Many of us who are here today are bearers of the priesthood. We are all, or nearly all of us, members of the Church in which that priesthood functions for the development and well-being of people. I presume we are all here to try and gain a little better understanding of the gospel plan and a greater enthusiasm for it, a greater determination to carry its teachings into our daily lives.

We have been told that we are the children of God, our Heavenly Father, that we had a conscious spiritual existence before we came here. The gospel plan is one which God and his Son Jesus Christ developed, which if properly followed by the spirits who come into the earth, would lead them back not only to the presence of God but also to an exaltation in his presence, all of which has been explained to us today. The gospel includes many things that we should do. Some phases of its expression are in the form of "thou shalt not" do this or that. Others are in the positive form of "thou shalt" do this and that. Of course, it is our pur-

pose to learn what they are and properly interpret them and integrate them into our daily living.

The first great commandment that was given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, according to recorded history, the revealed words which we have, was to multiply and replenish the earth. In my recent visits to the stakes over the last two or three years, I have tried to keep a record of the percentages of the people who were married as members of the Church, who were married in the temple. I discovered that about fifty-five percent of the marriages were celebrated in the temple. Forty-five percent of them were of people who had not the inclination to go to the temple for that purpose.

I feel in my heart that it was the intent of God that when marriage should be celebrated, it should be done with the vow and promise that it would never be broken, so that the great privileges of exaltation which are promised us could be realized throughout eternity. It is an unfortunate thing that many of these marriages are hastily contracted and not sealed by the powers of the priesthood. Consequently, many of them break up and result in disaster.

Now how are we going to find out the things that we should do to make a marriage like this perpetual? We have to return to the gospel of Jesus Christ and put its teachings into practice. Could we make a perfect effort at that, of course, we would eventually attain to the powers of God, for that is the promise which he has given us.

Our purpose in coming here today is to learn something about it and how, perhaps better, we can do those great things.

I would like to read to you a scripture found in the Doctrine and Covenants which I think expresses the purpose of the gospel:

Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will. (D & C 88:68.)

Then, in another section we read:

For you shall live by every word that

proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. (*Ibid.*, 84:44.)

The recorded revelations that we have—the modern ones—we find in the the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price, but there are many revealed expressions of the doctrine and will of God, our Heavenly Father, in the Bible, so we have the three sources. John says in his writings,

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. (John 5:39.)

It is my firm conviction that when we come to understand really the scriptures, we discover that every single purpose therein is to testify that Jesus Christ was to come, is the Son of God, and was to work out a redemption for us. He prepared the plan that we should follow. It is our purpose to learn it and then to try to live by every word that has proceeded from the mouth of God.

You will remember the first scripture says,

Therefore sanctify yourselves. . . .

I met a member of the Church one time who said that salvation does not depend upon men's acts at all, and he quoted the scripture, ". . . by grace are ye saved. . . ."

"Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8-9.) This does not seem quite like that, does it? We are saved from death and given the privilege of a resurrection and through the grace and gift of God we have the privilege of sanctifying ourselves, thus earning an exaltation.

So that is our problem, brethren and sisters. Let us read the scriptures; let us discover in them the way of life that will lead us back to the kingdom of God. Let us put forth every effort and sanctify and purify our lives. And, brethren and sisters, let us be more interested in the effect upon ourselves than that which we think we observe sometimes in our neighbors.

There are many of the provisions I have said which say, "thou shalt not" do this and that, and many of us are prone to judge our neighbors, thinking only of the things that they should not do which we think they do; but

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there is a positive side to this which far outweighs that, it seems to me, as far as we individually are concerned. We should be not interested in the failures of our neighbors but in their successes and in our own successes in coming nearer to God our Heavenly Father.

The first great principle is love. We are to love God our Heavenly Father.

Then the next principle to it is we should love our neighbor as ourselves. If we could just do that, we would glory in the successes of our neighbors; and while we would feel bad if they made mistakes, we would not judge them, entirely, on the mistakes they made, but would balance against them the efforts towards righteousness that they demonstrate. Then if their righteous conduct should outweigh the other side, we would be happy, would we not? That is the way we would like people to think of us. That is the way we would think of them. We would extend mercy to them. That does not mean feeding them and clothing them; it means helping them to adjust their lives to the will of God, our Heavenly Father, and to give aid and succor. Spiritual aid and succor is more important than temporal aid at times. We should extend both, of course, but most certainly, if we love our neighbor, we are going to extend to him our spiritual aid and comfort in the spirit of mercy.

God said to Adam that he should cultivate the soil and live by the sweat of his brow and that still is the responsibility of every one of us. How can we feel that we have completely done the will of God if we are not diligent in providing for ourselves and for those who are dependent upon us? Is there ever a time in the life of a man, who is able to do so, when he should not provide for himself? Diligence, then, is another phase of this great program that God gave us, a practical, everyday program for everyday living, which when properly carried into effect has its spiritual reaction just as definitely as anything else, and the man who meets his obligations to his fellows is likewise sanctifying his soul.

The positive side of this has so many different headings that it is impossible for me to try to deal with all of them,

but there is still another side that I try never to forget, and that is that to sanctify one's soul one should gain control over the God-given urges and propensities of one's body, and there are so many of us who fail in that. That is so often the cause of disruption in marriage relationships; people fail to live true to the covenants which they make in marriage simply because the urges of the body are too strong for them, and they do not, apparently, seek the spirit of God in an effort to gain control.

I have said so many times, and I repeat it, that I believe self-control, perfect self-control, would be the greatest victory that any person born into this earth could gain; and with perfect self-control and a knowledge of the plan which God prepared for us, which we can only find by searching the scriptures and listening to the authorized priesthood of God, we would be able to sanctify our souls, would we not?

To sanctify means to make holy, and only holy things can come back to the presence of God, our Heavenly Father. So, sooner or later, if we enjoy the privilege of association under the influence of Jesus Christ and the Father, it will be because we sanctify ourselves, that our minds may be single to God. If we had that single purpose, to please God, we would strive to learn how, and then to do just exactly what would be required.

For you shall live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4.) That is the key, brethren and sisters. Let us learn what it is; and when we learn it, let us not try to find loopholes in the recorded statements that will justify our failure, but let us determine through prayer and humility to reach a proper understanding of the plan and then live it as nearly perfectly as we can.

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

President David O. McKay:

Elder Antoine R. Ivins of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us. We shall now hear Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder Spencer W. Kimball.