

Saturday, April 6

But we are told that "The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, . . ." that only the work of men shall come to naught. (D & C 3:1.)

We must continually seek men for public office whose desire to do good supersedes all things else.

We must sanctify our own individual lives by keeping the commandments of the Lord—as one person prayed, "Oh, Lord, reform the world—beginning with me." We must sanctify our homes and teach our children loyalty, obedience, honesty, respect for law, respect for others, and a love of the Lord.

We must help others to accept Jesus as the Redeemer, the Savior, the God of this world.

To the degree that men acquire these virtues, their strength increases and their power to resist evil becomes greater. Note this promise that has been given in regard to this wonderful land of America.

Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land for their sakes, but unto the righteous it shall be blessed forever. (2 Nephi 1:7.)

There, my brothers and sisters, is the prescription for peace and security, nationality and individuality.

. . . behold, I say, if the day shall come that they will reject the Holy One of Israel, the true Messiah, their Redeemer and their God, behold, the judgments of him that is just shall rest upon them. (*Ibid.*, 1:10.)

Let us remember that even though God had a foreknowledge of what "would be" under certain conditions, it

is not his will nor his desire that vice, injustice, and crime, disobedience and intolerance and bloodshed and war exist in the world. His purposes are to provide a way where men may find happiness and joy, peace, now and forever. Nevertheless, he will not interfere with the agency of men! But fortunately, according to Mormon's teaching: ". . . the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil;" and have a "perfect knowledge," whether it is of God or of the devil. (See Moroni 7:16.)

Let each of us build upon the sure foundation recommended by Helaman in the days of the Nephites:

And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall. (Helaman 5:12.)

May we always choose the right. May we always defend the right, at home and throughout the land, and seek for peace and serenity and tranquility on the foundation for peace that was laid down by the Lord Jesus Christ, the God of this land, I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We have just listened to Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve. Elder Antoine R. Ivins of the First Council of Seventy will now address us. Elder Ivins will be followed by Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson.

ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

PRESIDENT MCKAY, and brethren and sisters, I stand before you this afternoon a very blessed man. I wish to bear testimony to the mercies of our Heavenly Father and the blessings that

I have received from him. When next month arrives, I will have lived seventy-six years in this troubled world of ours with only one serious case of sickness, hardly ever having been deprived of the

privilege of going about my daily duty. And come the month of June, I will have had forty-five years of companionship with a wonderful wife who has walked side by side with me through the vicissitudes of life.

When we were told today about being careful about going into debt, I was reminded of the way my wife and I started out. We lived for a long while in a 12 by 24, with no door between the bedroom and the dining room, and we know what it is to come up through that road. Through it all, however, we have been blessed with the spirit of unity and love for each other. I have a wife whose major interest is the joy and happiness of other people, and for this I am extremely thankful.

When the month of June comes around, it will be twenty-six years since I read in the newspaper in Honolulu that I was to be one of your servants as one of the General Authorities of the Church. It came as a shock. It came without notice, but was accepted by my wife and me in the spirit of service, and during that time—those twenty-six years—we have tried to acquit ourselves as creditably as possible of the task of serving the people. In all this, we have been devoted to the Church and have let nothing, so far as we could tell, interfere with our service. My experience has given me contact with many peoples in America, in Mexico, where I lived twelve years, and in the Hawaiian Islands, where I spent ten years, some of my friends from Hawaii being here today to attend this conference.

I grew up among the Indians of Southern Utah, and when I married my wife, we became a part of the New Zealand Mission and met many of the Maori people. In that experience, of course, most of my time has been spent for the Church and the members of the Church generally and I have come to believe that perhaps the most important thing for a member of the Church is a testimony to the truth of the gospel.

We heard last night a very interesting testimony of the blessings and benefits that come from accepting the gospel, blessings which were brought to certain people through the missionary service of this Church, and you who know me know that the group to which I belong

in the General Authorities is devoted particularly to the missionary work of the Church.

Testimony! I have come to believe that any person who has an honest testimony will strive to the utmost of his ability to live true to the teachings that have come to us from our Heavenly Father through the revelations of Jesus Christ, given to the leadership of this Church.

Testimony! How do we get it? We get it through faith. You who were here last night heard that the testimony which was borne to us came as a result of prayer. Of course, there was instruction. There was study; but our brother told us that he went down on his knees in fervent prayer and arose with a conviction in his heart that the gospel is true. He bore testimony to its wonderful blessings which had come to him with the privileges of membership in this Church.

Testimony! That is the great thing we should strive for, brethren and sisters. We get it through faith and prayer and service. We retain it through faith and prayer and service. Christ told Peter that he had founded his Church upon revelation, the revealed testimony that he was the Son of God. He said the gates of hell would not prevail against it. I wish we were able to testify that the gates of hell can never prevail against the testimony on the part of an individual, and I believe that is true as long as the testimony abides in such strength as to determine the conduct of people. But, unfortunately, it happens with many that, having once had a testimony, they give way to the weaknesses of the flesh. Their testimony begins to dim, and in time, to disappear, and when it disappears, men frequently give themselves over to the powers of the flesh.

Now we should strive, brethren and sisters, to retain ever in our hearts that testimony, and to do it we must serve. The missionary cause is served in many ways. One way is by carrying to the people the message of the restored gospel, as was shown in our meeting last night. Another way was mentioned by President [J. Reuben] Clark last night in our meeting, and that is by living the gospel.

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Second Day

So, I feel that the best way we can teach the gospel is first to live it, showing individually and collectively the powers there are in the observance of the teachings of our Savior and in the exercise of the priesthood which God has caused to be restored. I believe honestly, brethren and sisters, that any man who lives worthy of the Melchizedek Priesthood has absolute control over the evil and sins of the world as far as he himself is concerned. He may not be able to control other people, but if he accepts and lives worthy of the Melchizedek Priesthood, he should have absolute power over evil. That is our purpose, brethren and sisters. If we could do that, if we could live that way, we would set before nonmembers and inactive members alike an example of which they could never complain and which must certainly impel them seriously to study the gospel.

We have in the Church as our responsibility for missionary service, a force of men who could be counted in the seventy thousands, men who were born in the Church, men who for one reason or another have not felt inclined to accept the responsibility and exercise the privileges of membership to the extent of receiving the priesthood, or at least the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is one of the largest mission fields we have in the Church, brethren and sisters. There is an effort being made on the part of the leadership of the Church to reach that particular group of people.

Two weeks ago last night Sister Ivins and I sat down at a banquet in Mesa, Arizona, where fifty men with their wives had taken the course that is suggested in this particular school [for senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood] designed to reach this particular group of people. They were a happy group. They had learned through that teaching some of the value, some of the joy, and some of the happiness that comes from study of the gospel and service in this Church. I would that a

school of that kind could be established in every stake in the Church and carried through successfully, because I believe, and I think you will admit, that any man who takes the trouble to study seriously the revealed word of God for a reasonable period of time cannot but accept the truth of it, and then, if he can get the testimony of which I speak, he will accept its benefits and blessings.

Now how are people going to effect this? The other night I listened to a song which was written in Spanish and English, "Que Sera, Sera" ("Whatever Will Be, Will Be"), and there is an implication in that song that this mother, talking to her daughter, would lead her to believe that the daughter herself could have no effect upon the future. But that is a false implication. Using the same reasoning, you would say these inactive men are as they are because they are, and maybe that is true. But they are not as they are because they had to be. They themselves, had they felt inclined, could have moved themselves out of this condition and into the full exercise of the privileges of the priesthood. It means honest living, of course, brethren and sisters, but it is worth the effort.

Testimony! Can you help one to gain a testimony that will impel him to service? What greater thing could you do? Are you going to sit by and leave these men to others, or are you going to use your influence with your neighbors, with your friends, in an effort to carry to them this testimony? It must be done in friendship. It must be done in simplicity. It must be done in faith, and with prayer, and God help us to do it, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Antoine R. Ivins of the First Council of Seventy has just concluded speaking. Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson will now address us,—a member of the Presiding Bishopric.