

to bestow under the rules and laws governing, and having in mind justice. And I have the further feeling that for every ill thing we do there will be imposed upon us the least penalty that may properly be bestowed, having in mind the principles involved,—eternal justice seasoned by mercy and love.

In the Passover Chamber, the Savior had said they could not go where he was going, but they knew where it was. Thomas said he did not know. Where was it? And then the Savior uttered those great words: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Over and over again in his ministry,

he proclaimed those principles. He is the way, he is the life, he is the truth, he is the light. That is the message which comes to us, and may God give to each of us the power to follow him, to live in his light, tread his way, observe his truths, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus, his Son. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr. of the First Presidency has just addressed us. We shall now hear from Elder Antoine R. Ivins of the First Council of Seventy, who will be followed by Elder Alma Sonne.

ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My beloved brethren and sisters, it is almost a frightening situation to face you and realize the obligation that that implies on my part. I seek an interest in your faith and prayers that anything that I may say may be directed by the Spirit of God our Heavenly Father.

First, I desire to say to Sister Bennion, Sister McKay, and Sister Kirkham, that I loved their husbands dearly and miss their presence today and hope that God will comfort the sisters in the absence of these wonderful men.

As you have been told, I am a member of the First Council of the Seventy, a group selected to proclaim the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, and I am always interested in the progress that that great movement makes. There are many ways of doing it, of course; there are many fields of labor in which we embark to spread a knowledge of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

I have enjoyed the remarks of President Clark. I believe that there has come into my heart through inspiration and revelation a testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he has worked out for us the means by which we can return to the presence of God, even in exaltation.

Last night we had a very interesting missionary meeting, and from my point of view, one of the most pleasing features of it was the very sweet and hum-

ble testimony of a new member of the Church as to the joys and the satisfactions that have come into his heart after having found what he called the pearl of great price. That comes about because the priesthood of God has been restored to the earth. The men who hold that priesthood have the obligation, which is really a privilege, of carrying to the world a knowledge of the plan of life and salvation, which through experience and observation I can testify is really true and effective in the lives of men and women who accept it and live it. People who accept that testimony have the privilege of coming into the fold and enjoying the many blessings that can result through the ministry of the priesthood of God.

It is a wonderful responsibility to hold that priesthood. It is a tremendous opportunity that we have in its administration, not only for the benefit of others who have not understood it and appreciated it, but for our own sakes as well.

It is now twenty-four years since I first stood at this pulpit and bore my testimony to you. In that time I have had the pleasure of ministering among the people of the stakes and the wards, and I have been in the territory of all the mission fields of Mexico, Canada, and the United States. I have seen it effective in the lives of people, and verily it is, as we were told last night, a pearl

Saturday, April 5

of great price which is within the reach of all who will strive to get it.

Now the pearl of great price is not a bound volume. We have one we call the Pearl of Great Price, of course, but that is not the pearl of great price to which I refer. The pearl of great price—what is it? It is the opportunity, I believe, to earn an exaltation in the kingdom of God, which comes to us as a merciful gift from Christ our Lord. Now, there are many others who have the privilege of earning that great gift.

I like to think of the pearl of great price as being in escrow, brethren and sisters, and we can only receive it—and perhaps we will not know whether or not we have done it successfully until the end of our days—by obtaining and exercising and magnifying the offices of the priesthood. That is what it means, brethren and sisters, the opportunity of the priesthood magnified in the lives of men and women, and the exaltation that can come about through that exercise.

To me that is the pearl of great price. It will never be retrieved from escrow until God gives us the word of commendation for a life well lived.

There are many, many men in the priesthood of God; we were told yesterday that there are almost 203,000 men in the Melchizedek Priesthood, and those men have that opportunity and that responsibility. As I have moved about among the stakes and checked in recent years, I have discovered, however, that there are many people who have gone through the formality of having that blessing bestowed upon them who evidently do not appreciate it. I have come to think that the Melchizedek Priesthood, perhaps, in certain sections, is the most unappreciated gift that we have. In many sections where I have been there are at least thirty percent of the elders who are reported inactive. Of course, I do not know just what "inactivity" means, but certain it is that when they are reported as such they are not striving fully to magnify their calling.

I like to suggest to those people the advantage of doing it—to hold up to them an incentive for it, and I would like to read you a little from the Doc-

trine and Covenants, which sets up that privilege:

For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling [mind you, the magnifying of their calling], are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.

They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.

Now that means, to become the elect of God one has to magnify his calling in the priesthood.

And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord;

For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;

And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;

And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.

And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.

Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved. (D & C 84:33-40.)

Now that, my brethren and sisters, is the blessing that may be obtained by magnifying the calling we have in the priesthood. Two hundred and three thousand men have that opportunity. Two hundred and three thousand men, if they live to avail themselves of all of the privileges of the Melchizedek Priesthood, will be able to take from escrow that pearl of great price which is, in my opinion, exaltation in the kingdom of God our Heavenly Father.

The culminating privilege in the testimony of that fine brother last night was the fact that he had been able to take his wife and children to the temple in Los Angeles, to be sealed to his wife and have his children sealed to him. In many, many meetings which I have attended, meetings of elders and their wives and of reclaimed members of the Church, if you will permit that expression, the culminating blessing to which these brethren have testified is the privilege of being sealed to their wives and having their children sealed to them in the temple of God; and still, not fifty percent of our people who mar-

ry avail themselves of that privilege. All that our Father hath shall be given to him who magnifies that calling, and that means that he shall take his wife to the temple, because we are told also that men who succeed in fully living up to all of the privileges and responsibilities of the Melchizedek Priesthood shall become gods with the power of eternal increase. That is the pearl of great price, brethren and sisters.

Then, why should we not strive, once we have been offered that privilege, to magnify it?

Now it is our duty, the duty of those of us who strive to do it, to help others to realize the importance of it and then give aid and succor where it is necessary to strengthen in their determination these people who have not yet seen fit to qualify for all these blessings. We have many of them, yes, many of them, and who are they? They are our brothers, our cousins, our uncles, and in cases, our fathers. I had an elder in my chair, setting him apart one day, and asked his father if he could help me, it being a Melchizedek Priesthood function, and he said, "No." I said, "Well, brother, you have to be careful, because as soon as this son of yours gets in the mission field he is going to start to work on you to convince you of these things." He said, "Brother Ivins, he is not waiting to get in the mission field; he is starting now."

Well, there we are, brethren and sisters. That is just a typical instance of many men who are willing that their

sons should go out and serve in this cause and are hopeful that their sons will be able to live better lives than they have.

On another occasion, as one of those fathers left my office, I said, "Now, the next time you bring a son in, and you say it is going to be soon, be sure that you can help me." He said, "I will."

Now, brethren and sisters, we all know that these things are important in our lives, but why cannot we develop the courage that it takes to qualify for the Spirit of God through exercising the priesthood that has been given to us to the very fullest of our ability? Why cannot we? That is the great and important problem, it seems to me, brethren and sisters.

I testify to you that priesthood is virile in the lives of men, that it is actual, that it has been restored. Bless your soul, in one direction, there are only two steps between my ordination as an elder and the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is here, brethren and sisters, in its vigor and in its strength and in its purity in unbroken line. Now why cannot we live worthy of it and magnify it?

May 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 spoken to us. Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us.

ELDER ALMA SONNE

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren and sisters, I have been deeply impressed by the stirring and sublime messages which have come to us during this conference, also by the singing of the choirs—for singing, after all, is surely a part of divine worship.

Someone has said that the best evidence of Christ's divinity is Christ himself.

A few years ago I made some notes which I headed, "Jesus Christ—a Reality." I had two reasons for making the notes. One was that I had just read an

article entitled "Jesus Christ—a Myth," and the other was the reading of a summary in a Denver newspaper of some sermons delivered on the previous Sunday. One of the ministers, according to the report, made the following statement: "It matters not to me whether the historical Jesus lived or not so long as I have access to the philosophy of life which is attributed to him."

The protestant minister who made this statement, it appears, is willing to teach Christianity without Christ. By