

ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My brethren and sisters, it is only the fact that I have discovered that there is a great spirit of love and sympathy in this gathering, that I have the confidence to stand before you this afternoon and bear my testimony, but it is no easier than it was thirty years ago in October when I first did it.

Brother Longden, you need not brag!

Sixty times, my brethren and sisters, I have pledged to you my service—an honest service as far as it lay within my power, and I hope that God has blessed my efforts that somewhere along the line, someone may have been encouraged and comforted, for that is our sole purpose.

I find myself following the Patriarch to the Church as a speaker, and it reminds me that when I was a teenager, about sixty-two years ago, I went to a patriarch to have a blessing, and it was a very fine blessing. Mind you, at that time I was living in Mexico with the possibility that upon obtaining my majority, I could become a Mexican citizen. Some of the promises in that blessing would depend upon my remaining there and becoming a citizen. That I did not want to do. So when these promises have not been realized, I have never blamed the patriarch. I looked upon that blessing, brethren and sisters, as a vision of what I might do if I would seek the blessings of the Lord, live true to the covenants that I had made, and endeavor to realize those blessings.

I think that all of the blessings that are promised to us throughout the Church are dependent upon our efforts to help them come to pass. I never have felt that a patriarchal blessing was a prediction as to what must come to pass, but what might come to pass if we would help conditions so that those things could be realized.

Many of those things I have tried to do, but I just did not want to be a Mexican citizen, and I did not want to be a Mexican statesman. So I am not holding Patriarch Stowell responsible for the failure. It has not been his fault, brethren and sisters, perhaps it has been

mine, and perhaps I am wholly responsible for it. At any rate I am happy that it has not come to pass yet.

Now, I wonder if some of us have the right attitude toward the promises that are made to us by patriarchs and other people who bless us. I have had blessings given me by the President of the Twelve and the President of the Church and other people, and I have felt always that it was an indication of what the brother who gave me the blessing felt might be realized if it pleased God and if I earned it. Maybe I am not right, but that is the way I feel about it.

There is another point that this brings to my mind—it is seventy-two years since I was baptized and confirmed. In that baptism and confirmation there is another promise made to me, and it is just as possible as the patriarchal blessing. It is based upon the same life of service, that if I will live true to the implied covenants that there are in the waters of baptism and confirmation, that I can eventually work my way back into the presence of God, our Heavenly Father, and be exalted there. I am thinking that some of us do not remember that and do not worry too much about it.

Then my problem is to learn how to do it, brethren and sisters, and learning how to do it to make up my mind that I want to do it, and making up my mind that I want to, that I start about doing it.

I have a relative by marriage who had a little difficulty with one of his habits one time—one that so many people suffer with, and he said, "Antoine, the day I made up my mind that I wanted to quit it, I was through. From that time on, Antoine, I never had to struggle with it because I made up my mind that I wanted to quit." That is one of our major problems, brethren and sisters, to find the way back into the celestial glory in the kingdom of God and, finding it, make sure that we follow it.

The way to find out what the gospel means and the privileges that it holds

for us is to study the scriptures. We have been told about that today, to study the scriptures and to follow the program of the Church, brothers and sisters, and there are a lot of us that are very sluggish in following the program of the Church. If you do not believe it, follow me around the next little while and see how many of our members of the Melchizedek Priesthood are up to date in reading the Book of Mormon. Brothers and sisters, we are just not there, we are sluggish in doing the things we know we ought to do and in studying to find out what pleases God our Heavenly Father as to the way we should live.

I believe that the best place where the gospel of Jesus Christ is set out for us to follow is in the Book of Mormon. I have reread it this year, so I dare talk to you, but where can you find in all of our scriptures a more complete and clearer and more concise statement of the way back into the kingdom of God than you find in the Book of Mormon.

Of course, we like to read the Bible, we like to read other works, and I am never quite satisfied until I join the Doctrine and Covenants under the same cover with the Book of Mormon, and then we have joined the Pearl of Great Price to them, so we have the triple combination. Brethren and sisters, I suggest that we do not stop when we read the Book of Mormon, but that we go right through from cover to cover of that triple combination and try to remember what is in it and then make up our minds we want to do it, for that is the thing.

You cannot do that, brethren and sisters, without gaining a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and testimony is necessary. It is absolutely the essential

factor in our determination to do these things, because some of the things we have to refrain from doing are pretty natural for us, and if we do not have something to guide us and to give us incentive to bridle our passions (and that is testimony) we are not so likely to do it as well as we might.

So testimony is what we seek in this, brethren and sisters.

Then Brother Marion D. Hanks told us that we should live in these troublous times without fear. And what is it that makes one fearless? The testimony of Jesus Christ!

Sister Ivins and I and the mission president one time held a meeting in a little town north of Mexico City where a few years before two young men had been arrested and had been promised their lives if they would deny the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those two boys stood up beside an adobe wall and were killed by gunfire, doing it without fear because they knew the future which comes from testimony as well as any of us.

Brethren and sisters, that is our great problem. Can we get a testimony? We get it by prayer and study, but more especially after prayer and study, we get it by doing the things God tells us to do and making our lives conform to them. May he help us to do these things, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, adding my testimony to the others. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Antoine R. Ivins of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve.

ELDER SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My beloved brothers and sisters, I hope that of the estimated million who may have been listening this morning, there may have been many among them who might have been kings and their courts, presidents and their cabinets, prime

ministers and their associates, editors, commanders of armies and navies and air forces, and all others in the world, particularly our fellow men of the Americas from Tierra del Fuego to Point Barrow—for the prophet of the Lord