

SECOND DAY

MORNING SESSION

Promptly at 10 o'clock Saturday, October 4, 1924, President Heber J. Grant opened the meeting by announcing that the congregation would sing, "High on the mountain top."

After singing, Elder William M. Waddoups, President of the Hawaiian Temple, offered the opening prayer.

Eva Aird sang a solo entitled, "The Hour of Hallowed Peace."

ELDER GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

Truly those who are assembled in this house this morning have reason to be grateful for the blessings by which we are surrounded. A more beautiful morning could hardly be desired, and the weather conditions are so delightful, that we must all feel uplifted. The privilege we have of meeting our friends from all parts of the Church is a blessing that I am sure is greatly appreciated.

OUR DUTY TO ASSIST IN PERPETUATING LIBERTY

In this day when strife is everywhere apparent, when there is contention between individuals of various parties, it is pleasing to me as a member of the Church to know that our heavenly Father is interested in us, and in our government. We are fortunate in having our agency. The Lord has blessed each of us with intellect and has offered to direct our thoughts if we will approach him in a proper manner. The mind of man is affected by good and by evil influences, and there are in the world those two powers that have been active from the beginning. Knowing that we may be directed by proper influences as members of this great Church, and as citizens of this wonderful government, surely we will not depart from the advice and counsel of our heavenly Father and follow those teachings that will lead us to destruction. Knowing that the Lord prepared this land that it might be a haven of liberty for those who dwell here, and understanding that he desires a continuation of those conditions that the builders of this republic contended for, we who are members of his Church ought, in every possible way, to assist in perpetuating that liberty that means so much for the children of men.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL LAW OF THE LAND TO BE SUPPORTED

We find in the Doctrine and Covenants that the Lord gave to his people a revelation on August 6, 1833, (Doc. and Cov. 98.) That seems to me has a bearing on conditions as they exist in our country today:

"Verily I say unto you my friends, fear not, let your hearts be comforted; yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks;

"Waiting patiently on the Lord, for your prayers have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and are recorded with this seal and testament—the Lord hath sworn and decreed that they shall be granted.

"Therefore, he giveth this promise unto you, with an immutable covenant that they shall be fulfilled; and all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name's glory, saith the Lord."

When that revelation was given, our people were being harassed and annoyed by those who did not accept the revelations of the Lord to us, and their lives were made almost intolerable by their fellow citizens, but they claimed the blessings of our heavenly Father, and in this revelation he assured them that their prayers had been answered, and that the fulfilment of his promise to them for their faithfulness would be certain. They at that time were living at Kirtland, Ohio, where the first temple was erected in this dispensation, to the glory of our heavenly Father. He said to them regarding the laws of the land:

"And now, verily I say unto you concerning the laws of the land, it is my will that my people should observe to do all things whatsoever I command them.

"And that law of the land which is constitutional, supporting that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges, belongs to all mankind, and is justifiable before me.

"Therefore, I, the Lord, justify you, and your brethren of my Church, in befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land;

"And as pertaining to law of man, whatsoever is more or less than this cometh of evil."

In other words, if we fail to sustain the constitutional law of the land we have transgressed the will of our heavenly Father.

"I, the Lord God, make you free, therefore ye are free indeed; and the law also maketh you free.

"Nevertheless, when the wicked rule the people mourn.

"Wherefore, honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil."

WE SHOULD NOT BE LED ASTRAY BY FALLACIES

In these days of confusion, when the Constitution of our country is assailed, by those who have no understanding of the purpose of God regarding this great country, it behooves those who do understand to consider seriously and faithfully, the benefits that will flow to us by honoring and sustaining the government that was reared under the direction of our heavenly Father.

We are a peculiar people in many ways, and in this particularly are we peculiar, in that we believe that the constitution of the United States was inspired by our heavenly Father, and he has told us that he raised up the very men who should frame the Constitution of the United States. Knowing that, we should not be led astray by the

fallacies of individuals whose selfishness inclines them to attack that which our heavenly Father has prepared for the people of this land.

A DECLARATION OF BELIEF REGARDING GOVERNMENTS AND
LAWS IN GENERAL

In a very early day in the Church our people promulgated their attitude with reference to the law of the land and the purpose of government. I believe I will take time this morning to read it to you. It is found in the Doc. and Cov., sec. 134; and in the *History of the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 247:

"A declaration of belief regarding governments and laws in general, adopted by a unanimous vote at a general assembly of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, held at Kirtland, Ohio, August 17, 1835, with the following preamble: That our belief with regard to earthly governments and laws in general may not be misinterpreted nor misunderstood, we have thought proper to present at the close of this volume our opinion concerning the same."

And this is what our people subscribed to in conference assembled:

"We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society.

"We believe that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life.

"We believe that all governments necessarily require civil officers and magistrates to enforce the laws of the same; and that such as will administer the law in equity and justice should be sought for and upheld by the voice of the people if a republic, or the will of the sovereign.

"We believe that religion is instituted of God; and that men are amenable to him, and to him only, for the exercise of it, unless their religious opinions prompt them to infringe upon the rights and liberties of others; but we do not believe that human law has a right to interfere in prescribing rules of worship to bind the conscience of men, nor dictate forms for public or private devotion; that the civil magistrate should restrain crime, but never control conscience; should punish guilt, but never suppress the freedom of the soul.

"We believe that all men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside, while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights by the laws of such governments; and that sedition and rebellion are unbecoming every citizen thus protected, and should be punished accordingly; and that all governments have a right to enact such laws as in their own judgments are best calculated to secure the public interest; at the same time, however, holding sacred the freedom of conscience.

"We believe that every man should be honored in his station, rulers and magistrates as such, being placed for the protection of the innocent and the punishment of the guilty; and that to the laws all men owe respect and deference, as without them peace and harmony would be supplanted by anarchy and terror; human laws being instituted for the express purpose of regulating our interests as individuals and nations, between man and man; and divine laws given of heaven, prescribing rules on spiritual concerns, for faith and worship, both to be answered by man to his Maker.

"We believe that rulers, states, and governments have a right, and are

bound to enact laws for the protection of all citizens in the free exercise of their religious belief; but we do not believe that they have a right in justice to deprive citizens of this privilege, or proscribe them in their opinions, so long as a regard and reverence are shown to the laws and such religious opinions do not justify sedition nor conspiracy.

"We believe that the commission of crime should be punished according to the nature of the offense; that murder, treason, robbery, theft, and the breach of the general peace, in all respects, should be punished according to their criminality and their tendency to evil among men, by the laws of that government in which the offense is committed; and for the public peace and tranquility all men should step forward and use their ability in bringing offenders against good laws to punishment.

"We do not believe it just to mingle religious influence with civil government, whereby one religious society is fostered and another proscribed in its spiritual privileges, and the individual rights of its members, as citizens, denied.

"We believe that all religious societies have a right to deal with their members for disorderly conduct, according to the rules and regulations of such societies; provided that such dealings be for fellowship and good standing; but we do not believe that any religious society has authority to try men on the right of property or life, to take from them this world's goods, or to put them in jeopardy of either life or limb, or to inflict any physical punishment upon them. They can only excommunicate them from their society, and withdraw from them their fellowship.

"We believe that men should appeal to the civil law for redress of all wrongs and grievances, where personal abuse is inflicted or the right of property or character infringed, where such laws exist as will protect the same; but we believe that all men are justified in defending themselves, their friends, and property, and the government, from the unlawful assaults and encroachments of all persons in times of exigency, where immediate appeal cannot be made to the laws, and relief afforded.

"We believe it just to preach the gospel to the nations of the earth, and warn the righteous to save themselves from the corruption of the world; but we do not believe it right to interfere with bond-servants, neither preach the gospel to, nor baptize them contrary to the will and wish of their masters, nor to meddle with or influence them in the least to cause them to be dissatisfied with their situations in this life, thereby jeopardizing the lives of men; such interference we believe to be unlawful and unjust, and dangerous to the peace of every government allowing human beings to be held in servitude."

NO ONE A GOOD MEMBER OF THE CHURCH WHO REFUSES
TO SUSTAIN THE LAW OF THE LAND

I felt that on this occasion, and at this time, when there is so much unrest in our land, that I would like to read to you what our people conceived to be their duty to the government under which they lived. We still believe that there is only one way whereby we may enjoy peace and happiness, and that is by observing the constitutional law of our land, and by sustaining that constitutional law that was inspired by our heavenly Father at the inception of this great government. There are those who are misguided in the belief that they may organize groups and take into their own hands the punishment of those who have differed from them in their ideas of religion or government. We may well understand that men who do that come

in conflict with the orderly system that our heavenly Father has decreed should govern the children of men. So, as Latter-day Saints in these times of unrest we may know that no man is a faithful member of this Church, in good standing, who refuses to sustain the law of the land, and who lends himself in any way to break down that organized system of laws that has been prepared for the good of the community. The Lord directs that we seek after good men and great men, and that we pray for and sustain them in order that the laws that are enacted for our government may be such as he would be pleased to indorse. This people may go on exercising a power for the blessing of the children of men in this land that will be felt from shore to shore, and from border line to border line. I am grateful that I belong to a Church that has been directed by our heavenly Father to observe the constitutional law of the land. I am grateful that those men who have led this Church have been inspired by the Lord to teach obedience to law. I am thankful that on the eve of a great election, when we are to choose those who will preside over the destinies of the nation and the states, that we have the word of our heavenly Father that we should select good men, and honorable men, and that the franchise that we are blessed with shall be exercised in the interest of orderly government, and in the interest of the perpetuation of a system of laws that shall continue peace and contentment and satisfaction to all who dwell in this land.

THANKFUL FOR THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY

This is God's work that we are identified with. He has established his Church in this latter day. He has blessed us with the opportunity to seek him in prayer, and, if we are humble, he will lead us to do those things that will make for righteousness and for contentment in life. Today, let us feel as we go from this delightful conference that we will draw near unto the Lord, that we will honor him and honor the Government that he has prepared for us, under which we live and in which he have part in protecting.

This Church is our Father's work. It is the advocate of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and this government is established by the will of Jesus Christ and is a part of his plan whereby men may enjoy liberty and freedom, and where all faiths and beliefs and doctrines may enjoy liberty and be amenable to the law of the land; and where no group of individuals may array themselves against the rights and privileges of their fellows. I thank my Father in heaven for the knowledge that he loves liberty. I thank him for the blessings that he has given to us of peace and happiness in these everlasting hills. I am grateful for my companionship with men and women such as are assembled here today, and such as you represent throughout this great land. That the Lord may help us that we may be worthy of our birthright, that we may live such pure and holy lives that the adversary will have no power

to tempt us, or direct us into evil paths, and that we may listen to the whisperings of that still small voice, to which all good men are entitled, and know that voice when it shall come to us, for it will point us the way of peace and happiness and eternal life, is my prayer, and that God may grant it to us all, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOHN WELLS

Of the Presiding Bishopric of the Church

I have listened with a great deal of pleasure and appreciation to the remarks that have been made yesterday and today. They have been a source of joy to my soul, and I appreciate most sincerely this opportunity of being present to listen to the words of life, of counsel, and of advice that have been given already and will yet be given during this conference.

This vast congregation is unique. It is composed not of delegates whose expenses have been paid by organizations that they might come to attend these sessions, but is made up of Latter-day Saints who of their own free will have assembled in this great building for the purpose of worshipping God and for the purpose of being blessed and inspired by truth and a fuller understanding of the Gospel. They have assembled from places all the way between Canada and Mexico, as far southeast as Georgia, northeast up to New York and vicinity, from Chicago and from such western states as California, and from points as far west as the Hawaiian Islands. They have gathered here for the purpose of listening to words of inspiration and of being encouraged in their holy faith. So, in that respect, this gathering is unique; and I am thankful and glad that I am privileged to be one who is here.

While Brother George Albert Smith was speaking I thought to myself, "What more am I thankful for than those things which he has expressed this morning?" I am thankful, as I believe we all are, for the blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; for the kind and tender mercy of our Father in heaven in giving us the privilege in these latter days of hearing and embracing the truth, as revealed from our heavenly Father to his servant the Prophet Joseph. I am thankful, and I think that we all are thankful, for this goodly land, for this land choice above all other lands, protected by two mighty oceans from Old World hatreds and feuds, this land where there can be developed the highest civilization the world has yet seen. I am thankful that the Lord has so abundantly blessed his people. Though adversity brought that Pioneer band here, he himself placed them in the center of this great country, in the valleys of these great mountain ranges, where wealth and peace and comfort prevail; and how different we find the world to be when we leave these vales and these peaceful towns and villages of the Latter-day Saints, and how glad we are to get back again. I