

to me that Joseph Smith is not a prophet of God, he has taken everything; he has burned every bridge behind me. I never saw the Prophet, but I have heard my father often talk about him and I have read his revelations and his prophecies, as a witness for God, and I know they are true. He is a prophet of God. I sustain the Church and uphold the hands of the priesthood as best I know how. God bless you. Amen.

ELDER RULON S. WELLS

Of the First Council of Seventy.

I earnestly hope that I may enjoy the spirit of the Lord while I stand before you. It seems to me that anyone who has made himself at all familiar with the history of the world must be deeply impressed with the fact that God has been over all, that he has directed the destinies of his children here upon this planet. Notwithstanding this, however, he has given unto them their free agency, for he has decreed that men shall be free from the very beginning.

The Lord asked his servant Job: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? * * * when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Modern revelation has made it plain what this occasion was. The proclamation of God's plan of salvation, the gospel of Jesus Christ, in which the free agency of man obtains. In order to carry out this plan it was necessary to create this earth where God's children might receive bodies of flesh and bone and, the recollection of their spirit life being withheld from them, and with a knowledge of good and evil, they might be proved whether, in the exercise of their free agency, they would "do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them." The creation of a world and redeeming it from the fall, which was also contemplated, required the service of One endowed with Godlike power and the Lord said: "Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of man: Here am I, send me." Father thy will be done and the glory be thine forever. But Satan also came, even Lucifer, a son of the morning and said: Behold here am I, send me, I will be thy son and I will redeem all mankind that one soul shall not be lost and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor. "And the Lord said: I will send the first." And Satan rebelled against God and was cast down and many followed after him.

Thus it was that the First Born in the spirit, and the Only Begotten in the flesh, became the great champion of human liberty from the very beginning, and throughout all the history of the world.

Let us for a few moments contemplate some of the things that have transpired in the history of the world, the rise and fall of great empires, the mighty battles for human liberty which have been fought.

Who cannot see the overruling hand of Providence? When Miltiades, the hero of the battle of Marathon, with a small army of 9,000 men defeated and put to rout 100,000 Persians, 6,000 of whom fell upon the battlefield with a loss to the Greek army of only 192,

who can doubt that they were aided and upheld by an Almighty power directing the destiny of mankind? The freedom of the world was hanging in the balance. Which shall prevail, Asiatic despotism and superstition, or the new freedom and civilization? And ten years later, Xerxes, with the largest army ever mustered in the history of the world, until the great world war, invaded Greece but was held at Thermopylae for days by Leonidas and his brave 300 Spartans; every one of whom, however, died in defending the country rather than surrender, thus bringing upon themselves a fame and glory that shall endure as long as time shall last.

Then Themistocles, commander of the naval forces, learning of the Persians, final passage through the pass at Thermopylae on their way to Athens, boarded the inhabitants of that city on his ships and conveyed them to Salamis, and then with his 350 war galleys attacked the Persian fleet of 1,200 ships which had already sustained severe losses and had been thrown into confusion by the violent storms which they encountered on the sea. Again the Persians were put to rout and sustained a loss of 200 ships. In the following year the land forces continued to fight until September, when the Athenians and their allies with an army of 70,000 men, under command of Aristides, fought the final battle at Plataea and on the same day the combined naval and military forces of the Spartans, Athenians and their allies under Prince Pausanias defeated the Persians by land and by sea at and off Mt. Mycale, just opposite the Island of Samos. Who can read of these thrilling and soul-stirring events without a sincere feeling of gratitude to the Greeks for the great service they rendered to mankind in the great cause of human liberty, and who can doubt that they were guided and upheld by an overruling Providence, whose cause is our cause, even the cause of Liberty. It does not detract from the honor due to the Greeks to say that God used them as instruments in his hand to further his divine purposes. Surely Providence is over all. History is replete with illustrations: the conquests of Alexander, the great; we heard yesterday how through him the Greek language became the language of his empire and became the medium of publishing to the world the gospel of Jesus Christ which is the truth that shall make men free indeed.

Not always have the victories of great men been based upon the principles of righteousness; nevertheless the purposes of the Almighty cannot be defeated, for he overrules in all, and often "moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."

Shall I mention Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte and Gustavus Adolphus, the "Lion of the North," Luther, Melancthon and Zwingli, and the other great reformers? Time will not permit, but in the achievements and victories of each and all of these great men, one cannot but see and recognize the Divine purpose in breaking the chains of superstition, intolerance and slavery, and leading mankind out of the darkness that covered the earth and the gross darkness in which the people were benighted.

Was not the great Columbus inspired of the Lord to cross the

unknown seas and discover the western world? What a wonderful stride in the cause of human liberty! America, a choice land above all other lands, withheld during the many centuries of the past to become a place of refuge for the downtrodden peoples of the old world, to become the habitation of free men where no kings shall oppress or hold the reins of government, as the Nephite prophets have foretold, and how literally have their predictions been fulfilled!

Then came Washington, the father of his country, who fought the revolutionary battles which gave us our national independence; Hamilton, the constructive genius of the constitution of our country, and Jefferson, that great champion of the rights of men, who wrote the Declaration of Independence and inspired his fellow-countrymen with love for the principles of human liberty.

Another mighty champion arose in the coming of Abraham Lincoln, the great emancipator, who broke the chains of slavery and fought that these precious principles for which our revolutionary fathers had fought "might not perish from the earth." And later still came Woodrow Wilson, who, when the freedom of the world was in imminent danger, led the forces of America in the greatest conflict that the world had ever known, that it might be made safe for democracy.

Great and mighty are these men of America. How our hearts swell with patriotic pride when we contemplate their achievements. Let us then honor them, and let me here say that we honor them most when we say, as all Latter-day Saints do say, that God raised them up and inspired them with his holy Spirit for the futherance of his great cause, the cause of human liberty. Let us not think even for a moment that liberty is the gift of any government or any nation. Oh, no! Life and liberty are our inalienable rights and were vouchsafed unto us in that primeval council when our great champion, even Jesus Christ, said: "Here am I, send me" for he came and organized this earth as a dwelling place for the children of God, for you and me:

To live and to be free,
 To worship God alone
 As conscience guideth me,
 As my own heart is prone;
 For these are rights God given,
 He gave them all to me,
 They emanate from heaven,
 E'en life and liberty.

This is the thought that comes into my mind when I contemplate the history of the world, that Providence is over all.

This human liberty for which these mighty men, to whom I have alluded, have struggled, great and glorious though it is, is after all only a measure of civil liberty. There is a greater freedom to which we should aspire; for, let it be known that even in this great and glorious republic, the greatest one that ever existed upon the face of the earth, where the greatest measure of human liberty is meted out to our Father's children, in this land of the free and home of the brave, we are not free. "The whole world lieth in sin and groaneth under dark-

ness and under the bondage of sin," but the truth that emanated from God, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, that was proclaimed in that primeval day shall make us free indeed if we will only receive and obey it. And who have been the champions of this greater freedom? First and foremost of all was the Redeemer of mankind, he that was in the beginning. He came in the meridian of time and ministered the law of liberty and freedom among the children of men. Many others have been sent, other great and noble ones, but I shall not take the time to enumerate them all but there was Abraham, whom God chose among the great ones, for he knew him before he was born and chose him to become the father of the faithful. And there was Moses, to whom the Lord gave the perfect law of liberty, even the gospel of Jesus Christ which is the higher law. But the children of Israel were not prepared for that great law of liberty, that higher law, and the plates upon which it was engraven were broken. Moses went up into the mount again and returned with the law of carnal commandments, that the people might repent of sin. It was the gospel of repentance; "Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal." These great commandments have been thundered down to us through all the ages from Mount Sinai, and are still in force among the children of men. Why? That they might be liberated from the bondage of sin.

At all times these champions of liberty have been opposed by that arch enemy of God, even Satan, that rebelled against God in the beginning, and those who followed after him, and, as always, through human instrumentality, they killed the prophets, they persecuted the saints, they crucified the Savior of the world and put to death his apostles, those mighty men of God who preached his gospel in all the then known world, and transmitted their testimony in holy writ for the generations which were to come. Surely power was given unto Satan to make war with the Saints and overcome them as John the Revelator tells us.

The darkness that followed these tragic events has been rightly called the dark ages, and was only partly dispelled by the great reformers who were, however, not reformers but protestants who made effective protest against the darkness and tyranny that held the world in spiritual bondage and most abominable idolatry.

All these, together with the discovery of America and the founding of our glorious republic under the guiding hand of Providence, were the necessary preliminary preparations for the restoration of his glorious gospel and the setting up of his Church and kingdom upon the earth, never to be thrown down nor given to another people; where the perfect law of liberty shall be supreme and mankind shall be liberated from the bondage of sin, and Satan shall be bound for a thousand years during the great millennial reign of peace when Christ shall be our king and subdue all enemies under his feet.

Therefore God raised up another champion of human liberty even Joseph Smith the great prophet of the latter days, to usher in this glorious dispensation, the climax of which, not yet attained, shall be the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But Satan, not yet bound, came again. I presume he will continue to come until the great battle will be fought on the field of Armageddon. So he came in the days of Joseph Smith through whom the gospel had been restored, and the Church of Christ had again been established on the earth. Through the human instrumentality of a cruel mob, he was murdered in cold blood, another prophet of the living God; but not until those principles which have within them the power of God unto salvation, the principles that liberate mankind from the bondage of sin, had been established among the Saints of the latter days. Let us then carry on the work so well begun until its final consummation. Let us rejoice in the assurance which we have of its final triumph. And may our hearts be filled with gratitude to our heavenly Father that he has fought our battles and will lead us on to victory if we will do our part. And let us put our trust in him and have an abiding faith that "Providence is over all." This is my earnest prayer through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The congregation sang, "Come let us anew our journey pursue."

The benediction was pronounced by Elder J. Berkeley Larson, president of the Shelley stake of Zion.

The conference adjourned until 2 o'clock p. m.

CONCLUDING SESSION

On Tuesday afternoon, October 5, 1926, the concluding session of the ninety-seventh Semi-Annual Conference was held in the Tabernacle. All the seats in the main hall and galleries were comfortably filled.

President Heber J. Grant presided, and at 2 o'clock announced that the congregation would sing, "Earth with her ten thousand flowers."

After singing, prayer was offered by Elder Wallace Calder, president of the Uintah stake of Zion.

The Congregation sang, "Do what is right, the day-dawn is breaking."

ELDER JOSEPH W. McMURRIN

President of the California Mission

I trust, my brethren and sisters, that during the short time I occupy this position I may be sustained by your faith and sympathy and by the blessing and inspiration of the holy Spirit. I feel that it is a very important thing to stand in this pulpit, and claim the attention of so large a number of people. I am very thankful for the opportunity and feel it is a very great honor.

I am glad to be able to say to this congregation that in the