

up the hands of the servant of the Lord who presides over us; that we may help him not only by our faith and prayers but by loving kindness as opportunity offers; that we may march under the banner that he shall hold aloft as God continues to sustain him as President of the Church, as the prophet of the Lord in these latter days.

I know that God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ. I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the living God, as I know that I live; and I bear you witness of it in humility and in loving kindness, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ELDER RULON S. WELLS

Of the First Council of Seventy

My heart has been filled to overflowing and I have been greatly thrilled with the spirit of this great occasion, this great celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the organization of the Church. I rejoice this day over the glorious truths that have come to light in the restoration of the Gospel of our Redeemer.

Those who were present at the pageant last night must have been impressed with the magnitude of this work. The story told in symbol contemplates the "Message of the Ages," the work of the Lord. It had its beginning before the foundations of this earth were laid. It has been one great struggle between good and evil, a great struggle for the liberty of the children of God. This work contemplates an exercise of free agency, of liberty. It is for the purpose of making men free and securing unto them their inalienable rights, which they, of necessity, must exercise in order to obtain eternal life. There can be no salvation in compulsion. There can be no reward through compelled obedience. But when men elect in the free exercise of their agency to serve God instead of serving mammon, thereby do they comply with the conditions of salvation.

This Gospel is a plan of liberating mankind from bondage. "The whole world lieth in sin, and groaneth under darkness and under the bondage of sin" (Doc. and Cov. 84:49), but the truth from heaven has a mission to perform, namely, to liberate us and make us free. It is no wonder that the Latter-day Saints have espoused the great cause of human liberty, that they regard this great government of which we form a part as having been inspired of Almighty God, that they regard the Constitution of our land and that instrument that preceded it, known as the Declaration of Independence, as being inspired of the Almighty for the salvation and the protection of the children of God. We rejoice in being citizens of this great republic, the freest country in all the world. Its principles, the very foundations upon which it has been established, are set forth in that Declaration of Independence, wherein it is stated that "all men are created equal and that they have been endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Let it not be felt

that these rights are given to us by any government. Not so. We live not because a government has given us the privilege to live; we live because God gave us life. We are free not because any government has given us our liberty—we are free not because we have received that power and that right from any human source; we are free because God made us free.

The Lord inspired the fathers of our country, our Revolutionary fathers, with this same spirit of human liberty, this right of free agency. This great struggle for liberty did not begin on this earth; it began before the foundations of it were laid. The Lord devised the plan whereby we might be liberated and made free and independent. The Lord designs that we shall be so. There was war in heaven before the foundations of this earth were laid. And what was that great conflict over? It was a struggle for the liberties of the children of God.

What is freedom? What is liberty? Does it mean license to do evil? No, indeed it does not. To be free means to liberate ourselves from the bondage of sin. We, in this country, boast of our human liberty and we have great reason to be proud of the liberty that we enjoy under our Constitution; but after all is said and done it is only a measure of civil liberty, but the greatest measure to be found among all the governments of the world. We sometimes boast of being in the land of the free, the home of the brave. Nevertheless, we are not free until we have overcome evil—until we liberate ourselves from the bondage of sin.

The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is destined to make us free. It is the truth revealed from heaven that will make all men free if they will only render obedience to it. This plan of free agency was opposed by the enemies of God, foremost among whom was Lucifer, even in that primeval day when the plan of life and salvation was first promulgated among the children of God, when it was made known that they could come upon this earth and receive bodies of flesh and bones and live this earth life, in the exercise of their free agency.

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

There is none in all the world who feels more deeply than we do the import of our popular national hymn:

"Our fathers' God! to thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light,
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King!"

What a blessed boon is liberty. The free agency of man! The right to live upon the earth with a knowledge of good and evil. Blessed are we if we choose the good and reject the evil, provided, of course, we do so of our own volition, in the exercise of our free agency. Many there were even in the very beginning who opposed this plan. We are told in holy writ that one-third of the hosts of heaven followed Lucifer in his rebellion against God and were cast out of heaven. That war begun in heaven, is continued here on earth. To follow the enemies of God means to follow them into slavery, but to serve God means freedom, and we are under necessity of choosing whom we will serve—God or the adversary of our souls, the arch enemy of God. Many there have been in all ages who have endeavored to enslave mankind—to dominate the minds and consciences of men. All such are enemies of God. They have instituted despotic governments and have ruled with an iron hand. They have established state religions and punished non-conformists as heretics and even burned them at the stake. All enemies of God are they who seek to destroy the free agency of man or to deprive them of their inherent—their inalienable rights of life and liberty, the right to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. The establishment of a state religion is an abomination in the sight of God. Think of poor afflicted Russia now under Soviet rule. How they have suffered in the past under the despotic rule of the Czar, and dominated by a corrupt hierarchy—an established state church, enslaving and oppressing them!

The people of that land had good reason to rise up against such conditions and all sympathy should be extended to them in their struggle for liberty; but no sooner have they liberated themselves from this condition of thralldom till the Soviet seeks to plunge them into the still more deadly slavery of atheism. These Soviet masters are still greater oppressors and tyrants than any who have ever preceded them, for they have even undertaken to prevent them from serving God in any form whatever, and when men cease to serve God, at that moment they begin to serve the devil, which means slavery. Such rulers have no conception of human rights. What they need is a Thomas Jefferson to write into their constitution a provision like this: The Soviet shall make no law respecting the establishment of any religion, nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof. They have surely broken down the establishment of a state religion, but they have also undertaken to prevent the free exercise of any religion—to deprive their people of their inherent rights. Tread lightly, ye powers that be, for this is holy ground. Even in our own land there are some who seem to think that our Constitution is unfriendly to religion. On the contrary, it is intended to encourage and protect all religions. It simply means "equal rights to all, but special privileges to none,"—no state religion, but no interference with any. This is holy ground. To congress it says "hands off."

How grateful we ought to be for those champions of human

liberty that have arisen in our own land—for George Washington, “the father of his country,” who led our forces in establishing this free republic, founded upon the principles of human liberty; for Abraham Lincoln, the great emancipator, who under the inspiration of the Almighty, carried on the fight to preserve unto us these sacred rights that they might not perish from the earth; for Woodrow Wilson, who led the American forces in the greatest struggle of history for human liberty, and that these principles that we love so dearly shall be extended to all mankind. The influence of these great champions of human liberty will be felt by the inhabitants of this world throughout the ages which are to come.

Let us, then, as Latter-day Saints, rejoice in the precious boon of liberty secured unto us by that great palladium of our inherent rights, the Constitution, and manifest our loyalty to it by obedience to it and the laws which have been enacted in carrying out its provisions. Let us also rejoice in the free agency of man which permeates the Gospel of Jesus Christ and manifest our appreciation of it by our obedience to that Gospel which is the “Truth that will make us free.” This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

“The glory of the Lord shall be revealed,” from the oratorio, “The Messiah,” was sung by the choir.

Elder George F. Whitehead, President of the St. George Temple, pronounced the benediction, and the Conference adjourned until 2:00 p. m.

AFTERNOON MEETING

Conference reconvened at 2:00 p. m.

President Heber J. Grant presided.

The music for this meeting was furnished by the Provo Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Gerrit de Jong.

The choir and congregation sang “Come, come, ye Saints.”

Elder David K. Udall, President of the Arizona Temple, offered the opening prayer.

The choir sang the anthem, “As the hart pants after the water-brooks.”

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

MEANING OF IMMORTALITY

At a time when Moses was caught up into an exceeding high mountain and face to face talked with God, an account of which is given in the first chapter of the Book of Moses, in the Pearl of Great Price, the God of heaven and earth made use of this very significant and impressive expression:

“Behold, this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”