

I feel that we owe a deep debt of gratitude to Evan Stephens, George Careless, Joseph J. Daynes, and many others, for the splendid music they have prepared for our hymns and our anthems.

The choir then sang the anthem, "Let the mountains shout for joy."

### ELDER RULON S. WELLS

#### *Of The First Council of the Seventy*

I desire at the beginning to express my delight in the selection of the men who have been chosen to fill the vacancies occasioned by the death of President Anthony W. Ivins, of the First Presidency, and Brother Charles H. Hart, of the First Council of Seventy, and also in the filling of the vacancies occasioned by the promotion of our brethren in the Council of the Twelve and in the First Presidency. I love these men, as I do all of the General Authorities of the Church. I have always sustained them; I have personally known them for many years.

Two of the brethren who have been thus chosen have been my intimate missionary associates; Elder David O. McKay and Elder Alonzo A. Hinckley were fellow missionaries with me in the European Mission. I rejoice in the honor that has come to them and feel in my heart to uphold and sustain them, and ask God's blessing upon them.

At the opening of this morning's session of the conference the choir sang: "An Angel from on High," and that led me to thinking of the mission of the angel Moroni, and of the scriptures which foretold his coming; when to John, on the Isle of Patmos, the visions of the future were opened unto his mind, as expressed in this quotation from Rev. 14:6, 7:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

As I contemplated this oft-repeated passage of scripture, many thoughts came into my mind.

I have just been attending the German conference in the Assembly Hall, and as I realized that these Swiss and German Saints, whom I was addressing in their own language, had been gathered here in response to the message of that "Angel from on high," I gave expression, in part, to these thoughts; but I desire to still further give expression, during the few moments that I have before me, to the thoughts that came to me in contemplating that wonderful message to the world.

First of all, it is the promulgation of this Gospel, that it is to go to all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples that dwell upon the face of the earth. This Gospel message—not a new Gospel, but the everlasting Gospel, the Gospel that was proclaimed from the very beginning of the world unto the children of men—that same everlasting Gospel must be carried to all of the various nations of this earth.

That is some work to accomplish, the fulfilment of that prophecy, which prophecy must be fulfilled by carrying the Gospel to every nation. We are told in a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Sec. 90:11) that the time is to come when every man shall hear the fulness of this Gospel in his own language and in his own tongue. Think of the immensity of that work, what a prodigious undertaking it is to carry the Gospel to all the various nations, and that too in their own language.

We have made some headway, but there are many nations that have not heard the word of the Lord, the Gospel in its fulness and purity as it has been restored in this day and age by the coming of that mighty angel which John the Revelator saw flying in the midst of heaven.

There is one country alone with its 163,000,000 people speaking a foreign tongue, and probably many dialects of that tongue. The Gospel in its purity has not been preached to them. The scriptures have not been translated—those that were given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and many others in defense of the faith and explaining the Gospel in its purity have not been brought to the understanding of that people. Many of the children of Israel are there and must hear the Gospel and be gathered into the fold. And there are also other nations to whom likewise this Gospel must be preached. I merely mention this as an illustration of the prodigious work that lies before us in carrying the Gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

We must not forget that when it first came to us it came engraven upon golden plates uncovered by the Angel Moroni, for:

Lo! in Cumorah's lonely hill  
A sacred record lies concealed

This record, containing the fulness of the everlasting Gospel, was engraven upon the plates of gold in a foreign language, which no one understood but which nevertheless was translated by Joseph Smith, through the gift and power of God, into the English language. How fortunate for us that we were born in a country where the English language is spoken and that we have the privilege of hearing it in "our own tongue, in our own language." Well this same privilege must come to "every nation, kindred, tongue and people" before the words of that prophecy can be fulfilled. By whom shall this Gospel message be delivered to the nations? Surely by those to whom it has been committed—by the Latter-day Saints.—None others. And for this we must prepare ourselves by learning their languages and translating into them the written word. And what is the message we have to bear? We must declare the restoration of that everlasting Gospel through the coming of holy beings from the realms above—declare that the Church of Jesus Christ has again been set up on the earth and has been endowed with power from on high—even the power of the Priesthood, which gives to men the authority to administer the saving ordinances of the Gospel.

There are two methods by which the Lord endeavors to save his people and bring them to a knowledge of the truth. One of these methods

is based upon fear and the other upon love. Both are good and the Lord employs them both.

There is much wickedness in the world, for "the earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof," and the warning voice must be given: "Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment is come," calling upon all men to repent and be baptized and be warned that the time is drawing near when the judgments of the Almighty shall be poured out upon the nations, "when sin and iniquity shall be banished from the face of the earth, and righteousness shall predominate and cover the earth, even as the waters cover the mighty deep." That is the warning that goes out. It is based upon fear, it is wholesome fear, and all the nations who give heed and listen to that everlasting Gospel rendering obedience to it, shall escape the judgments.

But there is still another method given which is based upon love. First let me say of the wickedness—and there is much of it in the world—some people have said, and tried to shift the responsibility upon nature, that men are by nature sensual and devilish. I wish to challenge that statement. I do not believe a word of it. It is not true; we are not by nature sensual or devilish. We are the children of God, and we have been formed and fashioned in his image—not only in his bodily image, but have been endowed with his divine attributes. We are by nature then the children of God, divine, not sensual and devilish.

We read an explanation of these things in the book of Doctrine and Covenants, wherein the statement is made that in the beginning we were created in the image of God, and that God gave commandments unto the children of men, but through transgression of those holy commandments, men became devilish and sensual. (Doc. and Cov., 20:18, 19, 20.)

But there is a difference in saying that men have *become* sensual and devilish, and saying that they are *by nature* so. They are not; they are God-like, formed in his image, endowed with his divine attributes. The devil is exercising influence over the children of men, and the Lord has given us our free agency and freedom of will to think, to determine, and to do the thing that we will. Some have made a mistake by imagining that the power to do these things is salvation. Nothing of the kind—that is free agency.

We have the privilege of choosing. If we choose to do right, it will lead to our salvation, very true. But, if we exercise that freedom of will and that free agency in doing evil it will just as surely lead to our damnation.

But we are not by nature vile. I know that many people in the world justify themselves by blaming it on to their nature. Poets have written so; even the poet Byron in summing up the character of men, after paying his tribute to his Newfoundland dog, pays a very questionable compliment to mankind, in an epitaph he wrote on that dog's tombstone. Said he:

Oh man! thou feeble tenant of an hour,  
Debased by slavery, or corrupt by power,

Who knows thee well must quit thee with disgust,  
Degraded mass of animated dust!  
Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat,  
Thy smiles hypocrisy, thy words deceit!  
By nature vile, ennobled but by name,  
Each kindred brute might bid thee blush for shame.

I think that is a pretty good explanation of the present condition of the world, to a very large extent. But it does not apply to all. There is one statement in it that I take exception to, that is: "By nature vile." It is not so. Men became vile by transgressing the laws, therefore they should repent and be baptized every one of them that they might not be overtaken by the judgments of God.

The other method is based on love. How can we look out into this natural world and behold the beauties of nature, how can we look into the starry heavens, how can we behold the blazing sun at noonday without being impressed with the divinity of God's work? How can we contemplate those things without being filled with love for God and worship him who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and the fountains of water, who made the stars and the sun. He is in the sun and is the light of the sun, and is the power thereof by which it was made. He is in the stars and is the light of the stars, and the power by which they were made. Worship him; love him with all your heart. Adore him; think of him grandly as the Creator of the heavens and earth and all that in them are. And worship him who made the sea and the fountains of water. How can we look upon them without being overwhelmed with the goodness of God unto us, for he made the sea and the fountains of water. We see the water come trickling down the mountainside into the canyon creeks, and from the creeks into the rivers, and from the rivers to the sea; there to be caught up through evaporation into the clouds and wafted by the winds back to the mountain tops to begin its course anew. We may divert those streams from their natural channels onto our arid lands and produce an abundant harvest, or we may harness them and propel the machinery of the world, illuminate our streets, our public buildings and our homes; but the water thus diverted seeps back into its natural channels, in its downward course to the sea and back to the mountains, to feed the ever-flowing fountains of water. Surely in these times of drouth we ought to appreciate the value of the sea and fountains of water.

Therefore, worship him in spirit and in truth, and then in the abundance of your love for God, keep his commandments, and he will surely lead you, not only to escape the judgments which are to come, but lead you into the celestial kingdom, to come forth in the resurrection of the dead, clothed upon with immortality and eternal life. These are the promises of the Father to those who love the Lord and who worship him in spirit and in truth.

Then let us worship the Lord, keep his commandments, and so live that we may have part in his glorious work and be numbered among those who shall receive the crown of eternal life, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.