

## ELDER RULON S. WELLS

*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

## LOVE OF TRUTH SHOWN BY OBEDIENCE

The main theme of this great Conference has been the love of God and our fellowmen on the one hand and the love of our country on the other hand. I love the Lord and I love his Gospel, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only way to manifest our love for him is through keeping his commandments. As you have already heard, our loyalty is demonstrated by our faithfulness in keeping the word of the Lord. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Our love for our country is manifest in our obedience to her laws. We in this country should be loyal to this Government which is inspired by God and was instituted among his children for the blessing of mankind.

## GRATEFUL FOR CHURCH AND COUNTRY

I am proud of my standing in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; proud that I am a member of this Church. I prize that membership above all else. How grateful I am to my Heavenly Father that I have been born in the day and age when this glorious Gospel has been restored to the earth; that I have been born of goodly parents; and taught from my childhood up in the glorious principles of life and salvation.

I am proud of my country and of its institutions. I am proud to be an American citizen. The remarks that have been made during this conference from the very beginning have set my soul aflame with patriotic fire for my God and my country, and I hope that I may be loyal to both all the days of my life, and manifest that loyalty and that love through obedience to the mind and will of God and to the laws of our beloved land.

We as a people have a special interest in our loyalty to our country. It seems to me that we have an interest in this country that transcends that of any other people. What a wonderful country this is! This earth was created by the Almighty, who holds the title to every acre of the land upon the surface of this earth. He made it; it is his, and the fulness thereof belongs to him, and certainly his right to parcel that country out to whomsoever he will may not or should not be contested.

## THE LORD'S COVENANTS WITH HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE

Under the new and everlasting covenant the Lord has made land grants to his chosen people.

Many thoughtless speakers and thoughtless writers have sometimes imagined that the covenant was merely a grant, a land grant, and overlooked the stupendous fact that all such land grants have been given to his chosen people that they might have place whereon to establish his statutes and build up his Church and Kingdom. Unto Adam he

gave the whole earth and gave dominion to Adam over every living thing that creepeth upon it; to Abraham he gave the promised land, even the land of Palestine; to Moses he renewed the covenant made with Abraham, including the land grant accompanying it; and to Joseph he gave the land of America, long before its discovery by Columbus.

#### AMERICA THE LAND OF JOSEPH

This is the land of America on which we dwell. Joseph, the favored son of Israel, to him and to his posterity was given this great and glorious land. To him and all the house of Israel his companions. Therefore, I say, we have a special interest for we are the descendants of Joseph. Our patriarchs have declared our lineage as that of Joseph, the favored son of Israel. When his patriarchal father laid hands upon his head and pronounced the blessings "of heaven above and of the deep that lieth under," he promised unto him the land of America. This grant, this pledge, and this promise, were given long before Columbus discovered America and hence it was not known by that name or that title, but that land is so graphically described in the scriptures that it is sure to be none other land than the blessed land on which we dwell. One of our songs in pioneer days reads:

We are the true born sons of Ephraim,  
 Who with us that can compare?  
 We are of the royal house of Joseph,  
 That bright and glorious morning star.

That is our lineage; our patriarchs have so told us. We have an abiding faith that this land belongs to us and at the same time that the holy land of Palestine belongs to the House of Israel, the seed of Abraham, given to them for an everlasting inheritance, to Judah and the House of Israel his companions. If any descendant of Joseph should desire to obtain a part or parcel of this blessed land, it would be wise that he secure it by purchase from someone that could show an abstract of title back to a United States patent. So we advise people that they should pursue that course if they want to obtain any part of it by legal possession at the present time. The same thing, no doubt, is being done by the descendants of Judah in the blessed land of Palestine. They, too, have a right, and yet I suppose they are securing it by purchase; however, their rights are being vigorously opposed, notwithstanding the Lord gave it unto Abraham through the son of promise, Isaac, not to Ishmael the progenitor of the Arabs, but the time will come when these land grants will be duly honored, for the wicked shall be destroyed and the saints, only those who have entered into the covenant, shall inherit these lands. "All the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that is shall leave them neither root nor branch."

The thoughts that are in my mind in connection with this everlasting covenant and accompanying land grants, I wrote once in the form of a poem. Let me not call it a poem or dignify it by so high a title, but on

January 1, 1938, the inspiration came to me to write some verses to give expression to the thoughts which I have been here expressing. I will repeat them to you:

## BOOKS DIVINE

Holy Bible, book divine,  
Precious treasure, thou art mine.  
Mine to tell me whence I came;  
Mine to teach me who I am.

Book of Mormon, book divine,  
Precious treasure, thou art mine;  
Mine to guide me in my youth;  
Mine to lead me in all truth.

Stick of Judah, Israel's guide,  
Stick of Joseph by its side;  
These are one in Ephraim's hand,  
Brought to light in Joseph's land.

Judah ever wears the crown,  
Wields the scepter, wears the gown,  
Inheriting the Holy land  
According to Divine command.

Joseph is a fruitful bough,  
Favored son of Israel thou;  
His branches running o'er the wall  
Gathering all who heed his call,

In the choicest land above all lands  
Whereso'er the ocean strands  
Where amid its rocks and rills  
High above Judea's hills,

In the Rocky Mountain height  
Stands the Temple, "God its light."  
Many people go and say  
He will teach us of His way.

And among its ancient mounds  
To the very utmost bounds  
Of the everlasting hills,  
How my soul with rapture thrills!

America is Joseph's land;  
Here shall Zion ever stand.  
And Judah's land again shall shine,  
Blessed land of Palestine.

From Zion shall go forth the law,  
Even as the prophet saw;  
And from Jerusalem the word  
In every land it shall be heard.

Of these sayings not one is mine;  
All I've done—I've made them rhyme.  
In these books inspired men  
Have "graven them with iron pen,"

"And lead them in the rock forever,"  
That from the Truth we may not sever.  
Oh, ye holy books divine,  
Precious treasures ye are mine.

These are my thoughts in connection with this blessed land of America and our right to it, and yet we are willing to harbor here those who come from afar from all the nations—a place of refuge for those who are oppressed under the tyrannical governments of the old world. How grateful we ought to be for this land of liberty in which we dwell, and how loyal we ought to be to it, appreciating all its blessings and privileges.

#### THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY

On July 4th, 1917, a few months after the entry of the United States into the great World War, I composed the following verses expressing my feelings in regard to the inalienable rights of man as set forth in the Declaration of Independence which crystalized in the framing of our glorious Constitution:

I do not want you to think that I imagine that I am a poet; I have just been able to write a few unique verses that emphasize the feelings that are overflowing in my heart, and I think I have just time to repeat that poem:

#### LIFE AND LIBERTY

To live and have a being,  
To dwell upon the earth,  
Is a boon and blessed right  
Inherited at birth.  
The Lord who gave, he taketh  
And blessed be his name;  
For he that taketh, maketh  
And giveth back again;

But woe to man, or nation,  
That taketh life for fame;  
For conquest or ambition  
No matter in what name;  
For life, it is my dower,  
Oh, how my heart doth swell,  
For God gave me the power  
Upon his earth to dwell.

But what is life if fettered?  
Mere lungs without a breath.  
"Give me liberty" was uttered,  
"Or" otherwise "give death."  
To stand upon the mountain,  
And breathe the heavenly air—  
To quaff at freedom's fountain,  
No "let or hindrance" there.

To linger in the valley;  
To travel o'er the plain;  
Out on the sea to sally,  
Across the bounding main.  
The world is mine to live in;

The ocean lanes are free;  
For these our God hath given  
To all—to you and me.

To live and to be free;  
To worship God alone,  
As conscience *opide<sup>th</sup>*  
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.

It is for these we're struggling,  
The Teutons say for naught.  
To us these rights are precious,  
For them our fathers fought.  
So we the same defending  
'Neath the red and white and blue,  
And to all the world extending,  
Will our happiness pursue.

May the Lord grant now that we may be loyal to our native land.

Lives there a man with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land.

Let there be no member of this Church who does not feel in his heart, "I'm going to be loyal and true to my Church for it is the Church and Kingdom of God." I endorse with all my heart the remarks that I have heard.

The testimony that has just been borne by Elder George F. Richards regarding the leaders of this people from the Prophet Joseph Smith to our present leader and prophet—Heber J. Grant—is likewise my testimony, and I bear witness of it in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

The Choir sang "And Then Shall Your Light Break Forth" (Mendelssohn).

### ELDER JOSEPH F. MERRILL

#### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

To me the spot on which I stand in this historic building is hallowed, long since made so by the presence here of many great prophets and leaders who have gone to their reward. Among them were five presidents of the Church. So I never stand here to speak without feeling very humble and therefore dependent upon the Lord for whose inspiring Spirit I always most earnestly pray to help and guide me.

#### THANKFUL FOR LEADERS

I have been thrilled by things said at every session of this Conference. When I heard President Grant Friday morning read the masterly document by the First Presidency affecting the war situation and