

President David O. McKay:

The invocation was offered by Wilford W. Kirton, Jr., president of the University Stake. The Relief Society Singing Mothers will now sing: "If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments,"

Sister Florence J. Madsen, composer, and it will now be conducted by Sister Madsen.

Singing by the Relief Society Singing Mothers, "If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments."

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

Clouds hung over the eastern horizon this morning. When I met my associates, I noticed that some of them were carrying their topcoats, but I am pleased to see the sun shining at the opening of this great conference. There are many in the world who see hanging over the international horizon threatening clouds also. There are storms ahead!

I am prompted by the outlook to take as a text for the few words that I shall say this morning, an encouraging thought from the Thirty-first Psalm: "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." (Psalm 31:24.)

Sixty or seventy years ago, when United States history was an essential course in elementary public school teaching, many a boy was thrilled by Patrick Henry's dramatic declaration: "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!" Patrick Henry was then a delegate to the Second Revolutionary Convention held at Richmond, Virginia, March 23, 1775.

The Creator, who gave man life, planted in his heart the seed of liberty. Free agency, as life, is a gift from God. "Do you wish to be free? Then above all things, love God, love your neighbor, love one another, love the common weal; then you will have true liberty." (Savonarola.)

Last Saturday, September 23, 1961, fearing they might be deprived of this inalienable right, two women—"one fifty-seven and the other sixty-three, leaped from an East Berlin apartment building, fronting on a West Berlin street. West Berlin firemen caught

them in a safety net while communist police [Vopos] looked on without shooting.

"West Berlin police reported that another family in a border house was preparing to leap into the firemen's nets when the lights in their apartment suddenly went out."

The local press tells us that "when the lights flashed on again, West Berliners saw the apartment was full of Vopos [policemen]. There was no sign of the would-be escapees." (*Deseret News-Salt Lake Telegram*, September 23, 1961.)

A West Berlin official said the largest number of refugees ever reported in a single day was 3,793 persons who fled to Berlin on May 28, 1953. It is reported that new arrivals in 1961 (this year) have increased the number of refugees who have fled East Germany during the month of August to nearly 20,000. More than 150,000 seeking freedom from the domination of communism have crossed the border so far this year—150,000! (See *Ibid.*, August 12, 1961.)

In contrast to the barbaric state-rule of the communist, from which these people are fleeing by the hundreds of thousands, I call your attention this morning to the freedom-loving spirit of America. On Bedloe's Island in New York harbor stands the Statue of Liberty—a gift of the French people to the American people. Israel Zangwill, in *The Melting Pot*, gives the words spoken by David, the Russian emigrant Jew, as follows:

"All my life America was waiting, beckoning, shining—the place where God would wipe away tears from off all faces. To think that the same great torch of Liberty which threw its light across all the seas and lands into my

Friday, September 29

First Day

little garret in Russia is shining also for all those other weeping millions of Europe, shining wherever men hunger and are oppressed, shining over the starving villages of Italy, Ireland, over the swarming, starving cities of Poland, and Galicia, over the ruined farms of Rumania, over the shambles of Russia. When I look at our Statue of Liberty, I just seem to hear the voice of America crying: "Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

In the September 1961, issue of *Highways to Happiness*, a little pamphlet many of you receive, I was pleased with the timely comment that, and I quote:

"America is a land of but one people, gathered from many nations. Some came for love of money, and some came for love of freedom. Whatever the lure that brought them here, each gave his gift. Irish lad and Scotch, Englishman and Dutch, Italian, Greek, and French, Spaniard, Slav, Teuton, Norse—all have come bearing gifts, and have laid them on the altar of America.

"All brought music, and their instruments for the making of music.

"All brought their poetry, winged tales of man's many passions; ballads of heroes and tunes of the sea; lilting scraps caught from sky and field, or mighty dramas that tell of primal struggles of the profoundest meaning.

"Then, each brought some homely things, some touch of the familiar home field or forest, kitchen or dress—a favorite tree or fruit, an accustomed flower a style in cookery, or in costumes—each brought some homelike familiar thing.

"Hatred of old-time neighbors, national prejudices and ambitions, traditional fears, set standards of living, graceless intolerance, class rights, and the demand of class—these were barred at the gates.

"At the altar of America, we have sworn ourselves to a simple loyalty. We have bound ourselves to sacrifice and struggle, to plan and to work for this one land. We have given that we may gain; we have surrendered that we may have victory!"

There is a significant reference in the Apocalypse to "a war in heaven." (See

Rev. 12:7.) It is not only significant but also seemingly contradictory, for we think of heaven as a celestial abode of bliss, an impossible condition where war and contention could exist. The passage is significant inasmuch as it sets forth the fact there is freedom of choice and of action in the spirit world. This contention in heaven arose over the desire of Satan ". . . to destroy the agency of man, which I the Lord, had given him, . . ." (Moses 4:3.)

Freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of action within boundaries that do not infringe upon the liberty of others are man's inherent right, granted him by his Creator—divine gifts "essential to human dignity and human happiness."

"Therefore, cheer up your hearts," admonished an ancient prophet in the Book of Mormon, "and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves— . . ." (2 Nephi 10:23.)

"This love of liberty which God has planted in us," said Abraham Lincoln, "constitutes the bulwark of our liberty and independence. It is not our frowning battlements, our bristling seacoasts, our army, and our navy. Our defense is in the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands, everywhere. Destroy this spirit, and we have planted the seeds of despotism at our very doors."

Brethren, the opposite of freedom is bondage, servility, restraint—conditions that inhibit mentality, stifle the spirit, and crush manhood. To coerce, to compel, to bring into servitude is Satan's plan for the human family.

Throughout the history of the world man has contended even to death to free himself from bondage and usurpation, or to retain the freedom he already possessed. This is particularly true in regard to the right to worship. Attempts to control the consciences of men have always resulted in conflict. To decide one's own relationship to the Creator and to his creations is the natural and inalienable right of all.

Equally fundamental and important to man's happiness and progress is the right of personal security, the right of personal liberty, and the right of private property. The right of personal

security consists in the enjoyment of life, limbs, body, health, and reputation. Life, being the immediate gift of God, is a right inherent by nature in every individual. Likewise, man has a natural inherent right to his limbs. His personal liberty consists in the right of changing one's situation or habitation according to will. The right of property consists in the free use, enjoyment, and disposal of all acquisitions, without control or diminution save by the laws of the land. The right of private property is sacred and inviolable. If any part of these inalienable individual possessions should be required by the State, they should be given only with the consent of the people.

When King John of England, whom Dickens calls "a coward and detestable villain," deprived his subjects of their liberties and ruthlessly burned and destroyed their property, the people rose up against him, brought him to Runnymede, and compelled him on Monday, June 15, 1215, to affix his signature to the Great Charter of England by which, among other things, he pledged himself "to maintain the Church in its rights, to imprison no man without a fair trial, and to sell, delay, or deny justice to none."

Five hundred and fifty years later, the American colonies imbued with the spirit that produced the Magna Charta, declared:

"As the happiness of the people is the sole end of government, so the consent of the people is the only foundation of it, in reason, morality, and the natural fitness of things. And therefore every act of government, every exercise of sovereignty against or without the consent of the people is injustice, usurpation, and tyranny. It is a maxim that in every government there must exist somewhere a supreme, sovereign, absolute and uncontrollable power; and it never was, or can be delegated to one man or few; the great Creator having never given to men a right to vest others with authority over them unlimited either in duration or degree.

"When kings, ministers, governors, or legislators, therefore, instead of exercising the powers intrusted with them according to the principles, forms, and

proportions stated by the Constitution, and established by the original compact, prostitute those powers to the purposes of oppression; to subvert, instead of preserving the lives, liberties, and properties of the people, they are no longer to be deemed magistrates vested with a sacred character, but become public enemies and ought to be resisted." (Adams, *Works*, I, p. 193.)

My brethren and sisters, the ultimate purpose of Christianity in the world is to develop an honorable, upright individual in an ideal society known as the kingdom of God.

Nearly two thousand years have passed, and the world is still a long way from the realization of either achievement. Indeed, today Christianity itself, and its handmaiden, Democracy, are on trial before the world tribunal. Conditions in this war-torn world seem to bear witness that men are forever learning, but never coming to a knowledge of the truth.

Though true Christianity as expressed in the divine law, ". . . love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind . . . and thy neighbour as thyself," (Matt. 22:37, 39) has never yet been accepted and practised by the nations of the world, yet the Spirit of the Christ has, like leaven in the lump, been influencing society toward the realization of freedom, justice, and better harmony in human relations.

In the world today, however, the spirit of paganism has again asserted itself and seems to be all but triumphant in its effort to overthrow the few Christian ideals that civilized peoples have absorbed.

"If Western civilization emerges from existing situations safely, it will be only through a deeper appreciation—and note this—through a deeper appreciation of the social ethics of Jesus than it has yet shown. And our danger is increased rather than diminished by the fancied security in which our masses live."

Merely an appreciation of the social ethics of Jesus, however, is not sufficient. Men's hearts must be changed. Instead of selfishness, men must be willing to dedicate their ability, their possessions—

Friday, September 29

First Day

if necessary, their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor for the alleviation of the ills of mankind. Hate must be supplanted by sympathy and forbearance.

Force and compulsion will never establish the ideal society. This can come only by a transformation within the individual soul—a life brought into harmony with the divine will. *We must be "born again."*

Though nearly 2,000 years have passed since Jesus taught the gospel of brotherhood, it seems as difficult for men today as in Christ's day to believe that peace and truth can come only by conforming our lives to the law of love. Men still find the greatest difficulty in accepting this central core of Christ's teachings.

Manifestly, there has not been much cessation of man's inhumanity to man through the centuries. Notwithstanding this, I believe that right and truth will eventually triumph.

Today, as we see hovering over the nations of the earth the ever-darkening clouds of nuclear war, we are prone to think that righteousness among men is waning. In our own beloved country, "a land choice above all other lands," we are grieved and shocked when the Supreme Court renders a decision ruling that it is unconstitutional for the Federal Government of any State to require a "belief in the existence of God" as a qualification for public office; also, we experience apprehension when we know that enemies to our republican form of government are becoming more blatant; when we see political demagogues seemingly more successful, drunkenness and immorality flauntingly defiant—seeing these conditions we wonder whether mankind is growing better or worse. In private life, disappointments, adversity, sickness, and sorrow make us discouraged and sometimes despondent.

Still I am confident that *truth will yet prevail*, and in that confidence, say again with the Psalmist: "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." (Psalm 31:24.)

We may take courage in what I believe is a fact, that in the hearts of more millions of honest men and women than ever before war is abhorrent. War has

lost its false glamour and boasted glory. Such an attitude at least keeps alive our hope for the dawning of that day when men ". . . shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah 2:4.)

How utterly foolish men are to quarrel, fight, and cause misery, destruction, and death when the gifts of a Divine and Loving Father are all around us for the asking—are already in our possession if we would but recognize them. Christ's invitation is still extended to all peoples:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30.)

I am as sure as that I am speaking to you that the peace and happiness of mankind lie in the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world, our Savior. As Peter declared over 1900 years ago, so I testify to the world today, that there is "none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.)

The principles of the restored gospel as revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, are the surest, safest guide to mortal man. Christ is the light to humanity. In that light man sees his way clearly. When it is rejected, the soul of man stumbles in darkness. No person, no group, no nation can achieve true success without following him who said:

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12.)

It is a sad thing when individuals and nations extinguish that light—when Christ and his gospel are supplanted by the law of the jungle and the strength of the sword. *The chief tragedy in the world at the present time is its disbelief in God's goodness, and its lack of faith in the teachings and doctrines of the gospel.*

To all who believe in a Living, Per-

sonal God and his divine truth, life can be so delightful and beautiful.

As a matter of fact, it is glorious just to be alive. Joy, even ecstasy, can be experienced in the consciousness of existence. There is supreme satisfaction in sensing one's individual entity and in realizing that that entity is part of God's great creative plan. There are none so poor, none so rich, sick, or maimed who may not be conscious of this relationship.

I know that for not a few of us the true joy of living is overcast by trials, failures, worries, and perplexities incident to making a living and attempting to achieve success. Tear-bedimmed eyes are often blind to the beauties that surround us. Life sometimes seems a parched and barren desert, when, as a matter of fact, there is comfort, even

happiness within our grasp if we could or would but reach for it.

The Lord has given us life, and with it free agency; and eternal life is his greatest gift to man.

To the Church in all the world the message of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the other General Authorities is: Be true and loyal to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." (Psalm 31:24.)

God help us so to be true, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Marion D. Hanks.

ELDER ELRAY L. CHRISTIANSEN

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

With you, my brothers and sisters, I have been deeply moved by the message of President McKay this morning—so timely, so fitting, so true! He is, indeed, the prophet of God in this day. To this I testify! I know also that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that through the restoration of the gospel he has given a divine plan for living which will help all of us who adhere to it to avoid the pitfalls and the sorrows that will surely come if we depart therefrom. If ever there were a day in the world when the gospel of Jesus Christ is needed, it is today! It is needed to give us fortitude and direction.

The gospel is more than something just to talk about, however. It is a design for living, for successful living, for happy living. It calls for deeds, action, and proper conduct on the part of each and all of us. Its principles are not limited to the payment of tithing, the Word of Wisdom, keeping holy the Sabbath day—they are part of the gospel, of course, and are very important, but the gospel embraces *all* truth and the application of *all* virtues. "We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good

to all men. . . . If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things." (Thirteenth Article of Faith.)

The principles enunciated in that Article of Faith are designed to help us to become more refined, more reliable, more peaceable, more Christlike.

One of the virtues mentioned is benevolence, which is the disposition to do good, to be kind, to be charitable to others. Among the beautiful principles taught the multitude by Jesus upon the mountain was this: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: . . ." (Matt. 7:12.) This is often referred to as the Golden Rule. It is another version of the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Mark 12:31.)

Laws, rules, regulations are designed to give society a more safe and a more orderly way of living. But it is understandable that even though we have innumerable laws, both civil and ecclesiastical, to direct us, laws cannot be made to cover each specific act or each transaction that we make. For this reason we must develop a conscience