

presidencies, bishoprics, members of General Auxiliary boards, and members of the Church, and friends everywhere who may be listening by radio and television.

The music for this session will be rendered by the Logan Institute of Religion Choir with James L. Bradley conducting; Alexander Schreiner is at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the choir singing, "Open Our Eyes." The invocation will be offered by Elder Roy William Oscarson, president of St. Louis Stake.

The Choir sang "Open Our Eyes." President Roy W. Oscarson, President of the St. Louis Stake, offered the invocation.

President Hugh B. Brown

The members of the choir of the Logan Institute of Religion have ex-

pressed a desire to sing the following song as a tribute to our prophet, President David O. McKay. The words of this song were written by President McKay, and the music arranged by Alexander Schreiner. It is titled, "The Gospel is Truly the Power of God Unto Salvation." It will be conducted by James L. Bradley.

Singing by the Choir, "The Gospel is Truly the Power of God Unto Salvation."

President Hugh B. Brown

Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve and president of the European Mission will be our first speaker this afternoon. He will be followed by Thorpe B. Isaacson, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder Benson.

ELDER EZRA TAFT BENSON

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

In 1831 the Lord said this to his Church:

"For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

"Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

"For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

"But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned." (D&C 58:26-29.)

The purposes of the Lord—the great objectives—continue the same: the salvation and exaltation of his children.

Objectives and Guide Lines

Usually the Lord gives us the overall objectives to be accomplished and

some guidelines to follow, but he expects us to work out most of the details and methods. The methods and procedures are usually developed through study and prayer and by living so that we can obtain and follow the promptings of the Spirit. Less spiritually advanced people, such as those in the days of Moses, had to be commanded in many things. Today those spiritually alert look at the objectives, check the guidelines laid down by the Lord and his prophets, and then prayerfully act—without having to be commanded "in all things." This attitude prepares men for godhood.

The overall objective to be accomplished in missionary work, temple work, providing for the needy, and bringing up our children in righteousness has always been the same; only our methods to accomplish these objectives have varied. Any faithful member in this dispensation, no matter when he lived, could have found righteous methods to have carried out these objectives without having to wait for the latest, specific church-wide program.

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His Children To Act on Their Own Initiative and Responsibility

Sometimes the Lord hopefully waits on his children to act on their own, and when they do not, they lose the greater prize, and the Lord will either drop the entire matter and let them suffer the consequences or else he will have to spell it out in greater detail. Usually, I fear, the more he has to spell it out, the smaller is our reward.

Often, because of circumstances, the Lord, through revelation to his prophets or through inspired programs designed by faithful members which later become adopted on a church-wide basis, will give to all the membership a righteous means to help accomplish the objective; for instance, any member of the Church a century ago who studied church doctrine would have known that he had the prime responsibility to see that his children had spiritualized family recreation and were taught in the home lessons in character building and gospel principles. But some did not do it.

The Home Evening

Then, in 1915 President Joseph F. Smith introduced, church-wide, the "weekly home evening program" with promised blessings to all who faithfully adopted it. Many refused and lost the promised blessings. (At the October conference, 1947, I referred to that promise in a talk on the Family Home Evening.) Today we have the home evening manual and other helps. Yet some still refuse to bring up their children in righteousness.

But there are some today who complain that the home evening manual should have been issued years ago. If this is true then the Lord will hold his servants accountable; but no one can say that from the inception of the Church up to the present day the Lord through his Spirit to the individual members and through his spokesmen, the prophets, has not given us the objectives and plenty of guidelines and counsel. The fact that some of us have not done much about it even when it is spelled out in detail is not the Lord's fault.

For years we have been counseled to have on hand a year's supply of food. Yet there are some today who will not start storing until the Church comes out with a detailed monthly home storage program. Now suppose that never happens. We still cannot say we have not been told.

Should the Lord decide at this time to cleanse the Church—and the need for that cleansing seems to be increasing—a famine in this land of one year's duration could wipe out a large percentage of slothful members, including some ward and stake officers. Yet we cannot say we have not been warned.

Another warning: You and I sustain one man on this earth as God's mouthpiece—President David O. McKay—one of the greatest seers who has ever walked this earth. We do not need a prophet—we have one—what we desperately need is a listening ear.

Warnings of Threats to Freedom

Should it be of concern to us when the mouthpiece of the Lord keeps constantly and consistently raising his voice of warning about the loss of our freedom as he has over the years? There are two unrighteous ways to deal with his prophetic words of warning: you can fight them or you can ignore them. Either course will bring you disaster in the long run.

Hear his words: "No greater immediate responsibility rests upon members of the Church, upon all citizens of this Republic and of neighboring Republics than to protect the freedom vouchsafed by the Constitution of the United States." (Cited in Jerreld L. Newquist, *Prophets, Principles and National Survival* [SLC: Publishers Press, 1964], p. 157.) As important as are all other principles of the gospel, it was the freedom issue which determined whether you received a body. To have been on the wrong side of the freedom issue during the war in heaven meant eternal damnation. How then can Latter-day Saints expect to be on the wrong side in this life and escape the eternal consequences? The war in heaven is raging on earth today. The issues are the same: "Shall men be compelled to do what others claim is

for their best welfare" or will they heed the counsel of the prophet and preserve their freedom?

Satan argued that men given their freedom would not choose correctly, therefore he would compel them to do right and save us all. Today Satan argues that men given their freedom do not choose wisely; therefore a so-called brilliant, benevolent few must establish the welfare government and force us into a greater socialistic society. We are assured of being led into the promised land as long as we let them put a golden ring in our nose. In the end we lose our freedom and the promised land also. No matter what you call it—communism, socialism, or the welfare state—our freedom is sacrificed. We believe the gospel is the greatest thing in the world; why then do we not force people to join the Church if they are not smart enough to see it on their own? Because this is Satan's way, not the Lord's plan. The Lord uses persuasion and love.

Hear again the words of God's mouthpiece: "Today two mighty forces are battling for the supremacy of the world. The destiny of mankind is in the balance. It is a question of God and liberty, or atheism and slavery. . . .

"Those forces are known and have been designated by Satan on the one hand, and Christ on the other.

"In Joshua's time they were called 'gods of the Amorites,' for one, and 'the Lord' on the other. . . . In these days, they are called 'domination by the state,' on one hand, 'personal liberty,' on the other; communism on one, free agency on the other." (*Ibid.*, pp. 215-216.)

Now, the Lord knew that before the gospel could flourish there must first be an atmosphere of freedom. This is why he first established the Constitution of this land through gentiles whom he raised up before he restored the gospel. In how many communist countries today are we doing missionary work, building chapels, etc.? And yet practically every one of those countries have been pushed into communism and kept under communism with the great assistance of evil forces which have and are operating within our own country and neighboring lands.

Yes, were it not for the tragic policies of governments—including our own—tens of millions of people murdered and hundreds of millions enslaved since World War II would be alive and free today to receive the restored gospel.

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., put it clearly and courageously when he said:

"Reduced to its lowest terms, the great struggle which now rocks the whole earth more and more takes on the character of a struggle of the individual versus the state. . . .

"This gigantic world-wide struggle, more and more takes on the form of a war to the death. We shall do well and wisely so to face and so to enter it. And we must all take part. Indeed, we all are taking part in that struggle, whether we will or not. Upon its final issue, liberty lives or dies. . . . The plain and simple issue now facing us in America is freedom or slavery. . . . We have largely lost the conflict so far waged. But there is time to win the final victory, if we sense our danger, and fight." (*Ibid.*, pp. 318, 327-328.)

Now where do we stand in this struggle, and what are we doing about it?

The devil knows that if the elders of Israel should ever wake up, they could step forth and help preserve freedom and extend the gospel. Therefore the devil has concentrated, and to a large extent successfully, in neutralizing much of the priesthood. He has reduced them to sleeping giants. His arguments are clever.

Here are a few samples:

First: "We really haven't received much instruction about freedom," the devil says. This is a lie, for we have been warned time and again. No prophet of the Lord has ever issued more solemn warning than President David O. McKay. Last conference I spoke of a book embodying much of the prophets' warnings on freedom from Joseph Smith to David O. McKay which I commend to you. It is entitled *Prophets, Principles, and National Survival*.

Second: "You're too involved in other church work," says the devil. But freedom is a weighty matter of the law;

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the lesser principles of the gospel you should keep but not leave this one undone. We may have to balance and manage our time better. Your other church work will be limited once you lose your freedom as our Saints have found out in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and many other nations.

Third: "You want to be loved by everyone," says the devil, "and this freedom battle is so controversial you might be accused of engaging in politics." Of course the government has penetrated so much of our lives that one can hardly speak for freedom without being accused of being political. Some might even call the war in heaven a political struggle—certainly it was controversial. Yet the valiant entered it with Michael. Those who support only the popular principles of the gospel have their reward. And those who want to lead the quiet, retiring life but still expect to do their full duty can't have it both ways.

Said Elder John A. Widtsoe:

"The troubles of the world may largely be laid at the doors of those who are neither hot nor cold; who always follow the line of least resistance; whose timid hearts flutter at taking sides for truth. As in the great Council in the heavens, so in the Church of Christ on earth, there can be no neutrality." (*Ibid.*, p. 440.)

Fourth: "Wait until it becomes popular to do," says the devil, "or, at least until everybody in the Church agrees on what should be done." But this fight for freedom might never become popular in our day. And if you wait until everybody agrees in this Church, you will be waiting through the second coming of the Lord. Would you have hesitated to follow the inspired counsel of the Prophet Joseph Smith simply because some weak men disagreed with him? God's living mouthpiece has spoken to us—are we for him or against him? In spite of the Prophet's opposition to increased federal aid and compulsory unionism, some church members still champion these freedom destroying programs. Where do you stand?

Fifth: "It might hurt your business or your family," says the devil, "and besides why not let the gentiles save

the country? They aren't as busy as you are." Well, there were many businessmen who went along with Hitler because it supposedly helped their business. They lost everything. Many of us are here today because our forefathers loved truth enough that they fought at Valley Forge or crossed the plains in spite of the price it cost them or their families. We had better take our small pain now than our greater loss later. There were souls who wished afterwards that they had stood and fought with Washington and the founding fathers, but they waited too long—they passed up eternal glory. There has never been a greater time than now to stand up against entrenched evil. And while the gentiles established the Constitution, we have a divine mandate to preserve it. But unfortunately today in this freedom struggle, many gentiles are showing greater wisdom in their generation than the children of light.

Sixth: "Don't worry," says the devil, "the Lord will protect you, and besides the world is so corrupt and heading toward destruction at such a pace that you can't stop it, so why try." Well, to begin with, the Lord will not protect us unless we do our part. This devilish tactic of persuading people not to get concerned because the Lord will protect them no matter what they do is exposed by the Book of Mormon. Referring to the devil, it says, "And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, and they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell." (2 Nephi 28:21.)

I like that word "carefully." In other words, don't shake them, you might awake them. But the Book of Mormon warns us that when we should see these murderous conspiracies in our midst that we should awake to our awful situation. Now why should we awake if the Lord is going to take care of us anyway? Now let us suppose that it is too late to save freedom. It is still accounted unto us for righteousness' sake to stand up and fight. Some Book of Mormon prophets knew of the final desolate end of their nations, but

they still fought on, and they saved some souls including their own by so doing. For, after all, the purpose of life is to prove ourselves, and the final victory will be for freedom.

But many of the prophecies referring to America's preservation are conditional. That is, if we do our duty we can be preserved, and if not then we shall be destroyed. This means that a good deal of the responsibility lies with the priesthood of this Church as to what happens to America and as to how much tragedy can be avoided if we do act now.

And now as to the last neutralizer that the devil uses most effectively—it is simply this: "Don't do anything in the fight for freedom until the Church sets up its own specific program to save the Constitution." This brings us right back to the scripture I opened with today—to those slothful servants who will not do anything until they are "compelled in all things." Maybe the Lord will never set up a specific church program for the purpose of saving the Constitution. Perhaps if he set one up at this time it might split the Church asunder, and perhaps he does not want that to happen yet for not all the wheat and tares are fully ripe.

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared it will be the elders of Israel who will step forward to help save the Constitution, not the Church. And have we elders been warned? Yes, we have. And have we elders been given the guidelines? Yes indeed, we have. And besides, if the Church should ever inaugurate a program, who do you think would be in the forefront to get it moving? It would not be those who were sitting on the sidelines prior to that time or those who were appeasing the enemy. It would be those choice spirits who, not waiting to be "commanded in all things," used their own free will, the counsel of the prophets, and the Spirit of the Lord as guidelines

and who entered the battle "in a good cause" and brought to pass much righteousness in freedom's cause.

Years ago Elder Joseph F. Merrill of the Council of the Twelve encouraged the members of the Church to join right-to-work leagues and President Heber J. Grant concurred. For our day President David O. McKay has called communism the greatest threat to the Church, and it is certainly the greatest mortal threat this country has ever faced. What are you doing to fight it?

"The War in Heaven" Is Raging on Earth Today

Brethren, if we had done our homework and were faithful, we could step forward at this time and help save this country. The fact that most of us are unprepared to do it is an indictment we will have to bear. The longer we wait, the heavier the chains, the deeper the blood, the more the persecution, and the less we can carry out our God-given mandate and world-wide mission. The war in heaven is raging on earth today. Are you being neutralized in the battle?

"Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

"For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. . . ." (D&C 58:27-28.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve. Elder Thorpe B. Isaacson, Assistant to the Twelve, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve.