

The singing for this afternoon's session will be furnished by the Brigham Young University Combined Choruses, conducted by John Halliday, with Robert Cundick at the organ.

We are exceedingly pleased to have these 400 Brigham Young University students present and participating in these services. We commend them for the efforts they have put forth to come here and inspire us with their singing. We welcome them with all our hearts.

We shall begin this service by the combined choruses singing, "The Heavens Are Telling," following which the invocation will be offered by Elder Stewart A. Durrant, formerly president of the Alaskan-Canadian Mission.

As the opening musical number, the Brigham Young University Combined Choruses sang the anthem, "The Heavens Are Telling."

Elder Stewart A. Durrant, formerly president of the Alaskan-Canadian Mission, offered the opening prayer.

President N. Eldon Tanner

The Combined Choruses will now favor us with, "I Stand All Amazed," after which Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve will speak to us.

The Brigham Young University Combined Choruses sang the hymn, "I Stand All Amazed."

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker; and he will be followed by Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Council of Seventy.

Elder Marion G. Romney

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My beloved brethren and sisters: I sincerely pray and hope that the Spirit referred to by Brother Lee this morning will motivate you and me while I occupy this very important place, for I purpose to make a few remarks about the foundation principle upon which the gospel of Jesus Christ is built, the principle of agency.

Year of decision

In this year of decisions, we shall have opportunity to exercise our voting franchise. There seems to be no end to the advice available as to how we should do this. Out of the din of confusion comes the contention that the way to exercise it and really demonstrate that we have it is to help make Utah a wide-open state by voting for liquor by the drink. With all right-minded people we reject this fallacious contention. By the same token, we join with all right-minded men in defense of every man's right to make his own choice.

Against the background of current

events, I have thought it not inappropriate to make a few remarks concerning the making of decisions and the effect of one's decisions upon his own agency.

Man a free agent

Our political institutions have been structured upon the premise that man is a free agent by divine endowment. Upon this premise the Magna Charta was wrung from King John in 1215. Contending for this principle, the Pilgrim Fathers were harried out of their native land by King James. After taking temporary refuge in Holland, they came to America, where they founded a new state in which they could implement their ideals of freedom. A century and a half later, the colonists wrote the principle of free agency into the Declaration of Independence. Following the revolution, the Founding Fathers perpetuated it in the Constitution.

Our national strength has always been in our devotion to freedom.

When asked, "What constitutes the bulwark of our liberty and independence?" Abraham Lincoln replied: "It is not in our frowning battlements, or bristling seacoasts, our army and navy. . . . Our reliance is in the law of liberty which God has planted in us."

We Latter-day Saints know that the right of men to make their own decisions is God-given, for to Moses the Lord said: ". . . I gave unto . . . [men] their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency." (Moses 7:32.)

This the Lord confirmed to Joseph Smith when he said: ". . . I gave unto [Adam] that he should be an agent unto himself. . . ." (D&C 29:35.)

Through an ancient American prophet, the Lord said: ". . . remember, my brethren . . . ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free." (Hel. 14:30.)

Preservation of free agency

Latter-day Saints not only believe that freedom to make one's own choices is an inalienable divine right; they also know that the exercise of it is essential to man's growth and development. Deprived of it, men would be but puppets in the hands of fate.

The preservation of free agency is more important than the preservation of life itself. As a matter of fact, without it, there would be no existence.

"All truth [says the Lord] is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence.

"Behold, here is the agency of man. . . ." (D&C 93:30-31.)

The foregoing are but samples of the scriptures which set forth the principle of free agency accepted and implemented by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Neither the Church, its officers, nor any of its responsible representatives ever seek to abridge one's freedom to make his own decisions—be it in the voting booth or elsewhere. Representations to the contrary are either ignorantly or maliciously made. Usually such representations are calculated to influence

people in the exercise of their agency—the very objective they impute to and so condemn in others. Only Satan and wicked men seek to abridge men's agency. The Lord never does. Neither do his servants. The divine gift of free agency, however, is not a self-perpetuating endowment.

Men abridge own agency

Men themselves can, and most of them do, abridge their own agency by the decisions they themselves voluntarily make.

Every choice one makes either expands or contracts the area in which he can make and implement future decisions. When one makes a choice, he irrevocably binds himself to accept the consequences of that choice.

Jesus, in his Prodigal Son parable, gives a classic illustration of this truth. You will remember that in it a young man, exercising his inherent right of choice, makes a decision to take his portion of his father's estate and go and see the world. This he does, whereupon nature follows its uniform course. When the prodigal's substance is squandered, he makes another choice, which takes him back home where he meets "the ring, and the robe, and the fatted calf." His felicitous father gives him a welcome. But the consequence of his earlier decision "is following him up, for the farm is gone. The 'father' himself cannot undo the effect of the foregone choice." (Collins, *Such Is Life*, pp. 85-88.)

Freedom to choose

From the very beginning God has, through his prophets, made it clear that expanded freedom follows wise choices, and that freedom is restricted by unwise decisions.

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse," said Moses to the children of Israel. "A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, . . . And a curse, if ye will not obey [them]. . . ." (Deut. 11:26-28.)

Lehi said that "men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to

choose liberty and eternal life . . . or to choose captivity and death." (2 Ne. 2:27.)

Israel's choice of a king

There is a great lesson on this point, as it affected a whole nation, in Israel's rejecting judges, which were recommended by the Lord, and choosing to be ruled by kings. Near the end of his administration, as judge of Israel, the people said to Samuel:

"Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." (1 Sam. 8:5.)

Samuel, being grieved by this desire of the people, sought the Lord and was directed by the Lord to say to Israel:

"This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.

"And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

"And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

"And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

"And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

"And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.

"He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

"And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day."

This message Samuel delivered.

"Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;

"That we also may be like all the nations. . . ." (1 Sam. 8:11-20.)

"And the Lord said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people . . . for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." (1 Sam. 8:7.)

The Lord here followed his uniform course. He refused to interfere with Israel's right of choice, even though their choice was to reject him. Israel, having been warned by both their God and his prophet Samuel, exercised their agency, contrary to the advice of both. They got their king, and they suffered the consequences. In due time their kingdom was divided, they were taken captive, and ultimately they became slaves.

Guide for right decisions

Realizing that liberty depends upon the decisions we make ought to inspire in us a desire to make such choices as will preserve and expand our freedom, and I believe it does so inspire us. What people lack and desperately need today—as they have always needed—is a sure guide for making right decisions. How wonderful it would be if all could enjoy the blessing recently pronounced upon the head of a young man, to whom a patriarch said:

"You have the power of discernment, to look forward into the future and discern and understand the results which come from righteous living . . . You can recognize the effect of evil tendencies even in their beginning. . . . You are, as it were, a watchman upon the tower of Zion, because of this power which the Lord has blessed you with and this understanding which you have and which will grow with you through your years to see and understand the results, which are small in their beginning."

Pattern given by Mormon

This is indeed a wonderful blessing. And what is equally wonderful is that it is available to us all if we will but qualify for it. All we need to do is follow the pattern prescribed by Mormon as he sought, even as I am now seeking, to emphasize the importance of making right decisions. Brother Lee read it this morning and I am

going to read it again, because of its great importance. To his people, Mormon said:

“. . . take heed, my beloved brethren, that ye do not judge that which is evil to be of God, or that which is good and of God to be of the devil.

“For behold, my brethren, it is given unto you to judge [you bearers of the priesthood, this is directly to you], that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night.

“For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.

“But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil; for after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him.

“And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged.

“Wherefore, I beseech of you, brethren, that ye should search diligently in the light of Christ that ye may know good from evil.” (Moro. 7:14-19.)

Characters fashioned by decisions

Let us be ever conscious of the fact that our characters are fashioned by the decisions we make. Free agency does not guarantee freedom and liberty. Freedom and liberty and peace are the products of right decisions made in the exercise of free agency.

By the making of proper decisions, Jesus Christ became the Son of God and our Redeemer. By making wrong decisions, Lucifer, “son of the morning,” became Satan.

Inherently, they were both endowed with free agency.

“One ship drives east and another
drives west
With the selfsame winds that blow.
’Tis the set of the sails
And not the gales
Which tells us the way to go.”
(Ella Wheeler Wilcox, “The
Winds of Fate”)

James Russell Lowell suggests the consequences and the importance of decisions, in these lines:

“Once to every man and nation
comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood,
for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God’s new Messiah,
offering each the bloom or blight,

Parts the goats upon the left hand
and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes by forever ’twixt
that darkness and that light!”
(“The Present Crisis”)

Decisions that expand freedom

I bear you my solemn witness that these principles are true and that they are ever operating in our lives. I bear further witness to what you and I both know, and that is, that if we would benefit from these principles and be on the way to eternal life, we must put them into practice now in our daily lives. We must be guided by them in our temporal as well as in spiritual affairs, in the voting booth as well as in our churches. On election day a month hence, we shall have opportunity to test our commitment to these principles of the gospel. This is so because at least one of the issues there to be decided, the one raised by “Liquor Initiative Petition No. A,” is of a vital, moral nature. No amount of sophistry can make it otherwise. The Lord himself and his living mouthpiece have so declared it. Let no man fault his God or his state by failing to vote upon that issue.

If on that day, in the privacy of the voting booth, we so exercise our franchise as to satisfy ourselves and please our God, we shall have made a deci-

Saturday, October 5

Second Day

sion calculated to preserve our free agency and expand the area in which we can exercise it in the future.

And finally, when the issues are determined, whether we stand with the winners or the losers, of this we may be sure: To make the proper choice on any issue is of far more importance to us personally than is the immediate outcome of the issue upon which we make a decision. The choices we make will affect the scope of our agency in the future. As of now, we have the right of decision. What we will have tomorrow depends upon how we decide today. In conclusion, I put to you the question and the admonition given by Elijah to Israel:

"How long halt ye between two

opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." (1 Kings 18:21.)

God grant us discernment and the courage to make right decisions, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Council of Seventy will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Loren C. Dunn of the First Council of Seventy.

Elder S. Dilworth Young

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My dear brethren and sisters: The Prophet Joseph Smith at one time said that he taught people correct principles and they could govern themselves. I would submit to you that of course he meant by that they would be following correct principles when they governed themselves. On that basis I should like to speak to you about one of those principles and its application.

In a time of his own choosing, known prophetically as the latter days, the Lord restored his Church to the earth. He also chose the man through whom he would make the restoration, a man to be known as a prophet, seer, and revelator. He let it be known by a prophetic revelation that the man thus honored should be named Joseph, after his father's name, and also after his great ancestor who was sold into Egypt. Our common testimony, yours and mine, is that this man was Joseph Smith.

The seventy organized

Within five years of the date the Church was organized, the Prophet had surprised Brigham and Joseph Young with the statement that Joseph Young was to be a president of the seventy. No man would have thought of such a group of men as the seventy.

There were to be seventy men in the quorum, and the quorum was to be presided over by seven presidents—not a president with six counselors, but seven presidents, each holding the presidential keys over the quorum.

Until that time the only information about this important body of men was contained in the narrative of Luke. He wrote:

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

"Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

"Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

"And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

"And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

"And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

"And the seventy returned again