

selor; Clara W. Beebe, Second Counselor; Mary R. Jack, Secretary and Treasurer; Matilda W. Cahoon, Chorister; Jane R. Crawford, Organist; Genet Bingham Dee, Librarian; Isabell S. Ross, Ann Nebecker, Edna H. Thomas, Physical Directors. And the members of the general board.

GENERAL BOARD OF RELIGION CLASSES RELEASED

Inasmuch as the commissioners of education, under the direction of the General Board of Education, have taken over the work of the Religion Classes, it is moved and seconded that we honorably release with our blessing for their past splendid labors, the members of the General Board of Religion Classes. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

ELDER JOSEPH W. McMURRIN

*(Of the First Council of Seventy, and President of the
California Mission)*

It is certainly a very great privilege, as well as a great responsibility, to stand before this great congregation. I sincerely hope that the few moments I occupy this position I may be prompted by that good spirit which has been made manifest in the remarks that have been made by the presiding authorities of the Church during the meetings of this great conference. I have felt impressed, while listening to the valuable instructions imparted, with the testimony of the member of a stake presidency that I listened to several years ago when I was attending a stake conference. He had just returned from attending the general conference of the Church, and he stated that he had been in attendance at the general conference for fifty-two years. When he returned from this particular conference his people inquired as to the character of the conference and how he had enjoyed himself. He answered by saying that it was the greatest conference he had ever attended. Then the children laughed and said: "Why, father, we have heard you say that after every conference, as long as we can remember." I have been attending conferences myself for about forty years, and I think I may go back to the people of the California mission and say, in all truth and sincerity, that this conference has been most enjoyable; that the instructions that have been imparted, from my point of view, have been as valuable, that the manifestations of the Spirit of the living God have been as great in the teachings imparted to the people, as any conference I have ever attended. I thank God for a religion of this character; that after long years of listening to the instructions and testimonies of the presiding authorities of the Church, there is such light, and power in the gospel of the Redeemer of the world that the hearts of men and women are made just as glad in the work of God, after they have listened to these instructions for a lifetime, as when they first heard

the glad tidings of great joy. I don't know that there is anything else in the world just like "Mormonism." It surely is the power of God. It is the fulfilling of the prophecies that have been given through ancient prophets in days gone by, and if any man can come into this great congregation and listen to the character of instructions imparted by the presiding men of the Church, and look into the faces of the hosts of Israel who have come up from the East, and the West, and the North and the South, that they may be more perfectly instructed in the ways of God, and not feel that this is a marvelous work and a wonder, and a fulfilment of the predictions of the prophets in relation to the latter-days, then I can only say that he would be in every way contrary to my own view and contrary to the convictions of my own soul.

I am glad, my brethren and sisters, to be a missionary, and glad to say to the fathers and mothers who have sons and daughters in the California mission, that those sons and daughters are doing honor to their parentage. It is really a wonderful thing to witness the development that takes place with these missionaries, and yet it is true that they are weak men and weak women and they feel very keenly their weakness. Still, through the blessing and power of God, they are convinced of the truth of the gospel and they are made to comprehend, by the unerring guide of the Holy Spirit, the truth of the religion revealed of the Lord in the dispensation in which we are living, just as fully and completely as their fathers and their mothers have been made to know that truth.

I was thrilled in my soul, just a short time ago, in attending a priesthood meeting of the missionaries in the San Francisco conference, to hear a young sister say—and she said it in the fear of God and under the inspiration of the Spirit of God—"I never knew that I was alive until I came into this mission." I talked, not long ago, with a young man who has been and is a stock-raiser, and has been quite prominent in connection with this business, and he said to me, "President McMurrin, I have never taken as much pleasure in watching my flocks and my herds, and in witnessing the increase in their numbers, as I have taken here in striving to preach the doctrines of the everlasting gospel. I have never found any joy in connection with my personal affairs that could in any way equal the joy that I have experienced as I have tried, to the best of my ability, to communicate to men the message of the gospel that has been committed into my hands, and I have never been half as anxious over any of my worldly possessions; I have never prayed about them to the same extent that I have prayed about the responsibility that rests upon me as a preacher of righteousness."

I am glad to say that the sons and daughters of the Latter-day Saints who are laboring in the California mission are laboring there under the inspiration of the Spirit of the Lord. There may not be anything of a very remarkable character transpiring, and yet there

is something remarkable transpiring, for the message of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is being delivered to the people of that mission, and that message is the power of God unto salvation. The delivering of the message, bearing witness to the truth, will have its effect in due time, for the Lord God Himself has promised that the declaration of His word, as it is spoken by His servants, shall never fall to the ground without bearing fruit, and I am a believer in the promise that has been made in relation to these matters.

We have recently had the pleasure, in California, of having with us President Heber J. Grant, Dr. John A. Widstoe and Bishop Charles W. Nibley, and of having the President dedicate a chapel at San Bernardino. That name ought to have interest to the Latter-day Saints. President Brigham Young, in the early settlement of this great section of the country, sent pioneers into California. There is a story related that he said that when they found a mountain with a mark upon its side of an arrow-head they should pitch their tents. I don't know whether he ever said anything of the kind or not, but it is represented, at least in Railroad literature, and in other ways, that such a declaration was made. But be that as it may, those people pitched their tents in the section where San Bernardino now stands, and upon the mountain side there is the perfect picture of an arrow head, and it has been made as you know the emblem of the Salt Lake Route. Owing to the coming of the Johnston army, these early pioneers were called back home, and from that time, from that day up until the present time, we have had no real foot-hold in San Bernardino; and, of course, our hearts are glad and we praise the Lord God of heaven in the fact that we are now privileged, through the ministry that is being carried on in California, to establish a splendid little chapel that has been dedicated to the Lord our God by the President of the Church. We have come to believe that some of the things that possibly illumined the mind of President Brigham Young, long ago, may yet take place in that region of country, and we have recently thought it to the advantage of the work of God to establish a conference, with headquarters in San Bernardino. We have also been successful in establishing a conference with headquarters in the city of Fresno, where we have had but little opportunity in the past to proclaim these glad tidings of great joy. There is a great multitude of people, three hundred fifty thousand strong, in the Fresno conference, who know just about as much regarding the principles of the gospel of Lord Jesus Christ as if they lived in some far-off, distant land; and the missionaries, who are operating at that point, have joy and gladness in their souls, because of the success that is attending their ministry. And so we might continue to speak of San Francisco, and to speak of Los Angeles, and to speak of San Diego, and to speak of sections of Nevada and Arizona where these young boys, in their weakness, and yet with joy in their hearts and with confidence in the call that they have received from the servants of God, are lifting up

their voices according to their ability, calling men to repentance, and bearing witness, under the inspiration and power of the Holy Ghost, concerning the truth of the everlasting gospel?

We had the privilege, while President Grant was visiting, to go out to Long Beach, where the civil authorities had given the "Mormon" choir of Los Angeles, Long beach, and Ocean Park the opportunity of singing *The Martyrs* in their great auditorium, and it was packed to its capacity. They say there were six thousand people present.

Elder Axel A. Madsen, the conference president, delivered a concise and comprehensive story in relation to the martyrs, the character of men they were, and the causes that led up to their martyrdom. Under the inspiration and Spirit of God he was enabled to present things of very great importance, and I take it there are many men who heard what he had to say, as well as who heard the singing of the choir, who will remember favorably something concerning "Mormonism." President Grant had the opportunity, I am glad to say also, before that great congregation, of saying a few words in appreciation of the kindness and liberality of the authorities in Long Beach. Permission has now been granted us by the commissioners of Balboa Park to meet there. Balboa Park is the park that housed the buildings of the great fair during the International Fair that was held at San Francisco and San Diego, and they have there a great open air organ, and permission has been given to the choir of Southern California to go and sing *The Martyrs* to the people of San Diego, and the privilege also of using the great organ that was erected during the fair period. We had the privilege, some time ago, in Long Beach of singing *The Vision* to a great host of people, four thousand or five thousand strong, when Elder Everard McMurrin had the blessed privilege of bearing record to the truth of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and expounding in clearness and force the nature of that great first vision, and what was to come to the inhabitants of the world as a result of it. While we do not see great things transpiring, our hearts are made glad in what is taking place, and your sons and your daughters know that the Lord has spoken. They know that the gospel of the Redeemer of the world, as revealed to Joseph Smith, is the power of God unto salvation, and they have the courage to tell the people, according to their power and ability, the gospel message. God bless the sons and daughters of Zion, and establish them for ever and for ever in that form of religion which is indeed and of a truth the Power of God, the only means of salvation to a perishing world. Amen.

A sacred solo was sung by James H. Neilson, "Thus shall Thy light shine forth."