

May the Lord bless us. May his spirit be with us. May this conference be one long to be remembered, for its deep spirituality and the influences that have come through associations with one another, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

An anthem, "Christ our Passover," solo by Miss Ellis Timpson, was sung by the choir. Benediction was pronounced by Willard C. Burton, of the Granite stake of Zion.

## CLOSING SESSION

The final session of the Conference was held in the Tabernacle on Sunday afternoon, October 7, 1923, at 2 o'clock. President Heber J. Grant presided.

The choir sang the anthem, "Prayer and Praise."

Invocation by Elder Nephi L. Morris, of the Salt Lake stake of Zion.

The choir sang, "The Pilgrim's Chorus."

## PRESIDENT ANTHONY W. IVINS

*My Brethren and sisters:* I feel my dependence upon the Lord, as I stand before this vast congregation of Latter-day Saints. I have thought, since the beginning of the conference, that if answer were needed to the world, the people of the world who do not understand, justifying the faith and works of the Latter-day Saints, these great assemblies of people, which have come together on this occasion would be sufficient.

"IF THIS BE THE WORK OF MEN."

Soon after the death and resurrection of the Redeemer of the world, when he had commissioned his disciples to preach the gospel to all creatures, and their ministry had fairly commenced, they were taken on one occasion and cast into prison. Then people came to the Jewish high priests and said to them: These men whom we cast into prison are preaching among the people, they are healing the sick and causing the blind of see, and working great miracles. So the disciples were cited to appear before their accusers and they took counsel that they might kill them. Then we are told here in Acts that,

"There stood up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

"And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

"For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves; who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to naught.

"After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him; he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

"And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught:

"But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."

#### WHY THE SPEAKER THOUGHT OF THIS QUOTATION.

I have thought of that scripture, my brethren and sisters, during the proceedings of this conference, and particularly so because of two clippings which I hold in my hand, taken from recent publications, one of them from a journal which is published by one of our most important religious denominations; the other, from a daily newspaper. From the first of these clippings I read as follows:

#### OPPOSING THE CHURCH

"Only those who have had occasion to live for a time in a part of the country entirely dominated by 'Mormons' are able to estimate, with any degree of accuracy, the strength and danger of 'Mormon' influence in our Western states. Never have I heard Christ preached, or the necessity of a personal Savior. Never do I hear of missionaries going out to convert people to Christ. They talk only of converting them to 'Mormonism.' In Sunday schools and Church schools emphasis is placed upon the Book of Mormon rather than upon the Bible, and in one text they are explicitly told that the Book of Mormon is higher authority than the Bible."

#### WHY MAKE RESPONSE?

In the clipping from the daily paper, if it is correct—and I have no doubt that it is—a man professing to be a teacher of righteousness, in a public address recently delivered, referring particularly to the proceedings at the memorial services recently held at the Hill Cumorah, declared that the "Mormon" Church was the most ignorant church in the world, and that the proceedings, upon this occasion, when the one-hundredth anniversary of the appearance of the Angel Moroni to Joseph Smith was commemorated, were all rot, rot, rot. When I read it I thought of this scripture which I have read from the Acts of the Apostles. To this congregation of Latter-day Saints I suppose it would appear unnecessary—in fact I have heard the word ridiculous used—that attention be paid to such statements as these which I have just quoted, and in fact that is true, but it nevertheless does at times become necessary for the Church to make response to statements of this kind, for there are people, many of them good people, people who love the truth and desire it, who are misled and strongly prejudiced because of statements such as this that I have quoted being made by men in whom they have confidence. If those charges were true, if it were true that the Church taught doctrines which led men and women away from Christ, rather than to him, if it were true that the Church encouraged or in any degree endeavored to keep its members in a condition of ignorance, in this age of enlightenment and intelligence in which we live, these criticisms would be justified.

## DOCTRINES BEST EVIDENCE

But if on the other hand, they are not true, if they are not founded upon facts, persons making them assume very grave responsibility, for they either discuss questions upon which they are not informed, and in regard to which they are ignorant and thus convey improper impressions, or else they wilfully misrepresent the truth in order that they may prejudice their hearers. The doctrines of the Church are the best evidence of what the Church teaches. The Book of Mormon itself is the best evidence of what it is. The opinions of men may differ in regard to it, but when we take the book itself, when we carefully study it, when we understand its contents, we there find the evidence of its worth, or otherwise. I know that abstract statements, either mine in favor of the Book of Mormon, or yours in opposition to it, would not be sufficient to convince thoughtful minds, people who desire to know the truth of its contents, hence, we go to the Book of Mormon itself. I wonder, and I have often asked myself the question, why people professing to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, people whose mission is to bring others to faith in the divinity of his mission, to convert the world to the great truth that he is its Redeemer, I have wondered why men who place so much stress upon this should object when other testimony comes, when other corroborating evidence is produced which justifies their attitude and confirms the very thing that they are teaching; and yet that condition has always existed.

Elder Roberts declared to us this morning, better than I can say it, the importance of this scriptural record, particularly to the people of these United States. It is important also, to the people of the world, for it is given to the world. It is of special importance to the scattered remnants of the house of Israel. It is of special importance to the Jew, for it comes as a message to him as well; and the whole burden of the message which it brings is that great truth that Jesus of Nazareth, born of the virgin Mary, crucified upon Calvary, and risen from the dead, is the Redeemer of the world. The title page of the book itself, if you will turn to it, my brethren and sisters, establishes this fact. This title page, by the way, was not written by Joseph Smith, it was inscribed upon the plates and translated by him as he found it, and it gives evidence to the world of the purpose in its preservation. "It is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites.—Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile.

. . . An Abridgment taken from the Book of Ether also, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven." The special purpose in the preservation of the plates, and the bringing forth of the record in this dispensation is declared to be: "To the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations." That is the purpose of it.

## TESTIMONY FROM BOOK OF MORMON

At a time long ago, when the truth was brought into question, the Prophet Isaiah said: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." In the mouths of two or three witnesses shall the truth be established. So I am just going to turn and read here, first from the Book of Mosiah, the testimony which is borne in that book upon this important question:

"For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity, to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight. \* \* \*

"And also his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned. \* \* \*

"And moreover, I say unto you, that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent."

And yet intelligent men, through the publications which they send out to the world, declare that they have never heard Christ taught as a personal Redeemer by the "Mormon" people.

## ANOTHER WITNESS

These words of Mosiah were uttered one hundred twenty-five years before Christ, before his birth into the world. Again another witness: A great concourse of people were gathered together upon this continent, discussing the words of the prophets who had declared that Christ, after his crucifixion at Jerusalem, should appear here, when they heard a voice as though it came from heaven declare the Only Begotten of the Father. Casting their eyes up towards heaven, they tell us that they saw a man descending and that he was clothed in a white robe. He came down, stood in their midst, stretched forth his hand, and said:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ whom the prophets testified shall come into the world. Behold, I am the light and the life of the world, and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world."

Evidence again of the divinity of the mission of the Redeemer and his teachings in this book.

Now turn over again, long after his death, four-hundred years had elapsed, when Mormon, writing here in the book which bears his name, gives this witness: "And these things doth the Spirit manifest unto me; therefore I write them unto you all,"—addressed to us, the people who live here in the time when this record was to come forth:

"And for this cause I write unto you, that ye may know that ye must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, yea, every soul who belongs to the

whole human family of Adam; and ye must stand to be judged of your works, whether they be good or evil;

"And also that ye may believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, which ye shall have among you; and also that the Jews, the covenant people of the Lord, shall have other witness besides him whom they saw and heard, that Jesus, whom they slew, was the very Christ and the very God.

"And I would that I could persuade all ye ends of the earth to repent and prepare to stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

"The Lord hath commanded me, yea, even Jesus Christ."

My brethren and sisters, I might open this book at almost any chapter, almost any page, and read to you there the testimony of one prophet after another, from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem, six hundred years before Christ, until four hundred years after his coming, in which the whole burden of the appeal which they made to their people and the burden of the testimony that they bore, was that in the meridian of time the Redeemer should come, and that through him the bonds of death would be broken, and the people of the world redeemed from the transgression of Adam. It is a wonderful thing that in the face of all of this, men can, in some way, associate as they do the Book of Mormon as a publication tending to lead people away from Christ and from Christianity, despite its contents.

#### THIS IS CHRIST'S CHURCH.

The Presiding Bishop called our attention, yesterday, to the fact that this is Christ's Church; it bears his name. He opened, under the direction of the Father, this gospel dispensation. This Church was organized for the purpose that the world might know the Redeemer as he is, and be brought to repentance, redemption and everlasting life, through obedience to his gospel. It seems to me that this should set at rest the foolish statements made in this publication to which I have referred. I want the young men and women, if they are here, who are not familiar with the book, and I want the members of the Church who are not familiar with its contents, to know that there is no necessity for alarm because of the unjustifiable things that people say about the Church, for as I said before, the Church must be judged by what it is, not by what people say of it. Those words of Isaiah, uttered more than two thousand six hundred years ago, are just as applicable to us today as they were applicable to the people to whom he spoke: "If they speak not according to the law and the testimony, it is because there is no light in them."

#### AS TO IGNORANCE

Now, my brethren and sisters, just a word in regard to the statement made by this pretended teacher of righteousness, that the "Mormon" Church is the most ignorant church in the world. I want to ask the people of the world this one question: Can they point to an instance in the history of the past where ignorance and achievement and accomplishment have gone hand in hand? I am sure the answer would be, No. People do not advance in ignorance. People

do not develop in ignorance. So far as I am aware, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the first religious body to declare that "the glory of God is intelligence," not ignorance; the first to declare that "men cannot be saved in ignorance." I do not mean to apply that to secular education, but it is only through the proper development of the intelligence of man, assisted by the gift of God, our Father, that men can come to understand his great purposes, the plan of human redemption which has existed from the beginning of time, and its application to us, who live in the dispensation of the fulness of times. I have thought of it as I have looked at these great congregations of people. Looking backward for one hundred years, does the accomplishment of the Church indicate the work of an ignorant people? It is not yet one hundred years since the Church came into existence. Its members at the time of its organization, were very few. It was in poverty, but thank the Lord, not in ignorance. From that small beginning, ask yourself the question: what has been its accomplishments? The people of the great congregation are here, and they are but a small representation of the whole, coming into these mountain valleys, to a place regarded as undesirable by all other people, not going to the Pacific Coast because of the gold that was there to lure people on, not to the great plains and fields of Oregon where it was evident that a country existed which was susceptible of a high degree of agricultural development, but stopping here in these valleys of the mountains, the Church gathered in its poverty. It gathered in from various nations, people in poverty, and from this spot reached out to the north and south, and the east and west, until towns and villages and hamlets sprang up. In every productive valley of the intermountain country, has intellectual development kept pace with the secular development which has occurred. We only need refer, and we do so with pride, to the educational status of the State of Utah today. There may be states which are slightly in advance, there may be states which have accomplished slightly more, but no other people under similar circumstances have developed a system of education equal to that which has been developed by the people of these intermountain valleys, by the Latter-day Saints who came here in their poverty. I say it without fear of successful contradiction.

#### AS TO PATRIOTISM AND DEVOTION

What does the record of their past history show, their record as devoted and patriotic citizens of the country in which they live? The great Mexican war—we would not regard it as a great war now, although in a sense it was at the time—came just when the Latter-day Saints were moving in their poverty with their families to seek a home here in the west. When the call came for men they gave them in the service of their country, a thing with which we are familiar, but which the world knows very little of. Those five hundred members of the Mormon Battalion accomplished a march which we are told is

without precedent in the history of the world, the circumstances under which it was accomplished considered.

The war of the Rebellion came, and the Latter-day Saints remained steadfast to the government, offered and gave their services. The war with the Philippines came, the "Mormon" people did their full share in bearing the burdens of that war.

Then came the great World War. The government asked Utah for seven hundred forty-six men for the United States Army. She furnished two thousand, two hundred forty-four men. The government asked for one hundred twenty-six men to go into the marine service and the State furnished three hundred forty-six. Independent of this, Utah furnished one battery of artillery composed of one thousand five hundred men. The total number of men asked for was eight hundred seventy-two in all branches of the service, and the State furnished four thousand eight hundred thirty-one men. The Red Cross asked us for three hundred fifty thousand dollars, and we gave them five hundred twenty thousand dollars. The first Liberty Loan apportioned us six million, five hundred thousand dollars, and we took nine million, four hundred thousand dollars of that issue. The second Liberty Loan asked us to take ten million dollars and we took sixteen million, two hundred thousand dollars. The Young Men's Christian Association and other similar organizations asked us for one hundred thousand dollars, and we gave them one hundred five thousand dollars. The request was made that we furnish seventeen million one hundred thousand dollars, and we gave twenty-six million two hundred ninety-one thousand dollars. The third Liberty Loan came after this in which an equal proportion was given. This does not include the liberal contributions made by the auxiliary associations of the Church. It does not include the large amount of wheat which had been accumulated by the Relief Societies of the Church, the only incident of such a character that occurred in the war, or could occur in the world, for there was no other body that had so gathered together a large quantity of wheat that could be turned over in bulk in case of emergency as was done at that time.

#### NOT THE WORKS OF IGNORANCE

I quote these figures, my brethren and sisters, as a part of the evidence. The evidence, the law and the testimony are here to show that the works of the Latter-day Saints have not been the works of ignorant people. I myself have gone into a country where, for three hundred years there had existed what was called a high degree of civilization. I did not see a plow that was not made of wood and being pulled by oxen, with the yoke lashed to their horns. I did not see a modern wagon, but the old-fashioned carts and the old-fashioned plows, with which people plowed and bore their burdens in the valley of the Nile, thousands of years ago. Twenty years after the time that eight small "Mormon" colonies were established in the north of Mexico,

they had accomplished more, looking to the advancement and development of that people in the introduction of modern methods of agriculture, modern agricultural machinery, improved varieties of fruits and grains, than had been accomplished before since the day of the conquest; evidence sufficient of the intelligence, the integrity, and the industry of the Latter-day Saints. "By their fruits ye shall know them." That has always appealed to me as a definite and certain law. Ignorant people do not accomplish the work of intellectuals, and vice versa.

So I wonder what can be the mental process by which a man reaches the conclusion that the Latter-day Saints are the most ignorant people in the world. It is not a new thing; it has been going on since the beginning of time, since the organization of the Church, and I expect will continue to go on just the same; and that is another thing that the Book of Mormon here tells us will occur, and another one of the evidences of the truth of this book; for it seems to provide for just about every criticism that can be made. Moroni, the last man to write in it, says:

"The Lord hath commanded men, yea, even Jesus Christ.

"And I said unto him: Lord, the Gentiles will mock at these things, because of our weakness in writing; for, Lord, thou hast made us mighty in word by faith, but thou hast not made us mighty in writing; for thou hast made all this people that they could speak much, because of the Holy Ghost which thou hast given them:

"And thou hast made us that we could write but little, because of the awkwardness of our hands. \* \* \*

"And when I had said this, the Lord spake unto me, saying: Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness."

This has been exemplified many times in the history of the Church.

This book, as has been testified before, is the very embodiment of the spirit of Americanism. We hear a lot about that in these days. In its simplicity it lays down those fundamental principles of democracy upon which every republican form of government must be based and founded. It teaches us that there should be no king to dictate upon this land. It teaches us that the will of the people, the voice of the people shall govern, and that minorities should submit to majorities. It teaches us also that the time may come when majorities will go wrong, "and when that time cometh," saith the Lord, "then my judgments shall hang over this people."

#### FEET UPON SAFE GROUND

Now my brethren and sisters, where differences of opinion exist, whether it be in regard to our temporal affairs or whether it be in regard to spiritual affairs, or faith in God, by which we hope to attain to eternal life in his presence, there must be some basic law to which we can refer and from which there can be no further appeal, which is the end of controversy; otherwise I may assert and you may



deny, and controversy would never cease. As it applies to our civil affairs, the temporalities and their control, that tribunal is the civil law, the law which we ourselves have made. As it applies to God and his purposes, the law is his written and spoken word. From it there can be no just appeal. So in civil affairs we honor and respect and uphold the civil law, and in things which pertain to the word of the Lord we adhere to his written word, as it is contained here in the Bible and in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon has been before the world now for nearly one hundred years. No one has ever pointed out an error in principle that is in it. Men may ridicule, they may scoff, but that does not constitute argument, nor evidence. They are the last arguments to which the vanquished always resort—ridicule, abuse, misrepresentation; and I suppose they will be applied to us.

So I feel that our feet are upon perfectly safe ground, that all that has been said in testimony of the divinity of the mission of Joseph Smith, and the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon, is true. I know it to be true, the opinions of men to the contrary notwithstanding. The time will come when men will know it to be true—just as the last words in the book tell us that it will. Let me read this last communication to conclude my remarks. These are the words of Moroni:

#### A CALL TO COME TO CHRIST.

"I exhort you to remember these things: for the time speedily cometh that ye shall know that I lie not, for ye shall see me at the bar of God; and the Lord will say unto you: Did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man, like as one crying from the dead, yea, even as one speaking out of the dust?"

"I declare these things unto the fulfilling of the prophecies. And behold, they shall proceed forth out of the mouth of the everlasting God; and his word shall hiss forth from generation to generation.

"And God shall show unto you, that that which I have written is true.

"And again I would exhort you that ye would come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing.\* \*

"Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

"And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.

"And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen."

Solo by Louise Watson, "The words of our God endureth forever."