

CLOSING SESSION

The closing session of the conference was held in the Tabernacle on Sunday afternoon, October 5, 1924, at 2 o'clock.

President Heber J. Grant presided.

The choir sang Evan Stephen's anthem entitled, "Hosannah," which was first sung at the dedication of the Salt Lake temple. The congregation joined in singing the verses of the hymn, "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning," included in the anthem.

President Grant announced that the Berratt Hall had been connected by radio and would accommodate a large number of people.

The invocation was offered by Elder Thomas E. McKay, president of the Ogden stake of Zion.

A male quartette sang, "The Lord's Prayer." The members of the quartette were: August and Henry Glissmeyer, Cannon Lund and Hyrum Christianson.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

We have a message from the radio operator in President Penrose's room. President Penrose heard all of the proceedings this morning, most of it as perfectly as if he were here on the stand. He was very grateful in listening to one verse of his own remarkable and wonderful song, "School thy feelings," and tears of gratitude filled his eyes, while listening to this, that he could enjoy the spirit and inspiration of our meeting almost as perfectly as if he had been here upon the stand. Certainly, one of the most marvelous, if not the most marvelous, inventions to date is radio.

President Penrose wishes the Saints to know that his testimony is as profound and strong as it was when he first embraced the gospel, in 1850.

Brother George Albert Smith has visited President Penrose, during the intermission, and brings this message from him. He wishes to bear his testimony to this audience that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer and Savior of the world of mankind, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, that his successors are servants of the Lord, and that his Church is divine and led by inspiration. He is grateful for membership therein. He sends love and greetings to all Israel.

ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE

PROGRESS AND SPIRIT OF MISSIONARY WORK

In the front row of chairs facing this great stand, with its series of pulpits, I see a body of men each of whom has been called to a very responsible position in the Church. They are the presidents of mis-

sions. We have been privileged to hear from a few of them, as also from two others, they being members of the First Council of the Seventy, as well as mission presidents for the time being. These men are the directing officers in the army of missionaries laboring in the world. The report you have heard from them, and such as you hear from conference to conference, and the many individual reports you receive from your sons, your daughters, your husbands, who are members of this army, bear witness to you that the missionary work is progressing as well as it ever has been progressing and possibly better than in any earlier time.

The vicissitudes of the recent years of warfare have brought many people to a state of reflection. Many who have been careless and indifferent have been led to consider what this life means in relation to the life that lies beyond. Many whose ears have been dull are now listening intently for the radio message that shall satisfy them; and it comes sometimes in a very unexpected way, and by unlooked for means. This, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, would not, could not be what it is were it not for our missionary system. Nearly, or quite two thousand missionaries are now in the field, as you were told this morning, and many are going and some few returning. I may say continuously. Scarcely a week passes unmarked by the setting apart of a new company of missionaries, who go out commissioned to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in the nations of the earth.

I am well aware of the fact that some people take a little umbrage at what they think is presumption on our part in sending missionaries amongst them. They think that we should labor as some of the churches of the day labor, amongst the semi-civilized people of heathen nations, who have not come yet to recognize a knowledge of the Lord and Savior of men. We send our missionaries not only to such, but also to those who count themselves enlightened Christians. Our missionaries go with a message, not with a command. They go in the spirit of persuasion, asking only a hearing, a respectful hearing; for they have something of worth to present. Our missionary system would scarcely be justified had we nothing definite to present, nothing more than minor differences in ritual or creed such as distinguishes some of the great denominations of the day. I would not blame people becoming impatient over such relative trifles; but we have something that can be found amongst no other people upon the face of the earth. This is no instance of group egotism, it is a solemn fact.

We proclaim not only that Jesus Christ is the foreordained and actual Savior of the race; not only that, but we proclaim that no ordinance of salvation can be authoritatively administered except under his commission, and that that commission is definite and personal. Hence these men, young, middle aged, sometimes aged, and in smaller number these women, go out to the world with a proclamation that in this day and age, strictly in accordance with the predictions of ancient

prophets and with the word of the Lord Christ himself, while he was in the flesh, he has again spoken, and is speaking from the heavens, directing the affairs of the Church that bears his name, the name given by him, not taken by any human assumption, but conferred and bestowed authoritatively. We do not send missionaries out to assail or attack members of other churches, or the sects and denominations as organized bodies. We send them out to preach the positive doctrine of the restored gospel, which is the doctrine of the ancient gospel, speaking thus of the gospel according to the period of its preaching upon the earth. We are remarkable as a people for this missionary work.

TWO CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE CHURCH

There comes to my mind at the moment a conversation between a bishop of one of the big churches of the day and myself, dating a few years back. He had given some study to the plan of organization and operation of this Church, and said to me: "There are two features characterizing your Church that I would very much like to see introduced into ours." I said to him: "Bishop, I know what they are, but I should like to have the pleasure of hearing you specify them." In the same spirit of good will and fellowship he retorted: "Well now, honor bright, I will tell you whether you are right or wrong if you will tell me which two I have in mind." I said: "They are our missionary system and our tithing system." "You are right." "Well now bishop, why don't you introduce them into your church if you are so desirous of having them as features of your organization?" "Well," he said, "frankly speaking, I don't know. I can see some difficulties, but they are small, I think they could be removed. Yet beyond these there appears to me to be some great obstacle." "Surely," said I, "there is. May I express my opinion as to the reason why your great church has not introduced these features?"

THE TITHING SYSTEM

"You cannot introduce and operate the tithing system successfully, for the tithe is holy, and none but men who bear the holy Priesthood in fact and not by name only can touch it. The handling of the tithe has been provided for in the law revealed from the heavens. It was so in the days of ancient Israel. It is so today, and, Bishop, from what you have already admitted in our conversation—which to me has been very interesting—you know that you haven't a single priest or even a Levite in your church who can touch the tithe with authority." Well, we passed on to the other feature:

THE WONDERFUL MISSIONARY SYSTEM OF THE CHURCH

"Why can't we have your missionary system?"

"Because, bishop, if you tried to introduce it the first thing you would do would be to make up a salary schedule, so much for the pre-

siding officers and so much for the traveling ministers; and in the second place the men and women of your church would not respond if you called them. You know that."

I went on and addressed him as I am speaking now to you: Do you think for a moment that the thousands and thousands of young missionaries, who have gone out and come home filled with the spirit of their work, would ever have put their energy into that labor if they were working for wage, such wage as men count in the terms that bankers use? Do you think it for a moment? We take our young men and young women from comfortable up-to-date homes, provided with the conveniences of modern life, and send them out, perhaps into the woods of the south where they have to put up with what would be called rather rough fare, and rather inadequate accommodations. They smile at it all and rejoice in the experience and work all the harder. I know it, I have been amongst them. I have been with every one of these worthy men to whom I have referred, in their respective fields, I have traveled with many of them throughout the length and breadth of their missions. I have met the elders in little branches and conferences, and on their individual circuits; have met them in the woods, have met them in the mountains, have met them in the towns and on the highways and the byways. I have felt of their spirit, and I find there a spirit that no man can ever develop from the incentive of money wage.

Our missionary system is operated as the Lord has directed. These men and women go out trusting in the Lord, and beside those who go out, I pray you forget not those who remain at home, those worthy fathers, those honorable, God-loving mothers and brothers and sisters too, who are working, working hard, that they may make up the deficiency in means required by their sons and daughters or other relatives in the mission field. For, be it remembered, our missionaries accept anything that is offered them as they may need—a meal, a coat, a pair of shoes, lodging—any one who offers such in time of need finds his offering accepted, and a blessing left with him. But not all are willing so to help; and there is a deficit in every case, and that is made up by the sending of means from home. Do you know, that, reckoning the earning capacity of our missionaries at a very low figure, and considering what that means for one to three years in the field, and considering also the means they spend in traveling to their fields of labor and in traveling within their fields, that the sum will total up above the million dollar mark every year? They do this because they have the spirit of their calling resting upon them. They go out with this definite message to the people, and you can give a missionary no greater joy than to listen to him attentively while he states his message, and then discuss it with him in a friendly spirit. You will find that he does not try to force it upon you. But why am I talking to you, in the second person, you Latter-day Saints? You know the missionary does not try to force the gospel upon those

people out in the world; he tries to present it to them for their consideration ever praying that the Lord will bear witness in the heart of his hearer or hearers as to whether he is telling the truth or not.

These missionaries come home after having been brought in contact with members of practically all the great religious denominations of the world, firmer, if possible, in the truth and in their conviction of testimony than they were when they set out. They have had every opportunity for comparison, every facility for discriminating judgment; and they come home rejoicing in the sure knowledge that has been with them, as a companion by day and by night, all the time they have been in the field. Is it not a wonderful work? And it will not cease as long as there are souls willing to accept the message. We are using the press, and the press is a mighty missionary, but this individual labor will continue. I have heard the remark made by a few—it is so insignificant that perhaps I should not stop to refer to it—by the few who are a little out of harmony with the system, that we have outgrown our missionary work, and will have to bring about a revolution and supplant it by something better and more up-to-date. What is better, what is more up-to-date than the method of a man approaching another with the truth, and bearing witness to it in all solemnity? And yet with all humility, earnest in his testimony, merely asking the other man to listen, the humble missionary continues his labor, for our missionaries have a little of the spirit of the fabled ancient mariner, they are not at peace unless they can get somebody to listen to that which they have to tell them, because they know the value of their message. Do you not remember when Andrew recognized the Christ at the beginning of our Lord's ministry in the flesh, how the man tore himself away from that blessed presence and rushed off to find his brother Peter to tell him of what he had heard? it was so joyous, something so nearly unbelievable. We have found the Messiah; come and see for yourself, come and listen. Then the gentle Philip heard and he went off to find Nathanael. You know him, do you not—that Israelite without guile? He was impressed with Philip's words, and the Lord addressed him by name. Philip and Nathanael wondered about it. Then read again about that woman at Jacob's well in Samaria. The testimony the Christ bore to her, that he was the Messiah sank into her heart, and she hastened back to the village and told the people; and they came out, a great flock of them to see and to hear. What of Lehi and his vision, in which he found himself plucking fruit from a beautiful tree by a stream. He found the fruit to be delicious, and more than merely good in taste; and his first thought was for his wife and children. In the vision he saw them at a distance, and he beckoned to them, he shouted out to them to come and partake. So are the missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints crying to the nations: Oh, come and partake! This is the bread of eternal life.

The Lord has declared that in this day and age his servants are

sent out by him, and that he will hold the world accountable for the message which they deliver. In the very first section of this volume of modern revelation, the book of Doctrine and Covenants, we read: "And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples whom I have chosen in these last days." That means our missionaries, and those who preside over them to direct them in their labors; and the Lord continues: "And they shall go forth and none shall stay them; for I the Lord have commanded them." None have been able yet to permanently stay the voice of the missionary who has gone forth with the word of God. True, mobs have quieted them for a moment, but they have been able to raise their voices again. Disturbances have been only local.

"Behold," saith the Lord, "this is mine authority and the authority of my servants," and so on in that first section. Read for yourselves.

May the Lord continue to set his seal of blessing and approval upon the labor of the missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER REY L. PRATT

President of the Mexican Mission

I sense very keenly, my brethren and sisters, my weakness in standing before you this afternoon, and I sincerely pray that the Spirit of the Lord will guide and assist me in the few remarks I shall make to you upon this occasion. Truly, this is a wonderful occasion, and this is a wonderful sight to look upon the thousands of faces of Latter-day Saints who are gathered, who have come for the one purpose of being built up in their faith, testimonies, and knowledge of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I come to you, my brethren and sisters, as one of those whom Elder Talmage has been speaking about, who are engaged in missionary work among our Father's children in the world who are yet in darkness and who have not yet a knowledge of the saving principles of the gospel restored in this day and age in which we live. I thank the Lord, from the bottom of my heart, that I have been deemed worthy of this call, and the greatest desire of my life is to continue to labor zealously in the Lord's work, in the service of his children, with a desire to bring a knowledge of him, to as many as may be, of those children who are now in the world hungering and thirsting for the word of the Lord; for truly that prophetic utterance of Amos the Prophet is in this day being fulfilled. Men are going to and fro upon the earth seeking for the word of the Lord, and, in many instances, have not been able to find it.

I bring to you a message from the mission in Mexico, and I rejoice to say that since the day that temporarily we had to withdraw