

you, so long as you are true and faithful in keeping and observing his commandments, and I bless you my brethren and sisters, by the authority which the Lord has given me to bless all Israel, that peace and health and happiness may be in your homes, until your mortal missions are finished, and I do it humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

“Open the Gates of the Temple,” was sung by William Russel.

### ELDER JOSEPH W. McMURRIN

*Of the Council of Seventy, and President of the California Mission*

I do not suppose, my brethren and sisters, that anyone in attendance at this general conference of the Church has had as trying an experience as I have had during these meetings.

The President, in calling upon the brethren to address the conference, has gone from stand to stand. I know the brethren that occupy the stand that I have the honor to sit in, have felt several times that they were about to be called upon to speak, only to discover that they were mistaken. My companions for the past three days have been taken from either side of me as they in turn have been called to speak, and now at the last moment I am to have the pleasure after speaking for a brief time of sitting without any further anxiety for a few minutes during the closing moments of this general conference. It does create in the minds of men who are called upon to address these great assemblies a very great feeling of anxiety. President Charles W. Penrose upon one occasion made a remark of that character and heaved a sigh of relief when he came into one of the stake conferences, here in the city, and expressed to me personally the pleasure he felt when he thought that he would be under no responsibility to address the people. There were other brethren who had been especially appointed to attend that stake conference and the responsibility of speaking would be upon them. I have heard President George Q. Cannon in his life time more than once make a similar declaration. You are all acquainted with the fact that it is quite a common thing for these brethren who belong to the presiding authorities of the Church to intimate when they stand up before the people that they have a feeling of anxiety, and desire the help and the assistance that can be given by the congregation through their faith and their prayers.

I am very happy, my brethren and sisters, notwithstanding the rather trying experience that I have had during the conference, to say that my spirit is in harmony with the teachings that have been presented during these meetings. I respond in my soul to the testimony and teachings and information imparted by President Heber J. Grant in the opening meeting, and as I have listened to the brethren who have been called upon to speak to the people I have felt in

my whole being that I could say Amen with all my heart to the counsels and testimonies that have been delivered.

I have the pleasure, my brethren and sisters, of laboring as a missionary in California. The mission covers the state of California passed away considerable anxiety because of sickness. We have had in that mission during the year that has just passed an average of about one hundred and twenty-five missionaries. Of this number I believe at the close of last year, or at the opening of this year, there were about thirty-nine lady missionaries, and the balance of the force is made up of young men such as have been spoken of here during these conference meetings. I am happy to say that these men and women, speaking in a general sense, at the present time are in the enjoyment of good health. There are some minor troubles, but no serious illness. We have had, however, during the year that has passed away, considerable anxiety because of sickness. We have had both men and women who have submitted to surgical operations for appendicitis, and in one or two instances the cases were very serious, and the surgeons and nurses that waited upon them despaired of their lives. We are very thankful, however, that through the blessings and mercy of the Lord our God the lives of the missionaries who have been thus in danger have been spared, and they have been raised up to health and vigor and have been able to again take up the prosecution of the work resting upon them as ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would like to say to bishops and stake presidents, that I fear at times there is not sufficient attention given to the physical condition of men and women who are being called to labor as missionaries. I think possibly in some instances there is a wrong impression in the minds of some people regarding the nature of missionary work. I am quite satisfied that some times there is a feeling that an individual who is run down can be called into the mission field and there recuperate. Such a thought I am sure is a very great mistake. Missionary work, when it is faithfully performed, is hard work, the strongest men, and the strongest women, who come into the California mission find in the performance of their missionary duties that they have all that their physical powers will enable them to do; and it is a very great mistake to send into the mission field, either men or women, who are not possessed of good physical power, for they not only are unable themselves, as a general thing, after prosecuting their work for a brief season to continue that work, but they demand also attention of other missionaries in nursing them and this interferes with the service that the healthy missionary might render. I am very glad to have received the information since coming to attend this conference that more careful attention than ever before is being given to the health of missionaries to make as sure as possible that they are in good physical condition before they go out to preach the gospel.

The California mission is probably unlike any other mission. Some eighteen months ago, or such a period, the presiding authorities of the Church felt that it would be for the advantage of the work of the Lord to organize a stake of Zion in that mission. That is something that has not taken place heretofore in any mission field. In the city of Los Angeles, which is the most populous part of the California mission, a stake of Zion was organized. That stake, I am glad to say, has made very splendid advancement. It was organized with six wards and three branches, and it has grown now to have seventeen wards and twenty-two Sunday schools. I do not suppose that in any other mission it can be said that there was received and recorded, during the year 1924, over thirty-six hundred Church members, who had come in from adjoining communities from the stakes and wards here in Utah and Idaho, and from Arizona and from other sections, but that is what took place in the California mission last year. Over thirty-six hundred members were recorded in the books of the stake of the mission, who had come from other sections of the country. I do not suppose that thirty-six hundred Latter-day Saints actually came into California during the year. Possibly many of them had been in the state for a considerable period of time, some of them no doubt may have been there for some years, but they have only now been recorded as members of the Church on the records of the mission or on the records of the stake.

There have also been a large number who have been transferred, probably thirteen hundred or fourteen hundred Church members have received their certificates of membership during the year, and have been transferred to other communities. This, of course, causes changes in officers. There have already been in the Los Angeles stake since its organization changes in four or five different bishoprics, and there have also been a number of changes in the high council. This is brought about by the fact that the Latter-day Saints who are in California as a general thing are not in the condition as home owners indicated by the report made by President Grant at the opening of this conference. They are not home-owners. There is but a very small percentage of the members of the Church in the California mission who own their own homes. They are wage-earners as a general thing. They are living, many of them, in rented apartments, in fact the great majority of them are in rented apartments, and many of them are living in furnished apartments, and it is an easy matter when one doesn't own a home if he hears that there is a little better prospect in some other section to pick up his grip and call for a drayman to take his trunk to the railroad station and go elsewhere. I am glad to say, however, notwithstanding the large number of people who have come to California who are Latter-day Saints, there has been work as a general thing in the past for all of this great influx of people as well as for tens of thousands who have come from all parts of the



nation. At the present time, however, conditions are not as desirable as they have been, from a working point of view in the past.

I would recommend that if there are any Latter-day Saints who have the thought in their minds of coming to California for the purpose of finding employment they be a little slow in putting such thought into execution. I think I can safely say that there are more men in California at the present time than there is work, and that there are many idle men in California. Rents are very high. California is a wonderful state, a beautiful country, a desirable place for habitation in many respects, but it is not a very desirable place for men and women to come to who do not have money in their pockets, and I would like to say that Latter-day Saints without money will be altogether better off, and they will be altogether safer, in these well-established communities where the people own their homes, than to migrate to California.

We have the experience in the California mission of having our headquarters in the city of Los Angeles and that is also the headquarters of the Los Angeles stake of Zion. We are performing missionary work just in the same manner that we conducted missionary work before the stake was organized. I think that our missionary service has been of very great value to the stake organization, for the local brethren who are tied up with their employment could not have gone out among the people and looked up these hosts of strangers and have established the organizations that have been established by the labor of the missionaries, and which has increased the organizations within the stakes from nine to twenty-two, as I have stated.

There are at the present time about six thousand members in the Los Angeles stake of Zion. There are a little less than nine thousand members in the California mission outside of the Los Angeles stake of Zion, so that we have there some fifteen or sixteen thousand enrolled members of the Church within the California mission, when we include the membership of the Los Angeles stake. There are thousands possibly in the state that are still unknown to us. We also have gone out into the Maricopa stake by the expressed desire of the bishopric of the Phoenix ward and the presidency of the Maricopa stake, and have performed some very effective missionary work in the city of Phoenix. Phoenix is the capital of the state of Arizona. I am glad to say that I recently heard from the lips of Bishop Price the very highest words of praise and commendation for the splendid services that were being rendered in the city of Phoenix, by California missionaries who through their labors are strengthening the hands of the bishopric, and drawing many strangers into the meetings. He reported to me that they had more strangers coming to their meetings since the last missionaries were sent into that city than had ever been in the habit of attending their meetings before.

We have also gone out during the same period into the northern part of the state, and at times have labored to some extent in com-

munities that form part of the Snowflake stake of Zion, but we have only gone there by the invitation and with the full permission of the authorities who preside over that stake. These things, I take it, are a little different to conditions that prevail elsewhere in the missions here in the United States or in other sections.

I am proud to be a missionary, my brethren and sisters. I am proud of my companionship. The young men and the young women who make up the missionary corps of the California mission, are not experienced men, they are not experienced women. They come into the mission with a very great degree of anxiety. They come oftentimes wondering whether they have any right or authority to speak in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether they have authority to administer the sacred and holy ordinances of the gospel, but thanks be to God through faithful labor almost without a solitary exception they have found God, they have learned that by keeping the commandments of God, our heavenly Father is not very far from any one of us. They have received manifestations of the Spirit of God, they have laid their hands upon those who have been seriously afflicted and the Lord our God has heard their humble prayers, and by his mysterious power he has healed those who have been afflicted. He has poured into their souls understanding in relation to the doctrines of the gospel, until they have soon come to be able to stand upon their feet and bear witness of the truth as it has been revealed in the dispensation in which we live. And they are not doubting, they are full of conviction, they are full of understanding, they are full of determination, they are full of humility, they are full of willingness and ready to go and come and anxious to labor to the very best of their power that the message of the gospel may be preached among the people. We are trying to impress upon the minds of men and women with whom we come in contact that there has indeed been this revelation of the gospel that has been spoken of so frequently during our conference meetings, that in our own time the heavens have been opened, that the Lord our God has made his appearance, with his Son, our Redeemer, and that by the sending of holy angels he has conferred authority upon men to call people to repentance and that the missionaries speak legally in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The missionaries believe that they have that authority, and in the fear of God they are going among the people, calling men and women to repentance, expounding to them the principles that have been revealed, ready and willing and anxious to administer to them the holy ordinances of the gospel, if people will believe and repent. I am glad to be one with them.

My soul is filled with joy and thanksgiving and praise. The hands of the servant of God who presides over this Church were laid upon my head before I went to California, and blessings were pronounced upon my head that it seemed to me when I commenced my ministry in the midst of that people never could have fulfilment, yet

I stand here before this great congregation this afternoon and bear witness that in the mercy and providence, and through the power of God, he has fulfilled marvelously the promises that have been placed upon my head, and I feel that I am under obligation to give my service to my Father in heaven for the building up and advancement of his work.

God gave me my life in the days of my young manhood, and raised me up from a deathbed by his power, and I have covenanted with my Father in heaven upon many occasions that I would try to manifest appreciation for the marvelous power that was manifest in my own behalf when he raised me from that condition of death. I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. I know that this Church is in very deed the Church of Jesus Christ. I know that the power and authority of the Priesthood has been conferred upon men, and that by that authority men minister and expound and preach the gospel of the Redeemer of the world. Jesus Christ himself taught that it was in vain to teach for doctrine the commandments of men—"In vain do ye worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." That is just as true today as it was when those words fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are not teaching the commandments of men, we are teaching the doctrines that have been revealed by the Lord, and we are under obligation to teach and maintain the truth. God help us to do it, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER LAWRENCE G. KIRKMAN

*President of the Twin Falls Stake of Zion* ..

This is a new experience for me. I am rather young in my office and rather young in the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and yet in humility I appreciate this wonderful privilege. It seems to me that the Latter-day Saints have experienced a multitude of sensations during this conference. It seems to me that never in my life have I had so many thrilling sensations during meetings of a conference as I have had during the last two or three days.

We live in sunny southern Idaho, an altitude a little lower than this, and a wonderful climate of about sixteen or seventeen hours of sunshine. In the summer time the sun rises at about 5:00 o'clock in the morning and at the longest day we have a most glorious sunset at about 8:20 in the evening. Perhaps that would be strange to you people in the mountains, but where we live there is scarcely a mountain either east or west of us, but some small mountains south and north; therefore the sun comes almost at is does in the east, from the ground, and sets in the ground in the west in the evening. We have been blessed wonderfully, it seems to me, in this splendid country, with the most wonderful soil, I think, in the United States, the most productive land