

received the literature, and that his secretary had already begun reading the Book of Mormon, and he was going to do so as the opportunity presented itself. And he continued: "I want to thank you for the little pamphlets which you enclosed, because of the information that they contain."

I thought how much different are conditions today from what they have been in times past. Conditions in the world are changing. I find that we have friends on every hand. We have opportunities of visiting, every night that we have open, holding cottage meetings, street meetings and private meetings with the people and conversing with them.

I pray that God may bless us that we may go on with the work, and that you at home may assist us by sending your sons and daughters, which I pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The chorus sang "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed" (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 6:7.) Music composed by George H. Durham.

ELDER REY L. PRATT

Of the First Council of Seventy, and President of the Mexican Mission

I sincerely trust, my brethren and sisters, that the Spirit that has actuated those who have spoken during this Centennial Conference may be given to me, that I may be able to say something that will strengthen us in our faith and in our testimonies of the Gospel, that we hold so dear.

The Psalmist said, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh but in vain.

"It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows."

In connection with his words my mind has reverted to the counsel of Gamaliel, that wise Jew, who asked the Jews to desist in their persecution of the apostles, counseling that if their work was not of God it would come to naught, even as had the work of many that he mentioned who had raised up and taught strange doctrines, and who had gained considerable following, but, when they had passed on, their work had ceased with them. I recall also the words of the Savior to his disciples, for he reproved the Jews in his day, citing from Isaiah, saying unto them:

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

"And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:

"Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

"Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

"But he answered and said, Every plant, which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."

I have been reflecting upon these scriptures, my brethren and sisters, in connection with the history of the Church during the past hundred years. It has grown marvelously, notwithstanding the persecutions that have been hurled against it, from even before the Church was organized, for Joseph Smith, when he announced to the world that he had seen a vision, was made the subject of the most bitter persecution, and it never ceased to follow him until he sealed his testimony with his blood. The Church itself, from then for many years, was submitted to persecution. It has been submitted to ridicule. The wise and the learned of the world, from the standpoint of the wisdom and the learning of men, have ridiculed this work, and have really predicted and prophesied its downfall; and they seem to be very much alarmed because their predictions have not come true. But my brethren and sisters, they have not reckoned with the vitality of this work; they have not reckoned with the fact that the Gospel restored and the Church organized means more than the mere setting up of a religious system, officered by mortal man. They have not taken into consideration the fact that the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ means the restoration to earth again of the power of God to speak, and to act in his name, the restoration of the holy priesthood. If you will stop to reflect for a minute, it will occur to you, perhaps, strange, as it has to men that I have spoken to in the world, that Joseph Smith, after he received the wonderful vision in which the Father and the Son appeared to him, did not immediately set up a religious system; he waited; and why? Because he sensed and realized that even with that great vision, which restored to the world that which the world was most in need of at that time, a knowledge of God as he is, still he was not empowered to speak in the name of God, to minister in the ordinances of the Gospel, with authority to organize the Church and place in it those officers that Christ placed in it, namely apostles, prophets, etc. Joseph Smith did not know when that would come when he received that vision. It was not until in the due time of the Lord when he received the priesthood, first the Aaronic at the hands of John the Baptist, that he performed any ordinances for the salvation of the souls of men; and not until he had received the keys of the kingdom, or the Melchizedek Priesthood, and the holy apostleship, did he presume in any way to organize the Church and to set in operation the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation among the children of men, here upon the earth.

Now, brethren and sisters, if this work were not of God I believe that we could believe still, today, that it would come to naught. But I know, by the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and by the experiences that I have had in ministering as a humble missionary in the world, that the priesthood, restored to earth in this dispensation, is a reality. It is the power of God to act in his name, and its works; it operates.

I have been laboring, too, as a missionary, and I have been laboring

among Book of Mormon people. There is no book in the world that has so appealed to me, and that so absorbs me, in its contemplation, as the Book of Mormon. And my heart has gone out through these long years, nearly a quarter of a century that I have labored without ceasing, in the interest of the people who are the descendants of the prophets who wrote that book.

In thinking over the history of the Church I recall that in the year of its organization the matter of preaching the Gospel to the Lamanite people occupied, with great concern, the minds of the leaders of the Church. In September, 1830, a revelation was given in which Oliver Cowdery was given to know that he was to carry the Gospel to the Lamanites. In October of the same year there were included in that mission, by direct revelation, Parley P. Pratt and Ziba Peterson and others to preach the Gospel to the Lamanites. There was a beginning. It has been preached at different times from then down until now, and in the specific work that I am engaged in, namely the Mexican Mission, for fifty-one years has the Gospel been preached in the Spanish language to the Mexican people. In the year 1879 an apostle of the Lord, Moses Thatcher, climbed nearly to the summit of the great volcano Popocatepetl that overlooks all of the country, nearly from sea to sea, in the interior of Mexico, at an elevation of perhaps eighteen thousand feet. There, stretching out his hands, he dedicated the land of Mexico to the preaching of the Gospel and to the redemption of the Lamanites, in that land.

But no one who has not followed the history of it closely, knows the hectic time we have had in preaching the Gospel in Mexico. Discouragements have been piled upon discouragements, until I have wondered sometimes—I have never doubted, but I have wondered just when we would see the fruits of our labors, and just when I might feel secure, and sure that the Gospel was planted in that land to stay there. We have had revolutions nearly all of that time, and since 1910 we have had revolutions continuously. Our missionaries have had to leave the republic, on one pretext and on another, and our saints have been left, many times for years at a time, to struggle as best they could, only connected with the body of the Church by correspondence which I have been able to carry on with their leaders down there, with their branch presidents particularly.

Five years ago, nearly, now, because of controversy between church and state in that land, all of our missionaries were obliged to leave the country and the saints were again left to shift for themselves as best they could. We prayed for the time that we might return, and they prayed for the return of the missionaries. In every letter that has been exchanged they have plead that we might come back to them, and they have asked the Lord that the missionaries might be returned to them.

I have had some misgivings as to what their condition would be, during all this long time that the missionaries were away from them. The Lord opened the way in February, and alone I went into the interior of Mexico. I traveled in that country for six weeks, in com-

pany with the branch presidents and our local district president that we have named in the interior of the country. I visited in their branches, merely as a member, and, because of the restrictions, not permitted to call the people together as an officer of the Church, nor to speak to them as an officer of the Church; but as a member and in conversation with them I visited them all. And I am happy with what I found in that land. We carried the Gospel to them. We not only taught them faith in God, faith in the Gospel as restored, faith in the principles of repentance and baptism and in the Church organization, but, brethren and sisters, we laid our hands on their heads, during the years that are past, and we ordained them to the priesthood. Deacons, teachers, priests, and elders have been ordained in that land. Branches have been organized. A district has been organized, and men from among the local priesthood there have been called to officiate and to conduct the affairs of that mission as best they could. I confess that through the years that have passed I have felt rather as I think Alma must have felt when he embarked on his great missionary journey. He wished that he might be endowed with the voice of an angel, that he might preach to the people with the voice of a trumpet, that all men might hear and be brought to a knowledge of the truth. I have felt many times that I should like to be able to do more than it seemed that I was physically able to do. I have felt that the restrictions that kept me back were galling, and I wished to get into the land, for I feared for the stability of the people of the land that had joined the Church.

I would like to read to you, however, the word of the Lord that came to us, because it comes to me as a revelation, and it made me more contented to do just as the Lord seems to make it possible for me to do in my ministry. Alma said:

"O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!

"Yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with the voice of thunder, repentance and the plan of redemption, that they should repent and come unto our God, that there might not be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth.

"But behold, I am a man, and do sin in my wish; for I ought to be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto me.

"I ought not to harrow up in my desires, the firm decree of a just God, for I know that he granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he alloteth unto men according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction.

"Yea, and I know that good and evil have come before all men; he that knoweth not good from evil is blameless; but he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires, whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience.

"Now, seeing that I know these things, why should I desire more than to perform the work to which I have been called?

"Why should I desire that I were an angel, that I could speak unto all the ends of the earth?

"For behold"—and mark these words—"the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true."

I found that in the absence of your sons from the interior of Mexico, the Lord had magnified his servants who hold the holy priesthood in that land, and the work has not merely maintained itself but it has grown. Those people, confronted with the difficulty of not being able to hold their services in rented halls, because the law of the land forbids, had gone to with their might, and although they have built but humble houses, yet without asking a cent from the Church, they have built in the time that I speak of, five magnificent little meetinghouses in which they meet. In one place where our people were forbidden to meet, two years ago, in a little branch where only ten resided, they took off their coats, made the adobes and built the house. I was in their place the other day. Since they built it they have baptized enough people so that we had eighty-five people present in that building. Four weeks ago Sunday, in the town of San Marcos—Brother Ivins will remember that his early missionary experiences took him there a few years ago—they have builded a splendid house that will seat almost four hundred people, and we had at the evening session there nearly two hundred and fifty people gathered together. Our district president and his counselor gave addresses that I should be proud to have all the world hear, in defense of our position and the position of those people in that land.

My time is very limited, but I wish to recount some of the conditions with which they are confronted. There is a great upheaval in Mexico along all lines. There is an emancipation of the people. They are struggling. They are coming up from the dregs of degradation and slavery, and there is a great nationalistic spirit permeating the whole people. It is finding its way into the realms of the churches. There has been a great schism in the Catholic church. There has arisen a national Mexican Catholic church in opposition to the Roman Catholic church. The Mexicans are asking, all over the country: "Why should we look to Rome for leadership in the Catholic church? Why should we look to England for leadership in the Episcopal church? Why should we look to the United States for leadership in all of the Protestant denominations?" They have asked our people: "Why should you look to the United States for leadership in the 'Mormon' Church?" and our people have been invited, all over the country, there, to unite themselves with other factions of other churches to build up a Protestant Mexican church with leadership in their own land.

Four weeks ago Sunday, there stood before two hundred and fifty of the Mexican people there, most of them members, but many of them not members, a young Aztec. When I first knew him he wore the costume of the country. He wore white factory pants, with sandals on his feet, and a white blouse. He could scarcely speak, intelligibly, the Spanish language. He is well educated now. He joined the Church some twenty-two years ago. He dresses well; he knows the scriptures from cover to cover. He stood before the people and for an hour spoke to them of the principle of authority and brought up this proposition of the people and the suggestion that our people join with them in making a national church. Now he said, "Brethren, we must be con-

sistent. The Lord does not know national limits in regard to his Church, and it has been his good pleasure to reveal his will to a prophet, who is as much our prophet as he is the prophet of the people among whom he was raised up, and that prophet is Joseph Smith. We hold the priesthood and we have seen its power, we have seen its manifestations, we have seen our sick healed, we have been blessed by it and held together; and all we have we know we owe to the restoration of that power that came to Joseph Smith. That is the power of God that will guide his Church, and we cannot make it any more Mexican than it is."

Now, brethren and sisters, I was humbled, I was humiliated, but I was thankful, and I felt like saying: Maybe thousands have not come in, maybe nations have not been born in a day, but I thank God that the roots of the everlasting Gospel have struck deep in the soil of the hearts of the Lamanite people of Mexico. I feel sure that, come what may, there is no power in heaven or in hell that can uproot that power implanted in that land, and it will go on, just as that same power will go on with you.

I feel just as sure as I feel that I live that this Gospel will thrive. It doesn't worry me what men think about whether we are going to succeed or not. I know that there are people in the Church that shouldn't be in the Church. I have met a lot of people that to me seem to be just like the foam that the waves beat up upon the shore and that then melts away. There is also a stratum that is in some parts and factions of the Church that is like the dregs of poison. But the vast body of the Church is true and is clear and is pure, and this work will go on to ultimate success and will remain. It is, and always will be, the power of God unto salvation.

This is my faith, this is my testimony, and I bear it humbly to you today in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ARTHUR WELLING

President of the North Central States Mission

Very humbly, my brethren and sisters, and yet in deep gratitude and pride I bring you greetings from the missionaries and saints of the North Central States Mission. I should like my testimony to be to the youth of Zion, these young people who have been singing for us, many of whom I have the honor to know, and of whose acquaintance and friendship I am very proud; and to the other thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of young people of the surrounding territory here who may be listening in to these services today. I recently calculated that in our mission, which is large geographically but small numerically, there are five million five hundred eighty-seven thousand and some hundreds of population, only twenty-five hundred and eighty-seven of whom are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. That will figure out to about seventy-five thousand for each of our seventy-five missionaries. I think nothing more need be said in