

SECOND DAY

MORNING MEETING

The third session of the Conference was held Monday morning, April 5, at 10 o'clock a.m.

President David O. McKay, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the services.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

The time has arrived for the opening of this the third session of the 113th Annual Conference of the Church. President Grant is with us and is presiding at this meeting.

There are present on the stand, with President Grant, his two Counselors, members of the Council of the Twelve, the Patriarch to the Church, the Assistants to the Twelve, the Presidents of the First Council of Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric.

Elder J. Spencer Cornwall will direct the music, and Alexander Schreiner is at the organ.

We will open the meeting by the congregation singing, "Come All Ye Sons of Zion," Song Folder number 19. You who have hymn books will find it on page 257.

The congregation sang the hymn, "Come All Ye Sons of Zion, (Words by William W. Phelps).

Elder Levi S. Udall, President of the St. Johns Stake, offered the invocation.

The congregation joined in singing, "How Firm a Foundation" (Kirkham).

ELDER JOHN H. TAYLOR

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I am very happy, my brethren, to have the opportunity of being in this conference to hear the words of inspiration, counsel, and instruction that have come to us. I trust that I may be able to say something that will be helpful and that I may be humble in the things that I say.

I heard of a speaker who, in telling of his experiences in delivering a sermon, said that as he stood before a congregation he felt he was a great waterfall pouring out the word of the Lord into the hearts of the thirsty people. A man who was standing by him said, "Brother, from

where I was sitting in the audience you didn't look like much of a waterfall. In fact what I saw looked more like just a trickle."

INCREASE IN VISITORS TO TEMPLE SQUARE

As you know, I am connected with the Temple Square Mission. We have many thousands of people coming there. We thought that the war would interfere with this mission, that we would not have very much to do. We were mistaken. During the months of January, February, and March of last year, when the grounds and tabernacle were open, we had something like forty-three thousand people. This year during the same three months when the tabernacle has been closed, we have had something like fifty thousand people. Three times as many people are going out with the guides this year as did last year. In the same three months of last year we sold two hundred seventy-six copies of the Book of Mormon. The three months of this year we have sold five hundred thirty-six copies of the Book of Mormon.

I am giving you this information because a number of people, principally members of the Church, thought that because the tabernacle is closed no one would come to visit with us and that we would not be able to do the type of work that we were able to do previously. In fact, among our own membership we often hear it said that the closing of this very historical building is a great calamity and that we are failing to reach the people whom we should reach.

I grant you that the opportunity of coming into this building is a choice one. Inside this building there are a sacredness, a spirit of worship, and a quietness that reach into the hearts of men and women and in some way go down deep into their souls. It makes them remember the great faith and courage of our pioneers who made it possible to have this building, this block, and this city of ours. However, I am quite sure that many of us forget that the Block is also a sacred spot and that in it there is the spirit of worship, that God is here with us, and that all men and women who come within our gates are blessed and may feel the inspiration of the Lord as they come among us.

CLOSING OF THE TABERNACLE

I surely wish our people could realize this fact and not feel that all has been lost simply because the tabernacle has been closed. Seemingly, we have no objections from our friends. We have any number of army men and civilians who, when we say the building has been closed because of the war emergency, say that that is the right thing to do. The only opposition that we have, seemingly, comes from our own membership. The work that we are doing in the Block is of immense value to the people who come here. The guides are having the same opportunity of preaching the gospel. We ask our guides to make an hour the maximum and about forty or fifty minutes the minimum of time to hold the people as they take them through the Block. So our guides are using the fifty and sixty minutes, just as they have always used in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. When men and women go away, I am quite certain

they go away with a more kindly feeling concerning the Church of the Lord that has been established in these latter days. Without any doubt we are doing a work that is valuable in spreading a knowledge of the gospel among the people.

STORY OF A CONVERSION

Because of the nature of our work we have the opportunity of seeing people change their viewpoint, changing their way of life, rearranging their thinking in regard to the religious problems of the day. We have people coming into the Church because of their contact here. Recently, we had a very intelligent and outstanding woman visit with us. Much of her life had been spent in France. She came on the Block and went around with one of our guides and was so impressed that she came again. She was going down to California and thought she had better stay here long enough to hear more about the Gospel. So we taught her the Gospel; and one of our guides was so considerate that she took her to some of our meetings and young people's gatherings. The woman kept coming back. Then we talked things over with her, and one day we said to her, "You know we have the Word of Wisdom in the Church; it has to do with smoking and drinking and the use of tea and coffee." It was quite a surprise to her, and in a way shocked her because the use of some of these things had been a part of her life. She asked, "Is that one of the teachings of Joseph Smith?" We answered, "Yes, that is one of the revelations which were given to him." "Well, if Joseph Smith said that, that is what the Lord wanted His children to do; I am going to do it." So since then she has left all these things alone. She continued her investigation and is now a humble, faithful, and sincere member of the Church.

You know you have to change, turn around, think differently and do things differently when you come into the Church of Jesus Christ. I wish all of us as we think about things could say in our hearts, "Well, if the Prophet Joseph Smith said that, and it was given to him by the Lord, we will do it just as he wants us to do."

A FATHER AND MOTHER CHANGE THEIR VIEWPOINT

One day a father and mother came onto the Block. They followed several of our groups. As they went around the third or fourth time, they thought that perhaps the people behind the counter would wonder why they were going so often. So they made this explanation: "We have a son who is over in England in the military work. One day he wrote to us and said that he had met the Mormon missionaries who are now in the army and said, 'They surely are a splendid lot of fellows.'"

Nothing more was said by the son about his companions until some time later when they received a letter saying that he had joined the Mormon Church. "We were so ashamed and embarrassed," said the mother, "that we just could not go out and meet our friends or talk about things, because of our son's joining a church that had such a bad name

and reputation as the Mormon Church." I could not blame her so much because of the many lies which have been told about us.

Several days later they decided to come to Salt Lake and find out for themselves just what kind of church their son had joined. "We have been in the city a few days and have gone around with the guides several times and have bought some Church works. Things look very different to us now. We have enjoyed our visit and admire many of your teachings."

May the Lord bless us. May we catch the spirit of missionary work. May we be helpful to the men and women who are around us that no one shall go into the presence of God and have any complaint to make because we Latter-day Saints were untrue to the testimony and the obligations resting upon us to help our friends to see and understand the beauties of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I humbly ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

BISHOP LEGRAND RICHARDS

Presiding Bishop of the Church

Brethren: You are the shepherds of the flock. I cannot help feeling that in the marvelous work you are doing in feeding the sheep and the lambs, you are demonstrating your love of Him, as the Savior expressed Himself to Peter; and I believe we might read between the lines, His love of those who undertake such a marvelous work as you do.

WORK IN CHURCH BRINGS OWN REWARD

Bishop Nibley once said, speaking of the bishops, that he thought Paul made a mistake when he said, "Those who desire the work of a bishop desire a good work." He should have said, "a good lot of work."

We hear a great deal about how the bishops are overloaded, have too much to do, how many of them are wanting to be released because of the great responsibility they are carrying. I have taken occasion during these few conference days to inquire of many of them, "Bishop, how are you enjoying your work?" and each has replied in about these words, "Very much—it is the grandest opportunity I have ever had." And I believe that is the way the bishops feel about it.

When I was on my first mission, I received a letter from my father in which he said in words such as these, "My son, I would like to say to you that there is no organization, corporation, or society in the world that will pay as great dividends on your time, your means invested, and your talents as the Church and Kingdom of God." And I want to bear testimony to you this day, brethren, of the truth of this statement. I feel that the Lord owes me nothing for what I have done in the Church. He is the best Paymaster I know anything about.

GATHERING PREDICTED

I would like to read a few words from the thirty-first chapter of