

ence of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah.

There are on the stand this morning all the General Authorities of the Church except Elder Spencer W. Kimball, who is convalescing at home under his doctor's orders; Elder Alma Sonne, who is in Europe in charge of the European Missions; and President S. Dilworth Young, President of the New England Mission.

Elder Joseph Anderson is the Clerk of the Conference.

This full service will be broadcast over Station KSL, Salt Lake City, as will also the service this afternoon, beginning at 2:00 p.m.; likewise the services tomorrow, Saturday, at 10:00 a.m., and 2:00 p.m.; and also the two services on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. By arrangement through KSL, these same sessions will be broadcast over the following stations: KDSH at Boise, KSUB at Cedar City, KID at Idaho Falls, KEYY at Pocatello, KSVC at Richfield, KJAM at Vernal, and over KTYL at Mesa by transcription.

These services will also be broadcast in the Assembly Hall over a loud speaking system and by television. All general sessions of the Conference will be heard and seen in the Assembly Hall in the same way.

Any messages and calls that come to us from persons supposed to be in attendance at the Conference will be announced at the dismissal of this meeting over the loud speaking system on the grounds. Everyone would do well to listen carefully to such announcements.

The choir singing during today's sessions will be by the Relief Society Singing Mothers of the Salt Lake Region. Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen is the conductor; Elder Frank W. Asper the organist.

The first song will be: "Come, Come Ye Saints," sung by the Choir and congregation, Elder J. Spencer Cornwall conducting.

The opening prayer will be offered by President James E. Ririe of the East Rigby Stake, Rigby, Idaho.

The Choir and congregation sang the hymn: "Come, Come Ye Saints."

President James E. Ririe of the East Rigby Stake offered the invocation.

The *Relief Society Singing Mothers* of the Salt Lake Region sang: "O Come, Let Us Worship."

### PRESIDENT GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

I appreciate the fact that there are many people who come to this house from time to time who do not realize what a blessing a gathering of this kind means to those who attend. As your first speaker this morning, and for the benefit of the radio audience, I

will say, George Albert Smith, the President of the Church will now speak.

#### RELIEF SOCIETY CONFERENCE

I announce to you that you can find nowhere else in all the world a gathering comparable to this one. We have had two days of meetings on this block. This house has been filled with women of the Relief Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gathered here, representing the stakes and missions of the Church. They represent the oldest women's religious organization in the world. They came, not on a sight-seeing trip, but to worship, and to be instructed. They came here to the house of the Lord knowing that if they were assembled under proper conditions, they would be blessed. Their two days of mingling and rejoicing together have prepared the way for this other great general conference.

This conference will continue three days, and during that time it will be remarkable if all the seats in the building are not taken and people standing, and in addition to that the Assembly Hall, which has been equipped with radio television, will take care of an overflow as far as possible, and also the open air will be enjoyed by many people listening to the amplified program outside.

As I came in this morning and saw this wonderful audience, these beautiful flowers, our sisters here representing a great organization, the Singing Mothers, I felt subdued in my soul and thankful to my Heavenly Father that it is possible for me to meet with you today. When we think of the disturbances that are in the world, the uncertainty that is in the minds of individuals everywhere as to what may occur, we are grateful to come into the Lord's house as we do this morning, a house that was dedicated to him in the days of the poverty of our people, a house that has been recognized as unusual among all the houses of worship in all the world, and from this tabernacle every Sabbath day there goes forth a broadcast to all the states of the American Union and to many parts of the world in other lands, a broadcast of religious music and a sermonette. Not anything to compare with this program can be found anywhere. These singers voluntarily come here every Sunday to render these programs.

#### SERVICE OF TABERNACLE CHOIR

For twenty years this great choir has been rendering service to the delight and the spiritual uplift of hundreds of thousands, yes, millions of people, by means of radio, and the choir itself receives no compensation. This organ, when it was built, was one of the great organs of the world and still is, and it has been heard in many lands. Personally I have had the pleasure of hearing it and the choir while visiting in the missions in the South Seas and other

places. They are devoting their time, every Sunday, singing praises to our Heavenly Father, causing his children everywhere to rejoice.

Here in Salt Lake City a large percentage of the population are not members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but thousands of them listen to this program and seem to have joy in telling us that they feel that it is a rich, spiritual uplift to them.

#### MISSIONARY WORK

This morning we have over five thousand missionaries scattered throughout the world. For what purpose? "Surely," as one minister said to me in England many years ago, "we don't desire you to come over here to preach; we have all the churches that we can fill." And he said, "We have all the preachers that we can afford to pay. Why do you come over here?"

And my answer to him was, "My brother, we are over here without financial remuneration to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the wonderful people who dwell in this part of the world."

He asked, "Why don't you go to the heathens like we do?" And I answered, "We do." He asked, "Where do you go?" And I said, "We come right here."

He looked somewhat annoyed, and I said to him, "Now don't be disturbed, my brother. That isn't intended as an offense at all. There are no finer people in the world than you have here, but what is a heathen anyhow?"

With some hesitation he answered, "Well, a heathen is a man who doesn't believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Jesus Christ."

I said, "Do you have any people like that here in Great Britain?"

He dropped his head and said, "Yes, I am sorry to say we have."

Then I said, "Surely you are not going to complain about us if we come over here to help you convert them. You haven't been able to do it, and that is why we are here. We want them all to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Today our five thousand missionaries are scattered over the face of the earth, paying their own expenses or having them paid by their loved ones at home, and the sole purpose of that great missionary effort is that all of your brothers and sisters and mine, all of the children of our Heavenly Father, may be brought to a knowledge of the purpose of life and be given understanding of what it means to be born into this world and to know that we are living eternal lives. The entire world is a marvelous missionary field for this great Church! There are some nations in which we have been unable to do missionary work, but the Lord in his own way, will provide for doing that. And, of course, many people hear the gospel of Jesus Christ by means of radio, who wouldn't otherwise hear it.

## CENTER OF MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

Speaking of the missionary field, I wonder sometimes, if we realize that Salt Lake City is the center of our great missionary activity. There isn't a city in the world, in my judgment, that is better known than this city because of the temple, the Tabernacle, and the great organ and choir broadcasting as they have been every Sunday for nearly twenty years. Salt Lake City is one of the world's most beautiful cities.

I wonder if some of you realize the hours and the days and the months that are spent by your brothers under the direction of President Irvin T. Nelson of the Big Cottonwood Stake beautifying the grounds, making the flowers to bloom and the shrubs to be delightful, the lawns to be kept green. I would like those brethren who do that fine work to know that many of us appreciate it very much. They are helping the people who come here to become interested in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and many of them say, "Why we never saw anything like this any place else," and they go away and tell their neighbors and friends.

Wherever I go, it seems to be in the minds of people, many of them, and they say, "I'm going to Salt Lake City some day. I want to go out there and see what you people have accomplished in the wilderness." We haven't done it all, brethren and sisters. This is the Lord's Church. He gave it the name of his Beloved Son. He directed the pioneers to come here. He didn't send them some place else, and, under his guidance, and under his inspiration, the people have lived out here and, with his blessing, the soil has been made fruitful, and there is no more beautiful place in all the world that is occupied as homes by the sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father than the section of country that you live in. Surely we should be grateful.

Referring to the missionary work, think of sending more than five thousand into the world to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to people who believe that they already have it, and yet when they compare what the Lord has revealed in this latter-day in addition to what they already have, they discover that it took the revelations of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith in our day to make the Bible, the Old and the New Testaments, plain to these people.

## CONVERSION THROUGH BOOK OF MORMON

I remember a good many years ago when I was down in California, I met a man who was a great geologist, whose name was Robert Hill. While being employed in research in Mexico and Central America by the Smithsonian Institute or National Museum, a Book of Mormon fell into his hands, and he read it. He was working under the direction of the department at Washington, where they collect all of the curiosities from the various sections of the

country. He was there as a government employee. The National Museum, I presume, is where much of the material may be found.

When he read the Book of Mormon he asked for a leave of absence. He came to Salt Lake City and inquired for somebody who would indicate to him the source of the Book of Mormon, for he said, "This book explains some things that the scientists are unable to harmonize." Dr. James E. Talmage took him in hand and informed him as to the source of the Book of Mormon, how it had been revealed, how the people had come here under the direction of our Heavenly Father and built up this country. Before Robert Hill left, he said, "This is what I have been looking for," and he was baptized and became a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He returned to Mexico, and I saw him later in Los Angeles. When I asked him what effect the Book of Mormon had on his life, he said, "Why, Brother Smith, it enabled me to understand the Bible as I have never understood it before."

There have been distributed hundreds of thousands of tracts and books teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, the expense for which has been paid by the Church and its members in order that other people might enjoy what we enjoy.

There isn't anything that enriches our lives like an understanding of the purposes of life and the ability to live the gospel of Jesus Christ. All happiness worthy of the name comes to us when we observe the teachings of our Lord and live to be worthy to be his sons and daughters.

#### VISITORS TO TEMPLE SQUARE

Since coming into this building this morning I have asked how many strangers there are who come onto this block each year. Last year I had supposed was the greatest year we have ever had because of the number coming here during our celebration, but I understand that this year up to today 840,662 of the children of our Heavenly Father, your brothers and sisters and mine, have come here onto this block to see and learn what the Lord has done. I think it is marvelous, and so this morning as I stand here in your presence, I am grateful that I belong to the same organization that you belong to, grateful that all the good things that the world enjoys, all that is true and wholesome and uplifting and educational may be enjoyed by the membership of this Church without having to give up one thing.

I have said to many people when they have asked me, "What is there about this organization that you belong to? What is it that you are so concerned about, that you send your missionaries all over the world?" I have replied sometimes, "We want you all to be happy. We want you all to rejoice as we rejoice. After awhile we will have to meet our record, and if we have been faithful, I am sure the Father of us all in the world will thank us and bless us for

bringing so many of his sons and daughters to an understanding of the purpose of life and how to enjoy it under the influence of his spirit."

#### OBEDIENCE BRINGS BLESSINGS

It is glorious to live in this part of the world. I might say it is glorious to live in this age of the world notwithstanding the sorrow and distress and uncertainty that exist. We have received an assurance that our Heavenly Father is mindful of us if we will be faithful. We have no promise that he will care for us on any other terms, but he has said that if we will honor him and keep his commandments, he will watch over us and protect and bless us. I think of that lovely audience that I saw here yesterday, all our sisters, and now this morning there is a great mixed audience apparently mostly men. Yet we are only a small portion of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that has become identified with the Church of the Lamb of God since the year 1830. It is marvelous, my brothers and sisters, what the Lord has done—and he has done it.

#### INSPIRATION OF GENERAL CONFERENCE

We will have the pleasure today and during the days to follow of hearing quite a number of those who devote their time to teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have people here from nearly all parts of the Church throughout the world. Many have come a long way, not to hear men speak, but to feel the inspiration of the Almighty as it flows to those who are called to address us, play for us, and sing for us in this wonderful house of the Lord.

I know that God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ. And I am thankful to know that we are all brothers and sisters—thankful that he gives us all opportunities so to adjust our lives here that when mortality is complete and our work is done that we will dwell in his presence and enjoy the companionship of those we love forever. Shouldn't that make us feel that our homes must be the abiding place of the Spirit of the Lord? Shouldn't that make each of us feel, where we know what the Lord has advised us to do, that it is the best for us and we will do what he wants us to do? I want to say that the happiest people in all the world are those who obey the counsel of our Heavenly Father.

I pray that his spirit may continue with us. I pray that when we have finished this conference, we may go away feeling that we have waited upon our Heavenly Father and not in vain. We will return to our homes, sharing what we have enjoyed here with those not able to come, and to our families with a renewed determination that we will keep the commandments of God and that we will so adjust ourselves that our homes will be the abiding place of his spirit that will guide us into all truth. That the Lord may add his

blessings and his peace be with us, as we go through this conference, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## PRESIDENT GEORGE F. RICHARDS

### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

It is written that faith is the first principle of revealed religion, the foundation of all righteousness. (See D. & C. Lectures on Faith 1:1.) This being true, all our righteousness is due to faith, and it follows that our unrighteousness is due to a lack of faith. We desire in preaching the gospel to the Saints and strangers alike to establish as far as possible faith in the minds and the hearts of people that they may bring forth righteousness, for righteousness is what makes for salvation in the kingdom of God, and we are all candidates for salvation.

### EVIDENCES OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

In my remarks today, I desire to speak of some of the evidences of the divine, personal, and glorified existence of God, the Eternal Father, and of his Son, Jesus Christ, a knowledge of whom I regard as the world's greatest need; also to give evidence of the fact that Joseph Smith was a divinely inspired prophet of God, that he was an instrument in the hands of God in the restoration of the everlasting gospel, and the establishment of the Church and kingdom of God on earth in this, the gospel Dispensation of the Fulness of Times.

### JOSEPH SMITH'S FIRST VISION

On a beautiful spring morning in the year 1820, a fourteen-year-old boy of Manchester, New York, being considerably exercised over religion, and believing the scripture which reads:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him (James 1:5)

retired into a grove of trees nearby to pray. He tells his own story as follows:

After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual