

ANGELUS TEMPLE

We have recently received from the pen of Rev. D. H. Scott, of Los Angeles, Calif., an account of the work of Mrs. Aimee Semple McPherson, of that city, and the work she is doing. This is the result of his observations covering a period of two years' residence and active pastoral work in Los Angeles. He is a man of good judgment and unquestioned veracity, as well as an active and faithful preacher of the gospel of Christ as understood and taught by the Wesleyan Methodist Church. We welcome this unprejudiced and thoughtful review from one who is thoroughly competent to judge concerning the subject with which he deals. We give it to our readers without any further comment.—Ed.

THE CHURCH OF THE FOUR SQUARE GOSPEL, OF LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

The study of religious activities of the past is interesting, and in some cases very distressing. Paul seemed to have anticipated some conditions that would prevail in what is very apparent the closing dispensation of the age, when he earnestly warned the people to contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints. He also gave an urgent appeal to "try the spirits," because in his day false prophets were abounding. I suppose that no place in the world is such a center of varieties of religious teachings and Bible interpretations as is Los Angeles. All of them are totally erroneous, and, in fact, the majority of them embody many fundamental truths. Some one has said that half truth is worse than no truth at all. It therefore behooves us as a Church, and all believers in particular, to seek earnestly all the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

About two years ago I arrived in Los Angeles to take charge of our Wesleyan work here on the coast, and since that time have had many inquiries coming from various sections of our Connection regarding the work of Angelus Temple, under the supervision of Aimee Semple McPherson. For months I have felt impressed to write an article on this subject for the Church paper, thus saving me much private correspondence, and enlightening the Connection as a whole. I want it understood that what I have to say is not prompted by a spirit of jealousy or maliciousness. I will neither express my adverse criticism or my approval of the work. My whole desire is to give as accurate and unbiased a description of the activities of that institution as is possible.

The Angelus Temple is one of the most perfectly constructed buildings in the city, with a seating capacity of five thousand five hundred. I have been in some of the large auditoriums of this city, and there are none more perfectly designed. The large dome is a miniature heaven with the constellations beautifully represented. There are numerous ante-rooms for Sunday School purposes and other meetings. The stained glass windows are well worth the visit of anyone interested in the beauty of art, costing at least several thousands of dollars. They boast of their pipe-organ

as being one of the very best in Southern California. A spacious and neatly designed baptistry is located just at the rear of the platform. At the present time they are constructing a massive six story building for a Bible Training School.

Mrs. McPherson herself is a woman of unusual ability and charming personality. She possesses the power of leadership which could be easily coveted by all. The wonder is that she can be so active, apparently day and night, year in and year out, and yet physically able to stand the great strain. Mrs. McPherson has held great interdenominational evangelistic campaigns in Los Angeles and about the various cities of Southern California. The apparent object of these meetings was to help all affiliating churches. It has, therefore, seemed a little singular that she has now drawn to herself such a large church, for she boasts of ten thousand members. She has also branch churches scattered in these same places where she held these meetings.

I will give a brief description of one of the services which I attended. When the hour had arrived, and the great organ was pealing forth its melodious strains, there appeared two little girls carrying large bouquets of flowers. From the first balcony came Mrs. McPherson and her mother, who were followed by the large Angelus Temple choir. As soon as the great congregation caught a glimpse of their pastor, they began and continued to applaud until she and her choir were seated. There were bursts of applause throughout their entire service, which is a regular feature at Angelus Temple. The opening part of the meeting was devoted to a musical hour consisting of their Silver Band and various novelty selections, such as a hand-saw solo, music on harmonica, etc. One of the very noticeable features in connection with the preliminary service is the prominence of Mrs. McPherson in the leadership of the song and praise service, as well as in the preaching. The sermons of Mrs. McPherson are as a whole very acceptable, and yet very ordinary. At the conclusion of her addresses an earnest appeal for seekers is given which frequently meets with a very hearty response, usually from one hundred to one hundred and fifty. She will direct the seekers to kneel, and, repeating after a prayer, they are told to hold up their hand and say, "Praise the Lord, Jesus saves." Then the personal workers distribute cards for membership. Every Thursday night she conducts a very spectacular baptismal service, the candidates being urged to dress in white. She, with her assistant, sometimes baptizes as many as four at a time. All during this ceremony various colored lights are brought to play upon them. To make the Sabbath services as attractive as possible, the sermons are unusually illustrated. On one occasion she dwelt upon the subject of the two houses, one being built upon the sand and the other upon the rock. Two miniature houses were erected upon the platform and at the right point in the sermon all the lights were turned out, and with the imitation of storm, the flash of lightning and the boom of thunder, the one house crashed to the floor of the platform. On another Sabbath evening, in

order to impress certain truths, she was attired as a motor cop.

A great variety of services are held each night in the week with the exception of Monday night. There seems to be a desire on the part of the management to verge very closely to the entertaining side, that the attention of the people may be drawn toward the Temple. On one evening she had the Fire Chief of the City give a talk along his particular line of work. To give an idea of the quickness of response on the part of his department he turned in an alarm, and in but a very few moments of time his men were at the Temple. They also illustrated the jump into the life net, one of the firemen jumping from the very top of the dome into the net held for him on the main floor of the Temple. One can readily imagine the excitement and suspense of the onlookers as they saw the man leap from the dome to the net.

At a recent national convention of the Shriners, one of their choirs went immediately upon their arrival on Sabbath morning to the Temple to render the music for the morning service. The Elks Band of Pasadena has also assisted in their musical programs. Though Mrs. McPherson does not particularly encourage membership in these various lodges, yet she gives a good deal of prominence to these organizations in her services. However, all the activities are not confined to the Temple itself. At the last Rose Tournament the Temple entered a magnificent float, which won the sweepstake of the entire Tournament. The papers reported the cost of the float as being four thousand dollars. This event occurs upon the first day of the New Year, and is attended by thousands. On the New Year's evening on which their float was so successful, I attended their meeting. I was more impressed with the spirit, which seemed like that of a conquering football team, for much of the service was devoted to the report, Mrs. McPherson herself being seemingly carried beyond herself, holding in her hands various dailies giving an account of the tournament, and literally shouting for joy over the great victory.

Some will question, "Doesn't Mrs. McPherson preach the gospel?" I affirm that she does, and I will not say that people are not really saved under her ministry. The outstanding objection on the part of some serious-minded people is the fact that she teaches that the gift of the unknown tongue is an evidence of the baptism with the Holy Ghost. For this purpose, what is known as the Five Hundred Room is devoted for seekers, whom she urges to pray for this unscriptural gift. In her public meetings very little emphasis is laid upon what she considers this very important experience, frequently referring to the baptism of the Holy Ghost, but rarely making mention of the gift of tongues. They are not allowed to speak in tongues in the public services. It is a known fact that she does not teach second blessing, entire sanctification doctrine, but merely refers to it as "the Baptism."

One medium of advertising is her divine healing program, and many have made trips across this country, as well as from other nations, to be present at them. It

(Continued on page 8.)

Sept. 15 '23
Nov. 30 '23
f. 30 '24
at 24
Jan. 31 '25
Mar. 15 '25