

ELDER DAVID A. SMITH

Of the Presiding Bishopric of the Church

There are only a few moments left, but I feel that I should take the time to comment upon a thought expressed by one of our speakers, who said that he was asked why our young people do not have a testimony of the gospel. I think that the person asking this question was either misinformed, or was not acquainted with the young people of the Church. It is true that few of them feel to express themselves as having a testimony of the gospel, but when put to the test, they soon learn the difference between that strong feeling they have that the gospel is true and the assurance that causes them to say they know.

In my opinion, one reason for this apparent lack of knowledge, on the part of the young people, is that, as parents and officers in the Church organizations, we have not taken advantage of the means provided and have not given the encouragement needed to bring out this important fact. Perhaps we are not setting the proper example, and many of us fail to show the proper interest in this great gift, for we are told that a testimony is the gift of God and does not come unsought.

Some of our young men go into the mission field and express themselves as not knowing for a surety that the gospel is true, but they feel that it is, and hope soon to gain a testimony. If they had been put to work and given more opportunities to bear testimony at home, this gift of God would have come to them, just as it does later in the mission field. It should be the aim of every parent and every officer in the Church to assist the young people to gain a testimony, for those who are not of our faith do not understand why we send young men and young women into the world to preach the gospel who seemingly are not fully converted.

I read a letter the other day from a young man who a few months ago was attending the missionary class here. He is now laboring in one of the large cities in Europe. In his letter he calls attention to many little incidents that tend to impress him with the great importance of the service in which he is engaged, and of the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit.

I will repeat one incident. One morning he awakened early and could not go to sleep again. His companion complained of his restlessness, which the elder could not explain. He finally arose from his bed to study, but could not apply himself to his study and so decided to take a walk. As he started out, he was impressed to go to another part of the city, where two other elders were living. On the way there he met a man and his wife from Utah whom he knew. They did not have the address of any of the elders or Saints in that city, and in their prayers had asked the Lord to direct them. This boy, being the only elder in that city who was acquainted with them, was led to them by this unseen Power, and his vision was

opened to the great power of prayer and the willingness of the Lord to answer the prayers of his children.

Similar incidents of the manifestations and power of the Holy Spirit could be related by nearly every member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Even so, are we fully impressed with the importance of these manifestations? Do they enter into our lives and cause us to turn to our heavenly Father in humility, with a desire to serve him with all our might, mind, and strength?

Two or three days ago I met a young man on the street whom I have not seen for a great many years. As I stopped to shake hands with him, he said that he wanted to have a visit with me and a long talk. We stepped to the curb and he told this story:

Having left school in his youth and obtained employment which took him away from home, he had very little opportunity to labor in the Church. His companions and associates having but little time for religion, he drifted from active participation in Church affairs. After two or three children had been born to him, his thoughts wandered to his early home teachings, and to the prospects of the future for his family. In his youth he had been taught to pray, and had never turned from this practice.

Finally, the elders were called in to administer to one of his children who had been given up by the attending physicians. Almost instantly the child was relieved and continued to improve until it was soon in perfect health.

This little incident brought forcibly to his mind the teachings of his childhood, and he was so impressed that his whole soul is now centered upon so living that he may go with his family to the temple, there to have the promise of the new and everlasting covenant sealed upon them. This young man's mother has been a constant worker in the temple for many years, and her prayers have gone out to the Lord, asking that the heart of her son be touched, and in the Lord's own way and in due time these prayers have been answered.

Thus, we see the importance of loving one another, as we are commanded to do and we should constantly be found serving the Lord by serving our fellow men and encouraging them in their efforts to earn as their reward salvation in the celestial kingdom.

May this be our lot, is my prayer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir sang, "Daughter of Zion."

The closing prayer was offered by Elder John Keddington.