

ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

Patriarch to the Church

I come before you, brothers and sisters, with a sincere desire that I may have an interest in your faith and prayers while I take this time, for I am sure that I need it.

I wish to add my testimony of the divinity of the gospel to those others of this conference, for I know of a surety of the divinity of the gospel of Jesus Christ and that it has been restored in this, the latter day.

I enjoyed Brother [Adam S.] Bennion's discussion of the converts in Europe, which brought to my mind many similar experiences I have through contacts with converts to the Church. One of the prominent things that he told us was the thrill and the joy of these young people, missionaries and servicemen, who are growing in their testimony, that the testimony of the gospel is one of their choicest possessions and one of the things that brings so much joy to them. Those who come to my office, so often converts to the Church, have repeated to me the same stories that Brother Bennion repeated—that life has just begun for them.

A husband and wife said that they felt that they had wasted fifteen years of their married life, for now, since they had joined the Church, they were just beginning to live again.

It is not so much the words that they express, but it is the thrill and the joy that lights up their faces when they say it, in all sincerity—a joy that can come from no other source.

So, as this knowledge of the gospel is one of the most important things for us to gain, I have heard many times members of the Church, as well as investigators or non-members, ask the question, "How does one know? How does one get a testimony of the gospel?" The Lord has told us, and it has been repeated here before in this conference:

There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

And when we obtain any blessings from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. (D & C 130:20.)

If we want the blessing of a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ and want to know, even if we are just investigators and want to know which is the gospel of Jesus Christ, then we have to find out what that law is and fulfill it.

Moroni gives us the key to that law. As he was preparing the records which were given into his keeping, and he was finishing his part of them before putting them away for some future date—he knew not when it would come—he wrote in his record:

Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down unto the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.

And whatsoever thing is good is just and true; wherefore, nothing that is good denieth the Christ, but acknowledgeth that he is.

And ye may know that he is, by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore I would exhort you that ye deny not the power of God; for he worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men, the same today and tomorrow, and forever. (Moroni 10:3-7.)

Now he has given us two thoughts, primarily, in this record: first, "ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ." And second he said, ". . . he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things." So if we are going to find the law by which we may gain a knowledge, we have the key to it here; first, we must do something ourselves, we must ask for it, and,

Saturday, October 6

Second Day

second, then we will be given that through the Spirit.

In section eighty-nine there is another key. The promise that is given there is:

"And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments," and then the Lord gives us a promise of health and adds, "... shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures." (D & C 89:18-19.)

If we will learn the law of obedience and take that first step ourselves, the Lord will prompt us and give us that knowledge through the Spirit.

The Lord has said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matt. 7:7.) If we do not seek, if we do not ask, if we do not knock, then we cannot receive that knowledge.

In cottage meetings and other gatherings where the gospel is proclaimed, all do not receive it the same; yet the same thing is taught to all. There are some in the group who will apply that law by which that blessing may be received, that of putting themselves in tune with the Spirit, just like a large radio transmitting station. The Lord's spirit is with us all. The gospel of Jesus Christ is being proclaimed, but if we do not put ourselves in tune, we do not get the reception. If we do not get the reception, it is not the fault of the broadcasting station, it is the fault of the receiver, and we are the receiver; we must put our spirit in tune.

The soul is made up of body and spirit, and as we get in tune with the Spirit, then we receive that testimony by the Spirit.

We were reminded last Thursday in our meeting in the temple prior to this conference that the greatest testimony is that which comes and testifies of the Spirit. We cannot always trust what we see and what we hear, but we can always trust that prompting of the Spirit that comes to us, which declares to us that which is truth; and by that power we get our strength and testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Prophet Joseph Smith had to take that first step and ask for knowledge.

He read in James that if ye lack wisdom and shall ask, ye shall receive. He took the words of James to heart and went into the grove of trees and knelt and asked for that knowledge which he received. There the Prophet saw and heard, and surely it was testified to him of the Spirit that this was true and that these things which he experienced were true, by which he received a true knowledge of God the Father and of the Son, so that he knew that Jesus Christ lived, and that the Father lived, and knew that he had truly seen a vision, as we have heard testified here today.

So I say, let us put ourselves in tune. If there are members in the Church who are uncertain, who are lacking in that strength of a testimony, ask, and ye shall receive, knock, and it shall be opened unto you. If you will put yourself in tune that your spirit shall be in tune with the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, then you shall receive a knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

May the blessings of the Lord be with us all, that we may all enjoy that prompting of the Spirit and be able to assist others as a result of that knowledge given to us, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church, has just concluded speaking.

After the singing and the benediction, this Conference will be adjourned until 7:00 o'clock this evening, when the General Priesthood Meeting of the Church will be held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. Only those holding the Priesthood are invited to be present. Persons not holding the priesthood will kindly refrain from attempting to enter the building. This Priesthood Session will not be broadcast, excepting in the overflow meetings that have already been appointed, in the Assembly Hall and Barratt Hall, and by direct wire over a public address system to members of the Priesthood assembled, in addition to the Barratt Hall and Assembly Hall, in 81 other Church buildings in Utah, Idaho, Colorado, New York, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Wyoming, Ne-