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THE TESTIMONY OF THE TRUTH.

The importance for the Saints of the Most High to possess a testimony of the truth of the Gospel of Christ is a theme often dwelt upon by speakers who address their congregations. And justly so. For that testimony is, so to speak, one of the vital parts of the organism through which the spiritual life makes itself manifest in the soul. It is a power which in all ages has made great men of God. Religion, piety, goodness of heart there may be without it, but that noble enthusiasm which was the distinguishing characteristics of Abraham, of Moses, of Elijah, of Paul, and, in our age, of Joseph the Prophet and his faithful successors is impossible until the testimony becomes clear and firm. The question what it is and how it is obtained is therefore one of the most profitable for meditation.

To have a testimony of the truth of the Gospel is to have more than a belief in its doctrines. Belief may be founded on the statement of others, whom we trust for sound judgment and veracity, while this testimony is founded in personal experience. Paul stands before his opposers testifying that the Savior lives, for he had seen Him. No matter if they contradicted him, calling him a maniac; no matter if they imprisoned him and beat him; this could not change the fact nor shake the assurance he had of its being a fact. With our martyred Prophet it was the same. He stated that he had seen the Eternal Father and His Son. No matter if he had to suffer at the hands of enemies, and die for it. It was nevertheless a truth, unchangeable and indestructible. These instances may serve to illustrate what the testimony is to the believer. It is that full assurance of the truth of the Gospel, which makes its possessor quite as absolute in his knowledge as he is conscious of the fact that he exists and that the surrounding world is something real. It is the sweet fruit of genuine faith and it gives to those who possess it peace, joy, strength and power to live their religion acceptably to the Father who is in heaven.

This testimony is obtained differently by different individuals. Hardly two persons can be found who have received it in the same way, as regards

the minor details. As each one has his own history, so he has also his own spiritual experience. But notwithstanding the differences, there are some general features that are invariably the same.

In the first place, the testimony of which we speak is, as all blessings, the gift of God. But the promise is given that all who comply with certain conditions shall obtain it. The absence of it in any individual case never depends on Him whose promises are ever faithful, ever sure. One of these conditions is to seek for it diligently, which implies the careful study of the innumerable evidences that are given to help us to arrive at a firm conviction. The human mind is so constituted that by giving proper attention to a subject, this becomes clear; truths presented, if given heed to, force themselves on the understanding. Doubt and indifference to religious truths will, upon investigation, probably invariably be found to be the result of neglect to study these truths in the proper way, while on the other hand careful attention to them is sure to bring the desired testimony.

It has already been stated that it is the gift of God. This suggests another thought. It is not likely to be given to those who do not need it. Its purpose is to enable the follower of Christ to overcome temptations, advance in holiness and while so doing to further the interests of the Kingdom of God. It is therefore only natural that a person must have a desire in this direction, if he wants to obtain this particular gift. It is not given to those whose sole aim in life is to seek worldly advantages and indulge in temporal pleasures, for the evident reason that it is not needed or desired. But when a person arrives at the happy determination that he will conquer all evil tendencies in himself, or when he is placed in a position where he must stand up for the truth and face, perhaps, able antagonists, then he may confidently ask the Almighty to give this testimony, and he will receive an answer to his humble prayer in the hour of need. Thousands of Elders have had this experience. They have returned from their fields of labor rejoicing in the testimony they have had while serving their Master faithfully.

One instance of this kind is particularly remarkable. One of the humble

Saints in Jaffa died there about three years ago. Previous to his sickness he often expressed a desire to have a full testimony of the truth of the Gospel, but it seemed as if his desire could not be granted. He believed in the Gospel and defended it and lived the life of a faithful Saint, but there seemed to be a desire in his soul for more absolute certainty than he had, and he often expressed himself to that effect in conversation with the Elders who visited him. He took sick and it was evident that his days were numbered. Two days before his death, he was visited by the German consul. This gentleman commenced abusing the Church of God and told the dying brother that his sickness was a punishment for his heresy, adding that if he would renounce Mormonism then and there, he—the consul—would pray to God for him and he would perhaps be well.

The dying man listened for a while. Then he resumed a sitting posture, and with beaming eyes and his hand lifted toward heaven, said, "Sir, I testify to you that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God and that Mormonism is true." Then he had the testimony which he had so much desired. He obtained it when it was most needed, and he died with happiness in his heart.

The lesson we draw from all that the Lord has revealed on this subject and from the experience of the Saints is that those who will seek diligently to obtain a testimony of the truth of the Gospel shall receive it, and retain it as long as they continue to live in accordance with the expressed will of God.

Laun, an Indian, was killed on Tuesday morning at Healdsburg, Montana, by another Indian named Maximilian. Maximilian shot Laun with a pistol, the ball entering the abdomen. Maximilian claims that Laun was pursuing him with a knife, intending to kill him.

On Thursday George Davis of Wales was taken before Judge Johnson of Spring City on a warrant sworn out by Carl Hanson of that town charging Davis with obtaining money under false pretenses by disposing of personal property on which a mortgage was held by Hansen. Davis was found guilty and sentence set for Saturday.—*Ephraim Enterprise*.