



Type: Magazine Article

How I Obtained My Testimony of the Truth

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Source: *The Young Woman's Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (December 1892),
pp. 123–125

Published by: Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association

Abstract: No abstract available.

Green wheat, and corn, and tree-plumes bend
 Along the path thy footsteps wend,
 Where stretched the dreary alkalies
 Roofs of a hundred hamlets rise,
 Fair rose—and orchard-gardens bloom
 Where mocked the uplands' arid doom;—
 And lo! where proud in olden days
 The pilgrim people rendered praise
 For refuge found—devoting first
 With fervent prayer, and hymnal burst
 Amid the valley's primal hush
 On waste unclaimed from rock and brush—
 A princely Temple's future site—
 (Traced with a true prophetic light—
 Viewing the time that yet should yield
 A fitting jewel for the shield)—
 A stately house—a regal roof,
 Takes precedence in the picture's woof,—
 And the great Temple—thus foreseen
 Rears its fair structure on the scene.

In many a canyon's winding aisle
 The mountain's great cathedral pile—
 Vandalled through years by Labor's hand,
 To gain their treasures for the land—
 Yielded the blocks that fitly frame
 An altar to Jehovah's name.
 Now lost in new and shapely guise
 The majesty that met the skies
 In massive height, by nature piled
 Unhewn, within the lonely wild.
 Here the true spirit of the peaks
 Thrilled by the touch of sculpture speaks,
 And through its moulding firm and warm
 Gains for its living soul a form!

Slow toil and scanty substance knew
 The stately building's dawning view;
 Yet well at last the day was won
 That saw the massive mission done.
 Now in the landscape like a lance
 Its vision quickens on the glance.
 Its graceful mass the moonlight shows
 Like some vale drifted peak of snows;
 Upon the gleaming granite walls
 The day's bright sunshine pallid falls,—

The leaping dawn and sunset's fires
 Kindle its bosk of snowy spires—
 And high aloft the angel blows
 The trumpet of the ending woes
 Of long forsaken Babylon.

By plodding steps the way was won;
 Hardship and struggle, toil and pain,
 Plague-ravage of the future wain—
 Dark Hate's dire threat of ceaseless harm,—
 The note of battle's near alarm
 Filled the long years whose only gleam
 Was some dim future's living dream.

Yet though thy bleeding footsteps fail
 Amid the tangles of the vale—
 Upon the bridges of the years
 In growing strength thy form appears.
 What though beneath the arches glide
 The waters of a turbid tide?
 Above their angry sweep and roar
 Thy onward footsteps lightly soar,—
 And though some fate of foreign fault
 Cause thee to stumble or to halt,
 Rise, and fare onward, lovely land!
 An angel leads thee by the hand;—
 Thy red, high-heaped, baptismal fire
 Shall chasten thee to high desire;
 Thy vales, thy peaks, thy streams, thy sea—
 Thy treasures born, and yet to be—
 Fruits of the yet unwedded soil,
 And all the mountains' hidden spoil,
 With clear and clarion voices cry
 The portent of thy destiny!
 They dream who deem that long for naught
 Such gifts unto thy arms were brought
 To turn to ashes in the flame
 Of some foregone, forgotten fame.
 Thy country soon shall hear and heed
 Thy plaint of merit, plea for need;
 And this fair Christmas tide that shines
 Now close upon thy path, but signs
 The precious light of peace whose ray
 Shall gild thy future steps for aye.

Josephine Spencer.

HOW I OBTAINED MY TESTIMONY OF THE TRUTH.

"Did you ask how I got my testimony of the truth of Mormonism? Why, I never got one."

Such was the reply of Pres. Cannon to my interrogation, and I suppose I must have shown my

astonishment in my countenance, for he smiled quietly, and added,

"The reason why I received none, was because I did not have to get one. It was born with me. Since I first heard the gospel, or

Mormonism as it is called, I have always known it to be true. It seemed to be a part of my very nature. I can remember, though in my early boyhood that I felt very badly because I had no especial gift, and I used to think I was not a favored child of God, else I would have received the gift of tongues or some other such gift. When, however, I went upon my mission to the Sandwich Islands, I did receive the gift of interpretation and also was assisted by the gift of tongues in the most satisfying manner. I became thoroughly proficient in the language of the islands in a very brief period, and these gifts became of practical service to me at a time when I absolutely needed them to fulfill my mission. To enumerate the cloud of testimonies which I have received and do receive to the truth and power of our religion would be too much for my time and perhaps your patience. As a part of my very life is my knowledge that God spoke through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and also that those who reject the gospel of Christ will be under sure condemnation."

"You know, Pres. Cannon, many of our young people wish to have a testimony of this gospel, and they say they don't know how to get it, and many of them don't know what it is when it comes. Perhaps they have been born with the testimony in their hearts, and there they let it lie, expecting some supernatural manifestation. This is the greatest

reason I had for desiring to prepare these articles, in order to bring before the minds of our young people, the many and simple ways in which this precious testimony has come to our greatest and best men and women."

"If you know of any young persons who think they have no testimony, just say to them that if the Lord were to withdraw His Spirit from them they would be apt to find the awful condition they would be in. I heard of one man who thought he did not have any testimony of the authenticity or divinity of the Book of Mormon, and he asked the Lord if the Book was true, to withdraw from him His spirit for a space of time as a testimony to him that he might know by that evidence that it was divine. The Lord answered his request. The effect was of the most startling kind. His experience was of such a terrible nature that he prostrated himself in supplication before the Lord for a speedy return of the precious gift he had voluntarily cast from him. After suffering past description the Spirit returned; he knew for himself then that the Book of Mormon was true and that this gospel was the plan of life and salvation. Such an experience was awful, and it ought to be a lesson to every member of the Church. Many undervalue, if they do not despise, the precious gift which God has given them. Instead of cherishing and cultivating it, they think it of no worth. Of course where this is the case,

the gift does not grow. Faith does not increase, neither does it blossom into knowledge, and gradually the Spirit of the Lord is withdrawn."

This was President George Q. Cannon's view as he expressed it to me. In conclusion I would most warmly urge our girls to cherish and place a high value on the gift of the Holy Ghost which they have received. Do they need a testimony? Let them look around and see the condition of those who have once had the Spirit of God and lost it. See the darkness, the blindness of mind, the hardness of heart which they exhibit. Ought this not to be a testimony to every soul that this is the work of God and that He has bestowed the Holy Ghost upon those who have submitted to the ordinances of the gospel and who

keep His commandments? Also, that He withdraws the Holy Ghost from those who do wrong? Is not this plain to every child in this Church who is capable of reflection? Then, if there are those who think they do not have a testimony, is not this a testimony? Do they want the Spirit of God, with the peace, the light and the happiness which it brings, withdraw from them to prove this to them? Do they want the darkness, the unhappiness, the uncertainty which Satan stands ready to give, to take possession of them, in order that they may see the contrast? God forbid that any of our girls should be so dissatisfied with that which God has given her as to let it slip from her and the darkness of the adversary take its place.

THEOLOGICAL.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE TRUTH.

To some people the writings of this lesson may seem superfluous; but I have found so many little points in which only time and experience have helped me to make them plain before the young people under my care, that I am inclined to think there are others who may have some difficulties in dealing with this subject.

In talking with Pres. George Q. Cannon on this subject, he said he never had obtained a testimony, but the reason was that he was born with one. I

have thought a great deal about that since, and I have wondered if the great majority of our young people have not been born with a testimony. He said a good way to make sure of the fact that one has a testimony, if there is any doubt in the mind, is to ask the Lord to withdraw His Spirit and testimony for a short space of time, and the results would convince the most doubtful of the light and testimony they had previously been in possession of.

In the first place, it must be most clearly understood that