

the services. Just as I was about to resume my pace, his eyes happened to focus upon me, whereupon he threw open his arms and motioned me toward him. I suppose that words are inadequate to express the feeling of love which I felt as he reached out and embraced me, kissing me as was his custom with his children and grandchildren.

There, in the sanctity of a house of God, Joseph Fielding Smith — the grandfather — was not concerned with whether or not it was proper protocol to greet me in such a fashion, especially in front of that room full of people. At that moment he was displaying the love and concern which he had for a grandson. I believe our Father in Heaven looked down with pleasure upon that moment, which to me, was as sacred as any moment I have spent on earth.

What kind of a man was Joseph Fielding Smith? A man of great compassion and warmth, and filled with a love for all of mankind. Just ask those who knew him best.

## A CONVERT DISCOVERS A PROPHET

DENISE ST. SAUVEUR

When I encountered missionaries from the Church two years ago, they questioned me as to the need for prophets, both ancient and modern. At that time I was a student in a Catholic College preparing for the future. I was not quite ready to revert to the past and “Bible tales” whose validity I doubted. Believing in a modern prophet seemed an absurdity after studying a wide range of contemporary theologians and philosophers. To me there was no need for a prophet. Yet, three months later I bore testimony that Joseph Smith and his grand-nephew Joseph Fielding Smith were called to be prophets in our time.

Soon after I became a member, however, I discovered it was easy to take the Prophet for granted. I had never seen President Smith in person, and I came to wonder how a man of 94 years could understand me and my problems. As time passed the academic world came to encompass reality for me. Struggling to live the Gospel became as everyday as my class assignments. That President Smith had grown through some seventy-five more years of experience than I had did not relieve the apprehensions resulting from my new life in the Church. I did not know Elder Smith as a man, or as a man of God.

Two weeks before President Smith passed away, however, I met him. It was not the usual introduction; I sat far from him, but the spirit of that man filled the room and greeted me warmly. While attending June M.I.A. Conference I experienced an alteration of my feelings toward Brother Smith. He became a real person.

During that weekend I witnessed things that I have since tried to fashion into an image. Simply said, I beheld a living testimony of Jesus Christ. Before me sat a father with two righteous sons supporting him on either side. The filial devotion of the two younger men reflected the love, patience, and faith of a generous father. A father for the Church as well as his own family. As he presided over our first general meeting, it was as if I too became an adopted member of President Smith’s family. My spirit witnessed glimpses of godliness

in that man, and his love for me impressed itself as forcefully as the love I have received from our God and Father in Heaven.

On Sunday, in an extraordinary and intimate Sunrise Service, President Tanner shared stories with a few of us about the Prophet. He told how his wisdom did not dampen his wit, how he made quips about his age and his declining agility. It seems Brother Smith used laughter constructively, and that he was the prime subject for his own ribbing. I had not seen this gift of humor in his Conference talks, and hearing about it made him a more comfortable, endearing person to me, one I'm glad I came to know.

At this moment the memory of Joseph Fielding Smith dwells with me. His death does not erase the testimony I gained at the final session of the M.I.A. Conference. In his last general public address it was obvious that his strength came from the Lord. The Prophet's physical body did not possess the ability to walk alone. When he rose to speak he had to receive assistance from his two counselors. Yet, as he stood at the pulpit I could see the strength of the Lord supporting him, and his clear unbroken voice delivered a message of hope and assurance to me — a message that although we will encounter enormous difficulty in the world we need not be overcome with the spirit of despair. Indeed he left us with a testimony that we have every reason to rejoice in the Lord. As he spoke I came to understand him as the faithful servant — the Prophet — I once only thought I knew. After ten minutes he was again assisted to his seat by President Tanner.

Through coming to know President Smith I began to understand that we are indeed to be as God once was — the kind of man President Smith was — and I am keeping President Smith's memory with me as a reflection of the total being I should become.

## JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH— THE KINDLY, HELPFUL SCHOLAR

G. HOMER DURHAM

Many published works of Church history and doctrine testify to the scholarship and direct literary style of the late, tenth President of the Church, President Joseph Fielding Smith. Those who were privileged to use the archives during his tenure as Church Historian can recount many examples of the openness and helpfulness extended to visiting scholars during his term. The following incident reports and shares a different but related experience. It illustrates his warm, friendly character which was not always appreciated by those not having benefit of personal association.

My first serious use of the Historian's Office began about 1940. I suffered from the usual American-Mormon ambition to produce *opus magnum seriatim ad infinitum*. After writing several articles on Mormonism, I found myself examining the output since 1882 of the then President of the Church, Heber J. Grant. The results, thanks to Dr. John A. Widtsoe and Richard L. Evans, then editors of the *Improvement Era*, appeared in 1941 as *Gospel Standards*: