I am inclined to think that notwithstanding the gains we see in the work of the Lord, notwithstanding the reformation we see in the lives of many people, often we are prone to emphasize the problems and disregard the progress.

I am optimistic concerning the work of the Lord. I cannot believe that God has established His work in the earth to have it fail. I cannot believe that it is getting weaker. I know that it is getting stronger. I realize, of course, that we are beset in the world with many tragic problems. I am a newspaper reader, and I have seen a good deal of this earth. I have been in areas where war rages and hate smolders in the hearts of people. I have seen the appalling poverty that hovers over many lands. I have seen the oppression of those in bondage and the brutality of their overlords. I have watched with alarm the crumbling morals of our society.

And yet I am optimistic. I have a simple and solemn faith that right will triumph and that truth will prevail. I am not so naive as to believe there will not be setbacks, but I believe that “truth crushed to earth will rise again.”

When I left for a mission some sixty-two years ago, my good father handed me a card on which were written five words. They were the words of the Lord to the ruler of the synagogue who had received news of his daughter's death: “Be not afraid, only believe” (Mark 5:36). I should like to express a few thoughts on this theme.

Kingdom to Stand Forever

I believe in the triumph of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the triumph of the Church and kingdom of God on the earth. If ever your faith is inclined to weaken as you see the onward march of evil and oppression, read again the story of Daniel who, putting his trust in the “God in heaven that revealeth secrets,” interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. He said concerning our day that the God of heaven shall “set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these [other] kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44).

I believe that the cause we have the honor to represent is that kingdom which shall stand forever.

I am not engaging in unrealistic dreams when I think of its future, for every day I see the miracle of its strength and of its growing influence in the lives of millions across the earth. Yet it is not a great impersonal juggernaut of power. It finds its best expression in the quiet of the lives of those who have embraced it.

Yes, we have problems among us. We are far from perfection. And yet I have seen so much of good that my faith constantly strengthens.

Belief in Youth

I believe in our youth. I believe in their goodness and decency. I believe in their virtue. I have interviewed thousands of them on a personal and individual basis. Yes, there are some who have succumbed to evil, but they are a minority.

I remember visiting South Vietnam some years ago. I talked individually with two or three hundred men—men who had waded through the blood and heat of battle, but men who were virtuous in their lives. I remember one of them, a boy who had just come down from the Rock Pile near the Demilitarized Zone, who said in response to a question on morality: “Not on your life—I couldn’t do that. I want to be worthy of a great girl some day.”

Service of Missionaries

I believe in our people’s sense of service. I have been in the missions of the Church where we have about forty-nine thousand missionaries. They are there at their own expense and at the expense of their families. They give to the Lord one and a half to two years of their lives. Their days are long, their weeks crowded and arduous. They speak with a persuasive conviction. They bear testimony of the living Christ and of the virtues of His marvelous work.

May I read from a letter received from one of them: “The most effective technique we have found in our work is fasting and prayer. We saw how this worked a few weeks ago with an investigator of the Church. He had a number of questions and problems to overcome, and we just didn’t seem to get anywhere when we met with him to discuss them. So we would go home to our apartment and ask the Lord to bless him and help him understand what we had explained to him. We felt it was very important that he be baptized, so we asked the Lord to bless him with a desire for baptism. Even up through the sixth lesson he was wavering, so we fasted the day before his baptism, and he has been a faithful member ever since.”

One thinks of the words of the Lord to His disciples who complained they could not perform miracles. Said
He: “This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” (Matt. 17:21).

Miracle of Devotion

Is it not a miracle in itself that in this day of doubt and disbelief young people, thousands of them, with lives to live and careers to build, spend a year and a half to two years in the service of the Lord, laboring constantly and even willing to fast and pray in behalf of those to whom they seek to teach a better life? I know of no experience more refreshing than to be with them and feel of their spirit. They will restore your faith in youth. They will quicken your faith in the Lord.

Appreciation for Parents

I believe in something else that is a barometer of their goodness. Paul warned that in the last days men would be unthankful, unholy, disobedient to parents, without natural affection (see 2 Tim. 3:1–3). One need not look far in the homes of our time to see that prophecy being fulfilled. And yet I have witnessed a repudiation of that insofar as many are concerned. In my visits with our young missionaries, I have heard hundreds of our young men and women stand on their feet and express their feelings. Almost without exception they speak words of appreciation, of thankfulness for their parents. What a remarkably refreshing thing it is to hear young men and women, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, and twenty-two years of age, stand before one another and, in the quiet confidences of such a meeting, say, “I really appreciate my dad.” “I love my mother.” They are not maudlin; they are manly, athletic, able young men and womanly girls of charm and education. Their words come from the heart. Those sentiments in this day are as a cool and refreshing breeze on a hot and humid night.

Enthusiasm of Converts

The Lord declared that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached … for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14). Can it possibly be accomplished? I remember an insight that suggested how it can happen.

I met a woman in South America who had just joined the Church. Fired by a great love for that which she had found, she had gone about enthusiastically telling others. During a period of only seven months since her baptism, she had referred three hundred acquaintances to the missionaries so that they might explain the gospel to them. At one point, sixty had come into the Church. More likely came in. In São Paulo, Brazil, I met the young missionary who first had taught her the gospel. He too had been a convert, had gone on a mission to represent the Church at considerable financial sacrifice. The woman of whom I speak was one of forty-three he had assisted in bringing into the Church at that point. This young man of Brazil had expanded himself more than one hundred times—forty-three converts of his own and sixty through one of those he converted, with more from others of his converts to come.

Work Requires Faith

Yes, this work requires sacrifice, it requires effort, it requires courage to speak out and faith to try. This cause does not need critics; it does not need doubters. It needs men and women of solemn purpose. As Paul wrote to Timothy: “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (2 Tim. 1:7–8).

I wish that every member of this church would put those words where he might see them every morning as he begins his day. They would give us the courage to speak up, they would give us the faith to try, they would strengthen our conviction of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that more miracles would happen over the earth.

I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that this is their holy work, and I plead with you and with the God of heaven that we shall have the power and the faith and the devotion to roll it forward to its great destiny.


Gospel topics: faith, missionary work, service, youth