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## " ... Always Be a Missionary"

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**Abstract:** As a part of the restoration of the gospel, the Book of Mormon became the companion volume of the Bible. No one who reads the Bible sincerely can deny that a volume of scripture is needed to record the fulfillment of the promises made to Joseph.



For some time I have wanted to put into the record a statement by Thomas Edison in his autobiography, made in the twilight of his productive life:

"The useful man never leads the easy, sheltered, knockless, unshocked life. At [age] thirty-six he ought to be prepared to deal with realities, and after that until he is sixty he should be able to handle them with a steadily increasing efficiency.

"Subsequently, if he has not injured his body by excess indulgence in any

of the narcotics (and by this term I mean liquor, tobacco, tea and coffee), and if he has not eaten to excess, he very likely may continue to be achiev- ingly efficient up to his eightieth birth- day, and in some cases until his ninetieth."

The testimony of the times corrob- orates what Edison said, and what the Lord told us—information that has been in our hands for more than sixscore years.

The Lord has blessed us with knowl- edge that we are under obligation to develop our minds, for "The glory of God is intelligence," (*Ibid.*, 93:36) and "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." (*Ibid.*, 131:6.) He has given particular emphasis to spiritual truth, but in addition to charging the early brethren to teach one another the doctrines of the kingdom, he also in- structed them to prepare themselves in a wide field of knowledge, including languages, history, and law. In the Church there are the principles and program which can lead us to the pos- session of minds that are clean and honest, educated, trained, controlled, creative, productive, and useful.

We have received the word of the Lord that "... men are, that they might have joy," (2 Nephi 2:25) and we know that there is joy in responsible relation- ships with our fellow men. As this is true of other men, it is especially true

of our own families. The family, sealed together under the law of God, is the eternal unit, and our own high possi- bilities in the eternities are contingent upon our relationship with our family, as well as with our Heavenly Father and his other children.

Underlying all that has been re- vealed to us the Lord has given us to know that we are his children, that life is purposeful and meaningful, and that we are blessed with the possibility of a high destiny. I thank God that I know these things, and I pray that he will bless us to understand that though we may have partaken of some of the problems of the world, though we may have undergone some of the tragedies of the world, there is hope and answer for us in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Though we could not choose or direct in our earliest days the home we grew up in or the parents who bore us, yet we can do something about the sort of parents we are or will be, and about the home our children will grow up in.

I thank the Lord for the good things he has blessed us with, and pray that we may have the wisdom to be stead- fast and faithful and to do that which will perpetuate for those who are to come the blessings which the Lord has made available through the principles and programs and inspired leadership of his great Church.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## "... ALWAYS BE A MISSIONARY"

**LeGrand Richards**

*of the Council of the Twelve*

I feel very grateful, brothers and sis- ters, for the privilege that is mine to be associated with you in this great con- ference, and my heart has been made to rejoice in the wonderful messages we have received and the testimonies that have been borne. Not only that, but I have been made very happy to greet so many of you on the block and in the building whom it has been my privilege to meet as I travel through the Church and visit the various stakes of Zion. I have a profound respect and appreciation for the faith of you Latter- day Saints, for the great work you are accomplishing in your own localities. I never return from a conference but what I say to my good wife, "My, the Saints are wonderful," and I thank the Lord that I am a part of this great or- ganization.

It has been my privilege to spend much of my life in the missionary work

of the Church. I imagine today that through the courtesy of the radio and television stations there will be many listening in who are not yet members of this Church. I am sure they will be some day when they know what we know about it. I have always said that there is not an honest man or an hon- est woman in this world who really loves the Lord who would not join this Church if he knew what it was.

Those of us who have had missionary experience know how our hearts have been made to rejoice when we find peo- ple who really love the Lord and who want to serve him the way the Lord wants to be served, and they come to a knowledge of the truth. Sometimes we find people who have looked for years and years to find the truth. I had a letter from a man recently, a prominent attorney who had investigated many churches, and when he found "Mor- monism," as it is known to him, he said he had found an answer to all of his seeking. And some years ago, in my missionary work, we brought an attor- ney into the Church. He was an in- telligent man. We asked him to talk in one of our conferences, and he said something like this—we had asked him

to tell what he had found in Mormo- nism that appealed to him. He said, "If you have hunted for something all your life until you decided it did not exist, and then you just happen to stumble on to it, you do not need anybody to tell you that you have found it, do you?" He said, "That is what I did when I found Mormonism and the thing about it that is most wonder- ful to me is the fact that the more I know about it the more wonderful it becomes."

I have a testimony here, copied from a letter from a lady who wrote in to the Bureau of Information for informa- tion about the Church. She said she had hunted for fifty-three years to find the truth, and then she told about the various institutions and churches she had investigated, and after getting our literature, she finally joined the Church, and after so doing this is what she wrote:

"I now have a serenity and com- posure and inner strength and an inward joy which I never before possessed. Do all souls receiving enlightenment exclaim within their silent heart, feeling com- passion for a blind, groping, and griev- ing world, 'O suffering world, I come.



I come.”

The missionaries find ample compensation for the great work they are doing when they see honest souls who seek after righteousness brought to a knowledge of the truth through their instrumentality. The Lord said to the early elders of the Church that if they should labor all their days and bring save one soul unto him, how great would be their joy with that soul in the kingdom of the Father.

I want to bear you witness that many of us have great joy in the companionship of those to whom it has been our privilege to bring the restored gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I want to say to you that the Latter-day Saints are doing a great work in providing missionaries. It is the most unselfish movement I think this world has ever known. There is no thought of any monetary compensation. Sacrifices are made by young and old alike in order to carry the gospel to those who are yet in darkness, and we invite everyone to join with us.

Sometimes I wonder if we have invited our neighbors and our friends to become a part of us, and if we do, then we will find the joy that comes in being instruments in the hand of the Lord in carrying the truth to them.

President McKay indicated today that we are all missionaries. In fact, he has told us that each of us should be a missionary, and while we are not all called and set apart to go from door to door, we are called by the Lord, for he said: “Let every man who is warned, warn his neighbor,” (See D & C 88:81) and that is a call from the Lord, and President McKay has asked that each of us should be a missionary and try to bring someone into the Church.

I repeated that request in a stake conference a few months ago, and a few weeks thereafter, I received a two-page typewritten letter from a young man who was in that conference. He was a son of the stake president. He was only there visiting on an assignment. He said, “Brother Richards, I heard you request each of us to try to bring someone into the Church. I believed that you meant me, so I wrote my wife and said, ‘When I come home I have a proposi-

tion to make to you,’” and the proposition was that they should bring some family into the Church. Then he said to his wife, “The young man that I work with in the office seems to be quite a fine man, and if you are willing I will invite him and his wife to our home and we will have them for supper.”

Well, of course when the supper was over they had to talk about something, and you know what they talked about, and the letter was written to tell me the joy he and his wife had because that couple had now joined the Church. I tell you, it will bring great joy into the lives of people when they know what the Church is.

I want to say to you today that my testimony is such that I believe we live in the great day of fulfillment. As I think of the history of the past, two great events stand out paramount above all others in religious history, and all the prophets have looked to those days and testified of them. The first was the coming of the Redeemer of the world, and you will remember that when he came, he took the Holy Scriptures to prove to the people that he had come in fulfillment of the words of the prophets. You remember his statement as he walked along the way toward Emmaus with two of his disciples following his resurrection, and their eyes were holden that they did not recognize him. After he had heard what they had to say and seeing that they did not realize what his mission was, he said, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken,” (Luke 24:25) and beginning with Moses and the prophets, he showed them how that in all things the prophets had testified of him. Then he opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures for all the prophets had looked to that great event.

The second great event is when he shall come in power and great glory in the latter days, to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords, and all of the prophets have looked to our day. I wonder sometimes if we are mindful enough in order to interpret the promises of the prophets. I think of the words of the Savior when he said:

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” (John 5:39.)

I like to look upon the scriptures as a blueprint that shows the things that God intended to do, and I think it is a wonderful thing to know what the prophets have had to say, but I think it is more wonderful to live in the day of the fulfillment of the promises of the prophets. The Savior puts his stamp of approval upon the necessity of knowing the scriptures. He said to the Pharisees who endeavored to catch him in his words: “Do you not therefore err

because ye know not the scriptures?” (Mark 12:24.)

If we knew the scriptures, we would understand them. Let me give you an illustration. While I was still the Presiding Bishop, we brought the plans of the great Los Angeles Temple to show to the First Presidency. There were eighty-five pages, and we did not have them complete—the electrical work and the heating facilities were not done—eighty-five pages about five feet long and three feet wide. It was glorious to look upon those plans and see that temple, but not a hole had been dug in the ground. Compare that with when we went to the dedication, and in the evening when the floodlights were turned on that magnificent building, it was just as if some ethereal thing had been dropped down from heaven. I thank God that it is my privilege to live in the day of fulfillment of the things that the prophets have foretold for the latter days to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord.

I give you the words of the Apostle Peter. He said:

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (II Peter 1:19-21.)

If you will think about that for a minute, and then consider the words of Isaiah where he said that the Lord had proclaimed the end from the beginning, then the prophets have, as it were, drawn a blueprint of what the Lord intended to do, and we live now in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times that has been referred to in this conference, for the Apostle Paul said that the Lord had revealed unto him the mystery of his will,

“That in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” (Ephesians 1:10.)

I want to say unto you that no other people have a program of uniting all things which are in heaven and which are on earth. We understand this in the great work that is being done by the living for the dead, and that brings us to another great event that was to transpire in the latter days, to which Brother Romney referred this morning—the coming of Elijah the Prophet to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest he come and smite the earth with a curse. (Mal. 4:5-6.) Who knows anything about that great program of uniting the children on the



earth with their parents who have gone beyond except the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as the Lord has revealed these great truths in our day?

Referring again to the words of Peter where he said, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy," (II Pet. 1:19) I now give you his words on the day of Pentecost to those who had crucified the Lord when he called them back to repentance, saying:

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21.)

If we believe the Holy Scriptures, as we are admonished to do, and the words of the prophets, we cannot look for the second coming of Christ in power until there is a restitution of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began. I want to say unto you that that is what this Church is, as it has been pointed out in this conference—the restoration of the Holy Priesthood, the re-establishment of the Church of Christ in the earth, founded upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, with Christ our Lord as the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20), which God placed in the Church according to the Apostle Paul

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, . . .

"That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (*Ibid.*, 4:12-14.)

How can anybody look at the Christian world today and see its divided condition and know that the Lord intended that we should come to a unity of the faith, without realizing that we must return again to the organization that he placed in the Church? And what an organization that is, where every man and every man's son can be

co-partners, as it were, with the Lord through bearing his Holy Priesthood, to help establish his kingdom in the earth.

If there is to be a restitution of all things, that presupposes that it cannot be a reformation. It also presupposes that the truth did not remain upon the earth. There is not time today for me to go into the prophecies of the falling away, but men of our day have borne witness that the truth is not upon the earth. I like the statement contained in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, prepared by seventy-three divines and bible students, in which they say:

"We must not expect to see the Church of Holy Scripture actually existing in its perfection on the earth. It is not to be found thus perfect, either in the collected fragments of Christendom, or still less in any of those fragments."

How wonderful, when seventy-three noted divines trying to find the truth just by reading the scriptures without the living testimony of the Spirit, come to know that the world has drifted away from the teachings of the scriptures. You will recall that great leader among the Baptists, Roger Williams, who resigned as pastor of the oldest Baptist Church in America and gave these reasons:

"There is no regular constituted Church of Christ, on the earth, nor any person authorized to administer any church ordinance, nor can there be until new apostles are sent by the great head of the Church for whose coming I am seeking."

If he had lived in the day of the restoration of the gospel as taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith, he would have known that apostles had been sent again in our day with the same authority, the same organization, the same truths that were taught in the Meridian of Time.

There is not time to discuss all the great truths that we have received through the restoration of the gospel, but if you will think of the things that have been mentioned in this conference: the gathering of Israel, the building of temples, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon—and nobody can read the Bible without knowing that there is a companion volume of scripture that must be united with it, which is to become one in the hands of God—and when you think of a record of over 500 pages of history and words of prophets who have lived upon this land of America, and when you read the promises to Joseph of a new land in the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills, and his blessings which were to be greater than the blessings of his progenitors, you cannot help but wonder why the Lord would have made such promises unto that chosen of the House of Israel, without providing for the

recording of the fulfilment of those promises. So we have the record of the fulfilment of all these promises.

I leave you one more passage of scripture before I close, and that is in the third chapter of Malachi, where the Lord said he would send his messenger to prepare the way for his coming, that he would come swiftly to his temple, and who would abide the day of his coming, because he would be as refiner's fire and fullers' soap.

I call attention to the fact that he did not come to his temple in the Meridian of Time, and I ask you today, where is a people in all the world that are building temples to the Most High? You know the record of this Church, the number of temples that have been dedicated in recent years. This great temple that stands upon this block, and yet the churches know not what temples are for, nor do they have a knowledge of the ordinances that are to be performed therein. We would not know either, except that we live in the day that Peter spoke of, to prepare the way of the Lord when there was to be a restitution of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began, truly the day of fulfilment.

In closing I leave you a testimony of a man who sat in my office recently, who spent thirty years as a minister of the gospel. Then he met the Mormon elders. He said, "I had always thought I had as much authority as any man to perform the ordinances of the gospel, until I met the Mormon elders and then I knew that I must accept baptism at their hands." And then he added: "Brother Richards, when I think of how little I had to offer my people as a minister of the gospel compared to what I now have in the fulness of the gospel as it has been restored, I want to go back and tell all my friends what I have found. Now, they will not listen to me. I am an apostate from their church."

But such are the testimonies of people, who, as Jesus said "hunger and thirst after righteousness." He also said:

"My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:16-17.)

I bear you witness, and make the promise to all who are not members of this Church that if they will investigate our message and ask God, the Eternal Father, that they can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that the truth has been restored in its fulness to the earth to prepare the way of the coming of the Lord.

This testimony I give to you in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.