

I am more than pleased to pay the following tribute to the sacred memory of my dear old friend; the late Samuel W. Richards:

My closest associations with him was when he presided over the Eastern States Mission and I was one of his missionary helpers. But before that time, in the fall and winter of 1888, I was a member of his preceptor Class, one of a group of young men who met together in the old Social Hall. Their selections for teacher was Elder S. W. Richards (at the date about 65 years old and in the full bloom of matured manhood.) Although he was a busy man and the position offered no monetary compensation, yet he was willingly accepted the labor of love, and all that winter he faithfully attended our weekly meetings, listened to our amateur attempts at public speaking, and patiently, kindly guided our clumsy efforts. When I look back upon those days, and realize his own attainments as speaker and writer, my admiration for his gentleness and forbearance is most profound.

In the spring of 1896 I was called to the Eastern States Mission to assist Elder D. R. Gill in the Welsh district of Pennsylvania. Elder Richards had been selected the year before by Pres. Woodruff to re-open the mission, which had lain dormant for over thirty years. Sister Mary Ann Richards, had also been called as matron of the Mission House. When I reached Mission headquarters, I was met at the door by Brother and Sister Richards, Bro. Richards recognized me at once as one of his old Preceptor Class. He took me in his arms, saying, "David, you are just the young man I've been looking for --- I want you to stay right here with me as clerk of the Mission.

From that hour I was at home in the Mission House and Brother and Sister Richards become my spiritual parents. The recollection of those happy days and their love and solicitude for me is very sweet and tender particular the mother's care I received from Sister Richards in my homesick hours, so much needed and so much appreciated. Under Pres. Richards administration the mission grew from ten missionaries to 150; a fine start for future developments. Through his culture one paper in particular, "The Brooklyn Eagle," (very exclusive periodical) gave him space for the weekly synopsis of our Sunday Services a remarkable concession in those days of bitter prejudice.

Pres. Richards also had a gift of healing and on one occasion I received his personal ministrations and was instantly healed. He made an ideal presiding officer and easily made friends. His knowledge of the Scriptures and Church History gave his public utterance weight and authority, and his kind genial nature welcoming virtues were affection, sincerity, faith and courage. he was a living example of the fruit of the Gospel and a firm believer and an able defender of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, I believe he has earned what he strove for --- Celestial glory.

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