

for him, but he had a question. He asked Russell Ballard as they flew to “I’m not afraid of dying,” he said. “What is, will I be able to find

Brother Richards had asked who had reassured him he’d give his own answer—“Brother Richards said it would be difficult”—really got his answer. “What do you mean?”

With all of the thousands of people in the Church through your personal work, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonderment*, you probably have a hard time finding someone there to greet you.”

Elder Richards responded in

at a conference that Brother Richards said which he later

He let me and the Regional Office interview him, but he was that was happening spiritually. He made the decision [on who to call as a spiritual motivator. He and the Lord had already made a decision. He just has that

within, the steady affirmation of the Holy Spirit—near—that is the dearest of all. He has lived for it. He treats it as the Gift of the Holy Ghost.” To me, the gift of the Holy Spirit is like sunshine and water are to the plants. You take away the water, and it would not be any more. He continued with the promise: “The Holy Ghost shall

be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.” (D&C 121:46.) A granddaughter recalls hearing him say to a group of young people who visited him, “I would rather have my priesthood than all the money, marbles, or peanuts in the world.”

Following Ina’s passing, two manifestations were given to Elder Richards which indicate his ever-increasing attunement to the Spirit—even to the seeing of things not visible to the eyes of those who are closest to him. In the first, he felt Ina’s influence in a matter which was of great importance to the family. For years the Ashton family had been trying to find a record of the father of Henry P. Lindsay, Ina’s great-grandfather. He was from North Carolina, where the vital records were largely destroyed during the Civil War. Elder Richards’s daughters had spent much time and effort trying to establish the name and record. Three of them—Nona, Marian, and Mercedes—had made a trip to North Carolina for that purpose, but without success.

When he was ill in the hospital, Brother Richards and Nona were watching television one day when a group of eight people appeared on the screen. One said, “We are going to the funeral of James Lindsay, father of Henry P. Lindsay,” after which the picture disappeared. Elder Richards said, “Nona, please call Alden at KSL and have them rerun that picture so we can make a record.” Nona had not seen the picture. Nor, apparently, had anyone except Elder Richards, for when Nona phoned Alden there was no picture to rerun. (*Blue Book*, p. 3.) On the strength of what Brother Richards had so plainly seen and heard, the temple work was done for this ancestor.

The second experience occurred in the Salt Lake Temple on May 4, 1978, at a meeting of the General Authorities. It is told in part by Elder Boyd K. Packer, upon whom it had a profound effect. Testimonies had been borne, Elder Richards first and then each taking his turn. Later, Brother Richards asked to speak. Elder Packer quotes him: “Brethren, I have something to tell you. A little while ago, I saw a man seated above the organ there

and he looked just like that." (He gestured toward President Wilford Woodruff's portrait which hangs in the room.) He then added, "I saw him just as clearly as I see any of you Brethren."

Of the experience, Elder Richards said: "He was dressed in a white suit and was seated in an armchair. I thought at the time that the reason I was privileged to see him was probably that I was the only one there who had ever seen President Woodruff while he was upon the earth. I had heard him dedicate the Salt Lake Temple and I had heard him give his last sermon in the Salt Lake Tabernacle before he died. I thought it wonderful that the Lord could project, without mechanical means, the likeness of a man long since dead." As Elder Packer says of Brother Richards, "He links us back. Here is a man who rubbed shoulders with those who stood with the Prophet Joseph Smith."

In June of 1978 Elder Richards went into the hospital for a hernia operation. He had the operation on a Monday, recuperated Tuesday at the hospital, returned to his apartment Wednesday, and was back at his office on Thursday. "The operation was successful," he said. "I had no pain." Perhaps by this time he was becoming inured to pain. Elder Packer, one of those whom Elder Richards designates as his "guardian angel," facetiously asked him one day as he lent his arm to his associate and they walked to their meeting in the temple together, "Who is going to help you over when I die of old age?" They chuckled together, then Brother Packer, feeling the pressure of weight upon his arm, solicitously inquired, "Are you in constant pain?" "No more than I can stand," was the cheerful answer. "Which means," the younger apostle surmised, "that he is in pain all the time. He simply lives above it." In spite of pain or discomfort, Brother Richards exercises his leg and foot many times each night to keep it as limber and usable as he can.

On his ninety-third birthday, February 6, 1979, Elder Richards was asked to offer the opening prayer at the Utah House of Representatives, where his son LaMont was serving. On February 23, his father's birthday, he was taken to the hospital, where he remained in critical condition for nearly a month. In the March 2 temple meeting of the First Presidency and the Twelve,

President Kimball asked if any Brother Richards was. One saw a doctor that morning and had a matter of hours. Elder Richards' daughter Mercedes and her husband, who were notified. Some of the conference assignments so they could be there. A remarkable thing happened which relates:

One of the most curious things happened on the evening of the Twelve, Elder Howard W. Hunter said, "Brethren, LeGrand Richards is going to die at this time. He is not functioning effectively." He thought of him, normally occupied by Elder Richards going to be sitting right here in the discussions of this council!" It was never heard in my life.

At the hospital, however, the doctor's prognosis would not be that he would again flow back into the unconscious. His daughter Mercedes and other family members and watched as if an actual struggle of will was taking place. Maxwell had earlier entered the room for a blessing and, when they had gone, Brother Packer has spoken. "Inasmuch as he said, 'If you still have work to do, you can communicate with the Savior.'"

Not long after that, a grandchild was taking their turn watching at his bedside. Richards making strange, low sounds. His father was dying, she was about to be taken. Her husband restrained her, saying, "Near, they could make out the Savior, I come to Thee."

On two occasions he tried



LeGrand Richards

BELOVED APOSTLE

Lucile C. Tate

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