

“A Man Without Eloquence”

I don't know how many people today even know this saintly pioneer's name or his story, but he holds renowned place in our history, though not known by name.



Eleazer was born November 4, 1795, at Albany, New York. In 1816, he married Rebecca Van Zant and to them were born eight children. They made their home in Tioga County Pennsylvania for many years.

The family history states that,

“Eleazer first heard of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints through his friend Alphaeus Gifford, when he returned home with five [copies of] the Book of Mormon, and Eleazer was given a copy....This small

group of friends—Alphaeus and his brother, Levi, Elial Strong, Abraham Brown, and Eleazer—were so excited to receive this good news they went to the John Johnson Farm in [Hiram] Ohio to see the Prophet Joseph Smith. There [Eleazer] received the Gospel with an open heart and was baptized the 4th of December in 1831, by his friend Levi Gifford.”

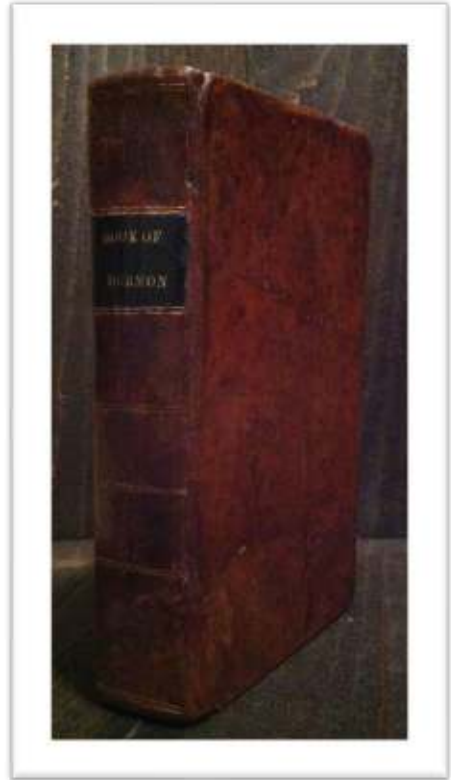
Eleazer and his friends, now filled with the fire of the Spirit and conversion, journeyed toward home and stopped and held a meeting in the little town of Mendon, New York. There they preached the restored Gospel they had just found.

Then in January 1832, some of those same men who had listened to them in Mendon, journeyed to Pennsylvania to visit Eleazer's branch of the Church established in Columbia, Bradford County, Pennsylvania. The visitors stayed six days attended meetings of the branch and witnessed the modern manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit poured out. It was during that meeting that Eleazer stood and bore a simple but powerful testimony of the truthfulness of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ and of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith.



One of the men from Mendon who heard that humble testimony and was deeply touched by it and later said,

“If all the talent, wisdom, and refinement of the world had been sent to me with the Book of Mormon and had declared in the most exalted of earthly eloquence, the truth of it, undertaking to prove it by learning and worldly wisdom, they would have been to me like the smoke which rises only to vanish away. But when I saw a man without eloquence, or talents for public speaking, who would only say, ‘I know, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the Lord,’ the Holy Ghost proceeding from that individual illuminated my understanding and light, glory, and immortality were before me. I was encircled by them, filled by them, and I knew for myself that the testimony of the man was true.”



That man, so deeply touched by a humble farmer’s testimony, was Brigham Young. Subsequently, on April 14, 1832, Brigham Young was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints by Eleazer Miller, who also ordained him an elder.



Brigham and Eleazer shared a bond of deep friendship that spanned the next four decades. Together they experienced Missouri, Kirtland, Zion’s Camp, the expulsion of the Saints from Far West, leaving Nauvoo, and finally in 1848, Eleazer journeyed to the Salt Lake Valley in Brigham Young’s company.

Father Eleazer Miller passed away April 12, 1876. At his passing, the Deseret News published the following,

“He was a true and honest man and maintained his integrity to the work of the Lord to his last moments.”

I share this story to remind all of us of the power of true testimony—that is--humbly and simply declaring what *we know to be*

true of ourselves independent of any other person; testifying of our own knowledge of those most vital elements of a true testimony, namely: of God the Father, His son Jesus Christ, of Joseph Smith and the Restored Gospel and the power of the Holy Scriptures and the Priesthood restored. And then after declaring that testimony, going home and living it to the end of our days. No “Saintly Sunday Saints” here. We are Saints through and through every day! What we speak and declare on Sunday, we live on Tuesday.

Sometimes I wonder as I listen, if we compensate for a lack of testimony with a profusion of words, tears, and funny stories.

As evidenced, lives are changed by simple testimonies accompanied by the Lord’s power!

Source: <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/memories/KWV9-PVK>

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