

“I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go, Dear Lord”

(Mission Experience Series.)

By **Elder J. A. Bronson**

IN RESPONSE to your request for some of my missionary experiences, I will try to tell you of the trying, yet faith-inspiring experience we passed through when my General Conference appointment was changed from Northeastern Illinois to the Spokane District, Washington.

When wife and I finally decided to take up the missionary work, and the first appointment reached us we were living in Illinois, and were appointed to labor in that field; but in order to go we were compelled to place a five-hundred-dollar mortgage on our little home. That meant thirty dollars a year interest, besides the heavy taxes and insurance that must be kept up.

Wife worried along for two years and by renting some furnished rooms managed to pay the taxes, interest money, and insurance; but as time passed by the home needed repairs, the mortgage was coming due in another year, and—well we could just feel things slipping out of our hands and something must be done.

My father and mother, a married sister and brother, were living on homesteads in Montana, and many letters came to us trying to persuade us to go to them and take up a homestead. So after praying very earnestly for direction, and after carefully talking the matter over with Evangelist Frederick A. Smith, the missionary in charge, F. J. Curtis, Bishop E. A. Blakeslee, and others, we made arrangements to rent our home and go West.

On the night of February 2, 1914, we said farewell to the Saints and friends of our old home town Belvidere. In due time we were being welcomed by the Saints of the Culbertson Branch of Montana, and were again under the roof of our dear parents, my father and mother.



ELDER J. A. BRONSON.

We passed through the exciting scene of choosing the piece of land that we would make our new home on. The half section was filed on and the sixteen by sixteen "shack" was built. Old "Red" the horse was bought and all was going fine, western style.

General Conference time had come. I longed to be with the conference, but that was out of the question. And now the one question in our minds was, "Where, oh where, will I be sent this year to labor? Surely the good Lord knows best, and he will not send me too far from home. He knows that we are trying so hard to save our little home back East and that if we are successful on our homestead for just three years we can prove up, and then we can pay off the five hundred dollar mortgage and have a little left to put in the hands of the Bishop. And the Lord knows that my dear wife and baby are now out here on the homestead, ten miles from my father and mother, twenty-five miles from town and post office, strangers in a strange land."

Then, too, the Eastern Montana District was to be organized that spring and that would mean new missionaries for the new district, so of course I would be left right there where I could do missionary work and at the same time look after my homestead.

Looking at it from a human standpoint we could see no reason whatever but that I would be left there, and every reason in the world why I would be. But at the same time the Spirit seemed to say to me that I must not plan on that but rather be ready to go any place! So in humble reverence we offered ourselves again to God with a firm determination to go where he wanted us to go, praying for grace sufficient.

About the 25th day of April, father and I drove to the "breaks" for poles to cover my dugout barn, we could not make the round trip to my homestead, so stopped at father's for the night. It was late when we got there, and while I was unhitching the team father went for the lantern. During the day word reached mother from conference of the appointments.

When father came back from the house with the light I noticed that he acted rather strangely and finally he said with a strained voice, "Well, my boy, word has come from conference."

In a flash I could see my wife and baby alone on the big homestead during the long summer months, for I seemed to know that I would be called upon to leave them there.

"Yes?" was my only response.

Father turned his back to me as though he could not get the harness unfastened, and managed to say, "Spokane."

Silence reigned for a few minutes and dear old dad said, "I wouldn't go a step! You are needed just as badly here as any place! Now that you have such a fine piece of land, too, it would be a shame to leave it, and you can't leave Minnie and the baby out there alone. I wouldn't go! I wouldn't!"

But father's words proved to be a help to me rather than a discouragement, as I well remembered his telling me long ago how Brother Joseph told him in the spirit of prophecy that he would tell the gospel to many in foreign fields if he would prove faithful; but

he did not prove himself, and when I was ordained he told me with tears in his eyes (a thing we seldom saw father do was to cry) that I must prove faithful and do the work that he failed to do.

Mother had had most of the day to think the matter over and to have her cry, so when we reached the house she was prepared to cheer and strengthen me.

"Well, well, my dear boy, what a grand field you have been appointed to labor in!" (And she put her arms around me.) "How proud your mother is of you. You are the only traveling missionary in that great field. What a charge God has seen fit to give to you!" And as mother talked, not giving room for a thought of any other kind, but that "you are going," we were soon all in the same spirit and making plans to that end.

In the morning, bright and early, I started for home. Oh, how could I tell wife where I was asked to go? She was young in the work; had always been taught to disrespect the work instead of to love it, as I had been taught. Would she feel willing to make the great sacrifice? She had passed through so much already, had given up her home, had given her companion over to the work, and now she must be left alone out on the prairies of Montana while her loved one would be on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, nearly a thousand miles away.

But the good Lord had prepared the way and had sent word to her the day before of my appointment, and she, too, had been strengthened by the great Spirit of God.

As I drove towards the house she ran out to meet me and greeted me with the glad words, "You are going, aren't you, sweetheart?"

"Going where?"

"Why, out to that beautiful State of Washington!"

"Yes, girlie; if you say go I will surely go," and I might say that as we gave ourselves fully for the Master's service the peaceful Spirit of God rested upon us, and then our happiest moments were in making our plans for the coming year's work.

The 12th day of June, wife, baby and I started for the depot. We left babe at mother's as we passed by there, and slowly we drove to the little depot where we would so soon say good-by to each other. I shall never forget how beautiful and womanly my sweetheart looked as the train pulled away leaving her all alone at the depot. I stood upon the rear end of the coach and from there I watched my loved one until all I could see was a little white speck. I need not tell you of the hours of sadness and loneliness that we each experienced as she was winding her way home to the babe and homestead with "old Red" and I was being taken from them by the mighty steam engine.

In due time I was in the city of Spokane. I soon located the church and the home of Brother W. W. Fordham. All were strangers to me, and I must say my faith was tried. District conference time was near at hand, and that night there was to be a priesthood meeting. Brother Fordham and I attended. He was the only one who knew the new missionary had arrived. As we opened the door, Brother Gray, the city missionary, arose and stated, "Brethren,

this is our new missionary. This is the man I have described to you, that God had shown me in vision."

And then I was told how Brother Gray and Brother Hart had each seen their new missionary and had described him to the Saints, even so far as to notice that his hair was parted on the right side. They each testified that I was certainly the man. I was told that I would be blessed in my labors, and that the angels would go before me. All this was strengthening to me, and as I wrote it all to wife she, too, rejoiced that we were where God wanted us.

It might be well to state that nearly two years have passed and all is well both on the homestead and in the district; wife has but one more summer to "hold down" the homestead, and then she can be with me. As it is now she is with me winters. And now as another General Conference draws near our earnest prayers are that God might see fit to leave us in this Spokane District, Washington. But we have learned that "God's ways are the best ways."



Immigration

By Lula M. Sandy

CHAPTER 2

THE IMMIGRANT tide tells the story of bright days of peace and prosperity, or dark days of panic, war, and industrial depression.

The Irish immigrants came in large numbers when the potato famine became a certainty. Germans and Italians came in large numbers after the absorption of their smaller states into the larger nations. Any severe oppression, (and there have been many), has brought the Russian Jew in numbers.

The new immigration differs materially from that of the old immigration. The old immigrant came from the better class, the more enlightened of the people, while the new immigrant is drawn from the poorest and least desirable element of southern Europe and Asia, from Italy, Austria, Russia, Syria, Turkey, India and Greece. These immigrants come from the poorest sections of their country, the small villages mostly, and for a time they live in filth and squalor, by necessity for their families' sake.

The woman's life is hard and dreary; there are many births and many deaths. The tenement is their home. They are meek and submissive. There they care for their large families and often a few boarders, and all prosper or starve together. Five or six persons sleep in one room, often with very little ventilation. They fill our streets with crowds as they cluster together in the large cities, and surely deserve our pity if we would but give them a thought. They come to us without employment, friends, fireside, food, or raiment; they cannot speak our language, are unacquainted with the