

MISSIONARY WORK

Fundamentalism claims the L. D. S. Church is in spiritual bondage because it does not send missionaries in the field without purse or scrip as was done in the early days of the restoration. Joseph Musser explained:

"SEPTEMBER 23, 1832, THE LORD, IN A REVELATION TO JOSEPH SMITH AND SIX OTHER ELDERS, RE-CONFIRMED THE ORDER OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD --- THE PRINCIPLE BEING FOLLOWED BY THE ANCIENT APOSTLES. SAID HE:

"I GIVE UNTO YOU THIS COMMANDMENT, THAT YE BECOME EVEN AS MY FRIENDS IN DAYS WHEN I WAS WITH THEM, TRAVELING TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN MY POWER: FOR I SUFFERED THEM NOT TO HAVE PURSE OR SCRIP, NEITHER TWO COATS) . . . THEREFORE LET NO MAN AMONG YOU, (FOR THE COMMANDMENT IS UNTO ALL THE FAITHFUL WHO ARE CALLED OF GOD IN THE CHURCH UNTO THE MINISTRY), FROM THIS HOUR TAKE PURSE OR SCRIP, THAT GOETH FORTH TO PROCLAIM THIS GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM." D. & C. 34:(77,78),86.

"THIS RULE WAS FOLLOWED IN THE PRESENT DISPENSATION FOR MANY YEARS, BUT NOW THE ORIGINAL INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW HAS BEEN CHANGED, REQUIRING THE ELDERS TO TRAVEL WITH PURSE AND SCRIP." (Truth, vol. 4, pp. 144,145)

Deprecating further the present proselyting methods of the Church Joseph

Musser continues his critique:

"CHURCH LEADERS BOAST MUCH OF THE MISSIONARY SYSTEM NOW IN VOGUE, WHILE PURSUING A COURSE DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE THAT WHICH THE LORD COMMANDS . . . UNDER GOD'S PLAN ELDERS GO INTO THE MISSIONFIELD DEPENDING ENTIRELY UPON THE LORD FOR GUIDANCE, SUSTENANCE AND PROTECTION. THIS TENDS TO KEEP THEM HUMBLE AND BETTER FITTED TO DELIVER THEIR MASTER'S MESSAGE. THE PLAN ALSO ENABLES MEN OF SPECIAL SPIRITUAL ATTAINMENTS, BUT WHO ARE NOT ENDOWED WITH WORLDLY WEALTH, TO PERFORM MISSIONS, WHEREAS TODAY SUCH MEN, THOUGH EMINENTLY QUALIFIED, ARE DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY BECAUSE OF LACK OF MEANS TO MEET THEIR DAILY EXPENSES . . . THE LAW OF GOD, AS SET FORTH, REMAINS UNALTERED, BUT THE CHURCH, THROUGH ITS ACTIONS AND ATTITUDE HAS INVALIDATED OR SUSPENDED IT, REQUIRING MISSIONARIES TO BE PROVIDED WITH MONTHLY ALLOWANCES, AND THAT OFTEN TIMES AT AN EMBARRASSING SACRIFICE ON THE PART OF THE PARENTS AND LOVED ONES AT HOME. MISSIONARIES IN THE FIELD HAVE EVEN BEEN TOLD THAT UNLESS THEY CAN HAVE MORE MONEY FURNISHED THEM THEY WILL BE SENT HOME BEFORE THEIR MISSIONS ARE ENDED. THE STOCK ARGUMENT IS THAT CONDITIONS HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE SAVIOR ANNOUNCED THAT LAW, AND MEN CANNOT COMPLY WITH IT TODAY . . . GOD HAS NOT CHANGED HIS LAW PERTAINING TO MISSIONARY WORK . . . THEN, IN ITS MISSIONARY POLICY, HAS NOT THE CHURCH DEPARTED FROM THIS LAW OF THE GOSPEL?" (Truth, vol. 3, pp. 144-6)

Joseph Musser's claim that only the wealthy can serve on missions for the Church is fallacy. Many young Elders in the Church work, save for and pay their own way in the mission field. Those financially unable, but who desire to serve, will be provided for by missionary ^{FUNDS} from the various Melchizedek Priesthood quorums. There is

is no reason for any worthy and desirous Elder to forfeit missionary service. Further one does not need to go abroad to perform a mission but may labor at home in the Stake missions of the Church where ample opportunity for service is everywhere present.

The reason the method of full-time missionary activity has been changed in the Church is because of changing social and economic conditions. The same was true in the days of the Savior. When the first missionaries were sent out by the Savior he commanded them to go without purse or scrip as stated:

"THESE TWELVE JESUS SENT FORTH, AND COMMANDED THEM SAYING . . . PROVIDE NEITHER GOLD, NOR SILVER, NOR BRASS IN YOUR PURSES, NOR SCRIP FOR YOUR JOURNEY, NEITHER TWO COATS, NEITHER SHOES, NOR YET STAVES: FOR THE WORKMEN IS WORTHY OF HIS MEAT." (Matthew 10:5,9,10)

We find, however, when the Lord commanded the Twelve as to their missionary service after his death, he told them to take both purse and scrip.

"AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, WHEN I SENT YOU WITHOUT PURSE AND SCRIP, AND SHOES, LACKED YE ANYTHING? AND THEY SAID NOTHING. THEN SAID HE TO THEM, BUT NOW, HE THAT HATH A PURSE, LET HIM TAKE IT, AND LIKEWISE HIS SCRIP." (Luke 22:35,36)

It would seem other considerations and conditions brought about a change in the form of missionary service. The same thing has happened in our own dispensation. In the founding days when the Saints were destitute, being driven from pillar to post missionaries went without purse or scrip as commanded, relying on those they preached to for sustenance. However, when the Saints settled in Utah and came of means the methods of proselyting were changed. This happened during Brigham Young's presidency. A missionary fund was first established to help support a missionary's family while he was away as well as to help him in getting to and from his field of labor. A short time later it was felt missionaries should pay their own way, not relying on means from investigators or converts poorer than themselves. As early as 1863, only fifteen years after the first pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, George A. Smith spoke of changing conditions that should alter the method of missionary service: