

This achievement was not imposed externally. This yearning to do and to be was kindled internally by as simple a thing as a testimony of the gospel.

I have received that testimony. I have given you my witness. The test of the truthfulness of my witness, as well as the witness of all those who have so testified in this conference, is not the acceptance by the nonmembers of the Church, nor even by the members of the Church. The test is whether God inspired it and recognizes and honors such testimony. Any of you may know of the truthfulness of these things which have been spoken by asking the Lord for your own personal witness that these things are true. May each of you be concerned enough about your eternal destiny so to ask,

I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**President Hugh B. Brown:**

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, of the First Council of Seventy, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing, "Come, O Thou King of Kings," conducted by Jay E. Welch.

After the singing, Elder Boyd K. Packer, Assistant to the Twelve, and President of the New England Mission, will be our speaker; and he will be followed by Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy.

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The Choir and congregation sang, "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

### ELDER BOYD K. PACKER

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My beloved brethren and sisters: Much of the past year we have spent presiding over the New England Mission. I can't resist quoting a few lines from Robert Frost. Coming from New England here to the many varieties of good weather we have seen today, these lines seem so appropriate:

"The sun was bright but the day was chill.

You know how it is on an April day,  
When the sun is bright and the wind is still,

And you're one month on in the middle of May.

But if you as much as dare to speak  
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,  
A wind comes off the frozen peak  
And you're two months back to the first of March."

("Two Tramps in Mudtime.")

New England is beautiful in many ways:

"Oh beautiful for pilgrim feet,  
Whose stern, impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare of freedom beat  
Across the wilderness!"

(Katherine Lee Bates, "America the Beautiful.")

It is a place of beginnings. It was there . . .

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flags to April's breeze unfurled,  
Here once the embattled farmers stood,  
And fired the shot heard round the world."

(Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Concord Hymn.")

**"The cradle of liberty"**

Something is said about its being the cradle of liberty. It is more than that. It is the birthplace of prophets of God. Joseph Smith was born there, Brigham Young, Willford Woodruff, and many others. Joseph Smith twice preached there from door to door.

Today our elders set foot on the same granite cobblestones, tap the same knockers on the same doors to bear the selfsame witness.

They see them come, two by two—teaching truth, leaving blessings. Because they are but striplings, they do

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not see them as servants of the Lord, authorized to represent The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by his own declaration "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased. . . ." (D&C 1:30.)

This dedicated service of the missionaries is most appealing to non-members. Last week I sat at lunch with two executives of a national service organization. "Will you," one of them solicited, "spend an evening with us to explain how your volunteer program works? We depend to a large measure on volunteer help, and we need to know the secret of your success."

#### The secret to our success:

If there is a secret to our success, it is poorly kept. The whole purpose of this conference and of our missionary effort is to tell it—over and over and over again.

A prominent minister recently reflected on why their people would not serve. "Our ministers are dedicated. Why will our people not respond?" The thing he does not understand is that the response to such a call does not depend on the dedication and conviction of the minister or the one making the call but rather upon the dedication and conviction of the one who answers it.

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there is no professional clergy, as is common in the other churches. Perhaps more significant than this, there is no laity. All members of the Church are subject to call to render service and carry on the activities of the Church. The miracle is *the members respond!*

On one occasion I was in the office of President Henry D. Moyle when he placed a call. After greeting the man, he said, "I wonder if your business affairs would bring you into Salt Lake City sometime in the near future? I would like to meet with you and your wife, for I have a matter of some importance that I would like to discuss with you."

Though it was many miles away, that man suddenly remembered that

his business would bring him to Salt Lake City the very next morning. I was there when President Moyle announced to this man that he had been called to preside over one of the missions of the Church.

"Now," he said, "we don't want to rush you into this decision. Call me in a day or two, as soon as you are able to make a determination as to your feelings concerning the call."

The man looked at his wife and she looked at him, and without a word there was that silent conversation between husband and wife, and that gentle almost imperceptible nod. He turned back to President Moyle and said, "Well, President, what is there to say? What could we tell you in a few days that we couldn't tell you now? We have been called. What answer is there? Of course, we will respond to the call."

Then President Moyle said gently, "Well, if you feel that way about it, actually there is some urgency about this matter. I wonder if you could be prepared to leave the 13th of March?"

The man gulped, for that was just eleven days away. He glanced at his wife. There was another silent conversation. And he said, "Yes, President, we can meet that appointment."

"What about your business?" asked the President. "What about your grain elevator? What about your livestock? What about your other holdings?"

"I don't know," said the man. "But we will make arrangements. Somehow all of those things will be all right."

Such is the great miracle that we see repeated day after day. These men, each with his wife and family, leave their private affairs settled as best they can with relatives or partners. They respond to the call, giving up political preference, opportunities for promotions and advancements in their careers, opportunities to enlarge their holdings and increase their wealth.

One of the marvelous testimonies we witness regularly is the generosity of nonmember employers. They not only permit but indeed encourage men who may be their key executive officers to respond to such calls and reassure

them with this farewell: "We do not understand it, but we compliment you on your dedication. We assure you that you can return with full status."

The generosity of such men, though not members of the Church, will not go unheeded. To you, our friends, who have been thus generous, we say that you are within the scope of our prayers, and blessings will accrue to your benefit.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the men and women who serve is their willingness to pay for the privilege.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Mal. 3:10.)

Without any dinners or any billing or any system of collections, ten percent of their increase is generously donated. Indeed, this is just the beginning. There is a fast offering to sustain the poor; there are building funds; there are donations of every kind. Such giving robs them of selfishness. It is one thing to give lip service—it is another to order one's life.

These are men and women who are "in the world" but "not of the world." They are Saints—Latter-day Saints—and there are hundreds of thousands of them. The test, of course, is not in numbers only. To know the so-called "secret," one must see within the heart of the individual.

It is no light thing to open one's heart and expose the most tender and delicate feelings. I hesitatingly do so only from the feeling that it may help someone, that it may illustrate, that you may understand that the gospel has practical application in everyday life; but most of all because it is Easter.

Just more than a year ago, my mother passed away, a lovely trim little mother of eleven children, about whom I have spoken before at this pulpit. Her parents emigrated from the old country, and she grew up speaking Danish.

Two years ago she contracted a fatal malady. Fortunately, she was under the care of a doctor who was like a son; his ministering to her showed such a reverence. She faced the experience all too common among us, the gradual weakening and erosion of her capacities, accompanied by increasing pain. At this time one of my brothers in company with the patriarch gave her a blessing, as authorized under the revelation that specifies that "the elders of the church, two or more, shall be called, and shall pray for and lay their hands upon them in my name; and if they die they shall die unto me, and if they live they shall live unto me." (D&C 42:44.)

In a marvelous way she was released from pain and could rest comfortably, except when moved about. She faced the long ordeal of the decline.

One Friday afternoon at my desk, while I was working on correspondence, it suddenly occurred to me that we should go and visit Mother. It was a very strong impression. We made the trip that very day.

We found Mother about the same as we had seen her on a number of previous visits. She seemed more appreciative than usual for our visit. She then whispered over and over again the single word, "Tomorrow." Finally, I understood and said, "Mother, is tomorrow the day?" She smiled a radiant smile that brightened the face of this weakened little lady. "Yes," she said. "Mother, are you sure?" "Oh, yes," she said. "I am sure."

I then asked if she would like to have a blessing. "That would be good," she said.

That evening the brothers came as they usually did, and the six of us administered to her. The spirit of inspiration was present, and the words of the blessing hold a sacred assurance to our family.

I was under the necessity of meeting a conference appointment in Panguitch [Utah] the following day, and hesitated; but finally I felt that I must be about the ministry to which I have been called. The doctor assured us that there was no change, and it was sug-

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gested that I call them on Sunday evening when I returned.

"Oh, no," I said. "I'll check with you tomorrow."

On Saturday, the tomorrow about which she spoke, I called before leaving. The doctor had been there, and everything was as before. Upon arriving at my destination I called again and received the same assurance. After the first meeting I placed another call and was informed that Mother had slept peacefully away, surrounded by her family. The last words she was heard to speak were "Ira, Ira," the name of my father, who by six years had preceded her in death.

This then is the secret: In a thousand quiet, spiritual ways, that witness comes. The gospel of Jesus Christ is

true. I bear solemn witness that Jesus is the Christ. I know, and she knew, that he is the resurrection and the life and that as he said, "he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11:25-26.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President Hugh B. Brown:

Elder Boyd K. Packer, Assistant to the Twelve and President of the New England Mission, has just spoken to us.

Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of the Seventy will now speak to us.

### ELDER MARION D. HANKS

#### *Of the First Council of the Seventy*

It has been a great blessing through this conference to have with us Brother Ivins, our dearly loved and respected associate. He isn't here at this meeting, but I think it not inappropriate to tell you that he has been very ill and through the graciousness of the Lord has been restored marvelously and is able to be with us occasionally. He has been in meetings of this conference.

I would like to commend also the appointment of President Cullimore, a strong and choice associate in the missionary cause in England—a man of great substance and faith and strength.

I was thinking a few moments ago about a meeting in Idaho at which I listened to a speaker who had waited for a long time to be called on. He commended the people at the meeting for their graciousness to him, expressed appreciation for their kindness, thanked them for making him feel at home, and said, "You have really made me feel like one of you. I don't know which one, but he ought to be about ready to go home—he's tired!"

As I have listened with you to the great sermons of this conference and to the marvelous music and have felt

the spirit and enjoyed the instructions, like you I have paid many of the speakers the tribute of divided attention. Their sermons have started me thinking. Two thoughts in particular have recurred. The repeated references to the modern movement celebrating the demise of God have recalled a reported exchange between Nietzsche and another. Nietzsche's message read, "God is dead." Signed "Nietzsche." The answer came back, "Nietzsche is dead." Signed "God."

The other thought: Someone said that atheists do not find God for the same reason that thieves do not find policemen.

During these conference sessions I have been thinking of you—you and your counterparts all over the Church, all over the world—you who do so much of the meaningful work of the Church in your own area and sector. I am sure that you, like I, will go home with the desire and determination, born of appreciation, to apply and make use of what has been said here.

Perhaps you will go home strengthened in two pivotal principles around which our efforts revolve.