

I further testify that obedience to all of God's laws brings the precious promise of peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "Go, Ye Messengers of Glory" without announcement.

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### President Hinckley

We have heard from President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Go, Ye Messengers of Glory."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

## Elder Thomas S. Monson

### Anonymous donor

Recently, I approached the reception desk of a large hospital to learn the room number of a patient I had come to visit. This hospital, like almost every other in the land, was undergoing a massive expansion. Behind the desk where the receptionist sat was a magnificent plaque which bore an inscription of thanks to donors who had made possible the expansion. The name of each donor who had contributed \$100,000 appeared in a flowing script, etched on an individual brass placard suspended from the main plaque by a glittering chain.

The names of the benefactors were well known. Captains of commerce, giants of industry, professors of learning—all were there. I felt gratitude for their charitable benevolence. Then my eyes rested on a brass placard which was different—it contained no name. One word, and one word only, was inscribed: "Anonymous." I smiled and wondered who the unnamed contributor could have been. Surely he or she experienced a quiet joy unknown to any other.

### "Tell no man"

My thoughts turned backward in time—back to the Holy Land; back to Him whom we especially remember this Easter Sunday; back to Him who

redeemed from the grave all mankind; back to Him who on that special mountain taught His disciples the true spirit of giving when he counseled, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them. . . .

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:1, 3).

Then, as though to indelibly impress on their souls the practical application of this sacred truth, He came down from the mountain with a great multitude following Him. "And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

"And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

"And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man" (Matthew 8:2-4). The word *anonymous* had a precious meaning then. It still has.

### "Shan't know who sends it"

The classics of literature, as well as the words from holy writ, teach us the endurance of anonymity. A favorite of mine is Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." I can picture the trembling Ebenezer Scrooge seeing in vision the return of his former partner, Jacob Marley, though Jacob had been dead for seven years. The words of

Marley penetrate my very soul, as he laments, "Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I!" ("A Christmas Carol," in *The Best Short Stories of Charles Dickens* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947], p. 435).

After a fretful night—wherein Scrooge was shown by the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come the true meaning of living, loving, and giving—he awakened to discover anew the freshness of life, the power of love, and the spirit of a true gift. He remembered the plight of the Bob Cratchit family, arranged with a lad to purchase the giant turkey (the size of a boy), and sent the gift to the Cratchits. Then, with supreme joy, the reborn Ebenezer Scrooge exclaims to himself, "He shan't know who sends it" ("A Christmas Carol," p. 481). Again the word *anonymous*.

### Lessons from the *Lusitania* and Potomac River accidents

The sands flow through the hourglass, the clock of history moves on; yet the divine truth prevails undiminished, undiluted, unchanged.

When the magnificent ocean liner *Lusitania* plunged to the bottom of the Atlantic, many lives were lost with the vessel. Unknown are many deeds of valor performed by those who perished. One man who went down with the *Lusitania* gave his life preserver to a woman, though he could not swim a stroke. It didn't really matter that he was Alfred Vanderbilt, the American multimillionaire. He did not give of worldly treasure; he gave his life. Said Emerson, "Rings and other jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself" ("Gifts," in *The Complete Writings of*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson* [New York: Wm. H. Wise and Co., 1929], p. 286).

A year ago last winter, a modern jetliner faltered after takeoff and plunged into the icy Potomac River. Acts of bravery and feats of heroism were in evidence that day, the most dramatic of which was one witnessed by the pilot of a rescue helicopter. The rescue rope was lowered to a struggling survivor. Rather than grasping the lifeline to safety, the man tied the line to another, who was then lifted to safety. The rope was lowered again, and yet another was saved. Five were rescued from the icy waters. Among them was not found the anonymous hero. Unknown by name, "he left the vivid air signed with his honor" (Stephen Spender, "I think continually of those—" in *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*, ed. James Dalton Morrison [New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers], p. 291).

### Three examples from daily lives

It is not only in dying that one can show forth the true gift. Opportunities abound in our daily lives to demonstrate our adherence to the Master's lesson. Let me share in capsule form just three:

1. On a winter's morn, a father quietly awakened his two sons and whispered to them, "Boys, it snowed last night. Get dressed, and we'll shovel the snow from our neighbors' walks before daylight."

The party of three, dressed warmly, and under cover of darkness, cleared the snow from the approaches to several homes. Father had given but one instruction to the boys: "Make no noise, and they will not know who helped them." Again, the word *anonymous*.

2. At a nursing home in our valley, two young men prepared the sacrament. While doing so, an elderly patient in a wheelchair spoke aloud the words, "I'm cold." Without a moment's hesitation, one of the lads walked over to her, removed his own

jacket, placed it about the patient's shoulders, gave her a loving pat on the arm, and then returned to the sacrament table. The sacred emblems were then blessed and passed to the assembled patients.

Following the meeting, I said to the young man, "What you did here today I shall long remember."

He replied, "I worried that without my jacket I would not be properly dressed to bless the sacrament."

I responded, "Never was one more properly dressed for such an occasion than were you."

I know not his name. He remains anonymous.

3. In far-off Europe, beyond a curtain of iron and a wall called "Berlin," I visited, with a handful of members, a small cemetery. It was a dark night, and a cold rain had been falling throughout the entire day.

We had come to visit the grave of a missionary who many years before had died while in the service of the Lord. A hushed silence shrouded the scene as we gathered about the grave. With a flashlight illuminating the headstone, I read the inscription:

Joseph A. Ott

Born: 12 December 1870—  
Virgin, Utah

Died: 10 January 1896—  
Dresden, Germany

Then the light revealed that this grave was unlike any other in the cemetery. The marble headstone had been polished, weeds such as those which covered other graves had been carefully removed, and in their place was an immaculately edged bit of lawn and some beautiful flowers that told of tender and loving care. I asked, "Who has made this grave so attractive?" My query was met by silence.

At last a twelve-year-old deacon acknowledged that he wanted to render this unheralded kindness and, without prompting from parents or leaders, had done so. He said that he just wanted to do something for a missionary who gave his life while in the service of the Lord. I thanked him; and then I asked

all there to safeguard his secret, that his gift might remain anonymous.

### John Weightman's dream

Perhaps no one in my reading has portrayed this teaching of the Master quite so memorably or so beautifully as Henry Van Dyke in his never-to-be-forgotten "The Mansion." In this classic is featured one John Weightman, a man of means, a dispenser of political power, a successful citizen. His philosophy toward giving can be gained from his own statement: "Of course you have to be careful how you give, in order to secure the best results—no indiscriminate giving—no pennies in beggars' hats! . . . Try to put your gifts where they can be identified and do good all around" (*Unknown Quantity: A Book of Romance and Some Half-told Tales* [New York: Scribner's, 1918], pp. 337, 339).

One evening, John Weightman sat in his comfortable chair at his library table and perused the papers before him spread. There were descriptions and pictures of the Weightman wing of the hospital and the Weightman Chair of Political Jurisprudence, as well as an account of the opening of the Weightman Grammar School. John Weightman felt satisfied.

He picked up the family Bible which lay on the table, turned to a passage and read to himself the words: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:19-20).

The book seemed to float away from him. He leaned forward upon the table, his head resting on his folded hands. He slipped into a deep sleep.

In his dream, John Weightman was transported to the Heavenly City. A guide met him and others whom he had known in life and advised that he would conduct them to their heavenly homes.

The group paused before a beautiful mansion and heard the guide say, "This is the home for you, Dr. McLean. Go in; there is no more sickness here, no more death, nor sorrow, nor pain; for your old enemies are all conquered. But all the good that you have done for others, all the help that you have given, all the comfort that you have brought, all the strength and love that you bestowed upon the suffering, are here; for we have built them all into this mansion for you" (*Unknown Quantity: A Book of Romance and Some Half-told Tales*, pp. 361-62).

A devoted husband of an invalid wife was shown a lovely mansion, as were a mother, early widowed, who reared an outstanding family, and a paralyzed young woman who had lain for thirty years upon her bed—helpless but not hopeless—succeeding by a miracle of courage in her single aim: never to complain, but always to impart a bit of her joy and peace to everyone who came near her.

By this time, John Weightman was impatient to see what mansion awaited him. As he and the Keeper of the Gate walked on, the homes became smaller—then smaller. At last they stood in the middle of a dreary field and beheld a hut, hardly big enough for a shepherd's shelter. Said the guide, "This is your mansion, John Weightman."

In desperation, John Weightman argued, "Have you not heard that I have built a schoolhouse; a wing of a hospital; . . . three . . . churches?"

"Wait," the guide cautioned. ". . . They were not ill done. But they were all marked and used as foundations for the name and mansion of John Weightman in the world. . . . Verily, you have had your reward for them. Would you be paid twice?"

A sadder but wiser John Weightman spoke more lowly: "What is it that counts here?"

Came the reply, "Only that which is truly given. Only that good which is done for the love of doing it. Only those plans in which the welfare of oth-

ers is the master thought. Only those labors in which the sacrifice is greater than the reward. Only those gifts in which the giver forgets himself" ("The Mansion," pp. 364-68).

John Weightman was awakened by the sound of the clock chiming the hour of seven. He had slept the night through. As it turned out, he yet had a life to live, love to share, and gifts to give. Oh, may we remember that—

A bell is no bell till you ring it,  
A song is no song till you sing it,  
And love in your heart wasn't put  
there to stay,  
Love isn't love till you give it  
away.

(Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein 2nd, "Sixteen Going on Seventeen.")

### Service known to God

May this truth guide our lives. May we look upward as we press forward in the service of our God and our fellowmen. And may we incline an ear toward Galilee, that we might hear perhaps an echo of the Savior's teachings: "Do not your alms before men, to be seen of them" (Matthew 6:1). "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:3). And of our good deeds: "See thou tell no man" (Matthew 8:4). Our hearts will then be lighter, our lives brighter, and our souls richer.

Loving service anonymously given may be unknown to man—but the gift and the giver are known to God. Of this truth I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The Choir sang "Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise" without announcement.

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### President Hinckley

We have listened to Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise."