

However Long and Hard the Road

JEFFREY R. AND PATRICIA T. HOLLAND

Patricia T. Holland

Just before commencement exercises last spring, my husband received a letter from a student which read something like this:

Dear President Holland:

I am completing my undergraduate experience at BYU this month and will be graduating in our upcoming commencement service. My parents are relieved, my professors are surprised, and I am holding my breath. Things could go wrong, you know, even at this late date.

And that brings my one grievance with you. It is this late date business. My dates have been so late that most of them never showed up. I thought it was an assumed part of the BYU contract that I would be married before graduation. Well, you've got just under three weeks to come up with somebody or I want my tuition back.

Urgently yours,

Obviously this letter was written in fun, but I do worry that some of you—especially the women on campus—are struggling with your social life more than you would like. I expect there are many who would like to be dating and who would like to have a guaranteed offer of marriage before graduation. As

the chill of winter sets in, you may be feeling about as special as frozen custard.

If you are disappointed in the romance—or lack of it—in your life, I ask you to do exactly what this student did—keep a sense of humor, retain your marriage goal for the important commandment it is, and put your energies into becoming! Don't spend your time walking on your lower lip about what is not. That just stretches the heck out of your lower jaw. Be excited about your chance to grow and develop and *become*.

You have so much personal potential, and this is the greatest place in the entire world to develop it. This *is* the time and this *is* the place!

It's interesting to me that the rest of the world does eventually discover what was given long ago in the scriptures. I recently read this: "Only a small portion of what we are [is developed] and there is enormous potential in the human being" (Leo Buscaglia, *Love* [New York: Fawcett, 1982], p. 19).

In his book, *The Politics of Experience*, R. D. Laing said, "What we think is less than what

Jeffrey R. Holland was president of Brigham Young University when this devotional address was given on 18 January 1983.

we know: What we know is less than what we love: What we love is so much less than what there is, and to this . . . extent, we are much less than what we are” (R.D. Laing in *Love*, p. 19). Without being smug, we’ve known that since the dawn of the Restoration. Surely that ought to be our own exciting challenge toward becoming—of growing, seeing, feeling, touching, smelling, hearing, believing. No time for a Harlequin Romance or a long lower lip with that kind of view.

Marilyn Funt, who wrote the book *Are You Anybody?* did so in response to people’s asking in the Hollywood swirl if she “was anybody.” In answer she said:

I used to think being somebody meant public recognition of one’s efforts. Wrong. I now know that the feeling of being somebody comes from hard work and self-growth. Being in control of my life makes me answer that question with a strong “Yes!” [New York: Pinnacle Books, 1981]

If it didn’t seem unbecoming of the president’s wife in full view of the television audience, I would like to just shout at you to see in yourself what I see in you. The only limitations you have are those you set on yourselves. All of the tools and texts are here, right at your hand. But sometimes we cannot recognize the real purpose and significance of the moment which is ours to experience. That’s because too many of us learn only through our heads and not through our hearts!

A common man or woman will hear only the commonplace, but a man or a woman connected to the powers of heaven will learn to be an inheritor of those powers.

As Christ was moving toward his crucifixion, he said, “Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again” (John 12:28). Some of the people there didn’t hear anything but a noise (they thought it thundered); others only heard words, and they thought an angel had

spoken to him. Only a few heard the words as they were, and *they knew* God had spoken them!

“Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes” (John 12:30). He may have been saying, “I already know these things, but did you hear that you too (if you keep company with him) have the potential to glorify his name?”

Be all that you can be! If you have oil in your lamps, you will find how often you get a chance to light them. If you have cared enough to prepare, your light will attract many, both men and women who will seek and cherish your companionship.

In closing, may I share with you a direct quote from my baby sister who graduated from BYU in 1980, returned from a mission in May of 1982, and is still single:

It used to discourage me that girls younger than I were married, but now, having learned what I’ve learned from my education and especially from my mission, I am thrilled with the direction, opportunities, and privileges the Lord has given me to grow. I will have so much more to contribute to my marriage when that time comes. And now I know after getting to know the Lord better that it will come in his own due time!

I, too, believe that—and share with you my testimony that the Lord lives and loves you and will direct the growth of each one of you, forever. Amen.

President Holland

Well, this certainly isn’t curling up in front of the fire with a bowl of popcorn. It isn’t even as cozy as the Cougarcat with a plate of nachos. But it is a great privilege to visit with you in any setting, and we are honored to have the opportunity this morning. The very nature of our opening assembly in September requires that I stress university policies and the general expectations for a new school year. I have been

quite forthright there, even a little stern, in hopes everyone would understand the firm academic and moral expectations we have for every BYU student. This past September I was pretty direct about some problems we had last spring, and in doing so I probably sent buck-shot out into a very large audience who didn't really deserve it. I guess that is okay if by word of mouth you helped take it to that very small audience who did deserve it.

For those reasons I have wanted to make this visit—convened as you are this very morning as the fog and the rain and the midwinter doldrums bear down on you—I have wanted to make this message more personal and more hopeful. Often enough I will have to talk about the university and your obligations to it. This morning, however, I just want to talk about you. In praying and preparing for this hour, I have wanted to help you, to have you believe we understand you. I pray even now that you will feel our love and admiration and appreciation for you.

Hang In and Hang On

We speak about *excellence* a great deal at BYU these days, and, by definition, excellence does not come easily or quickly—an excellent education does not, a successful mission does not, a strong, loving marriage does not, rewarding personal relationships do not. It is simply a truism that nothing very valuable can come without significant sacrifice and effort and patience on our part. Perhaps you discovered that when you got your grades last month. Maybe in other ways you are finding that many of the most hoped-for rewards in life can seem an awfully long time coming.

My concern this morning is that you will face some delays and disappointments at this formative time in your life and feel that no one else in the history of mankind has ever had your problems or faced those difficulties. And when some of those challenges come, you will have the temptation common to us

all to say, “This task is too hard. The burden is too heavy. The path is too long.” And so you decide to quit, simply to give up. Now to terminate certain kinds of tasks is not only acceptable but often very wise. If you are, for example, a flagpole sitter then I say, “Come on down.” But in life’s most crucial and telling tasks, my plea is to stick with it, to persevere, to hang in and hang on, and to reap your reward. Or to be slightly more scriptural:

Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.

Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days.
[D&C 64:33–34]

I am asking you this morning not to give up “for ye are laying the foundation of a great work.” That “great work” is you—your life, your future, the very fulfillment of your dreams. That “great work” is what, with effort and patience and God’s help, you can become. When days are difficult or problems seem unending, I plead with you to stay in the harness and keep pulling. You are entitled to “eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days,” but it will require your heart and a willing mind. It will require that you stay at your post and keep trying.

“Victory—Victory at All Costs”

On 10 May 1940, as the specter of Nazi infamy moved relentlessly toward the English Channel, Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill was summoned to the post of prime minister of England. He hastily formed a government and on May 13 went before the House of Commons with his maiden speech.

I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined this Government: “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat.”

We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war, by sea, land, and air, with all our might and with all our strength that God can give us. . . . That is our policy. You ask, What is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory—victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be. [Churchill: the Life Triumphant, American Heritage, 1965, p. 90]

Six days later he went on radio to speak to the world at large. He said:

This is one of the most awe-striking periods in the long history of France and Britain. . . . Behind us . . . gather a group of shattered States and bludgeoned races: the Czechs, the Poles, the Norwegians, the Danes, the Dutch, the Belgians—upon all of whom the long night of barbarism will descend, unbroken even by a star of hope, unless we conquer, as conquer we must; as conquer we shall. [Churchill, p. 91]

Then two weeks later he was back before Parliament. “We shall not flag or fail,” he vowed.

We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender. [Churchill, p. 91]

I share these lines with you not only because they are among the most stirring calls to patriotism and courage ever uttered in the English language, but also because I relied on them personally once, when I was just your very age.

Exactly twenty years ago last fall I stood on the famous white cliffs of Dover overlooking the English Channel, the very channel which twenty years before that ran as the only barrier between Hitler and England’s fall. In 1962 my mission was concluding, and I was concerned. My future seemed very dim and difficult. My parents were then serving a mission also, which meant I was going home to live I-did-not-quite-know-where and to pay my way I-did-not-quite-know-how. I had completed only one year of college, and I had no idea what to major in or where to seek my career. I knew I needed three more years for a baccalaureate degree and had the vague awareness that graduate school of some kind inevitably loomed up behind that.

I knew tuitions were high and jobs were scarce. And I knew there was an alarmingly wider war spreading in Southeast Asia, which could require my military service. I hoped to marry but wondered when—or if—that could be, at least under all these circumstances. My educational hopes seemed like a never-ending path into the unknown, and I had hardly begun.

So before heading home I stood one last time on the cliffs of the country I had come to love so much,

*This royal throne of kings, this scepter’d isle . . .
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war. [Richard II,
act 2, scene 1, lines 40, 43–44]*

And there I read again,

*We have before us many, many long months of struggle and suffering. What is our aim? . . .
Victory—victory at all costs; victory in spite of all terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be. . . .*

Conquer we must; as conquer we shall. . . . We shall never surrender.

Blood? Toil? Tears? Sweat? Well, I figured I had as much of those as anyone, so I headed home to try. I was, in the parlance of the day, going to give it “my best shot,” however feeble that might prove to be. Now at the same time in your life, I ask you to do the same.

Dreams and Visions

As you wage such personal wars, obviously part of the strength to “hang in there” comes from some glimpse, however faint and fleeting, of what the victory *can* be. It is as true now as when Solomon said it that “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18). If your eyes are always on your shoelaces, if all you can see is this class or that test, this date or that roommate, this disappointment or that dilemma, then it really is quite easy to throw in the towel and stop the fight. But what if it is the fight of your life? Or more precisely if it is the fight *for* your life, your *eternal* life at that? What if beyond this class or that test, this date or that roommate, this disappointment or that dilemma, you really can see and can hope for all the best and right things that God has to offer? Oh, it may be blurred a bit by the perspiration running into your eyes, and in a really difficult fight one of the eyes might even be closing a bit, but faintly, dimly, and ever so far away you can see the object of it all. And you say it is worth it, you do want it, you will fight on. Like Coriantumr, you will lean upon your sword to rest a while, then rise to fight again (see Ether 15:24–30).

Joseph Smith’s Perseverance

But how, you ask, do you get this glimpse of the future that helps you to hang on? Well, for me that is one of the great gifts of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not insignificant that early in this life Joseph Smith was taught this lesson three times in the same night and once again the next morning. Moroni said, quoting the Lord verbatim as recorded by the prophet Joel:

I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids of those days will I pour out my spirit.
[Joel 2:28–29]

Dreaming dreams and seeing visions. The Lord’s spirit upon all flesh—sons and daughters, old and young, servants and handmaids. I may be wrong, but I can’t imagine an Old Testament verse of any kind that could have helped this boy prophet more. He is being called into the battle of his life, for life itself, or at least for its real meaning and purpose. He will be driven and hunted and hounded. His enemies will rail and ridicule. He will see his children die and his land lost and his marriage tremble. He will languish in prison through a Missouri winter, and he will cry out toward the vault of heaven, “O God, where art thou? . . . How long. . . O Lord, how long?” (D&C 121:1–3). Finally he would walk the streets of his own city uncertain who, except for a precious few, were really friend or actually foe. And all that toil and trouble, pain and perspiration would end maliciously at Carthage—when there simply were finally more foes than friends. Felled by balls fired from the door of the jail inside and one coming through the window from outside, he fell dead into the hands of his murderers—thirty-eight years of age.

If all this and so much more was to face the Prophet in such a troubled lifetime, and if he finally knew what fate awaited him in Carthage, as he surely did, why didn’t he just quit somewhere along the way? Who needs it? Who needs the abuse and the persecution and the despair and death? It doesn’t sound fun to me, so why not just zip shut the cover of your Triple Combination, hand in your Articles of Faith cards, and go home?

Why not? For the simple reason that he had dreamed dreams and seen visions. Through the blood and the toil and the tears and the sweat, he had seen the redemption of Israel. It was out there somewhere—dimly, distantly—but it was there. So he kept his shoulder to the wheel until God said his work was finished.

The Early Saints; Fulfillment Ahead

And what of the other Saints? What were they to do with a martyred Prophet, a persecuted past, and now hopeless future? With Joseph and Hyrum gone, shouldn't they just quietly slip away also—somewhere, anywhere? What is the use? They have run and run and run. They have wept and buried their dead. They have started over so many times their hands are bloodied and their hearts are bruised. In the name of sanity and safety and peace, why don't they just quit?

Well, it was those recurring dreams, and compelling visions. It was spiritual strength. It was the fulfillment they knew to be ahead, no matter how faint or far away.

In their very first general conference, convened three months after the Church was organized, the Saints had recorded this:

Much exhortation and instruction was given, and the Holy Ghost was poured out upon us in a miraculous manner—many of our number prophesied, whilst others had the heavens opened to their view. The goodness and the condescension of a merciful God . . . create[d] within us a sensation of rapturous gratitude, and inspire[d] us with fresh zeal and energy, in the cause of truth. [Times and Seasons 4:23]

There they were, approximately thirty members of the Church meeting in that tiny Peter Whitmer home in Fayette, planning to overthrow the prince of darkness and establish the kingdom of God in all the world. All the world? What presumption! Were they

demented? Had they lost all power to reason? Thirty very average, garden-variety Latter-day Saints willing to work the rest of their lives? To what end? Persecution and pain and maybe thirty more members—for a grand total of sixty? Perhaps they did see how limited their immediate personal success would be, and maybe they even saw the trouble ahead, but they saw something more. It was all in that business of the influence of the Holy Ghost and heavens being opened to their view. President John Taylor said later of that experience:

A few men assembled in a log cabin; they saw visions of heaven, and gazed upon the eternal world; they looked through the rent vista of futurity, and beheld the glories of eternity; . . . they were laying the foundation of the salvation of this world. [HC 6:295]

Now there was to be a lot of bad road between that first conference of thirty people and a Church which would one day have nations flocking to it. And, unless I miss my guess, there are several miles of bad road ahead of that Church yet. But to have seen it and felt it and believed it kept them from growing “weary in well-doing,” helped them believe even in the most difficult of times that “out of small things proceedeth that which is great.” In battle far more important than World War II would be, these Saints also vowed victory, however long and hard the road.

Determination

Though nothing in our lives seems to require the courage and patient long-suffering of those early Latter-day Saints, still almost every worthwhile endeavor I can imagine takes something of that same determination. Certainly an education does, including paying off your student loans. But it can be done. I've done it. It just takes time. Even love at

first sight—if there is such a thing—is nothing like love after nineteen years, seven months, and eleven days, if my marriage to Sister Holland is any indication. Indeed “the best is [always] yet to be” (Robert Browning, “Rabbi Ben Ezra”).

In that sense Troilus, whose impatient love for Cressida makes him something of a basket case, teaches us a valuable lesson. “He that will have a cake out of the wheat must tarry the grinding,” Pandarus says to Troilus. “Have I not tarried?” Troilus pouts.

Pandarus: Ay, the grinding; but you must tarry the bolting.

Troilus: Have I not tarried?

Pandarus: Ay, the bolting; but you must tarry the leavening.

Troilus: Still have I tarried?

Pandarus: Ay, to the leavening; but here's yet . . . the kneading, the making of the cake, the heating of the oven, and the baking; nay, you must stay the cooling too, or you may chance to burn your lips.

[Troilus and Cressida, act 1, scene 1, lines 14ff]

The baking of life’s best cakes takes time. Don’t despair of tarrying and trying. And don’t “burn your lips” with impatience. Let me say just one bit more about the modern tragedy of sweethearts who will not tarry. It is of increasing alarm to me.

Symbolic Problem in Our World: Divorce

In even mentioning this I earnestly wish not to offend. I have seen divorce in my own family so I know something of the complexity, the pain, the accusations, and innocence that inevitably attend it. I do not speak here of specific lives or personal problems about which I know nothing and on which I would not pass judgment if I did. But the general matter of divorce, the abstract matter of divorce, is not only a major social but also a major symbolic problem in our world.

With the divorce rate hitting 50 percent and climbing, more than one million American children live through the trauma of a marital break-up every year. Andrew Cherlin of Johns Hopkins University says that “America[ns] . . . of the 70’s and 80’s are the first generation in the country’s history who think divorce and separation are a normal part of family life” (“Who’s Minding the Children,” Allan C. Brownfeld, from *Divorce and Single-Parent Family Statistics*, p. 24). That perception is being helped along by catchy new book titles like *Divorce, the New Freedom and Creative Divorce: A new Opportunity for Personal Growth*.

No one would wish a bad marriage on anyone. But where do we think “good marriages” come from? They don’t spring full-blown from the head of Zeus any more than does a good education, or good home teaching, or a good symphony. Why should a marriage require fewer tears and less toil and shabbier commitment than your job or your clothes or your car?

Yet some of you will spend less time on the quality and substance and purpose of your marriage—the highest, holiest, culminating covenant you make in this world—than you will in maintaining your ’72 Datsun. And you will break the hearts of many innocent people, including perhaps your own, if that marriage is then dissolved.

“You must [not give] half-hearted compliance [to a marriage],” said President Kimball. “[It requires] all [our] consecration” (Spencer W. Kimball, “An Apostle Speaks about Marriage to John and Mary,” *Improvement Era*, February 1949, p. 74). So every worthy task will require all that we can give to it. The Lord requires the heart and a willing mind if we are to eat the good of the land of Zion in the last days.

Lesson on Perseverance

Let me close with one last, lengthy lesson on perseverance.

On 28 July 1847, four days after his arrival in that valley, Brigham Young stood upon the spot where now rises the magnificent Salt Lake Temple and exclaimed to his companions: “Here [we will build] the Temple of our God!” (James H. Anderson, “The Salt Lake Temple,” *Contributor* [The Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Associations of Zion], no. 6, April 1893, p. 243).

Its grounds would cover an eighth of a square mile, and it would be built to stand through eternity. Who cares about the money or stone or timber or glass or gold they don’t have? So what that seeds are not even planted and the Saints are yet without homes? Why worry that crickets will soon be coming—and so will the United States Army?

They just marched forth and broke ground for the most massive, permanent, inspiring edifice they could conceive. And they would spend forty years of their lives trying to complete it.

The work seemed ill-fated from the start. The excavation for the basement required trenches twenty feet wide and sixteen feet deep, much of it through solid gravel. Just digging for the foundation alone required nine thousand man days of labor. Surely someone must have said, “A temple would be fine, but do we really need one this big?” But they kept on digging. Maybe they believed they were “laying the foundation of a great work.” In any case they worked on, “not weary in well-doing.”

And through it all Brigham Young had dreamed the dream and seen the vision. With the excavation complete and the cornerstone ceremony concluded, he said to the Saints assembled:

I do not like to prophesy much, . . . But I will venture to guess that this day, and the work we have performed on it, will long be remembered by this people, and be sounded as with a trumpet’s voice throughout the world. . . . Five years ago last

July I was here, and saw in the spirit the Temple. [I stood] not ten feet from where we have laid the chief corner stone. I have not inquired what kind of a temple we should build. Why? Because it was [fully] represented before me. [Anderson, Contributor, p. 257–58]

But as Brigham Young also said, “We never began to build [any] temple without the bells of hell beginning to ring” (J.A. Widtsoe [ed.], *Discourses of Brigham Young* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973], p. 410). No sooner was the foundation work finished than Albert Sidney Johnston and his United States troops set out for the Salt Lake Valley intent on war with “the Mormons.” In response President Young made elaborate plans to evacuate and, if necessary, destroy the entire city behind them. But what to do about the temple whose massive excavation was already completed and its 8’ x 16’ foundational walls firmly in place? They did the only thing they could do—they filled it all back in again. Every shovelful. All that soil and gravel that had been so painstakingly removed with those nine thousand man days of labor was filled back in. When they finished, those acres looked like nothing more interesting than a field that had been plowed up and left unplanted.

When the Utah War threat had been removed, the Saints returned to their homes and painfully worked again at uncovering the foundation and removing the material from the excavated basement structure.

But then the apparent masochism of all this seemed most evident when not adobes or sandstone but massive granite boulders were selected for the basic construction material. And they were twenty miles away in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Furthermore the precise design and dimensions of every one of the thousands of stones to be used in that massive structure had to be marked out individually in the architect’s office and shaped accordingly. This was a suffocatingly slow process. Just to

put *one* layer of the six hundred hand-sketched, individually squared, and precisely cut stones around the building took nearly three years. That progress was so slow that virtually no one walking by the temple block could ever see any progress at all.

And, of course, getting the stone from mountain to city center was a nightmare. A canal on which to convey the stone was begun and a great deal of labor and money expended on it, but it was finally aborted. Other means were tried, but oxen proved to be the only viable means of transportation. In the 1860s and '70s always four and often six oxen in a team could be seen almost any working day of the year, toiling and tugging and struggling to pull from the quarry one monstrous block of granite, or at most two of medium size.

During that time, as if the United States Army hadn't been enough, the Saints had plenty of other interruptions. The arrival of the railroad pulled almost all of the working force off the temple for nearly three years, and twice grasshopper invasions sent the workers into full-time summer combat with the pests. By mid-1871, fully two decades and untold misery after it had begun, the walls of the temple were barely visible above ground. Far more visible was the teamster's route from Cottonwood, strewn with the wreckage of wagons—and dreams—unable to bear the load placed on them. The journals and histories of these teamsters are filled with accounts of broken axles, mud-mired animals, shattered sprockets, and shattered hopes. I do not have any evidence that these men swore, but surely they might have been seen turning a rather steely eye toward heaven. But they believed and kept pulling. And through all of this President Young seemed in no hurry. "The Temple will be built as soon as we are prepared to use it," he said (Anderson, *Contributor*, p. 266). Indeed his vision was so lofty and his hope so broad that right in the middle of this staggering effort requiring virtually all that the

Saints could seem to bear, he announced the construction of the St. George, Manti, and Logan Temples.

"Can you accomplish the work, you Latter-day Saints of these several counties?" he asked. And then in his own inimitable way he answered:

Yes; that is a question I can answer readily. You are perfectly able to do it. The question is, have you the necessary faith? Have you sufficient of the Spirit of God in your hearts to say, yes, by the help of God our Father we will erect these buildings to his name? . . . Go to now, with your might and with your means and finish this Temple. [Anderson, Contributor, p. 267]

So they squared their shoulders and stiffened their backs and went forward with their might. But when President Brigham Young died in 1877, the temple was still scarcely twenty feet above the ground. Ten years later, his successor, President John Taylor, and the temple's original architect, Truman O. Angell, were dead as well. The side walls were just up to the square. And now the infamous Edmunds-Tucker Act had already been passed by Congress disincorporating The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One of the effects of this law was to put the Church into receivership, whereby the U.S. marshal under a November court order seized this temple the Saints had now spent just under forty years of their lives dreaming of, working for, and praying fervently to enjoy. To all appearances, the still unfinished but increasingly magnificent structure was to be wrested at this last hour from its rightful owners and put into the hands of aliens and enemies, the very group who had often boasted that the Latter-day Saints would never be permitted to finish the building. It seemed those boasts were certain to be fulfilled. Schemes were immediately put forward to divert the intended use of the temple in ways that would desecrate its holy purpose

and mock the staggering sacrifice of the Saints who had so faithfully tried to build it.

But God was with these modern children of Israel, as he always has been and always will be. They did all they could do and left the rest in his hands. And the Red Sea parted before them, and they walked through on firm, dry ground. On 6 April 1892, the Saints as a body were nearly delirious. Now, finally, here in their own valley with their own hands they had cut out of the mountains a granite monument that was to mark, after all they had gone through, the safety of the Saints and the permanence of Christ's true church on earth for this one last dispensation. The central symbol of all that was the completed House of their God. The streets were literally jammed with people. Forty thousand of them fought their way on to the temple grounds. Ten thousand more, unable to gain entrance, scrambled to the tops of nearby buildings in hopes that some glimpse of the activities might be had. Inside the Tabernacle President Wilford Woodruff, visibly moved by the significance of the moment, said:

If there is any scene on the face of this earth that will attract the attention of the God of heaven and the heavenly host, it is the one before us today—the assembling of this people, the shout of 'Hosanna!' the laying of the topstone of this Temple in honor to our God. [Anderson, Contributor, p. 270]

Then, moving outside, he laid the capstone in place exactly at high noon.

In the writing of one who was there, "The scene that followed is beyond the power of language to describe." Lorenzo Snow, beloved President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, came forward leading 40,000 Latter-day Saints in the Hosanna shout. Every hand held a handkerchief every eye was filled with

tears. One said the very "ground seemed to tremble with the volume of the sound" which echoed off the tops of the mountains. "A grander or more imposing spectacle than this ceremony of laying the Temple capstone is not recorded in history" (Anderson, *Contributor*, p. 273). It was finally and forever finished.

Later that year the prestigious *Scientific American* (1892), referred to this majestic new edifice as a "monument to Mormon perseverance." And so it was. Blood, toil, tears, and sweat. The best things are always worth finishing. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). Most assuredly you are. As long and laborious as the effort may seem, please keep shaping and setting the stones that will make *your* accomplishment "a grand and imposing spectacle." Take advantage of every opportunity to learn and grow. Dream dreams and see visions. Work toward their realization. Wait patiently when you have no other choice. Lean on your sword and rest a while, but get up and fight again. Perhaps you will not see the full meaning of your effort in your own lifetime. But your children will, or your children's children will, until finally you, with all of them, can give the Hosanna shout.

I testify that God loves each of us and that Jesus of Nazareth, his Only Begotten Son, came to "succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5)—bringing a divine form of worker's compensation, if you will, to you who keep tugging those granite boulders so faithfully into place. I love you and believe in you. This morning I have wanted to encourage you. You are laying the foundation of a great work—your own inestimable future. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" I pray that your life may be "a monument to Mormon perseverance" "however long and hard the road," in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.