



4-1-2003

### Use All The Tools In Our Toolbox

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/irp>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Featherstone, Elder Vaughn J. (2003) "Use All The Tools In Our Toolbox," *Issues in Religion and Psychotherapy*. Vol. 28 : No. 1 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/irp/vol28/iss1/10>

This Article or Essay is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Issues in Religion and Psychotherapy* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO HUMANITY ADDRESS PRESENTED AT THE FALL 2002  
AMCAP CONFERENCE ~ OCTOBER 3, 2002

## Use All The Tools In Our Toolbox

ELDER VAUGHN J. FEATHERSTONE

*First Quorum of the Seventy*  
and  
*Logan Utah Temple*  
*The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

Years ago I remember reading in the paper when President David O. McKay received the *Outstanding Man Of The Year* award. After President McKay received it he said these words which I think are so important about the way I feel tonight. He quoted from Shakespeare's *The Merchant Of Venice* (Craig, 1961), where Portia is before Lord Bassanio; she says this:

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,  
Such as I am: though for myself alone  
I would not be ambitious in my wish,  
To wish myself much better; yet, for you  
I would be trebled twenty times myself;  
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times  
more rich;

*Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone served as second counselor to the Presiding Bishopric 1972-1976, and has been a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy since 1976; he received Emeritus status in October 2001. He currently serves as president of the Logan Utah temple. He has also served as a member of the Boy Scouts of America National Advisory Council and as Young Men general president; as president of the Pacific Area, the North America Northeast Area, the Texas San Antonio mission, and the Boise Idaho North Stake. He is the author of several popular books, including Do-It-Yourself Destiny (1977), Charity Never Faileth (1980), Purity of Heart (1982), and The Millennial Generation: Leading Today's Youth into the Future (1999).*

That only to stand high in your account,  
I might in virtue, beauties, livings, friends,  
Exceed account ... (Act III, Scene ii)

I guess no one really does deserve many of the awards we receive; I think compliments are not what we are but what we should be – and I'll try to measure up.

I was counseled to think of myself tonight as being at an Irish *wake*: you're the guest of honor but you don't say very much. I can appreciate the man that said, "Hey, Joe I passed your house the other day" and Joe said, "Thanks!" Also, I think of the young employee who opened his pay envelope and found a notice that said "congratulations on your raise in pay; it will become effective as soon as you do" – and that's the way I feel here tonight.

I guess if I had a title for the talk you've asked me to give tonight it would be to *Use All The Tools In Our Toolbox*. That's a great statement, a great one-liner. I'm going to talk about one-liners in a minute, but let me just mention another one that has been really interesting to me as I've restored blessings, or when missionaries have come in for interviews, or I've counseled couples at weddings. I have said to them, "Give me the deepest convictions of your life, the things you know more than you know anything else in this world." You can tell an awful lot about people when they answer that; they say such things as:

- There is a God in heaven
- Jesus Christ is the redeemer of the world
- We can be sealed in temples for time and all eternity
- There is a great plan of happiness in which we can all be involved if we follow the pattern of the Master.

For me, I could go on and on talking about the things that are the most meaningful to me in my life: my wife, my children, and the things of this gospel of Jesus Christ. When asked that question, responses can be fairly shallow, but many have been so very deep. At a regional meeting in Melbourne Australia, I turned to a stake president and asked, "President, would you come up and stand by me, and give us the deepest convictions of your life, the things you know more than you know anything else in this world?" Well, he stood at the pulpit, just stood there, and the tears came. I watched as the minute-hand went around the clock once, and then twice – and he just couldn't speak. Finally I said, "Thank you; everyone here knows exactly the depth of your feelings about what you're thinking and what you wanted to say." And he sat down without having said a word. Sometimes it is hard to speak when we feel deeply about things that are really important to us.

I'd just like to thank all of you for unwearingly facing the trials you go through to help people that desperately need help. I guess most of us don't understand, and don't see the deep feelings, because a lot of emotions are hidden – but before you, they bare all, and that is so important.

In 1966, Robert F. Kennedy made this statement while he was in South Africa:

It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is thus shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance. (Kennedy, 1966)

I believe that is true. And on his tomb in the Arlington National Cemetery in Washington DC, these words are inscribed [quoted from the ancient Greek poet Aeschylus]:

In our sleep, pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart – and in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God. (Kennedy, 1968)

I believe that is so very true – there are wonderful blessings to be gained in suffering, if people understand the reasons why they're going through certain trials.

### HELPING THE HEALING PROCESS

I want to talk about five different things tonight which I think we don't talk about enough, that can be used in the healing process that you perform for so many needy people across this earth.

#### First: Humor

The first thing I would like to talk about is humor. I think humor is so essential to counseling and to the people who are being counseled. Sometime you just have to laugh. You know, I have heard that the insane<sup>1</sup> person never laughs; these people don't laugh; they mentally go away to where no one can ever hurt them again. And that is a tragedy. So if you can laugh, you won't go insane – at least that is my understanding about this. I remember the young man that lamented:

I asked my girl to wed,  
and she said, "go to my father"  
now she knew that I knew that her father was dead,  
and she knew that I knew the life he had led,  
and she knew that I knew what she meant when she said,  
"go to my father."

That one might take a minute or two to figure out.

And next, the young boy comes into the house – this is the kind of humor that I think does help us – and his dad took a look at his report card and said, "Son, that is the worst report card I have ever seen; I've never seen a report card so deplorable – that undoubtedly is the worst report card I have ever seen!"

Then the son said, "Dad, I agree. What do you think the problem is – heredity or environment?"

There may be some truth there!

Next – a man came home from work and showed his fist to his wife and said to her, "Sweetheart, if you can guess what is in here, we'll make love tonight."

And she said, "An elephant!"

But he said, "Close enough!"

I don't know if you remember Charley Boswell<sup>2</sup>. Charley Boswell was probably the greatest blind golfer in the world. One time Charley was on the Bob Hope Show, and after awarding a trophy, Bob got a little playful and said, "Blind golfer, huh? I'd like to play you sometime."

Charley said, "Well, Mr. Hope, I would like to play you sometime."

Bob said, "You don't understand – I gamble on every hole."

Charley said, "That's fine with me, Mr. Hope."

Bob said, "A lot of money – on every hole!"

And Charley said, "That's wonderful; I like to do that too."

Bob said, "You mean you'll play me?"

Charley said, "Of course."

Bob said, "When?"

And Charley said, "Midnight!" (Boswell, 1969; Smith, 2003).

So you have to have a sense of humor. That's the first of the five that I'd like to share tonight.

### Second: One-Liners

Now I would like to talk about one-liners for a minute and share some of those with you. There's some genius in one-liners that really can change lives and motivate people. Let me just read a few of them; these are only a fraction of my one-liners, but these are some I've picked up over the years. The first one I've already given to you:

- *Use All the Tools In Your Toolbox.*

The second one is:

- *Never try to catch a falling safe.*

The third one is:

- *Always do your homework well.* Boy, we better do our homework well when we're dealing with people.

Some more are:

- *Don't die on every hill.*
- *Never be a dream stealer.*
- *Never walk on the message.* For example, there are people that go out and wash their car in their shorts and we know that they've been to the temple; or, we occasionally see people drink something they shouldn't be drinking; or, the missionaries when they are doing something they shouldn't be doing – they are "walking on the message." Andrew Jackson<sup>3</sup> – and this is probably as important for

this group as anything – said:

• *Don't beat a hasty path to judgment.* It is indeed a pretty thin pancake when you've only got one side. For example, when counseling marriages or other groups. I've listened to many over the years – I guess I've not counseled as many as you have, but have counseled thousands. Often, in listening to a woman talk about her husband and the problems she has with him, I think, "Boy, he should not do that; that's a tragedy that he would treat her that way." But then I talk to him and I'll think, "You know, she shouldn't act like that with him." It becomes confusing when you don't have all the facts. So, "don't beat a hasty path to judgment."

Then this next one is really important:

• *The Internet could become a Trojan Horse in our homes.* I was in Preston, Idaho, and I said to the Stake President, "What is the greatest single problem you have in your Stake?" I thought he might say "home teaching" or "lack of Melchizedek Priesthood commitment." But he said, "The internet – we are having men leave their wives with a romance on the internet, and we are having wives leave their husbands; we are having youth who have been on the Internet and are deep in pornography." These are indeed tragedies; the internet truly could "become a Trojan Horse in our homes" if we are not careful.

And, finally:

• *Great leaders march off the map.* Alexander the Great said that, and I think it's a great one-liner. Every great achievement starts out unspectacularly – isn't that true? Dr. Laws,<sup>4</sup> all those years ago, while you were working your way up, who would have thought that one day you would be standing here as president of this organization, having served as Chair of the Department at BYU, having earned a doctorate from Columbia University, and all you've done in your life – it's a miracle what you've done.

### Third: Music

The third point that I'd like to make tonight is the importance of music in healing. Music is essential. When I prepared this talk, I went downstairs and put on a Tabernacle Choir (1995) recording. I especially love "Holy Art Thou" – it's the lyrics (Kingsmill, 1913) to "Largo" [from *Xerxes*], by George Friedrich Handel (1685-1759). It's my favorite piece of music in the whole world. After listening about twenty seconds into it, I'm

always uplifted spiritually.

But it isn't just classical music; we could talk about the hymns, too: "I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me; confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me" (*Hymns*, 1985, 193) and "I Need Thee Every Hour" (*Hymns*, 1985, 98). I really love "For the Strength of the Hills" – there's something so very deep in that song; I'd like to meet the author [Felicia D. Hemans<sup>5</sup>] of the lyrics:

We are watchers of a beacon whose light must never die;  
We are guardians of an altar 'midst the silence of the sky  
...  
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,  
Our God, our fathers' God. (*Hymns*, 1985, 35)

These words ring so clear! That's just one of the verses, the fourth. The other three are just as powerful. Also, I think of "Though Deepening Trials," another one of my favorites:

Though deepening trials throng your way,  
Press on, press on, ye Saints of God! ...  
Though tribulations rage abroad,  
Christ says, "In me ye shall have peace." (*Hymns*, 1985, 122)

Music is something that we all need. People who are alone can turn on some music, and the music is soothing. But if it is just silent, sometimes they can fall deeper and deeper into their frustrations and anxieties. But if they can just put something on the stereo, it can reduce the loneliness. Merlene<sup>6</sup> has been alone a lot, during most of her life; she says that the first thing she does is get up and turn on the radio so she has some music going on – and then she has company. People who are desperate quite often do not do those things. I think they need to.

I've driven on that crowded freeway in Salt Lake City from 5:30 to 6:00 in the evening for the last 29 and a half years and if I were a swearing man, I could easily do that a few times (someone once said of a swearing man "where he spits the grass never grows"). But to turn on the music – the station I listen to plays the kind of music that I like – then all of a sudden the traffic is no problem at all: I can just sail through all the traffic, whether it is a half hour or an hour and 15 minutes, and have a wonderfully pleasant experience, and arrive home calm

and peaceful. We all need that kind of healing music as well. We can listen to this and it's healing, but some types of music aren't healing, they're damaging.

I was at a stake conference with Elder ElRay L. Christiansen<sup>7</sup> many years ago when I was on the church's General Missionary Committee in 1965-67. We were at a stake conference in Idaho and he did something I had never seen: he just stood at the pulpit and read "How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent word" – and just read through all the verses. I thought of how people with a great deal of problems, if they would listen to these verses, even just read the lyrics, how it could certainly give them some kind of healing in their hearts and lives. Just listen to the words of the last four verses – the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh:

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of sorrow shall not thee o'erflow,  
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials my pathway shall lie  
My grace all sufficient, shall be thy supply.  
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

Even down to old age, all my people shall prove  
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love,  
And then, when gray hair shall their temples adorn,  
Like lambs shall they still to my bosom be borne.

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose  
I will not, I cannot, desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell shall endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake! (*Hymns*, 1985, 85)

I remember sitting in a meeting when I was just a young man. I think at that time we had four sons; Lawrence was a baby in his mother's arms. We were in a ward in the Valley View Stake and our Bishop had us sing "Count Your Many Blessings" (*Hymns*, 1985, 241). I'll never forget that experience because, for some reason that particular morning, the tears just streamed down my cheeks unashamedly – and I thought what a beautiful, strengthening verse this is that someone has put to music. We do, indeed, need to count our blessings; even

though there are a lot of problems in life, still we need to count our blessings.

#### Fourth: Poetry

Then the fourth thing – and remember I'm trying to talk about things that I don't think you usually talk about (you're so far over my head intellectually with all that you know about social work and psychiatry and psychologists and medicines for those kinds of things) – these suggestions are just some of the things that could be additional aides that ought to be used. The fourth thing is poetry.

You know, the poets are philosophers. The poet-philosopher Frances Cornford<sup>8</sup> wrote:

O why do you walk through the fields in gloves,  
Missing so much and so much?  
O thoughtless woman whom nobody loves,  
Why do you walk through the fields in gloves,  
When the grass is soft as the breast of doves  
And shivering-sweet to the touch?  
O why do you walk though the fields in gloves,  
Missing so much and so much? (Cornford, 1954)

There's a powerful message there. Merlene was once teaching a class of the little sunbeam children; she had been asked to teach because the teacher couldn't stay. The teacher had said this lesson is on "feelings" and she had written "feelings" on the board and put a happy face and a sad face and a frowning face to key off the lesson. Merlene said to the children, "what's this?"

The little kids said, "that it's a happy face!"  
And Merlene said, "what's this?"  
"It's a frowning face!"  
And, "what's this?"  
"It's a sad face."

Merlene apparently had fifteen or twenty of these little kids in her class, and she said, "Boys and girls, are all of you happy?" And you know how little kids are at that age, their hands just go up in a flash – all except one. Brook's hand didn't go up, so Merlene said, "Brook, aren't you happy?"

And she said, "no, teacher; I have a broken heart."

Merlene knelt down and said "come up here, Brook." Brook came up to the front and Merlene put her arm around her and said, "boys and girls, Brook has a broken heart and she isn't feeling very happy, so let's all tell her

how wonderful she is, and maybe help her feel happy." And so – this is as I recall Merlene telling it – they went around the room and each of the little kids said something nice about Brook; someone said she had a nice little ribbon in her hair and her shoes were nice, and they thought she was pretty; each one of them said something nice. When they finished Merlene said, "Now Brook, I love you and I care about you, and all these children care about you; now doesn't that help you feel happy?"

She said "no teacher, I have a broken heart – my mommy and daddy are getting divorced this week, and I have a broken heart." Merlene told me this story, and then I had a broken heart.

I remember I had to turn away because the tears came, thinking "how can we do that to little children?" But somehow they do this; they "walk through the field with gloves."

A young man who had been a bishop and stake president, and higher – not a general authority but very high – and after he had been in those high positions, he went to his bishop and said "I've found an alternate lifestyle." He went into the homosexual community and found himself a companion, left his wife and three children, and was excommunicated from the church. He was great person and beloved by everyone; a wonderful stake president; you could hardly describe this wonderful man as any better, he was so great before he went this lifestyle – now he's the empty shell of the man he once was. His brother who loved him dearly sent him a letter and quoted from *The Rape of Lucrece* these words by Shakespeare (Craig, 1961) – they are just wonderful:

What win I, if I gain the thing I seek?  
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy.  
Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week?  
Or sells eternity to get a toy?  
For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?  
Or what fond beggar, but to touch the crown,  
Would with the sceptre straight be stricken down?  
...  
Thy secret pleasure turns to open shame,  
Thy private feasting to a public fast,  
Thy smoothing titles to a ragged name.  
(lines 197-217, stanza 128)

And, the poet Harry Kemp (1883-1960) said this, and you'll appreciate this in your counseling; he called it "My Prayer for What I Have Not Been":

I kneel not now to pray that thou  
 make white a single sin,  
 I only kneel to thank thee Lord  
 for what I have not been –  
 For deeds which sprouted in my heart  
 but never to bloom were brought,  
 for monstrous which I stew  
 in the shambles of my thought –  
 Dark seeds the world has never guessed  
 by hell and passion bred  
 which never grew beyond  
 the bad that cankered in my head.  
 Some said I was a righteous man  
 poor fools! the gallows tree  
 if thou hadst let one foot to slip  
 had grown a limb for me. (Morrison, 1948)

Isn't that true? We look back on our lives and how narrowly we escaped doing things that could have changed our whole lives and put us in places where a lot of people are suffering at this time because they may not have had the balance we had.

I think if I were in your business I would pull out some of these poems and use them at the right time with the right people and maybe they could help somewhat.

This next one I absolutely love; it was written by a great man, Walter Malone (1866-1915); he's in the Tennessee state Hall of Fame. He was a prominent district judge in Tennessee. I don't know what else he did that was of great renown, but if all he did is write this poem he deserves to be not only in the Tennessee state Hall of Fame but in the celestial Hall of Fame. These words need to be emblazoned over his name. He entitled the poem "Opportunity," and it is a healing experience:

They do me wrong who say I come no more  
 When once I knock and fail to find you in;  
 For every day I stand outside your door,  
 And bid you wake, and rise to fight and win.

Wail not for precious chances passed away,  
 Weep not for golden ages on the wane!  
 Each night I burn the records of the day—  
 At sunrise every soul is born again!

Laugh like a boy at splendors that have sped,  
 To vanished joys be blind and deaf and dumb;

My judgments seal the dead past with its dead,  
 But never bind a moment yet to come.

Though deep in mire, wring not your hands and weep;  
 I lend my arm to all who say "I can!"  
 No shame-faced outcast ever sank so deep,  
 But yet might rise and be again a man.

Dost thou behold thy lost youth all aghast?  
 Dost reel from righteous retribution's blow?  
 Then turn from blotted archives of the past,  
 And find the future's pages white as snow.

Art thou a mourner? Rouse thee from thy spell;  
 Art thou a sinner? Sins may be forgiven;  
 Each morning gives thee wings to flee from hell,  
 Each night a star to guide thy feet to heaven.  
 (Rittenhouse, 1915; reprinted from Malone, 1906, *Songs of East and West*)

I don't know how you feel about those words but I think they could be just like a life-line being cast out to anyone who feels he has done something so terrible he will never be able to get back into the kingdom again and never have all the things he had before.

And then, I guess one of my favorites is "Gethsemane," by Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

In golden youth when seems the earth  
 A Summer-land of singing mirth,  
 When souls are glad and hearts are light,  
 And not a shadow lurks in sight,  
 We do not know it, but there lies  
 Somewhere veiled under evening skies  
 A garden which we all must see –  
 The garden of Gethsemane.

With joyous steps we go our ways,  
 Love lends a halo to our days;  
 Light sorrows sail like clouds afar,  
 We laugh, and say how strong we are.  
 We hurry on; and hurrying, go  
 Close to the borderland of woe  
 That waits for you, and waits for me –  
 Forever waits Gethsemane.

Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,

Bridged over by our broken dreams;  
 Behind the misty caps of years,  
 Beyond the great salt fount of tears,  
 The garden lies. Strive as you may,  
 You cannot miss it in your way;  
 All paths that have been, or shall be,  
 Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.

All those who journey, soon or late,  
 Must pass within the garden's gate;  
 Must kneel alone in darkness there,  
 And battle with some fierce despair.  
 God pity those who cannot say,  
 "Not mine but Thine"; who only pray  
 "Let this cup pass," and cannot see  
 The purpose in Gethsemane. (Wilcox, 1910)

You've been there and I've been there, and we'll all go there by and by, each one of us has our turn in Gethsemane – at least our type of a Gethsemane experience. Remember in Job (42:3) where he talked about things "too wonderful for me" and Jeremiah (20:9) talked about how he felt God's word in his heart "as a burning fire shut up in my bones." I think as we talk to people, we should help them understand that this kind of experience is a part of life. Life is a process – as we go along, we can work these things out.

### Fifth: Scriptures

The fifth thing I want to talk about tonight would have to be the wonderful blessings of the scriptures and the healing received when one reads the scriptures – especially the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine & Covenants*, and *Pearl of Great Price*. For just sheer pleasure I'll read the *Pearl of Great Price*, from the first page to the last page in an hour or so on a Sunday morning and just have a wonderful, thrilling experience.

I spoke the other day in our own home ward and mentioned a parable that Elder Boyd K. Packer talked about with the General Authorities – the parable of "The man with the wooden leg":

You're having a dance, and at the dance the dads are dancing with their daughters, and the sons are dancing with their mothers, and the people are dancing with each other. Everything is going along fine, then a man without a leg comes in. And then it gets awkward; the music stops and

the people don't know what to do. They can't keep him entertained and busy, and they don't want to dance because it will be hard for him – the whole thing is awkward.

That's where he stopped and asked us, "What does that mean?" and we discussed it for almost an hour. You know, in the church we have to talk about couples that are active, married with children and the mother stays at home; we don't want to hurt those who have to work (and we wouldn't for the world), but there are some mothers who don't have to work, who are working – and they'll pay a terrible consequence for it if they don't really have to work when they still have children at home. And we can't not talk about couples, how wonderful the relationship can be between couples, just because we have a lot of singles in the ward and we might offend the single people.

When I talked in our home ward, I mentioned how sometimes we hesitate to talk about divorce because we can think of five or six people that will be offended if we talk about divorce. But we have to talk about divorce: divorce is unacceptable; we don't do it – two Christian people who live Christian principles can just get along.

I also said, in talking to our home ward, that there are those young people who say, "We'll put off having our family" – and some are guilty of this – putting off their family until they get out of college, until they get their employment in place, and maybe a down payment on a new home or new car; then when things are squared away they go and have their family. That is not good counsel, whether it comes from the parents or even the bishop. The counsel of the Lord is that we have families in a normal way.

As I started out that part of the talk, there was a young couple – I can still clearly see them in my mind's eye – and they started laughing when I said that about not putting off having children in the marriage. I noticed this young couple looked at each other and they started laughing. And then I said "but you know, when they are ready to have children, quite often they can't" – the Lord said:

I command and men obey not; I revoke and they receive not the blessing. Then they say in their hearts: This is not the work of the Lord, for his promises are not fulfilled. But wo unto such, for their reward lurketh from beneath, and not from above. (D&C 58:32-33).

And then that young couple got just as quiet and pale, almost, as death; I watched them and I thought, "they've done that." As I have said before, young people often come to me and say, "will you give me a blessing so we can have children?" And I'll always ask the question, "Have you put off having children for selfish and personal reasons like getting your college degree and getting a down payment on your home?" If they say yes, I say "Well, I will still give you the blessing" but I quote that scripture from D&C 58: "I command, and men obey not; I revoke and they receive not the blessing."

### CONCLUSION

Let me conclude with this. I think you have all heard it. One man asked me to quote it about six months ago, but I don't think I had quoted it for ten years. I rehearse it all the time, though. It's *The Touch Of The Master's Hand* [written in 1926], by Myra Brooks Welch:

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer  
Thought it scarcely worth his while  
To waste much time on the old violin,  
But held it up with a smile:  
'What am I bidden, good folks," he cried,  
'Who'll start the bidding for me?"  
'A dollar, a dollar"; then, "Two!" "Only two?"  
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?  
Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;  
Going for three—" But no,  
From the room, far back, a gray-haired man  
Came forward and picked up the bow;  
Then, wiping the dust from the old violin,

And tightening the loose strings,  
He played a melody pure and sweet  
As a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,  
With a voice that was quiet and low,  
Said: "What am I bid for the old violin?"  
And he held it up with the bow.

"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two?  
Two thousand And who'll make it three?  
Three thousand, once, three thousand, twice,  
And going, and gone," said he.  
The people cheered, but some of them cried,  
"We do not quite understand –  
What changed its worth?" Swift came the reply:  
"The touch of a master's hand."

And many a man with life out of tune,  
And battered and scarred with sin,  
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd,  
Much like the old violin.  
A "mess of pottage," a glass of wine;  
A game – and he travels on.  
He is "going" once, and "going" twice,  
He's "going" and almost "gone."  
But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd  
Never can quite understand  
The worth of a soul and the change that's wrought  
By the touch of the Master's hand.  
(McFadden, 1997; Welch, 1996)

God bless you for your touch of the Master's hand, in  
the name of Jesus Christ.

### REFERENCES

- Boswell, C. (1969). *Now I See*. New York: Highland Press.
- Cornford, F. (1954). *Collected Poems*. London: Cresset Press.
- Craig, H. (1961). *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman & Co.
- Featherstone, V. (1976, March). General Authorities' Wives: Sister Merlene Featherstone. *New Era*, 42-44.
- Featherstone, V. (2000, May 4). A Wise and Understanding Heart. LDS Business College Commencement Address, Salt Lake City. <<http://www.ldsbc.edu/Speeches/Featherstonecomm.html>>
- Felleman, H. (ed.) (1936). *The Best Loved Poems of the American People*. New York: Doubleday & Co.
- Guthman, E. & Allen, C.R. (1993). *RFK: Collected Speeches*. New York: Viking Press.
- Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* (1985). Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
- Kennedy, R.F. (1966, June 6). Day of Affirmation [address presented at the University of Capetown, South Africa]. <<http://www.rfkmemorial.org/RFK/affirmation2.htm>> Reprinted in Guthman & Allen (1993).
- Kennedy, R.F. (1968, April 4). Statement on the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. [address presented in Indianapolis,

- Indiana]. <[http://www.rfkmemorial.org/RFK/rfk\\_mlk.htm](http://www.rfkmemorial.org/RFK/rfk_mlk.htm)>  
Reprinted in Guthman & Allen (1993).
- Kingsmill, Leigh (1913). *Handel: Holy Art Thou, an arrangement for four-part voices of the celebrated Largo from Xerxes by George Friedrich Handel, 1738*. London: Novello & Co., Ltd. Catalogue No. NOV290350.
- McFadden, W. (1997). *The Story Behind the Touch of the Master's Hand*. Elgin, IL: Brethren Press.
- Mormon Tabernacle Choir (1995). *More Greatest Hits – 19 Best Loved Favorites* (audio recording). Hollywood: Sony SMT61982 SMK61982
- Morris, R., Witherspoon, D., Taylor, W. & Kuhn, F. (2003). Dedicated to the memory of Charles A. (Charley) Boswell. <<http://www.eyeinjury.com/boswell.html>>
- Morrison, J. (ed.) (1948). *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Peterson, J. (1984). Friend to Friend: A Personal Interview with Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone. *Friend*, Aug.-Sept., 6-7.
- Rittenhouse, J. (ed.) (1915). *The Little Book of American Poets: 1787-1900*. Cambridge: Riverside Press.
- Smith, L. (2003, June 29). Despite fame, Bob Hope never lost the common touch. *Athens Banner-Herald*. <[http://www.onlineathens.com/stories/062903/opi\\_20030629012.shtml](http://www.onlineathens.com/stories/062903/opi_20030629012.shtml)>
- Sweet, N. & Melnyk, J. (eds.) (2001). *Felicia Hemans: Reimagining Poetry in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan.
- Welch, M.B. (Illus. G. Newbold) (1996). *The Touch of the Master's Hand*. Carson City: Gold Leaf Press. [reprinted from the 1929 edition published by E. Rothrock & Sons, Pomona CA]
- Wilcox, E.W. (1910). *Poems of Power* [2003 reprint]. New York: Kessinger Publishing Co.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 Editor's note: Elder Featherstone is here using the word *insane* to refer to patients who suffer from catatonic and/or severely depressed mental disturbances.
- 2 Charles A. Boswell (1916-1995) was a star athlete at the University of Alabama who gave up a career in professional baseball to join the U.S. Army in 1941. Major Boswell lost his sight in 1944 when he was hit by enemy fire while assisting a disabled colleague in Germany. Following World War II, he won 28 national and international blind golf championships and was the first Chairman of the Board of the *Helen Keller Eye Research Foundation* (Morris, et al., 2003).
- 3 General Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) became a national hero when he defeated the British at New Orleans in the War of 1812. A contemporary of Joseph Smith Sr., he was the president of the United States during the early years of the Restoration, 1829-1837.
- 4 Duane M. Laws EdD, AMCAP President 2001-2003, was Chair of BYU's Department of Marriage, Family & Human Development and later, a professor at Eastern Michigan University.
- 5 Felicia Dorothea Browne Hemans (1793-1835) was a popular Victorian poet, a friend of William Wordsworth and Sir Walter Scott. She is best known for the quote, "Strength is born in the deep silence of long-suffering hearts – not amid joy" (Sweet & Melnyk, 2001).
- 6 Merlene Minor Featherstone married Vaughn J. Featherstone in 1950. They are the parents of 7 children. Elder Featherstone describes his wife as "Merlene has a compassionate heart and a gentle spirit ... She feels a great mission in her home ... She loves family activity and loves the family being together ... Merlene is the miracle maker in our home" (Featherstone, 1976, p. 44).
- 7 Elder ElRay L. Christensen (1897-1975) served as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve from 1951 to 1975.
- 8 Frances Cornford (1886-1960), the granddaughter of Charles Darwin, was also related to William Wordsworth; she was married to the philosopher Francis M. Cornford of Cambridge University. In 1959 she was awarded the *Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry*