

The Perils of Grace

Robert L. Millet

There is no question but that the Latter-day Saints have been hesitant, even slow, to reflect upon and teach what the Book of Mormon and latter-day revelation have to say about the grace of God. This is understandable when we remind ourselves that the early Saints viewed the restored gospel and Church as major correctives to a Christian world that had gone off course. Speaking of Protestantism as a branch broken off from Catholicism, Joseph Smith stated, only eleven days before his death, “Here is a princ[iple] of logic—that men have no more sense [than to adopt]—I will illustrate [it by] an old apple tree—here jumps off a branch & says I am the true tree. & you are corrupt—if the whole tree is corrupt how can any true thing come out of it?”¹

More especially, since Mormonism arose in a largely Protestant America, it ought not surprise us that there was an especially strong emphasis by the Saints on the need to perform the works of righteousness in order to qualify for salvation. Many Mormons would have responded to any kind of “easy believism” or the accompanying antinomianism in much the same way the Apostle Paul did: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid” (Rom. 6:1–2).

1. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comp. and ed., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 1991), 382, Thomas Bullock report, June 16, 1844. Text in brackets was added editorially to the Bullock notes for publication in Joseph Smith’s history. Other editorial additions are not included here. See Joseph Smith Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 6:478.

A Risky Proposition

When the liberating concept of the grace of God began to dawn on me in about 1980, and as I began to teach or comment on it in Sunday School classes, BYU religion classes, at conferences and symposia, and at Education Week and Know Your Religion programs, it was not uncommon to have persons after a class discussion or lecture ask, “This is really exciting stuff, Brother Millet, but isn’t it just a bit risky? I mean, don’t you worry that some members of the Church will take this teaching and run with it, will use it as license to goof off, permission to do less than their best, or even violate their covenants?” I concurred then and agree now that it is indeed a risk, one that is as real in the twenty-first century as it was in the first century. Gospel liberty is very appealing, and what becomes a godsend and a breath of fresh air to a woman who is doing her best but falling short becomes a temptation to sin to a man looking for shortcuts or flirting with evil. As one woman remarked tearfully to me after a lecture on what I called graceful living, “This is simply too good to be true!” It really is, either to the glory or the condemnation of the person who responds to this supernal doctrine.

Since the late 1980s, I have had a fascination with evangelical Christianity. This interest began in a rather innocent way—I discovered an evangelical radio station in Provo and began listening on the way to work in the mornings as well as during the drive home in late afternoon. I first encountered the radio programs of such personalities as John MacArthur, Tony Evans, Chuck Swindoll, Charles Stanley, James Dobson, Haddon Robinson, and David Jeremiah. I then began to read their books, and this season of discovery laid a solid foundation for a more formal LDS/Evangelical dialogue that began in 1997 and continues on a semiannual basis to this day with a larger group of Evangelical and LDS scholars. I consider the time spent in conversation and friendship building with Evangelicals to be among the most significant and rewarding hours in my personal and professional life. During the last fourteen years, I have learned a ton about Christian history and theology, but I have learned half a ton about Mormonism; one cannot engage seriously another religious tradition without doing some major introspection, soul searching, sifting, and sorting between what proves to be pop theology or folklore on the one hand and actual doctrinal teachings of the Church on the other. Let me share what I have observed in the lives and beliefs of Evangelicals and what we can learn from it.

In the Evangelicals, I have discovered a people who love God and are tenacious in their desire to honor him and acknowledge his sovereignty;

who have a commendable and contagious love and devotion for the Lord Jesus Christ; whose trust in the Crucifixion and redeeming blood of the Savior drives and dominates their lives; who adore the word of God found in the Holy Bible, and more particularly the writings of the Apostle Paul; and who are fully persuaded that salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. These beliefs are central to their faith and way of life, and that is true for theologians as well as the evangelical woman in the pew or the born-again man on the street. That these teachings can be misunderstood and occasionally misapplied should not surprise Latter-day Saints; we see the same tendencies among our own people. But I'd like first to focus on the abuses or pitfalls that I have observed among my evangelical Christian friends, and then turn my attention toward the Latter-day Saints.

First, I have become aware of what might be called a hyperorthodoxy of speech or a “received vocabulary.” When one grows up in an evangelical home or has a conversion or born-again experience, he or she gradually comes to speak with a tongue trained in the lingo of the faith. This would obviously be true of any faith community, including our own. But I have encountered among Evangelicals an exaggerated stress upon the use of the word *grace*. For example, some friends of other faiths occasionally watch our general conference or study our conference issue of the *Ensign*. Almost always I will receive their “report” of conference, their assessment of the talks and tone of the two-day event soon after the conference ends. On several occasions, one of them has commented to me, “Bob, the conference was good, but I just wish your leaders would focus more on grace,” or “I liked the talk by Elder —; he mentioned grace a number of times,” or “I was really bothered by the way Elder — put so much emphasis on keeping the commandments or being worthy.” More than once after my friend has expressed disappointment about the lack of the word *grace*, I have said: “Did you really listen to the sermon by Elder —? He may not have used the word *grace* many times, but he spoke repeatedly of what men and women can do only through the power of Christ’s Atonement.” Or, I might say, “Did you even hear the words of Elder — as he focused on how our sins may be forgiven only through applying the precious blood of Christ?”

Spencer Fluhman of the BYU History Department and an important member of the LDS/Evangelical dialogue once remarked to our evangelical friends that sometimes our discussions seem to take the form of “Mormon tryouts for Christianity” rather than true dialogues. In the context of my story above, some Evangelicals appear almost to believe

that the number of uses of the word *grace* in a given sermon is a true test of the Christianity of the message. In a broader way, LDS mention of the works of righteousness, labor, obedience, or keeping the commandments really should not be a turnoff to those who take seriously the teachings of Jesus in the four Gospels (see Matt. 7:21; Luke 9:23; John 14:15). Faith always manifests itself in faithfulness. Salvation may come by grace alone, but grace is never alone.

Even a cursory reading of Christian history reveals a second peril of an excessive stress upon grace—namely, a discounting or almost dismissal of the church. Most of us can appreciate why such notable reformers as Luther and Calvin would rebel against the abuses of the Mother Church, including the sale of indulgences. But their rebellion soon took the form of a revolt against the institution of the church, a denunciation of a priestly hierarchy, and a clear de-emphasis on the sacraments or ordinances of the gospel. Even and especially today we can see how the Reformation's stress on a "priesthood of all believers" has led to an excessive focus on individual salvation and a personal relationship with Christ, the decline of denominations within Protestantism, and an approach to scriptural interpretation that smacks of "every man for himself." Historian Randall Balmer pointed out:

Luther's sentiments created a demand for Scriptures in the vernacular, and Protestants ever since have stubbornly insisted on interpreting the Bible for themselves, forgetting most of the time that they come to the text with their own set of cultural biases and personal agendas.

Underlying this insistence on individual interpretation is the assumption . . . that the plainest, most evident reading of the text is the proper one. Everyone becomes his or her own theologian. There is no longer any need to consult Augustine or Thomas Aquinas or Martin Luther about their understanding of various passages when you yourself are the final arbiter of what is the correct reading. This tendency, together with the absence of any authority structure within Protestantism, has created a kind of theological free-for-all, as various individuals or groups insist that *their* reading of the Bible is the only possible interpretation.²

Third, I once heard an evangelical preacher declare that "a Christ supplemented is a Christ supplanted." Because Evangelicals are so eager to ensure, in their teaching and lifestyle, that nothing, absolutely nothing,

2. Randall Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 24, emphasis in original.

can or should be substituted for the grace of God, they have for the most part limited the ordinances to baptism and the Lord's Supper. More seriously, they have relegated to the category of "nice but not needed" the ordinances of salvation themselves. I once attended a church service with a couple of my Christian friends. The pastor, an excellent teacher and superb expositor of scripture, took occasion during his sermon to chasten his flock, to scold those members of the congregation who had undergone a conversion but had never been baptized. Knowing what I do about how many Protestants feel about the sacraments or ordinances, I asked my friends after church, "Well, given what the pastor said, is baptism necessary or not?" After a short pause, one of them, a pastor himself, replied, "Baptism is necessary but not essential." I came back with, "Would you like to tease apart *necessary* and *essential* for me?" I was told that nothing but the "finished work of Christ" was essential for salvation. Baptism is necessary, he continued, in the sense that every good Christian ought to be baptized; it's what true Christians do. But nothing, including baptism, can be added to or required for salvation beyond Jesus's death on the cross. Frankly, I find it extremely difficult to read the Acts of the Apostles and not conclude that certain ordinances are absolutely essential and a vital facet of the Christian faith.

My perception after almost two decades of interaction with Evangelicals—and it is a generalization, I freely admit—is that they have what might be called a very high view of forgiveness and a low view of repentance. That is, Evangelicals rejoice regularly in the power and beauty and grandeur of God's forgiveness, and these glad tidings are sounded, even trumpeted, by all. That is as it should be, and Latter-day Saints could take a lesson from our friends. On the other hand, I hear repentance spoken of very little. I think I have never heard an evangelical sermon on *how* to repent, how to forsake our sins, how to repair the relationship with Deity that has been damaged through sin. In other words, what I hear consistently is how important it is for us to reach up and receive the Lord's forgiveness but not much on how it is to be received. Some have gone so far as to suggest that one of the reasons Evangelicals teach repentance so seldom is the fear that people may somehow begin to view their repentance as a work!

What is the result? Notice the following from pastor and theologian John MacArthur:

The more I have examined Jesus' public ministry and His dealings with inquirers, the more apprehensive I have become about the methods and content of contemporary evangelism. On a disturbing number of fronts, the message being proclaimed today is not the gospel according to Jesus.

The gospel in vogue today holds forth a false hope to sinners. It promises them they can have eternal life yet continue to live in rebellion against God. Indeed, it *encourages* people to claim Jesus as Savior yet defer until later the commitment to obey Him as Lord. It promises salvation from hell but not necessarily freedom from iniquity. It offers false security to people who revel in the sins of the flesh and spurn the way of holiness. By separating faith from faithfulness, it leaves the impression that intellectual assent is as valid as wholehearted obedience to the truth. Thus the good news of Christ has given way to the bad news of an insidious easy-believism that makes no moral demands on the lives of sinners. It is not the same message Jesus proclaimed.³

Robert Jeffress, the rather controversial Fundamentalist Baptist in Texas who has been no friend to the Mormons in recent years, has written, “In an attempt to ‘rescue’ grace from legalists [those who would turn the gospel into a set of regulations and good works that save us], we have unwittingly delivered it into the hands of libertarians, who insist that grace exempts Christians from any standard of conduct. Instead of saying that there is nothing we need to do to cause God to love us any more than He already does, a libertarian places the period after the word *do*. ‘Grace means there is nothing we need to do.’”

After quoting Ephesians 2:8–9, Paul’s teaching that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ, Jeffress explains:

For several centuries we Baptists have enjoyed beating Methodists (and others) over the head with this verse as proof positive that there is no relationship between good works and salvation. We scoff at those poor souls who attempt to work themselves to the pearly gates. “Why would you ever choose a faith that is so difficult? Why not try our brand of works-free Christianity? It is so much easier.” . . .

Obviously, something is wrong with this picture! Why is it that those who have received—and actually claim to believe—God’s instructions . . . as revealed in the Bible brazenly ignore those same instructions? Two words: *Bad grace*.⁴

What Jeffress called “bad grace” is what an evangelical acquaintance, Gerald McDermott, calls “greasy grace” or “sloppy *agapē*.” It is also what German pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer labeled as

3. John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1988), 15–16.

4. Robert Jeffress, *Grace Gone Wild: Getting A Grip on God’s Amazing Gift* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Waterbrook, 2005), 12, 71, 114.

“cheap grace.” “Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our Church,” Bonhoeffer wrote.

We are fighting today for costly grace. . . . Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. . . . Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field. . . . Costly grace is the gospel which must be *sought* again and again, the gift which must be *asked* for, the door at which a man must *knock*.

Such grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow, and it is *grace* because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is *costly* because it cost God the life of his Son: “ye were bought at a price,” and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us.⁵

The results are what one Evangelical, Ronald Sider, has referred to as the “scandal of the evangelical conscience,” a painful admission that in many ways—including divorce rates, materialism and the failure to care for the poor, sexual immorality, racism, and physical abuse in marriage—Evangelicals do not tend to live any better than what they themselves would refer to as worldly people.

Today, unfortunately, many people despise Christians, not for their unwavering obedience to Christ, but because of the hypocritical disconnect between Jesus’s teaching and our actions. . . .

Jesus gladly forgave even the most vile of sinners. But he called them to costly discipleship and holy obedience. . . . Cheap grace results when we reduce the gospel to forgiveness of sins; limit salvation to personal fire insurance against hell; misunderstand persons as primarily souls; at best, grasp only half of what the Bible says about sin; embrace the individualism, materialism, and relativism of our current culture; lack a biblical understanding and practice of the church; and fail to teach a biblical worldview.⁶

5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 43–45; emphasis in original.

6. Ronald Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience: Why Are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2005), 33–35, 56. See also Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (San Francisco: Harper, 2006).

LDS Perils

And what of Latter-day Saints? What of our own culture? Are there risks associated with how we choose to emphasize “the merits and mercy and grace of the Holy Messiah” (2 Ne. 2:8)? Certainly. As a bishop and a stake president, I have encountered members of the Church who have, as a result of their newfound gospel liberty, chosen to refuse all church callings that may come their way, to live a more laid-back, laissez-faire lifestyle, and in general to celebrate the Savior’s grace by essentially taking a furlough from church activity. I have been in conversation with persons who refuse to acknowledge the seriousness of their sins, since, as they now relate, they are no longer living under the law but rather “living under grace.” Others have become so enamored with “God’s unconditional love” that they assume he will pass lightly over their sins and wink at their indiscretions.

In point of fact, the closer we get to God, the more sensitive we become to even the slightest deviations from the path of righteousness. The purest men and women to live on this earth have been eager to acknowledge their weakness and their weaknesses, to confess their utter ineptitude to engage life’s challenges and temptations on their own, and to lean and rely wholly upon the Lord’s tender mercies. Nephi, son of Lehi, was keenly aware of where and when he fell short: “O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities. I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me. And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins.” What follows are words that demonstrate where Nephi’s confidence and trust were: “Nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted. My God hath been my support” (2 Ne. 4:17–20).

A second potential risk in teaching and glorying in the grace of God is to take an individualistic approach to happiness here and eternal life hereafter, much as some of our evangelical friends have. It is to assume that what really matters in one’s personal life is the gospel, not the Church. This is both doctrinally unsound and practically foolish. The Church of Jesus Christ *administers* the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is through the Church that we receive the doctrinal teachings, the priesthood ordinances that channel divine power to us, and what Elder Neal A. Maxwell called the “clinical material”⁷ to assist us in our quest for spiritual matu-

7. See, for example, Neal A. Maxwell, *The Promise of Discipleship* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001), 46.

rity. That is, no person can grow fully in spiritual graces independent of the Church; there are qualities of Christian character that can only be acquired and developed in community, as we associate with, serve, and learn to forgive one another. Recently Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Seventy pointed out that “we need the gospel *and* the Church. In fact, the purpose of the Church is to help us live the gospel.”⁸

But these two risks—of grace-based apathy or individualism—do not represent what I see as the greatest challenge to Latter-day Saints as they grapple with the idea of grace. Perhaps an experience I had several years ago can shed some light on this particular issue. Stephen Robinson and I were invited to Kansas City to spend the day in conversation with leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention. At a certain point in the conversation, however, one of our Baptist friends reacted to our insistence that we are Christians with, “But you folks do not believe in the grace of Jesus Christ.” Steve and I both leaned forward in our chairs and proceeded to try to convince our new acquaintances that in fact we did believe in and teach the importance of salvation by the grace of Christ. At that point one of the Baptists responded: “Yes, we understand—you believe in the Christ of the gaps.” I replied: “I’ve never heard that before in my life. Who or what is the Christ of the gaps?” He went on to explain that it was his understanding that Latter-day Saints believed in a kind of works-righteousness, that men and women are to do everything they can and expend all of their efforts and then Jesus would fill in the remaining deficit. An hour later, and after seeking again and again to dissuade them from their caricature of Mormonism, we realized that we had failed.

Of course Jesus Christ, the one who makes all the difference in our salvation, will make up the difference at the time of judgment, at least for those who have come to trust in and rely upon him. But too often, I fear, Latter-day Saints think that men and women are expected to do their 85 or 90 percent and leave the remainder, a modest percentage, for Jesus to handle. This is incorrect and misleading, inasmuch as it causes us to overstate our own role in salvation and grossly understate the role of him who has bought us with his blood. The scripture that seems to lend itself to this misunderstanding, is, oddly enough, 2 Nephi 25:23: “For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our

8. Donald L. Hallstrom, “Converted to His Gospel through His Church,” *Ensign* 42 (May 2012): 14, emphasis in original.

brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved *after all we can do*" (emphasis added).

I have met members throughout the Church who suppose this means that Christ can help us, strengthen us, empower us only *after* we have expended our best efforts and done everything we know how to do. First of all, do you know anyone who will have done *everything* they could have done? Do you know anyone who will have spent every waking hour of every day of every year serving God tirelessly and tenaciously? Only one person fits this bill, and that was the Lord Jesus Christ himself; he was the only one to live a perfectly obedient, perfectly sinless life. I believe Nephi is trying to teach that we are saved by the grace of Jesus Christ—meaning his unmerited divine favor, his unearned divine assistance, his enabling power—*above and beyond* all we can do, *notwithstanding* all we can do, *in addition to and together with* all we can do. Too often we're prone to think of grace only as the Lord's final boost into celestial glory hereafter. To be sure, we will need all the divine help we can get in order to qualify to go where God is. But the grace of God is extended to you and me every hour of every day and is not limited to the final bar of judgment.

If there had been no Atonement of Christ, no amount of good works on our part could ever, worlds without end, make up for its absence. "No matter how hard we work," Elder M. Russell Ballard has pointed out, "no matter how much we obey, no matter how many good things we do in this life, it would not be enough were it not for Jesus Christ and His loving grace. On our own we cannot earn the kingdom of God—no matter what we do. Unfortunately, there are some within the Church who have become so preoccupied with performing good works that they forget that those works—as good as they may be—are hollow unless they are accompanied by a complete dependence on Christ."⁹

Jesus is not only central to the plan of salvation; he is vital and indispensable. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot earn our exaltation. We cannot exercise the sufficient grit and willpower to do the works of righteousness and battle against Satan on our own. Christ is our Lord, our Savior, our Redeemer, and our King. He is the Lord of Hosts, meaning the Lord of Armies, the Captain of our Salvation. He is God, and if it were not so, he could not save us. Without him, we have nothing. With him, we have everything.

9. M. Russell Ballard, "Building Bridges of Understanding," *Ensign* 28 (June 1998): 65.

Conclusion

Christian leaders and pastors, including Latter-day Saint teachers and Church officers, walk a fine line when they emphasize the grace of God in their teachings, sermons, and writings. On the one hand, this doctrine breathes encouragement into deflated souls who try their best to follow Christ but continually fall short; it highlights the goodness and tender mercy of an omniloving God. It provides hope and strength, what we have come to know as “enabling power,” for disciples who seek to accomplish what would be the impossible were it not for the heavenly assistance proffered by our Lord and Savior.

On the other hand, it does indeed, as I have pointed out, constitute a genuine risk. Bruce C. Hafen explained some years ago that

the person most in need of understanding the Savior’s mercy is probably one who has worked himself to exhaustion in a sincere effort to repent, but who still believes his estrangement from God is permanent and hopeless. By contrast, some people come before a bishop feeling that the repentance process requires them to do little more than casually acknowledge the truth of an accusation. An increasing number of younger Church members even seem to believe they are entitled to “a few free ones” as they sow their wild oats and walk constantly along the edge of transgression. Constant emphasis on the availability of forgiveness can be counterproductive for those in these latter categories, suggesting—wrongly—to them that they can “live it up” now and repent easily later without harmful consequences.

Elder Hafen then addressed what he perceived to be the far greater risk:

I sense that an increasing number of deeply committed Church members are weighed down beyond the breaking point with discouragement about their personal lives. When we habitually understate the meaning of the Atonement, we take more serious risks than simply leaving one another without comforting reassurances—for *some may simply drop out of the race, worn out and beaten down* with the harsh and untrue belief that they are just not celestial material.

The Savior himself was not concerned that he would give aid and comfort to backsliders or that he would seem to be soft on sin. Said he, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . . For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30). He spoke these words of comfort in the overall context of his demanding teachings about the strait and narrow way and the need to develop a love so pure that it would extinguish not only hatred, but lust and anger [Matt. 5:21–22, 27–28, 43–45]. He said his yoke is easy, but he asked for all our hearts.

His words do not describe an event or even simply an attitude, but a process; not the answer to a yes or no question, but an essay, written in the winding trail of our experience. Along that trail, *he is not only aware of our limitations, he will also in due course compensate for them*, “after all we can do” [2 Ne. 25:23]. That, in *addition* to forgiveness for sin, is a crucial part of the Good News of the gospel, part of the Victory, part of the Atonement.¹⁰

Striking the delicate balance between grace and works, faith and discipleship, in today’s complex world is a formidable challenge. Many of our Protestant friends have assumed a theological posture called *monergism*, the belief that God alone is sovereign, is in complete control, determined long beforehand who will and who will not be saved, and even provides the desire and hope and prompting motive to choose Christ and his gospel. Taking that choice out of men and women’s grasp leaves it all with God, and one can appreciate why so many who subscribe to such a belief do not live lives appreciably different from unregenerate and unconverted souls. As Elder Neal L. Andersen taught, faith is much, much more than a feeling; it is a *decision*.¹¹ It is a decision to come out of the world, to ignore the allures and enticements of those who proselytize from the great and spacious building, to attend to the quiet voice of him who has “called [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). It is a decision to pattern our lives after the only perfect being to walk this earth.

It seems to me that the LDS way is quite different from monergism: our approach is what might be called *synergism*—God and humanity are working together for the salvation of souls. Is this not what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippian Saints? “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” If we stop there, it appears that salvation is something that man himself is to “work out,” a process over which we as mortals have the greatest control. But we dare not stop there, for Paul adds, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philip. 2:12–13). Now it sounds like God is the principal, the initiator, the prompter and

10. Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart: Applying the Atonement to Life’s Experiences* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 5–6, emphasis on “addition” in original, all other emphasis added.

11. Neil L. Andersen, “It’s True, Isn’t It? Then What Else Matters?” *Ensign* 37 (May 2007): 74.

motivator, the conductor of our soul's symphony. "You see," C. S. Lewis explained, "we are now trying to understand, and to separate into water-tight compartments, what exactly God does and what man does when God and man are working together."¹²

"In recent years," Elder Hafen stated, "we Latter-day Saints have been teaching, singing, and testifying much more about the Savior Jesus Christ. I rejoice that we are rejoicing more. As we 'talk [more] of Christ' (2 Ne. 25:26), the gospel's doctrinal fulness will come out of obscurity." Elder Hafen spoke boldly of the spread of falsehood relative to LDS doctrine. He drew our attention to the fact that "the adversary is engaged in one of history's greatest cover-ups, trying to persuade people that this Church knows least—when in fact it knows most—about how our relationship with Christ makes true Christians of us."¹³

As Latter-day Saints, we rejoice with our Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant friends in what God has preserved for us, the Holy Bible—the lessons for life it contains, the commandments and statutes of God it lays out, and, most importantly, the redemption it foreshadows (Old Testament) and the messianic dispensation it describes (New Testament). The Bible is God's holy word, and we delight in the normative doctrine and direction it provides. But Mormons also find great comfort in knowing that God has revealed himself and his Beloved Son anew and has opened the heavens and expanded the canon of scripture. It is that independent revelation, that new dispensation of truth and divine power, that provides the needed clarity and perspective, both on how to lay our burdens and cares at the feet of the Savior and also how to manifest our faith by our faithfulness. And it is the proper management of that dynamic tension that leads, not only to doctrinal resolution, but more importantly, to that consummate peace promised by the Master, the peace that passes all understanding (Philip. 4:7).

Robert L. Millet is Professor Emeritus of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University. A former chair of the Department of Ancient Scripture and dean of Religious Education, Millet has worked for almost twenty years in the area of Christian interfaith relations in an effort to build bridges of understanding between professing Christian groups.

12. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 131–32.

13. Bruce C. Hafen, "The Atonement: All for All," *Ensign* 34 (May 2004): 97, 98.