

Mosiah 2

- 1 Benjamin means Son of the Right Hand
John Welch, *King Benjamin's Sermon Made Simple*, p. 24

Words of Mormon 1:17-18

- 2 17 For behold, king Benjamin was a holy man, and he did reign over his people in righteousness; and there were many holy men in the land, and they did speak the word of God with power and with authority; and they did use much sharpness because of the stiffneckedness of the people--
18 Wherefore, with the help of these, king Benjamin, by laboring with all the might of his body and the faculty of his whole soul, and also the prophets, did once more establish peace in the land.

- 3 King Benjamin did not become jaded, nor was he preoccupied with or defined by his role as a warrior-king. Clearly, he knew that his was a spiritual ministry. Even a cursory cruise through modern political and military history attests to how often lesser individuals are both confined and defined by their contemporary events. We never would have had the great King Benjamin sermon if he had been confined and defined by such prior events. Likewise, we would never have had the sermon and his example if he had become desensitized by his victories and achievements. Benjamin's meekness in the face of his many accomplishments marks this man.

Ours is an age when we yearn for more consistency and for more correct character in the private and public behaviors of secular leaders. Benjamin was Benjamin, whether he was in his garden, on the battlefield, with his family, or practicing statecraft. For him there was no such thing as a public persona. Moreover, how many other warrior-kings, for instance, would have chosen to regard themselves as teacher more than king? . . .

Benjamin was much more concerned over connecting with his spiritual constituency than with his political constituency. . . .

Meek King Benjamin could have wallowed in public esteem. He could have worried over how to preserve and keep his image intact. Instead, he was concerned with having Christ's image in his countenance (see Alma 5:14). Being meek, he quickly deflected praise, as we all should, giving glory to God and deferring to our heavenly King (see Mosiah 2:19).

John Welch, Neal A. Maxwell, "A Manual for Discipleship," *King Benjamin's Speech Made Simple*, p. 17-18

- 4 Interestingly, literary analysts have identified and compared some twenty-two farewell speeches from Greco-Roman antiquity and from the Bible. William S. Kurz has developed a set of twenty elements that are found in this genre of notable literary farewell addresses. On his list were farewell orations by Moses (Deuteronomy 31-34), Joshua (Joshua 23-24), David (1 Kings 2:1-10; 1 Chronicles 28-29), Samuel (1 Samuel 12), Socrates, and others. Based on this analysis, Benjamin's speech works well as a classic farewell address, containing at least as many elements of a typical farewell speech as any other text. Of course, no single speech contains all the elements identified by Kurz: Moses' contains the most, with sixteen; Paul's, fourteen; and Socrates', eleven. As will be discussed in detail in a subsequent chapter of this book, Benjamin's features at least sixteen, with other elements implied.

Ibid p. 59-60

William Norwood Brigance has described this manifestation of impact and power in oratory as follows:

- 5 Not only is history written with words. It is made with words. Most of the mighty movements affecting the destiny of [nations] have gathered strength in obscure places from the talk of nameless men, and gained final momentum from leaders who could state in common words the needs and hopes of common people. Great movements, in fact, are usually led by men of action who are also men of words, who use words as instruments of power, who voice their aims in words of historic simplicity.

Ibid p. 61

King Benjamin's Wisdom

- 6 Benjamin's speech is great oratory not only because it addresses great themes, but because it does so while remaining completely in touch with real life.

- Service ("when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God," Mosiah 2:17)
- Leadership ("I, even I, whom ye call your king, am no better than ye yourselves," Mosiah 2:26)
- Human nature ("the natural man is an enemy to God," Mosiah 3:19)
- Responsibility ("but men drink damnation to their own souls," Mosiah 3:18)
- Humility ("ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created of the dust," Mosiah 2:25)
- Indebtedness ("and ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be, forever," Mosiah 2:24)
- Grace ("Ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures," Mosiah 4:110)
- Obedience ("watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God," Mosiah 4:30)
- Gratitude ("if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess...yet ye would be unprofitable servants," Mosiah 2:20-21)
- The importance of children ("little children...they are blessed," Mosiah 3:16)
- Human accountability ("[remember]...the awful situation of those that have fallen into transgression," "consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God," Mosiah 2:40-41)
- Peace ("ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due," Mosiah 4:13)
- Contention ("beware lest there shall arise contentions among you," Mosiah 2:32)
- Wealth ("For behold, are we not all beggars?" Mosiah 4:19)
- Charity ("ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor," Mosiah 4:16)

Ibid, p. 67-69

Mosiah 2 Introduction

Mosiah 2-6 Year Rite

- 7 There is a detailed description of a coronation in the Book of Mormon that is paralleled only in ancient nonbiblical sources, notably Nathan ha-Babli's description of the coronation of the Prince of the Captivity. The Book of Mormon version in Mosiah 2-6 (c. 125 BC) is a classic account of the well-documented ancient "Year Rite": (a) The people gather at the temple, (b) bringing firstfruits and offerings (Mosiah 2:3-4); (c) they camp by families, all tent doors facing the temple; (d) a special tower is erected, (e) from which the king addresses the people, (f) unfolding unto them "the mysteries" (the real ruler is God, etc.); (g) all accept the covenant in a great acclamation; (h) it is the universal birthday, all are reborn; (i) they receive a new name, are duly sealed, and registered in a national census;

(j) there is stirring choral music (cf. Mosiah 2:28; 5:2-5); (k) they feast by families (cf. Mosiah 2:5) and return to their homes.

Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, ed. By S. Ricks J. Welch, et al. [Salt Lake City, 1985], 6:295-310; as quoted in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. By Daniel H. Ludlow [New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992], 1:189

8 In order to understand the full impact of King Benjamin's address, we must examine the setting that drew it forth. Mormon, writing some four centuries later, informed us about King Benjamin and the circumstances that led to his last great sermon (see W of M 1:12-18; Mosiah 1:1-2:8). Benjamin did not inherit a comfortable situation when he became the king of the Nephite peoples. It was a time of war, with armies of the Lamanites coming down against the Nephites. King Benjamin led his people in battle, wielding the sword of Laban with his own hand. Thousands were killed, and eventually the Lamanites were driven out of the land (see W of M 1:13-14)....

During the kingship before Benjamin's reign, the Nephites had incorporated the Mulekite people, whose language was different and whose knowledge of Jehovah and the Mosaic law had been corrupted. Teaching them a new language and a new religion and having that settle in would have been difficult and time-consuming (see Omni 1:14-19). Mormon said that besides the wars with the Lamanites, there were "contentions among his [Benjamin's] own people." Mormon also explained that there were "false Christs," "false prophets," and "false preachers and teachers" among the people. "Many dissensions" also arose, and the people were described as stiffnecked (W of M 1:12, 15-17)....

With the assistance of holy prophets, whom he sustained, and through his own personal righteousness, King Benjamin brought a complete turnaround among his people... (W of M 1:18).

Selected Writings of Gerald N. Lund [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999], 220-221

Mosiah 2:1

9 If you want to know what the Lord has for this people at the present time, I would admonish you to get and read the discourses that have been delivered at this conference, for what these brethren have spoken by the power of the Holy Ghost is the mind of the Lord, the will of the Lord, the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto Salvation. Harold B. Lee, "To Ease the Aching Heart," *Ensign*, April 1973, p. 121

Mosiah 2:5-8

10 I believe that the Lord is anxious to put into our hands inventions of which we laymen have hardly had a glimpse....

A significant revelation states: "For, verily, the sound must go forth from this place into all the world, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth—the gospel must be preached unto every creature." [D&C 58:64]

I am confident that the only way we can reach most of these millions of our Father's children is through the spoken word over the airwaves, since so many are illiterate. We have proved the ability of our young men to learn other languages....

King Benjamin, that humble but mighty servant of the Lord, called together all the people in the land of Zarahemla, and the multitude was so great that King Benjamin "caused a tower to be erected, that thereby his people might hear the words which he should speak unto them." [Mosiah 2:7]

Our Father in Heaven has now provided us mighty towers—radio and television towers with possibilities beyond comprehension—to help fulfill the words of the Lord that "the sound must go forth from this place unto all the world."

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball (1982), 587-88

11 For the next six months, your conference edition of the Ensign should stand next to your standard works and be referred to frequently. As my dear friend and brother Harold B. Lee said, we should let these conference addresses “be the guide to [our] walk and talk during the next six months. These are the important matters the Lord sees fit to reveal to this people in this day.”

Ezra Taft Benson, “Come unto Christ, and Be Perfected in Him,” *Ensign*, May 1988, p. 84

Mosiah 2:9

12 *Trifle not*

Last week I was talking with a member of the Quorum of the Twelve about comments we had received on our April conference talks. My friend said someone told him, “I surely enjoyed your talk.” We agreed that this is not the kind of comment we like to receive. As my friend said, “I didn’t give that talk to be enjoyed. What does he think I am, some kind of entertainer?” Another member of our Quorum joined the conversation by saying, “That reminds me of the story of a good minister. When a parishioner said, ‘I surely enjoyed your sermon today,’ the minister replied, ‘In that case, you didn’t understand it.’” ...

A message given by a General Authority at a general conference...is not given to be enjoyed. It is given to inspire, to edify, to challenge, or to correct. It is given to be heard under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord, with the intended result that the listener learns from the talk and from the Spirit what he or she should do about it.

King Benjamin understood that principle and explained it. His great sermon that is recorded in the first few chapters of the Book of Mosiah begins with these words:

My brethren, all ye that have assembled yourselves together, you that can hear my words which I shall speak unto you this day; ...I have not commanded you to come up hither to trifle with the words which I shall speak, but that you should hearken unto me, and open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand... (Mosiah 2:9).

As this prophet-king taught, when we come to hear a servant of the Lord, we are not “to trifle with the words” that he speaks. It is our duty to open our ears to hear and our hearts to understand. And what we should seek to understand is what we should do about the message. I feel sure that is what King Benjamin meant, because he said later in his great message, “And now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them” (Mosiah 4:10).

Dallin H. Oaks, *The Dedication of a Lifetime*, CES Broadcast, Oakland, California, 1 May 2005

Mosiah 2:13

13 *True Leadership*

What kind of leader was Jesus? He didn’t pull rank. He didn’t demand special privileges. In fact, he said some pretty severe things about the leaders who wanted the best places in the synagogue and wanted people to step aside for them in the market-place. As a teacher, I always felt that I was a servant. Max de Pree defines leadership not in terms of giving orders or staying in charge, but in terms that should sound very familiar to us. He says: “The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor.” Isn’t that wonderful? ...

What else about Jesus? He didn’t have an office. He didn’t barricade himself behind a desk. He went to the people. He didn’t wait for people to approach him, he sought them out; and because he was on the road, opportunities came to him. He was constantly on the move—in Mary’s and Martha’s home, on the road, in the synagogues, in the marketplace, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, on the Sea of Galilee. He was a leader in motion. He went where the people were.

Chieko N. Okazaki, *Disciples*, pp. 189-190

14 Conversely, those leaders in history who have been most tragic in their impact on mankind were tragic precisely because they lacked to almost any degree the qualities of the Man of Galilee. Where Jesus was selfless, they were selfish. Where Jesus was concerned with freedom, they were concerned with control. Where Jesus was concerned with service, they were concerned with status. Where Jesus met the genuine needs of others, they were concerned only with their own needs and wants. Where Jesus was concerned with the development of his disciples, they sought to manipulate mortals. Where Jesus was filled with compassion balanced by justice, they have so often been filled with harshness and injustice.

Spencer W. Kimball, *Jesus the Perfect Leader*

Mosiah 2:14

15 *Taxation*

Burdensome, unjust taxation is a form of theft. King Benjamin realized that a government has no more right to steal from its citizens than the citizens have to steal from one another.

Rodney Turner; as quoted in *Studies in Scripture*, ed. By Kent P. Jackson [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987], 7:211

Mosiah 2:16-18

16 *Service*

People serve one another for different reasons.... [1] Some serve for hope of earthly reward. Such a man or woman may serve in a Church position or in private acts of mercy in an effort to achieve prominence or cultivate contacts that will increase income or aid in acquiring wealth. Others may serve in order to obtain worldly honors, prominence, or power....The scriptural word for gospel service "for the sake of riches and honor" is *priestcraft* (Alma 1:16)....[2] Another reason for service...is that which is motivated by a desire to obtain good companionship. We surely have good association in our Church service, but is that an acceptable motive for service?...Persons who serve only to obtain good companionship are more selective in choosing their friends than the Master was in choosing his servants. [3] Some serve out of fear of punishment. The scriptures abound with descriptions of the miserable state of those who fail to follow the commandments of God.... [4] Other persons serve out of a sense of duty or out of loyalty to family, friends, or traditions. I would call such persons "good soldiers." They instinctively do what they are asked, without question....Such persons...do much good. We have all benefited from their good works...Service of this character is worthy of praise and will surely qualify for blessings, especially if it is done willingly and joyfully.... [5] One such higher reason for service is the hope of an eternal reward. This hope...is one of our most powerful motivations....

The above five motives for service have a common deficiency. In varying degrees each focuses on the actor's personal advantage, either on earth or in the judgment to follow. Each is self-centered. There is something deficient about any service that is conscious of self. A few months after my calling to the Council of the Twelve, I expressed my feelings of inadequacy to one of the senior members of my quorum. He responded with this mild reproof and challenging insight: "I suppose your feelings are understandable. But you should work for a condition where you will not be preoccupied with yourself and your own feelings and can give your entire concern to others, to the work of the Lord in all the world." Those who seek to follow [the Savior's]...example must lose themselves in their service to others.... [6] If our service is to be most efficacious, it must be unconcerned with self and heedless of personal advantage. It must be accomplished for the love of God and the love of his children....Here we learn that it is not enough to serve god with all of our *might* and *strength*. He who looks into our hearts and knows our minds demand more than this. In order to stand blameless before god at the last day, we must also serve him with all our *heart* and *mind*.

Dallin H. Oaks, *Pure in Heart*, pp. 38-49

17 Service in behalf of others is one thing required of every soul. He who is able but will not serve his fellows in some way is not fit to have place among them. Serving others is its own reward. When we receive the priesthood, we do so with the understanding that it will be used for the benefit of others. This is an obligation we take upon us. In fact, priesthood blesses us in two ways: First, it is the means through which exaltation comes to those who hold it; second, it is to be used in behalf of others that they also may be blessed. No man is independent. Put a man off by himself, where he could communicate with none of his fellow beings or receive aid from them, and he would perish miserably. It is a mistake for us to draw within ourselves as does a snail into its shell. No man has been given the priesthood as an ornament only. He is expected to use it in behalf of the salvation of others.

Not only is he expected, but he is commanded to do so, for the Lord said, after pointing out the various offices in the priesthood and the duties assigned to each: "Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.

He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved shall not be counted worthy to stand. Even so, Amen" (D&C 107:99-100)
President Joseph Fielding Smith, *CR*, April 1966, 101-102

18 When we understand why we serve we will not worry about where we serve.
Howard W. Hunter, *BYU Devotional*, 2 Sept. 1990

19 Continue to seek opportunities for service. Don't be overly concerned with status. Do you recall the counsel of the Savior regarding those who seek the "chief seats" or the "uppermost rooms"? "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. 23:6, 11). It is important to be appreciated. But our focus should be on righteousness, not recognition; on service, not status. The faithful visiting teacher, who quietly goes about her work month after month, is just as important to the work of the Lord as those who occupy what some see as more prominent positions in the Church. Visibility does not equate to value.

Howard W. Hunter, *Ensign*, Nov. 1992 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992], 96-97

20 *Mundane service can be of great value.* God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another mortal that he meets our needs. Therefore, it is vital that we serve each other in the kingdom....

So often, our acts of service consist of simple encouragement or of giving mundane help with mundane tasks—but what glorious consequences can flow from mundane acts and from small but deliberate deeds!
Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, edited by Edward L. Kimball, p.252

21 Love is a potent healer. Realizing that, Satan would separate you from the power of the love of God, kindred, and friends....He would lead you to feel that the walls are pressing in around you and there is no escape or relief. He wants you to believe you lack the capacity to help yourself and that no one else is really interested....His strategy is to have you think you are not appreciated, loved, or wanted so that you in despair will turn to self-criticism, and in the extreme to even despising yourself and feeling evil when you are not....If you have such thoughts, break through those helpless feelings by reaching out in love to another in need. That may sound cruel and unfeeling when you long so much for healing, but it is based upon truth. Paul taught, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Love comes by learning how to give it to another in a spirit of trust. If you feel deprived of love, that is difficult. Yet sustained concern and support of others will engender their interest and love. You will feel needed. You become an instrument through which the Lord can bless another.

Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, May 1994 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1994], 8-9

22 Position in the Church does not exalt anyone, but faithfulness does. On the other hand, aspiring to a visible position—striving to become a master rather than a servant—can destroy the spirit of the worker and the work. Occasionally confusion exists regarding servants and masters. The Bible reports that a group of men “had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest” among them. Jesus said, “If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all” (Mark 9:34-35)...The word servant comes from the Greek noun diakonos, which means “one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master,” Diakonos is the Greek word from which the English word deacon is derived.

Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, May 1996 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996], 15-16

23 The bandage for a sufferer of leprosy arrived at LDS Humanitarian Center in an ordinary plastic bag. It looked like the many hundreds of others: made by hand from white, cotton thread, three inches wide by four feet long.

Like other similar bandages, this one was sturdy, designed so it would not stick to sores like flat bandages can, and could be sterilized for reuse. These bandages, while relatively easy to make, can take more than 40 hours to complete.

But there was something special about this bandage. At the top, the stitches were tight and orderly. About half way down, the stitches became increasingly uneven and loose. After another few inches, the stitches once again became even.

Attached to the bandage was a small note written by hand that said:

“Just a note about this bandage. I know it’s not the most perfect bandage you’ve ever seen, but it was made by my younger sister (age 46) who died of breast cancer in February. She worked on this right up till the end....She was determined to finish it, but died before it was finished. I finished it for her. Even though it looks a little funny, no bandage was ever done with more love, effort, or perseverance.”

The letter was not signed. There was no indication of who this woman was or where she was from.

All that can be surmised is that during her time of greatest affliction, this woman performed a simple act of kindness, something that would bring relief to a stranger. One stitch at a time—hour after hour—in her final and most troubling hours, her thoughts and hands were devoted to easing the pain of another.

In the great events of world history, the making of a bandage for a leprosy patient may not merit a mention. But perhaps beyond the veil, angels rejoice in a simple act of charity that serves as a symbol of all that is best within us. Nell K. Newell, *Welfare Services*, *Church News*, 8 Jan. 2005, 16

24 A few years ago I had been assigned with other General Authorities to attend a series of area conferences in New Zealand and Australia. Initially, the leader of our group was to have been President Spencer W. Kimball. However, because of the need for some emergency surgery, he could not travel with us, so President N. Eldon Tanner led the group in his place.

Each day during the trip President Tanner telephoned President Kimball in his hospital room to get a report on his condition and to give a brief report of the conferences in which we were participating. After the daily call to Salt Lake City, President Tanner would always give us a report on the President's condition. We were anxious and appreciated these brief messages.

Once, after we had been out for five or six days, President Tanner made his usual call to the hospital in Salt Lake City. However, this day he had no report for us. When we asked if he had talked to the President, he told us he had tried, but President Kimball wasn't in his room. "Where was he?" we asked. "They weren't sure; they couldn't find him," President Tanner said. "They thought he might have gone down to the next floor of the hospital to visit the sick."

To paraphrase a statement made by Wendell Phillips, it may be accurately said, "How prudently most men sink into nameless graves, while now and then a few forget themselves into immortality." (as quoted by William Jennings Bryan, *The Prince of Peace*, Independence: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1925.)

Elder H. Burke Peterson, *Selflessness: A Pattern for Happiness*, *Ensign* (CR), May 1985, p.65

25 You elders perhaps have one of your number sick, and his crop needs harvesting. Get together and harvest it. One of your members has a son on a mission, and his funds are getting low. Just ask if you can be of help to him. Your thoughtfulness he will never forget. Such acts as these are what the Savior had in mind when he said, "Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto me." (See Man. 25:40.) There is no other way that you can serve Christ. You can kneel down and pray to him, that is good. You can plead with him to give you his guidance through the Holy Spirit—yes, we do that and must do it. We have to do it. But it is these practical, daily visits in life, it is the controlling of our tongue, in not speaking evil of a brother, but speaking well of him, that the Savior marks as true service.

President David O. McKay, *Conference Report*, October 1955, Afternoon Meeting, p.129

26 It is not enough for any of us to get a job and feverishly work to produce income that leads only to personal comfort. We may gain some recompense in all of this, but we will not gain the ultimate satisfaction. When we serve others, we best serve our God.

Generally speaking, the most miserable people I know are those who are obsessed with themselves. By and large, if we complain about life, it is because we are thinking only of ourselves. For many years, there was a sign on the wall of a shoe shop I patronized that read: "I complained because I had no shoes until I saw a man who had no feet." The most effective medicine for the sickness of self-pity is to lose ourselves in the service of others....

The best cure for weariness is the challenge of helping someone who is even more tired. One of the great ironies of life is this: He or she who serves almost always benefits more than he or she who is served.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Standing for Something* [New York: Times Books, 2000], 56

I've come to Clean Your Shoes

27 Still in shock, I stumbled about the house trying to decide what to put into the suitcases. Earlier that evening I'd received a call from my hometown in Missouri telling me that my brother and his wife, her sister and both the sister's children had been killed in a car crash. "Come as soon as you can," begged my mother.

That's what I wanted to do—to leave at once, to hurry to my parents. But my husband, Larry, and I were in the midst of packing all our belongings to move from Ohio to New Mexico. Our house was in total confusion.... Supper dishes still sat on the kitchen table. Toys were strewn everywhere.

While Larry made plane reservations for the following morning, I wandered about the house, aimlessly picking things up and putting them down. I couldn't focus. Again and again, the words I'd heard on the phone echoed through my head: "Bill is gone—Marilyn too. June—and both the children...."

It was as though the message had mottled my brain with cotton. Whenever Larry spoke, he sounded far away. As I moved through the house, I ran into doors and tripped over chairs.

Larry made arrangements for us to leave by seven o'clock the next morning. Then he phoned a few friends to tell them what had happened. Occasionally, someone asked to speak to me. "If there's anything I can do, let me know," that person would offer kindly.

"Thank you very much," I'd reply. But I didn't know what to ask for. I couldn't concentrate.

I sat in a chair, staring into space, while Larry called Donna King, the woman with whom I taught a nursery class at church each Sunday. Donna and I were casual friends, but we didn't see each other often. She and Emerson, her thin, quiet husband, were kept busy during the weekdays by their own "nursery"—six children ranging in age from two years to fifteen. I was glad Larry had thought to warn her that she'd have the nursery class alone the coming Sunday.

While I sat there, [my little daughter] Meghan darted by, clutching a ball. [Her brother] Eric chased after her. *They should be in bed*, I thought. I followed them into the living room. My legs dragged. My hands felt gloved with lead, I sank down on the couch in a stupor.

When the doorbell rang, I rose slowly and crept across the room. I opened the door to see Emerson King standing on the porch.

"I've come to clean your shoes," he said.

Confused, I asked him to repeat.

"Donna, had to stay with the baby," he said, "but we want to help you. I remember when my father died, it took me hours to get the children's shoes cleaned and shined for the funeral. So that's what I've come to do for you. Give me all your shoes—not just your good shoes, but *all* your shoes."

I hadn't even thought about shoes until he mentioned them....

While Emerson spread newspapers on the kitchen floor, I gathered...shoes....

Emerson settled himself on the floor and got to work. Watching him concentrate intently on one task helped me pull my own thoughts into order. *Laundry first*, I told myself. While the washer chugged, Larry and I bathed the children and put them to bed.

While we cleared the supper dishes, Emerson continued to work, saying nothing. I thought of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. Our Lord had knelt, serving his friends, even as this man now knelt, serving us. The love in that act released my tears at last, healing rain to wash the fog from my mind. I could move. I could think. I could get on with the business of living.

One by one, the jobs fell into place. I went into the laundry room to put a load of wash into the dryer, returning to the kitchen to find that Emerson had left. In a line against the wall stood all our shoes, gleaming, spotless. Later, when I started to pack, I saw that Emerson had even scrubbed the soles. I could put the shoes directly into the suitcases.

We got to bed late and rose very early, but by the time we left for the airport, all the jobs were done. Ahead lay grim, sad days, but the comfort of Christ's presence, symbolized by the image of a quiet man kneeling on my kitchen floor with a pan of water, would sustain me.

Now, whenever I hear of an acquaintance who has lost a loved one, I no longer call with the vague offer, "If there's anything I can do...." Now I try to think of one specific task that suits that person's need—such as washing the family car, taking their dog to the boarding kennel, or house-sitting during the funeral. And if the person says to me, "How did you know I needed that done?" I reply, "It's because a man once cleaned my shoes."

Madge Harrah

28

It has always seemed somewhat paradoxical to me that we must constantly have the Lord command us to do those things which are for our own good. The Lord has said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 10:39.) We lose our life by serving and lifting others. By so doing we experience the only true and lasting happiness. Service is not something we endure on this earth so we can earn the right to live in the celestial kingdom. Service is the very fiber of which an exalted life in the celestial kingdom is made....

Oh, for the glorious day when these things all come naturally because of the purity of our hearts. In that day there will be no need for a commandment because we will have experienced for ourselves that we are truly happy only when we are engaged in unselfish service. Let us use the freedom which comes from self-reliance in giving and serving.

Can we see how critical self-reliance becomes when looked upon as the prerequisite to service, when we also know service is what Godhood is all about? Without self-reliance one cannot exercise these innate desires to serve. How can we give if there is nothing there? Food for the hungry cannot come from empty shelves. Money to assist the needy cannot come from an empty purse. Support and understanding cannot come from the emotionally starved. Teaching cannot come from the unlearned. And most important of all, spiritual guidance cannot come from the spiritually weak.

There is an interdependence between those who have and those who have not. The process of giving exalts the poor and humbles the rich. In the process, both are sanctified. The poor, released from the bondage and limitations of poverty, are enabled as free men to rise to their full potential, both temporally and spiritually. The rich, by imparting of their surplus, participate in the eternal principle of giving. Once a person has been made whole or self-reliant, he reaches out to aid others, and the cycle repeats itself.

President Marion G. Romney, *The Celestial Nature of Self-reliance*, *Ensign* (CR), November 1982, p.91

Mosiah 2:19-21

Gratitude

29

There were many challenges Orderville faced in the ten years they lived the order there. One of them they never really conquered is one with which we all struggle. It was the problem of not remembering. That is a problem we must solve, too.

Just as the memory of poverty would fade, we so easily forget that we came into life with nothing. Whatever we get soon seems our natural right, not a gift. And we forget the giver. Then our gaze shifts from what we have been given to what we don't have yet....

And so the remembrance of King Benjamin urged upon us can be ours. Remembrance is the seed of gratitude, which is the seed of generosity. Gratitude for the remission of sins is the seed of charity, the pure love of Christ. And so God has made possible for you and me this blessing, a change in our very natures: "And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God." (Moroni 8:26.)

Henry B. Eyring, "Remembrance and Gratitude," *CR*, Sept. 30, 1989

30

I am inclined to acknowledge the hand of God in all things. If I see a man inspired with intelligence, with extraordinary ability and wisdom, I say to myself he is indebted to God for that wisdom and ability; and that, without the providence or interposition of the Almighty, he would not have been what he is. He is indebted to the Lord Almighty for his intelligence, and for all that he has; for the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. God originated and designed all things, and all are his children....The children of men have sprung from the Almighty, whether the world is willing to acknowledge it or not....We live and move and have our being in God our heavenly Father. And having sprung from him with our talents, our ability, our wisdom, we should at least be willing to acknowledge his hand in all the prosperity that may attend us in life, and give to him the honor and glory of all we accomplish in the flesh.

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 62

31

Gratitude is deeper than thanks. Thankfulness is the beginning of gratitude. Gratitude is the completion of thankfulness. Thankfulness may consist merely of words. Gratitude is shown in acts.

I think it is well for us to consider our attitude toward blessings for which we should be most grateful; not just the temporal blessings-our harvest, profits, etc. Our thanksgiving might be entirely selfish, if we are thinking only of the success that has attended our investments, if we are grateful only for good crops, if we are going to express thanks for sufficient income to pay our taxes.

The observance of Thanksgiving Day should be, in the best sense, religious. When President George Washington issued the first proclamation, he called attention to reliance upon God, and urged the people to meet and express their gratitude, not merely for temporal things, but for the Constitution that gives to men liberty, for favorable attitudes of other nations toward this new country.

It might be well to review the feelings and emotions with which we approach Thanksgiving Day. There are some with whom things have gone well. The family circle has remained unbroken. No wasting sickness has come into the

home. Prosperity has left its blessings. The table is laden with plenty. There is meat in the larder and grain in the storehouse. Because of these things, they imagine they are grateful; but such gratitude is the essence of selfishness. It finds its basis in circumstances; it draws its inspiration from clear skies and smooth sailing, and hence it is as fitful and efflorescent as the alternations of sunlight and shadow.

If these conditions of personal comfort and prosperity are in themselves the ground of thankfulness, where in the hour of adversity shall we find occasion for rejoicing?

The record of the past has its graver side. There have been pain and losses, and disappointments and bereavements, and heartaches. Where in those things is there reason and ground for gratitude? Has the empty larder, the bare table, the desolate home, the vacant chair, the first mound in the cemetery no place for thanksgiving?

Ah, just here is the point of stumbling with many an earnest soul. We find in the bitter chill of adversity the real test of our gratitude; and that is the true gratitude, which, triumphing over conditions merely physical and external, finds its ground of thankfulness in God Himself. It is independent of circumstances. It goes beneath the surface of life, whether sad or joyous, and finds itself upon God.

Laying aside the thought of prosperity, let us consider four or five things for which everybody, rich or poor, well or sick, may express gratitude. The realities in life, after all, are the things which bring joy and happiness; and too many people in the world fail to appreciate these realities.

The first great reality for which we should be thankful is life itself. Life is a mystery to most of us, but all should be grateful for it. Life is the highest gift that God can give to man. And there is no person so poor, so crippled, who should not be grateful for it.

A second fundamental for which we should be grateful is the free agency God has given us—freedom and liberty vouchsafed by the Constitution of the United States.

Another reality for which you and I may express gratitude is our noble parentage. No matter how poor we are, how crippled we may be, we have received this blessing; and if we have not, then we have the freedom to make that name a worthy one.

Let us express gratitude for opportunities to render helpful service in the Church—service to our fellow men, not to self. If you would be happy, make somebody else happy. This is a fundamental law of Christ, and the Church is so organized that every person may have an opportunity in some organized way to render service to somebody else. Remember that ". . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:40)

David O. McKay, *Pathways to Happiness*, p.317-318

32 Master spoke of the "second mile" and told us to go there (see Matt. 5:41). Why? Because he wants to bless us. So he put all the blessings in the second mile, but we must go where they are before we get them.

The first mile, we owe; that's what we are getting paid for. Recently I mentioned that to an elder who was hardly meeting the minimums. He responded, "Paid? I'm not getting paid."

I said, "Oh? You can breathe can't you?"

"Yes."

"You think you have that coming to you or something? King Benjamin says the Lord is preserving you from day to day by granting you breath—even supporting you from moment to moment" (see Mosiah 2:21). Do we ever thank the Lord for the fact we can breathe? No, not usually, until we get to where we can't breathe. Then we call upon him in a panic.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., *Following Christ to Victory*, *Ensign* (CR), May 1979, p.29

33 We are told that we are unprofitable servants, and so we are, if we think of trying to pay our Savior back for what he has done for us, for that we never can do; and we cannot by any number of acts, or a full life of faithful service place our Savior in our debt.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:15

Mosiah 2:24

34 *Ingratitude*

I believe that one of the greatest sins of which the inhabitants of the earth are guilty today is the sin of ingratitude....We see a man with extraordinary gifts, or with great intelligence, and he is instrumental in developing some great principle. He and the world ascribe his great genius and wisdom to himself. He attributes his success to his own energies, labor, and mental capacity. He does not acknowledge the hand of the Lord in anything connected with his success, but ignores him altogether and takes the honor to himself. This will apply to almost all the world. In all the great modern discoveries in science, in the arts, in mechanics, and in all the material advancement of the age, the world says, "We have done it." The individual says, "I have done it," and he gives no honor or credit to the Lord.

Now, I read in the revelations through Joseph Smith, the Prophet, that because of this, the Lord is not pleased with the inhabitants of the earth; he is angry with them because they will not acknowledge his hand in all things.

President Joseph Fielding Smith, *Conference Report*, October 1969, Third Day-Morning Meeting, p.110

35 The inhabitants of this continent anciently were so constituted, and were so determined and persevering, either in righteousness or wickedness, that God visited them immediately with great judgments of blessings. But the present generation, if they were going to battle, if they got any assistance from God, they would have to obtain it by faith.

Joseph Smith, *TPJS*, 299

Mosiah 2:25-26

36 *Humility*

We are not our own, we are bought with a price, we are the Lord's; our time, our talents, our gold and silver, our wheat and fine flour, our wine and our oil, our cattle, and all there is on this earth that we have in our possession is the Lord's....

...There is no man who ever made a sacrifice on this earth for the Kingdom of heaven, that I know anything about, except the Savior. He drank the bitter cup to the dregs, and tasted for every man and for every woman, and redeemed the earth and all things upon it. But he was God in the flesh, or he could not have endured it. "But we suffer, we sacrifice, we give something, we have preached so long." What for? "Why, for the Lord." I would not give the ashes of a rye straw for the man who feels that he is making sacrifice for God. We are doing this for our own happiness, welfare and exaltation, and for nobody else's. This is the fact, and what we do, we do for the salvation of the inhabitants of the earth, not for the salvation of the heavens, the angels, or the God.

Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, pp. 176-77

37 These are the words of the late Malcolm Muggeridge, British author, journalist and television commentator.
 "I may, I suppose, regard myself, or pass for being, a relatively successful man. People occasionally stare at me in the streets—that's fame. I can fairly easily earn enough to qualify for admission to the higher slopes of the Internal Revenue—that's success. Furnished with money and a little fame even the elderly, if they care to, may partake of trendy diversions—that's pleasure. It might happen once in a while that something I said or wrote was sufficiently heeded for me to persuade myself that it represented a serious impact on our time—that's fulfillment. Yet I say to you—and I beg you to believe me—multiply these tiny triumphs by a million, add them all together, and they are nothing—less than nothing...measured against one draught of that living water Christ offers to the spiritually thirsty. Malcolm Muggeridge; as quoted in *With Full Purpose of Heart, Messages by Dallin H. Oaks* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002], 74-75

38 [Regarding man] science tells us that without the spirit about all that is left is a quantity of water, far enough to make about seven bars of soap, sulphur enough to rid one dog of fleas, iron enough for a large nail, magnesium for one dose, lime enough to whitewash a chicken coop, phosphorus sufficient to tip some 2200 matches, potassium enough to explode a toy cannon, sugar to fill a shaker, and little more. But with a spirit directing mental processes and physical maneuvers man is "little lower than the angels" and is "crowned...with glory and honour" (Psalm 8:5). And yet man in his vanity and impudence has taken unto himself the glory of all his accomplishments, set himself up as God and, as has been said, has even "created God in his (man's) own image." It is as if the Boulder Dam should say: "I am powerful. I hold back great quantities of water. Parched land becomes fertile and productive because of me. There were no builders. I am the great cause and responsible to no power.
Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 27

39 The animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms abide the law of their Creator; the whole earth and all things pertaining to it, except man, abide the law of their creation....We tame the animals and make them do our drudgery and administer to our wants in many ways, yet man alone is not tamed—he is not subject to his Great Creator. Our ignorant animals are faithful to us, and will do our bidding as long as they have any strength; yet man, who is the offspring of the Gods, will not become subject to the most reasonable and self-exalting principles. How often have we witnessed a faithful animal conveying his master home so drunk that he could not see his way or sit up; yet his faithful animal will plod through mud, shun stumps, trees, and bad places, and land him safely at home?
Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, 9:246-247

40 *Be Thou Humble*
 Be thou humble in thy weakness, and the Lord thy God shall lead thee,
 Shall lead thee by the hand and give thee answer to thy prayers.
 Be thou humble in thy pleading, and the Lord thy God shall bless thee,
 Shall bless thee with a sweet and calm assurance that he cares.

Be though humble in thy calling, and the Lord thy God shall teach thee
 To serve his children gladly with a pure and gentle love.

Be thou humble in thy longing, and the Lord thy God shall take thee,
 Shall take thee home at last to ever dwell with him above.

Mosiah 2:27

41 "*Clear conscience*"

With all my heart I urge you wonderful young people not to take a secret shame with you to your marriage. You may never be able to forget it. You will want to go through life with the strength that comes from a clear conscience,

which will permit you one day to stand before your Maker and say, "My soul is pure." Self-denial is not restrictive. It is liberating. It is the pathway to freedom. It is strength.

James E. Faust, in *Conference Report*, Apr. 2000 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000], 56

Mosiah 2:32-33

42 *Contention*

Contentions come from the evil spirit (v. 32). The Savior said the devil is "the father of contention" (3 Nephi 11:29). Those who obey the evil spirit and die in their sins will receive an everlasting punishment (Mosiah 2:33). The reason for such punishment gives us an excellent definition of sin: "having transgressed the law of God contrary to his own knowledge" (v. 33). The apostle John wrote, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). However, a broken law without knowledge may not always be a sin. The natural effects of the broken law will still follow, but the punishment of God may be withheld and the Atonement will pay for the demands of justice through the mercy of Christ. The Prophet Ezekiel said: "Again, when the wicked *man* turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die" (Ezekiel 18:27-28).

Monte S. Nyman, *These Records are True*, pp. 204-205

Mosiah 2:33

43 *Everlasting punishment*

"Eternal punishment, or endless punishment, does not mean that those who partake of it must endure it forever. "It is not written that there shall be no end to this torment, but it is written endless torment. Again, it is written eternal damnation; wherefore it is more express than other scriptures, that it might work upon the hearts of the children of men, altogether for my name's glory....Behold, the mystery of godliness, how great is it! For, behold, I am endless, and the punishment which is given from my hand is endless punishment, for Endless is my name. Wherefore— Eternal punishment is God's punishment. Endless punishment is God's punishment." [D&C 19:6-12.]

The laws of God are immutable, and from this explanation we learn that the same punishment always follows the same offense, according to the laws of God who is eternal and endless, hence it is called, *endless punishment*, and *eternal punishment*, because it is the punishment which God has fixed according to unchangeable law. A man may partake of endless torment, and when he has paid the penalty for his transgression, he is released, but *the punishment remains and awaits the next culprit, and so on forever.*

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:228

Mosiah 2:34

44

The spirit of consecration pervades the lines of King Benjamin's speech as he urges followers, for instance, "to render to [God] all that you have and are" (Mosiah 2:34), thus touching a raw and reminding nerve in each of us insofar as we hold back some of ourselves.

Ironically, if the Master is a stranger to us, then we will merely end up serving other masters. The sovereignty of these other masters is real, even if it is sometimes subtle. They do call their cadence, for "we are all enlisted," if only in the ranks of the indifferent. To the extent that we are not willing to be led by the Lord, we will, instead, be driven by our appetites and be preoccupied with the lesser things and the pressing cares of the day.

So many of us are kept from eventual consecration because we mistakenly think that somehow, by letting our will be swallowed up in the will of God, we lose our individuality. Abinadi cited the key example, for he spoke of how Jesus let his will be "swallowed up in the will of the Father" (Mosiah 15:7).

What we are really worried about, of course, is not giving up self, but rather selfish things—like our roles, our time, our preeminence, and our possessions. No wonder we are instructed by the Savior to lose ourselves (see Luke

9:24). He is only asking us to lose the old self in order to find the new self. This is part of what Benjamin's sermon is all about—to put off the natural man in order to come into our spiritual inheritance. So, it is not a question of losing one's identity but of finding it. Ironically, so many people already lose themselves anyway—but in their consuming hobbies and preoccupations.

Neal A. Maxwell, "A Manual of discipleship," *King Benjamin's Speech Made Simple*

45

The testimony of King Benjamin and of all the prophets is that one really serves himself as he serves the Lord. Sin leads to misery, suffering, and loss of agency for oneself. (See 2 Nephi 2:27, 29; Alma 41:10; D&C 19:15-20.)

King Benjamin clearly defines the consequences of sin. Sin is rebellion against God. When one knows what is right and does not do it, he not only violates the actual law, but puts himself in a state of opposition to God—a serious offense in and of itself. Thus he becomes "an enemy to all righteousness" (Mosiah 2:37), one of the basic problems of the natural man. (See Mosiah 3:19.)

A bishop tells the story of an older sister who came in for a temple recommend. When he asked her about adherence to the Word of Wisdom, she admitted that she had one cup of coffee each morning. When he asked if she could quit and was told no, he suggested that he could not issue a recommend until compliance with the law was met. The woman grew very angry and said, "I don't think it is that significant! One cup of coffee is nothing. I can't believe a loving Father would hold me out of the celestial kingdom for one cup of coffee a day. Why, then, should you hold me out of the temple?"

For a long moment the bishop looked at her and then said very gently, "I suppose that there are many, many things far more serious than a cup of coffee. Certainly one of those more serious things is rebellion against God. As a member of the Church you know what the Lord has taught concerning the Word of Wisdom. If you know the law and still refuse to obey it, that is a very serious state of rebellion. So as long as you continue in this state of opposition you cannot dwell with God. And so, yes, I believe that a single cup of coffee per day can hold you out of the celestial kingdom, and for the same reason I cannot issue you a temple recommend unless you show that you have repented of your opposition and show by your actions that you are obedient to his laws."

The words of the bishop shocked the woman. She had never thought of her actions in that way before. With tears in her eyes she thanked him, promising to be back later when she could answer all of his questions properly and enter the temple worthily.

BYU Book of Mormon Student Manual, pp. 155-156

Mosiah 2:36

46

Withdraw yourselves from spirit

An important aspect of baptism by the Spirit may frequently be overlooked in our spiritual development.

"We should...endeavor to discern when we withdraw [ourselves] from the spirit of the Lord, that it may have no place in [us] to guide [us] in wisdom's paths that [we] may be blessed, prospered, and preserved" (Mosiah 2:36). Precisely because the promised blessing is that we may always have His Spirit to be with us, we should attend to and learn from the choices and influences that separate us from the Holy Spirit.

The standard is clear. If something we think, see, hear, or do distances us from the Holy Ghost, then we should stop thinking, seeing, hearing, or doing that thing. If that which is intended to entertain, for example, alienates us from the Holy Spirit, then certainly that type of entertainment is not for us....

I recognize we are fallen men and women living in a mortal world and that we might not have the presence of the Holy Ghost with us every second of every minute of every hour of every day. However, the Holy Ghost can tarry with us much, if not most, of the time—and certainly the Spirit can be with us more than it is not with us.

David A. Bednar, *Ensign*, May 2006, 30

Mosiah 2:3747 *Unholy Temple*

The temple is the house of God and no unclean thing is to enter it. Thus the temple becomes a natural metaphor for our bodies. To allow those thoughts or feelings that are unclean to enter the sanctuary of our spirit is, as it were, to defile the temple or the sacred place.

Millet and McConkie, *Commentary on the BOM*, p. 143

Mosiah 2:38-39

48 No man can commit the unpardonable sin after the dissolution of the body, nor in this life, unless he receives the Holy Ghost, but they must do it in this world.

Joseph Smith, *TPJS*, 357

Mosiah 2:4049 Vice is a creature of such frightful mien
That to be hated, needs but to be seen
But, seen too often, familiar with her face
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Author Unknown

Mosiah 2:40-41

50 Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God.

Joseph Smith, *TPJS*, 255-56

51 It is impossible for weak mortals, and we are all weak, fully to comprehend the extent of the suffering of the Son of God. We cannot realize the price he had to pay...It is, however, within our grasp to know and realize that this excruciating agony of his sacrifice has brought to us the greatest blessing that could possibly be given. Moreover, we are able to realize that this extreme suffering-which was beyond the power of mortal man either to accomplish or endure-was undertaken because of the great love which the Father and the Son had for mankind.

We are extremely ungrateful to our Father and to his Beloved Son when in all humility with "broken hearts and contrite spirits" we are unwilling to keep the commandments. The violation of any divine commandment is a most ungrateful act, considering all that has been accomplished for us through the atonement of our Savior.

We will never be able to pay the debt. The gratitude of our hearts should be filled to overflowing in love and obedience for his great and tender mercy. For what he has done, we should never fail him. He bought us with a price, the price of his great suffering and the spilling of his blood in sacrifice on the cross.

Now, he has asked us to keep his commandments. He says they are not grievous, and there are so many of us who are not willing to do it. I am speaking now generally of the people of the earth. We are not willing to do it. That certainly is ingratitude. We are ungrateful.

Every member of this Church who violates the Sabbath day, who is not honest in the paying of his tithing, who will not keep the Word of Wisdom, who wilfully violates any of the other commandments the Lord has given us, is ungrateful to the Son of God, and when ungrateful to the Son of God is ungrateful to the Father who sent him.

If our Savior would do so much for us, how in the world is it that we are not willing to abide by his commandments, which are not grievous, which do not cause us any suffering if we will only keep them? And yet, people break the Word of Wisdom; they refuse to attend to their duties as officers and members in the Church; many of them stay away from meetings the Lord has called upon them to support. They follow their own desires if they are in conflict with the commandments of the Lord.

If we understood our position, and if we loved the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, ...then we would keep his commandments. When we will not do this, I tell you, my brethren and sisters, we show ingratitude to Jesus Christ.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols. edited by Bruce R. McConkie, 1: p.131-132

Mosiah 2 Conclusion

52

We walk in darkness at noon-day when we postpone obedience. We walk in darkness at noon-day when we choose to place other priorities higher than the highest ones. We walk in darkness at noon-day when we live beneath our spiritual privileges, when we have access to the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven and the very powers of godliness but choose instead to exist on borrowed light and are content with life as usual. Indeed, we walk in darkness when we obscure the light of heaven by distraction, preoccupation, and spiritual complacency.

Robert L. Millet, *Men of Influence*, p. 26