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## “Come, Follow Me”: The Imitation of Christ in the Later Middle Ages

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As Latter-day Saints we most often look to the Reformation as the preparation for the Restoration. In my studies of medieval history, however, I have come to realize that the way was also prepared for the Reformation itself, and that preparation occurred in the later Middle Ages. Earlier in the Middle Ages, active participation in religious devotion was the role of religious specialists such as monks and priests. Religious movements in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries changed this pattern and created a widespread interest in religion, bringing about a dramatic rise in common people’s participation in religious devotion. Concurrent with this was an increased focus on the life and suffering of Jesus Christ.

As late medieval devotion increasingly focused on the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, laypeople throughout Europe sought both to meditate on His life and suffering and to follow His example. The efforts to follow in Christ’s footsteps took many forms. Pilgrims in Jerusalem sought to stand physically in the places of His suffering. Those in Europe believed they could experience His pain through meditation on accounts and images of His scourging, His carrying the cross, and His crucifixion. Some even scourged themselves to feel closer to His suffering.

While I believe we can learn much from this desire to meditate on Christ’s atoning sacrifice, some of these devotional practices may strike us as missing the full meaning of the Savior’s invitation to “come, follow me” (Luke 18:22). Their enthusiasm for practices that we would not encourage today grew out of the contemporary belief that sharing Christ’s suffering was necessary to receive the benefits of the Atonement. The impact of doctrinal understanding on devotional practices illustrates one effect of missing “plain and precious” parts of the gospel. Nevertheless, I believe that the widespread late medieval enthusiasm to follow the Savior demonstrates how through the Spirit of Christ people were gradually prepared for the Father to teach of the covenant through the Restoration (D&C 84:44–48).

### Imitation of Christ through Devotional Literature

One of the ways in which people in the later Middle Ages learned about the life of Christ was through devotional texts that told stories about His life and sufferings. As Europe became increasingly urbanized in the central and later Middle Ages, the merchant classes grew in size and importance. With this rise came higher levels of literacy and an increased demand for book production, first in manuscript form and then in printed form, starting in the mid-fifteenth century with Gutenberg’s movable type. While there was also a widespread interest in chivalric romance literature and other secular genres, the demand for devotional literature was very significant. In part this demand had developed under the influence of the mendicant orders of monks, such as the Franciscans and Dominicans, who encouraged the spread of lay religiosity. <sup>[1]</sup>

The Franciscans are particularly important in understanding the widespread late medieval interest in meditation on the life of Christ. Their efforts to promote Christ-centered piety and encourage broad participation in these devotional practices can be considered a religious revolution. <sup>[2]</sup>

During this era the Bible was not generally available in vernacular languages and the laity were not encouraged to own and study the Bible. The devotional texts of the Franciscans, however, written in both Latin and the languages of the people, made the biblical narrative of Christ’s life available to a large public. <sup>[3]</sup> Although the retelling of these stories reflects the Franciscans’ theological concerns and in some cases goes beyond the text of the Bible, these efforts created and reinforced a widespread European familiarity and interest in the biblical narrative. These texts also helped to spread and strengthen a widespread European focus on Christ-centered devotion.

To this day one of these texts, Thomas a Kempis’s *Imitation of Christ*, has remained well known. Rather than

being a unique literary text, the *Imitation of Christ* is part of a body of literature that had been earlier developed and disseminated throughout Europe. Some other early and influential devotional texts include the *Meditationes vitae Christi*, which was believed to have been written by Bonaventure, Richard Rolle's *Mediations on the Passion*, and Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi*. These various meditations on the life of Christ enjoyed widespread popularity and were translated into many languages.

As the titles of these devotional works suggest, their focus was on encouraging individuals to meditate on the life and suffering of Christ. The approach of these works differed from modern scripture commentaries. They were not concerned with the historical context of the life of Jesus in Roman-occupied Judea in the first century. Likewise, the central focus of these texts was not the teachings of the Savior on a sunny hillside in Galilee. Instead they focused on the miracle of the birth of Immanuel ("God with us") and the terrible humiliation and suffering manifest in Christ's expiatory sacrifice on our behalf.

These devotional works followed the general biblical accounts but made them accessible by encouraging readers to see and experience the scriptural events as if they were actually present. In some ways they might be seen as similar to modern Latter-day Saint historical fiction in that they were based on actual events but then made more personal and vivid by retelling them with added details. These devotional texts sought to make the Passion vividly immediate by narrating the events in graphic detail.

These vivid images were designed to evoke intense emotional reactions to the events of Christ's suffering. The devotional texts would also directly address the audience, telling them to behold Christ's suffering and to feel His pain as though they were there with Him. This personal connection of imagination and feeling with the suffering of Christ was seen as a means to participate in the Passion, a participation believed to be necessary to allow individuals to fully receive the benefits of His suffering. This participation allowed individuals a means to know, through their own experience, the love of God manifest in the suffering of Christ.<sup>[4]</sup>

The experience of participation was seen as a means of following Christ. A fourteenth-century writer from the Netherlands, Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen, explained the effect that this personal connection to the Passion should have: "For He suffered for your personal redemption. Therefore apply all that you read of Christ's doings to yourself, as if they were done for you alone, and always imagine that Christ is saying to you: I did this that you might follow Me."<sup>[5]</sup> The devotional accounts of Christ's suffering pointed individuals to Christ and made the invitation to follow Him widely available.

As these devotional texts told the stories of Christ's life and suffering, they encouraged the readers to follow His example. This imitation of Christ was often referred to as "being conformed to Christ." These texts not only encouraged the readers' imitation but they also explained how to participate in Christ's sufferings and gave examples of those who had done so.

While the phrase "being conformed to Christ" did, in some cases, include sharing the physical suffering with Christ, the means through which individuals were encouraged to "take up their cross" and follow Christ varied widely. These different means of following Christ and being conformed to Him also included moral action in living a virtuous Christian life, emotional connection in feeling His suffering and His love, and mental remembrance and meditation on the events of His life and suffering. These different ways of following Christ are illustrated here in this passage of Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi*: "We ought to carry the Cross of our Lord and help Him to bear it, with our hearts by pious remembrance and compassion, with our lips by frequent and devout thanksgiving, with our whole body by mortification and penance, and thus give thanks to our Saviour by our affections, words and deeds."<sup>[6]</sup> Participation, whether physical, moral, mental, or emotional, was the experience of feeling the love of God manifest in Christ's sufferings. Ludolph explicitly lays out how being conformed to Christ's suffering changes the individual. "Now in order to enter into the sweet savour of our Lord's Passion and to compassionate Jesus crucified, attend to the following things. First strive, as much as thou canst, to unite thyself to Him by fervent love; for the more fervently thou lovest Him, the more thou wilt compassionate His sufferings, and the more thou dost compassionate Him, so much the more will thine affection be enkindled, so that love and pity will thus mutually increase, until thou comest to perfection."<sup>[7]</sup> For Christians in the later Middle Ages, the desire to follow Christ and become like Him focused primarily on His suffering, believing that this focus would move them to love and perfection.

As Latter-day Saints we also seek to always remember the Savior and His suffering on our behalf. We also believe that remembering His love will increase our love for Him and our desire to obey and follow Him. At the same time, there are aspects of the late medieval devotional emphasis that do not resonate with our sensibilities or doctrinal

understanding. One point in particular is the theological question of how the benefits of Christ's suffering are made available for us. I will discuss this in greater depth in the conclusion, but it is important to note that while the Restoration and Book of Mormon have emphasized faith, repentance, baptism, and gift of the Holy Ghost as the path to receiving the blessings of the Atonement, late medieval Christians did not have this clarity of understanding. They also sincerely wanted to receive the blessings of Christ's suffering on their behalf, but the doctrinal interpretation of their day emphasized that sharing Christ's suffering was the gate. This desire to participate in Christ's suffering was often understood very literally, and this interpretation can be seen in the experience of pilgrims in Jerusalem.

### **Imitation of Christ through Pilgrimage**

Those devout Europeans who had the opportunity to travel to Jerusalem during the later Middle Ages found an extension of the Franciscan-inspired devotional literature and imagery that they were familiar with at home. In the early part of the fourteenth century the Franciscans became the custodians of Jerusalem for Western Christianity and, as such, they were the guides of European pilgrims through the holy places.

The Franciscans' theological focus on Christ's suffering reshaped the Jerusalem pilgrimage from its previous random assortment of holy places of Old and New Testament events. <sup>[8]</sup> Much like the devotional literature that told the events of the Passion and then encouraged a personal response, the Franciscans shaped pilgrimage into a meditation on the Passion. They focused their tours on the Jerusalem of the New Testament, specifically on the places of Christ's suffering and death, and encouraged the pilgrims to meditate and respond. As the pilgrims walked in Christ's footsteps, they believed that their presence and their compassionate response allowed them to receive the benefits of Christ's suffering, benefits that were quantified by the Franciscans as indulgences.

Although as Latter-day Saints we do not quantify the spiritual benefits available through these acts of remembrance and imitation, many who have visited historical sites have spoken of a feeling of participation. Whether in walking the path of the Savior in Jerusalem or following the steps of the early Saints down Parley Street in Nauvoo, remembering the sacrifices made on our behalf can bring spiritual renewal and rededication.

For many today it is surprising to learn that the fourteenth—and fifteenth-century pilgrims did not follow the historical narrative directly, starting at either the site of the arrest in Gethsemane or the judgment by Pilate and then progressing towards Calvary. Instead, because of the pressures from the governing Muslim authorities of the Mamluk dynasty, the pilgrims started at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and then moved their way out of the city. This has been seen as a reverse direction because it meant that the pilgrims *began*, rather than ended, their path at what they believed to be the site of the Crucifixion.

When pilgrims returned to Europe a number of them tried to reproduce the experience of Jerusalem pilgrimage in their home cities. This was accomplished by setting up stations or markers that indicated the different sites along the Saviors road to Calvary. The influence of the devotional literature and its Passion narration was so strong that these substitute paths did not reproduce the Jerusalem pilgrimage's reverse direction, but instead followed the biblical narrative. While these stations or markers originally led virtual pilgrims through city streets, they were also set up in churches where the devout would move from one image to another contemplating the experience of Christ's suffering.

These practices of following the Stations of the Cross spread widely throughout Europe, and the stations were eventually formalized into the fourteen stations that continue to be practiced throughout the Roman Catholic world. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the European experiences of pilgrims led them to demand that the order of the pilgrimage in Jerusalem be changed to follow the order of the biblical narrative. With the institution of the modern-day Via Dolorosa (or Way of Sorrow) Jerusalem pilgrims were able to literally accept the invitation to take up their cross and "come, follow me" (Luke 18:22).

Christ's invitation to "come, follow me" was widely extended throughout the later Middle Ages. Individuals heard this call through devotional literature recounting Christ's life and sufferings, devotional art that illustrated Christ's Passion and death, and devotional practices such as Jerusalem pilgrimage and the Stations of the Cross. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, meditation on and participation in Christ's sufferings became a widespread concern, creating a large base of interest in questions of religious practice and belief. During the sixteenth century, the Reformers challenged some aspects of these practices, as well as the theology behind many of these practices and beliefs. These challenges to the institutional monopoly of the Roman Catholic Church in Western Europe created multiple churches that, when later combined with the freedom of religion available in the United States, provided the necessary conditions for the Restoration through the prophet Joseph Smith.

### **Implications for Latter-Day Saints**

As grateful as we are as Latter-day Saints for the religious diversity and renewed emphasis on the Bible that the Protestant Reformation brought about, we owe a similar debt of gratitude to the theologians and pious inhabitants in medieval Europe for gradually teaching and embracing a doctrinal focus on the mercy and love manifest in the suffering of Christ. While they did not possess the covenant made possible by the restored authority of the priesthood, I believe that the Spirit was moving upon the people of this era, helping them move closer to coming unto God (D&C 84:45–47). Through the Restoration the final step of that process has been accomplished as “the Father teacheth . . . of the covenant” (D&C 84:48). A fresh examination of the doctrines and practices of late medieval piety can clarify the central saving doctrines revealed through the Restoration.

For pious individuals in the later Middle Ages, the desire to participate in the suffering of Christ was shaped by Franciscan theology’s focus on the need to suffer with Christ in order to receive the benefits of Christ’s suffering. While in many cases this desire to participate took the form of remembrance, emotional experience, or moral living, it also promoted acts of physical imitation such as flagellation and other forms of self-inflicted suffering.

The emphasis on participation was expressed by Bonaventure, an important Franciscan theologian: “Christ, the King of Kings, makes a decree that none may see him, unless he is crucified with him. And this decree is applicable to all without exception; moreover it is binding on all, and none may ignore it. And whosoever holds back from accepting the mortification of the cross in his body so that the life of the Lord Jesus in his own body is not manifest in imitation, is not worthy in other respects, without that banner of victory, to follow him to the crown.”<sup>[9]</sup>

This emphasis on participation in Christ’s suffering as the means to receive His glory is implicitly stated by Paul in Romans 8:17: “We suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” The Franciscans’ insistence on suffering with Christ to receive Christ’s glory was established by the example of their founder, Saint Francis of Assisi, who was believed to have received the stigmata, or wounds of Christ. In Bonaventure’s words, Francis was “totally transformed into the likeness of Christ crucified, not by the martyrdom of his flesh, but by the fire of his love consuming his soul.”<sup>[10]</sup> Faith and love led here to literal imitation.

Franciscan theologians and the devout of the later Middle Ages were convinced that Christ was their intermediary with God, but they also believed that the intensity of their faith and love could best be shown by voluntarily imitating Christ’s suffering. As Latter-day Saints we also recognize that undergoing suffering may be a necessary part of our process of coming unto Christ (D&C 101:4–5). Elder Neal A. Maxwell has noted, however, that we need not volunteer for suffering: “There are many who suffer so much more than the rest of us: some go agonizingly; some go quickly; some are healed; some are given more time; some seem to linger. There are variations in our trials but no immunities. Thus, the scriptures cite the fiery furnace and fiery trials [Daniel 3:6–26; 1 Peter 4:12]. Those who emerge successfully from their varied and fiery furnaces have experienced the grace of the Lord, which He says is sufficient [Ether 12:27]. Even so, brothers and sisters, such emerging individuals do not rush to line up in front of another fiery furnace in order to get an extra turn!”<sup>[11]</sup> One of the greatest clarifications of the Restoration is not only the reaffirmation that Christ has suffered for us but the further witness that He has truly suffered *with* us in all things (Alma 7:11–13). With this added confidence in the infinite and personal scope of Christ’s Atonement we can gain comfort and strength in moments of personal Gethsemane-like experiences.

While clearly emphasizing Christ’s suffering with us, rather than our need to suffer with Him to receive the blessings of the Atonement, both the teachings and experiences of modern prophets and apostles point to how the Lord may use our experiences of suffering to help us more fully come unto Christ. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “Men have to suffer that they may come upon Mount Zion and be exalted above the heavens.”<sup>[12]</sup> President Marion G. Romney commented on this, saying, “This does not mean that we crave suffering. We avoid all we can. However, we now know, and we all knew when we elected to come into mortality, that we would here be proved in the crucible of adversity and affliction.”<sup>[13]</sup> In recent times we have heard many of the Lord’s prophets and apostles testify both of Christ’s suffering with us and how their own sufferings have been sanctified to bring them closer to Christ and to enable them to testify of Him.<sup>[14]</sup>

As Latter-day Saints we can rightly rejoice to know that receiving of the merits of Christ’s atonement requires only faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring in faith on His name (D&C 20:29). At the same time, the late medieval understanding of the imitation of Christ as participating in His suffering can open up new insights for us into the fulness of the Restoration. A noted scholar of late medieval piety has observed that “for ordinary

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Christian as well as saint, devotion to Christ entailed ritual identification with him.” For late medieval Christians, ritual identification with Christ included a physical, mental, or emotional imitation of His suffering, in the belief that “if it so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:17).

I have previously discussed our shared recognition of the spiritual benefits of always remembering Christ through meditation on devotional readings and participation in retracing the events of sacred history. As helpful and beneficial as these practices can be, I believe that as we ponder this less-familiar notion of ritual identification with Christ, our appreciation and understanding of the Restoration will be further deepened.

Latter-day Saint scholars’ study of the world of the ancient Near East has helped us to appreciate aspects of temple worship by clarifying how sacred time and space allow us to participate in sacred history. I believe that the late medieval practice of ritual identification can likewise provide helpful insights as we ponder ordinances such as partaking of the sacrament or baptism. A useful illustration of this idea of ritual identification can be seen in the ordinance of baptism. At baptism we take upon ourselves the name of Christ (Mosiah 5:5–12), a covenant that we renew weekly when we take the sacrament (D&C 20:77).

An aspect of taking the name of Christ upon us is ritual identification. Paul described baptism in terms of ritual identification: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). When we “put on Christ” through this ordinance, we ritually identify ourselves with Christ. We *imitate* or *participate* in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Paul describes this participation, saying: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Romans 6:3–6). Through our baptism we are ritually “baptized into his death” and “buried with him by baptism into death.” Likewise, through our baptism we are ritually lifted up from this death through Christ’s atonement and resurrection. Our submersion also represents the crucifixion of our “old man” of sin before our ritual “resurrection” that shows how “we also should walk in newness of life.”

There is a clear sense that our ritual participation in Christ’s suffering through the ordinance of baptism is an absolute prerequisite for our receiving all the blessings of the Atonement. We can live in the world in a different way, in “newness of life,” because of the power of the Atonement that is made available through the ordinance of baptism. As we ritually participate in Christ’s death, we also ritually receive the blessings of His atoning sacrifice—the ability to rise in the resurrection of the just “in the likeness of his resurrection” and return back to our Father in Heaven.

Let us now return to Paul’s statement in Romans 8:17: “We suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”<sup>[16]</sup> Unlike the late medieval Christians, we do not interpret this passage to promote the active pursuit of suffering in imitation of Christ. We can, however, see in this connection a model for the participation in sacred history that the ordinances make available to us. Through ritually suffering with Christ, we receive promises that “we may be also glorified together.”

Seeing the ordinances as a means to participate in the atonement of Christ not only helps us to appreciate the ordinance of baptism, but it also can increase our understanding of participation in the sacrament and in the ordinances of the temple. In the sacrament we covenant to take the name of Christ upon us, and we literally partake of emblems of Christ’s suffering—His body and blood. Our participation in His sacrifice allows us to receive the blessing to “always have his Spirit to be with [us]” (Moroni 4:3). As with baptism, this participation in Christ’s suffering prepares and equips us to go forward and live differently in the world, having “put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

The temple ordinances can be seen to offer us similar opportunities to participate in the Atonement so that we may receive Christ’s glory. President Harold B. Lee commented that “the receiving of the endowment requires the assuming of obligations by covenants which in reality are but an embodiment or an unfolding of the covenants each person should have assumed at baptism.”<sup>[17]</sup> As we ponder the endowment as “an embodiment or an unfolding” of the baptismal covenant, we can begin to more deeply appreciate Christ’s invitation to come unto Him and be perfected in Him (Moroni 10:32). Paul suggests how the ordinances make participation possible when he says that “as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). This “put[ting] on Christ” can be glimpsed in the dedication of the Kirtland Temple when Joseph Smith prayed that “thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them” (D&C 109:22). Through the ritual identification of the ordinances, “we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:17).

Christ has invited us, “Come, follow me.” We often place the entire burden of this invitation on our own shoulders and thus grow “weary in well-doing” (D&C 64:33). Instead, we should see His invitation as an offer to yoke ourselves to Him through His restored ordinances. When we understand the imitation of Christ as participating in His expiatory suffering and glorious resurrection, His invitation allows us to learn of Him and find rest unto our souls (Matthew 11:28–30). As we take the name of Christ upon us through the ordinances, we are truly connected with the “newness of life” flowing from His atoning sacrifice and victory over the grave.

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- [1] An excellent introduction to late medieval piety can be found in Richard Kieckhefer, “Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion,” in *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt, World Spirituality 17 (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 75–108.
- [2] See, for example, Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 8. A similar assessment of the Franciscans and additional background on the mendicant movements can be found in C. H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society* (London: Longman, 1994).
- [3] Valuable discussion of this literature can be found in Thomas H. Bestul, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); see also Denise L. Despres, *Ghostly Sights: Visual Meditation in Late Medieval Literature* (Norman, Okla.: Pilgrim Books, 1989); John V. Fleming, *An Introduction to the Franciscan Literature of the Middle Ages* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977).
- [4] A helpful discussion of the role of experiential knowledge in late medieval piety can be found in David Morgan, *Visual Piety: A History and Theory and Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 60–66. I develop the discussion of the theology of participation in the Passion and the spread of this practice in “*Compassio: Participation in the Passion and Late Medieval Jerusalem Pilgrimage*” (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate University, 2003).
- [5] Ed. M. de la Bigne, *De Spiritualibus Ascensionibus* (Maxima Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum et Antiquorum Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum, XXVI), Lyons 1677, 273B; quoted in and translated by Eugene Honee, “Image and Imagination in the Medieval Culture of Prayer: A Historical Perspective,” in *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe, 1300–1500*, ed. Henk van Os (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 165.
- [6] Ludolph of Saxony, *The Hours of the Passion taken from The Life of Christ by Ludolph the Saxon*, ed. Henry J. Coleridge (London: Burns and Oates, 1887), 7.
- [7] Ludolph, *Hours of the Passion*, 22.
- [8] A recent introduction to late medieval Jerusalem pilgrimage can be found in Nine Miedema’s “Following the Footsteps of Christ: Pilgrimage and Passion Devotion,” in *The Broken Body: Passion Devotion in Late-Medieval Culture*, ed. A. A. MacDonald, H. N. B. Ridderbos and R. M. Schlusemann (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998), 73–92.
- [9] Bonaventure, “Dominica IV in Quadragesima, Sermo I” in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Peltier, 13:170–71; quoted in and translated by David L. Jeffrey, *The Early English Lyric and Franciscan Spirituality* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 55.
- [10] Bonaventure, *The Soul’s Journey into God—The Tree of Life—The Life of St. Francis*, trans. Ewert Cousins (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1978), 306.
- [11] Neal A. Maxwell, “From Whom All Blessings Flow,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 11–12.
- [12] Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932–51), 5:556.

[13] Marion G. Romney in Conference Report, October 1969, 57; as cited in Howard W. Hunter, “The Opening and Closing of Doors,” *Ensign*, November 1987, 59. President Hunter, who knew much suffering in his life, shared these comments: “Being childlike and submitting to our Fathers will is not always easy. President Spencer W. Kimball, who also knew a good deal about suffering, disappointment, and circumstances beyond his control, once wrote: ‘Being human, we would expel from our lives physical pain and mental anguish and assure ourselves of continual ease and comfort, but if we were to close the doors upon sorrow and distress, we might be excluding our greatest friends and benefactors. Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering, and self-mastery’ [*Faith Precedes the Miracle*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972,98)” (cited in Hunter, “The Opening and Closing of Doors,” 54).

[14] In addition to Presidents Howard W. Hunter and Spencer W. Kimball, recent examples come to mind in the experiences and statements by such apostles as Elder David B. Haight, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, and Elder Robert D. Hales.

[15] Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 192.

[16] The full context of this passage discusses the covenant of baptism. It refers to our adoption as the children of God and our becoming joint-heirs with Christ. This specifically refers to baptism as an adoptive covenant. See my article, “Hebrew Concepts of Adoption and Redemption in the Writings of Paul,” in *The Apostle Paul: His Life and His Testimony, The 23d Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 80–95.

[17] Harold B. Lee, *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee: Eleventh President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996), 574.