

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

JOHN THE BELOVED: SPECIAL WITNESS OF THE ATONEMENT

KENT R. BROOKS

Every prophet who has ever lived on this earth has received the sure witness of the divinity of the Son of God. As recorded in holy scripture—ancient and modern—their testimonies declare Jesus is the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the world, and salvation is available only through Him. One of those prophets, John the Beloved, taught about the redeeming and enabling powers of the Atonement. His writings—the Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and the book of Revelation—compose an eyewitness account and personal testimony of Jesus the Christ.

Jesus declared, “I am come in my Father’s name” (John 5:43). Jesus was foreordained by the Father, receiving the authority to act in His name and to be the Savior of the world. “As many as received him,” John taught, “to them gave he power to become the sons of God” (John 1:12). In this passage, the English word *power* is used to translate the Greek word *exousia*, which literally means authority, right, or privilege. Faith in Christ and acceptance of him as Savior are prerequisites to gaining the authority or power to become the sons of God. Even though we are not literal sons of God the Father in the flesh, the great plan of happiness makes it possible for us to become as such through adoption into the family of Christ. We become coheirs with the Only Begotten to all that the Father has. No one can claim this honor without proper authority from the Savior, who received it from the Father.

Kent R. Brooks is an associate professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University.

JOHN, A SPECIAL WITNESS OF JESUS CHRIST

“We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof” (Articles of Faith 1:5). John, a fisherman by trade, was called by the Lord and given the *power*, the authority, the right, and the privilege to be one of the Twelve Apostles, or special witnesses, of Jesus Christ. Upon his call, John “immediately left [his] ship and [his] father, and followed [Jesus]” (Matthew 4:22). When one is called by proper authority and acts “in the power of the ordination wherewith he has been ordained” (D&C 79:1), his background or experience matters not, for “whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies.”¹ Under the divine tutelage of the Savior, John was qualified as one of the “special witnesses of the name of Christ” (D&C 107:23) to “bear witness to his doctrine [and] of its effect upon mankind.”²

What is the doctrine of Christ, of which John was to be a special witness? The doctrine of Christ is the doctrine of the Father. Jesus taught, “My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:16–17). “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38; see also 4:34; 5:30). The doctrine of Christ is that we come unto Him through faith, repent of our sins, receive the Holy Ghost, and endure to the end (see 2 Nephi 31:17–21; 3 Nephi 11:29–41). Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). “I am the door of the sheepfold. . . . By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall . . . find pasture” (JST, John 10:7, 9).³ John stated his whole purpose in writing was that “ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31).

John wrote of the premortal Christ, the “Word” who was “with God, and the word was God,” by whom “all things were made” (John 1:1, 3). He recorded the Savior’s testimony that “before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). He was an eyewitness of the postmortal, resurrected Christ. Within the first eight days following His Resurrection, Jesus visited the Twelve on at least two occasions. His special witnesses were privileged to see and feel the nail prints in His hands and feet (see John 20:19–20, 26–29; 1 John 1:1) and were given the charge “as my Father hath sent me, even so I send you” (John 20:21). After those visits, Jesus appeared to John and other disciples at the Sea of Tiberius or the Sea of Galilee (see John 21:1–2). On numerous

other occasions during His forty-day ministry, they were taught many “things pertaining to the kingdom of God” and received “many infallible proofs” of the living Christ (Acts 1:3). Later, while living in exile on the Isle of Patmos, John was personally visited by the risen Lord. To His beloved disciple, Jesus testified, “I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore” (Revelation 1:17–18).

As a witness of the mortal Christ, the “only begotten of the Father,” who “was made flesh, and dwelt among [men]” (John 1:14), John drew upon the powerful imagery the Savior used in His sermons to teach His doctrine. Jesus spoke of Himself as the “living water” (John 4:11), the “bread of life” (John 6:35, 48), the “light of the world” (John 8:12), and the “good shepherd” (John 10:11, 14), all of which bore witness that life and salvation are to be found only in Christ. John related the tender story of Lazarus, a disciple whom Jesus loved (see John 11:5, 36), for whom He wept (see John 11:35) and whom He raised from the dead (see John 11:43–44), a vivid testimony that Jesus is the “resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25). To give emphasis to the truth that we are saved “by grace . . . after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23), Jesus taught the parable of the vine and the branches, testifying, “I am the true vine. . . . Ye are the branches . . . without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:1, 5). John was the only one of the Gospel writers who preserved the metaphorical allusions to Jesus as the Living Water, the Bread of Life, the Good Shepherd, and the True Vine.

The mission of Christ was to “bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39) through the Atonement, the supreme act of love. It was His love for the Father (see John 14:31) and His love for all of us (see John 15:13) that moved Jesus to finish the work the Father gave Him to do (see John 17:4). In what Elder Bruce R. McConkie called “perhaps the most . . . powerful single verse of scripture ever uttered,” John the Beloved testified: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). That single verse, said Elder McConkie, “summarizes the whole plan of salvation, tying together the Father, the Son, his atoning sacrifice, that belief in him which presupposes righteous works, and ultimate eternal exaltation for the faithful.”⁴

No one but Christ had the ability to atone for the sins of all mankind. John taught two reasons for this. First, the Atonement had to be performed by one who was sinless—one who had been perfectly obedient to the laws

of God (see 1 John 3:5). Only the unblemished “Lamb of God” qualified (John 1:29). Second, the Atonement had to be performed by one who had power over life and death. From His mortal mother, Christ inherited the power to lay down His life; from His immortal Father, He inherited the power to take up His life again (see John 5:26). In perfect submission to the will of the Father, Jesus chose to lay down His life voluntarily (see John 10:17–18). John testified that this act of matchless love could not have been completed without the shedding of blood (see 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5; 5:9). Christ’s sinless and voluntary self-sacrifice provided a redemptive and enabling power to all mankind.

THE REDEMPTIVE POWER OF THE ATONEMENT

The Fall of Adam brought into the world both physical death, which is the separation of the spirit from the body (see James 2:26), and spiritual death, separation from God or alienation from the things of God (see Alma 12:32). The Atonement of Christ redeems, or ransoms, us from the effects of the Fall. “Redemption,” Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught, “is of two kinds: conditional and unconditional.”⁵

Unconditional redemption provides two free gifts to mankind. The first unconditional gift is that all who ever have or ever will live in mortality will be redeemed from physical death through the Resurrection, because Jesus “taste[d] death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9). John recorded the Savior’s own testimony that all “shall come forth; they who have done good, in the resurrection of the just; and they who have done evil, in the resurrection of the unjust” (Inspired Version, John 5:29).

Whether just or unjust, all will be raised with an immortal body, never again subject to death or the pains, sicknesses, and fatigues of the mortal body (see Alma 11:41–45). I came to appreciate that blessing as a teenager. My father suffered from the effects of diabetes, including the loss of sight in the last two years of his life. Although I experienced a great loss when he died during my senior year in high school, I felt peace knowing his spirit would one day be reunited with a perfect physical body that would be free from the physical afflictions he had suffered in this life. I rejoiced to know his passing had restored his sight and that he could see his family for the first time in more than two years. “Jesus said . . . I am come into this world, that they which see not might see” (John 9:39).

The second unconditional blessing of the Atonement is expressed in our second article of faith: “We believe that men will be punished for their

own sins, and not for Adam's transgression." Although each of us is certainly influenced by the Fall of Adam (that is, we all experience pain, suffering, sickness, and death), the infinite mercy of Christ prevents us from being punished for Adam's transgression or the sins of anyone else. We may suffer because of the sins of another, but that suffering does not occur as a punishment imposed by God. For God to punish one person for the sins of another would not be just. John recorded the words of Jesus: "The Father . . . hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22) and "my judgment is just" (John 5:30).

Redemption from physical death is unconditional, but redemption from spiritual death is not. "Conditional redemption," Elder McConkie said, "is synonymous with exaltation or eternal life. It comes by the grace of God coupled with good works and includes redemption from the effects of both the temporal and spiritual fall."⁶ We alienate ourselves from God and die spiritually through sin. And because all sin, John reasoned, all have need of the Atonement (see 1 John 1:8, 10). John further explained that the Atonement provides redemption from spiritual death upon conditions of repentance and subsequent obedience and makes spiritual rebirth possible (see John 3:3–5; 8:51; 1 John 1:9; 2:29; JST, 1 John 3:9; 5:18; Revelation 2:11; 20:6). "If any man sin and repent," John testified, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (JST, 1 John 2:1–2). Here the English word *advocate* is used to translate the Greek word *parakletos*, which means intercessor, helper, or comforter. If our hearts are broken, our spirits contrite, and we exercise faith unto repentance, Jesus will intercede at the Final Judgment as our advocate with the Father (see Moroni 7:28). And "no man," Jesus said, "cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

The word *atonement* means literally to reconcile or to set at one—one with God.⁷ Jesus, who was one with the Father (see John 10:30), mediates a reconciliation between God and us whereby we are "brought again into communion with [the Father], and [are] made able to live and advance as a resurrected being in the eternal worlds."⁸ By so doing, Jesus, the "author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2), answers "the ends of the law" (2 Nephi 2:7), thus bringing about our eternal happiness, which is the "end" or the "object and design of our existence."⁹

The word *propitiation* is used to translate the Greek word *hilasmos*, which denotes an appeasing, or the means of appeasing. We are accountable for

how we exercise our agency and what we do with the laws of God. According to the law of justice, if we obey the laws of God, we automatically receive the blessings associated with those laws (see D&C 82:10). In a sense, we get what we deserve. But if we violate the laws of God, we will also get what we deserve because the penalty of sin automatically follows (see D&C 130:20–21). “That,” Elder Dallin H. Oaks said, “is an outcome I fear. I cannot achieve my eternal goals on the basis of what I deserve. Though I try with all my might, I am still what King Benjamin called an ‘unprofitable servant’ (see Mosiah 2:21). To achieve my eternal goals, I need more than I deserve. I need more than justice. . . . [I need mercy through] the atonement of Jesus Christ. . . . Mercy signifies an advantage greater than is deserved. This could come by the withholding of a deserved punishment or by the granting of an undeserved benefit. . . . If justice is exactly [the punishment] one deserves, then mercy is *more* benefit than one deserves. . . . *The Atonement* is the means by which justice is served and mercy is extended.”¹⁰

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. said: “I believe that our Heavenly Father wants to save every one of his children. . . . I believe that in his justice and mercy he will give us the maximum reward for our acts, give us all that he can give, and in the reverse, I believe that he will impose upon us the minimum penalty which it is possible for him to impose.”¹¹ If we accept the terms of conditional redemption, then “mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles [us] in the arms of safety” (Alma 34:16). John testified “the Lamb . . . shall feed [us], and shall lead [us] unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from [our] eyes” (Revelation 7:17). If we let Him, the Good Shepherd will free us from the entanglements of sin and bring us safely back to the fold.

Conditional redemption requires that we repent fully of all our sins. The repentance that brings complete forgiveness requires suffering. President Spencer W. Kimball said: “There can be no forgiveness without real and total repentance, and there can be no repentance without punishment.”¹² The unrepentant sinner must pay the full price of sin. “He that exercises no faith unto repentance,” Alma said, “is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption” (Alma 34:16). If an unrepentant sinner is exposed to the full extent of the demands of justice, then what about the repentant sinner? Jesus said: “For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not

suffer if they would repent; but if they would not repent they must suffer even as I" (D&C 19:16–17). Can the repentant sinner escape suffering entirely, or is he still subject to part of the demands of justice? Can the repentant sinner satisfy the demands of justice by his own suffering, by his own works of repentance?

Elder Oaks answered these questions. He said:

Do these [verses] mean that a person who repents does not need to suffer at all because the entire punishment is borne by the Savior? [No, they mean] that the person who repents does not need to suffer "even as" the Savior suffered for that sin. Sinners who are repenting will experience some suffering, but, because of their repentance and because of the Atonement, they will not experience the full . . . extent of [suffering] the Savior [did] for that sin. . . . The suffering that impels a transgressor toward repentance is his or her own suffering. But the suffering that satisfies the demands of justice for all repented transgressions is the suffering of our Savior and Redeemer. . . . Some transgressors . . . [ask] "Why must I suffer at all? . . . Now that I have said I am sorry, why can't you just give me mercy and forget about this?" . . . The object of God's laws is to save the sinner, not simply to punish him. . . . The repentant transgressor must be changed, and the conditions of repentance, including confession and personal suffering, are essential to accomplish that change. To exempt a transgressor from those conditions would deprive him of the change necessary for his salvation.¹³

Only through Christ's suffering and Christ's grace, John testified, can we receive the "fulness" of the Father, "even immortality and eternal life" (Inspired Version, John 1:16). Lehi taught "there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah" (2 Nephi 2:8). Nephi said the fullness of the Father is available only to those who have unshaken faith in the words of Christ, who rely "wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save" (2 Nephi 31:19). The word *merits* is found six times in the scriptures. Five of those references are in the Book of Mormon (see 2 Nephi 2:8; 31:19; Alma 24:10; Helaman 14:13; Moroni 6:4), and one is in the Doctrine and Covenants (see D&C 3:20). All six passages refer to the merits of Christ.

We must do our part, but no matter how hard we try, no matter how fully we repent, no matter how many good works we do, we simply cannot

bring about our own redemption. John recorded the words of Jesus: “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me” (John 15:4). Elder Oaks said: “Man unquestionably has impressive powers and can bring to pass great things by tireless efforts and indomitable will. But after all our obedience and good works, we cannot be saved from the effect of our sins without the grace extended by the atonement of Jesus Christ.”¹⁴

THE ENABLING POWER OF THE ATONEMENT

In the October 1995 general conference of the Church, President Boyd K. Packer said: “[Except for] the very few who defect to perdition, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no apostasy, no crime exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness. That is the promise of the atonement of Christ.”¹⁵ Clearly, the Atonement has the power to redeem us from sin and from the effects of the Fall. But the Atonement also has the power to enable us. To *enable* means “to make able; give power, means, or ability to; make competent.”¹⁶ The redemptive power of the Atonement makes us clean. The enabling power of the Atonement, which is activated by faith in Jesus Christ, makes us powerful, able, competent, and holy. It is the power that compensates when we do our best and still fall short. It is the power that magnifies our abilities, allowing us to achieve beyond our own natural capacity. It is the power that enables us to keep trying even when we feel like giving up. It is the power by which we are “born again” (John 3:3) and become perfect (see John 17:23).

Our goal is not just to become clean. Our goal is to become like God! We cannot do that by ourselves. C. S. Lewis said:

When I was a child I often had [a] toothache, and I knew that if I went to my mother she would give me something which would deaden the pain for that night and let me get to sleep. But I did not go to my mother—at least, not till the pain became very bad. . . . I did not doubt she would give me the aspirin; but I knew she would also do something else. I knew she would take me to the dentist next morning. I could not get what I wanted out of her without getting something more, which I did not want. I wanted immediate relief from pain: but I could not get it without [also going to the dentist].

Our Lord is like the dentist. . . . Dozens of people go to Him to be cured of some one particular sin which they are ashamed of . . . or which is obviously spoiling daily life. . . . Well, He will cure it all

right: but He will not stop there. That may be all you asked; but if you once call Him in, He will give you the full treatment. . . . “Make no mistake,” He says, “if you let Me, I will make you perfect. The moment you put yourself in My hands, that is what you are in for. Nothing less, or other, than that. You have [free will], and if you choose, you can push Me away. But if you do not push Me away, understand that I am going to see this job through. . . . I will never rest, nor let you rest, until you are literally perfect—until my Father can say without reservation that He is well pleased with you, as He said He was well pleased with Me.”

And yet—this is the other and equally important side of it—this Helper who will, in the long run, be satisfied with nothing less than absolute perfection, will also be delighted with the first feeble, stumbling effort you make tomorrow to do the simplest duty. As a great Christian writer (George MacDonald) pointed out . . . “God is easy to please, but hard to satisfy.” . . . On the one hand, God’s demand for perfection need not discourage you in the least in your present attempts to be good, or even in your present failures. Each time you fall He will pick you up again. And He knows perfectly well that your own efforts are never going to bring you anywhere near perfection. On the other hand, you must realize from the outset that the goal toward which He is beginning to guide you is absolute perfection; and no power in the whole universe, except you yourself, can prevent Him from taking you to that goal.¹⁷

Like the redemptive power of the Atonement, the enabling power is made possible by the grace of God. We can, by our sins, spiritually disable ourselves. But we cannot, without His help, become spiritually enabled. He is the source, the “outlet,” of the power. If we accept His Atonement and let our will be swallowed up in His, we can “plug into” that unfailing source of power and strength.

John wrote of the enabling power of the Atonement. Recorded in John 15:7 are the words of the Savior: “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” John bore witness that “whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we *keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight*” (1 John 3:22; emphasis added). “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing *according to his will, he heareth us*” (1 John 5:14; emphasis added). Those who are obedient to that counsel will truly

discover “with God nothing *can* be impossible” (JST, Luke 1:37; emphasis added). There is no weakness, no bitterness, no pain, no sickness, no trouble, no habit, no hurt we cannot overcome with His help. There is no attribute of godliness we cannot develop, no righteous desire we cannot accomplish through His enabling power. The Bread of Life can supplant whatever we lack. The Living Water can bring life and nurture additional growth “after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23).

For example, we may feel we cannot forgive another who has hurt us, cannot love someone who seems unlovable, cannot pray for those who spitefully use us (see Matthew 5:44), cannot renew trust in one who has violated our trust, or cannot continue to try when we are weary of well-doing or feel we are not succeeding. Through faith, the enabling power can help us forgive when we cannot find forgiveness within ourselves, love when we feel no love, pray when we do not feel like praying, trust when trust seems impossible, and press forward in spite of the press of life. The enabling power of the Atonement can help us overcome all things (see D&C 63:47) because “all things are possible to him that believeth” (Mark 9:23). John said those who overcome through the enabling power of the Atonement will become “kings and priests” (Revelation 1:6; 5:10), will gain eternal life (see Revelation 2:7), will avoid the second spiritual death (see Revelation 2:11), will inherit the celestial kingdom (see Revelation 2:17), will be made rulers over many kingdoms (see Revelation 2:26–28), will retain their names in the Lamb’s book of life (see Revelation 3:5), will become the sons of God (see Revelation 21:7), and will be endowed with the power, the authority, the right, and the privilege to reign forever in celestial splendor (see Revelation 22:3–5). “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes”; he taught, “and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

In the words of the beautiful hymn “More Holiness Give Me,” we find a wonderful expression of what the enabling power can bring to us:

More holiness give me,
More strivings within,
More patience in suff’ring,
. . . More faith in my Savior,
More sense of his care,
More joy in his service,
More purpose in prayer.

More gratitude give me,
 More trust in the Lord,
 . . . More hope in his word,
 . . . More meekness in trial,
 More praise for relief.
 More purity give me,
 More strength to o'ercome, . . .
 More blessed and holy—
 More, Savior, like thee.¹⁸

President Ezra Taft Benson said that “men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace. Whoever will lose his life in the service of God will find eternal life.”¹⁹

The enabling power of Christ can do all that and more. Alma prophesied: “[Jesus] shall go forth, suffering pains . . . of every kind; and . . . he will take upon him the . . . sicknesses of his people . . . and . . . their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:11–12; see also Matthew 8:17).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland noted the word *succor* literally means “‘to run to.’ . . . Even as he calls us to come to him and follow him, he is unfailingly running to help us.”²⁰ Such is the love of the Good Shepherd. As John so beautifully recorded: “The sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. . . . And . . . he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice” (John 10:3–4). Jesus understands perfectly every feeling, every temptation, every pain, every weakness, every sickness, every infirmity, and every difficulty known to man. He knows us. He loves us. He desires to help us. And that “teacher come from God” (John 3:2) can enable us to do all things, if we will but let Him.

Elder Bruce C. Hafen of the Quorum of the Seventy spoke of the enabling power of the Atonement. He said:

A sense of falling short or falling down is not only natural but essential to the mortal experience. . . . The Savior’s victory can

compensate not only for our sins but also for our inadequacies; not only for our deliberate mistakes but also for our sins committed in ignorance, our errors of judgment, and our unavoidable imperfections. I grieve for those who . . . believe that, in the quest for eternal life, the Atonement is there only to help big-time sinners, and that they, as everyday Mormons who just have to try harder, must “make it” on their own. The truth is not that we must “make it” on our own, but that he will make us his own. . . . As we [hold to the iron rod], we are likely to find that the cold rod of iron will begin to feel . . . [like the] loving hand of one who is literally pulling us along the way. He gives us strength enough to rescue us [and] warmth enough to tell us that home is not far away. . . . Sometimes we talk about how important it is to be on the Lord’s side. Perhaps we should talk more about how important it is that the Lord is on *our* side.²¹

Is it any wonder that John, the “disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21:7, 20; 13:23; 19:26–27; 20:2), spoke so often and with so much tenderness of the love of the Savior. He said Jesus loved the Twelve “unto the end” (John 13:1). As a special witness of that love, John wrote: “[I] have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. . . . [I] have known and believed the love that God hath to [me]. God is love; . . . [and] there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear. . . . [I] love him, because he first loved [me]” (1 John 4:14, 16, 18–19). The amazing thing is not that *we* could love *Him*, a being who is perfect and who has done so much for us. No, what causes each of us to “stand all amazed” is that He was willing

To rescue a soul so rebellious and proud as mine,
That he should extend his great love unto such as I, . . .
Oh, it is wonderful that he should care for me
Enough to die for me!
Oh, it is wonderful, wonderful to me!²²

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “Would it be possible for a man to exercise faith in God, so as to be saved, unless he had an idea that God was love? He could not; because man could not love God unless he had an idea that God was love, and if he did not love God he could not have faith in him.”²³ Without God’s grace, His perfect love for us, we could not be saved. Without our faith in His perfect love and our determination to love and serve Him with all our “heart, . . . might, mind, and strength” (D&C 59:5),

we could not be saved. But through His perfect love, His atoning sacrifice, we can be redeemed from the Fall and be enabled to return home, back to the presence of our Heavenly Father, where, John testified, we will forever “have right to the tree of life” (Revelation 22:14), the love of God (see 1 Nephi 11:21–22), and can drink freely of “the water of life” (Revelation 22:17).

“When, at last, we are truly pointed homeward,” said Elder Neal A. Maxwell, “the world’s pointing fingers of scorn can better be endured. As we come to know to Whom we belong, the other forms of belonging cease to mean very much. Likewise, as Jesus begins to have a real place in our lives, we are much less concerned with losing our places in the world. When our minds really catch hold of the significance of Jesus’ atonement, the world’s hold on us loosens. (See Alma 36:18.)”²⁴

John declared of his writings, “These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31). Blessed by the testimony of this special witness, our knowledge of and our faith in the redeeming and enabling powers of the Atonement are strengthened. With gratitude we exclaim, “Oh, sweet the joy this sentence gives: ‘I know that my Redeemer lives!’”²⁵

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “You Make a Difference,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 43.
2. David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953), 251.
3. Joseph Smith Translation quotations not available in the Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible are from Thomas A. Wayment, ed., *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible: A Side-by-Side Comparison with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005).
4. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–73), 1:144.
5. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 623.
6. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 623.
7. Boyd K. Packer, “Atonement, Agency, Accountability,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 69.
8. James E. Talmage, in Hugh B. Brown, *The Abundant Life* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 315.
9. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 255.

10. Dallin H. Oaks, "Sins, Crimes, and Atonement," address to CES religious educators, February 7, 1992 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), 2.
11. J. Reuben Clark Jr., in Conference Report, October 1953, 84.
12. Spencer W. Kimball, "To Bear the Priesthood Worthily," *Ensign*, May 1975, 78.
13. Oaks, "Sins, Crimes, and Atonement," 5–6.
14. Dallin H. Oaks, "'What Think Ye of Christ?'" *Ensign*, November 1988, 67.
15. Boyd K. Packer, "The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness," *Ensign*, November 1995, 20.
16. *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1989), s.v. "enable."
17. C. S. Lewis, "Perfection," from *The Joyful Christian* (New York: Macmillan, 1977), 77–78.
18. *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 131.
19. Ezra Taft Benson, *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 361; see also Matthew 10:39.
20. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Come unto Me," *Ensign*, April 1998, 22; see also D&C 112:13.
21. Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 20, 22.
22. "I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*, no. 193.
23. Joseph Smith, comp., *Lectures on Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 3:47.
24. Neal A. Maxwell, "Settle This in Your Hearts," *Ensign*, November 1992, 66–67.
25. "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," *Hymns*, no. 136.