

SIN, GUILT, AND GRACE

Martin Luther and the Doctrines of the Restoration

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In 1973, American psychiatrist Karl Menninger published an intriguing book with the provocative title *Whatever Became of Sin?* One of the reasons Menninger's publication was significant was its timing; the academic community and popular culture were distancing themselves from religion in general and the concepts of sin and guilt in particular. Menninger, founder of the world-renowned Menninger clinic, and well-versed in the biological and sociological origins of mental illness, wrote: "In all of the laments and reproaches made by our [leaders], one misses any mention of 'sin,' a word which used to be a veritable watchword of prophets. . . . Wrong things are being done, we know; tares are being sown in the wheat fields at night. But is no one responsible, no one answerable for these acts? Anxiety and depression we all acknowledge, and even vague guilt feelings; but has no one committed any sins? Where, indeed, did sin go? What became of it?"¹

Menninger's view met significant opposition. Albert Ellis, a contemporary of Menninger and a well-respected theoretician and psychologist, represented those who spoke out against religious beliefs when he stated, "Religiosity, therefore, is in many respects equivalent to irrational thinking and emotional disturbance. . . . The elegant therapeutic solution to

emotional problems is to be quite unreligious. . . . The less religious they are, the more emotionally healthy they will be.”² Ellis’s statement echoes the writings of Sigmund Freud, who considered religion to be “the universal compulsive neurosis of humanity.”³ The writings of Freud and Ellis anticipated many of the current criticisms of religious belief and practice, such as those by Professor Richard Dawkins, who describes religion as a “malignant infection.”⁴

With few exceptions, however, research from the early part of the twentieth century to the present has produced very little support for the arguments linking religion and mental illness.⁵ The significant majority of studies are supportive of the conclusion that religious belief and practice, and most especially intrinsic religious devotion, facilitates mental health, marital cohesion, and family stability.⁶

While the majority of research relating to mental health is positive with regard to religion’s influence, there are important lessons to be learned from the minority of studies that suggest some religious beliefs and practices are detrimental to mental health. There are few influences more destructive in the lives of individuals, families, and nations than religion “gone bad.” Conversely, as this paper will suggest, religion in general is an influence for good in the lives of individuals, families, and nations.

The primary intent of this paper is to focus on the core doctrinal principles of sin, guilt, and grace and the blessings made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ as they contribute to the temporal and eternal well-being of the human family. Special attention is also given to doctrinal teachings, which if misunderstood and wrongly applied can contribute to individual, familial, and global instability. A major portion of the paper includes examples from the life of the noted Protestant reformer Martin Luther, as illustrations of both the positive and negative influences of genuine and distorted religious belief and practice.

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

G. K. Chesterton, a British writer noted for his insights into Western culture, once wrote a book entitled *What’s Wrong with the World*.⁷ Legend has it that the title for Chesterton’s 1910 publication was inspired by

an invitation he and several other British writers were given to write for the *Times*, the well-known London paper, about the problems the world was facing. Apparently, a number of submissions were received, but Chesterton's was the most noteworthy. In answer to the question "What's wrong with the world?" he simply stated, "Dear Sirs, I am. Sincerely yours, G. K. Chesterton."⁸

While not all of the problems in the world have sin as their origin (see John 9:1–3), to ignore the morality of mortality and to relabel all such problems as sickness, mental illness, or even crime is to make a tragic mistake. If we do not understand the relationship among sin, guilt, repentance, and the grace of Jesus Christ, we may never be free of our particular burdens. The consequence of eliminating sin as a source of suffering is to also remove the only remedy that will bring the healing so many seek.

The most common Greek word translated as "sin" in the New Testament is *hamartia*, which more precisely means "missing the mark."⁹ While the "mark" we miss when we sin is often interpreted as breaking God's commandments, Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught that the "mark" isn't simply a commandment or principle, but "the mark is Christ."¹⁰ Christ is the mark; the doctrinal principles contained in his gospel are manifestations of his very being. Doctrinal principles, precepts, and laws are vital, but the Savior wasn't just a teacher of the law—he was and is the Law: "Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life" (3 Nephi 15:9).

As we become disciples of Jesus Christ by following his teachings, we acquire his attributes and become as he is. Paul taught the early Saints at Philippi, "I press toward the *mark* for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14; emphasis added). Sin distances us from the Savior; following his teachings and example leads us to him.

BEYOND THE MARK

Paul taught the Saints in Rome, "For all have sinned, and *come short* of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23; emphasis added). The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob taught that we can also transgress the laws of God by going

“*beyond* the mark.” Jacob taught that “looking beyond the mark” is how the ancient Jews lost the truth they were once blessed to have: “Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by *looking beyond the mark*, they must needs fall; for God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they cannot understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it God hath done it, that they may stumble” (Jacob 4:14; emphasis added).

The Jews were seeking a savior, but most were not seeking to be saved from sin. The savior they were anticipating would free them from Roman oppression and provide temporal salvation. They missed the mark in failing to accept and follow Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

In our own day, there are those who also go “beyond the mark” as a means of placing themselves above others and the law above the Lawgiver. They, like some of the Pharisees of old, do the right things for the wrong reasons. In Matthew, Christ’s critique of the Pharisees relates not to actions but to motivations: “But all their works they do for to be seen of men” (Matthew 23:5). Robert L. Millet writes: “As members of the Church exceed the bounds of propriety and go beyond the established mark, they open themselves to deception and ultimately to destruction. Imbalance leads to instability. If Satan cannot cause us to lie or steal or smoke or be immoral, it just may be that he will cause our strength—our zeal for goodness and righteousness—to become our weakness. He will encourage excess, for surely any virtue, when taken to the extreme, becomes a vice.”¹¹

Going “beyond the mark” is thus often an expression of legalism or “works righteousness” where individuals attempt to save themselves through obedience to the law. Going “beyond the mark” can be as destructive as falling short of keeping the commandments. This extrinsic form of religious belief and practice, where the focus is on public behavior rather than private worship, is a characteristic common to many in the religious community who experience increased mental and emotional instability.¹² Those who are *extrinsically* religious tend to see religion as a means to achieve the acceptance of the public and other self-focused objectives. *Intrinsically* religious people place the will of God and the good of others before themselves. Intrinsic religious belief and practice is the manner of religion most commonly correlated with increased mental health.¹³

The New Testament's extrinsically motivated Pharisees are examples of those who worshipped the law but rejected the Lawgiver. The Apostle Paul described this same counterfeit righteousness by those in his day who had "a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2). Paul continued his description by teaching that such individuals were "ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, [and] have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3). These scriptural warnings, along with the findings from social science research, give us clear warnings of the dangers of being overzealous in religious belief and practice (see Mosiah 9:3).

MARTIN LUTHER

While there are individuals who look and live "beyond the mark" as a means of gratifying their "pride [and] vain ambition" (D&C 121:37), others ignorantly sin in a sincere but misguided attempt to live what they understand to be the gospel of Christ (see Mosiah 3:11). It is a sobering reality that we can sin in ignorance, and though we may not be morally culpable of sin, we nevertheless suffer the consequences of the transgressed law.

One of the most striking examples in Christian history of one who began his ministry focused on the external sacraments of his faith, in what he mistakenly thought was genuine religious devotion, is Martin Luther, one of the fathers of the Reformation. Luther's personal, and later public, battle with the theological counterfeits of legalism, overzealousness, and (arguably) a clinical obsession with scrupulosity, influenced both the Protestant Reformation and the later Restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith. There is much that people of all faiths can learn from the mistakes of Martin Luther as well as from his significant contributions to both religious belief and practice.

From his own writings we read that Martin Luther began his ministry as a faithful Augustinian monk: "I was a good monk, and kept the rule of my order so strictly that I may say that if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery, it was I. All my brothers in the monastery who knew me will bear me out. If I had kept on any longer, I should have killed myself with vigils, prayers, reading, and other work."¹⁴

The Augustinians were known for their moral and physical discipline. They slept and studied in small and generally unheated rooms. In addition to making vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, Luther and the other monks of his order engaged in formal worship beginning each day between and 1:00 and 2:00 a.m. These sessions normally lasted forty-five minutes each and were held seven times throughout the day. While the young Luther has been quoted as saying, “The first year in the monastery the devil is very quiet,”¹⁵ things changed dramatically in the years that followed. After an initial year of peace, Luther began to experience feelings of guilt and despair:

When I was a monk, I made a great effort to live according to the requirements of the monastic rule. I made a practice of confessing and reciting all my sins, but always with prior contrition; I went to confession frequently, and I performed the assigned penances faithfully. Nevertheless, my conscience could never achieve certainty but was always in doubt and said: “You have not done this correctly. You were not contrite enough. You omitted this in your confession.” Therefore the longer I tried to heal my uncertain, weak, and troubled conscience with human traditions, the more uncertain, weak, and troubled I continually made it. In this way, by observing human traditions, I transgressed them even more; and by following the righteousness of the monastic order, I was never able to reach it.¹⁶

For ten years Luther labored with increasing feelings of guilt and doubt. His writings reveal that other monks with whom he served experienced similar feelings: “I saw many who tried with great effort and the best of intentions to do everything possible to appease their conscience. They wore hair shirts; they fasted; they prayed; they tormented and wore out their bodies with various exercises so severely that if they had been made of iron, they would have been crushed. And yet the more they labored, the greater their terrors became.”¹⁷

SEARCHING FOR PEACE

Martin Luther looked to his religion and his religious leaders to help him with his guilt. Specifically, he turned to the sacraments of the Catholic

Church but found that they did not provide the peace he was seeking. Commenting on his participation in the Church's sacraments, Luther recorded the following: "After confession and the celebration of Mass I was never able to find rest in my heart."¹⁸

Confession became an unfruitful ordeal for both Luther and those to whom he confessed. His biographers note that Luther "confessed frequently, often daily, and for as long as six hours on a single occasion."¹⁹ Johannes von Staupitz, Luther's trusted mentor and the vicar of the Augustinian order in which Luther served, was one of those who received Luther's confessions. Of this relationship, Luther wrote: "I often made confession to Staupitz. . . . He [Staupitz] said, 'I don't understand you.' This was real consolation! Afterward when I went to another confessor I had the same experience. In short, no confessor wanted to have anything to do with me. Then I thought, 'Nobody has this temptation except you,' and I became as dead as a corpse."²⁰ Father Staupitz endeavored to ease Luther's guilt: "If you expect Christ to forgive you, come in with something to forgive—parricide, blasphemy, adultery—instead of all these little peccadilloes."²¹

If confession did not salve Luther's guilt, neither did fasting from food and drink, which he often did for days at a time. Luther recorded, "I almost fasted myself to death, for again and again I went for three days without taking a drop of water or a morsel of food."²² While he acknowledged that fasting had a legitimate place in Christian worship, Luther warned that those who practiced fasting beyond its intended purpose (as he had) would "simply ruin their health and drive themselves mad."²³ Luther's increased devotion to prayer, a central part of a monk's daily routine, appears only to have added to his burden. Luther stated, "I chose twenty-one saints and prayed to three every day when I celebrated mass; thus I completed the number every week. I prayed especially to the Blessed Virgin, who with her womanly heart would compassionately appease her Son."²⁴ Luther reported that instead of bringing the relief he sought, his extra devotion to fasting and prayer "made [his] head split."²⁵

Catholic theology at the time included "an individualistic view of sin," but "a corporate view of goodness."²⁶ Luther had been taught that while everyone must be accountable for every sin they had committed, they

were also entitled to the collective goodness of the righteous who had died having acquired more righteousness than they would need to receive salvation in the kingdom of God. This pooled righteousness was available for a price. The transmission of credit from the collective righteousness of the saints to the person in need was referred to as an “indulgence.”²⁷

One of the means by which this “transfer” of righteousness from one person to another could occur was by making a financial contribution. Other methods included visiting holy sites and viewing sacred relics. During Luther’s first visit to Rome he climbed (on his knees) the “Scala Santa” (holy stairway), twenty-eight marble steps Jesus had allegedly ascended when he was brought before Pontius Pilate for judgment. These steps had been transported from Jerusalem to Rome to remind the people of the Savior’s unjust trial and crucifixion. Luther biographer Richard Marius notes that those who climbed these steps, offering a prayer on each step, did so with the belief they would be “purged of the necessity of satisfaction for all the sins they had ever committed.” Marius recorded that when Luther finished his ascent he questioned the validity of having his sins remitted in this way by asking, “Who can know if it is so?”²⁸ In the end, Luther concluded that “those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.”²⁹

Christian psychiatrist Ian Osborn postulates Luther was suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder.³⁰ A more precise clinical diagnosis is “scrupulosity,” which Latter-day Saint psychiatrist Dawson Hedges and his colleague Chris Miller describe as “a psychological disorder primarily characterized by pathological guilt or obsession associated with moral or religious issues that is often accompanied by compulsive moral or religious observance and is highly distressing and maladaptive.”³¹

Obsessive-compulsive disorder, scrupulosity, or any other psychological disorder is not “caused” by religion. Rather, people tend to express their mental confusion through the areas of life that are important to them.³² “Cultural backgrounds [religious or otherwise] provide the scenery around which emotional problems create the drama.”³³ While no mortal can accurately judge the origin of Luther’s guilt and despair, it is clear that Luther was desperate to understand and to resolve what he

termed “*Anfechtungen*,”³⁴ or what others have described as “the dark night of the soul.”³⁵

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Martin Luther’s experience with the grace of Jesus Christ would eventually bring him peace and ultimately inspire the Reformation. Luther’s journey to grace formally began when his vicar, Johannes von Staupitz, invited him to pursue a doctoral degree and lecture on the Bible at Wittenberg University. Luther was stunned with the invitation but accepted the new assignment and began with a serious study of the Bible, beginning with the book of Psalms followed by the books of Romans and Galatians.

What resulted changed the course of history. Luther’s so-called “tower experience” was in large part a personal revelation received as he studied and taught the scriptures over a period of years.³⁶ The “tower” was a small room in the tower of the Black Cloister in the Wittenberg monastery. Luther listed and discussed many scriptural texts that were vital to him being “reborn,” but the text that was central to his personal transformation came from Romans: “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17). In the beginning, Luther struggled to understand the phrase “the righteousness of God.” Initially these words angered him to the point that he “hated the righteous God who punishes sinners.”³⁷ But a new understanding of “God’s righteousness” ultimately changed everything:

The words “righteous” and “righteousness of God” struck my conscience like lightning. When I heard them I was exceedingly terrified. If God is righteous [I thought], he must punish. But when by God’s grace I pondered, in the tower and heated room of this building, over the words, “He who through faith is righteous shall live” [Romans 1:17] and “the righteousness of God” [Romans 3:21], I soon came to the conclusion that if we, as righteous men, ought to live from faith and if the righteousness of God contribute to the salvation of all who believe, then salvation won’t be our merit but God’s mercy. My spirit was thereby cheered. For it’s by the righteousness of God that we’re justified and saved through Christ. These words [which

had before terrified me] now became more pleasing to me. The Holy Spirit unveiled the Scriptures for me in this tower.³⁸

Eventually, Luther formulated what is now known as the doctrine of “justification by faith.” The “righteousness of God” in Romans 1:17 wasn’t a description of God’s anger towards the sinner, Luther came to believe, but of his mercy and forgiveness available to those who believed in him. Luther taught that the doctrine of justification was the “chief article of Christian doctrine” and that “we must all be justified alone by faith in Jesus Christ, without any contribution from the law or help from our works.”³⁹ Protestant scholar and pastor John F. MacArthur Jr. defines the doctrine of justification as “an act of God whereby He imputes to a believing sinner the full and perfect righteousness of Christ, forgiving the sinner of all unrighteousness, declaring him or her perfectly righteous in God’s sight, thus delivering the believer from all condemnation.”⁴⁰

What Luther had initially failed to understand, and what he came to see as a failing of Catholicism, was that personal peace and eternal salvation were not rewards for his own good works, but could only come because of “the righteousness of God” that was made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. All the prayers Luther had offered, the fasting he had done, the countless hours of confession he had made, and the indulgences he had received could never earn God’s favor and thus bring him blessings of peace and redemption.

Luther’s obsessions and compulsions with prayer, fasting, scripture study, and so on do not appear to have been motivated by a pharisaical desire to elicit the praise of his fellow men but by his desire to be accepted by God and be free from guilt and a consuming fear of death and damnation. His religious obsessions with his own problems, however, were a major part of what was preventing his progress. John MacArthur writes, “The root of both psychological and spiritual sickness is preoccupation with self. Ironically, the believer who is consumed with his own problems—even his own spiritual problems—to the exclusion of concern for other believers, suffers from a destructive self-centeredness that not only is the cause of, but is the supreme barrier to the solution of, his own problems.”⁴¹

Luther’s new understanding allowed him to accept God’s forgiveness and focus on the needs of others. The following is Luther’s counsel to a man

who was making the same kind of mistakes he had made. Luther's comments provide additional insight into the depth of his new understanding:

Brother, it is impossible for you to become so righteous in this life that your body is as clear and spotless as the sun. You still have spots and wrinkles (Eph. 5:27), and yet you are holy. But you say: “. . . . But how will I be liberated from sin?” Run to Christ, the Physician, who heals the contrite of heart and saves sinners. Believe in Him. If you believe, you are righteous, because you attribute to God the glory of being almighty, merciful, truthful, etc. You justify and praise God. In short, you attribute divinity and everything to Him. And the sin that still remains in you is not imputed but is forgiven for the sake of Christ, in whom you believe and who is perfectly righteous in a formal sense. His righteousness is yours; your sin is His.⁴²

Luther no longer allowed his sins to consume him, for after years of despair he had the conviction that he had been forgiven through his faith in Christ and that the righteousness of God had been imputed to him. This redemptive and enabling power allowed Luther and allows each of us to be forgiven of our sins and do that which we cannot do on our own, and it is the means by which God “consecrates [our] afflictions for [our] gain” (2 Nephi 2:2).

COUNTERFEIT DOCTRINES

President Joseph F. Smith once taught, “Satan is a skillful imitator, and as genuine gospel truth is given the world in ever-increasing abundance, so he spreads the counterfeit coin of false doctrine . . . ‘that were it possible he would deceive the very elect.’”⁴³ The doctrines of the grace of Christ and the rightful place of good works have been the subjects of the adversary's most effective and destructive deceptions. Because these doctrines are so central to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the adversary has conjured seductive counterfeits that have deceived and will continue to mislead those who hear the gospel message.

Some, citing the tradition of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, focus on biblical passages such as the Apostle Paul's counsel to the Ephesians: “For

by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8–9). Many of these same individuals ignore the next sentence in the text, which reads: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10; emphasis added).

Others, following the tradition of churchmen and scholars like the British monk Pelagius, choose not to emphasize grace but to stress the importance of good works and focus on the writings in the Epistle of James: “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? . . . Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:14, 17). Like the young Luther, many of these individuals wrongly believe their good works will save them and fail to understand the importance of “relying *alone* upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith” (Moroni 6:4; emphasis added).

Taking the scriptures as a whole, the Savior and his ancient Apostles taught that good works cannot save us, but neither can we be saved without them. Contentious debates about the relationship between grace and good works are rarely instructive or edifying. Those on both sides of the argument generally conclude the debate more firmly entrenched in their own versions of what the Savior and his servants taught concerning the relationship between grace and works. C. S. Lewis described the principle behind this doctrinal dynamic in the following: “He [the devil] always sends errors into the world in pairs of opposites. And he always encourages us to spend a lot of time thinking which is the worse. You see why, of course? He relies on your extra dislike of the one error to draw you gradually into the opposite one. But do not let us be fooled. We have to keep our eyes on the goal and go straight through between both errors.”⁴⁴

Taking the doctrine of grace beyond what the Savior and his servants have taught cheapens and changes this most important principle into a distortion that defeats the very purpose of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer taught:

Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. . . . Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline,

Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ. . . .

[Costly] grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow, and it is *grace* because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is *costly* because it cost God the life of his Son.⁴⁵

Conversely, overstating the place and the importance of good works erroneously elevates humankind to mistakenly believe we can save ourselves. Elder M. Russell Ballard has written:

No matter how hard we work, no matter how much we obey, no matter how many good things we do in this life, it would not be enough were it not for Jesus Christ and His loving grace. On our own we cannot earn the kingdom of God—no matter what we do. Unfortunately, there are some within the Church who have become so preoccupied with performing good works that they forget that those works—as good as they may be—are hollow unless they are accompanied by a complete dependence on Christ.⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

A correct understanding of the relationship among sin, the grace of Christ, and good works was integral to the Reformation and vital to the Restoration and is also essential to each of us as we strive to find peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come. Robert Millet wisely concluded, “God and man are at work together in the salvation of the human soul. The real question is not whether we are saved by grace or by works. The real questions are these: In whom do I trust? On whom do I rely?”⁴⁷

The distortion of the importance of good works brings either a sense of self-righteousness to those who experience success from their obedience or despair to those, like the young Martin Luther, who scrupulously keep the commandments without immediate reward. The distortion of

the Savior's grace creates at one extreme a false sense of liberty with license to sin, or, less dramatic but just as damning, the false notion that mediocrity is acceptable. These distortions are the adversary's way of tempting us to place a principle above what the Savior and his chosen servants have taught. President Spencer W. Kimball warned, "Whatever thing a man sets his heart and his trust in most is his god; and if his god doesn't also happen to be the true and living God of Israel, that man is laboring in idolatry."⁴⁸ A doctrine, true or false, can become an idol just as easily as a material object.

While not all mental and emotional problems have a moral origin, a distorted understanding of grace or good works helps explain the research studies that report elevated scores on various measures of mental instability and family conflict across religions and denominations.⁴⁹ Like the young Martin Luther before he came to understand the graciousness of Christ, some individuals work themselves to exhaustion and despair in an attempt to solve personal and familial problems. Other individuals and families fail in their attempts to find peace because they are undisciplined in their discipleship and unwilling to keep the commandments God has given them and claim the blessings that come through obedience.

We learn from the Book of Mormon that humankind is "redeemed, because of the righteousness of [the] Redeemer" (2 Nephi 2:3) and that "no flesh 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 described the relationship between grace and works when he recorded that "it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Nephi 25:23). Though much has been written in an attempt to interpret what Nephi meant by the phrase "all we can do," perhaps the best answer is found in the interpretive words of a once-wicked Lamanite leader who had discovered God's forgiveness "through the merits of [God's] son" (Alma 24:10). Anti-Nephi-Lehi said, "And now behold, my brethren, since it has been *all that we could do*, (as we were the most lost of all mankind) *to repent* of all our sins and the many murders which we have committed, and to get God to take them away from our hearts, for it was *all we could do to repent* sufficiently before God that he would take away our stain" (Alma 24:11; emphasis added).

The key is repentance, available only through the Atonement of Christ, which allows us to claim the gift of grace. Perhaps the most significant contribution the Book of Mormon provides in helping us understand the relationship of sin, the grace of Christ, and our own good works is found in the following summary from Moroni's farewell sermon:

Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot. (Moroni 10:32–33)

NOTES

1. Karl A. Menninger, *Whatever Became Of Sin?* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1973), 13.
2. Albert E. Ellis, "Psychotherapy and Atheistic Values: A Response to A. E. Bergin's 'Psychotherapy and Religious Values,'" *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 48, no. 5 (1980): 637.
3. Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. W. D. Robson-Scott (New York: Doubleday, 1957), 77–78.
4. Richard Dawkins, *A Devil's Chaplain* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003), 143.
5. Daniel K Judd, "Religious Affiliation and Mental Health," appendix A in *Religion, Mental Health, and the Latter-day Saints*, ed. Daniel K Judd (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1999), 257.
6. Allen E. Bergin, Kevin S. Masters, and P. Scott Richards, "Religiousness and Mental Health Reconsidered: A Study of an Intrinsically Religious Sample," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 34, no. 2 (1987): 197–204. See also Daniel

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7. G. K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*, 8th ed. (London: Cassell, 1910).
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 9. E. P. Sanders, "Sin," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. Daniel Noel Friedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:41.
 10. Neal A. Maxwell, "Jesus of Nazareth, Savior and King," *Ensign*, December 2007, 45.
 11. Robert L. Millet, "Pursuing a Sane and Balanced Course," in *Selected Writings of Robert L. Millet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 372.
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 14. Martin Luther, as cited in Roland C. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (1950; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2012), 26.
 15. Martin Luther, as cited in E. H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), 130.
 16. Jaroslav Pelikan, ed., *Luther's Works* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 27:13.
 17. Pelikan, *Luther's Works*, 27:13.
 18. Pelikan, *Luther's Works*, 5:157.
 19. Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 35.
 20. Pelikan, *Luther's Works*, 54:94.
 21. Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 36.
 22. Pelikan, *Luther's Works*, 54:339.
 23. Pelikan, *Luther's Works*, 44:74–75.
 24. Pelikan, *Luther's Works*, 54:340.
 25. Pelikan, *Luther's Works*, 54:85.
 26. Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 27.
 27. Alister McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution—A History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 46–47.

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29. Pelikan, *Luther's Works*, 31:179.
30. Ian Osbourne, *Can Christianity Cure Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008), 62–67.
31. Chris H. Miller and Dawson W. Hedges, "Scrupulosity Disorder: An Overview and Introductory Analysis," *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 22 (2008): 1042.
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