CHAPTER 1

The Long Arc of God's Love

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—the Apostle Paul, Epistle to the Romans 8:38–39

In the process of breaking the frame of everyday experience, the gospel restores and makes real the forgotten possibilities of youth. Henry David Thoreau wrote, "The youth gets together his materials to build a bridge to the moon, or, perchance, a palace or temple on the earth, and, at length, the middle-aged man concludes to build a woodshed with them."[1] Mortality has a way of deflating our dreams and trimming us down to size. This, of course, is not all bad—to be successful in life we need to know our weaknesses as well as our strengths. But for many, early childhood is a time of boundless optimism, and it is as if we arrived here from a better, more promising sphere. Recall

William Wordsworth's recollection of early youth:

> There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight,
> To me did seem
> Apparell'd in celestial light,
> The glory and the freshness of a dream.[2]

Later in the ode, Wordsworth ventures that the celestial light that suffuses our youthful apprehension of nature arises from our heavenly home:

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar:
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home.

In other words (and this is Wordsworth's next line): "Heaven lies about us in our infancy!"

These lines are well known to Latter-day Saints because they affirm our belief in a pre-earth life. Some also believe that while memories of that life may briefly linger after birth, they eventually fade into what Wordsworth called "the light of common day." The present world closes in on us and commandeers our thinking, inclining us toward fully naturalistic understandings of ourselves and the situation that, it may seem, we just happened to chance upon. Not sure of how we got here, or why we might be here, we cannot be sure of what comes next. But God has given us the gospel, which is a lens through which we see the world

with eyes of faith and by which we recapture the bright and buoyant optimism of childhood.

OPTIMISM REGAINED AND BIG-PICTURE UNDERSTANDING

A case in point is the conversion of F. Enzio Busche and his family. As a young teenager Enzio was drafted into the German army during the last year of World War II. Like many others, he suffered incredible hardship after the war while Germany was rebuilding its infrastructure and economy. He eventually finished high school, studied at the university level, and took over his family's printing business. Married in 1955, he and his wife Jutta began their family. By this time he was a successful businessman. Then in 1958 two Latter-day Saint missionaries knocked on his door. As an emeritus member of the Seventy many years later, Elder Busche related his family's conversion, comparing it to his childhood Christmas experience.[3] On the day of Christmas Eve the adults would send the children out to play and spend the day cleaning and decorating the house. When the house was spick-and-span, generally in the late afternoon, they would bring in the children, bathe them, and dress them in their best clothes. Then they would gather them together and bring them into a living room that was radiant with candles and Christmas lights. For Enzio it was like being taken to another world. The Christmas experience was good and clean and wholesome. It was spiritual.

Enzio stated that as he grew older he decided that the spiritual aspect of Christmas wasn't real. It was too good to be true, just a childhood experience that one had to outgrow in order to get on with the real business of life—going to

school, getting a job, and achieving wealth and success. So he followed this path until those two missionaries knocked on his door and he was impressed to invite them in. Getting to know them and hearing their message, he recalled, was like rediscovering Christmas: "There was something in these missionaries—a glow of trust, a glow of hope, a glow of security, and a glow of love—that looked in the beginning to us like a fairy tale." They had a spiritual radiance about them, and as a consequence Enzio and his family joined the Church. What he had written off as fanciful and too good to be true became real to him again, but this time in a deeper, truer way. In 1977 Enzio became a General Authority of the Church when he was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Along with renewing our childlike faith and optimism, the restored gospel, Elder Boyd K. Packer taught, gives us the big picture, which resembles a three-act play.[4] The first act sets the stage for mortality, and without the knowledge of what occurred in premortality, it is impossible to make complete sense of the second act, which begins with our physical birth. Not only that, but it is impossible to fully grasp the scope of God's love. Not knowing what happened before our arrival on earth, we are almost sure to overlook the ways God's blessings tumble into this world from an earlier world. First of all, by pushing back the gospel narrative to that earlier world, the restored gospel heightens our appreciation of the Savior's sacrifice on our behalf. Christ was, as John said, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). Something momentous happened early on, something that thereafter lends lasting significance to the events that play out in mortality. This something, Latter-day Saints believe, is the premortal Christ's willing assent to suffer on behalf of all people so

that they might, on condition of repentance, return to live with God at a higher turn of the gospel spiral. After our mortal sojourn, Christ's Atonement allows us to return to God enriched by our away-from-home experiences but no longer tainted by them.

The Book of Mormon is instructive in this regard. Although it has little to say about premortality, it nevertheless stretches us beyond the mortal horizons of birth and death. In my opinion the first great moment in the Book of Mormon occurs when Nephi prays to make larger sense of things. His two older brothers are rebelling against their father Lehi, who has, for reasons they cannot fathom, left Jerusalem and taken his family into the wilderness. In retrospect we know that Nephi was right to support his father, but at the time he could not have known—at least, initially—that God was leading Lehi into the long sweep of sacred history. It took prayer to introduce Nephi to that possibility, and even then he came away with no details but just the assurance that he should follow his father. Here is what he says about the experience:

> And it came to pass that I, Nephi, being exceedingly young, nevertheless being large in stature, and also having great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father; wherefore, I did not rebel against him like unto my brothers. (1 Nephi 2:16)

Later, Nephi will begin to develop a big-picture understanding of why the Lord has led his family into the wilderness: it was not just to escape the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, but also to plant a saving branch or remnant of Israel in a remote part of God's vineyard. As this under-

standing dawns on Nephi, he finds solace in the writings of Isaiah, who prophesied that though God would scatter his ancient covenant people, he would never forget them and would, at last, joyfully and redemptively gather them together again. For those on the front end of this many-century, multigenerational endeavor, though, things might have seemed dreary at times. Nephi's brother Jacob, who like Nephi surely felt connected to Jerusalem by reason of his Old World birth, also quoted Isaiah, no doubt in part as healing balm. In his closing words, however, Jacob seems unable to mask the hurt that lingers for those cut off from their ancestral home:

> And it came to pass that I, Jacob, began to be old; and the record of this people being kept on the other plates of Nephi, wherefore, I conclude this record, declaring that I have written according to the best of my knowledge, by saying that the time passed away with us, and also our lives passed away like as it were unto us a dream, we being a lonesome and a solemn people, wanderers, cast out from Jerusalem, born in tribulation, in a wilderness, and hated of our brethren, which caused wars and contentions; wherefore, we did mourn out our days. (Jacob 7:26)

The mournful beauty of the passage echoes the following lines from Psalm 137, which express the gloom of Jews forcibly driven out of Jerusalem by their Babylonian captors.

> By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

> If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. (Psalm 137:1–6)

Along with Jacob and Nephi, the Psalmist feels the tug of Jerusalem—its sacred environs and ancestral memories. But thanks to earlier prophets (particularly Isaiah), all three have reason to believe that a larger story is now in progress, one that spans generations and far-flung geographic barriers. In the Bible we learn of Israelites driven into Assyria and then, a century later, into Babylon. Both of these forced migrations were not without sacred rhyme or reason, according to Isaiah, for in God's own time he will gather together those whom he has scattered. This is the prospect that comforts Nephi and Jacob, whose family is projected far beyond Assyria and Babylon.

Sometimes challenges are quickly overcome, sometimes not. As Lehi's family journeys through the Old World wilderness of the Arabian Peninsula, Laman and Lemuel continue their rebellion, hoping to reverse the migration and return to Jerusalem. As months turn into years, perhaps they resign themselves to dying in the wilderness or, much better, in the land Bountiful at the edge of the Indian Ocean. In any event, they never see their hardship as the first chapter of a long, multigenerational story whose far-distant ending completes God's grand purpose of saving his children. Nephi, however, by remaining open to the impressions of the Holy Ghost, is prophetically schooled to think and feel more vastly, which is why he states in his closing words that he "pray[s] the Father in the name of Christ that many of us, if not all, may be saved in his kingdom at that great and last day" (2 Nephi 33:12).

"Many of us, if not all." Were it not for the narrative in which it is embedded, this phrase might be taken as empty rhetoric, an idiom easy to mouth but hard to feel. But Nephi's story, as he relates it, suggests a gradual acclimation to divine thought, and no doubt his experiences caused his heart to swell "wide as eternity," as it was said of Enoch (Moses 7:41). There is, after all, the heartbreak entailed by ongoing disharmony within his family, a breach that will widen once they reach the New World. What is more, he learns by revelation of the degeneracy, conquest, and apostasy of his posterity many generations hence (see 1 Nephi 12:19–23). So while Nephi is lifted up to the Lord in vision and given expansive understanding, he often feels weighed down by that understanding, entailing as it does a knowledge of his posterity's disobedience and misery.

For example, after Nephi sees in vision the destruction of his seed, he returns to his father's tent to find his wayward brothers disputing Lehi's prophetic claims. At first Nephi cannot engage them; he is too drained and demoralized by what he has just seen in vision, the dark prospect of which is unfolding right before him:

> And now I, Nephi, was grieved because of the hardness of their hearts, and also, because of the things which I had seen, and knew they must unavoidably come to pass because of the great wickedness of the children of men. And it came to pass that I was overcome because of my afflictions, for I considered that mine afflictions were great above all, because of the destruction of my people, for I had beheld their fall. (1 Nephi 15:4–5)

Gradually, however, he is able to gather strength to ask a simple question: "Have ye inquired of the Lord?" (1 Nephi 15:8). Since prayer was the point at which Nephi's path

diverged from that of his brothers, he admonishes them to take this first step toward big-picture understanding. They, however, respond: "We have not [inquired of the Lord]; for the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us" (v. 9). Careful to protect their position vis à vis their younger brother, they launch an oddly reasoned preemptive strike against the very possibility of divine revelation. Determined not to pray, they insist that God will not answer their prayers.

Laman and Lemuel's myopia is self-inflicted. By remaining narcissistically attached to their own personal hardships, they never glimpse the larger pattern of things that would turn those hardships into priceless blessings. For all their failings, however, Laman and Lemuel are not evil in an over-the-top way. They are recognizably human. If my observations may be trusted, many of us who profess belief in God kick against (or would kick against) the kind of wholesale disruptive change that uprooted Lehi's family. In the moment that tribulation unexpectedly overtakes us, we, like Laman and Lemuel, find it hard to get long-range perspective on things. We do not have the distance that history naturally supplies, nor the advantage of viewing our experience through some yet-to-be-written sacred record. Lacking these same helps, Laman and Lemuel behave as fairly normal human beings; they are instances of what King Benjamin called the "natural man" (Mosiah 3:19), and they struggle to make sense of what strikes them as a senseless situation. Nephi, however, is dramatically different; he does not fall within the range of everyday human behavior, owing to his prayerful reliance on the Lord.

UNDERSTANDING NEPHI

To gain some appreciation of Nephi's goodness and the book he inaugurates (the Book of Mormon), consider the following. Again, if my experience may be trusted as representative of Latter-day Saint devotion, it is safe to say that all faithful members of the Church want to go to heaven, and they worry in that regard about their children, grandchildren, friends, and neighbors. But Nephi, as noted, is concerned about "all of God's children," not as a way of adding to his prayer a nice rhetorical flourish, but because he has caught sight of the long arc of God's love as it spans generations and geographic barriers.

We partially catch sight of that arc. Our hearts are stretched or turned back toward our ancestors and forward toward our posterity, but rarely (it seems to me) for more than a few generations in either direction. At some point things grow dim, owing to our inability to imagine real, living people from nothing more than a birthdate, say, or, in the case of distant posterity, from nothing more than the prospect of a birthdate. But Nephi sees much more, which is why the Book of Mormon is a book of prophetic horizons. He sees in advance much of the thousand-year sweep of the book, but his vision does not stop there. He sees our day as well. What makes his vision compelling is that he is not concerned with historical events per se; he is concerned with family and multigenerational familial happiness.

Which is to say Nephi's yardstick for taking the measure of history is very different from the modern yardstick. Because he does not reflexively assume that history has been a Stone Age to Information Age ascent out of an abyss of ignorance, he does not try to track that ascent in terms of science, technology, economic policy, and so on. These

endeavors may ease (and complicate) the human condition, but they do not of themselves empower a society to live "after the manner of happiness" (2 Nephi 5:27). Obedience to gospel principles does this, and such obedience (unlike manned spaceflight or the latest cell phone technology, say) is within the reach of all people who have been gathered into the Abrahamic covenant, irrespective of place or time. Given this understanding, Nephi can readily grasp why his family is being scattered beyond Jerusalem: God wishes to leaven the loaf of humanity with the saving power of the Abrahamic covenant.

This alone is what counts as history for Nephi—God's saving work, his endeavor to rescue many, if not all, of his children. And because this work involves the mingling of Israel into non-Israel (the intergrafting of tame and wild olive branches for the betterment of both), it is a work that cannot begin and end in a single lifetime or even several lifetimes. While for most believers the clock starts ticking at birth, quits ticking at death, and then some sort of summative judgment is made of one's life, Nephi has been caught up to the higher perspective of multigenerational rise and fall, and he feels his own life is significant to the degree that it lifts others heavenward—whether those in his immediate family or, just as importantly and no less real, those to be born in the distant future.

For Nephi there is hope for everyone, for in God's plan "time and tide flow wide."[5] If he could speak to us today, he would insist that the saving work of God entails far-flung family interconnections that overcome the separating effects of space and time and thereby explode the modern conceit that "I am my own person." Where most of us see distance and separation as we look down the corridor of the centuries, Nephi sees continuity and even unity. Where we

see single-handed, single-generation, or several-generation accomplishment (e.g., the "Greatest Generation," the Industrial Revolution), he sees many-handed, multigenerational rise and fall. To be sure, he believes individuals may act on their own, but often they are swept along by tradition. Even when they believe they are free of the past, they resonate to and mediate the good and the bad of their ancestors. For Nephi, then, history is more participatory, more tightly interwoven across the centuries, and more dependent on long-reverberating acts of obedience and disobedience than most people now suppose. That is why he likens scriptural narrative to his own experience—he wants us to know that there are no spectators to the Book of Mormon (see 1 Nephi 19:23). We, like Nephi, are part of that story, though we are *latter-day* participants in a salvation drama that reaches back to the saving promises made to Old Testament patriarchs.

AT THE OTHER END OF THE BOOK OF MORMON—MORONI AND HIS PROMISE

If the youthful Nephi's prayer is the moment that led him into what Paul called "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of God's love (Ephesians 3:18), Moroni's closing promise reenacts that moment by asking readers to reflect on God's long-suffering love as it expresses itself in the Book of Mormon narrative—and, what is more, as that love has now miraculously overleapt the time frame of the record itself and materialized as a book through which the voice of an ancient people "crying from the dust" may be heard (2 Nephi 33:13). I confess that I missed this point for many years.

As a young missionary, I directed investigators to Moroni 10:4–5.

> And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.

While I did not doubt the veracity of the promise, I did note that most people we taught did not receive a witness of the Book of Mormon, even though many claimed to have prayed with a "sincere heart" and "real intent." That was a bit puzzling to me. Decades later, however, I read Moroni 10:3 and realized that, like Nephi, Moroni feels that once readers grasp how merciful God has been toward all his children, they will begin to realize or "remember" how merciful he has been to each person—each reader—individually. In some manner hard to comprehend, God's universal love distills upon each person individually.

> Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

The word *remember* is particularly interesting in this verse. How can someone who has never read the Book of Mormon, or perhaps any Christian scripture whatsoever, "remember" God's loving-kindness to his children "from the creation of Adam" down unto the present moment?

They cannot, of course, until they begin to prayerfully read holy scripture and experience the impressions of the Holy Ghost, which "bring[s] all things to [one's] remembrance" (John 14:26). The word of God, prayerfully received, opens the mind to larger possibilities, some of which recapture the forgotten hopes of childhood, just as Elder Busche experienced. And certainly, by stretching us upward toward God and outward toward our fellowmen, prayerful immersion in holy writ allows us to realize our commonality with others. No matter how different others may seem, and no matter the time and place of their mortal state, we share with them the same earthbound predicament, the same vulnerability to sickness, hurt, and death; and given that vulnerability (what the scriptures call our fallen nature), we may all rejoice in the gospel realization that a loving God has provided an escape therefrom. But first we must follow Nephi and Moroni as they teach us to pray.

The primordial intrigue of prayer is that it attunes us to a larger resonance of things, enabling our entry (or reentry) into moments of expansive jubilation, the like of which attended the birth of Jesus: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:13–14). The restored gospel helps us to know that this jubilation reaches back to the premortal existence, where "the morning stars sang together, and the sons [and daughters] of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7) when the premortal Jehovah offered himself as a sacrificial lamb in order to bring about God's plan to save "many, if not all," of his children. Of this momentous event, Latter-day Saint scholar Hugh Nibley observed that "when the plan was announced to the assembled hosts, and the full scope and magnanimity of it dawned upon them,

they burst into spontaneous shouts of joy and joined in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving, the morning song of Creation, which remains to this day the archetype of hymns, the great *acclamatio*, the primordial nucleus of all liturgy."[6]

John the Revelator numbered the participants in this great choir as "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11). We participate in it every time we bear witness of God's goodness in word or deed; we evoke the great hymn, tap into its cosmic resonance, and feel it echoing in our soul, according to Elder Jeffrey R. Holland. "There are several reasons for bearing testimony," he stated while speaking to the missionaries of the Church: "One is that when you declare the truth, it will bring an echo, a memory, even if it is an unconscious memory to the investigator, that they have heard this truth before—and of course they have. A missionary's testimony invokes a great legacy of testimony dating back to the councils in heaven before this world was. There, in an earlier place, these same people heard this same plan outlined and heard there the role that Jesus Christ would play in their salvation."[7]

The great hymn may be said to restate the Word of creation, which "was in the beginning with God" and whereby "all things were made" and without which "was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1–3).[8] The Atonement being its keynote, it celebrates the unfathomable love of God, which love "descend[s] below all things" and thereby brings all things together—harmoniously, cosmically (Doctrine and Covenants 88:6; 122:8). The Apostle Paul made this point when he insisted that by virtue of Christ's atoning sacrifice "all things" are brought before God and thereby "hold together," whether "things on earth or things in heaven" (Colossians 1:15–20, New International Version).

This deep mutuality and reconciliation of difference—this *at-one-ment*—brings things together, just as the harmonic assimilation of different musical tones produces a single hymn. Although each tone is distinctive, each plays off the others (each is reconciled to the others) so that the deeply satisfying outcome is a single musical composition rather than a disjointed succession of sounds.

At the level of the individual believer, the promise of God is that gospel obedience brings the different parts of our lives into harmony so that even our "wilderness" years, our seasons of hardship and disappointment, are retroactively charged with significance. Nothing is lost in God's economy; nothing is senseless. Every valiant effort, no matter how disappointing the immediate result, will be redeemed, will be repackaged into a larger pattern of meaning and given back to us as a gift. "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpiller, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you," the Lord promises in the book of Joel. "And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed" (Joel 2:25–26).

This wondrous work unfolds on many levels as the saving, reconciling power of Christ's Atonement "descends below all things"—below all hatred, all strife, all declaration of absolute enmity and apartness—to heal from within and to bring us into remembrance of events older and more foundational than the daily triumphs, hurts, and hostilities that routinely monopolize our interest. When Moroni admonishes us to "remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things," he has every reason, it would seem, *not* to remember God's

mercy. From the limited perspective of the present moment, his cause is lost: he is in the middle of a bloodbath, an everyday witness to spiritual depravity and physical atrocity, and because the mad frenzy is irreversible, his only recourse is to ride the tide of events while hiding from those who wish to kill him. Where is God in all this? Where is his mercy? From the point of view of those in the middle of the slaughter, nowhere, it would seem. Remarkably, however, Moroni does not despair, even as the slaughter rages and threatens to destroy him. Like Nephi, he has perceived the long arc of God's love as it stretches beyond the horizons of mortal experience, and his principal concern is to plant the seed of faith in the hearts of people yet unborn.

We, of course, are among those people, and the Book of Mormon is that seed. To vary the metaphor, the Book of Mormon is an integral part of God's long rhyme of salvation. Though its narrative begins with family discord and ends with the chaotic destruction of a once-happy people, the book itself ends on a promising, uplifting note. Moroni, after all, knows that there is a bigger story in the offing, and he trusts that God can find a rhyme where most humans find nothing but chaotic finality and senseless, irredeemable ruin. But, again, the difference is that Moroni has tasted of God's redemptive love through prayer, and he thus knows that God is merciful beyond mortal imagining. God's work of salvation unfolds across millennia, and it involves the mutual uplift of all people as cultures intermix and the living and dead reach out to each other in the temple.

This is the wondrous mercy of God that, when remembered, melts or softens hearts. It is what William Shakespeare called "sweet love remembered," and he described its transforming power in his twenty-ninth sonnet. Although the sonnet is not explicitly religious, it does track the pro-

cess of prayer—the struggle to break out of one's narcissistic cocoon into the free air of God's love.

> When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
> I all alone beweep my outcast state,
> And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
> And look upon myself and curse my fate,
> Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
> Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
> Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
> With what I most enjoy contented least;
> Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
> Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
> Like to the lark at break of day arising
> From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
> For thy sweet love rememb'red such wealth brings
> That then I scorn to change my state with kings.[9]

While it makes sense to suppose, as many scholars do, that Shakespeare's sweet remembered love is a close friend, the mention of daybreak and of the lark singing "hymns at heaven's gate" catalyzes the sonnet's sudden spiritual expansion and imbues the last lines with the suggestion of otherworldly rescue. That suggestion, I propose, is Shakespeare's way of skirmishing with the wondrous truth of a loving God who unfailingly and everlastingly remembers his children and who asks in return that they remember him. The invitation to remember is meant primarily to fulfill our need for the expansive joy that prayerful remembrance brings, not God's need for praise—though we will thank and praise God and even jubilate once the revelation of his long-enduring, long-continuing love begins to register.

"Herein is love," wrote John, "not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). And, a few verses later: "We love

him, because he first loved us" (v. 19). God took the first step, thereby obliging reciprocity on our part. But according to John, God's gift of love was so magnanimous that nothing less than Christlike love can be offered to God in return. God's love is its own medium of exchange, and when we are filled with it, we freely love others as God has loved us. Like Nephi and Moroni, we are stretched out toward others along the long arc of God's love, and in that holier state we are rescued from the particularity of our own mortal circumstance and the narcissistic tendency to save only ourselves.

NOTES

1. Henry David Thoreau, *The Heart of Thoreau's Journals*, ed. Odell Shepard (New York: Dover, 1961), 94.
2. William Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," in *Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250–1900*, ed. Arthur Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 608.
3. Enzio Busche, "Christmas Every Day," *Liahona*, December 2001.
4. Boyd K. Packer, "The Great Plan of Happiness," https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/manual/book-of-mormon-teacher-resource-manual/appendix/the-great-plan-of-happiness.
5. Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (New York: Norton, 1967), 148.
6. Hugh W. Nibley, "Treasures in the Heavens," *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1978), 51.
7. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Missionary Work and the Atonement," *Ensign*, March 2001.
8. While John's identification of Christ with the Word (*logos*) obviously refers to Christ's role in the creation of the world, it also may be said to reach back to the role Christ played in the Council in Heaven. We read in the book of Revelation that during the War in Heaven, Lucifer launched a war of words—he accused his brethren "before . . . God day and night"; those who opposed him,

however, were able to "overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (Revelation 12:7–11).

9. William Shakespeare, Sonnet 29, in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 3rd ed., ed. David Bevington (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980), 1588.