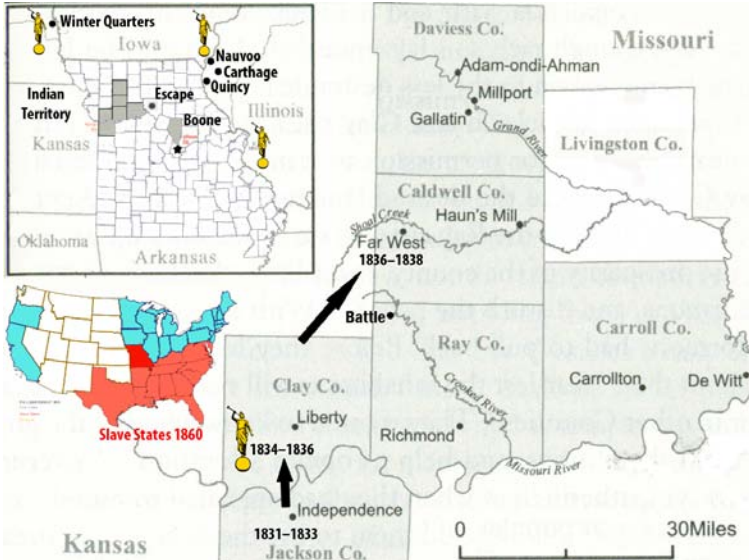


#28: "O God, Where Art Thou"

Monte F. Shelley, 16 Aug 2009

Quotes

- Do I see difficulty in every opportunity ... or opportunity in every difficulty?
- Adversity can help people sink to new heights.
- When the power of persuasion does not work, some men resort to the persuasion of power.



Timeline of Events in Missouri (OH=Our Heritage)	
1831	Saints begin to gather in Jackson county (stake of Zion) June. WW Phelps "to assist ... [with] printing, ... selecting and writing books for schools" (55:4), went with Joseph to Jackson county, appointed printer for Church (57:11).
1832	Jun. Phelps published first <i>Evening and Morning Star</i>
1833	Apr. Persecution began (too many voters, slavery, Indians) Jul. WW Phelps wrote article on free people of color. Old settlers saw it as an invitation to settle there. His printed clarification was too late. Mob destroyed press/home. Nov-Dec. Saints move to Clay county Dec 16. D&C 101 → why driven out of Jackson county.
1834	Feb 24. D&C 103 → gather men for Zion's camp. June. Zion's Camp reached Clay County. Jul 3. Missouri presidency: D & J Whitmer, WW Phelps
1835	Kirtland. WW Phelps prepared 1835 D&C & hymnbook, was scribe for translation of Book of Abraham, reported seeing heavenly personages.
1836	Jun 29. Objections to Saints in Clay county: (a) poor, (b) religion, (c) customs & dialect, (d) slavery, (e) Indians. Aug. Ray co. opposed Saints. They agreed to move north of county line with a 6 mile "no-man's land" separating Sept. Missouri Saints moved to Far West Dec 26. Caldwell county created exclusively for Saints.
1837	Kirtland. Williams, Luke & Lyman Johnson, Boynton Jun. Missions to England over next 15 years → 51,000 Nov. Hyrum Smith in First Presidency replacing Williams
1838	Jan. Plot to kill Joseph and Sidney in Kirtland. Joseph told his mother he had a promise that he would live at least 5 more years (lived 6.5 more). Joseph flees to Far West. Feb. High Council tries D. & J. Whitmer, WW Phelps Mar 14. Joseph arrived in Far West. Mar-May. WW Phelps, D & J. Whitmer, O. Cowdery, McClellan, Lyman Johnson , H. Page excommunicated

May. Joseph identified Spring Hill as Adam-ondi-Ahman
Jun. Saints received preemption land rights in Far West. S. Avard starts a secret society called Danites.
Jun 19. Sidney gave Salt sermon to get dissenters to leave.
Jul 4. Sidney gave patriotic speech. "That mob that comes ... to disturb us, it shall be ... a war of extermination. We ... will stand for our own until death."
Jul 8. Joseph told Twelve to leave from their missions from the Far West temple site on Apr. 26, 1839. WW Phelps and Williams returned to favor (HC 3:46n)
Aug 6. Mob prevented Saints from voting ^{OH}
Sept. Mob persecution began.
Sept 26. Saints buy land of those wanting to leave Daviess.
Oct 1-10. DeWitt besieged and Saints forced to leave.
Oct. Sashel Wood, a minister, told mob that "the land sales ... were coming on, and if they could get the Mormons driven out, they could get all the lands entitled to pre-emptions ... [and] all the lands back." (BYU Studies 47.1) Believing State would not help, Mormon defenders expelled non-Mormons from Daviess co., took food, etc.
Oct 24. Marsh's slanderous affidavit signed by O. Hyde
Oct 23-25. Bogart's militia patrols Ray co. line, acts like mob, harasses Saints, captures 3 men, prepares to fight in Ray co. D. Patten killed at battle at Crooked Creek ^{OH} Joseph had advised Saints in outlying areas to move to Far West or Adam-ondi-Ahman before battle.
Oct 26. Joseph told Jacob Haun "Move in ... if you wish to save your lives." Fearing property loss, Haun said they'd use buildings as a fort. Joseph said "You are at liberty to do so." After Haun left, Joseph said, "we will soon learn that they have been butchered." (Bowen, <i>FTP</i> , 7-9)
Oct 27. Gov. Boggs issued extermination order ^{OH}
Oct 30. Haun's Mill. 200 men killed 17 men and boys ^{OH}
Oct 31. Joseph and others were taken prisoners.
Nov 1. Court-martial condemned them to die, but General Alexander Doniphan refused to kill them ^{OH} Far West surrendered, no guns or travel, deed property. Mobs loot, destroy property, beat men, ravish women.
Nov 3. Joseph told prisoners that no one would die.
Nov 4. Joseph preached to a woman and others in Jackson county fulfilling his earlier public prophecy that "a sermon should be preached in Jackson county by one of our Elders, before the close of 1838." (HC 3:201)
Nov 9. 53-64 prisoners taken to Richmond jail ^{OH}
Nov 12. Trial began. Apostates WW Phelps, J. Whitmer, S. Avard, J. Corroll, G. Hinckle testified against them. Sale of Saints preemption properties began for 2 weeks McClellan plundered Saints, stole books from Joseph's home, expressed desire to beat Joseph. (HC 3:215)
Nov 23. WW Phelps signed a document whitewashing treatment of Far West Saints (HC 3:359)
Nov 24. Mob leaders began buy Mormon land and got the improvements too (BYU Studies 47.1 2008:41-42)
Dec. 1. Move to Liberty Jail for treason ^{OH} : Joseph, Sidney, Hyrum , L. Wight, C. Baldwin, A. McRae Stay in Richmond jail for murder @ Crooked River: PP Pratt, M. Phelps, L. Gibbs, N. Shearer, and D. Chase.
Dec 16. Joseph wrote of tribulation caused by apostates like Phelps, J & D Whitmer, Cowdery (HC 3:232)
Dec-Jan. Emma visited Joseph 3 times before going to Illinois in mid-Feb. ¹ Brigham in charge of departures.



Liberty Jail Visitor's Center

1839	8000+ Saints driven out of Missouri to Quincy in winter ^{OH} Jan 25. Ailing Sidney released, but remained for protection Feb 5. Sidney stole away at night fearing murder. Feb 7. Lord said prisoners could escape if all agreed. All received witness but Wight who'd go next day (HC 3:257) Feb 14. Brigham fled from Far West to avoid being killed Mar 4. Prisoners caught trying to bore a hole in outer wall Mar 17. Phelps excommunicated by the Twelve in Quincy. Mar 20–25. D&C 121–123 were part of letter from Joseph Apr 5. 50 men swore not to eat or drink until Joseph killed. 8 men mocked Apr 26 Far West prophecy & said if they come, they'll be murdered. They mocked 8 witnesses. J. Whitmer replied, "I handled those plates." (HC 3:306–8) Apr 6. Joseph & others sent to Daviess county under guard Apr 9. Prisoners appear before a drunken grand jury. Apr 16. On way to Boone county, prisoners escape with help of guards (OH; HC 3:321) Apr 17. Twelve left for Far West to fulfill prophecy. Apr 22. Joseph & others welcomed by friends in Quincy ^{OH} Apr 26. Twelve met in Far West at midnight. They stopped by home of apostate I. Russell to say goodbye. (HC 3:339) May 1. Saints buy a swamp land, Commerce (Nauvoo, Ill.) WW Phelps wrote letter from Far West to wife in St. Louis that shows his apostate attitude and embitterment. May 22. In response to WW Phelps' letter about sale of Saints' real estate, Joseph wrote, "mind your own affairs and ... avoid all interference in our business." (HC 3:358) Jul 4. PP Pratt and M. Phelps escaped. King Follett did not.
1840	Jun 29. WW Phelps sent letter asking Joseph's forgiveness. Jul 22. Joseph welcomed him back. He was appointed to publishing tasks, and spoke for Joseph several times.
1844	Jun 22. Before leaving Nauvoo, Joseph and Hyrum asked Phelps to take their families to Cincinnati (HC 6:547) Jun 24. Phelps rode with Joseph to Carthage. Jun 27. Phelps visited jail. Joseph murdered in afternoon. Jun 29. Phelps spoke at funeral service (HC 6:628). Aug 1. Phelps published "Praise to the Man." (T&S)
1976	Jun 25. Missouri rescinds extermination order.
2002	Jun 28. Tabernacle Choir concert in Quincy, Ill. Proceeds of \$75,000 donated to a Quincy community foundation.

Lessons from Missouri and Liberty Jail

1. Why adversity and affliction?

Because ...

- Own wickedness (D&C 101)
- Zeal without knowledge led to persecution. (HC 2:394)
- Wickedness of others (mobs & apostates)
- We or our leaders ignore counsel like Jacob Haun.

To ... stir us up to a remembrance of our duty to love God & man

- To see if we will seek God's will and keep covenants (98:14)
- To purify and sanctify us (128:24). To try as Abraham (101:4)
- To know how to succor or help others in need (Alma 7:11–12)

Why did Jesus suffer "pains ... afflictions ... temptations ... and ... sicknesses"? To "loose the bands of death ... [and] that his bowels may be filled with mercy ... that he may know ... how to succor his people according to their infirmities." (Alma 7:11–12)

Why did Lehi's family suffer famine and afflictions? Because "they were unfaithful. ... To stir them up in remembrance of their duty" to love God and neighbor. (Mos. 1:17; Hel. 11:34; 12:1–3)

2. Good and bad people "drink the bitter cup" (19:18)

In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed that he "might not drink the bitter cup" (D&C 19:18; Mt 26:39, 43; Mk 14:36)

The Egyptians made the lives of the Israelites "bitter with hard bondage" (Ex 1:14). Jewish leaders say that a Jew in trouble should never describe his situation as "bad," but rather as "bitter." Medicine, too, is bitter tasting, but serves a beneficial purpose.

Neal A. Maxwell said at a friend's funeral, "Sometimes the best people ... have the worst experiences ... because they are the most ready to learn." (*A Disciple's Life*, 20)

Jeffrey R. Holland: "Every one of us... is going to spend a little time in Liberty Jail—spiritually speaking. We will face things we do not want to face for reasons that may not have been our fault. Indeed, we may face difficult circumstances for ... reasons that came *because* we were trying to keep the commandments. ... We may face persecution; we may endure heartache and separation from loved ones; we may be hungry and cold and forlorn. Yes, before our lives are over we may all be given a little taste of what the prophets faced often in their lives. ... Just because difficult things happen—sometimes unfair and seemingly unjustified things—it does not mean that we are unrighteous or that we are unworthy of blessings or that God is disappointed in us. Of course sinfulness does bring suffering, and the only answer to that behavior is repentance. But sometimes suffering comes to the righteous, too. ... If you are having a bad day, you've got a lot of company—very, very good company. The best company that has ever lived." ("Lessons from Liberty Jail," BYU, 7 Sept. 2008)

3. The gospel is not insurance against pain

"The gospel of Jesus Christ is not insurance against pain. It is resource in event of pain, and when that pain comes (and it will come ...), rejoice that you have resource to deal with your pain." (Carlfred Broderick, "The Uses of Adversity")

Harold B. Lee: "Living the gospel ... is no guarantee that adversity will not come into our lives; but living the gospel does give us the strength and faith and power to rise above that adversity and look beyond the present trouble to the brighter day." (quoted by A. Theodore Tuttle, Conference Report, Oct. 1967, 15)

4. Why me? Why now? ... Why not?

Marvin J. Ashton: When tragedy, disappointment, and heartache surface in our lives, ... many ... become self- condemning and resentful. ... With heavy hearts and broken spirits, the parents of a wayward child ... [asked], "Where did we go wrong? What have

we done to displease the Lord? ... Why us?" ... Remember that all suffering is not punishment. It is imperative that we do not allow ourselves to be destroyed by the conduct of others. Sometimes we spend so much time trying to determine what we did wrong in the past to deserve the unpleasant happenings of the moment that we fail to resolve the challenges of the present. ... "If we lock ourselves in a prison of failure and self-pity, we are the only jailers ... we have the only key to our freedom." ... We can let ourselves out of such a prison by turning to the Lord for strength. With His help we can use our trials as stepping-stones. The keys are in our hands. (*Ensign*, Nov 1984)

5. Liberty Jail became a prison-temple for Joseph

Neal A. Maxwell: "The double walls, four feet thick, kept Joseph and his companions in, but they could not keep the Spirit and revelation out." (*But For...*, 2) "Ironically, this period of enforced idleness, grim though the conditions were, was perhaps the only time in the Prophet's often hectic adult life when there was much time for reflection. ... Joseph Smith received some of the most sublime revelations ever received by any prophet ... [D&C 121, 122]. Therein are divine tutorials by which the Lord schooled his latter-day prophet—probably the most tender tutorials in all of holy writ now available." (30 Mar 1986, BYU)

Jeffrey R. Holland: Elder B. H. Roberts and Elder Maxwell said Liberty Jail was "a 'prison-temple.' ... Certainly it lacked the purity, the beauty, the comfort, and the cleanliness of our true temples. ... The speech and behavior of the guards and criminals ... was anything but templelike. In fact, the restricting brutality and injustice ... would make it seem the very antithesis of the liberating, merciful spirit of our temples. ... So in what sense could Liberty Jail be called a "temple" ... in the development of Joseph Smith personally and in his role as a prophet? And what does such a title tell us about God's love and teachings, including where and when that love and those teachings are made manifest? ... Does it strike us that spiritual ..., revelatory ... [and] sacred experience can come to every one of us in all the many and varied ... circumstances of our lives if we want it, if we hold on and pray on, and if we keep our faith strong through our difficulties? ... We are not alone in our little prisons here. When suffering, we may in fact be nearer to God than we've ever been in our entire lives. *That* knowledge can turn every such situation into a would-be temple." ("Lessons from Liberty Jail")

6. O God, where art thou? (121:1)

Joseph wrote: "They practice these things upon the Saints, who have done them no wrong; ... who loved the Lord. ... These things are awful to relate, but they are verily true. ..."

¹ O God, where art thou? ... ³ How long shall they suffer these wrongs ..., before thine heart shall be softened toward them...? ⁵ Avenge us of our wrongs. ⁶ Remember thy suffering saints.

7. Thine afflictions shall be but a small moment (121:7)

"We received some letters. ... They were to our souls as the gentle air is refreshing. ... Those who have not been enclosed in the walls of prison, without cause ..., can have but little idea how sweet the voice of a friend is. One token of friendship ... awakens ... every sympathetic feeling; ... until finally all enmity, malice, and hatred ... are slain ... [by] Hope. and when the heart is sufficiently contrite, then the voice of inspiration ... whispers,"

^{121:7} My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; ⁸ ... If thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.

In one of his last letters from Liberty Jail, Joseph wrote, "I feel like Joseph in Egypt" (Letter to Emma, 21 Mar 1839; *PWJS* 409).

8. "We have learned by sad experience" (121:39)

9. Use persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness, love

⁴¹ Influence ... by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; ⁴² By kindness, and pure knowledge, ... ⁴⁵ Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men ... and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God. ... ⁴⁶ The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion. (121:41–46)

10. "All these things ... shall be for thy good" (122:7)

⁵ If thou art called to pass through tribulation; ... false brethren; ... robbers; ... false accusations; if thine enemies ... tear thee from ... thy ... [family and thy son] be thrust from thee by the sword, and thou be dragged to prison, ... ⁷ And ... cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; ... know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant. (D&C 90:24; Mar 1833 Kirtland)

In Egypt, Joseph said to his brothers, "be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you ... to save your lives. ... Ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good." (Gen 45:4–7; 50:15–21)

The prison walls that kept Joseph in jail also kept the mob out! Sidney remained in jail 10 days after being released to keep from being killed. Mobs threatened to kill Joseph when he was moved.

Joseph: "I was glad to see you. No tongue can tell what inexpressible joy it gives a man to see the face of one who has been a friend after having been enclosed in ... a prison for five months. ... My heart will always be more tender after this than ever it was before. My heart bleeds continually when I contemplate the distress of the Church. Oh that I could be with them I would not shrink at toil and hardship to render them comfort and consolation. ... I never could have felt as I now do if I had not suffered the wrongs that I have suffered. All things shall work together for good to them that love God." (Letter, 3/15/1839)

Neal A. Maxwell: "The whole experience in Liberty Jail, as Joseph indicated, was such that without it he could not possibly have understood certain dimensions of suffering." (*But for...*, 7)

Jeffery R. Holland: "The lessons of the winter of 1838–39 teach us that *every* experience can become a *redemptive* experience if we remain bonded to our Father in Heaven through that difficulty. These difficult lessons teach us that man's extremity is God's opportunity, and if we will be humble and faithful, if we will be believing and not curse God for our problems, He can turn the unfair and inhumane and debilitating prisons of our lives into temples—or at least into a circumstance that can bring comfort and revelation, divine companionship and peace." ("Lessons ...")

James E. Faust: "In the pain, the agony... of life, we pass through a refiner's fire, and ... the unimportant ... can melt away like dross and make our faith bright, intact, and strong. ... In the agonies of life, we seem to listen better to the faint, godly whisperings of the Divine Shepherd" (*Ensign*, May 1979, 53).

Marion G. Romney: "I have seen the remorse and despair in the lives of men who, in the hour of trial, have cursed God and died spiritually. And I have seen people rise to great heights from what seemed to be unbearable burdens. Finally, I have sought the Lord in my own extremities and learned for myself that my soul has made its greatest growth as I have been driven to my knees by adversity and affliction" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1969, 60).

11. “Art thou greater than He?” (122:8)

⁸The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he? (122:8)

Neal A. Maxwell: “We should not complain about our own life’s not being a rose garden when we remember who wore the crown of thorns!” (*Ensign*, May 1987, 72).

Jeffrey R. Holland: I testify of God’s love and the Savior’s power to calm the storm. Always remember ... that He was out there on the water also, that He faced the worst of it right along with the newest and youngest and most fearful. Only one who has fought against those ominous waves is justified in telling *us—as well as the sea*—to “be still.” Only one who has taken the full brunt of such adversity could ever be justified in telling us in such times to “be of good cheer.” Such counsel is not a jaunty pep talk about the power of positive thinking, though positive thinking is much needed in the world. No, Christ knows better than all others that the trials of life can be very deep and we are not shallow people if we struggle with them. But even as the Lord avoids sugary rhetoric, He rebukes faithlessness and He deplors pessimism. He expects us to believe! (*Ensign*, Nov 1999)

12. “Thy years shall not be numbered less” (122:9)

In Jan. 1839, Joseph told his mother he had a promise that he would at least live 5 more years. He lived 6.5 more years. In Liberty Jail, Joseph told Lyman Wight that he would not live to be 40 years old. He was 38.5 when he was murdered.

13. “Cheerfully do all things ... in our power” (123:17)

Let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed. (123:17)

Joseph wrote letters of counsel to Saints and Emma. He tried all legal means to get out of jail. He tried to escape twice. He prayed for deliverance.

Joseph’s letters showed his long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, love, and kindness to Emma and the Saints. At the end of this letter, he persuaded them to avoid common stock organizations, to publish an account of their persecutions, to avoid secret societies, to beware of prejudices against those who differ from us, and to support the Constitution which is “a glorious standard ... founded in the wisdom of God. It is a heavenly banner.”

Joseph B. Wirthlin: The way we react to adversity can be a major factor in how happy and successful we can be in life. ... I still remember [my mother’s] advice ... when my team lost a football game: “Come what may, and love it.” ... Adversity, if handled correctly, can be a blessing in our lives. We can learn to love it. As we look for humor, seek for the eternal perspective, understand the principle of compensation, and draw near to our Heavenly Father, we can endure hardship and trial. We can say ... “Come what may, and love it.” (*Ensign*, Nov 2008, 26–28)

Hot water softens carrots and hardens eggs.

“Because of the ... war ... many had become hardened ... and many were softened because of their afflictions (Alma 62:41)

Quotes

Bruce C. Hafen: Perhaps we cannot know Christ’s love without knowing his pain. If so, the personal suffering we confront in the sanctification process ... could move the pure love of Christ from a concept in one’s head to a substance in one’s heart. And once in the heart, charity will circulate all through the body because it is being moved by “a new heart.” (*A Disciple’s Life*, 562)

Elder Maxwell’s experience with leukemia

When Elder Maxwell learned he had leukemia in 1996, his wife said, “You’ve talked and written so much lately about trials and suffering. Maybe the Lord wants to let us see how we can deal with that ourselves.” He was reluctant to plead for a miracle and felt other apostles who died early were better men than he. He was willing to drink his bitter cup. His wife reminded him that Jesus made an earnest plea that His bitter cup pass from Him before He finally submitted. He endured intense treatments and chemotherapy for 46 days in 1997. In the hospital, he said, “It’s the kind of experience in which I need some tutoring; and yet ... I won’t mind when the course is over. ... I want to play in the game ... on this side or that side. I don’t want to sit on the sidelines.” He then enjoyed a 15 month remission and began comforting people with cancer and other afflictions.

During this time, Randy Gibbs met with Elder Maxwell to get a blessing for his eyes. Randy asked how he made sense of his disease and the suffering of good people. He said “I know that [God] loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things (1 Ne 11:17). ... Our ‘why’ questions are so hard to answer. But ... we can know ... the Lord loves us and knows us personally. ... I’ve learned that sometimes when the Lord is actually lifting us, we may feel He is letting us down.” In an earlier visit with Randy Gibbs, Elder Maxwell referred to “three types of trials: those we die from, those we live with, and those we pass through.” (Randy Gibbs, *Spiritual Vision*, 1-3)

When Elder Maxwell’s leukemia returned, he began periodic experimental treatments that lasted 4 years. “In ... 2000 when he was in a pondering mood about his illness..., Neal had a sacred experience. ... The soul voice of the Spirit came into his mind to whisper, ‘I have given you leukemia that you might teach my people with authenticity.’ The words sank in deeply, confirming his belief that the Lord had authored his tutorial—and his recovery.” (*A Disciple’s Life*, 562) He died in July 2004.

Neal A. Maxwell: So often in life a deserved blessing is quickly followed by a needed stretching. Spiritual exhilaration may be quickly followed by a vexation or temptation. Were it otherwise, extended spiritual reveries or immunities from adversity might induce in us a regrettable forgetfulness of others in deep need. The sharp, side-by-side contrast of the sweet and the bitter is essential until the very end of this brief, mortal experience. Meanwhile, even routine, daily life provides sufficient sandpaper to smooth our crustiness and polish our rough edges, if we are meek. Anne Morrow Lindbergh wisely cautioned: “I do not believe that sheer suffering teaches. If suffering alone taught, all the world would be wise, since everyone suffers. To suffering must be added mourning, understanding, patience, love, openness, and the willingness to remain vulnerable.” ... Certain forms of suffering, endured well, can actually be ennobling. Annie Swetchine said, “Those who have suffered much are like those who know many languages; they have learned to understand and be understood by all.” (*Ensign*, Apr 1997)

Neal A. Maxwell: “‘Laman and Lemuel ... did murmur ... because they knew not the dealings of that God who had created them’ (1 Ne. 2:12). Failing to understand the “dealings” of the Lord with His children—meaning His relations with and treatment of His children—is very fundamental. Murmuring is but one of the symptoms, and not the only consequence either; in fact ... this failure affects everything else! To misread something so crucial constitutes a failure to know God, who then ends up being wrongly seen as unreachable, uninvolved, uncaring, and unable.” (*Ensign*, Nov 1999, 6)