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Contending without Contention

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Abstract: *“Think not,” said the Savior at Matthew 10:34, “that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” And this has in fact been the case — too often literally, but certainly figuratively. In the Old Testament, the Lord accurately foretold the situation that we commonly see: “I will take you one of a city,” he explained, “and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion” (Jeremiah 3:14). Unfortunately, those who aren’t so “taken” are often not entirely happy with the beliefs and practices of those who are. “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?” Jesus told his audience at Luke 12:51–52. “I tell you, Nay; but rather division.” But is Jesus not the Prince of Peace? Has he not also commanded us “That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matthew 5:39)? Jude 1:3 tells us that we “should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” but we are also told not to be contentious in carrying out that assignment. Doing both simultaneously can be an extraordinarily great challenge. But it is the Lord’s challenge to us.*

Barring an unforeseen disaster, I’ll be back by the time you read or hear this introductory essay. (In fact, sadly, I’ll probably already be gone again to someplace else — thus illustrating one of my mother’s favorite principles: “There’s no rest for the wicked.”) At the moment, though, I’m writing it while sitting in Jerusalem. I’m sitting not far from the “green line” that essentially divides the eastern and predominantly Arab part of the city from its western and almost entirely Jewish section.

Originally, the name *Jerusalem* — which, in Hebrew, is *Yerushaláyim* — probably comes from a root *yry*’ (“to found,” or “to lay a cornerstone”) and *Shalem*, which was the personal name of the Canaanite god of “twilight” or “dusk” in the Bronze Age. But, since the Hebrew word *ir* is the equivalent of English *city*, and since *Shalem* comes from the same

root (*s-l-m*) as that standing behind the Hebrew and Arabic words for “peace” (respectively, *shalom* and *salaam*), *Jerusalem* has often, and not incorrectly, been interpreted as “City of Peace.”

And, indeed, that is exactly what Jerusalem should be. Far too often, though, it hasn’t been. According to a commonly accepted reckoning, the city has been attacked 52 times, besieged 23 times, captured or recaptured 44 times, and altogether destroyed twice. Moreover, even today, although the city has been under the unified political control of Israel since the Israelis took East Jerusalem in the Six Day War of June 1967, it remains divided. Even its name suggests division: The ending *-áyim* is a Hebrew dual, which may simply indicate that Yerushaláyim originally sat on two distinct hills — the area is extremely hilly¹ — but which also seems sadly prophetic.

When I visit here, I never fail to remember an experience from the first of my many stays in Jerusalem. It occurred back when I lived in the city as a student from January to June of 1978.

One day, I was sitting alone in the traditional Garden of Gethsemane, just north of the beautiful Roman Catholic Church of All Nations. I was looking across the Kidron Valley — the King James Bible’s “brook Cedron” (at, for example, John 18:1, but “the brook Kidron” at 2 Samuel 15:23) — toward the ancient Temple Mount and the beautiful late-seventh-century Muslim Dome of the Rock. It is one of the greatest views in the world. Suddenly, my attention was caught by a convoy of long-bed military trucks that were slowly climbing up the Derekh Ha’ophel or Al-Akma road, carrying a number of large Israeli armored tanks. (These were either the last generation of tanks before the famous Israeli *Merkava* or, perhaps, the very earliest examples of that fearsomely effective weapon, which officially entered service in 1979.)

Suddenly, it hit me very powerfully that those tanks, ascending the hill on which the Temple of Jerusalem once stood and within a few hundred yards (at most) of the place in which Jesus the Christ had voluntarily undertaken his redeeming sacrifice on our behalf, symbolized what a mess we mortals have made of things here on this earth. They vividly illustrated how desperately we need the Savior, his gospel, and his atonement. Whatever your politics, whatever you think about the Arab-Israeli conflict or about the merits of Zionism or the

1. John Menzie Macfarlane (1833–1892), the Scottish-born Latter-day Saint choir director, civic leader, and southern Utah pioneer who wrote the popular Christmas carol “Far, Far Away on Judea’s Plains” (*Hymns*, 212), had obviously visited neither Jerusalem nor Judea more generally.

grievances of the Palestinians, we have plainly not behaved as we should. And not merely in the Middle East, though the Middle East illustrates my point with exceptional clarity. In our premortal state, we knew each other as brothers and sisters, children of our common heavenly Parents. They did not send us here, we did not come to earth, to hate and oppress and injure and kill each other.

As I'm writing, though, the headlines are dominated by yet another in our seemingly endless series of cruel and brutal wars. Innocent people are dying in Ukraine. And some of those innocents, I have no doubt, are members of the invading army. Everyone involved is a child of God.

As I reflect upon such things, I cannot help but think of Moses 7, which, to my mind, surely ranks among the most powerful chapters in all of ancient or modern scripture. I begin with the part of the vision of Enoch in which

he beheld Satan; and he [Satan] had a great chain in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness; and he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced. (Moses 7:26)

That is a horrifying image — a chilling glimpse of a genuinely sadistic and arguably deranged personality. It is not unlike C. S. Lewis's depiction of "the Unman," a fictional, extraterrestrial version of the devil in *Perelandra*, the second volume of his famous "space trilogy," who takes insane delight in the sheer pointless infliction of pain and suffering.

But the most remarkable passage of Moses 7 is yet to come. In it, we see Enoch stunned at witnessing God's tears, and we ourselves are, or we should be, stunned at how such vulnerability co-exists with God's holiness and his inconceivably great power:

And it came to pass that the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept; and Enoch bore record of it, saying: How is it that the heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains?

And Enoch said unto the Lord: How is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity?

And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea, millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations; and thy curtains are stretched out still; and yet thou art there, and thy bosom is there; and also thou art just; thou art merciful and kind forever;

And thou hast taken Zion to thine own bosom, from all thy creations, from all eternity to all eternity; and naught but peace, justice, and truth is the habitation of thy throne; and mercy shall go before thy face and have no end; how is it thou canst weep?

The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency;

And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood;

And the fire of mine indignation is kindled against them; and in my hot displeasure will I send in the floods upon them, for my fierce anger is kindled against them.

Behold, I am God; Man of Holiness is my name; Man of Counsel is my name; and Endless and Eternal is my name, also.

Wherefore, I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made; and mine eye can pierce them also, and among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren.

But behold, their sins shall be upon the heads of their fathers; Satan shall be their father, and misery shall be their doom; and the whole heavens shall weep over them, even all the workmanship of mine hands; wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer? (Moses 7:28–37)²

But suffer they — and we — surely do. The Hebrew biblical prophet Joel provides a memorable summation of much of human history. Or perhaps one should more accurately describe it as “inhuman history”:

2. For further reflections on this stunning scriptural passage, see Daniel C. Peterson, “On the Motif of the Weeping God in Moses 7,” in Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., *Revelation, Reason, and Faith: Essays in Honor of Truman G. Madsen* (Provo: FARMS, 2002), 285–317, <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?filename=11&article=1066&context=mi&type=additional>.

A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. (Joel 2:3)

Commentators have disagreed about whether the prophet is describing a locust plague, a Babylonian invasion, or apocalyptic events of the last days. In any case, his words accurately depict what is happening in Ukraine as I write, in Mariupol and Kharkiv and other locations, and what has happened far too many times to count throughout history and around the world.

Contemplating such matters reveals the acute urgency of the claims of the gospel. Although they are too often treated as merely matters for online debate and repartee, they far transcend such triviality.

I've long been very fond of the excellent second-tier English poet A. E. Housman (1859–1936), who, along with writing such works as “To an athlete dying young,” from *A Shropshire Lad*, was a prominent classicist at the University of Cambridge. The melancholy mood of many of his poems speaks to me, for some curious reason. I've even made a minor pilgrimage to his grave.

Housman was an atheist, and sometimes a hostile one. But he had moments of deep yearning. One of his poems in particular, entitled “Easter Hymn,” poignantly captures those feelings of longing for a belief that, in the end, he simply couldn't muster. It expresses wonderfully well part of the Christian hope that is invested in the Easter season and, more particularly, in the event that Easter commemorates. But it speaks, too, to the awful situation in which we find ourselves, and in which we have far, far too often found ourselves:

If in that Syrian garden, ages slain,
 You sleep, and know not you are dead in vain,
 Nor even in dreams behold how dark and bright
 Ascends in smoke and fire by day and night
 The hate you died to quench and could but fan,
 Sleep well and see no morning, son of man.

But if, the grave rent and the stone rolled by,
 At the right hand of majesty on high
 You sit, and sitting so remember yet
 Your tears, your agony and bloody sweat,

Your cross and passion and the life you gave,
Bow hither out of heaven and see and save.³

Another passage of scripture that has come to loom large in my mind as I've grown older and as I've seen the wrecks that we as individuals and societies make occurs in the twenty-ninth chapter of the book of Alma. I will confess that, for a surprisingly long time, I actually tended to avoid these two verses, probably because of their setting in a musical piece that, at least when I was in my teens and early twenties, seemed to me to have been overused to the point of triteness and cliché. I no longer feel that way, though. Quite to the contrary, I feel sharply the imperative need for preaching the gospel, not to advance my "team" in some sort of competition but to minimize the kind of suffering that I've observed too frequently over my lifetime:

O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart,
that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with
a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every
people!

Yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with the voice of
thunder, repentance and the plan of redemption, that they
should repent and come unto our God, that there might not
be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth. (Alma 29:1–2)⁴

And when I think of "crying repentance unto every people," I sincerely mean "unto every people." The point is not merely to convert others, important though that is, but to convert ourselves, as well. For, as the great Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn famously reflected in his classic historical account of the crimes of Soviet Communism, *The Gulag Archipelago*,

If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people
somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were

3. A. E. Housman, "Easter Hymn," in *More Poems* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1936). This poem, and others, were published posthumously in *More Poems* by Housman's brother, Laurence Housman.

4. For some brief thoughts on literary technique in this passage, see Daniel C. Peterson, "The Book of Mormon was very carefully written," *Deseret News* (20 June 2013); <https://www.deseret.com/2013/6/20/20521358/the-book-of-mormon-was-very-carefully-written>.

necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them.⁵

Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either — but right through every human heart — and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. And even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained. And even in the best of all hearts, there remains ... an unrooted small corner of evil.⁶

The problem isn't just The Other. The problem can and, to some extent, inevitably does exist among us, too. The Book of Mormon is very instructive here — and not surprisingly, because, as President Ezra Taft Benson reminded us, “it was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us.”⁷

And the Book of Mormon clearly tells us that contention and pride can afflict members of the Church as well as nonmembers. Early in the first century before Christ, for example,

the people of the church began to be lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and to set their hearts upon riches and upon the vain things of the world, that they began to be scornful, one towards another, and they began to persecute those that did not believe according to their own will and pleasure.

And thus, in this eighth year of the reign of the judges, there began to be great contentions among the people of the church; yea, there were envyings, and strife, and malice, and persecutions, and pride, even to exceed the pride of those who did not belong to the church of God.

5. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, Vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), Part I: “The Prison Industry,” Chapter 2: “The History of Our Sewage Disposal System.”

6. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, Vol. 2, Part IV: “The Soul and Barbed Wire,” Chapter 1: “The Ascent.”

7. President Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon — Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign* 16, No. 11 (November 1986), <https://abn.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1986/11/the-book-of-mormon-keystone-of-our-religion>.

And thus ended the eighth year of the reign of the judges; and the wickedness of the church was a great stumbling-block to those who did not belong to the church; and thus the church began to fail in its progress. (Alma 4:8–10)

The Book of Mormon gives us an account of the Nephites prior to the advent of Christ, not an account of the apostate Lamanites. According to its record, “Satan ... did go about spreading rumors and contentions upon all the face of the land, that he might harden the hearts of the people against that which was good” (Helaman 16:22).

On the eve of Christ’s crucifixion in the Old World, the Book of Mormon focuses upon the Nephites, not the Lamanites, when it relates how contention and mutual hatred completely destroyed organized, orderly, civil community:

Now behold, I will show unto you that they did not establish a king over the land; but in this same year, yea, the thirtieth year, they did destroy upon the judgment-seat, yea, did murder the chief judge of the land.

And the people were divided one against another; and they did separate one from another into tribes, every man according to his family and his kindred and friends; and thus they did destroy the government of the land.

And every tribe did appoint a chief or a leader over them; and thus they became tribes and leaders of tribes.

Now behold, there was no man among them save he had much family and many kindreds and friends; therefore their tribes became exceedingly great.

Now all this was done, and there were no wars as yet among them; and all this iniquity had come upon the people because they did yield themselves unto the power of Satan.

And the regulations of the government were destroyed, because of the secret combination of the friends and kindreds of those who murdered the prophets.

And they did cause a great contention in the land, insomuch that the more righteous part of the people had nearly all become wicked; yea, there were but few righteous men among them.

And thus six years had not passed away since the more part of the people had turned from their righteousness, like the dog to his vomit, or like the sow to her wallowing in the mire. (3 Nephi 7:1–8)⁸

Surely, apart from its witness to the divinity and redeeming mission of the Savior Jesus Christ, one of the principal messages of the Book of Mormon is its strong counsel against strife and contention, which is not only implicit in its accounts of the bloody wars of the Jaredites, Nephites, and Lamanites, but fully explicit in numerous verses of the text:

And again, the Lord God hath commanded that men should not murder; that they should not lie; that they should not steal; that they should not take the name of the Lord their God in vain; that they should not envy; that they should not have malice; that they should not contend one with another; that they should not commit whoredoms; and that they should do none of these things; for whoso doeth them shall perish. For none of these iniquities come of the Lord. (2 Nephi 26:32–33a)

And he [Alma the Younger] commanded them that there should be no contention one with another, but that they should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another. And thus he commanded them to preach. And thus they became the children of God. (Mosiah 18:21–22)

Thus did Alma teach his people, that every man should love his neighbor as himself, that there should be no contention among them. (Mosiah 23:15)

Among the very first words spoken by the risen Christ to the Nephites who had assembled at the temple in the land of Bountiful after the catastrophic destruction described in 3 Nephi 8 were these:

For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another;

8. For another illustration of the disastrous consequences of pride within the Church, see Helaman 3:33–34, 36; 4:1.

but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.
(3 Nephi 11:29–30)

The Restoration itself began in a divine response to the prayer of a young boy in the spring of 1820. It was a prayer that, at least in part, sought deliverance from the religious confusion and contention that surrounded him there in the “burned-over district” of central and western New York.⁹ The religious revivals and socio-political reform movements emerging out of the “Second Great Awakening” that swept the area, said some, seemed to set the area ablaze with spiritual fervor. But they also caused fierce contention that was disturbing to a rural farm boy in his early teens, especially because they divided even his own family:

For, notwithstanding the great love which the converts to these different faiths expressed at the time of their conversion, and the great zeal manifested by the respective clergy, who were active in getting up and promoting this extraordinary scene of religious feeling, in order to have everybody converted, as they were pleased to call it, let them join what sect they pleased; yet when the converts began to file off, some to one party and some to another, it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more pretended than real; for a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued — priest contending against priest, and convert against convert; so that all their good feelings one for another, if they ever had any, were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions. (Joseph Smith — History 1:6)

9. The term *burned-over district* was made famous by an article by Whitney R. Cross, “Mormonism in the ‘Burned-Over District,’” *New York History* 25 no. 3 (1944): 326–38. Subsequently, it was adopted by other scholars, including Latter-day Saints such as Milton V. Backman, “Awakenings in the Burned-over District: New Light on the Historical Setting of the First Vision,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1969): 301–20; Lawrence J. Friedman, “The Gerrit Smith circle: Abolitionism in the burned-over district,” *Civil War History* 26, no. 1 (1980): 18–38; Marvin S. Hill, “The Rise of Mormonism in the Burned-over District: Another View,” *New York History* 61, no. 4 (1980): 411–30; Judith Wellman, “Crossing over Cross: Whitney Cross’s Burned-over District as Social History,” *Reviews in American History* 17, no. 1 (1989): 159–74; Monique Patenaude Roach, “The Rescue of William ‘Jerry’ Henry: Antislavery and Racism in the Burned-over District,” *New York History* (2001): 135–54; J. E. Martin, “Saints, Sinners and Reformers: The Burned-over District Re-Visited,” *The Crooked Lake Review*, 137 (Fall 2005).

Even before the founding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, no later than April 1829 and possibly as early as 1828, the Lord declared to Joseph Smith that it was his intent to “establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention; yea, Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine” (D&C 10:63). And, in a revelation given through Brigham Young at Winter Quarters, Nebraska, the Saints were counseled to “cease to contend one with another; cease to speak evil one of another” (D&C 136:23).

The author of Proverbs notes that “only by pride cometh contention” (Proverbs 13:10), which is to say that our fights stem from our pride. “Behold,” the prophet Mormon wrote to his son Moroni near the conclusion of Nephite history, “the pride of this nation, or the people of the Nephites, hath proven their destruction” (Moroni 8:27). “Beware of pride,” the Lord warned the young restored Church on 2 January 1831, “lest ye become as the Nephites of old” (D&C 38:39).

On 11 September 1831, when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was still less than a year and a half old, the Lord again admonished its membership in a revelation given through Joseph Smith to the elders of the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio:

My disciples, in days of old, sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts; and for this evil they were afflicted and sorely chastened.

Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men. (D&C 64:8–10)

We live in a time of often fierce divisions, over politics, over lifestyles, over responses to a pandemic, even over gender identities and preferred pronouns. These are frequently difficult matters, important matters, and positions on them are not uncommonly held and advocated with passion. Of course they merit discussion and debate. Sometimes, though, they sow division, even within the Church and among the Saints. And this should not be.

On 12 November 2021, President Dallin H. Oaks delivered a notable lecture at the University of Virginia in which, as he put it, he spoke both “as a religious person who has served in government at both federal and

state levels and now as a leader in the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” “I am,” he said,

distressed at the way we are handling the national issues that divide us. We have always had to work through serious political conflicts, but today too many approach that task as if their preferred outcome must entirely prevail over all others, even in our pluralistic society. We need to work for a better way — a way to resolve differences without compromising core values. We need to live together in peace and mutual respect, within our defined constitutional rights.¹⁰

President Oaks was plainly speaking as an American to an American audience in an American legal and political context. But the factionalism that currently afflicts the United States of America isn’t limited to one country, and the gospel’s condemnation of rancor and contention applies to Latter-day Saints (and others) everywhere, and not only to political disputes.

In a revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet at Kirtland, Ohio, between 27 December 1832 and 3 January 1833 that he himself described as an “olive leaf” ... plucked from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord’s message of peace to us,” the Lord tells us how we are to comport ourselves, even in disagreement: “Above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace” (D&C 88:125). “Blessed are the peacemakers,” said Jesus both as a mortal to the Jews and as a resurrected immortal to the Nephites, “for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9; 3 Nephi 12:9).

How should we go about doing this? In particular, how should we go about being peacemakers in the specific context here of advocating, commending, and defending the claims of the Restoration? Elder Neil L. Andersen, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, offers some helpful counsel:

How does a peacemaker calm and cool the fiery darts?
Certainly not by shrinking before those who disparage us.
Rather, we remain confident in our faith, sharing our beliefs
with conviction but always void of anger or malice.

10. Dallin H. Oaks, “Going Forward with Religious Freedom and Nondiscrimination,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (2022), 117, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/article/going-forward-with-religious-freedom-and-nondiscrimination/>.

Recently, after seeing a strongly worded opinion piece that was critical of the Church, Reverend Amos C. Brown, a national civil rights leader and pastor of the Third Baptist Church in San Francisco, responded:

“I respect the experience and perspective of the individual who wrote those words. Granted, I don’t see what he sees.”

“I count it one of my life’s greatest joys to know these leaders [of the Church], including President Russell M. Nelson. They are, in my estimation, the embodiment of the best leadership our country has to offer.”

He then added: “We can gripe about the way things were. We can refuse to acknowledge all the good going on now But these approaches will not heal our national divisions As Jesus taught, we don’t eradicate evil with more evil. We love generously and live mercifully, even toward those we think to be our enemies.”

Reverend Brown is a peacemaker. He calmly and respectfully cooled the fiery darts. Peacemakers are not passive; they are persuasive in the Savior’s way.¹¹

“None of us,” said President Russell M. Nelson at the April 2022 general conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

can control nations or the actions of others or even members of our own families. But we can control ourselves. My call ... is to end conflicts that are raging in *your* heart, *your* home, and *your* life It can be painfully difficult to let go of anger that feels so justified. It can seem impossible to forgive those whose destructive actions have hurt the innocent. And yet, the Savior admonished us to “forgive all men.”

We are followers of the Prince of Peace. Now more than ever, we need the peace only He can bring I know what I’m suggesting is not easy ... I plead with you to do all you can to end *personal* conflicts that are currently raging in your hearts and in your lives.¹²

11. Elder Neil L. Andersen, “Following Jesus: Being a Peacemaker,” *Liahona* 46, no. 5 (May 2022), 18, <https://abn.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2022/05/15andersen>.

12. President Russell M. Nelson, “The Power of Spiritual Momentum,” *Liahona* 46, no. 5 (May 2022), 97, <https://abn.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/>

Here at the Interpreter Foundation, we seek to comment upon, advocate, defend, and commend the scriptures, doctrines, and claims of the Restoration. We do so strongly, and with commitment. Sometimes even (or so we imagine!) with wit. We don't back down from what we're convinced is true, good, and beautiful. But we also try to do what we do honestly, calmly, and with charity. Without cruelty or anger or malice. We would have little claim to be disciples of the Savior if we didn't make a serious effort to behave as he has asked us to behave.

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