

## MY NOTE ON THE GRAVESTONE

During the summer of 2003, I was in Michigan, USA, researching my great-great-uncle Robert Hall. At the end of my trip, I revisited a cemetery I had been to 20 years earlier.

When I had visited the cemetery before, I noticed flowers on one of the headstones with the last name Hall. This time I wrote a note, dated it, and laminated it to protect it from the weather. Then I prayerfully left the note at the headstone, hoping that someone who could help me learn more about Robert Hall would find it. I returned home to California

hopeful but skeptical that anything would come of this note.

A week later I received a letter from a distant cousin named Deke Bentley.

“Yesterday I had a strange experience,” he wrote. “At 3:00 p.m. I was headed to buy strawberries when I decided to stop by the Plains Road Cemetery to check out my ancestors’ graves. I had not been there for several years. Next to the graves was your postcard.”

Deke had gone to the cemetery the same day I had left the note. I called him immediately. During our

conversation I found out that he lived in Hillsdale, more than 50 miles (80 km) from the cemetery.

A few months later I eagerly returned to Michigan to visit Deke. He told me he had relatives buried in the cemetery directly across from his home, and he asked if I would like to go there. He told me that the cemetery had four gravestones of Halls, two that he knew nothing about.

At the cemetery, Deke showed me the gravestones. The two he didn’t know about belonged to Martin and Anna Hall. I hadn’t brought my records, but I distinctly remembered having researched a Martin Hall.

We rushed to the county courthouse an hour before it closed, hoping a death record would identify Martin’s parents. It did! Martin’s father was Robert Hall! The Holy Ghost confirmed to me that my long search had ended.

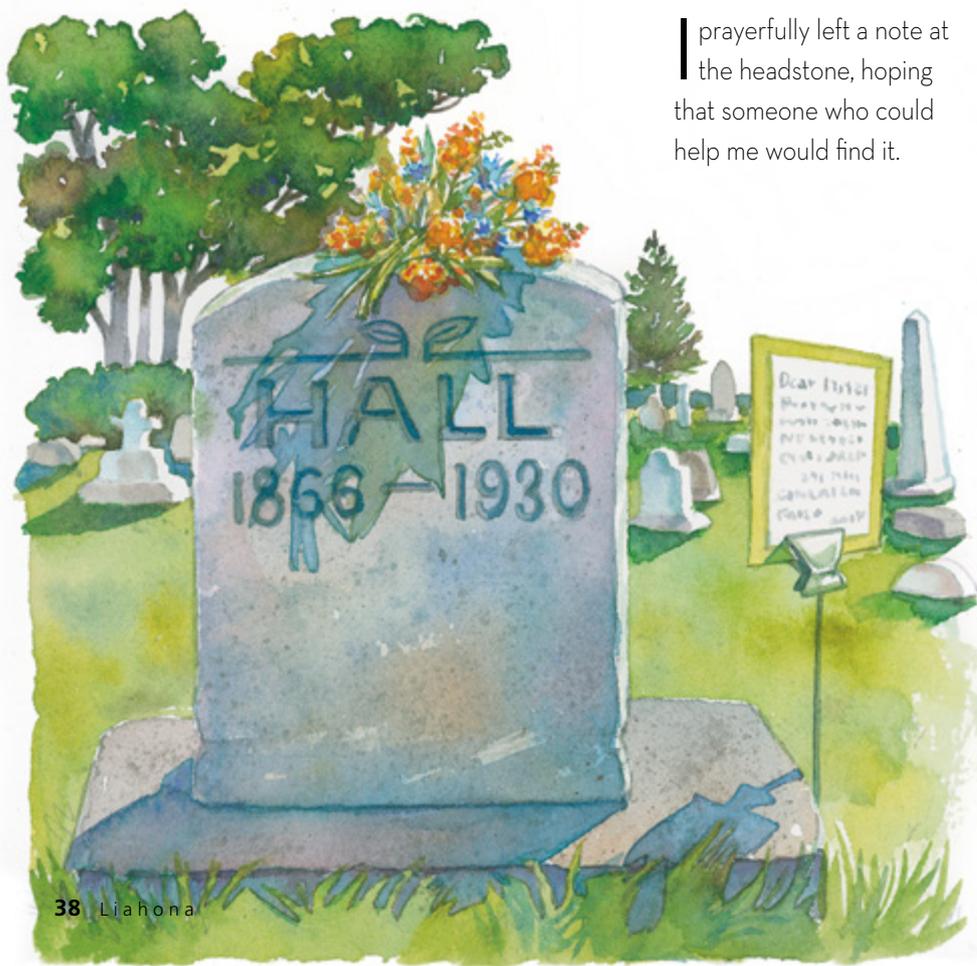
Deke, not a member of the Church, said finding Robert Hall seemed “almost spiritual.” I smiled, knowing that the Spirit had led me.

“You may have been disappointed that you didn’t leave your note 20 years ago,” Deke said, “but the fact is that I moved to Hillsdale just three years ago!”

This experience was a lesson to me that family history is indeed part of God’s work and that He leads us in our righteous efforts. ■

Marianne Chaplin Stovall, California, USA

I prayerfully left a note at the headstone, hoping that someone who could help me would find it.



## WILL THE LORD HEAL OUR SON?

When our son was four years old, he would frequently ask me to sing “Master, the Tempest Is Raging” (*Hymns*, no. 105). His little eyes would shine during the chorus when the Lord commands the winds and the waves to be still. He would ask me about Jesus’s power. I would answer that Jesus can do anything in righteousness because He has all power. The Savior was our son’s hero.

But when our son was 13 years old, he went into a deep depression. He no longer had any desire to speak or even to eat. He lost interest in his former activities, and he especially did not want to participate in family prayers or family home evenings. He seemed to no longer have an interest in church or the gospel.

The rest of our family prayed and fasted often for him, as did many brothers and sisters from our ward and stake and many of our friends and relatives. Our efforts felt like Alma the Elder’s experience of praying for his son (see Mosiah 27:14, 22–23).

We did not want to force the gospel on our son, so we told him that he did not have to participate in our family prayers or family home evenings but that we would like him to be there with us. As we followed the Savior’s words to “pray in your families unto the Father . . . that your . . . children may be blessed” (3 Nephi 18:21), both our family prayers and our family home evenings became more powerful. We

felt the Spirit in our home. And though our son was silent, he was there.

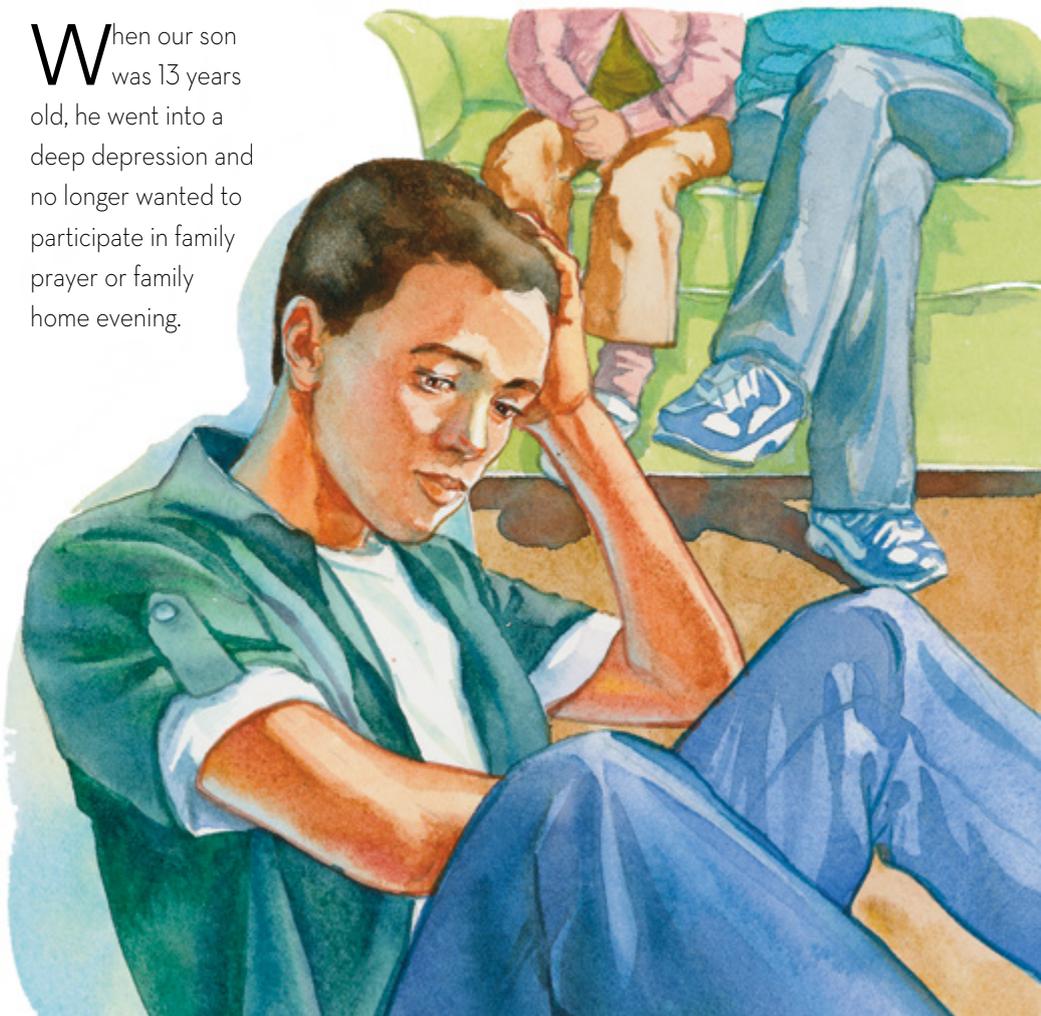
Little by little over the next two years, we saw that our prayers and family home evenings were having an influence on our son. During one family home evening, he bore testimony of the Savior and then asked if he could prepare a family home evening. He began to participate in family prayers and to attend church happily. He experienced a mighty change of heart that came as he felt the redeeming love of the Savior (see Alma 5:26). The Lord, with His healing power, had truly saved our son.

When our son was 13 years old, he went into a deep depression and no longer wanted to participate in family prayer or family home evening.

He began to be happy and full of life once again, willing to help others and to show love. He told me he knew the Savior had healed him. Our son’s trials helped him forge a powerful testimony and an increase in love for and trust in the Savior. He served the Lord as a missionary in the Argentina Buenos Aires South Mission. After his return he married in the temple, and he and his wife have a wonderful daughter.

I know that the Savior has the power to heal, to work miracles, and to make us happy in this life and in the life to come. ■

Ana Cremaschi Zañartu, Santiago, Chile



## ARE YOU A MORMON?

I was far from home attending an international conference for my job. Hundreds of people attended, but I was the only one from my state and region.

One evening a dinner was hosted for all the attendees. As we entered the dining hall, each of us received four tickets to use at the bar to order free alcoholic beverages. It occurred to me how easy it would be for someone far from home to be tempted by such an opportunity, thinking that no one would ever know. It was a fleeting thought, and I handed the tickets back to the person at the door.

During dinner I sat with seven strangers. I drank water as we ate, talked, laughed, and exchanged information that would help us in our employment.

The next morning at breakfast I greeted a gentleman who had been seated at my table. I was excited to notice by his name tag that he was from my hometown—a town I had not lived in for 35 years. After high school I had left home for college, married, and moved away.

As we discussed places and community events we both knew, he asked me if I still had family there. I replied that I did not but that I had many good friends there and that we kept in touch. He asked who they were, and I began to name some of them.

After the first few names he stopped me and said, “Wait, are you a Mormon? All the people you have named are Mormons.”

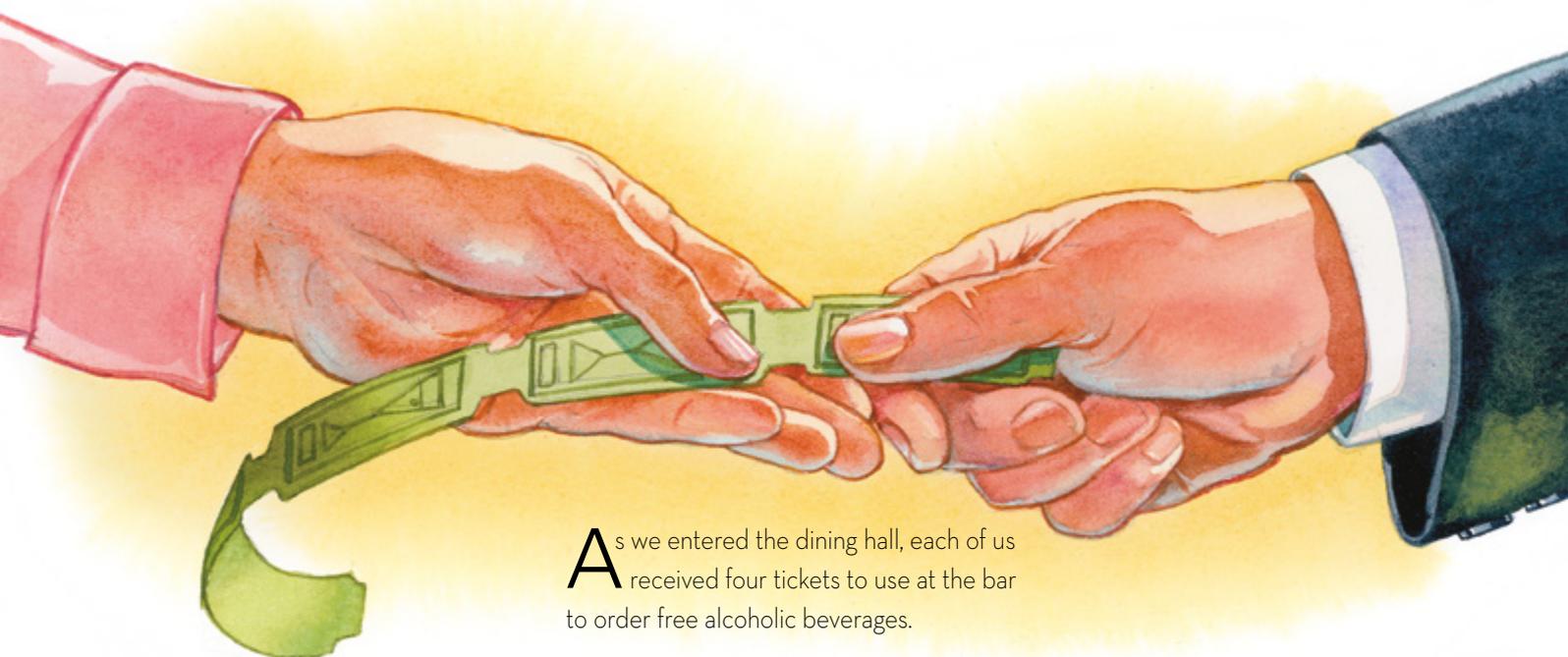
When I acknowledged that I was a

Latter-day Saint, he told me what fine citizens those friends were and how they had served the community and been good examples to all. For several minutes he shared his admiration for the Church and my friends, telling me how they had been advocates for good in the community.

As we parted, I could not help but think what might have happened had I chosen to use those drink tickets. I had been taught to choose the right by those very people we spoke of. I would have been uncomfortable and ashamed to admit that I was a member of the Church had I used the tickets.

How grateful I am for the example of those worthy, active, serving friends—35 years later and 2,000 miles (3,220 km) away from the home of my youth. ■

Carol A. Bowes, North Carolina, USA



As we entered the dining hall, each of us received four tickets to use at the bar to order free alcoholic beverages.

# THE PROPHET ANSWERED MY PRAYER

At the end of my second year I applied to my university's graphic design program. I wasn't accepted, but I was eligible to reapply the following year. I wasn't thrilled about waiting another year to graduate.

The closest thing to my chosen major was photography. So I prayed about changing my major and felt good about it. I just wanted to get my degree!

At the start of the fall semester, I had classes on film and on the social history of photography. I was excited about both. But as I looked over the syllabus of my film class, I noticed that students would be required to watch many R-rated movies. In my photography class the teacher stated that the pictures we would be studying would be violent, disturbing, and sexual. She said that was what photography was mostly about these days.

My heart sank as I contemplated what to do. I knew that the gospel taught against such things, but these classes were required. I thought of the scripture about being in the world but not of the world (see John 15:19). Could I be in these classes but not of them?

I prayed to know what to do and to have the faith to do what was right. I also counseled with my wife, parents, and brother. As I spoke with my brother, he reminded me of the following verse: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange

for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

I knew that education is important, but was I in the wrong field? How could I drop out of school temporarily when the light at the end of the tunnel was so close?

Late one night while I was up with our sick baby, the thought came to me to look up President Thomas S. Monson on the Internet. Soon I was watching a general conference talk President Monson had delivered in October 2011. I listened intently as he talked about the deterioration of society's moral compass, saying that inappropriate and immoral behavior had become acceptable by many.

Then he said exactly what I needed to hear: "We must be vigilant in a world which has moved so far from

Late one night while I was up with our sick baby, the thought came to me to look up President Thomas S. Monson on the Internet.

that which is spiritual. It is essential that we reject anything that does not conform to our standards, refusing in the process to surrender that which we desire most: eternal life in the kingdom of God."<sup>1</sup>

These words pierced me with great power. As tears ran down my face, I knew that a living prophet had answered my prayer.

Although I have postponed my plans for graduation, I know that the Lord will bless my family and me as we follow the prophet, reject the views of the world, obey the commandments, and support gospel standards. ■

Derrick Fields, Missouri, USA

## NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, "Stand in Holy Places," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 83.

