

THE MEANING OF THE ATONEMENT*

The Good News. The last talk, on the Terrible Questions, leads us directly and unerringly to the subject of the Atonement. For the Atonement is nothing less than the answer to the Terrible Question: "Is this all there is?" If you are a saint, you know that this is a wicked world; if you are the most cynical and worldly unbeliever, you still know by experience that it is a vicious one. It seems that everything we want here is either destructive or trivial. I am going to bypass the tempting list of quotations on the subject--Shakespeare, Sophocles, Matthew Arnold, William James, etc.--and turn directly to the scriptures, where Peter is not philosophizing or theologizing, but stating the facts of life: "Go about (anastrophete, conduct yourselves) in fear during your transient stay (paroikias chronon), knowing that perishables like silver and gold cannot free you from the futile way of life of your fathers" (1 Peter 1:17-18). Thus he concludes his comment: "For all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as wild flowers; the grass withers and the flowers crumble. But the word of the Lord endures forever" (1 Peter 1:24-25). Between these two statements of the problem Peter gives us another choice; there is an order of things which goes back "before the foundation of the world," and is now emerging again to our advantage--"manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:20). It is the carrying out of the Atonement for which the law of Moses was a preparation.

Jacob, in the Book of Mormon, goes right to the point. The problem is "that our flesh must waste away and die, . . . death hath passed upon all men" (2 Nephi 9:4, 6), and without the resurrection entropy--the good old Second Law of Thermodynamics¹--must take over, "and if so, this flesh must have

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laid down to rot and to crumble to its mother earth, to rise no more" (2 Nephi 9:7). That is entropy, and what is to stop it? Jacob grasps the situation, "There must needs be a power," he says, "of resurrection," and such a power has indeed been provided, "to fulfil the merciful plan of the great Creator" (2 Nephi 9:6). What a comfort to know that things are under control after all. The Fall has put us into a state of corruption in which it would be disastrous to remain if man should "put forth his hand and partake also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever [in his sins]" (Moses 4:28). Nobody wants to live forever in a sewer, yet according to Shakespeare even that is preferable to the alternative: "The weariest and most loathed worldly life that age, ache, penury, and imprisonment can lay on nature is a paradise to what we fear of death."²

But it doesn't have to be that way. That is just the point. The Atonement makes available the only kind of lasting life worth having. The great Christian tract on the Atonement, Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, begins with an exhilarating prospect: "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds [note the plural]. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:1-3).

The Word and the Deed. People are usually surprised to learn that atonement, an accepted theological term, is neither from a Greek nor a Latin word, but is good old English and really does mean, when we write it out, at-one-ment, denoting both a state of being "at one" with another and the process by which that end is achieved. The word atonement appears only once in the New Testament (Romans 5:11 in the King James Version), and in the Revised Standard Version it does not appear at all, since the new translation prefers the more familiar word "reconciliation."

Paul has just told us that the Lord "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High," so reconciliation is a very good word for atonement there, since it means literally to be seated again with someone (re-con-silio)--so that atonement is to be reunited with God.

The Greek word translated as "reconciliation" is katallagein. That is a business term which the Greek-English Lexicon tells us means "exchange, esp. of money; . . . change from enmity to friendship, reconciliation; . . . reconciliation of sinners with God."³ It is the return to the status ante quo whether as a making of peace or a settlement of debt. The monetary metaphor is by far the commonest, being the simplest and easiest to understand. Hence frequently, the word "redemption" literally means to buy back, i.e., to reacquire something you owned previously. Thus Moses: "But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh" (Deuteronomy 7:8). Redemption, or atonement, restores one to a former, happier condition. "And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemest to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?" (2 Samuel 7:23).

By redemption, someone has paid a price to get you off, but the frequent use of the commercial analogy is not out of reverence for trade and commerce but the opposite. The redeemed are bought to clear them of all worldly obligation by paying off the world in its own currency, after which it has no further claim on the redeemed: "And the child of eight days shall be circumcised for you, every male through your generations, born of a house or a purchase of silver of any outsider who is not of thy seed. He must certainly be circumcised, born of your house, or bought with your silver; and it shall be my covenant in [among or

with] thy flesh for an everlasting covenant" (Genesis 17:12-13). All the newborn are taken into the family, which is united by an eternal covenant by the token shedding of blood (circumcision) to become the seed of Abraham--this is a real at-one-ment. The Greek equivalent is lutrosis, a ransoming. Paul tells the saints to prepare for the salvation that has been made available by disengaging from this world--"denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"--so that God "might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people" (Titus 2:12, 14). Salvation is likewise rescue (soteria), also rendered deliverance. Another expression is "for a price," the word being time, "that which is paid in token or worth of value." He paid for us what he thought we were worth so he could join us with him. In his letter to the Ephesians, the proposition reads like a business agreement, not binding but releasing: "In whom we have bail (apolutrosin--our release pending the judgment) through his blood, the pardoning (aphesin, setting-aside) of misdemeanors (paraptomaton, blunder, trespass) on consideration of the money (ploutos) of his generosity (charitos), which on our behalf has exceeded in all wisdom and wisdom and understanding (phronesei) (Ephesians 1:7-8). Next Paul tells us that it was all the Savior's idea, "that in the economy (oikonomia) of the fullness of times the whole thing might be brought together again in Christ (anakephalaiosasthai)--things in the heavens and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:9-10). A great at-one-ment indeed! Meanwhile Paul counsels the saints, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption (bought free, apolutroseos)," and to be united in love, "forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:30, 32). So when the scriptures speak of atonement it is always re-conciliation, re-demption, re-surrection, re-lease, salvation, etc. All refer to a return to a former state. This is even more vividly and concretely expressed in the Hebrew terminology.

In Semitic languages where one root can have many meanings, the first rule is always to look for the basic or literal meaning of the word, which in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic usually takes us back to early days and simple homely affairs of life in the desert or the countryside. One simple physical act often triggers a long line of derivatives, meanings which are perfectly reasonable if one takes the most obvious steps from one to the next, but which can end up miles from the starting place. The basic word for atonement is kaphar, which has the same basic meaning in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic, that being "to bend, arch over, cover; 2) [to pass over with one's palm &c., to wipe out, rub] . . . to deny, . . . to forgive, . . . to be expiated, . . . renounce."⁴ The Arabic kafara puts the emphasis on a tight squeeze, such as tucking in the skirts, drawing a thing close to one's self. Closely related are Aramaic⁵ and Arabic kafat,⁶ meaning a close embrace, which are certainly related to the Egyptian hēpet,⁷ the common ritual embrace written with the ideogram of embracing arms. It may be cognate with the Latin capto,⁸ and from it comes the Persian kaftan,⁹ a monk's robe and hood completely embracing the body. Most interesting is the Arabic kafata,¹⁰ as it is the key to a dramatic situation.

It was the custom for one fleeing for his life in the desert to seek protection in the tent of a great sheik, crying out, "Ana dakhiluka," meaning "I am thy suppliant," whereupon the Lord would place the hem of his robe over the guest's shoulder and declare him under his protection. In the Book of Mormon we see this world as a plain, a dark and dreary waste, a desert. We see Nephi fleeing from an evil thing that is pursuing him. In great danger, he prays the Lord to give him an open road in the low way, to block his pursuers, and to make them stumble. He comes to the tent of the Lord and enters as a suppliant; and in reply, the Master, as was the ancient custom, puts the hem of his robe protectively over the kneeling man's shoulder (katafa). This puts him under the Lord's protection from all enemies. They embrace in a close hug, as Arab chiefs still do; the Lord makes a

place for him and invites him to sit down beside him--they are at-one (2 Nephi 4:33; Alma 5:24).

This is the imagery of the Atonement, the embrace: "The Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love" (2 Nephi 1:15). "O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness! O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies!" (2 Nephi 4:33). "Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he sayeth: Repent, and I will receive you" (Alma 5:33).

This is the hēpet, the ritual embrace that consummates the final escape from death in the Egyptian funerary texts and reliefs, where the son Horus is received into the arms of his father Osiris. There is a story confirmed by the recently discovered Apocryphon of John in which Jesus and John the Baptist meet as little children, rush into each others arms and fuse into one person, becoming perfectly "at-one."¹¹

In Israel when the sacrifices and sin offerings were completed on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest went to the door of the kapporeth to receive assurance from the Lord within that he had accepted the offerings and repentance of the people and forgiven them their sins: "At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee" (Exodus 29:42). The kapporeth is usually assumed to be the lid of the Ark, yet it fits much better with the front, since one stands before it.¹² The Septuagint, a much older text, tells us more: I will meet you at the "door of the tent of the testimony in the presence of the Lord, on which occasion I shall make myself known to you that I might converse with you" (Exodus 29:42).

We get the situation in Luke when Zacharias, a direct descendent of Aaron (as was also his wife), entered behind the veil into the Holy of Holies (naon tou kuriou, the skene or tent of the Old Testament) while people waited on the outside (Luke

1:9-10). He did not meet the Lord but his personal representative, a messenger of the Lord standing beside the altar (Luke 1:11), who identified himself as "Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, sent down to converse with thee and to tell thee the good news" (Luke 1:19). The news was about a great at-one-ment about to take place in which the children would "turn to the Lord their God" while the hearts of the fathers would be "turned again (epistrepsai) to the children, the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:16-17). It is all a preparation for a great bringing together again through the office of baptism after they had been separated by the Fall. "I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation and . . . Aaron and his sons, . . . and I will dwell among the children of Israel, and be their God" (Exodus 29:44-45). They will all be one happy family forever. It is understandable that the kapporeth should be called the mercy seat, where man is reconciled at-one with God on the Day of Atonement: "And after the second veil, the tabernacle [succoth, booth, tent] which is called the Holiest . . . [contained] the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly." Thus Paul to the Hebrews (Hebrews 9:3, 5).

Commenting on the ancient synagogue at Beth Alpha in Palestine, Goodenough notes, "The scene as designed shows the curtains drawn back at either side to disclose the objects behind them." The custom has persisted: "In a synagogue the Torah shrine is still properly concealed by a curtain, but these curtains in the mosaic are not especially connected with the shrine: they serve when drawn to open up a whole stage, a whole world. . . . So the curtains have taken the place of the old carved screen which seems to us to separate the world of man from heaven. . . . Only the few were allowed to penetrate to the adyton behind. . . . The sense of distinction between the earthly and heavenly [was] still kept." Even more important than the idea that the veil introduces us into another realm is that

"the curtains have also the value of suggesting the curtain in the Temple which separated the sanctuary from the world of ordinary life."¹³

And where does the Atonement motif come in? In a stock presentation found in early Jewish synagogues as well as on very early Christian murals, "the hand of God is represented, but could not be called that explicitly, and instead of the heavenly utterance, the bath kol [echo, distant voice, whisper] is given."¹⁴ From the hand "radiate[s] beams of light."¹⁵ "To show the hand and light thus emerging from central darkness," writes Goodenough, "is as near as one could come in conservative Judaism to depicting God himself."¹⁶ In early Christian representations the hand of God reaching through the veil is grasped by the initiate or human spirit who is being caught up into the presence of the Lord.¹⁷

Philo of Alexandria, who for all his philosophizing had a thorough knowledge of Jewish customs, compares all the hangings of the tabernacle with the main veil: "But in a sense the curtains also are veils, not only because they cover the roof and walls but also because they are woven of the same kinds of material. . . . And what [Moses] calls the 'covering' [kalumma] was also made with the same materials as the veil, . . . placed . . . so that no unconsecrated person should get even a distant view of the holy precincts."¹⁸ The material makes it the cosmic veil, the four colors being "equal in number to the elements . . . out of which the earth was made, and with a definite relation to those elements. . . . For it was necessary that in framing the temple of man's making, dedicated to the Father and Ruler of All, he should take substances like those with which that Ruler made the All. The tabernacle, then, was constructed to resemble a sacred temple in the way described."¹⁹

Ordinances. This yearly rite of atonement included the teshuvah, a "return to God, repentance."²⁰ The prophets repeatedly invite Israel to return to God, who is waiting with open arms to receive them if only they will repent (Jeremiah

3:14; Leviticus 16:30). They not only return and are welcomed in but they also sit down, and that is the yeshivah, "1) sitting, rest, 2) settlement, dwelling, . . . 3) . . . session, council, . . . court;"²¹ the meanings all combine in the Yeshivah shel ma lah or Metivta de-Raki a ("The Academy on High" or "Academy of the Sky," respectively): "Heaven (where the angels and the souls of the righteous are believed to dwell), a place of divine justice to which all will be summoned";²² the root yashav has the basic meaning of sitting or settling down to live in a place, yashub "seated, . . . [a] sitting."²³ You have a place because you have returned home.

All this we find in the Book of Mormon. Along with the embrace already mentioned, we find the formula "have place" used in exactly the same sense (Alma 5:25; cf. Mosiah 26:23-24, "a place at my right hand"; Enos 1:27, "there is a place prepared for you, in the mansions of my father," etc.). Thus Nephi promises Zoram that if he goes down to his father's tent, "if thou wilt go down into the wilderness to my father, thou shalt have place with us" (1 Nephi 4:34). This is the metaphor that Alma uses, combining the yashuv and yeshivah in proper order: "Do ye suppose that such an one can have a place to sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and also all the holy prophets, whose garments are cleansed and are spotless, pure and white?" (Alma 5:24). Need we recall that it was on the Day of Atonement that the priest entered the tent and that the people's garments were all made white by the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb? Alma continues, "Ye cannot suppose that such can have place in the kingdom of heaven" (Alma 5:25), and in the next verse he adds a most significant thing: "And now behold, I say unto you, my brethren, if ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?" (Alma 5:26). In the next verse he asks again if their garments "have been cleansed and made white through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins?" (Alma 5:27).

The Song of Redeeming Love. Of particular interest here is the song of redeeming love, which we hear resounding in the oldest known synagogue. It is the ruin of Dura Europos, discovered in 1932 and well preserved by the sands since its destruction in A.D. 256. The focal point of the assembly hall was the niche thought to contain the Torah Roll, i.e., the synagogue equivalent of the Holy of Holies. Immediately above the niche was painted "a great tree, rising nearly to the ceiling, . . . without grapes (and thus called a 'tree-vine')." According to the Jewish scholars "the tree led to the great throne above" under the high ceiling. On the panel immediately above the niche on one side of the tree trunk is depicted the sacrifice of Isaac, the akedah for the Day of Atonement. On the other side we see "Jacob . . . blessing his twelve sons." Some lions had been painted over to accommodate this picture. Another panel shows Jacob "bless[ing] Ephraim and Manasseh in the presence of Joseph."²⁴

Along with the Old Testament figures we see felines and masks of Dionysus and fertility symbols of Demeter.²⁵ In the midst of the tree are mingled various birds and animals, and there above them sits Orpheus playing his harp. His music brings all things into love and harmony, and Jewish scholars suggest that here he may represent David, "who saved Israel through his music."²⁶ Music is certainly the theme. Every figure in the elaborate display is facing the viewer full-face, and they seem to have their mouths open as if they are all singing together. The Orphic motifs are found in other synagogues as well.²⁷ But how does this pagan theme relate to the Day of Atonement? The connection is found in the New Testament word for the kapporeth, or mercy seat of the Day of Atonement. In the Greek, both of the Old Testament (Septuagint) and the New, the kapporeth is called the hilasterion, literally the place of the hilaria. Hilaria is the same word in Greek and Latin, from which we get our hilarious. Hilasterion is the word used by Paul for "atonement" in his address to the Romans (Romans 3:25), since the Romans

would understand it. The Roman writer Macrobius tells us that the hilaria was held at the Spring Equinox to celebrate the revival of life with the new vegetation year. The Mater Dea and Attis preside, he says, the very figures we find at Dura as Dionysus and Demeter, and the latter is drawn by her lions.²⁸ Another Roman tells us that on that occasion Orpheus was regarded as the king of the primum regnum, the primal god and creator.²⁹

The hilaria was the occasion on which all the world joined in the great creation hymn, as they burst into a spontaneous song of praise recalling the first creation "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). That song of creation has left its mark throughout the literature of the ancient world.³⁰

The mingling of pagan with Jewish and Christian symbols in the early art of the synagogue and the church (Marucci's Manual) was long discounted as "purely decorative," an explanation which was soon discredited by the evidence.³¹ As Goodenough sees it, "Dura presented its Old Testament scenes clustered about a great vine over the Torah shrine, a vine in which Orpheus played his lyre to the animals, while numerous other pagan symbols appeared in various parts of the room. The two, the pagan symbols and the Old Testament illustrations, could not be separated."³²

The Apostolic Constitutions, one of the earliest Christian writings, mingles early Jewish and Christian formulas with strong predominance of the former. Here the bishop leads the congregation in the litany, praising the "Creator and Savior, rich in love, long-suffering; who leads the chorus of mercy; always mindful of the salvation of thy creatures. . . . The rolling sea . . . sustaining countless forms of life . . . instructs all thy creatures to shout: 'How exalted are thy works, O Lord!' All things hast thou created in wisdom, . . . the holy Seraphin along with the Cherubim; . . . with unwearied voices cry, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts." It is the old Hebrew trishagion, found in Isaiah 6:3, as all Israel and the Church unite their voices, "and the power below heaven sing," as

the stars join in "this Hymn of the cosmos to God's bounty and love."³³ "Israel thy earthly church, . . . gather together in one [hamillomene] by the powers under heaven by day and night with a full heart and willing spirit sings the hymn." The four elements join in, "The creatures praise Him who gave them the breath of life, and the trees Him who caused them to spring up. Whatsoever things exist by thy word testify to the might of thy power. Hence it behooves every man to feel in his heart to send up a song to thee through Christ for the sake of all; for thou art kind in thy benefactions and generous in thy compassion."³⁴ As Alma puts it: "My brethren, . . . if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?" (Alma 5:26). And John tells us that "they sung as it were a new song before the throne, . . . and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth" (Revelation 14:3). The theme was renewal and liberation, which was also the theme of the hilaria at the time of the Saturnalia. The 144,000 are another striking example of at-one-ment.

Temple and Atonement. The word atonement appears only once in the New Testament, but 127 times in the Old Testament. The reason for this is apparent when we note that of the 127 times, all but five occur in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, where they explicitly describe the original rites of the tabernacle or temple on the Day of Atonement; moreover the sole appearance of the word in the New Testament is in the epistle to the Hebrews, explaining how those very rites are to be interpreted since the coming of Christ. In the other Standard Works of the Church, atonement (also atone, atoned, atoneth, atoning) appears 44 times, but only three times in the Doctrine and Covenants, and twice in the Pearl of Great Price. The other 39 times are all in the Book of Mormon. This puts the Book of Mormon in the milieu of the old Hebrew rites before the destruction of Solomon's Temple, for after that the Ark and the covering (kapporeth) no longer existed, but the Holy of Holies

was still called the bait ha-kapporeth. The loss of the old ceremonies occurred shortly after Lehi left Jerusalem. "As long as the Temple stood," we read in the Talmud, "the altar atoned for Israel, but now a man's table atones for him."³⁵ Thus the ordinances of atonement were, after Lehi's day, supplanted by allegory. Let us recall that Lehi and his people who left Jerusalem in the very last days of Solomon's temple were zealous in erecting altars of sacrifice and building temples of their own. It has often been claimed that the Book of Mormon cannot contain the "fullness of the gospel," since it does not have temple ordinances. As a matter of fact they are everywhere in the book if we know where to look for them, and the dozen or so discourses on the Atonement in the Book of Mormon are replete with temple imagery.

From all the meanings of kaphar and kippurim, we concluded that the literal meaning of kaphar and kippurim is a close and intimate embrace, which took place at the kapporeth or the front cover or flap of the tabernacle or tent. The Book of Mormon instances are quite clear, i.e., "Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you" (Alma 5:33). "But behold, the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love" (2 Nephi 1:15). To be redeemed is to be atoned. From this it should be clear what kind of oneness is meant by the Atonement--it is being received in a close embrace of the prodigal son, expressing not only forgiveness but oneness of heart and mind that amounts to identity, like a literal family identity as John sets it forth so vividly in chapters 14 through 17 of his Gospel (see below).

Borrowed Ordinances. Mention of the Egyptian endowment raises the question of whether the Hebrew rites are original. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries wide-ranging comparative studies in philology and religion made it look as if the Hebrew ceremonies of atonement were just one among many rites

found throughout the ancient world by which societies, primitive or civilized, would practice purification and expiation, individual and collective, to enter the New Year with a clean slate, their collective and individual sins having been transferred to and carried by a pharmakon, scape-goat, rex saturnalicus, Lord of Misrule, Year-King, etc.³⁶ Some of these are attested in pre-Hebraic times, and it was assumed that the Mosaic rites were not original but derivative. It must be admitted that other societies seem to share the tradition; the most notable is the grasp of the situation by the Greek dramatists, whose plays in fact were religious presentations, the main theme of the tragedies being the purging of guilt. No one ever stated the problem of man's condition more clearly than the great Greek dramatists. They show us what life is without the Atonement, for their view of life, like that of all the ancients, is a profoundly tragic one.

The standard tragedy begins with something gone very wrong in the city. After all, that is the way the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants also begin--in the one case, that "great city Jerusalem [about to] be destroyed" (1 Nephi 1:4); in the other, "peace [is about to] be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion" (D&C 1:35). Things are not as they should be in the world; nothing short of immediate destruction is in the offing. Someone must be responsible. Why? Because things don't just happen; appeal must be made to the oracle. Long before Aeschylus' The Suppliant Maidens (the earliest Greek tragedy), we find the same dramatic scene as Moses stands before the people and cries out, "Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin" (Exodus 32:30). For they had turned to the golden calf and were smitten with the plague.

But who is guilty? Not just one person, certainly; society makes us what we are and do, at least in part. Should all the society be punished, then? How do we apportion the blame when

all share in it? We cannot. The law of Moses insists with great strictness that every individual man, woman, and child, rich and poor, shall pay "ransom for his soul" of exactly the same amount--one-half shekel, no more, no less (see Exodus 30:11-16). Just as sweeping is the other provision that God "commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent" (3 Nephi 11:32) and to keep repenting as long as our days are extended for that express purpose. We are all in it together.

To satisfy both offended justice and offended deity, something must be done. Appeasement, payment, settlement--call it what you will--it must restore the old unity of the heavenly and the human order, it must bring about at-one-ment of the two. And what payment or sacrifice is sufficient to do that? The usual practice throughout the ancient world was to sacrifice the king, who after all took credit for victory and prosperity and was answerable when they failed.³⁷ This is the Egyptian theme on which the Book of Abraham starts out, but the Egyptians had no word for sin; even the Hebrew word khata properly means "to fail or miss, not to hit the mark," exactly like the Greek hamartanein (Genesis 20:6). The Egyptian idea of atonement appears in the regulation that if Pharaoh has knowingly or unknowingly taken life by the shedding of blood he must atone for it (entsühnen) by making a sacrifice, "by which sacrifice he is purified of the Serpent which has defiled him before the Gods."³⁸ That is a long way from the Hebrew atonement.

As to the resemblances that have beguiled the scholars, one hundred years ago Joseph F. Smith gave the most rational and still the most acceptable explanation for them, since Frazer's theory of spontaneous generation of parallel rituals is now widely discredited. To quote President Smith: "Undoubtedly the knowledge of this law and of other rites and ceremonies was carried by the posterity of Adam into all lands, and continued with them, more or less pure, to the flood, and through Noah, who was a 'preacher of righteousness,' to those who succeeded him, spreading out into all nations and countries. . . . What wonder,

then, that we should find relics of Christianity, so to speak, among the heathens and nations who know not Christ, and whose histories date back beyond the days of Moses, and even beyond the flood, independent of and apart from the records of the Bible." The scholars of his time, he notes, took the position that "'Christianity' sprang from the heathen, it being found that they have many rites similar to those recorded in the Bible, &c." This jumping to conclusions was premature to say the least, "for if the heathen have doctrines and ceremonies resembling . . . those . . . in the Scriptures, it only proves . . . that these are the traditions of the fathers handed down, . . . and that they will cleave to the children to the latest generation, though they may wander into darkness and perversion, until but a slight resemblance to their origin, which was divine, can be seen." Which comes first, the Pagan or the Hebrew version? As President Smith observes, "The Bible account, being the most rational and indeed [the] only historical one, . . . we cannot but come to the conclusion that this is not the work of chance."³⁹

The Competitors. Not a work of chance, to be sure, but were there others? Is the Bible account indeed the only rational historical one? These are questions that must be asked, and the vast amount of work on the subject that has almost all been done since Joseph F. Smith made his remarks over 100 years ago calls for a word of comment. In the nineteenth century a string of scholars with monosyllabic names--Jones, Bopp, Rask, Grimm, Pott, Diez, Zeuss--discovered unexpected relationships between all sorts of languages. In the early twentieth century their studies were followed up by grand, sweeping surveys of comparative literature, revealing a wealth of religious parallels that set the experts to their favorite game of arguing about where which rite or expression began, and who borrowed what when from whom.

It was more than a matter of general resemblances between doctrines and cults: the Hellenistic mystery religions, the Gnostics, the Mandaeans, the Early Christians, the Cabbalists, etc., all seemed to be speaking the same language. Looking back

in time, the scholars saw the strong influence of Plato almost everywhere, but where did he get it from? From the first, the consensus was always for Egypt, but in the 1920s there was a strong swing to Iran, with emphasis on Plato's dependence on Zarathustra. The fad wore off, but still the argument goes on.

What were the teachings in question? The basic ideas (Grundgedanken) of all of them are the yearning for return to God and eternal life, which Eduard Meyer, the most learned of them all, maintained came from Moses to Philo.⁴⁰ With this went the conviction expressed by Plato that this world is a place of evil from which we are liberated to return to God, this world being in a state of decline toward inevitable catastrophe and ultimate restoration by God.⁴¹ The escape of the individual to eternal bliss is anticipated by such things as baptism, sacred meals, prophecy, and visions or dreams of ascension to the Seventh Heaven. Eschatology and cosmology are conspicuous, and great importance is laid on the office and calling of the First Man.

With such things in common, it is not surprising that all the mystery religions recognized and copied each other;⁴² but it is equally clear that human vanity requires that each religion claim for itself the right to be the one and only exclusive original, given to the first man. Indeed in studying this stuff "one cannot avoid the feeling," as Reitzenstein puts it, "the speculative effort to view all religions as one great unity."⁴³ "The isolating of separate religions as we present them in our textbooks . . . breaks down completely if we trace the history of a religious idea or concept. . . . What may originally have been Babylonian can become Iranian or even Persian, just as we may trace a Persian doctrine in the end back to China."⁴⁴

But the great Eduard Meyer sees an exception to this in Christianity as a revealed religion. Of course he was challenged; how was it possible for a religion resembling so many others to appear out of nothing? For proof of his point, Meyer produced the case of Joseph Smith and Mormonism. Though knowing nothing whatever of the immense background material brought forth

long after his time, Joseph Smith nonetheless put together the most complete and comprehensible exposition of those same abundant motifs in eminently reasonable form. His nephew, Joseph F. Smith, was right.

The evidence that excited the debates of the early twentieth century was almost exclusively of a literary nature, so that the experts concluded that the cults themselves that came from Egypt, Greece, or the East, confined their activities largely to the intellectual and literary exercises of individual practitioners and their followers. In either case the Atonement for them was a scenario in which all the biblical terms become lofty abstractions, spurning the childish simplicity of the vulgar. Most scholars attributed this to Philo. The unio mystica of the cults and mysteries was a form of atonement, indeed, but with that difference. To the devotee impatient of the promised glory, eager for the great experience, waiting until the Resurrection and the Last Judgment was out of the question. They were not kept waiting. From the first, theatrical effects were provided to meet the demand--lights, incense, processions, chants, mystifying formulas, even narcotics provided the experience of another world. Immediate seating, no waiting. The biblical terms do not apply here; being born again was a matter of a few days or hours. And then there was that irresistible appeal to the vanity of the average man, suddenly rid of all of his dull mediocrity to become an exalted spirit overnight, like the Marcosians, immune to the weaknesses and vices of the flesh, infinitely superior to all who had not received the enlightenment.

What is so different in Joseph Smith's religion from the others that sound so much like it? The difference is the literal Atonement. It was, of course, the easy application of the rhetorical tropes that made it possible for the Neo-Platonists, mystics, gnostics, and clergy to enjoy immediate fulfillment. It is significant that the Book of Mormon insists not only on willingness to believe but a firm and stable mind to

qualify for atonement--no hysterical or egomaniacal characters like Simon Magus need apply (Jacob 3:2; Alma 57:27; Moroni 7:30).

Another point that places the gospel of Jesus Christ and the ideas of others worlds apart is that concept of sin which I have already mentioned. It makes such a teaching as that of the Lord in 3 Nephi 11:32 ("And this is my doctrine . . . that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me") simply unthinkable to them. In the three degrees of gnostic glory--the hylic, the psychic, and the pneumatic--those who had achieved the final degree were incapable of sin no matter what they did, just as a gold ring when plunged into filthy sewage in no wise becomes impure since it cannot possibly enter into reaction with such nasty stuff.⁴⁵

Joseph Smith took the Atonement back even before Abraham to Adam. There was a teaching that the sacrifice of Isaac was a great atoning sacrifice for Israel, and Isidore Levi has discussed "the offering of Isaac as an atonement for Israel";⁴⁶ Isaac offered himself as a free-will sacrifice on the Day of Atonement with Abraham functioning as the High Priest at the altar.⁴⁷ This was known among the Jews as the akedah, which means the binding, because Isaac submitted of his own free will to be bound and offered. (It was always a bad omen if the sacrificial victim, animal, or human, went unwillingly to the altar.) It has been maintained by some that Isaac actually was put to death on the occasion and was then restored: "And Isaac received his spirit again, while the angels joined in a chorus of praise: 'Praised be the eternal, thou who has given life to the dead.'"⁴⁸ Again, the chorus reminds us of Alma's "song of redeeming love."⁴⁹ Though most of the Jewish doctors reject the instant resurrection of Isaac, according to Roy A. Rosenberg, still even for them "Isaac was 'the perfect sacrifice,' the atonement offering that brings forgiveness to the sins of Israel through the ages."⁴⁹ The trouble is that Isaac was not sacrificed, but another, a ram, a substitute or proxy, even said to bear his name, was offered in his stead, serving as a type of

the great sacrifice to come;⁵⁰ for long after Isaac, the sacrifice was continued in the temple as a similitude of the great and last sacrifice until that actually took place, as Paul explains in his letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 7:26-10:22).

Without the temple and its appointments for blood sacrifice the Atonement becomes for the Jews a theological, philosophical, and especially psychological exercise.⁵¹ What was it then for the Christians? "There is no single New Testament doctrine of the Atonement," writes William J. Wolf. "There is simply a collection of images and metaphors . . . from which subsequent tradition built its systematic doctrines and theories. . . . Tradition has tried to decide what parts of this picture should be taken literally and what parts metaphorically and has developed extended rationales."⁵² That authority then lists the ransom metaphor, the buying free of a slave, etc., in Mark 10:45; this is the commercial interpretation. There is the emphasis on the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28). There is the image of the lamb developed by John 1:29, 36, and Revelation 13:8. The main issue, he says, is whether the Atonement is the completion of the Old Testament sacrifice or something independent and unique.

There are three main Christian interpretations today. First is the classical interpretation of the Greek Fathers, which integrates Incarnation, Atonement, and Resurrection, and uses the military context--the Christus Victor. Second is Anselm's interpretation in which "satisfaction" must be paid for offense to God's honor, because a son or subject, by the Medieval code of fealty and honor, must vindicate any offense to his lord.⁵³ The Roman catechism defines sin as "any damage done to the glory of God." Also, Christ's death, being undeserved, has a superfluous virtue to cover all sins. Third is the Reformation theory of Calvin that Christ as a substitute who endured God's punishment for man or for the elect. H. Grotius and Jonathan Edwards propounded the rectorial or governmental theory of Christ's death having a deterrent effect on sinners in the public interest.

More recently, emphasis has been put on the "moral-influence theories," that we "respond to Jesus' message and example of love" in our minds and hearts.⁵⁴ This is Abelard's "love answers love's appeal," which he intensifies by making the crucifixion an object of such pity as to stir all beholders to reform.⁵⁵ Albrecht Ritschl argues that Christ's example inspires "ethical response in history."⁵⁶ And so it goes. Vatican II and the Ecumenical Movement have turned back to the patristic writers and Anselm, restoring "sacrificial language," the "Christus Victor" and "moral-influence," with an inclination toward the theatrical, now moving towards "a reformation of sacrificial theory, which [is] fortified by the use of liturgy and . . . comparative history of religions."⁵⁷

The Atonement and the Law. The Nephites lived by the law of Moses, as implemented, for example by the laws of King Benjamin and Mosiah. Yet they are constantly being notified that salvation does not come by the law of Moses: "And, notwithstanding we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled. For, for this end was the law given" (2 Nephi 25:24-25). "Wherefore, we speak concerning the law that our children may know the deadness of the law; . . . that they need not harden their hearts against him when the law ought to be done away" (2 Nephi 26:27). For the law is tailored to our weakness, beginning with the Word of Wisdom, "adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints" (D&C 89:3). Merely keeping that, no matter how scrupulously, will not assure everlasting exaltation. Some of the Ten Commandments are for a barbaric people. Do you have to be reminded every morning not to kill anyone during the day, or to steal, or to bear false witness, or to commit adultery, etc.? Even so we observe even these commandments only half way today, applying them only to our friends--it is now acceptable or even commendable to kill, lie, or steal, as long as the victims are the bad people. The Lord summed up "all the law and the

prophets" in the two great commandments; if you keep them you can forget all about "the law," for would anyone who loves the Lord with all his heart, might, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself ever be capable of committing any of the awful things forbidden in the Decalogue?

Joseph Needham in his extensive research concludes that the idea of a law handed down from above is a cultural concept originating in empires and great kingdoms where the law is codified and enforced by the ruler. Normally, he maintains, people live not by written law but by established customs, as in China, where for ages the people have followed "that body of customs which the sage-kings and the people had always accepted, i.e., what Confucians called li,⁵⁸ . . . practices, . . . which unnumbered generations of the Chinese people have instinctively felt to be right, . . . and we may equate it with natural law."⁵⁹ It is the difference between the ethos and the nomos of the Greeks, and actually the difference is small indeed, since both are sacred and binding. In Israel what begins as the written law handed down by revelation from Sinai must in the end be "written in their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33; Romans 2:15). Needham quotes what he calls a Newtonian hymn: "Praise the Lord, for he hath spoken, worlds his mighty voice obeyed. Laws, which never shall be broken, for their guidance he hath made."⁶⁰

Here guidance is the keyword, for guidance leads the way, and that is what the law is to most people. The image is nowhere more vividly presented than in Nephi's account. What could be more natural to a family wandering in the wilderness than constant concern for guidance? The Liahona and the Iron Rod were not the goal they sought, but were simply the means of getting them there, like the Tree of Life in the Dura Synagogue,⁶¹ which as the scholars note, leads straight to the throne.⁶² What better guide to life-giving waters in the desert than the sight of a tree? "And by the law," says Lehi, "no flesh is justified" (2 Nephi 2:5); merely keeping the law will not save you. If you cling to it and make it your whole concern, you will find the

temporal law cut off, and even "the spiritual law" will leave you to perish, not because it fails of its purpose but because that purpose is limited to getting you to where you are going: "For, for this end was the law given; wherefore the law hath become dead unto us, and we are made alive in Christ because of our faith; yet we keep the law because of the commandments" (2 Nephi 25:25). The law leads us back home; the at-one-ment takes place when we get there. In other words, the law is all preparation. Everything we do here is to prepare for the Atonement:

"Therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state . . . which is after the resurrection of the dead" (Alma 12:24). The early Christians taught that as this life is a preparation for the next, so in the preexistence we had to prepare for this one.⁶³ To reach a stage where the test would be meaningful--the plan itself being "prepared from the foundation of the world," well ahead of time and well understood by those who accepted it here--angels were sent to remind men of that preparation (Alma 12:30; 13:2-5).

The Ordinances. Consider now how the rites of atonement were carried out under the law of Moses. Before approaching the tabernacle or tent covering the Ark, Aaron and his sons would be washed at the gate (Exodus 29:4); then they would be clothed with the ephod, apron, and sash (Exodus 29:5), and a mitre, a flat cap or pad which was meant to support the weight of a crown, was placed on his head (Exodus 29:6). The priests were also anointed (Exodus 29:1, 7) and consecrated or set apart (Exodus 29:9). Then they put their hands upon the head of a bullock (Exodus 29:10), transferring their guilt to the animal, which was slain, and its blood put upon the horns of the altar (the four corners of the world) (Exodus 29:12). The same thing was done with a ram (Exodus 29:15-16), and its blood was sprinkled as an atonement for all and placed upon the right ear and right thumb of Aaron, to represent his own blood as if he were the offering (Exodus 29:20). The blood was sprinkled over the garments of the

priests (Exodus 29:21), who then ate parts of the ram with bread (Exodus 29:22-24), Aaron and his sons "eat[ing] those things wherewith the atonement was made" (Exodus 29:33). For the rest of the year every day a bullock was offered for atonement (Exodus 29:36). Then the Lord received the High Priest at the tent door, the veil (in Leviticus 16:17-19, the High Priest alone enters the tabernacle), and conversed with him (Exodus 29:42), accepting the sin offering, sanctifying the priests and people, and receiving them into his company to "dwell among the children of Israel, and [to] be their God" (Exodus 29:45). This order is clearly reflected in D&C 101:23: "And prepare for the revelation which is to come, when the veil of the covering of my temple, in my tabernacle, which hideth the earth, shall be taken off, and all flesh shall see me together." What an at-one-ment that will be!

In reading the full account it becomes clear that there were a number of blood sacrifices of different animals and at different levels. There is perhaps much that escapes us. The newly discovered Temple Scroll is important on this score, describing some things that are quite different from what we find in the Old Testament.⁶⁴ Such freedom of action makes clear that the ordinances are indeed but a type and a similitude, and Aaron must continue to make atonement once a year "with the blood of the sin offering of atonements" (Exodus 30:10), while every individual must continue to pay ransom for his own soul of one-half shekel, the atonement money going to "the service of the tabernacle" (Exodus 30:16).

As understood by the rabbis today, though atonement can only be granted by God (Leviticus 16:30), to have it one must make a confession of guilt with an asham or guilt offering. With the loss of the temple and its sacrifices, teshuvah was interpreted as a "turning" or "returning" to the way of righteousness, requiring both remorse and reparation for one's sinful ways. "Judaism maintains that human beings have the capacity to extricate themselves from the causal nexus and determine freely their conduct."⁶⁵ Though teshuvah is achieved by one's own

effort, "divine mercy is necessary to heal or redeem man from the dire aftereffects of sin"; since sin "damages a person's relationship with the Creator, divine grace is required to achieve full atonement." But while prayer and suffering are required for atonement, Rabbi Yishma'el says for the "desecration of the divine name" only "death completes atonement."⁶⁶ The idea that one's death is an atonement is widespread, but since death is usually anything but a willing sacrifice, that leaves much to be required; also, the doctrine of "blood atonement" as understood by some is out of the question, since only one sacrifice was adequate to atone for our sins. You cannot clear yourself of the sin of suicide by committing suicide, and all sin is a form of suicide, "for the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Particularly interesting is the teaching of the rabbis that "the dead require atonement,"⁶⁷ and since the dead cannot repent they must be helped by the living through charity, prayer, and Torah study. The prayer for the dead (the Qaddusha or Kaddish) goes directly back to the temple in the time of the Maccabees.⁶⁸ "Significantly, vicarious expiatory significance is attributed to the death of the high priest or that of the righteous."⁶⁹ Here we have elements of the rites of atonement reflected in rabbinical teaching long after the temple and the priesthood had been taken away. It is interesting that the idea of "work for the dead" still lingers, if only on the level of good intentions.⁷⁰

As to the Atonement as "the plan laid down before the foundation of the world" (Alma 12:30), i.e., when it was approved at the Council in Heaven, this event is often mentioned in the earliest Christian and Jewish literature.⁷¹ One of the most notable texts is the Discourse on Abbatôn by Timothy, Archbishop of Alexandria (circa A.D. 380).⁷² When the plan was voted on, according to this account and others, it was turned down. For the earth herself complained, as in the Book of Moses and other Enoch literature, of the defilement it would bring upon her,

knowing the kind of inhabitants to come; and the heavenly hosts objected to a plan that would cause such a vast amount of sin and suffering--was all that necessary? The Only Begotten broke the deadlock by volunteering to go down and pay the price. This opened the way; the plan could go forward; the sons of God and the morning stars all shouted and sang for joy--that was the great creation hymn which left an indelible mark in ancient literature and ritual. The Lord had made it all possible, leaving men their agency, and obeying the Father in all things. Satan and his followers refused to accept the majority vote; for that, Satan was deprived of his glory in a reversal of the endowment and was cast out of Heaven, which was the reverse of at-one-ment.⁷³

Only in such a context does the Atonement, otherwise so baffling, take on its full significance. There is not a word among those translated as "atonement" which does not plainly indicate the return to a former state or condition; one rejoins the family, returns to the Father, becomes united, reconciled, embracing and sitting down happily with others after a sad separation. We want to get back, but to do that we must resist the alternative, being taken into the community of "the prince of this world" (John 12:31).

Jacob, contemplating our possibilities here on earth both for dissolution and salvation, breaks out into an ecstatic cry of wonder and awe: "O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace!" (2 Nephi 9:8). The resurrection is the first step to a physical at-one-ment which has been provided, a resurrection which is indispensable to saving our spirits as well--they too must be atoned, for when man yielded to the flesh at the Fall, it was the spirit that committed an act of disobedience and independence and could not undo that which was done. In the next verse Jacob gives a concise summary of the situation: "And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God [for no unclean thing can dwell in his presence, and being shut out is

the utter reverse of at-one-ment], and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself; yea, to that being who . . . transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light, and stirreth up the children of men unto secret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works of darkness" (2 Nephi 9:9). Here we have a neat chiasm, for "lies and misery" of the pretender are in every sense the reverse of the "grace and truth" of the Son. The part about the angel of light is important to let us know that Satan is with us as a regular member of the group, he does not show himself as a halloween horror; that point is vital in establishing the reality of the scene.

What is the justification for Jacob's alarming statement of total loss without atonement? For the answer, look around you! In the next verse Jacob describes our condition as Homer does that of his heroes, "all those noble spirits caught like rats in a trap,"⁷⁴ doomed ahead of time, but for the Atonement: "O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape [we are caught!] from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit" (2 Nephi 9:10); by this "the temporal, shall deliver up its dead" (2 Nephi 9:11), i.e., from the grave; but more important, "the spiritual death, shall deliver up its dead," and that is the death that really is hell-- "which spiritual death is hell." So now we have them both, body and spirit, brought together, another at-one-ment, "restored one to the other" (2 Nephi 9:12).

And how, pray, is this all done? Not by a syllogism or an argument or an allegory or even a ceremony; "it is by the power of the resurrection of the Holy One of Israel" (2 Nephi 9:12). Another outburst from Jacob: "O how great [is] the plan of our God!" (2 Nephi 9:13).

The Plan. To know that everything is going according to plan is a vast relief. Yet the word "plan" is nowhere found in the English Bible! Why not? It was among the precious things removed, no doubt. We mentioned in the last lecture how eager

the churchmen and the rabbis were to expunge from the record any doctrines of our preexistence or the Council in Heaven at the creation, both teachings being corollaries to the idea of a plan.⁷⁵ What do the schoolmen have left in place of the plan? For preexistence they exchanged predestination, St. Augustine's praedestinatio ad damnationem and praedestinatio ad salvationem--it is all the Will of God and there is nothing we can do about it. For the original sin makes mankind a massa perditionis, incapable of doing good.

A lively debate in the ninth century ended an attempt to soften the doctrine with the victory of "predestination to life and to death"--a victory for Augustine. Luther and Melancthon issued a joint statement declaring that "everything that happens occurs necessarily according to divine predestination, we have no freedom of will." Zwingli actually suggested a "universal plan" by which God predestined man to sin in order to display his own full glory and justice in forgiveness, but the Consensus of Geneva in 1552 was a victory for Calvin's rigorous predestinationism (supralapsarismus), according to which God predestined each individual to damnation or salvation from eternity. Rigorous predestination won another victory in the Arminian Controversy, at the Synod of Dordrecht (1618-19), which still reverberates in the unyielding severity of the Afrikaners. It was the issue of predestination that divided Wesley and Whitefield in 1741 and emerged in the 1870s as the Walther Predestination Controversy.⁷⁶

For over 1500 years Christians have tried to mitigate or get rid of the bitter doctrine of predestination, but they have never been able to let it go, having nothing to put in its place. In particular, Augustine and his successors found the doctrine of infant damnation painful--no atonement for unbaptized babies stained by the original sin. But what could they do? The alternative to predestination is preexistence, a firmly held tenet of the early church;⁷⁷ but Aristotle had declared that a no-no when he ruled out the existence of any other world than

this or any other intelligent beings than ourselves.

Yet I hear preachers today using the word "plan" freely, and no wonder, for what is of greater comfort than the assurance that what we are going through is all as it was planned, as it should be. What! This dismal routine? Planned this way? What is the rationale of that? I shall explain presently. Meanwhile an essential part of life is that all things have their opposites-- action and reaction are equal and opposite; and that is a good thing, as the early Christian writers observed, for if we couldn't be bad we couldn't really be good; and if nothing bad ever happened to us we could never know how blessed we are.⁷⁸

Washed in the Blood. There is one expression connected with the ceremonies which seems strangely paradoxical. It is having one's garments washed white with the blood of the Lamb. It is the Book of Mormon which clarifies the apparent contradiction. Alma tells us that "there can no man be saved except his garments are washed white; yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain, through the blood of him of whom it has been spoken by our fathers, who should come to redeem his people from their sins. And now I ask of you, my brethren, how will any of you feel, if ye shall stand before the bar of God, having your garments stained with blood and all manner of filthiness? Behold, what will these things testify against you? Behold will they not testify that ye are murderers, . . . guilty of all manner of wickedness?" (Alma 5:21-23). Being guilty of the blood and sins of your generation, you may not "have a place to sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and also all the holy prophets, whose garments are cleansed and are spotless, pure and white" (Alma 5:24). This is nothing less than the yeshivah, literally "sitting down" in the presence of God.⁷⁹

Note there are two kinds of bloodstained garments here, the one showing the blood and sins of this world, the other attesting (for Alma expressly states that "these things testify") that Aaron and his sons have completed the sacrifice of the Lamb and

thus cleansed the people of their defilements, and their garments are white. The blood that washes garments clean is not the blood that defiles them, just as the serpent that healed the people in the wilderness was not the serpent that killed (see Numbers 21:9).

It is on that principle of opposites that Satan's participation in our lives is to be explained. If we can be "encircled about eternally in the arms of [God's] love" (2 Nephi 1:15), we can also be "encircled about by the bands of death, and the chains of hell, and an everlasting destruction" (Alma 5:7); and if we can be perfectly united in the at-one-ment, we can also be "cast out" (Alma 5:25), separated and split off forever--their names shall be blotted out; . . . the names of the wicked shall not be mingled with the names of my people" (Alma 5:57). When Satan claims you as his, there is indeed a horrible oneness; for he too will embrace you to get power over you: Do "not choose eternal death, according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate, to bring you down to hell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom" (2 Nephi 2:29; cf. 1 Nephi 13:29; 2 Nephi 28:19; Alma 8:9). He will hold you in his strong embrace, having a great hold over you (Alma 10:25; 12:17; 27:12; Helaman 16:23). Joseph Smith felt that power, and it was not an imaginary power at all, a power many have felt since (JS-H 1:16). For he "get[s] possession" of you (3 Nephi 2:2), "for Satan desireth to have you" (3 Nephi 18:18), just as the Lord does. So while on the one hand, God "inviteth and enticeth to do good," and be one with him, so on the other hand Satan "inviteth and enticeth to sin" (Moroni 7:12-13).

Why don't we just get rid of Satan? Augustine lamented as an awful tragedy that God had not made us incapable of sinning--o miseria necessitas, non posse non peccandi. But as Irenaeus pointed out much earlier, without some kind of a test we could not prove ourselves good or bad, never being obliged to choose between the two.⁸⁰ If a probation on earth is to have meaning,

then there "must needs be that there is an opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11, 15). So, says Lehi, we must take a turn at resisting various enticements (2 Nephi 2:16, 21). Lehi knew the old literature: "That an angel [who] . . . had fallen from heaven; wherefore, he became a devil, having sought that which was evil before God," and then proceeded to administer temptation, deception, and misery to the human race (2 Nephi 2:17-18).

Is there any evidence for that? Well, why is the world full of misery? Who wants it? And yet someone seems to be pushing it on us all the time. His system works beautifully, and so he rules to this day on this earth (1 Nephi 13:29; John 12:31; 14:30), but it is our privilege to rise above his viciousness and our own weakness by repentance; and now comes one of the most heartening and encouraging verses in the Book of Mormon: the way is wide open and God "commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent" (3 Nephi 11:32)--all men all the time. In fact, our lives have been prolonged beyond the age of procreation for the specific purpose of giving us more golden opportunities to repent: "The days of the children of men were prolonged, according to will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh," all living in "a state of probation, and their time was lengthened," to give them every possible chance for otherwise "they were lost" (2 Nephi 2:21). So "all men must repent" and keep repenting as long as they live, for who would throw away that generous extension?

Lehi goes on to tell us that Adam interrupted an eternal existence to get himself into the predicament that we are in (2 Nephi 2:22). For this the Christians execrate his name, him who "brought death into the world and all our woes." But he brought something much better than that; verse 25 is perhaps the best known statement in the Book of Mormon: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). Humans, "redeemed from the fall, . . . have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, . . . free according to the flesh; . . . free to choose

liberty and eternal life, . . . or to choose captivity and [eternal] death" in the power of one who "seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself" (2 Nephi 2:26-27). He has that "power to captivate" because we give it to him (2 Nephi 2:29). The purpose of the plan, it should be clear by now, is to get us all involved. We are "invited and enticed" from both sides.

But how can I withstand Satan's skillful ploys of temptation? King Benjamin tells us how to go about it, first warning us that there is no other salvation to look for and no other conditions for achieving it (Mosiah 4:8). First, "believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things." This does not require suspension of judgment, since honesty alone obliges us to "believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend" (Mosiah 4:9). We can go farther than that: "Always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily" (Mosiah 4:11). Is that asking too much? On the contrary, says Benjamin, never was there such a bargain, for "if ye do this ye shall always rejoice" (Mosiah 4:12). If "nothingness" seems a rather low estimate of the human race, we have the overwhelming voice of the greatest viewers of the scene to confirm it. The most honest and enlightened ones do not hesitate to tell us that we are nothing; and the rebellious and wicked ones are the most cynical and despairing of all.

What are we to do? Lehi explains that if we approach the Lord with "a broken heart and contrite spirit," we have a case, "and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered" (2 Nephi 2:7). This puts an end to legalism and litigation. A broken heart and a contrite spirit cannot be faked or even calmly discussed, and that is a prime point: "How great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth" (2 Nephi 2:8). When all men stand in God's presence to be

judged, punishment will be meted out in terms of legal penalties--the law by which we were bound, the preliminary trials and tests to get us to our final hearing, but that is not what the judgment is about. What we are expecting in this final judgment is that "happiness which is affixed" to the law and which is the final purpose or end "of the atonement" (2 Nephi 2:10).

So we also have our part in achieving in the Atonement. How is it all done? The explanation of the Predestinationists, Neoplatonists, and Moslems is simply that God does it all because he can, which leaves us completely irresponsible nonentities. That is not what we want. We want to be one with the Father, which obviously is completely beyond our present capacity; it is only the Son who can help us: then "look to the great Mediator, and hearken unto his great commandments" (2 Nephi 2:28)--He will tell us just what to do, for he is anxious to help us. "Be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit" (2 Nephi 2:28). The Holy Ghost, that other Mediator, who comes to take over when the Lord is absent, seconds him in all things. "Redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah," Lehi tells his son, "for he is full of grace and truth" (2 Nephi 2:6). That says everything: to be full of grace is everything good that you can possibly conceive of; it is a combination of love, charity, and joy--charis, gratia, and "cheer." It is everything to be cheerful about and grateful for, and it is boundless love without a shadow of mental reservation, self-interest, or ulterior motive, in short, of anything false or untrue; it is all real, for he is full of grace and truth.

The Atonement and the Economy. It is interesting that in the Book of Mormon every teaching of the Atonement includes, as the principal condition of its fulfillment, the observance of certain economic practices. Why should anything as spiritual as the Atonement be so worldly? It is because of the nature of the sacrifice we must make.

If we would have God "apply the atoning blood of Christ" (Mosiah 4:2) to our case, we can also reject it. We can take advantage of it or we can refuse it. The Atonement is either dead to us or it is in full effect. It is the supreme sacrifice made for us, and to receive it we must live up to every promise and covenant related to it--the Day of Atonement was the day of covenants, and the place was the temple.

By very definition we cannot pay a partial tithe--but then tithing is not among the covenants, since it is only a partial sacrifice or rather, as my grandfather used to say, no sacrifice at all but only a token contribution from our increase. And if we cannot pay a partial tithe, neither can we keep the law of chastity in a casual and convenient way, nor solemnly accept it as St. Augustine did, as to be operative at some future time ("God give me chastity and continency, only not yet!"⁸¹). We cannot enjoy optional obedience to the law of God, or place our own limits on the law of sacrifice, or mitigate the charges of righteous conduct connected with the law of the gospel. We cannot be willing to sacrifice only that which is convenient to part with, and then expect a reward. The Atonement is everything; it is not to be had "on the cheap." God is not mocked in these things; we do not make promises and covenants with mental reservations. Unless we live up to every covenant, we are literally in Satan's power--a condition easily recognized by the mist of fraud and deception that has enveloped our whole society.

The Real Test. What Benjamin was setting forth in his address to the nation was the only way by which we can have a claim on the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. "There is none other salvation, . . . neither are there any conditions" other than these (Mosiah 4:8). Since "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Begotten Son" (John 3:16), what must we do about it? Nothing short of a supreme sacrifice was demanded of Abraham, whom we are commanded to take as a model if we would have the rewards of Abraham (D&C 101:4-5). Of course we cannot begin to

comprehend the greatness of the supreme sacrifice, but we can make what for us is the supreme sacrifice, as Abraham did when he firmly intended to sacrifice first his own life, as shown in Abraham 1, and then the life of "his only son." Fortunately it was not necessary for Abraham or Isaac to go so far, since another had paid the price. The Atonement makes it unnecessary, but as with Abraham, "the real intent" (Moroni 10:4), to use the Book of Mormon expression, must be there: "And God said, lay not thy hand upon the lad and do not do anything to him; for now I know that thou art one who fears Elohim, and hast not held back thy son, thy one son, from me" (Genesis 22:12). A ram was substituted, which in the rites of atonement became forever after the similitude of sacrifice of the Only Begotten. Fortunately for us the Lord has paid the price for us too. Here let us repeat that no "blood atonement" is required of us, since the sacrifice of our own lives "if necessary" has nothing to do with atonement for our sins, for which only one sacrifice could pay, but is expressly required only if it should be necessary in the course of building up and defending the kingdom of God on the earth, which is another thing.

The point of all this is that atonement requires of the beneficiary nothing less than willingness to part with his most precious possession.

Joined with the law of sacrifice is the law of consecration, which has no limiting "if necessary" clause; we agree to it unconditionally here and now. It represents our contribution to our salvation. The same rule applied in Israel. On the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement, was held the great assembly of the entire nation, "an holy convocation . . . [to] afflict your souls" (Leviticus 23:27), for the purpose of bringing a special "sin offering of atonement" (Numbers 29:11). The trumpet of the Jubilee was sounded, "proclaiming liberty to all the inhabitants" and announcing the seven-times-seventh year (Leviticus 25:8-10), the Jubilee year when all debts were cancelled and no profits were taken (Leviticus 25:14-17). This

is the indispensable step to achieving Atonement for the people, since it is debt to each other that keeps men from being one: there can be no Zion of rich and poor. It is a depressing thought that the law of consecration should be the hardest sacrifice for us to make, instead of the easiest. But this is made perfectly clear to us in the story of the rich young man who zealously kept all the commandments but was stopped cold by that one: "But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions," and Jesus sorrowfully let him go--there was no deal, no mitigation of the terms (Matthew 19:22; Luke 18:18-30). "If ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27), and you cannot be one in spiritual things unless ye are one in temporal things (D&C 70:14). Atonement is both individual and collective. That is what Zion is--"of one heart and one mind" (Moses 7:18), not only one with each other but one with the Lord. So in 3 Nephi 11, after the Lord had contact with every member of the multitude personally, "one by one" (3 Nephi 11:14-15), "when they had all gone forth and had witnessed for themselves, they did cry out with one accord, saying: Hosannah! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him" (3 Nephi 11:16-17). That was a true at-one-ment. Now the law of consecration is expressly designed "for the establishment of Zion," where "they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them" (Moses 7:18). For that we must consecrate everything we have to the whole, losing nothing for we are all one. To consecrate means to set apart, sanctify, and relinquish our own personal interest in the manner designated in the book of Doctrine and Covenants. It is the final decisive law and covenant by which we formally accept the Atonement and merit a share in it.

It is at the climax of his great discourse on the Atonement that Jacob cries out, "But wo unto the rich, who are rich as to the things of the world. For because they are rich they despise the poor." This is a very important statement, setting down as a

general principle that the rich as a matter of course despise the poor, for "their hearts are upon their treasures; wherefore, their treasure is their God. And behold, their treasure shall perish with them also" (2 Nephi 9:30). Why does Jacob make this number one in his explicit list of offenses against God? Because it is the number one device among the enticings of "that cunning one" (2 Nephi 9:39), who knows that riches are his most effective weapon in leading men astray. You must choose between being at one with God or with Mammon, not both; the one promises everything in this world for money, the other a place in the kingdom after you have "endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it," for only so can you "inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world," and where your "joy shall be full forever" (2 Nephi 9:18). Need we point out that the main reason for having money is precisely to avoid "the crosses of the world, and . . . the shame of it"?

I once told as a joke the story of a student who wrote in an exam that when we are told that there were no poor in Zion, it meant that only the well-to-do were admitted. To my amazement this is no longer a joke; most students are surprised and sometimes offended to be told that that is not actually the meaning of the passage. The objection to the law of consecration is that it is hard to keep. We want eternal life in the presence of God and the angels, but that is too high a price to pay! God has commanded and we have accepted, but then we have added a proviso: "We will gladly observe and keep the law of consecration as soon as conditions make it less trying and more convenient for us to do so." And we expect Atonement for that?! We are clearly told in the Book of Mormon that when God commands us to do something, no matter how hard, he will open the way for us if we put our hearts into it: "For I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7). How fortunate for Nephi that

the Lord did not ask him to observe the law of consecration! And perhaps he should have prudently waited until the coast was clear before going back to Jerusalem for the plates.

The key to keeping this commandment is of course faith, and faith is never without hope (anticipating and envisioning the results), and neither of these is of the slightest avail without charity (Moroni 7:41-44). So we pray with energy for "charity which seeketh not her own self-interest" (see 1 Corinthians 13:4-5). For "this love which . . . [God has] for the children of men is charity" (Ether 12:34); without it there is no "place . . . prepared in the mansions of my Father" (Ether 12:37)--that is to say there is no atonement. Charity alone should answer all our pious arguments for putting the law of consecration on hold: "Ye have procrastinated the day of your salvation until it is everlastingly too late . . . for ye have sought all the days of your lives for that which ye could not obtain" (Helaman 13:38). Even lots of money cannot guarantee you security.

But Is It Real? Alma took up the scriptures "to explain things beyond" (Alma 12:1). Having come this far, I ask myself with Alma, "O then, is not this real?" (Alma 32:35). And I find the answer in Jacob, who faces the issue fairly and squarely by placing the two conflicting views of reality side by side. First he speaks of prophecy: "For the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly, for the salvation of our souls" (Jacob 4:13). But most people will have none of this. "They despised the words of plainness," refusing to take the world literally. They are always missing the point "by looking beyond the mark." They want to explore "many things which they cannot understand," and God permits them to go their way, "that they may stumble" (Jacob 4:14), which they are bound to do if they insist on finding definitive final answers to the Terrible Questions in learned debate or even in the laboratory.

The first argument in favor of the reality that Jacob

insists on is that it gives us a correct and incisive view of our present world. This is not a rigmarole or primitive mumbo-jumbo, it gets down to the basic facts of life and begins the argument on a solid premise. You do not have to be an inspired prophet to know that man's state is parlous, that life is more than we can handle, and death is more than we can face. Nothing is more real in this life than the constant awareness that things could be better than they are. The Atonement does not take place in this world at all, and hereafter only when this world is made part of the celestial order. The unreality is all on this side of the great and awful gulf. If there is anything manifestly evident about the doings in the great and spacious building, it is the hollow laughter and silly pretensions of the people in it. Today the sense of unreality is beginning to haunt us all--life has become a TV spectacular to which we are beginning to adapt our own behavior. In this age of theatromania, where everything is a contrived spectacle, our lives reflect an endless procession of futility.⁸²

Wishful Thinking? For the Neo-Darwinist Korihor, the Atonement is nothing but wishful thinking, "the effect of a frenzied mind" (Alma 30:16). But as Lord Raglan has shown at length, such a doctrine is the last thing in the world that a seeker for an easy and blissful happy land would invent.⁸³ The rigorous terms of the Atonement, which demands the active participation of all its beneficiaries, and passes the bitter cup of sacrifice to all of them, has made it unpopular to the point of total rejection by the general public--hardly a product of wishful thinking or human invention! Science itself is more worthy of that description, as a recent statement by a Harvard professor of biology makes clear. Commenting on the remark of a political writer that "at least in the sciences nature sets the terms," she writes: "I am a materialist and firmly believe that nature exists out there, not just in our heads [the Atonement requires this too]. So, no doubt it 'sets terms' but not 'the terms.'" The nature that the sciences--which means, scientists--

tell us about is a nature scientists invent so as to provide the kinds of explanations of it, and uses of it, that the society requires. Societal intentions toward nature are what shape scientific descriptions of it, the descriptions, if you will, are intention-laden. . . . What I am getting at is that science and the conceptualizations of nature that scientists explain by means of it are no less cultural products and social productions than are economics, political science and philosophy."⁸⁴ On the other hand, as C. S. Lewis points out, the teachings of Jesus did anything but cater to wishful thinking, constantly baffling, bewildering, and antagonizing his hearers and disciples. The fact that the Lord and his teachings were mocked is strong evidence that they were real and he was real, for one does not mock a legend or a figment of one's own imagination.

But is that other world any more real? It is the standard by which we judge this one. It is hard to argue with the voices that keep telling us that we are strangers here. Charles Addams' famous cartoons entitled "What am I doing here?" make clear both that this is not where he wants to be and the implied corollary that there must be some place better. Whence this nostalgia, the "intimations of immortality," the yearning for the good, true, and beautiful, the ideal which we recognize in Plato's anamnesis? It is so vivid and compelling that we must actually fight to suppress it; the whole massive dismal routine of modern life is a screen we have thrown up to protect ourselves against the terrifying reality, too big for us to handle. Many birds and animals have a powerful and mysterious homing instinct that drives them for thousands of miles. This is real. When we feel overpowering nostalgia, can it be ignored as utterly meaningless? With experience our growing revulsion to this mad world is matched by a growing yearning for another which can become very real for us. Or is it not rather the young, as Wordsworth tells us, who feel most out of place and homesick here?⁸⁵

But is there nothing more solid? There must be something up

there, many scientists tell us, because there is something down here. Whatever it was that produced this astonishing theatre is perfectly capable of producing more and better. Who will deny that what we have here is a defective article, a broken-off fragment of something greater and handsomer? We can recognize the pieces, as Joseph F. Smith said, of a more complete and perfect order surviving in the wreckage around us. From all of this we can easily reconstruct or imagine a more perfect antetype. We would not come down here unless something was to be done; the work is not finished, the story is not over. What, say the theologians--could a perfect God have left anything undone? Even the quantum physicists tell us that everything that was going to happen should already have happened long, long ago.⁸⁶ And so we have to fall back with Professor George Wald by acknowledging that the show is not over, things are still going on against all the rules, and there is no explanation for it except that there is something very powerful at work beyond our world and our ken.⁸⁷

How Much Pain? Another question that the Atonement raises, which has puzzled me for years, is that to achieve the Atonement the Lord "suffereth the pains of all men, yea . . . of every living creature . . . who belong[eth] to the family of Adam" (2 Nephi 9:21; cf. D&C 18:11). There are two questions here. The first question is, How is such suffering possible or conceivable? We are told that as a mortal Christ suffered "temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death" (Mosiah 3:7; cf. Alma 7:11). Here death seems to place a limit on suffering, but there is suffering that knows no limit. Anyone who has suffered the extreme of both physical and mental pain knows that there is no comparison between them. Our physical capacity for pain is quite limited--nature's defenses take over and we black out. But what about the reach of imagination, comprehension, or surmise--to such things there is no limit. However great the physical pain, it was not that which atoned for our sins, "for

behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people" (Mosiah 3:7; cf. D&C 19:18). This was the cause of a suffering of which we cannot conceive, but which is perfectly believable.

But how could a few hours on the cross be effective through infinite time? Even in our limited sphere of action, one can never know how one's actions affect the lives of others for good or ill. One deed can go on reverberating through the ages; such were certain actions of Adam, Abraham, or Cain. The Atonement was one such act, the greatest, performed only once, Paul tells us. The Catholics think they repeat it literally in the Mass. We call it to remembrance in the Sacrament. The Atonement is universal and eternal (2 Nephi 9:7). The fifth-century rhetorician Isocrates once observed that if every man in Greece could lift twice as much, run twice as fast, jump twice as far, etc., the world would be little better off--animals and machinery do the fast and heavy work anyway. But if just one man could think twice as clearly as anyone does now, the whole world could be blessed forever after.⁸⁸ Here is a kind of action that has infinite leverage, and what gives it that leverage is faith.

Vicarious Suffering? And this raises the second question: How is it possible that one person should suffer for another? How can anyone else suffer pain for me? Since we are speaking of mental anguish, we can safely say it happens all the time. One explanation of this miracle is that the sight of the crucifixion spurs one to a sense of pity or shame and hence to repentance and good deeds (Abelard).⁸⁹

The possibility of suffering for another becomes real by the principle of substitution, which is a central doctrine of the Atonement. The sacrifice itself is vicarious; as a ram was a vicarious sacrifice for Isaac, so Isaac himself was to be sacrificed for others--by the akedah he expressed his own willingness to be offered up, and that was all God asked of him. But blood still had to be shed, hence the substitute. So also in that other arrested sacrifice--circumcision, with its real but

token shedding of blood. The blood of the bullock, ram, or lamb is the blood of the officiator who lays his hands upon its head. The whole economy of the temple balances justice, which demands fulfillment of the law against the mercy which spares the life of the individual. Is this just a game of make-believe, then? Far from it; the "real intent" of the akeda is required of all who would profit by the great atoning sacrifice.

What makes the vicarious sacrifice valid? It is the intent of the ransomed: "For now I know" (Genesis 22:12). As the law of sacrifice teaches, those of whom the sacrifice is required may "if necessary" actually have to go through with it, so that the substitute sacrifice is entirely acceptable if it is made in good faith. That is why the law of consecration is so important. It is before all a test of our good faith. A sincere sacrifice is required of all:⁹⁰ "Redeem every firstling of an ass with a lamb [a substitute] . . . and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem. And none shall appear before me empty," all must sacrifice (Exodus 34:20; 13:13). Finally, circumcision was a token sacrifice, a similitude, demanding the actual shedding of blood, and absolutely mandatory if one were to be united to the people of the covenant and to the God with whom the covenant was made (Genesis 17:10-14).

The Silent Treatment. And now we have another question. What good is teaching or a teacher that nobody is going to be willing to accept or listen to? What a strange phenomenon! Why is the most important principle of our existence designed to be almost totally ignored? Moses and the prophets complained that Israel did not heed it; John the Baptist and the Savior were voices in the wilderness; people only accepted the doctrine for three generations in the Book of Mormon; the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price are both addressed to reluctant audiences. And even where the message was accepted in each dispensation, righteousness was soon overtaken by self-righteousness. It is as if someone had died and left us a bequest in which we have no interest, since accepting it would

entail a change in our life-style. Who is willing to accept Benjamin's invitation: "If the knowledge of the goodness of God . . . has awakened you to a sense of your nothingness, and your worthless and fallen state . . . and also, the atonement which has been prepared from the foundation of the world"? (Mosiah 4:5-6). Who wants to accept the atonement on such terms? Who would "always retain in remembrance the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures" (Mosiah 4:11), forsooth? So cool has been the reception of the message that through the centuries, while heated controversy and debate have raged over evolution, atheism, the sacraments, the Trinity, authority, predestination, faith and works, etc., there has been no argument or discussion at all about the meaning of the Atonement. Why were there no debates or pronouncements in the synods? People either do not care enough or do not know enough even to argue about it. For the doctrine of the Atonement is far too complicated to have the appeal of a world religion.

Give us Smooth Things! A religion to be embraced by large segments of humanity must be before all else capable of simplification to the point of nullity. Indeed our word silly comes from the Old English saelig, blessed--to be blessed one must be simple-minded even to the point of near idiocy attained by the bumbling old saints in Russian folktale and fiction. By far the favorite Article of Faith of the Jews is the shema, which declares that God is One and that is all there is to it; a thousand times as a missionary I heard nur Gnade, and "God is love"--that's all anybody needed or wanted to know. When a poor Moslem has said, Allah akbar! or a Hindu uttered, om, they have said it all. Why the elaborate machinery of Christian doctrine? The Moslems ask, and Ireneaus asks the sectaries, Why can't we simply say that God did it and end the matter. The great Krister Stendahl took issue with your humble informant for approving Joseph Smith's saying, Nobody was ever "damned for believing too much."⁹¹ My answer is that if anyone was damned

for believing too much then we are all damned, for everyone believes far more than he will ever be able to prove, and constantly shifts ground on his beliefs.

But those who are repelled by the plan of Atonement as too long and complicated--with the Fall, repentance, resurrection, judgment, and the rest--have their own creeds. Ask the Moslem for his: "I believe on God, and on his angels, and on his prophets, and his apostles, and on his books." Why not God alone? Why all the paraphernalia? And why does Irenaeus write volumes on the subject after dismissing the whole problem in a single sentence? Moslems, Christians, and Jews are all "the people of the Book"--a big book. Why big? The book must contain something more than epithets for God. One of the main weaknesses of Christian theology has been its simplistic heaven, with nothing but harps and hymns of praise. And predestination, while posing no end of problems, has the sole virtue of being supremely simple: deus vult; insha'allah.

The scriptures engage us in a very serious and thoughtful project, but the minimal involvement which makes for popular religion plainly shows that something had been removed which has caused the Gentiles to stumble. It was removed by the doctors with the loss of the temple, as I explained at the last lecture, and that makes it worth the trouble. It was known from the beginning that "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehend[eth] it not" (John 1:5). "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:10-11). Why bother with this hopelessly unpopular doctrine? Because there are always some who do accept it, "but as many as received him, to them he gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13). That makes them the children of God before they lived in the flesh, and what more consummate at-one-ment than to resume their status as sons of God? For their sake it was all worth

it. It was the same in Old Testament times. The house of Israel, as Jacob reminds us, "are a stiffnecked and a gainsaying people; but as many as will not harden their hearts shall be saved in the kingdom of God" (Jacob 6:4). As for the others, they must be given the benefit of the doubt in the days of their probation: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John 15:24).

The Power Behind It. In its sweep and scope, atonement takes on the aspect of one of the grand constants in nature--omnipresent, unalterable, such as gravity or the speed of light. Like them it is always there, easily ignored, hard to explain, and hard to believe in without an explanation. Also, we are constantly exposed to its effects whether we are aware of them or not. Alma found that it engages the mind like a physical force, focusing thought with the intensity of a laser beam (see Alma 36:17-19). Like gravity, though we are rarely aware of it, it is at work every moment of our lives, and to ignore it can be fatal. It is waiting at our disposal to draw us on. When the multitude were overwhelmed by King Benjamin's speech, "and they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth, . . . they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, . . . for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men" (Mosiah 4:2). The blessing is there waiting all the time, needing only to be applied when the people are ready for it.

Reversing the laws of entropy (2 Nephi 9:7) requires knowledge which we do not possess; it is out of our league. But as many scientists have reminded us, whatever put us here is capable of doing the impossible.⁹² In discoursing on the nature of the Atonement, the Book of Mormon writers constantly refer to power. "My soul delighteth in the covenants of the Lord . . . in his grace, and in his justice, and power, and mercy in the

great and eternal plan of deliverance from death" (2 Nephi 11:5; cf. 2 Nephi 9:12, 25; Mosiah 13:34). That would seem to be the final word by way of explaining things. The word "power" occurs no less than 365 times in the Book of Mormon and 276 times in the Bible. The power of the devil is also referred to, but that is only the power which we give him when we "choose eternal death, according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate, to bring you down to hell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom" (2 Nephi 2:29).

We have what might be called an aliphatic chain, or rather something like a benzene ring, of power. Does it begin with love, faith, hope, or charity? Yes, for they all work together: "The Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men" (Moroni 7:32, 37-38). Moroni says it begins with love (Moroni 7:47-48), the desire to be one with the Beloved. The power source is faith: "By faith, they did lay hold upon every good thing" (Moroni 7:25). It is interesting that though we exercise faith and so can increase it, we have faith but we never read of receiving it; we ask for and receive health, wisdom, protection, the necessities of life, and life itself, etc., but we do not ask for faith; it is a principle that we seem to generate in ourselves, being dependent on some auxiliary source, for it is stimulated by hope. We can "lay hold" of these things only if we are "meek and lowly" (Matthew 11:29), for we cannot create power by an act of will; if that were possible Satan would be all-powerful. "And [as] Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me" (Moroni 7:33).

If it appears to be begging the question to fall back on power, we are in good company--that is as far back as the scientists can take us too. A recent study, "Explanation and

Gravity" by Gerd Buchdahl,⁹³ will illustrate the point. Descartes explained gravity as a phenomenon "in accordance with the properties of matter and motion." This is supposed to be an explanation of the cause, but by merely substituting the word properties for cause we have still explained nothing. For Newton, "Matter . . . does not . . . 'act,' even on impact"; it cannot "'act' independently of a non-material source." For him "gravitational action [is] a universal characteristic of matter," yet he "does not . . . claim . . . an understanding of 'the cause' of this attraction, or of its 'physical reason.'"⁹⁴ For Locke it "cannot be explained or made 'conceivable by the bare Essence . . . of matter in general, without something added to that Essence which we cannot conceive.'"⁹⁵ In the end Newton "contends that the existence of gravitational phenomena becomes rational [and thus real] only on the supposition that they are an expression of divine providence . . . an 'active principle' which . . . operates continually . . . 'in preserving and continuing the beings, powers, orders, dispositions and motions of all things.'"⁹⁶ In short, we know the cause is there only because we see its effects; and so it is with all the great forces in the universe, from gravity to the weak force.

Going to the Source. The standard guide to the Atonement is the Gospel of John. Four solid chapters, 14-17, are devoted to showing that the Atonement is literal; it is real. It is not surprising that John is the only New Testament character besides the Lord who is named in the Book of Mormon. The clergy have ever insisted that John is the most "spiritual" book in the Bible, instructing us in things that are true without being real. It is true that John is the most other-worldly of books, but it is also the most literal. John himself testifies to "that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life" (1 John 1:1). And it is John who reports what the Lord said on the subject: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we

have seen; and ye receive not our witness" (John 3:11). "And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony" (John 3:32). How can those who would make ghostly abstractions of such passages claim that they are receiving the witness? We need only compare the technical and legalistic and sectarian language of some of the epistles of the Apostles with the simple straightforward statements of John to see why the doctors of the schools refused to take him at face value. In their world no one could be that naive; John can't possibly expect us to take literally what he says, no matter how strongly he seems to insist on it.

But in John there is no room left for ceremony or metaphysics; it is all real and it is all in the other world. "Jesus raised his eyes to the sky and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee; . . . thou hast given him authority over all flesh so that everything thou gavest him, he can give to them, namely, eternal life" (John 17:1-2). "So now Father, glorify me in thy presence [or by your side] with the glory I had in your presence before the world existed" (John 17:5).

Where were we then? We were there: "They were thine, and thou hast given them to me; . . . now they know that all that thou hast given me comes from thee" (John 17:6-7). "I am asking for their sake: I do not plead for the world [that is the exclusion principle], but for those whom thou gavest me, because they are thine, and everything that is thine is also mine, and I am glorified in them" (John 17:9-10). "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me" (John 17:11), reads the King James version; but in the Greek text there is no direct object "whom," and the word tereo can mean to "test by observation or trial."⁹⁷ Instead we have an instrumental dative, so we get, "test them on the name with which you endowed me, that they may be one even as we are one." This takes us back to the kapporeth, for only the High Priest knew the name which he whispered for admission through the temple veil on the Day of

Atonement.⁹⁸

Here then is the sense in which we are one, the true at-one-ment. As to the ordinances on earth, "When I was with them I tested them in the name by which thou didst endow me, and they have kept the secret and not one of them has been destroyed except the son of perdition, that the scriptures may be fulfilled" (John 17:12). "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of [do not come out of] the world anymore than I am of the world" (John 17:14). "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given to them; that they may be one: even as we are one--I in them and thou in me" (John 17:22-23), that we may be endowed (initiated, completed) to make one, "so I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). "I ask not only for them but also for those who believe on me through their teachings, "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21).

Was the world then to be converted? No, says John, but they have to be given a chance: "Who of you can charge me with being wrong (hamartias)? If I am speaking the truth, why won't you believe me? You cannot hear my teaching because you are from your fathers, the devil, and you want to engage in his lustful practices. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth" (John 8:44, 46). That goes back to the drama in the preexistence: "If God was your Father you would love me. For I come from the Father and I am going back" (John 8:42). This constant reference to place and motion in John has ever been a perplexity to theologians, who maintain that God must be everywhere, but John will not allow that; i.e., "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come again unto you. If ye loved me ye would rejoice [they are sorrowing because they do not understand it], because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. . . . Hereafter I will not talk much

with you for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:25, 28, 30). How are we to avoid seeing the whole atonement in the other world when we read, "Father, concerning what thou hast given me, what I want is that wherever I am they too might be with me that they might behold my glory which thou gavest me, because thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). They are going back to that preexistent glory. "And I have made known to them thy name, and I shall make known that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them as I also in them" (John 17:26).

There are more than a dozen enlightening discourses on the Atonement in the Book of Mormon.⁹⁹ None is more remarkable than the impressive epitome contained in a single verse, the conclusion of Enos's movingly personal story: "And I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that in him I shall rest. And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father. Amen" (Enos 1:27).

1. The Second Law of Thermodynamics states: "All physical or chemical changes tend to proceed in such a direction that useful energy undergoes irreversible degradation into a randomized form called entropy. They come to a stop at an equilibrium point, at which the entropy formed is the maximum possible under the existing conditions." Albert L. Lehninger, Principles of Biochemistry (New York: Worth, 1982), 362.
2. Shakespeare, Measure for Measure, act III, scene 1, line 129-32.
3. Regarding katallagein, see Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott (revised by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie), A Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 899.
4. Regarding kaphar, see Marcus Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature, 2 vols. (New York: Pardes, 1950), 1:661-62.
5. Regarding the Aramaic kafat, see William Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, tr. Edward Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 1097; defined as "bind (. . . Syr. form knots, . . . twist into a knot, Ar. draw together. . . . II. bring together); . . . they were bound . . . bind; . . . bound."
6. Regarding the Arabic kafat, see Ed Stanley Lane-Poole, Arabic-English Lexicon, 2 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1885), 1 (7): 2618-23, defined as "He drew the thing together to himself, . . . and contracted it, grasped it or took it. . . . It (a garment) was drawn up, or tucked up, and contracted. . . . He took the whole of the property to himself." (The general idea seems to be that of an embrace.)
7. Regarding hēpet, see Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929), 71.
8. Regarding capto, see, P. G. W. Glare, ed., Oxford Latin Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 273; defined as "To try to touch or take hold of, grasp at."
9. Regarding the Persian kaftan (caftan), see Philip B. Gove, ed., Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Springfield, MA: Merriam, 1971), 313, "caftan: An ankle-length coatlike garment, usu. of cotton or silk, often striped, with very long sleeves and a sash [note the garment is drawn up around the body by the sash] fastening, common throughout the Levant." Cf. David B. Guralnik, Webster's New World Dictionary (New York: Collins and World, 1953), 198, "caftan [turk.qaftan] a long-sleeved robe with a girdle, worn in eastern Mediterranean countries"; Jess Stein, ed., Random House Dictionary (New York: Random House, 1983), 208, "caftan. n. a long garment having long sleeves and tied at the waist by a girdle, worn under a coat in the Near

East. Also. kaftan [< Russ kaftan < Turk < Pers qaftan]."

10. Regarding the Arabic kafata, see Poole, Arabic-English Lexicon, 1 (7): 2618-19.

11. "Aprocryphon of John," (P Berol. 8502 p. 19.6-22. 17; pp 79-85 Till) in Edgar Hennecke, New Testament Apocrypha, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 1:322.

12. Regarding kapporeth, see Francis Brown, The New Brown--Driver--Briggs--Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon (Lafayette, IN: Associated Publishers and Authors, 1978), 498; "It was a slab of gold 2 1/2 cubits by 1 1/2 cubits placed on top of the ark of testimony. On it, and apart of it, were two golden cherubim facing each other, whose outstretched wings came together above and constituted the throne of Yahweh." Cf. Miles Martindale, Dictionary of the Holy Bible, revised and corrected by Joseph Benson (New York: Bangs and Mason, 1823), 116; "The Hebrew word, rendered atonement, signifies covering; a proper atonement covering sin and the sinner from the avenging justice of God." Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., Harper's Bible Dictionary (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1985), 64; "Interest is focused on the gold 'mercy seat' or cover on top of it. This is now God's throne, where he appears in a cloud [Lev. 16:2] to communicate his will [Exod. 25:17-22]. As the Hebrew term kapporeth suggests, this was also the place where atonement was made, supremely by the sprinkling of blood on the Day of Atonement [Lev. 16:14-16]." This notes the contradiction between the idea of the lid or the roof. The original entrance to the most holy place was definitely a veil, Exodus 26:31-33. The earliest representations of synagogues show both the door to the Temple and to the Holy of Holies behind a heavy veil which has been partly drawn aside; Georgette Corcos, ed., The Glory of the Old Testament (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Publishing House, 1984), 45 (see caption of photo 64): "Such curtains conceal the doors of the ark in which the Scrolls of the Law are kept in the synagogue ('that you mayest bring in thither within the vail of the ark of testimony')." Illustrations on pages 45 (photo 64), 51 (photo 71).

13. Erwin R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, 13 vols. (New York: Pantheon, 1953-68), 1:251.

14. Ibid., 246.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., 248.

17. Hugh W. Nibley, The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1975), 244-46, 253; cf. Fernand Cabrol, Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de

liturgie (Paris: Letouzey, 1907), 2929 (Figure 988).

18. Philo, On the Life of Moses II, 17, 87; for English translation, see Philo, On the Life of Moses, 10 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 6:491, 493.

19. Philo, On the Life of Moses II, 17, 88-89; cf. English translation, page 493.

20. In Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, 2:1703, the first meaning given by Jastrow is "return to God, repentance"; Walter S. Wurzburger, "Atonement," The Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. Mircea Eliade, 16 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 1:494.

21. Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, 1:600.

22. Encyclopedia Judaica, 16 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 2:208-9; regarding the Yeshivah shel ma lah or Metivta de-Raki a ("The Academy on High" or "Academy of the Sky," respectively), "It is clear from the Bava Mezia 86a that the two terms are identical. . . . He [God] instructs young children who died before they could study (Avolah Zarah 3b). . . . On the Day of Atonement, . . . the permission of the Academy on High is invoked to hold the service together with 'transgressors.' It is also invoked in the prayer recited before changing the name of a sick person, see Seder Berakhot (Amsterdam, 1687), 299-301." "Yeshivah shel ma lah sitting, rest divine court. B. Metsia 86a, . . . has been summoned before divine justice (is dead)," Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, 1:600.

23. Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, 1:600, 603.

24. Encyclopedia Judaica, 16 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 6:294; cf. Corcos, The Glory of the Old Testament, 122 (picture number 185).

25. Ibid., 276.

26. Ibid., 294.

27. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, vol. 9.

28. Macrobius Saturnalia, I, 21, 7, in Macrobius, Saturnalia, tr. Percival V. Davies (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 142.

29. Servius, Nigidius, fr. 29a.

30. Richard Reitzenstein, Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1966), 50, and his other book Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965), 99, citing

- Macrobius, Saturnalia I, 20, 17.
31. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, 1:31.
32. Ibid.; cf. 1:71.
33. Apostolic Constitutions VII, 35, in PG 1:1029.
34. Ibid.
35. Berakoth 55a in Seder Zera'im, The Babylonian Talmud, tr. Maurice Simon, 10 vols. (London: Soncino Press, 1948), part 5:334.
36. Regarding the "scape-goat," or "Azazel," see Yoma 67b; cf. "Noah," 10-11 in Louis Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, 7 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1983), 5:170-71; Encyclopaedia Judaica, 3:1001-2.
37. For an entertaining discussion, read Mary Renault, The King Must Die (New York: Pantheon, 1958).
38. Siegfried Schott, "Die Reinigung Pharaohs," in Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen Philologisch historische Klasse 3 (January 1957): 67.
39. Joseph F. Smith, in JD 15:325-26.
40. Reitzenstein and Schaeder, Studien zum antiken Synkretismus, 23.
41. Plato, Republic X, 613-620.
42. Reitzenstein, Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen, 27.
43. Reitzenstein, Studien zum antiken Synkretismus, 112.
44. Ibid., 65.
45. Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 1:324.
46. Israel Lévi, "Le sacrifice d'Isaac et la mort de Jésus," Revue des Études Juives, 64 (1912): 161-84; especially 168.
47. See Gerald Friedlander, tr., Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer (New York: Hermon, 1965), 227, footnote 9.
48. B. Beer, Das Leben Abrahams (Leipzig: Leiner, 1859), 69.
49. Roy A. Rosenberg, "Jesus, Isaac, and the 'Suffering Servant,'" Journal of Biblical Literature 84 (December 1965): 388.

50. See Hugh W. Nibley, "The Sacrifice of Isaac," Improvement Era (March 1970): 84-94.
51. Wurzburger, Encyclopedia of Religion, 1:494.
52. William J. Wolf, Ibid., 496.
53. Regarding "Cur Deus Homo [circa 1097]," see Anselm of Canterbury, Why God Became Man and the Virgin Conception and Original Sin, tr. Joseph M. Colleran (Albany, NY: Magi, 1969).
54. Ibid., 498.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., 498.
58. Joseph Needham, The Grand Titration (London: Allen and Unwin, 1956), 301.
59. Ibid., 312.
60. Ibid., 299.
61. Regarding the Dura Synagogue, see Erwin R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, 13 vols, (New York: Pantheon, 1964), 9:78-123.
62. Ibid; cf. Encyclopaedia Judaica, 6:294.
63. Discussed in Hugh W. Nibley, "The Expanding Gospel," BYU Studies, 7 (1965): 3-27.
64. Yigael Yadin, The Temple Scroll (New York: Random House, 1985).
65. Wurzburger, Encyclopedia of Religion, 1:494.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. 2 Maccabees 12:45-46.
69. Wurzburger, Encyclopedia of Religion, 1:494. Also regarding kaddish, see Isaac Landman, ed., The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 10 vols. (New York: Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 1941), 6:273-75.
70. Hugh W. Nibley, "The Idea of the Temple in History," MS 120 (August 1958): 228-49; also published as "What Is a Temple," The Temple in Antiquity: Ancient Records and Modern Perspectives

(Provo: Religious Studies Center, 1984), 30-32; reprinted in CWHN 4:355-90.

71. Nibley, "The Expanding Gospel," 3-27.

72. E. A. Wallis Budge, tr., "Discourse on Abbatôn by Timothy, Archbishop of Alexandria," in Coptic Martyrdoms, 6 vols. (London: British Museum, 1914), 4:225-49 (English translation on 474-96).

73. *Ibid.*, 480-84.

74. Homer, Iliad, I, line 3, pollas d'iphthimous psychas Aidi proiapsen. See Homer, Iliad with an English translation by A. T. Murray (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971), 2-3.

75. "The Terrible Questions" was talk given by Hugh Nibley at the Riverton Stake Center on September 8, 1988.

76. For treatment of the issues and sources, Karl Heussi, Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte (Tübingen: Mohr, 1910), 64.

77. Nibley, "The Expanding Gospel," 11-12, 18-26.

78. Hugh W. Nibley, The World and the Prophets (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1954), 167-69; reprinted in CWHN 3:182-83, "The Ancient Law of Liberty."

79. Jastrow, A Dictionary of The Targumim, 1:600, 603.

80. Nibley, The World and the Prophets, 166-68; in CWHN 3:182-84.

81. Augustine, Confessions, 8:17.

82. Regarding theatromania, see Hugh W. Nibley, "Victoriosa Loquacitas: The Rise of Rhetoric and the Decline of Everything Else," Western Speech, 20/2 (Spring 1956), 57-82; "Sparsiones," CJ, 40/9 (June 1945), 515-543; "The Roman Games as a Survival of an Archaic Year-cult," (Berkeley: University of California Ph.D. Dissertation, 1939).

83. Lord Raglan, The Origins of Religion (London: Wattson, 1949), 25.

84. Ruth Hubbard, "The Laws of Nature," The Nation Since 1865 (October 24, 1988): 247:371.

85. W. Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality," Poetical Works of Wordsworth (London: Frederick Warne, 1854), 315.

86. P. T. Matthews, The Nuclear Apple (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), 71.

87. George Wald, "The Origin of Life," Scientific American (August 1954): 46, 53.

88. See George Norlin, tr., Isocrates, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).

89. William J. Wolf, No Cross No Crown: A Study of the Atonement (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957), 118; Wolf quotes Abelard's verse (from The Hymnal, Church Pension Fund, 1940): "Alone thou goest forth, O Lord, In sacrifice to die; Is this thy sorrow naught to us Who pass unheeding by? Our sins, not thine, thou bearest, Lord, Make us thy sorrow feel, Till through our pity and our shame Love answers love's appeal."

90. Joseph Smith, Lectures on Faith, compiled by N. B. Lundwall (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, n.d.), 58, "A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation."

91. TPJS 374.

92. Lyall Watson, Supernature (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 5, 8; Wald, The Origin of Life, 46; John D. Barrow and Frank J. Tipler, The Anthropic Cosmological Principle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

93. Gerd Buchdahl, "Explanation and Gravity," Changing Perspectives in the History of Science, ed. Mikulás Teich and Robert Young (London: Heinemann, 1973), 173-74.

94. Ibid., 176.

95. Ibid., 177-78.

96. Ibid., 180.

97. Regarding tereo, see Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 1789.

98. See for a possible example in Gnosticism, 1 Jeu 38-40; for an English translation, see Carl Schmidt, ed., The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex, tr. Violet Macdermot (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 99-111.

99. For example, 2 Nephi 2; 9; Jacob 4; Mosiah 3; 4; 12-16; Alma 5; 7:11-13; 34; 42; 3 Nephi 11:9-17; Ether 12; Moroni 7; and others.