

the meaning of the atonement

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THE GOOD NEWS

The last talk, on the Terrible Questions,¹ 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, and so on—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 that 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 Thermodynamics²—must take

over, "and if so, this flesh must have laid down to rot and to crumble to its really does mean, when we write it out, mother earth, to rise no more" (2 Nephi 9:7). That is entropy, and what is to stop being "at one" with another and the it? Jacob grasps the situation: "There must needs be a power," he says, "of The word atonement appears only once resurrection," and such a power has indeed been provided, "to fulfill the the King James Version), and in 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 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 God.

to the alternative: "The weariest and most loathed worldly life that age, ache, ciliation" is καταλλαγή. That is a business term which the *Greek-English* nature is a paradise to what we fear of death."³

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 someone.

The Greek word translated as "reconciliation" is καταλλαγή. 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."⁴ It is the return to the status ante quo, whether as a making of peace or a settlement of the 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, that is, 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 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 (*anakephalaiaosasthai*)—things in the guest's shoulder and declare him under redeemest to thee from Egypt, from the heavens and things on earth" his protection. In the Book of Mormon, nations and their gods?" (2 Samuel 7:23). (Ephesians 1:9-10). A great at-one-ment we see this world as a plain, a dark and dreary waste, a desert. We see Nephi By redemption, someone has paid a price to get you off, but the frequent use of the commercial analogy is not out of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the pursuing him. In great danger, he prays reverence for trade and commerce but day of redemption (bought free, the Lord to give him an open road in the opposite. The redeemed are bought *apolytroseos*)," and to be united in love, the low way, to block his pursuers, and to clear them of all worldly obligation "forgiving one another, even as God for to make them stumble. He comes to the by paying off the world in its own Christ's sake hath forgiven you" tent of the Lord and enters as a currency, after which it has no further (Ephesians 4:30, 32). So when the suppliant; and in reply, the Master, as claim on the redeemed: "And the child scriptures speak of atonement, it is was the ancient custom, puts the hem of of eight days shall be circumcised for always re-conciliation, re-demption, re- his robe protectively over the kneeling you, every male through your surrection, re-lease, salvation, and so man's shoulder (*katafa*). This puts him generations, born of a house or a on. All refer to a return to a former under the Lord's protection from all purchase of silver of any outsider who state. This is even more vividly and enemies. They embrace in a close hug, is not of thy seed. He must certainly be concretely expressed in the Hebrew as Arab chiefs still do; the Lord makes a circumcised, born of your house, or terminology. place for him and invites him to sit bought with your silver; and it shall be In Semitic languages, where one root down beside him—they are at-one (2 my covenant in [among or with] thy can have many meanings, the first rule Nephi 4:33; Alma 5:24). flesh for an everlasting covenant" is always to look for the basic or literal This is the imagery of the Atonement, (Genesis 17:12-13). All the newborn are meaning of the word, which in Hebrew, the embrace: "The Lord hath redeemed taken into the family, which is united Aramaic, and Arabic usually takes us my soul from hell; I have beheld his by an eternal covenant by the token back to early days and simple homely glory, and I am encircled about etern- shedding of blood (circumcision) to affairs of life in the desert or the ally in the arms of his love" (2 Nephi become the seed of Abraham—this is a countryside. One simple physical act 1:15). "O Lord, wilt thou encircle me 1:15). "O Lord, wilt thou encircle me real at-one-ment. The Greek equivalent often triggers a long line of derivatives, around in the robe of thy righteousness! is lytrosis, a ransoming. Paul tells the meanings that are perfectly reasonable O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine saints to prepare for the salvation that if one takes the most obvious steps from escape before mine enemies!" (2 Nephi has been made available by disengaging one to the next, but which can end up 4:33). "Behold, he sendeth an invitation from this world—"denying ungodliness miles from the starting place. The basic unto all men, for the arms of mercy are and worldly lusts, we should live word for atonement is *kaphar*, which extended towards them, and he saith: soberly, righteously, and godly, in this has the same basic meaning in Hebrew, Repent, and I will receive you" (Alma present world"—so that God "might Aramaic, and Arabic, that being "to 5:33). redeem us from all iniquity, and purify bend, arch over, cover; ... to deny, ... to This is the *hpet*, the ritual embrace that unto himself a peculiar people" (Titus forgive, ... to be expiated, ... renounce."5 consummates the final escape from 2:12, 14). Salvation is likewise rescue The Arabic *kafara* puts the emphasis death in the Egyptian funerary texts (soteria), also rendered deliverance. on a tight squeeze, such as tucking in and reliefs, where the son Horus is Another expression is "for a price," the the skirts, drawing a thing close to one's received into the arms of his father word being time, "that which is paid in self. Closely related are Aramaic6 and Osiris. There is a story confirmed by the token or worth of value." He paid for us Arabic *kafat*,7 meaning a close recently discovered *Apocryphon of John* in which Jesus and John the Baptist what he thought we were worth so he embrace, which are certainly meet as little children, rush into each could join us with him. In his letter to related to the Egyptian *hpet* ^{1,8}  the common ritual embrace other's arms and fuse into one person, like a business agreement, not binding written with the ideogram of embracing becoming perfectly "at-one."12 but releasing: "In whom we have bail arms. It may be cognate with the Latin In Israel when the sacrifices and sin offerings were completed on the Day of (apolytrosis—our release pending the judgment) through his blood, the pardoning (aphesin, setting-aside) of mis- *captō*,9 and from it comes the Persian Atonement, the High Priest went to the demeanors (*paraptomaton*, blunder, completely embracing the body. Most door of the kapporeth to receive assurance from the Lord within that he trespass) on consideration of the riches interesting is the Arabic *kafata*,11 had accepted the offerings and rep- (ploutos) of his generosity (*charitos*), as it is the key to a dramatic situation. pentance of the people and forgiven them their sins: "At the door of the which he has bestowed upon us in all It was the custom for one fleeing for his life in the desert to seek protection in the tabernacle of the congregation before wisdom and understanding (*phronesei*) the tent of a great sheik, crying out, the Lord: where I will meet you, to (Ephesians 1:7-8). Next Paul tells us that "Ana dakhiluka," meaning "I am thy speak there unto thee" (Exodus 29:42). it was all the Savior's idea, "that in the economy (*oikonomia*) of the fullness of suppliant," whereupon the Lord would The kapporeth is usually assumed to be times the whole thing might be brought place the hem of his robe over the with the front, since one stands before together again in Christ

it.¹³ The Septuagint, a much older text, when drawn to open up a whole stage, tells us more: I will meet you at the a whole world. ... So the curtains have "door of the tent of the testimony in the taken the place of the old carved screen presence of the Lord, on which occasion which seems to us to separate the world I shall make myself known to you that I of man from heaven. ... Only the few might converse with you" (Exodus 29:42). behind. ... The sense of distinction between the earthly and heavenly [was] Zacharias, a direct descendent of Aaron still kept." Even more important than (as was also his wife), entered behind the idea that the veil introduces us into the veil into the Holy of Holies (naon another realm is that "the curtains have tou kuriou, the skene or tent of the Old also the value of suggesting the curtain Testament) while people waited on the in the Temple which separated the outside (Luke 1:9-10). He did not meet sanctuary from the world of ordinary the Lord but his personal represen- life."¹⁴ tative, a messenger of the Lord standing And where does the Atonement motif beside the altar (Luke 1:11), who come in? In a stock presentation found identified himself as "Gabriel, who in early Jewish synagogues as well as stands in the presence of God, sent on very early Christian murals, "the down to converse with thee and to tell hand of God is represented, but could thee the good news" (Luke 1:19). The not be called that explicitly, and instead news was about a great at-one-ment of the heavenly utterance, the bath kol about to take place in which the [echo, distant voice, whisper] is children would "turn to the Lord their given."¹⁵ From the hand "radiate beams God" while the hearts of the fathers of light."¹⁶ To show the hand and light would be "turned again (epistrepsai) to thus emerging from central darkness," the children, the disobedient to the writes Goodenough, "is as near as one wisdom of the just; to make ready a could come in conservative Judaism to people prepared for the Lord" (Luke depicting God himself."¹⁷ In early 1:16-17). It is all a preparation for a Christian representations the hand of great bringing together again through God reaching through the veil is the office of baptism after they had grasped by the initiate or human spirit been separated by the Fall. "I will who is being caught up into the sanctify the tabernacle of the congre- presence of the Lord."¹⁸ gation and ... Aaron and his sons, ... and Philo of Alexandria, who for all his I will dwell among the children of philosophizing had a thorough know- Israel, and be their God" (Exodus 29:44- ledge of Jewish customs, compares all 45). They will all be one happy family the hangings of the tabernacle with the forever. It is understandable that the main veil: "But in a sense the curtains kapporeth should be called the mercy also are veils, not only because they seat, where man is reconciled at-one cover the roof and walls but also with God on the Day of Atonement: because they are woven of the same "And after the second veil, the kinds of material. ... And what [Moses] tabernacle [succoth, booth, tent] which calls the 'covering' [kalumma] was also is called the Holiest ... [contained] the made with the same materials as the cherubims of glory shadowing the veil, ... placed ... so that no mercyseat; of which we cannot now unconsecrated person should get even a speak particularly." Thus Paul to the distant view of the holy precincts."¹⁹ Hebrews (Hebrews 9:3, 5). The material makes it the cosmic veil, Commenting on the ancient synagogue the four colors being "equal in number at Beth Alpha in Palestine, Goodenough to the elements ... out of which the notes, "The scene as designed shows the earth was made, and with a definite curtains drawn back at either side to relation to those elements. ... For it was disclose the objects behind them." The necessary that in framing the temple of custom has persisted: "In a synagogue man's making, dedicated to the Father the Torah shrine is still properly and Ruler of All, he should take concealed by a curtain, but these substances like those with which that curtains in the mosaic are not especially Ruler made the All. The tabernacle, connected with the shrine: they serve then, was constructed to resemble a

ORDINANCES

This yearly rite of atonement included the teshuvah, a "return to God, repentance."²¹ 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";²² the meanings all combine in the Yeshivah shel macalah or Metivta de-Rakica ("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";²³ the root yashav has the basic meaning of sitting or settling down to live in a place, yashub" seated, ... [a] sitting."²⁴ 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," and so on). 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 (Septuagint) and the New, the Cherubim; ... with unwearied voices would ask, can ye feel so now?" (Alma *kapporeth* is called the *hilasterion*, cry, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of 5:26). In the next verse he asks again if literally the place of the *hilaria*. *Hilaria* hosts.' " It is the old Hebrew *qadosh*, their garments "have been cleansed and is the same word in Greek and Latin, *qadosh*, *qadosh* (cf. Greek *trishagion*, made white through the blood of from which we get our hilarious. "thrice holy"), found in Isaiah 6:3, as all Christ, who will come to redeem his *Hilasterion* is the word used by Paul for Israel and the Church unite their voices, 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, 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, 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."²⁵

Along with the Old Testament figures we see felines and masks of Dionysus and fertility symbols of Demeter.²⁶ 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."²⁷ 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.²⁸ 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

"atonement" in his address to the Romans (Romans 3:25), since the stars join in "this Hymn of the cosmos to God's bounty and love."³⁴ man writer Macrobius tells us that the *hilaria* was held at the Spring Equinox together in one [*hamillomene*] by the powers under heaven by day and night to celebrate the revival of life with the new vegetation year. The Mater Dea and Attis preside, he says, the very the hymn." The four elements join in, figures we find at Dura as Dionysus and Demeter, and the latter is drawn by her them the breath of life, and the trees lions.²⁹ Another Roman tells us that on Him who caused them to spring up. that occasion Orpheus was regarded as Whatsoever things exist by thy word the king of the primum regnum, the testify to the might of thy power. Hence primal god and creator.³⁰ it behooves every man to feel in his

The *hilaria* was the occasion on which heart to send up a song to thee through all the world joined in the great cre- Christ for the sake of all; for thou art ation hymn, as they burst into a spon- kind in thy benefactions and generous taneous song of praise recalling the first in thy compassion."³⁵ As Alma puts it: creation "when the morning stars sang "My brethren, ... if ye have felt to sing together, and all the sons of God the song of redeeming love, I would ask, shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). That song of can ye feel so now?" (Alma 5:26). And creation has left its mark throughout John tells us that "they sung as it were a new song before the throne, ... and no The mingling of pagan with Jewish and man could learn that song but the Christian symbols in the early art of the hundred and forty and four thousand, synagogue and the church (Marucci's which were redeemed from the earth" Manual) was long discounted as "purely (Revelation 14:3). The theme was decorative," an explanation that was renewal and liberation, which was also soon discredited by the evidence.³² As the theme of the *hilaria* at the time of Goodenough sees it, "Dura presented its the Saturnalia. The 144,000 are another Old Testament scenes clustered about a striking example of at-one-ment.

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."³³

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: All things hast thou created in wisdom, ... the holy Seraphin along with the

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 5 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 (including related terms atone, atoned, atoneth, atoning) appears 44 times, but only 3 times in the Doctrine and Covenants, and twice in the Pearl of

Great Price. The other 39 times are all in raises the question of whether the and do, at least in part. Should all the the Book of Mormon. This puts the Hebrew rites are original. In the late society be punished, then? How do we Book of Mormon in the milieu of the nineteenth and early twentieth centur- apportion the blame when all share in old Hebrew rites before the destruction ies wide-ranging comparative studies in it? We cannot. The law of Moses insists of Solomon's Temple, for after that the philology and religion made it look as if with great strictness that every Ark and the covering (*kapporeth*) no the Hebrew ceremonies of atonement individual man, woman, and child, rich longer existed, but the Holy of Holies were just one among many rites found and poor, shall pay "ransom for his was still called the *bait ha-kapporeth*. throughout the ancient world by which soul" of exactly the same amount—one-The loss of the old ceremonies occurred societies, primitive or civilized, would half shekel, no more, no less (see shortly after Lehi left Jerusalem. "As practice purification and expiation, Exodus 30:11-16). Just as sweeping is the long as the Temple stood," we read in individual and collective, to enter the other provision that God "commandeth the Talmud, "the altar atoned for Israel, New Year with a clean slate, their all men, everywhere, to repent" (3 but now a man's table atones for him."³⁶ collective and individual sins having Nephi 11:32) and to keep repenting as Thus the ordinances of atonement were, been transferred to and carried by a long as our days are extended for that after Lehi's day, supplanted by allegory. pharmakon, scape-goat, rex sat-express purpose. We are all in it Let us recall that Lehi and his people urnalicus, Lord of Misrule, Year-King, together. who left Jerusalem in the very last days and so on.³⁷ Some of these are attested To satisfy both offended justice and of Solomon's temple were zealous in in pre-Hebraic times, and it was offended deity, something must be erecting altars of sacrifice and building assumed that the Mosaic rites were not done. Appeasement, payment, settle- temples of their own. It has often been original but derivative. It must be ment—call it what you will—it must claimed that the Book of Mormon admitted that other societies seem to restore the old unity of the heavenly cannot contain the "fullness of the share the tradition; the most notable is and the human order, it must bring gospel," since it does not have temple the grasp of the situation by the Greek about at-one-ment of the two. And ordinances. As a matter of fact they are dramatists, whose plays in fact were what payment or sacrifice is sufficient everywhere in the book if we know religious presentations, the main theme to do that? The usual practice where to look for them, and the dozen of the tragedies being the purging of throughout the ancient world was to or so discourses on the Atonement in guilt. No one ever stated the problem of sacrifice the king, who after all took the Book of Mormon are replete with man's condition more clearly than the credit for victory and prosperity and temple imagery. great Greek dramatists. They show us was answerable when they failed.³⁸ From all the meanings of *kaphar* and what life is without the Atonement, for This is the Egyptian theme on which *kippurim*, we concluded that the literal their view of life, like that of all the the book of Abraham starts out, but the meaning of *kaphar* and *kippurim* is a ancients, is a profoundly tragic one. Egyptians had no word for sin; even the close and intimate embrace, which took The standard tragedy begins with Hebrew word khata properly means "to place at the kapporeth or the front something gone very wrong in the city. fail or miss, not to hit the mark," exactly cover or flap of the tabernacle or tent. After all, that is the way the Book of like the Greek hamartanein (Genesis The Book of Mormon instances are Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants 20:6). The Egyptian idea of atonement quite clear, for example, "Behold, he also begin—in the one case, that "great appears in the regulation that if sendeth an invitation unto all men, for city Jerusalem [about to] be destroyed" Pharaoh has knowingly or unknow- the arms of mercy are extended towards (1 Nephi 1:4); in the other, "peace [is ingly taken life by the shedding of them, and he saith: Repent, and I will about to] be taken from the earth, and blood he must atone for it (*entsühnen*) receive you" (Alma 5:33). "But behold, the devil shall have power over his own by making a sacrifice, "by which the Lord hath redeemed my soul from dominion" (D&C 1:35). Things are not as sacrifice he is purified of the Serpent hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am they should be in the world; nothing which has defiled him before the encircled about eternally in the arms of short of immediate destruction is in the Gods."³⁹ That is a long way from the his love" (2 Nephi 1:15). To be redeemed offering. Someone must be responsible. Hebrew atonement. is to be atoned. From this it should be Why? Because things don't just happen; As to the resemblances that have be- clear what kind of oneness is meant by appeal must be made to the oracle. guiled the scholars, one hundred years the Atonement—it is being received in a Long before Aeschylus' *The Suppliant* ago Joseph F. Smith gave the most ra- close embrace of the prodigal son, *Maidens* (the earliest Greek tragedy), we tional and still the most acceptable ex- pressing not only forgiveness but find the same dramatic scene as Moses planation for them, since Frazer's the- oneness of heart and mind that stands before the people and cries out, ory of spontaneous generation of par- amounts to identity, like a literal family "Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I allel rituals is now widely discredited. identity as John sets it forth so vividly will go up unto the Lord; peradventure To quote President Smith: "Undoubtedly in chapters 14 through 17 of his Gospel I shall make an atonement for your sin" the knowledge of this law and of other (see below). (Exodus 32:30). For they had turned to rites and ceremonies was carried by the the golden calf and were smitten with posterity of Adam into all lands, and the plague. continued with them, more or less pure, But who is guilty? Not just one person, to the flood, and through Noah, who Mention of the Egyptian endowment certainly; society makes us what we are was a 'preacher of righteousness,' to

BORROWED ORDINANCES

Mention of the Egyptian endowment

those who succeeded him, spreading Hellenistic mystery religions, the appear out of nothing? For proof of his out into all nations and countries. ... Gnostics, the Mandaeans, the Early point, Meyer produced the case of What wonder, then, that we should find Christians, the Cabbalists, and so on— Joseph Smith and Mormonism. Though relics of Christianity, so to speak, all seemed to be speaking the same knowing nothing whatever of the im- among the heathens and nations who language. Looking back in time, the mense background material brought know not Christ, and whose histories scholars saw the strong influence of forth long after his time, Joseph Smith date back beyond the days of Moses, Plato almost everywhere, but where did nonetheless put together the most and even beyond the flood, independent he get it from? From the first, the complete and comprehensible exposi- of and apart from the records of the consensus was always for Egypt, but in tion of those same abundant motifs in Bible." The scholars of his time, he the 1920s there was a strong swing to eminently reasonable form. His neph- notes, took the position that " 'Christia- Iran, with emphasis on Plato's de- ew, Joseph F. Smith, was right. nity' sprang from the heathen, it being pendency on Zarathustra. The fad wore The evidence that excited the debates of found that they have many rites similar off, but still the argument goes on. the early twentieth century was almost to those recorded in the Bible, etc." This What were the teachings in question? exclusively of a literary nature, so that jumping to conclusions was premature The basic ideas (*Grundgedanken*) of all the experts concluded that the cults to say the least, "for if the heathen have of them are the yearning for return to themselves that came from Egypt, doctrines and ceremonies resembling ... God and eternal life, which Eduard Greece, or the East confined their those ... in the Scriptures, it only proves Meyer, the most learned of them all, activities largely to the intellectual and ... that these are the traditions of the maintained came from Moses to literary exercises of individual fathers handed down, ... and that they Philo.⁴¹ With this went the conviction practitioners and their followers. In will cleave to the children to the latest expressed by Plato that this world is a either case the Atonement for them was generation, though they may wander place of evil from which we are liber- a scenario in which all the biblical into darkness and perversion, until but ated to return to God, this world being terms become lofty abstractions, a slight resemblance to their origin, in a state of decline toward inevitable spurning the childish simplicity of the which was divine, can be seen." Which catastrophe and ultimate restoration by vulgar. Most scholars attributed this to comes first, the Pagan or the Hebrew God.⁴² The escape of the individual to Philo. The unio mystica of the cults and version? As President Smith observes, eternal bliss is anticipated by such mysteries was a form of atonement, "The Bible account, being the most ra- things as baptism, sacred meals, indeed, but with that difference. To the tional and indeed [the] only historical prophecy, and visions or dreams of as- devotee impatient of the promised one, ... we cannot but come to the cension to the Seventh Heaven. glory, eager for the great experience, conclusion that this is not the work of Eschatology and cosmology are con- waiting until the Resurrection and the chance."⁴⁰ spicuous, and great importance is laid last judgment was out of the question. on the office and calling of the First They were not kept waiting. From the Man. first, theatrical effects were provided to

THE COMPETITORS

Not a work of chance, to be sure, but surprising that all the mystery religions processions, chants, mystifying were there others? Is the Bible account recognized and copied each other;⁴³ but formulas, even narcotics provided the indeed the only rational historical one? it is equally clear that human vanity experience of another world. Immediate These are questions that must be asked, requires that each religion claim for seating, no waiting. The biblical terms and the vast amount of work on the itself the right to be the one and only do not apply here; being born again subject that has almost all been done exclusive original, given to the first was a matter of a few days or hours. since Joseph F. Smith made his remarks man. Indeed, in studying this stuff "one And then there was that irresistible over a hundred years ago calls for a cannot avoid the feeling," as appeal to the vanity of the average word of comment. In the nineteenth Reitzenstein puts it, "the speculative man, suddenly rid of all of his dull century, a string of scholars with effort to view all religions as one great mediocrity to become an exalted spirit monosyllabic names—Jones, Bopp, Rask, unity."⁴⁴ "The isolating of separate re- overnight, like the Marcosians, immune Grimm, Pott, Diez, Zeuss—discovered ligions as we present them in our text- to the weaknesses and vices of the flesh, unexpected relationships between all books ... breaks down completely if we infinitely superior to all who had not sorts of languages. In the early trace the history of a religious idea or received the enlightenment. twentieth century their studies were concept. ... What may originally have What is so different in Joseph Smith's followed up by grand, sweeping been Babylonian can become Iranian or religion from the others that sound so surveys of comparative literature, re- even Persian, just as we may trace a much like it? The difference is the literal revealing a wealth of religious parallels Persian doctrine in the end back to Atonement. It was, of course, the easy that set the experts to their favorite China."⁴⁵ application of the rhetorical tropes that game of arguing about where which But the great Eduard Meyer sees an made it possible for the Neo-Platonists, rite or expression began, and who bor- exception to this in Christianity as a mystics, gnostics, and clergy to enjoy rowed what when from whom. It was revealed religion. Of course he was immediate fulfillment. It is significant more than a matter of general resembl- challenged; how was it possible for a that the Book of Mormon insists not lances between doctrines and cults: the religion resembling so many others to only on willingness to believe but a

firm and stable mind to qualify for to come;⁵¹ for long after Isaac, the theories," that we "respond to Jesus' atonement—no hysterical or egomani- sacrifice was continued in the temple as message and example of love" in our acal characters like Simon Magus need a similitude of the great and last minds and hearts.⁵⁵ This is Abelard's apply (Jacob 3:2; Alma 57:27; Moroni sacrifice until that actually took place, "love answers love's appeal," which he 7:30).

as Paul explains in his letter to the intensifies by making the crucifixion an object of such pity as to stir all

Another point that places the gospel of Hebrews (Hebrews 7:26-10:22).

Jesus Christ and the ideas of others Without the temple and its appoint- beholders to reform.⁵⁶ Albrecht Ritschl worlds apart is that concept of sin that I ments for blood sacrifice, the Atone- argues that Christ's example inspires have already mentioned. It makes such ment becomes for the Jews a theolo- "ethical response in history."⁵⁷ And so it a teaching as that of the Lord in 3 Nephi gical, philosophical, and especially goes. Vatican II and the Ecumenical 11:32 ("And this is my doctrine ... that psychological exercise.⁵² What was it Movement have turned back to the the Father commandeth all men, then for the Christians? "There is no patristic writers and Anselm, restoring everywhere, to repent and believe in single New Testament doctrine of the "sacrificial language," the "Christus me") simply unthinkable to them. In the Atonement," writes William J. Wolf. Victor," and "moral-influence," with an three degrees of gnostic glory—the "There is simply a collection of images inclination toward the theatrical, now hylic, the psychic, and the pneumatic— and metaphors ... from which moving toward "a reformation of those who had achieved the final degree subsequent tradition built its systematic sacrificial theory, which [is] fortified by were incapable of sin no matter what doctrines and theories. ... Tradition has the use of liturgy and ... comparative they did, just as a gold ring when tried to decide what parts of this picture history of religions."⁵⁸

plunged into filthy sewage in no wise should be taken literally and what parts becomes impure since it cannot pos- metaphorically and has developed sibly enter into reaction with such extended rationales."⁵³ That authority nasty stuff.⁴⁶

then lists the ransom metaphor, the **THE ATONEMENT AND THE LAW**
Joseph Smith took the Atonement back buying free of a slave, and so on, in The Nephites lived by the law of Moses, even before Abraham to Adam. There Mark 10:45; this is the commercial as implemented, for example, by the was a teaching that the sacrifice of Isaac interpretation. There is the emphasis on laws of King Benjamin and Mosiah. Yet was a great atoning sacrifice for Israel, the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28). they are constantly being notified that and Isidore Levi has discussed "the There is the image of the lamb salvation does not come by the law of offering of Isaac as an atonement for developed by John 1:29, 36, and Moses: "Notwithstanding we believe in Israel";⁴⁷ Isaac offered himself as a free- Revelation 13:8. The main issue, he says, Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and will sacrifice on the Day of Atonement is whether the Atonement is the look forward with steadfastness unto with Abraham functioning as the High completion of the Old Testament sac- Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled. Priest at the altar.⁴⁸ This was known rifice or something independent and For, for this end was the law given" (2 among the Jews as the *akedah*, which unique. Nephi 25:24-25).

"Wherefore, we speak concerning the law that our children means the binding, because Isaac There are three main Christian inter- concerned the law that our children submitted of his own free will to be pretations today. First is the classical may know the deadness of the law; ... bound and offered. (It was always a bad interpretation of the Greek Fathers, that they need not harden their hearts omen if the sacrificial victim, animal or which integrates Incarnation, Atone- against him when the law ought to be human, went unwillingly to the altar.) It ment, and Resurrection, and uses the done away" (2 Nephi 26:27). For the law has been maintained by some that Isaac military context—the Christus Victor. is tailored to our weakness, beginning actually was put to death on the Second is Anselm's interpretation, in with the Word of Wisdom, "adapted to occasion and was then restored: "And which "satisfaction" must be paid for the capacity of the weak and the Isaac received his spirit again, while the offense to God's honor, because a son or weakest of all saints, who are or can be angels joined in a chorus of praise: subject, by the Medieval code of fealty called saints" (D&C 89:3). Merely 'Praised be the eternal, thou who hast and honor, must vindicate any offense keeping that, no matter how scrupu- given life to the dead.'"⁴⁹ Again, the to his lord.⁵⁴ The Roman catechism lously, will not assure everlasting chorus reminds us of Alma's "song of defines sin as "any damage done to the exaltation. Some of the Ten Command- redeeming love." Though most of the glory of God." Also, Christ's death, ments are for a barbaric people. Do you Jewish doctors reject the instant being undeserved, has a superfluous have to be reminded every morning not resurrection of Isaac, according to Roy virtue to cover all sins. Third is the to kill anyone during the day, or to A. Rosenberg, still even for them "Isaac Reformation theory of Calvin that steal, or to bear false witness, or to was 'the perfect sacrifice,' the Christ was a substitute who endured commit adultery? Even so we observe atonement offering that brings God's punishment for man or for the even these commandments only forgiveness to the sins of Israel through elect. H. Grotius and Jonathan Edwards halfway today, applying them only to the ages."⁵⁰ The trouble is that Isaac propounded the rectorial or govern- our friends—it is now acceptable or was not sacrificed, but another, a ram, a mental theory of Christ's death having even commendable to kill, lie, or steal, substitute or proxy, even said to bear a deterrent effect on sinners in the as long as the victims are the bad his name, was offered in his stead, public interest. More recently, emphasis people. The Lord summed up "all the serving as a type of the great sacrifice has been put on the "moral-influence law and the prophets" in the two great

commandments; if you keep them you not because it fails of its purpose but parts of the ram with bread (Exodus 29:22-24), Aaron and his sons "eat[ing] can forget all about "the law," for would because that purpose is limited to anyone who loves the Lord with all his getting you to where you are going: those things wherewith the atonement heart, might, mind, and strength, and "For, for this end was the law given; was made" (Exodus 29:33). For the rest his neighbor as himself ever be capable wherefore the law hath become dead of the year, every day, a bullock was of committing any of the awful things unto us, and we are made alive in offered for atonement (Exodus 29:36). forbidden in the Decalogue?

Christ because of our faith; yet we keep Then the Lord received the High Priest Joseph Needham in his extensive re- the law because of the commandments" at the tent door, the veil (in Leviticus search concludes that the idea of a law (2 Nephi 25:25). The law leads us back 16:17-19, the High Priest alone enters handed down from above is a cultural home; the at-one-ment takes place the tabernacle), and conversed with him concept originating in empires and when we get there. In other words, the (Exodus 29:42), accepting the sin great kingdoms where the law is codi- law is all preparation. Everything we do offering, sanctifying the priests and fied and enforced by the ruler. Nor- here is to prepare for the Atonement: people, and receiving them into his mally, he maintains, people live not by "Therefore this life became a company to "dwell among the children written law but by established customs, probationary state; a time to prepare to of Israel, and [to] be their God" (Exodus as in China, where for ages the people meet God; a time to prepare for that 29:45). This order is clearly reflected in have followed "that body of customs endless state ... which is after the D&C 101:23: "And prepare for the which the sage-kings and the people resurrection of the dead" (Alma 12:24). revelation which is to come, when the had always accepted, i.e., what The early Christians taught that as this veil of the covering of my temple, in my Confucians called *li*,⁵⁹ ... practices ... life is a preparation for the next, so in tabernacle, which hideth the earth, shall which unnumbered generations of the the preexistence we had to prepare for be taken off, and all flesh shall see me Chinese people have instinctively felt to this one.⁶⁴ To reach a stage where the together." What an at-one-ment that be right, ... and we may equate it with test would be meaningful—the plan will be! natural law."⁶⁰ It is the difference itself being "prepared from the In reading the full account, it becomes between the *ethos* and the *nomos* of the foundation of the world," well ahead of clear that there were a number of blood Greeks, and actually the difference is time and well understood by those who sacrifices of different animals and at small indeed, since both are sacred and accepted it here—angels were sent to different levels. There is perhaps much binding. In Israel what begins as the remind men of that preparation (Alma that escapes us. The newly discovered written law handed down by revelation 12:30; 13:2-5).

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."⁶¹

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,⁶² which, as the scholars note, leads straight to the throne.⁶³ 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,

THE ORDINANCES

Consider now how the rites of atone-ment were carried out under the law of Moses. Before approaching the tab-ernacle 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 that 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 resurrection of the dead" (Alma 12:24). 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 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.⁶⁵ 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."⁶⁶ 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 go down and pay the price. This opened every sense the reverse of the "grace person's relationship with the Creator, the way; the plan could go forward; the and truth" of the Son. The part about divine grace is required to achieve full sons of God and the morning stars all the angel of light is important to let us atonement." But while prayer and shouted and sang for joy—that was the know that Satan is with us as a regular suffering are required for atonement, great creation hymn which left an member of the group, he does not show Rabbi Yishma'el says for the "desecra- indelible mark in ancient literature and himself as a halloween horror; that tion of the divine name" only "death ritual. The Lord had made it all possible, point is vital in establishing the reality completes atonement."⁶⁷ The idea that leaving men their agency, and obeying of the scene.

one's death is an atonement is wide- the Father in all things. Satan and his What is the justification for Jacob's spread, but since death is usually any- followers refused to accept the majority alarming statement of total loss without thing but a willing sacrifice, that leaves vote; for that, Satan was deprived of his atonement? For the answer, look much to be required; also, the doctrine glory in a reversal of the endowment around you! In the next verse Jacob of "blood atonement" as understood by and was cast out of heaven, which was describes our condition as Homer does some is out of the question, since only the reverse of at-one-ment.⁷⁴ that of his heroes, "all those noble

one sacrifice was adequate to atone for Only in such a context does the spirits caught like rats in a trap,"⁷⁵ our sins. You cannot clear yourself of Atonement, otherwise so baffling, take doomed ahead of time, but for the the sin of suicide by committing suicide, on its full significance. There is not a Atonement: "O how great the goodness and all sin is a form of suicide, "for the word among those translated as of our God, who prepareth a way for wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). "atonement" that does not plainly in- our escape [we are caught!] from the

Particularly interesting is the teaching dicate the return to a former state or grasp of this awful monster; yea, that of the rabbis that "the dead require condition; one rejoins the family, re- monster, death and hell, which I call the atonement,"⁶⁸ and since the dead can- turns to the Father, becomes united, death of the body, and also the death of not repent they must be helped by the reconciled, embracing and sitting down the spirit" (2 Nephi 9:10); by this "the living through charity, prayer, and happily with others after a sad temporal, shall deliver up its dead" (2 Torah study. The prayer for the dead separation. We want to get back, but to Nephi 9:11), i.e., from the grave; but (the Qaddusha or Kaddish) goes directly do that we must resist the alternative, more important, "the spiritual death, back to the temple in the time of the being taken into the community of "the shall deliver up its dead," and that is the Maccabees.⁶⁹ "Significantly, vicarious prince of this world" (John 12:31). death that really is hell—"which

expiatory significance is attributed to Jacob, contemplating our possibilities spiritual death is hell." So now we have the death of the high priest or that of here on earth both for dissolution and them both, body and spirit, brought the righteous."⁷⁰ Here we have salvation, breaks out into an ecstatic cry together, another at-one-ment, elements of the rites of atonement of wonder and awe: "O the wisdom of "restored one to the other" (2 Nephi reflected in rabbinical teaching long God, his mercy and grace!" (2 Nephi 9:12).

after the temple and the priesthood had 9:8). The resurrection is the first step to And how, pray, is this all done? Not by been taken away. It is interesting that a physical at-one-ment which has been a syllogism or an argument or an al- the idea of "work for the dead" still provided, a resurrection which is legory or even a ceremony; "it is by the lingers, if only on the level of good indispensable to saving our spirits as power of the resurrection of the Holy intentions.⁷¹ well—they too must be atoned, for One of Israel" (2 Nephi 9:12). Another

As to the Atonement as "the plan laid when man yielded to the flesh at the outburst from Jacob: "O how great [is] down before the foundation of the Fall, it was the spirit that committed an the plan of our God!" (2 Nephi 9:13). world" (Alma 12:30), that is, when it act of disobedience and independence

was approved at the Council in Heaven, and could not undo that which was **THE PLAN** this event is often mentioned in the done. In the next verse Jacob gives a To know that everything is going ac- earliest Christian and Jewish liter- concise summary of the situation: "Our cording to plan is a vast relief. Yet the ature.⁷² One of the most notable texts is spirits must have become like unto him, word plan is nowhere found in the the Discourse on Abbaton by Timothy, and we become devils, angels to a devil, English Bible! Why not? It was among the Archbishop of Alexandria (circa A.D. to be shut out from the presence of our the precious things removed, no doubt. 380).⁷³ When the plan was voted on, God [for no unclean thing can dwell in We mentioned in the last lecture how according to this account and others, it his presence, and being shut out is the eager the churchmen and the rabbis was turned down. For the earth herself utter reverse of at-one-ment], and to were to expunge from the record any complained, as in the book of Moses remain with the father of lies, in misery, doctrines of our premortal existence or and other Enoch literature, of the like unto himself; yea, to that being the Council in Heaven at the creation, defilement it would bring upon her, who ... transformeth himself nigh unto both teachings being corollaries to the idea of a plan.⁷⁶ What do the knowing the kind of inhabitants to an angel of light, and stirreth up the schoolmen have left in place of the amount of sin and suffering—was all secret works of darkness" (2 Nephi 9:9). plan? For premortal existence they that necessary? The Only Begotten Here we have a neat chiasm, for "lies exchanged predestination, St. Au- broke the deadlock by volunteering to and misery" of the pretender are in gustine's praedestinatio ad dam-

nationem ("predestination to damnation") and praedestinatio ad salvationem ("predestination to salvation") that is a good thing, as the early —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.⁷⁷ For over fifteen hundred 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 premortal existence, a firmly held tenet of the early church;⁷⁸ 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 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.⁷⁹

WASHED IN THE BLOOD

There is one expression connected with the ceremonies that seems strangely paradoxical. It is having one's garments washed white with the blood of the Lamb. It is the Book of Mormon that 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.⁸⁰ Note there are two kinds of blood-stained 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.⁸¹ 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 ... 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, us that there is no other salvation to sponseible nonentities. That is not what why is the world full of misery? Who look for and no other conditions for we want. We want to be one with the wants it? And yet someone seems to be achieving it (Mosiah 4:8). First, "believe Father, which obviously is completely pushing it on us all the time. His system in God; believe that he is, and that he beyond our present capacity; it is only works beautifully, and so he rules to created all things." This does not require the Son who can help us: then "look to this day on this earth (1 Nephi 13:29; suspension of judgment, since honesty the great Mediator, and hearken unto John 12:31; 14:30), but it is our privilege alone obliges us to "believe that man his great commandments" (2 Nephi to rise above his viciousness and our doth not comprehend all the things 2:28). He will tell us just what to do, for own weakness by repentance; and now which the Lord can comprehend" he is anxious to help us. "Be faithful comes one of the most heartening and (Mosiah 4:9). We can go farther than unto his words, and choose eternal life, encouraging verses in the Book of that: "Always retain in remembrance, according to the will of his Holy Spirit" Mormon: the way is wide open and the greatness of God, and your own (2 Nephi 2:28). The Holy Ghost, that God "commandeth all men, everywhere, nothingness, and his goodness and other Mediator, who comes to take over to repent" (3 Nephi 11:32)—all men all long-suffering towards you, unworthy when the Lord is absent, seconds him in the time. In fact, our lives have been creatures, and humble yourselves even all things. "Redemption cometh in and prolonged beyond the age of in the depths of humility, calling on the through the Holy Messiah," Lehi tells procreation for the specific purpose of name of the Lord daily" (Mosiah 4:11). his son, "for he is full of grace and giving us more golden opportunities to Is that asking too much? On the truth" (2 Nephi 2:6). That says repent: "The days of the children of men contrary, says Benjamin, never was everything: to be full of grace is were prolonged, according to the will of there such a bargain, for "if ye do this everything good that you can possibly God, that they might repent while in ye shall always rejoice" (Mosiah 4:12). If conceive of; it is a combination of love, the flesh," all living in "a state of "nothingness" seems a rather low charity, and joy—charis, gratia, and probation, and their time was estimate of the human race, we have "cheer." It is everything to be cheerful lengthened," to give them every possible the overwhelming voice of the greatest about and grateful for, and it is chance, for otherwise "they were lost" viewers of the scene to confirm it. The boundless love without a shadow of (2 Nephi 2:21). So "all men must repent" most honest and enlightened ones do mental reservation, self-interest, or ul- and keep repenting as long as they live, not hesitate to tell us that we are terior motive, in short, of anything false for who would throw away that nothing; and the rebellious and wicked or untrue; it is all real, for he is full of generous extension? ones are the most cynical and grace and truth.

Lehi goes on to tell us that Adam in- despairing of all.

interrupted an eternal existence to get What are we to do? Lehi explains that if himself into the predicament that we we approach the Lord with "a broken are in (2 Nephi 2:22). For this the heart and contrite spirit," we have a Christians execrate his name, him who case, "and unto none else can the ends "brought death into the world and all of the law be answered" (2 Nephi 2:7). Mormon every teaching of the Atonement includes, as the principal condition of its fulfillment, the observance of our woes." But he brought something This puts an end to legalism and much better than that; verse 25 is per- litigation. A broken heart and a contrite tion of its fulfillment, the observance of haps the best known statement in the spirit cannot be faked or even calmly certain economic practices. Why should Book of Mormon: "Adam fell that men discussed, and that is a prime point: anything as spiritual as the Atonement might be; and men are, that they might "How great the importance to make be so worldly? It is because of the have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). Humans, these things known unto the nature of the sacrifice we must make. "redeemed from the fall, ... have become inhabitants of the earth" (2 Nephi 2:8). If we would have God "apply the aton- free forever, knowing good from evil; to When all men stand in God's presence ing blood of Christ" (Mosiah 4:2) to our act for themselves and not to be acted to be judged, punishment will be meted case, we can also reject it. We can take upon, ... free according to the flesh; ... out in terms of legal penalties—the law advantage of it or we can refuse it. The free to choose liberty and eternal life, ... by which we were bound, the Atonement is either dead to us or it is or to choose captivity and [eternal] preliminary trials and tests to get us to in full effect. It is the supreme sacrifice death" in the power of one who our final hearing, but that is not what made for us, and to receive it we must "seeketh that all men might be the judgment is about. What we are live up to every promise and covenant miserably like unto himself" (2 Nephi expecting in this final judgment is that related to it—the Day of Atonement 2:26-27). He has that "power to "happiness which is affixed" to the law was the day of covenants, and the place captivate" because we give it to him (2 and which is the final purpose or end was the temple. Nephi 2:29). The purpose of the plan, it "of the atonement" (2 Nephi 2:10). By very definition we cannot pay a should be clear by now, is to get us all So we also have our part in achieving in partial tithe—but then tithing is not involved. We are "invited and enticed" the Atonement. How is it all done? The among the covenants, since it is only a from both sides. explanation of the Predestinationists, partial sacrifice, or rather, as my But how can I withstand Satan's skillful Neoplatonists, and Moslems is simply grandfather used to say, no sacrifice at ploys of temptation? King Benjamin that God does it all because he can, all but only a token contribution from tells us how to go about it, first warning which leaves us completely irre- our increase. And if we cannot pay a

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!"⁸²). 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 righteousness 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.

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 limit "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), canceled 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 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 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, personal interest in the manner designated in the Doctrine and Covenants. It is the final decisive law by which we formally accept the Atonement and merit a share in it.

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 would pay 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,

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 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 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 too late ... for ye have sought all the life has become a TV spectacular to be full forever" (2 Nephi 9:18). Need we days of your lives for that which ye which we are beginning to adapt our point out that the main reason for could not obtain" (Helaman 13:38). Even own behavior. In this age of teatro- having money is precisely to avoid "the lots of money cannot guarantee you mania, where everything is a contrived crosses of the world, and ... the shame security. spectacle, our lives reflect an endless procession of futility.⁸³

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

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 an easy and blissful happy land would 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 that 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—

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 truth would invent.⁸⁴ 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 no '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 descriptions, if you will, are intention-laden. ... What I am getting at is that nature that scientists explain by means of it are no less cultural products and social productions than are economics, political science and philosophy."⁸⁵ 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 that 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?⁸⁶

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.⁸⁷ 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.⁸⁸

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, and so on, 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.⁸⁹ 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.⁹⁰

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 akehah ("binding") 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 that 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:⁹¹ "Redeem every firstling of an ass with a lamb [a

substitute] ... and all the firstborn of there no debates or pronouncements in man among thy children shalt thou re- the synods? People either do not care deem. And none shall appear before me enough or do not know enough even to empty;" all must sacrifice (Exodus 34:20 argue about it. For the doctrine of the 3:13). Finally, circumcision was a token Atonement is far too complicated to sacrifice, a similitude, demanding the 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; Moses and the prophets complained a thousand times as a missionary I that Israel did not heed it; John the heard nur Gnade, and "God is love"—Baptist and the Savior were voices in that's all anybody needed or wanted to the wilderness; people accepted the know. When a poor Moslem has said doctrine for only three generations in *Allah akbar!* or a Hindu uttered *om*, the Book of Mormon; the Doctrine and they have said it all. Why the elaborate Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price machinery of Christian doctrine? The are both addressed to reluctant Moslems ask, and Irenaeus asks the audiences. And even where the message sectaries, Why can't we simply say that was accepted in each dispensation, God did it and end the matter? The righteousness was soon overtaken by great Krister Stendahl took issue with self-righteousness. It is as if someone your humble informant for approving had died and left us a bequest in which Joseph Smith's saying that nobody was we have no interest, since accepting it ever "damned for believing too much."⁹² would entail a change in our life-style. My answer is that if anyone was Who is willing to accept Benjamin's damned for believing too much then we invitation: "If the knowledge of the are all damned, for everyone believes goodness of God ... has awakened you far more than he will ever be able to to a sense of your nothingness, and prove, and constantly shifts ground on your worthless and fallen state ... and his beliefs.

THE SILENT TREATMENT

And now we have another question. What good is a 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 accepted the doctrine for only three generations in *Allah akbar!* or a Hindu uttered *om*, 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, the 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. My answer is that if anyone was Who is willing to accept Benjamin's invitation: "If the knowledge of the goodness of God ... has awakened you far more than he will ever be able to to a sense of your nothingness, and prove, and constantly shifts ground on your worthless and fallen state ... and his beliefs.

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 for his: "I believe on God, and on his your own nothingness, and his angels, and on his prophets, and his goodness and long-suffering towards apostles, and on his books." Why not you, unworthy creatures" (Mosiah 4:11), God alone? Why all the paraphernalia? forsooth? So cool has been the reception of the message that through the centuries, while heated controversy and debate have raged over evolution, Moslems, Christians, and Jews are all atheism, the sacraments, the Trinity, "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 that 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, "[is] 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 that 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.⁹³ 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. 9:12, 25; Mosiah 13:34). That would seem to be the final word by way of explaining things. The word power occurs no fewer 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 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 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 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.

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 of to fall back on power, we are in good company—that is as far back as the scientists can take us too. A recent Book of Mormon writers constantly study, "Explanation and Gravity" by Gerd Buchdahl,⁹⁴ 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 power 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.'"⁹⁵ 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.'"⁹⁶ 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."⁹⁷ 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, 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, a chance: "Who of you can charge me eternal life" (John 17:1-2). "So now with being wrong (hamartias)? If I am Father, glorify me in thy presence [or speaking the truth, why won't you by your side] with the glory I had in believe me? You cannot hear my your presence before the world existed" teaching because you are from your father, the devil, and you want to en- gage in his lustful practices. He was a "They were thine, and thou hast given murderer from the beginning, and them to me; ... now they know that all abode not in the truth" (John 8:44, 46). that thou hast given me comes from That goes back to the drama in the thee" (John 17:6-7). "I am asking for premortal existence: "If God was your their sake: I do not plead for the world Father you would love me. For I come [that is the exclusion principle], but for from the Father and I am going back" those whom thou gavest me, because (John 8:42). This constant reference to they are thine, and everything that is place and motion in John has ever been thine is also mine, and I am glorified in a perplexity to theologians, who them" (John 17:9-10). "Holy Father, keep maintain that God must be everywhere, through thine own name those whom but John will not allow that: "These thou hast given me" (John 17:11), reads things have I spoken unto you, being the King James Version; but in the yet present with you. ... Ye have heard Greek text there is no direct object how I said unto you, I go away and "whom," and the word tereo can mean come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye to "test by observation or trial."⁹⁸ would rejoice [they are sorrowing Instead we have an instrumental dative, because they do not understand it], so we get, "test them on the name with because I said, I go unto the Father: for which you endowed me, that they may my Father is greater than I. ... Hereafter be one even as we are one." This takes I will not talk much with you: for the us back to the kapporeth, for only the prince of this world cometh, and hath High Priest knew the name that he nothing in me" (John 14:25, 28, 30). How whispered for admission through the are we to avoid seeing the whole temple veil on the Day of Atonement.⁹⁹ atonement in the other world when we Here then is the sense in which we are read, "Father, concerning what thou one, the true at-one-ment. As to the hast given me, what I want is that ordinances on earth, "When I was with wherever I am they too might be with them I tested them in the name by me that they might behold my glory which thou didst endow me, and they which thou gavest me, because thou have kept the secret and not one of hast loved me before the foundation of them has been destroyed except the son the world" (John 17:24). They are going of perdition, that the scriptures may be back to that premortal glory. "And I fulfilled" (John 17:12). "I have given have made known to them thy name, them thy word; and the world hath and I shall make known that the love hated them, because they are not of [do with which thou hast loved me may be not come out of] the world anymore in them as I also in them" (John 17:26). than I am of the world" (John 17:14). There are more than a dozen enlight- "And the glory which thou gavest me I ening discourses on the Atonement in have given to them; that they may be the Book of Mormon.¹⁰⁰ None is more one: even as we are one—I in them and remarkable than the impressive epitome thou in me" (John 17:22-23), that we contained in a single verse, the may be endowed (initiated, completed) conclusion of Enos's movingly personal to make one, "so I have sent them into story: "I soon go to the place of my rest, the world" (John 17:18). "I ask not only which is with my Redeemer; for I know for them but also for those who believe that in him I shall rest. And I rejoice in on me through their teachings, "that the day when my mortal shall put on they all may be one; as thou, Father, art immortality; and shall stand before him; in me, and I in thee, that they also may then shall I see his face with pleasure, be one in us: that the world may believe and he will say unto me: Come unto that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21). me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared Was the world then to be converted? for you in the mansions of my Father. No, says John, but they have to be given Amen" (Enos 1:27).

NOTES

1. "The Terrible Questions" was a talk given September 8, 1988, in Riverton, Utah.
2. 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.
3. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, act III, scene i, lines 129-32.
4. Regarding *katallagein*, see Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott (revised by Henry S. Jones and Roderick McKenzie), *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 899.
5. 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.
6. 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."
7. 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.)
8. Regarding *hēpet*, see Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow *Wörterbuch der*

Aegyptischen Sprache (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929), 71. [Also [Budge](#)]

9. 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."

10. 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 fastening [note the garment is drawn up around the body by the sash], common throughout the Levant." Cf. David B. Guralnik, *Webster's New World Dictionary* (New York: Collins and World, 1953), 198, "caftan [*Türk. kaftan*] 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 < Türk < Pers qaftan*].")

11. Regarding the Arabic كَفَاتَة *kafata*, see Poole, [Arabic-English Lexicon](#), 1 (7): 2618-19.

12. Aprocryphon of John (Papyrus Berolensis 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.

13. 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 a part 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 that 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 veil of the ark of testimony')." Illustrations on pages 45 (photo 64), 51 (photo 71).

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

15. *Ibid.*, 246.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*, 248.

18. Hugh W. Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975), 244-46, 253; cf. Fernand Cabrol, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris: Letouzey, 1907), 2929 (figure 988).

19. 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.

20. Philo, *On the Life of Moses* II, 17, 88-89; cf. Philo, *On the Life of Moses*, page 493.

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

22. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 1:600.

23. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 16 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 2:208-9; regarding the *Yeshivah shel malah* or *Metivta de-Rakica* ("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 malah sitting, rest divine court. B. Metsia 86a, ... has been summoned before divine justice (is dead)," Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 1:600.

24. Philo, *On the Life of Moses* II, 87-88.

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

26. *Ibid.*, 276.

27. *Ibid.*, 294.

28. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, vol. 9.

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

30. Servius, *Nigidius*, fr. 29a.

31. Richard Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterien-religionen*

- (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.
32. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, 1:31.
33. *Ibid.*; cf. 1:71.
34. *Apostolic Constitutions* VII, 35, in PG 1:1029.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Berakoth 55a in *Seder Zera'im*, *The Babylonian Talmud*, tr. Maurice Simon, 10 vols. (London: Soncino Press, 1948), part 5:334.
37. 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.
38. For an entertaining discussion, read Mary Renault, *The King Must Die* (New York: Pantheon, 1958).
39. Siegfried Schott, "Die Reinigung Pharaos," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen Philologisch historische Klasse* 3 (January 1957): 67.
40. JD 15:325-26.
41. Reitzenstein and Schaeder, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus*, 23.
42. Plato, *Republic* X, 613-20.
43. Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, 27.
44. Reitzenstein, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus*, 112.
45. *Ibid.*, 65.
46. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I, 6, 2 in PG 7:1:508; cf. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 1:324.
47. Israel Lévi, "Le sacrifice d'Isaac et la mort de Jésus," *Revue des Études Juives* 64 (1912): 161-84; especially 168.
48. See Gerald Friedlander, tr., *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer* (New York: Hermon, 1965), 227, footnote 9.
49. B. Beer, *Das Leben Abrahams* (Leipzig: Leiner, 1859), 69.
50. Roy A. Rosenberg, "Jesus, Isaac, and the 'Suffering Servant,'" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84 (December 1965): 388.
51. See Hugh W. Nibley, "The Sacrifice of Isaac," *Improvement Era* (March 1970): 84-94.
52. Wurzbürger, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 1:494.
53. William J. Wolf, in *ibid.*, 1:496.
54. 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).
55. *Ibid.*, 498.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. Joseph Needham, *The Grand Titration* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1956), 301.
60. *Ibid.*, 312.
61. *Ibid.*, 299.
62. Regarding the Dura Synagogue, see Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, 13 vols. (New York: Pantheon, 1964), 9:78-123.
63. *Ibid.*; cf. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 6:294.
64. Discussed in Hugh W. Nibley, "The Expanding Gospel," *BYU Studies* 7 (1965): 3-27.
65. Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* (New York: Random House, 1985).
66. Wurzbürger, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 1:494.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. 2 Maccabees 12:45-46.
70. Wurzbürger, *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.
71. 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.
72. Nibley, "The Expanding Gospel," 3-27.
73. 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).
74. *Ibid.*, 480-84.
75. Homer, *Iliad*, I, line 3, *pollas d'iphthimous psychas Aidi proiapsen*. See Homer, *Iliad*, tr. A. T. Murray (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 2-3.
76. "The Terrible Questions" was a talk given by Hugh Nibley at the Riverton Stake Center on September 8, 1988.
77. For treatment of the issues and sources, Karl Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1910), 64.
78. Nibley, "The Expanding Gospel," 11-12, 18-26.
79. Hugh W. Nibley, *The World and the*

- Prophets (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954), 167-69; reprinted in CWHN 3:182-83, "The Ancient Law of Liberty."
80. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 1:600, 603.
81. Nibley, *The World and the Prophets*, 166-68; in CWHN 3:182-84.
82. Augustine, *Confessions*, 8:17.
83. 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," *Classical Journal*, 40/9 (June 1945), 515-43; "The Roman Games as a Survival of an Archaic Year-cult," (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1939).
84. Lord Raglan, *The Origins of Religion* (London: Wattson, 1949), 25.
85. Ruth Hubbard, "The Laws of Nature," *The Nation* Since 1865 (October 24, 1988): 247:371.
86. W. Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality," *Poetical Works of Wordsworth* (London: Frederick Warne, 1854), 315.
87. P. T. Matthews, *The Nuclear Apple* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), 71.
88. George Wald, "The Origin of Life," *Scientific American* (August 1954): 46, 53.
89. See George Norlin, tr., *Isocrates*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).
90. 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."
91. 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."
92. TPJS 374.
93. 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).
94. Gerd Buchdahl, "Explanation and Gravity," in Mikuls Teich and Robert Young, eds., *Changing Perspectives in the History of Science*, (London: Heinemann, 1973), 173-74.
95. *Ibid.*, 176.
96. *Ibid.*, 177-78.
97. *Ibid.*, 180.
98. Regarding tereo, see Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1789.
99. 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.
100. 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.