

# The Atonement

## DO TRADITIONAL EXPLANATIONS MAKE SENSE?

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IN that preexistent realm known as life before television, there was radio. On long winter evenings it was radio that brought Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, *The Shadow*, *The Lone Ranger*, *The Cisco Kid* and his faithful companero Poncho to many youngsters in their preteen and early teen years. I was one of them. Beamed into my bedroom with the same fifty-thousand-watt clear-channel clarity were also the voices of country preachers petitioning listeners to come unto Christ and be saved. I can still hear the strongly southern-accented words that formed almost a chant: "Christ died for your sins. Christ died for the sins of the world. Christ took the sins of the world on his shoulders."

These were the same words that flowed across the pulpit of our tiny rural LDS ward chapel or were uttered with tearful emotion in testimony meetings. It was the same message that came through in the hymns of gratitude and supplication, repeated so often that we knew the words by heart:

I tremble to know that for me he was crucified.  
That for me a sinner he suffered, he bled and died.  
I think of his hands pierced and bleeding to pay the debt,  
Such mercy, such love and devotion can I forget?<sup>1</sup>

To have so many sources proclaim that same message was almost more than I could bear. It seemed the entire Christian world understood a concept that made absolutely no sense at all to me. I could not imagine how Christ could take on his shoulders my sins and the sins of the world. My Sunday School and priesthood quorum teachers only intensified the frustration as they offered various explanations of the concept of the Atonement.

In such settings it was customary to present an analogy wherein we find ourselves about to lose home and hearth to some heartless creditor(s) to whom we owe money. Then, according to the analogy, comes the magnanimous philanthropic friend who offers to refinance us. He pays off our debt to the creditor(s) thus satisfying justice and then transfers the debt to himself

to be repaid later on somewhat easier terms.<sup>2</sup> This type of analogy seemed to me to break down in that the always anonymous creditor actually is not paid in transferable bonds, stocks, or coin of the realm but in blood, anguish, and suffering. It was easy to visualize how a benefactor's money is as effective as my own in redeeming my financial obligations and satisfying a creditor's sense of justice. But if my personal mistakes had offended someone to the point of their demanding retribution, I could not understand how they could be content with the blood and pain and suffering of someone else. The vicarious nature of the Atonement was beyond my comprehension.

I liked the pit-and-the-ladder explanation much better. While walking along a path we fall into a pit so very deep that we have no hope of ever getting out by ourselves. We are trapped, doomed to spend the rest of eternity in that dreadful hole. Along comes a trusted friend with a ladder as tall as our prison is deep. He lowers the ladder, allowing us to scramble up and make good our escape from the clutches of the pit.<sup>3</sup> The analogy was so simple and straightforward even I could understand. We mortals had fallen into the pit of death because Adam had partaken of the forbidden fruit. The Father sent his son to overcome death and provide a means of escape. But unfortunately this simple little analogy failed to explain all the talk about the vicarious sacrifice of Christ wherein he took upon himself the sins of all mankind. The concept of his dying for our sins was totally left out.

Writers and sermonizers on the Atonement seemed always to weave such a tangled fabric of unfathomable cliches about sin and punishment, justice and mercy, that I could not sort it out. These cliches suggested only that mankind had gotten into deep trouble and Jesus had volunteered to take the punishment or in some other way assist us.

On the farm where I was then growing up we had, among other sources of sustenance, a small flock of



If the Father and the Son are of one mind, why must Christ act as our advocate or mediator with the Father? Could it be that the Savior knows us better or cares about us more than the Father? Are they arguing over who gets saved and who doesn't?

laying hens and a few milk cows. The ultimate transgression this young steward of the coop and barn could visualize was stumbling and breaking a basket of eggs or spilling a pail of milk. That happened very rarely, but when it did, my wise parents combined counsel with consolation, suggesting that while awkwardness is not a virtue to be cultivated, it is to be expected that when you are in the milk and egg business you sometimes end up with broken eggs and spilt milk. The version of the Atonement that I thought I heard sounded very much like a story wherein children sent to the hen house gather eggs and accidentally, carelessly, or deliberately drop the basket and break the eggs. These children have been conditioned to expect a terrible beating for their transgression. An older brother comes along and seeing the plight of the poor trembling egg-breakers says something like this: Although I have never broken an egg or spilt a drop of milk in my entire life, I, the strongest, will take the beating you so richly deserve. I will take upon my shoulders the responsibility for your broken eggs. I will suffer for you after which you will be in my debt forever and ever.

The difficulty with this scenario is that it presupposes the existence of an authority figure who could be deceived into believing that big brother actually broke the eggs or who was so befuddled, frustrated, drunken, or angry that it didn't really matter who broke the eggs just so long as he could vent his rage by inflicting pain and seeing someone suffer. It was difficult for me to worship a god who either had such a warped sense of fair play that vicarious suffering could satisfy his notions of justice or was of such limited power as to be coerced into cooperating with beings who did.

To me it was all very confusing and of all young men seeking answers to life's riddles I was surely among the most miserable. My apparently feeble mind could not comprehend what seemed to be a simple, beautiful, and totally acceptable concept for nearly every other Christian in the world.

And then one night when I was alone with just the lamp, a book, and quiet contemplation, came a thrilling discovery. In his marvelous work *Jesus the Christ*, James E. Talmage writes, "In some manner, actual and terribly real though to man incomprehensible, the Savior took upon Himself the burden of the sins of mankind from Adam to the end of the world."<sup>1</sup> Recently I read again that burned-forever-into-my-memory sentence on the same page of the same book. There was the same red line under those words: *though to man incomprehensible*. There was certain comfort in the realization that if a great scholar like Talmage admitted he didn't understand the Atonement, perhaps I wasn't as severely retarded as I had feared.

Yet a bit later on in seminary and priesthood classes the tendency for teachers to dismiss questions about the Atonement as "delving into the mysteries and not essential to my salvation" again fueled my frustrations. It was easy to agree one could not hope to comprehend the basic mechanisms of *how* the Atonement was accomplished but still something within me cried out for greater understanding of at least *the concept*. An awareness was gradually deepening in me that the Atonement was more than a frivolous nonessential item of academic interest only to theological zealots. As Bruce R. McConkie so eloquently states:

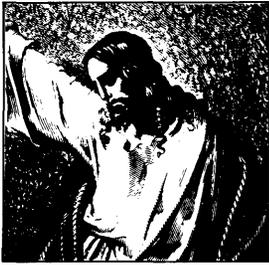
Nothing in the entire plan of salvation compares in any way in importance with that most transcendent of all events, the atoning sacrifice of our Lord. It is the most important single thing that has ever happened in the entire history of created things, it is the rock foundation upon which the gospel and all other things rest. Indeed all "things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it," the Prophet said (*Teachings*, p. 121).

The doctrine of the *atonement* embraces, sustains, supports, and gives life and force to all other gospel doctrines. It is the foundation upon which all truth rests, and all things grow out of it and come because of it. Indeed the atonement is the gospel.

It seemed maddening that the fundamental tenet of Christianity would remain so inscrutably mysterious to me. If other elements of the plan of salvation could make sense, why did this essential cornerstone continue to elude my understanding? These feelings were reinforced by exposure to LDS instruction wherein the sectarian notions of the incomprehensible nature of God are treated with a touch of sarcasm. These instructions implied to me that basic doctrines should be understandable. What did the words of the prophets on the subject of the Atonement really mean? Was it just sophistry and subterfuge or could it make sense to one as untutored and uninspired as I?

Obviously the farm boy who stared in wonder at tender bean sprouts pushing their way up through crusted soil and who was totally dazzled by the content of an egg organizing itself into an intricate feathered mechanism that pecked its way through a protective shell to step bravely into life could never hope to comprehend the technical detail of how the Atonement was accomplished. That would be like trying to sort out the technical detail of how the earth was organized. But surely the rationale for or concept of atonement could be understood.

From various sources one learns the word *atonement* is synonymous with reconciliation, absolution, redemption, reparation, paying ransom or price, rendering of sacrifice. It seems then that an understanding of the concept should resolve such



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questions as: Why was payment, ransom, reconciliation, or sacrifice necessary? Who made the payment, ransom, or sacrifice? What did the payment or ransom consist of? To whom was the ransom or sacrifice made? For whom was the ransom or sacrifice made?

These questions, for which most members of the Church have a ready answer, may be deceptively simple. For example consider the question, who made the sacrifice, who paid the ransom? I had always understood that it was the Savior, Jesus Christ, who made the atoning sacrifice. But what of such scriptures as, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16-17) or "Wherefore, the Almighty God gave his Only Begotten Son" (D&C 20:21) or "It was accounted unto Abraham in the wilderness to be obedient unto the commands of God in offering up his son Isaac, which is a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son" (Jacob 4:5). This was the precise theme of a recent lesson in a Melchizedek Priesthood study guide. In that lesson the question is asked, why was the Father willing to sacrifice his only begotten son in the flesh? Apparently Abraham and God the Father have similar roles as the *sacrificer* and Isaac and Jesus have similar roles as the *sacrificed*.<sup>6</sup>

But what then of the question, to whom was the sacrifice made? The dictionary in my King James Bible described the widely accepted Christian point of view, "He [Christ] is a 'ransom for many.' By His life and death He made before God an act of moral reparation, in man's name and on man's behalf, to that divine holiness and justice which our sins have outraged and defied. This act of reparation having been made it becomes morally possible for God to forgive us when we ask Him to do so 'for Christ's sake.'" <sup>7</sup>

Could this actually be saying (1) that our sins have outraged God the Father (that divine holiness) and (2) that reparation (tribute, bounty, satisfaction, amends, restitution) is demanded to calm him down? This puts the Father in the very strange position of both demanding reparation (payment, tribute) to himself and then providing that payment in the form of blood and suffering of his beloved son. Can this possibly be? Perhaps one could find such inconsistent behavior in an earthly medieval monarch gone mad but surely not in the Supreme Being of the universe whom we worship and want to emulate.

Closely tied to the notion of Christ's sacrifice being to his heavenly father is his role as mediator or advocate with the Father.<sup>8</sup> Is an advocate or mediator necessary because the Father doesn't know us as well as the Savior does, or doesn't care about us as much as the Savior does or is more stern than the Savior is or has a different opinion about the plan of salvation than the Savior does?

Are they arguing over who gets saved and who doesn't? This idea seems wildly inconsistent with the many scriptural declarations of "oneness" of the Father and the Son.<sup>9</sup> They claim to be one in mind and purpose. Why would the Son have to plead our case with the Father who authored the plan of salvation in the first place? Obviously I was misinterpreting the intent of these "advocate with the Father" passages because they made little sense to me.

Writers have often attempted to circumvent such difficulty by suggesting the sacrifice is demanded not by God the Father but by justice. The demands of justice are stated so forcefully that we begin to wonder who this very assertive person "Justice" is. But can justice be anything other than the sense of right and wrong of the ultimate presiding authority? Doesn't this lead us right back to the demands of justice being nothing more than the demands of God the Eternal Father who is the ultimate presiding authority?

At least one writer has defined justice in another way. According to this definition the universe is awash in a sea of intelligences. These intelligences are outraged at our admittedly offensive behavior and are incensed at the idea of our hoping to return to heaven's hallowed hallways after participating in this earthly orgy of sin and corruption. Their combined voices scream for blood and suffering to pay for such sinning. They, in effect, become justice. The ultimate sacrifice according to this view was made to meet their demands, i.e., the demands of justice.<sup>10</sup>

I have some sympathy for this point of view. It is a model that at first glance explains many scriptures such as this: "The work of justice could not be destroyed if so, God would cease to be God . . . do ye suppose that mercy can rob justice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so God would cease to be God." (Alma 42:13, 25.) But it seems incredible that the gods of heaven and earth must submit to what amounts to blackmail. According to this view if the demands of justice (the multitude of intelligences) are not met, they (the multitude) will withdraw allegiance, unplug God's support system, and God will cease to be God. It seems to me unlikely that the omnipotent beings we worship would find it necessary to appease this host of not-so-intelligent intelligences who would be satisfied with the vicarious suffering of a total innocent.

Suppose we inquire as to *what* exactly comprises the sacrifice? What *is* the atoning sacrifice? Many would respond that the "sacrifice" consisted of Christ's suffering, bleeding, and dying. This response is supported by scripture such as Alma 21:9, which states that "there could be no redemption for mankind save it were through the death and sufferings of Christ, and



The scriptures indicate that it is the blood of Christ which atones for our sins. If these verses are to be interpreted literally, then the blood of Christ must be regarded as a mysterious cleansing elixir, and the Atonement slips beyond rationality.

the atonement of his blood." Our hymns reflect this, as in:

How great the wisdom and the love  
That filled the courts on high,  
And sent the Savior from above  
To suffer bleed and die.

His precious blood he freely spilt,  
His life he freely gave  
A sinless sacrifice for guilt,  
A dying world to save.<sup>9</sup>

But the notion that it is Christ's death and the accompanying spilling of blood that somehow atones for our mistakes seems, to me, to miss the mark. Death in the manner experienced by the Savior is certainly not unique, though to offer one's life for others has always been regarded as the ultimate sacrifice. As Jesus himself said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). But what is life? If there is indeed life after death then one really cannot lay down his or her life, i.e., existence, awareness, state of being. It is the uncertainty that most mortals have about death that makes giving up life for someone else so utterly magnificent. Wouldn't the absolute certainty that death constitutes only a transition to another realm of existence and not the end of existence itself dramatically reduce the sacrifice involved in "dying" for others? Wherein, then, is the sacrifice associated with Christ's dying? The Father surely knew with absolute certainty that his only begotten son would not cease to exist; what did he really sacrifice in "giving" Christ to the world? If in fact one thousand years with us is but one day with God then the thirty-three years of Christ's earthly life meant only that the Father lent him to us for about forty-seven minutes. The anguish we mortals feel over the death of a child is intensified by fear that we shall never see that child again. The Father was surely not burdened by that kind of fear.

Jesus probably also was reasonably certain that for him death was not really the end of existence. Thus, words and phrases such as "Christ died for us" or "Christ died for our sins" seem rather empty. Surely Christ had to do more than die for our sins because that act seems to involve less of a sacrifice than many mortals have made in giving up their lives for others. And so the question persists: What was the sacrifice associated with the Atonement?

Perhaps a key element in the sacrifice was the shedding of blood. We are bombarded with scriptures dealing with the blood atonement: "Salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent" (Mosiah 3:18). "Their garments should be made white through the blood of the

Lamb" (Alma 34:36). "As in Adam, or by nature, they fall, even so the blood of Christ atoneth for their sins" (Mosiah 3:16). "And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood" (3 Ne. 27:19). "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11). (Emphasis added.)

But do these statements reflect literal or symbolic truth? If they are literally true then the blood of Christ must be regarded as a mysterious elixir possessing magical cleansing powers, and the concept of the Atonement slips beyond rationality. If the statements are intended to convey symbolically the notion that blood sustains life in our mortal bodies and to shed one's blood is to die, then are not these statements only another way of saying Christ died for our sins? Is the bleeding from every pore as he struggled in Gethsemane indicative of more than the intensity of Christ's agony? If the essence of the Atonement lies not in Christ's dying or bleeding then perhaps it lies in Christ's suffering. But if so, how?

I confess that the rhetoric and analogies about the Atonement that defied my comprehension as a boy continue to elude my understanding as a man. No doubt my spiritual myopia severely distorts my vision of the eternal scheme of things. Nevertheless I have arrived at a perspective of the Atonement that seems reasonably consistent with revealed word on the subject and brings to my mind peace. It seems to me that because of the often highly symbolic prophetic descriptions of the Atonement, we have unnecessarily shrouded an elegantly simple concept in mystery. To explain the concept requires a brief review of the plan of salvation.

There exist in this wide universe beings who, because of their vast intelligence, knowledge, experience, and power, qualify as gods. According to our founding prophet we are the same age as these divine beings, having existed coeternally with them.<sup>11</sup> Our earliest-mentioned level of organization is referred to simply as intelligence, implying perhaps an entity capable of self-awareness, identity, and independent thought but apparently not procreation.<sup>12</sup> Our heavenly father and mother arranged for the intelligences to begin a kind of progression in which we were born as literal spirit children.<sup>13</sup>

Because, for some reason, the more substantial physical bodies of the divine parents were more desirable than the spiritual constituents of their children, *body acquisition* and *testing* became important if the spirit offspring were to continue their progression. Apparently the godly parents knew well how their children behaved while in their presence. The acid test



We frequently hear that Christ was a ransom for our sins. This puts God the Father in the very strange position of both demanding reparation or tribute to himself and then providing that payment in the form of the blood and suffering of his own son.

would come when the children were thrust into yet another realm of existence where the overriding parental influence was considerably filtered.

Even in the household of gods there seems to have been sibling rivalry: not just squabbling, but outright rebellion. Indeed, the cause of the disagreement was not trivial but addressed a question of fundamental importance. Many appear to have been concerned about the risk involved in leaving relatively safe surroundings for the uncertainty associated with the rather perilous expedition to earth. They became vulnerable to the “big-brother-will-take-care-of-you-if-you-will-give-big-brother-your-support,-allegiance-and-taxes (i.e., glory) concept” to which humankind is still so susceptible. Lucifer, one of the particularly ambitious sons, asked for power to remove all risk from the proposed earthly experience. He was so persuasive that many of our spirit brothers and sisters stood by him as he insisted that none of us be allowed to make mistakes. (Abr. 3:25-28.) He would make all the decisions and we would be constrained by divine authority to follow his dictatorial mandates. Lucifer would bask eternally in the glory of our gratitude and servitude to him. Lucifer and company became so intolerably obnoxious that they were expelled in a struggle sometimes referred to as the war in heaven. These outcasts became bitter and determined to make things as difficult as possible for those who were allowed to come to earth.

Our older brother, the most intelligent and influential of us all (Abr. 3:19), chose to sustain the plan of the Father. That plan included sending us to a specially prepared planet where there were few guarantees. Many of us would not make it back to the presence of our heavenly parents. We were eternal entities in our own right and even the gods could not preprogram us for certain behavior leading to a fixed destiny. We were free agents.

Arrangements were made for physical molecules to cluster around our spirits in an astonishing fashion and form the much desired bodies. A problem was encountered in that this clustering of atoms into the highly organized patterns necessary for physical bodies could be only temporary (in some cases more temporary than others). Almost inevitably the beautifully organized systems must cease to function and eventually disintegrate. The molecules of our bodies would return to the earth.

This phenomenon called death seems a necessary part of the test-of-the-free-agent plan. If there were no suffering or death then free agency and hence the possible range of human transgression would be severely limited. To allow someone, for example, to cut off fingers or toes or possibly even an arm or a leg from a

fellow creature but prevent more lethal lops and chops through heavenly intervention would be to follow Lucifer’s safe but restricted not-one-shall-be-lost plan. On the other hand, if there was no death but those who departed were simply “translated” or “beamed up” then we would no longer be walking by faith, for there would be ample evidence of godly presence; our agency would be compromised by an immense burden of sure knowledge. Thus the death mechanism, a logical and necessary part of the entire plan, was launched with the event known as the fall of Adam.

The mission of Jesus Christ in this plan was twofold. The first part involved encouraging as many of us as possible to return to the presence of our heavenly parents so that we could continue to progress. This was a task made so immensely difficult and delicate by the independent nature of our eternal intelligence that even the failure rate of gods would be high. Because of our free agency even the favored Son could not use his vast power in this task except “by persuasion, by long suffering, by gentleness and meekness and by love unfeigned” (D&C 121:41).

What courage it must have taken for the one we call Jesus the Christ to say something like this: “The task ahead is immensely difficult; Satan’s tremendous opposition makes it even more difficult. The sins of mankind lend strength and enthusiasm and encouragement to Satan’s opposition. The rejection of me by so many of my brothers and sisters whom I love makes the personal burden of grief for me almost intolerably heavy. Nevertheless, I will do that which I was ordained to do; I will finish the task for which I accepted responsibility in spite of the vastly greater burden imposed by your sins. I will carry them and overcome the increased resistance because of them. In this sense I will take the sins of all mankind on my shoulders.”

The second part of this mission required power such as only a god could possess to resurrect or restore our bodies as well as those of all other once organized or organic systems. And so in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, the Savior exercised his divine power and made all the necessary arrangements not only to overcome his own imminent death but brought to bear those great forces necessary to do the same for all mankind. That this process was not easy or trivial, even for one vested with godly powers, is attested to by his own testimony: “[This] suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup and shrink—nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men” (D&C 19:18-19). This combining of elements



It is the uncertainty we have about death that makes giving up life for someone else so utterly magnificent. But if death constitutes only a transition to another realm, how can Christ's dying for mankind be considered a sacrifice?

ultimately to reunite the spirit and the physical body was totally independent of whether we were good or bad or how we met the test. We would all gain immortality purely by his grace and, could thus return to our godly parents with physical but eternally enduring bodies like theirs.

Together, these immensely difficult tasks of gathering disciples and overcoming death comprise the sacrifice of the Atonement. It was a sacrifice for Christ to step down from his place of power and eminence to live the humblest of earthly lives, to be ridiculed, spat upon, tormented, tortured, and ultimately murdered in the cruelest fashion by those very creatures he was struggling to save from their dead-end, no-further-progress-possible predicament. And it was a sacrifice for the Heavenly Parents to send their son off on such a mission knowing the immensity of the task he faced and the despair he would know of feeling forsaken by both God and man.

Thus the sacrifice was perhaps not one of appeasement to an angry or pouting deity made in the manner of offering infants to the fiery gods of ancient Canaan. Perhaps this sacrifice was not made to anyone or anything. Perhaps it was a sacrifice similar to that of a soldier who throws himself on a grenade about to explode in order to save his comrades or like a selfless individual plunging into a burning building to save sleeping brothers and sisters. Perhaps the sacrifice associated with the Atonement was a sacrifice *for* someone rather than *to* someone.

Similarly, the Savior's role as advocate with the Father may simply be confirmation that in spite of wickedness so great that a flood was required to cleanse the earth and make a new start, in spite of the aggregate and individual transgressions of mankind being even greater than perhaps anticipated, that in spite of all that he personally endured during his mission to earth, the Savior advocated proceeding with the plan of salvation that all had agreed upon in the early councils. Perhaps the reconciliation associated with his role as mediator is to persuade mankind to accept the Father rather than persuade the Father to accept mankind.

I still do not understand references to "hands pierced and bleeding to pay the debt" or statements to the effect that Christ has bought us with his blood. Perhaps we use these poetic, symbolic, and somewhat hypnotic phrases in our teaching and talk too much. I add a personal plea to those who understand the Atonement on behalf of those of us in the Church who are slow learners or lack inspiration but nevertheless sincerely want to understand what all such statements really mean. Help us sort out where reality ends and allegory, metaphor, or similitude begin.

In application we probably cannot rely on Christ's blood shed in the Garden of Gethsemane or on the cross to magically cleanse us. We must symbolically cleanse ourselves by liberal application of the stiff, painful scrubbing brush of repentance in order for the miracle of the Atonement to be fully effective. Whatever it is, the Atonement almost certainly is not a confirmed ticket to the celestial kingdom but can make such a trip possible.

The Lone Ranger, the Shadow, and the Cisco Kid have given way to the A Team and Howard Cossell. Television beams into my home the message and image of petitioners for Christ who continue to confuse the man who was bewildered as a boy. But some progress has been made in sorting through the cliches.

There may indeed be more to the Atonement than overcoming technical difficulties and the undercutting effects of our sins to make the necessary arrangements for immortality. But even this limited perspective fills me with awe for the being who could accomplish such a work.

#### Notes

1. "I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Co., 1948), no. 80. See also "How Great the Wisdom and the Love," *ibid.*, no. 68.
2. A recent much publicized version of this analogy may be found in Boyd K. Packer, *The Mediator* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978) (cf. Boyd K. Packer, "The Mediator," *Ensign* 7 [May 1977]: 54).
3. See, for example, Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954), 1:126-27.
4. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 11th ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982), p. 613.
5. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 60.
6. *Choose You This Day* [Melchizedek Priesthood study guide, 1980-81] (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), p. 118.
7. *A Concise Bible Dictionary Based on the Cambridge Companion to the Bible* (Cambridge: At the University Press, n.d.), s.v. "atonement."
8. See, for example, D&C 29:5; 32:3; 45:3; 62:1; 110:4; 76:69; 107:19; 2 Ne. 2:9, 27-28; Moro. 7:28; Jacob 3:1; Isa. 53:12; 1 Tim. 2:5-6.
9. See, for example, 3 Ne. 11:27; 19:23, 29; 20:35; 28:10; John 10:30 17:11, 21-22.
10. W. Cleon Skousen, *The First 2000 Years* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1953), pp. 352-62.
11. Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B.H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1932-51), 6:311; D&C 93:29.
12. For a discussion of different views on the nature of intelligence, see Blake Ostler, "The Idea of Pre-Existence in the Development of Mormon Thought," *Dialogue* 15 (Spring 1982): 59-78.
13. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 249.

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