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OF TIME AND ALL ETERNITY

GOD AND OTHERS IN MORMONISM AND HETERODOX CHRISTIANITY

By James McLachlan

For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; . . . having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery . . . Wherefore . . . there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation. Wherefore, this thing must needs destroy the wisdom of God and . . . also the power, and the mercy, and the justice of God.

—2 NEPHI 2:11–12

[With the Fall], the eternal free will has introduced itself into the darkness, pain, and source; and so also through the darkness into the fire and light, even into a kingdom of joy; in order that the Nothing might be known in the Something, and that it might have a sport with its contrawill, that the free will of the abyss might be manifest to itself in the byss [ground or foundation], for without evil and good there could not be any byss.

—JACOB BOEHME,
Mystérium Magnum 26:37

UNLIKE THE MAINSTREAM CHRISTIAN VIEW THAT there is one Absolute God who by very definition enjoys the blissful perfection of ultimate Being, Mormonism teaches that there are two Ultimate Realities—one personal, and one impersonal—and that God's eternal perfection implies anything but pure, uneventful enjoyment. Entailed within the mainstream Christian premise is an understanding that the world and all that takes place in it lacks ultimate status, for whatever happens in this world ultimately does not affect God's enjoyment of perfection. God is without body, parts, or passions—the final quality meaning the ability to be truly affected by anything external to God's own self, including the righteousness, or lack thereof, of God-created beings.

Many ramifications of this view of God's self-sufficient perfection have troubled certain Christian theologians ever since



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this notion became firmly established in the creeds. Especially troubling is how this view implies that human evil and suffering are illusory, that they have no ultimate reality. Still, rejecting the premise of God as the single Ultimate Reality, so that one can view the world and all that goes on within it as also being ultimately real creates its own difficulties. For how can one speak of the ultimate reality of both God and the world—both unity and the individuality of separate actors—without creating a metaphysical dualism and all the problems that flow from dualism, including the conclusion that suffering and evil are ultimately eternal?

Though mainstream Christian thinkers have shied away from the effort, some heterodox Christians have attempted to affirm both God and the world as Ultimates—that both God and the world are ultimately real and that what happens in this life genuinely affects God and everything else in the universe.

Because of this shared view that there are two Ultimates, it is worthwhile for Latter-day Saints to look at these heterodox traditions in Christianity so we might discover resources for our own development and articulation of this difficult but enriching theological position. The particular heterodox tradition that interests me here is one that began with the seventeenth-century German shoemaker and mystic Jacob Boehme and

was continued by F. W. J. Schelling and other German idealists, as well as by many romantic and personalist philosophers and theologians.¹

JOSEPH SMITH AND JACOB BOEHME

TWO CAVEATS AND a brief framing to begin: First, I am not suggesting that there is any historical link between Jacob Boehme and Joseph Smith or early Mormonism, only that they have similar projects, governed by similar intuitions about the superiority of the relationality of time to the totality of eternity. We can also find similar sensibilities in certain Mahayana Buddhist thinkers and sects and in the Hindu philosopher Ramanuja and some of his followers. Yet no one would claim any historical connection between them and Joseph Smith, just as no one would claim that Joseph Smith influenced Russian philosophers Nicolai Feodorov and Vladimir Soloviev, who both claim that the primary human project is the resurrection of our dead ancestors and tying the generations together.²

What Smith, Boehme, and these other thinkers share is the common-sense notion that time is real—perhaps more real than eternity—and that love requires both a lover and a beloved. But because of the widespread appeal of the idea that reality is a single, perfect Oneness and not a community of beings, this sensibility has always been a minority and heterodox position in both Eastern and Western philosophy.

Second, when I speak of eternity in this article, I do not speak of what I take to be the usual Mormon understanding of eternity as everlasting time. Instead, I'm talking about a Platonic notion of eternity as totality, as fulfillment—what Jean-Paul Sartre called an “In-and-for-itself” totality. This notion of eternity implies that God is able to exist completely outside the picture of the world, that God is able to take such a long view so as to be removed from the direct struggle and yet at the same time be in communion with the world though completely unaffected, completely isolated and safe from its strivings. One of the longtime goals of philosophers both in the East and West has been to achieve this view from “no where” for themselves.

What makes this view of eternal perfection unsatisfying to Mormons and the heterodox Christian thinkers we're engaging here is how it necessarily trivializes the import of not only the everyday but even the most momentous struggles of this life. For the traditional view, what happens here has little import. The purpose of life is to escape the world. In the words of an old mountain hymn, “I am a pilgrim and a stranger traveling through this wearisome land; but I have a home in yonder city, good Lord, not made with hands” (“I Am a Pilgrim”). We are just passers-through in this world, and the sooner we are out of it, the better. Nothing here has eternal value. In John Bunyan's Christian classic *Pilgrim's Progress*, Pilgrim begins his journey by forsaking his family and running toward the eternal city.

Then said the Evangelist, If this be thy condition, why standest thou still? He answered, because I know not

whither to go. Then he gave him a Parchment Roll, and there was written within, Fly from the wrath to come.

So I saw in my Dream, that the Man began to run; now he had not run far from his own door, but his Wife and children perceiving it, began to cry after him to return: but the Man put his Fingers in his Ears, and ran on crying, Life, Life, Eternal Life: so he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the Plain.³

No earthly love can compare with the glories of the perfect heavenly realm. It is best to stop up your ears and run as fast as you can from such love toward the eternal beauty. In another classic, *The Divine Comedy*, Dante, at the end of his journey, arrives in paradise and is greeted by his earthly love Beatrice; but when he ascends to the highest point in paradise, he turns from her as she turns from him and contemplates the perfect beauty of God. Dante, enraptured by the beatific vision proclaims: “O light eternal, who alone abidest in Thyself, alone knowest Thyself, and, known to Thyself and knowing, lovest and smilest on Thyself!”⁴ God's eternal perfection is the only thing of ultimate worth. This otherworldliness spawns the atheist critique that we lose all hope of love and justice in this world. As Joe Hill says, the long-haired preachers who come out at night claim that if you “work and pray, live on hay, you'll get pie in the sky when you die.”⁵ A line to which Cisco Houston added in his version of the song, “but it's a lie.”

To the contrary, Smith and Boehme maintained the world is *necessary* to God.⁶ The world is the reflection of God and was made from God's own nature.⁷ The world is created in a process much like that in which God is created, in a struggle with chaos.⁸ Both Smith and Boehme suggest that the world was spiritually created in the mind of God before it received its physical creation, but both see this spiritual creation as insufficient because it is only imagined and not truly realized. An actual existent is superior to an ideal. The “Divine idea” is less rich than reality; the world is richer *after* its history than at the beginning.⁹

Both Smith and Boehme stand outside the main Platonic traditions of Western theism. They are neither pantheists nor traditional theists but naturalists for whom God is both within and affected by the creation and is affected by what happens in this world. Both Smith and Boehme reject doctrines of predestination and *creatio ex nihilo* and, in doing so, create radically new interpretations of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience that offer strong affirmations of freedom. Smith and B. H. Roberts are more radical than Boehme, however, for though Boehme eliminates the ontological distinction between God and humanity, seeing both rooted in the absolute, he still makes important distinctions between the relative eternal status of God and humanity. In his King Follett Discourse, Joseph Smith smashes the distinction, declaring that God is a glorified human being. This is a vector that becomes further radicalized in a line extending from Smith through Brigham Young to Roberts and John A. Widtsoe.¹⁰

As non-privileged non-academics who stood outside the majority theological tradition, Boehme and Smith both discard



JACOB BOEHME, 1575–1624



JOSEPH SMITH, 1805–1844

***L*atter-day Saints can benefit from looking at heterodox traditions in Christianity, as they may discover resources for the better development and articulation of some of their own theological positions.**

the traditional notion of omnipotence, in which all real freedom and power is reserved to God, and the supporting doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* in favor of a type of “dialectical voluntarism” in which the world emerges from the “opposition of all things.”¹¹ God creates the world from a pre-existing chaos. For Boehme, this chaos or *Ungrund* is the no-thing. Nothing actual, formed, or ordered exists; it is all just potentiality. In Mormon terms, this formlessness before the creative act might be thought of as raw agency before the determination found in the exercise of free will. It is like sitting before a blank computer screen or a blank canvas. There are an infinite number of ways we might create something, but it is only our action that will determine what we will do. This is not, however, the same idea that some philosophers have suggested, that God chooses between an almost infinite number of possible worlds in which every action is already decided. It is something much more like artistic creation and daily life as we live it. New possibilities arise the moment I start writing or acting, and new ones arise as we write and act. Like us, God responds to them as they appear. As Indiana Jones said back in 1981 in the original *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark*, “I’m making this up as I go.”

Boehme’s concept of the *Ungrund* provides a potential synthesis to the continuing debate among Mormons about whether we existed as independent persons from eternity (called “intelligences”) or were created from an undifferentiated primal soup (called “intelligence”).¹² Boehme’s notion

synthesizes both positions. Everything that “is” has its basis in freedom or creativity. God calls us to higher degrees of perfection, eventually to personhood, and finally, to Godhood. We are not persons from eternity but become such in relation to our responsiveness to God’s call. But neither are we an inert substance that God mixes together to produce spirit children.

Free response presupposes the possibility of refusal. Boehme’s dialectical voluntarism is based on the image of groundlessness which is the beginning point for the development of Being. For Boehme, the *Ungrund* contains within it all antinomies, but in this state, they are unrealized and only potential. Boehme calls the *Ungrund* the “eternal silence” that lies at the basis of both God and the world, and he argues that it is the actualization in being of these potentialities that is the source of life. As such, in creating the world, God creates God as well.

Unlike Boehme, Joseph Smith does not develop a discussion of a groundless impersonal absolute, but we can see hints of what it might look like in places such as the discussion of opposition in 2 Nephi 2, in the declaration about Christ’s being “in and through” all things in Doctrine and Covenants Section 88, and in the discussions of intelligence in Section 93 and of the primordial chaos in Joseph Smith’s King Follett Discourse. Boehme’s descriptions of the theogonic and anthropogonic processes could also be read fruitfully by Mormons seeking new and interesting ways to express their tradition’s theology of human perfectibility.

MORMONISM'S TWO ULTIMATES

THE MORMON DOCTRINE that there are two Ultimates—one personal, the other impersonal—is easily seen in the following description of the Mormon understanding of God by Charles W. Penrose:

But, if God is an individual spirit and dwells in a body, the question will arise, “Is He the Eternal Father?” Yes, He is the Eternal Father. “Is it a fact that He never had a beginning?” In the elementary particles of His organism, He did not. But if He is an organized Being, there must have been a time when that being was organized. This, some one will say, would infer that God had a beginning. This spirit which pervades all things, which is the light and life of all things, by which our heavenly Father operates, by which He is omnipotent, never had a beginning and never will have an end. It is the light of truth; it is the spirit of intelligence. . . . If you see a living blade of grass you see a manifestation of that Spirit which is called God. If you see an animal of any kind on the face of the earth having life, there is a manifestation of that Spirit. If you see a man you behold its most perfect earthly manifestation. And if you see a glorified man, a man who has passed through the various grades of being, who has overcome all things, who has been raised from the dead, who has been quickened by this spirit in its fullness, there you see manifested, in its perfection, this eternal, beginningless, endless spirit of intelligence.

Such a Being is our Father and our God, and we are following in His footsteps. He has attained to perfection. . . . This spirit cannot be fully comprehended in our finite state.¹³

In this passage, Penrose is describing the experience of the Ultimate in a personal and impersonal form. The personal form is God, the Eternal Father; the impersonal is Spirit and intelligence.

The LDS assertion that there are two Ultimates naturally raises the charge that Mormonism is polytheistic. B. H. Roberts argues that this is not the case, that God’s essential oneness is located in the Divine Nature, which is singular. In Roberts’s terms, “God” is a “generic idea” that describes a being of perfect love. In this sense, there is just one “God.” However, “godhood” is a state of being that any human being can achieve when she or he arrives at full identification with basic reality. The term “God” therefore identifies all beings who have taken on themselves the Divine Nature, who have become morally perfect because they have achieved perfect love. The Divine Nature is One, though there are many individuals who fully identify with this singular Divine Nature and are therefore “God.”¹⁴

Roberts is also an excellent expounder of other theological commitments that follow from the LDS assertion of the existence of two Ultimates. One of these is a fuller and ennobling understanding of the interrelationship between the being,

God’s creative act is calling others from chaos into the sociality of community. The Mormon revelation is that God desires these others to enjoy the same fullness that God enjoys.

God—the individual supreme intelligence and Creator of the universe—and other intelligences—God’s children. This relation is a mutually dependent one: God cannot be perfect without them, nor they without God. Each entails the other. For Mormonism, being “God” means to be in a state of being that can occur only in relation to other self-existent beings.¹⁵ Joseph Smith taught that God found himself “in the midst of spirits and glory.”¹⁶ God did not create these others *ex nihilo* (literally: “out of nothing”) but is related to them from the very beginning. God’s creative act is calling these others from chaos into the sociality of community. There is something eternal about each and every other person in the universe. The Mormon revelation is that God desires these others to enjoy the same fullness that God enjoys, that they too may be exalted. The freedom or creativity that they possess, that they are, makes possible differing responses regarding how fully they enter that community.

Roberts’s distinction between the generic idea of God and a being who is “God” allows us to make sense of the passages in Alma 42 that refer to the logical possibility of God “ceasing to be God” (Alma 42:13–25). God is “God” as a matter of good will, of choice. Being “God” is not a matter of being but of love. It is logically possible that the personal being that is “God” could choose not to love. But if God so chose, at that very moment of decision, God would cease to be “God” (in the sense that this being would have fallen out of harmony with the Divine Nature).

THE SUPERIORITY OF TIME OVER ETERNITY—
WITH HELP FROM THE MOVIES

BOTH JOSEPH SMITH and Jacob Boehme map out a development of humanity toward deity that strongly favors the superiority of time and creation over a timeless perfection and the riskless unity of the One. Because, as Schelling often says, some concepts can’t be understood but only felt or acted upon, the movies can help us here. They can help illustrate the nature of the passage from a barren, desolate, eternal oneness to the multiplicity and risk of real plurality.

Vincent Sherman’s 1948 film *The Adventures of Don Juan* begins with some of the most memorable, though also admittedly corniest, seduction lines in the history of cinema. Don Juan (played by Errol Flynn) climbs the trellis toward his next conquest, Lady Catharine. He says, “I’ve loved you since the

beginning of time.” To which she semi-skeptically replies, “But you only met me yesterday.” Don Juan comes back with the knee-weakening zinger: “My lady, that was when time began.” We know that Don Juan will not remain true to the lady and, in fact, will never really love anyone. But we are not surprised that the line works on Lady Catharine because she wants to be seduced and is therefore open to his lies.

But why is the line so appealing to us and to Lady Catharine? I believe it is because we want a choice to be made that pulls us out of the dizzying chaos of the multiplicity of choices and gives us forever to another person. A commitment makes time begin. This is what happens in Wim Wenders’s film *Wings of Desire* when the character Marion says that now time can start, life can become serious, because she has met Damiel, the angel, who through his love for her has left eternity for time.

In both examples, the characters are articulating a psychological longing to experience that moment when the limitless possibilities of eternity begin to have a direction, a meaning—an indication that we aren’t just playing around anymore, that this is serious. The risk, of course, is that the other may lie to us. For Don Juan, time hasn’t begun, only the eternal return of his own desire. In fact, he actually reveals his egoistic pursuit in his next seduction line as Catharine says to him, “But you have loved so many women,” to which he replies: “An artist can paint a thousand canvases before achieving a single masterpiece. Would you deny a lover the same privilege?” In Don Juan’s response, love is reduced to an aesthetic pursuit of personal satisfaction and fulfillment, the creation of a masterpiece. Don Juan loves the “ideal woman” but doesn’t really care for any particular flesh-and-blood woman except as she reflects the ideal. Although Don Juan is lying—to Catharine and even to himself—his two seduction lines can be used as metaphors for interaction with the Divine. In the latter, the ideal is conceived aesthetically as the masterpiece that steps out of the vicissitudes of time, while in the former, time begins with the relational commitment to another.

We see something similar to Don Juan’s ideal of the masterpiece in this description of the consummation of love from Plato’s *Symposium*.

But what if a man had eyes to see the true beauty—the divine beauty, I mean pure, and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality and all the colors and vanities of human life—thither looking, and holding converse with the true beauty simple and divine? Remember how in that communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities for he has hold not of an image but of a reality, and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue to become the friend of God and be immortal, if mortal man may. Would that be an ignoble life?¹⁷

Here is eternity with no risk and no attachment to a particular, finite person. The lover of wisdom, as he moves toward the love of perfect beauty, loves another person for the *eternal form*

of beauty in that person rather than loving the person. One moves from the appreciation of the eternal, unchanging form behind the changing physical body to the appreciation of the eternal form represented in the character of the individual. Finally, the lover of wisdom looks past all finite forms to contemplate the eternal One.

Plato’s desire is for an eternal absolute purity beyond individuals, something not “clogged with the pollutions of mortality.” One loves nothing but the ideal untouched by the world, and the world is real only so far as it approximates the ideal. In this view, we don’t love another as an individual but for the eternal that is within that person, even though this eternal is imperfectly reflected. We escape the pollutions of mortality in the immaculate beauty of eternity. Don Juan doesn’t love Lady Catharine, only her ideal form. As she ages—which, for him, will happen by the next morning!—he will leave her in pursuit of his masterpiece.

In this Platonic view, the world in which we live, including all the beings within it, are imperfect copies of the ideal beauty that alone we should love. When we love something here, we fall into the unreal.

This same kind of relationship between the eternal ideal and the imperfection of the physical world is echoed in all negative versions of the Fall in the Christian tradition. The desire to be an independent being, to be free, and to love other beings in addition to God, or independently of God, is an impiety. Having created the world from nothing, God is the only real Being on which creation depends and derives its finite being. Creation has independent existence, and thus it is completely predestined by God, just like a movie in which the writers and directors have already determined the screenplay and will allow no modification by actors. There is a certain comfort in such stories because we know from the very beginning that good will triumph and the hero and heroine will end up together—even though they didn’t get there by choice. All suffering is just a part of the beauty of the story.

This is Augustine’s aesthetic solution to the problem of evil. God, who sees the whole from a perspective outside of time and space, sees that it is all good: the light and the darkness together complete the beauty of the composition.

We are like people ignorant of painting who complain that the colours are not beautiful everywhere in the picture: but the Artist has laid on the appropriate tint to every spot.¹⁸

From God’s vantage point, there is no such thing as evil in this world, just as when we watch a movie or admire a great painting and see only beauty even though much of the beauty is created by tensions and contrasts. For Augustine, the suffering found in this world, even the eternal damnation of countless beings, is part of the masterpiece achieved by the ultimate artist. All that we perceive as evil contributes to the goodness of the whole. God perceives the drama of the whole in one continuous glimpse. We, the players in the story, don’t quite see how it will end, and this ignorance is our only freedom.

Frankly, this “aesthetic” solution to suffering works better in

the movies and other artistic endeavors. In the world, where real suffering happens to countless creatures, we would like to think that all this activity changes something.

There are, of course, other ways of thinking about God, love, creation, freedom. A good example from the movies of seeing the world and its many beings as superior to a changeless eternity is Harold Ramis's comedy, *Groundhog Day*. In the film, a weatherman, Phil Connors (played by Bill Murray)



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finds himself thrown into eternity: he wakes up day after day in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, where it's always February 2, Groundhog Day. After an initial period of adjusting to the fact that no matter what he does, he cannot die nor does he have to face any negative consequences for his actions, he begins to see this fall into eternity as the fulfillment of a dream to do anything he wants. He even imagines himself as a god, or perhaps even God. He is the only real being—others, who are not indestructible as he is, are not as real as himself.

Phil eventually grows bored, however, as he realizes that he is actually in a hell in which nothing matters. He only escapes this hell when he actually commits to the others around him, and particularly—this is Hollywood after all—to his producer Rita (played by the lovely Andie McDowell). Time finally begins with Phil's act of decision to enter into real relations with other persons around him, when his love for Rita becomes more than just an attempt to seduce her. In real relationships, both beings in the relationship are affected by the other.¹⁹

Slovakian philosopher Slavoj Žižek uses *Groundhog Day* to explain the rebellion against the Platonic ideal of eternity by Boehme's nineteenth-century follower F. W. J. Schelling:

The "Schellingian" dimension of the film resides in its anti-Platonic depreciation of eternity and immortality: as long as the hero knows that he is immortal, caught in the "eternal return of the same"—that the same day will dawn again and again—his life bears

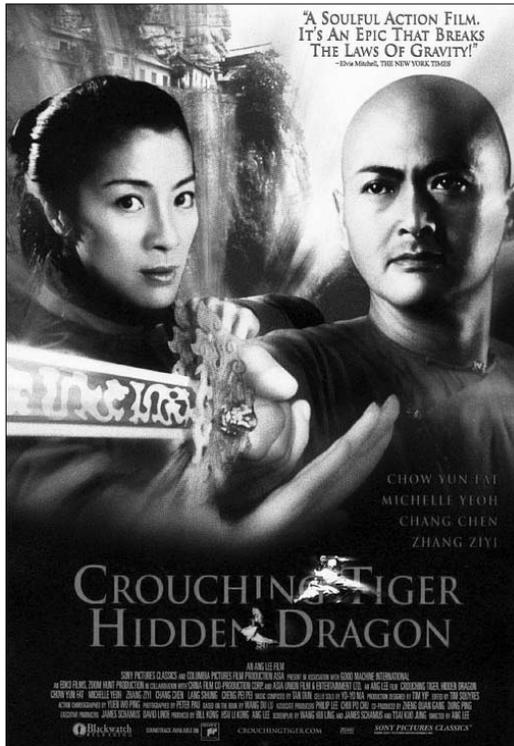
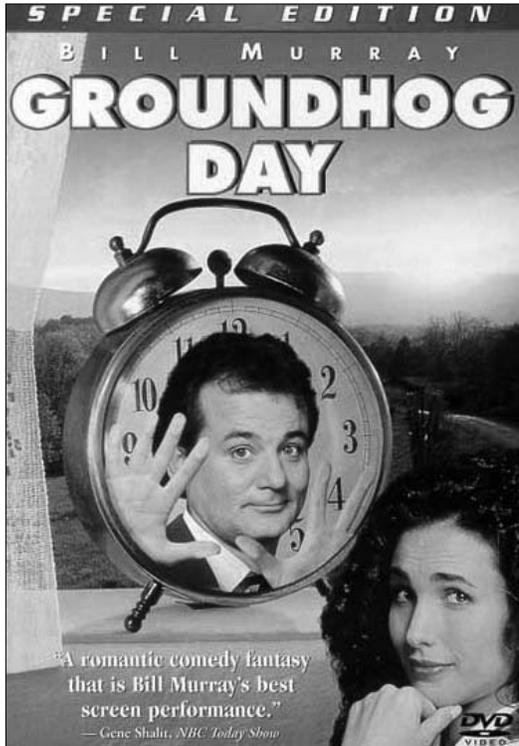
the mark of the "unbearable lightness of being," of an insipid and shallow game in which events have a kind of ethereal pseudo-existence; he falls back into

temporal reality only and precisely when his attachment to the girl grows into true love. Eternity is a false, insipid game: an authentic encounter with the Other in which "things are for real" necessarily entails a return to temporal reality.²⁰

This sense of the meaninglessness of eternity in comparison to the significance of temporal existence led Schelling to reject the traditional theistic doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, because this view of God creating from nothing separates God from his creations in a timeless eternity. For Schelling, the created world has added to God. In a significant way, it has created God.²¹ Traditional theism uses creation from nothing to make God a totally self-centered being apart from the world. The world is not real to God in the same way that Connor's endlessly repetitious Punxsutawney was not real to him.

As God moves toward personhood, Schelling, following Boehme, argues that we move from eternity to time, from the indifference and unity of the absolute to the strife and plurality of the world. But this is a move in the right direction. The move into the world is not simply a Fall from the absolute but also an ascent through which not only humanity but God finds God's true self.

Just as the films *The Wizard of Oz* and *Pleasantville* do, Wim Wenders's *Wings of Desire* uses a change from black-and-white to color to illustrate a broadening of perspective. In this case, with his renunciation of angelic status for love of the human Marion, the Angel Damiel moves from the black-and-white of



OPPOSITION IN ALL THINGS

FOR BOEHME, ONCE God chooses to create the world, God becomes involved in its destiny and is affected by the suffering and love that develop here. As the absolute, God is the Eternal Nothing, the eternal One, the impersonal ultimate. As the absolute, God is not really worthy of worship. God as the One is the No-thing.

[A]s an eternal Nothing; he hath neither foundation, beginning, nor abode; he possesseth nothing, save only himself; he is the will of the abyss; he is in himself only one; he needeth neither space, no place; he begetteth himself in himself, from eternity to eternity; he is neither like nor resembleth anything; and hath no peculiar place where he dwelleth. . . .²²

God as the One is nothing. Without the creature, without nature, without real

others, there is no determination about God, there is nothing to say about God. God is not will, not body, not space. If one called such a being perfect, it would have to be the perfection of perfect vagueness—perfectly boring, perfectly empty. This vagueness, this boring oneness is, of course, also bliss. It is like the vague, boring, meaninglessness of the statements made by many American politicians. We find nothing to disagree with because there is nothing there. If they were actually to say or do something, conflict would arise.

In his magisterial work about the philosophy of Jacob Boehme, Alexandre Koyré articulates how this oneness also translates into morality. He writes: “God, in Himself . . . is not even kind or cruel, not good or evil.”²³ Boehme wants God to be personal, to be not only perfect but “good.”

[W]hat Boehme believes prior to any doctrine, what he searches, what his thought is destined to justify, is that God is a personal being, even more, that he is a person, a living person, conscious of himself, an acting person, a perfect person.²⁴

The centrality of the personality of God and a personality tied to choice and relation to others is central to Mormonism

Time finally begins again when Phil’s love for Rita becomes more than just an attempt to seduce her.

Iwould rather be a ghost, drifting by your side as a condemned soul, than enter heaven without you.”

eternity into the color of love and world. The world has pain, yes, but also love.

Another wonderful example of the renunciation of immaculate eternity for pain and love in the world is the speech made by the monk Li Mu-bai in Ang Lee’s *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. As he is dying, the woman he loves, Yu Shu-lien, tells him not to waste his energy but to save it for meditation for final release from the world and entrance into eternal bliss. Instead of taking her advice, Li declares that his entire life has been a waste because his quest for nirvana made it impossible for him to declare his love for Yu:

I’ve already wasted my whole life. I want to tell you with my last breath that I have always loved you. I would rather be a ghost, drifting by your side as a condemned soul, than enter heaven without you. Because of your love, I will never be a lonely spirit.

In all these films, the message is that passion and commitment can be fulfilled only through renouncing the immaculate bliss of eternity and actually entering the world. The finite is no longer a fall nor a descent from God but an ascent to something far better.

as it is to Boehme and a good deal of the tradition that followed him.

Like Boehme, Joseph Smith rejects *creatio ex nihilo* in favor of a type of dialectical voluntarism in which the world emerges from the “opposition of all things.” Just as for Boehme, God creates the world in relation to already existing, and perhaps eternal, chaos, and Smith’s very personal God should be read in terms of will, not being. God chooses to be the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, and though Smith and most Mormons don’t believe it will ever happen, God, through the use of coercion, could “cease to be God” (Alma 42:13–25).

Also central to the notion of the person for both Boehme and Smith is the existence of real others and real sociality. This is evident in Mormonism in its basic eschatology, which holds that an individual has a pre-mortal existence followed by a mortal existence followed by a post-mortal existence. We give up the serenity, innocence, and banality of pre-mortal existence to become real persons.

Lehi’s marvelous deathbed instructions to his son Jacob (2 Nephi 2) give a quite sophisticated outline of Mormonism’s basic eschatology, which reflects a movement from an unconscious or dead unity—in either Eden or the pre-mortal existence in which humans are in the presence of God or in the unity of the primal chaos before God’s creative acts—to an alienated conflictual multiplicity that is this world, and then, finally, into a freely chosen, conscious unity in multiplicity or sociality of love in both this world and the world to come (see D&C 130:1–2). In this view, the plurality of the world, with all its conflict, is clearly superior to the serenity of the One.

For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility.

Wherefore, it must needs have been created for a thing of naught; wherefore there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation. Wherefore, this thing must needs destroy the wisdom of God and his eternal purposes, and also the power, and the mercy, and the justice of God. . . .

And after Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit

they were driven out of the garden of Eden, to till the earth. . . .

And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end.

And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin. . . .

Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy. (2 Nephi 2:11–12, 19, 22–23, 25)

The problem with the eternal bliss of the One is that it is dead. It may be unified, but it is not something to which one would want to return. It is the opposition of all things that make joy—indeed, that make persons themselves—possible. This movement from the serenity of oneness to the difficulties and richness of the world is also found in the *Mystèrium Magnum*, Boehme’s commentary on Genesis. First, about the original state of God and creation, Boehme writes:

For in the eternal speaking Word, which is beyond or without all nature or beginning, is only the divine understanding or sound; in it there is neither darkness nor light, neither thick nor thin, neither joy nor sorrow; moreover, no sensibility or perceivancy; but it is barely a power of the understanding in one source, will and dominion; there is neither friend nor foe unto it, for it is the eternal good, and nothing else.²⁵

But with the Fall, humanity and the dialectic dance begin: [T]he eternal free will has introduced itself into the darkness, pain, and source; and so also through the darkness into the fire and light, even into a kingdom of joy; in order that the Nothing might be known in the Something, and that it might have a sport with its contra-will, that the free will of the abyss might be manifest to itself in the byss [ground or foundation], for without evil and good there could not be any byss.²⁶

Both Jacob Boehme and Joseph Smith read the Genesis narrative as a “positive Fall” that opens a future, richer relation with God and others even as it also opens the possibility of suffering.²⁷

The theme of the positive Fall which leads toward the creation of persons in relation with God continues when the prophet Alma explains that through the Fall, humans become subjects, and because they are cut off from the Lord, they can follow their own will. This independent devel-



IMAGE FROM WINGS OF DESIRE

In the Mormon plan of salvation, we choose to give up the serenity, innocence, and banality of pre-mortal existence to become real persons.

opment of subjects is necessary to the drama between God and humanity.

Now, we see that the man had become as God, knowing good and evil; and lest he should put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever, the Lord God placed cherubim and the flaming sword, that he should not partake of the fruit—

And thus we see, that there was a time granted unto man to repent, yea, a probationary time, a time to repent and serve God.

For behold, if Adam had put forth his hand immediately, and partaken of the tree of life, he would have lived forever, according to the word of God, having no space for repentance; yea, and also the word of God would have been void, and the great plan of salvation would have been frustrated. . . .

And now, ye see by this that our first parents were cut off both temporally and spiritually from the pres-

Lucifer outlined his plan to be god only to be thwarted by Jehovah, who eliminated the possibility of Lucifer fulfilling his project by calling his imagining into question.

ence of the Lord; and thus we see *they became subjects* to follow after their own will.

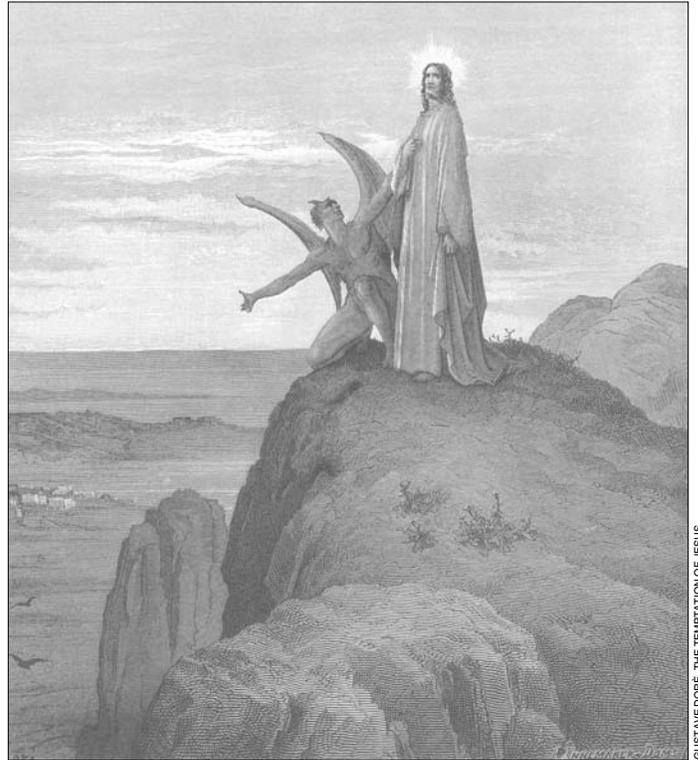
Now behold, it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this temporal death, for that would destroy the great plan of happiness. (Alma 42:3–5, 7–8, italics mine)

With the line, “they became subjects to follow after their own will,” Alma is describing the moment when Adam and Eve became real persons capable of real choices—bad ones as well as good.

As Alma’s teaching continues, he emphasizes the non-coercive character of the Divine. Human subjects are real subjects who participate in the determination of the open future. In this respect, Alma rejects the notion of universal salvation, for were God through His mercy to save humanity despite themselves, “God would cease to be God.”

And now, there was no means to reclaim men from this fallen state, which man had brought upon himself because of his own disobedience;

Therefore, according to justice, the plan of redemption could not be brought about, only on conditions of repentance of men in this probationary state, yea, this preparatory state; for except it were for these conditions, mercy could not take effect except it should destroy the work of justice. Now the work of



GUSTAVE DORE, THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

justice could not be destroyed; if so, God would cease to be God. (Alma 42:12–13)

“HELL IS OTHERS”

IN HIS GENESIS commentary, *Mystérium Magnum*, Boehme develops a concept of God as a harmony of opposites in which God continually wills the perfect balance between darkness and light, and between unity and multiplicity.²⁸ In Boehme’s creation story, evil begins with Lucifer’s free choice of death and darkness over the light. This choice separated him from God and represents the destruction of harmony.

The willful distortion of reality was also an act in which Lucifer separated himself from relation. In his refusal to return to the harmony, Lucifer completely denied the light within him and chose the darkness.

Absolute independence of any being is the ultimate lie. All are related. In fact, Lucifer represents the will to isolation, to be cut off—a selfishness that is in all things. For Boehme, this is the key to the power of temptation. As Boehme commentator David Walsh writes, for Boehme “Lucifer can ‘imagine’ his angry fire into all things and by hardening their will can extinguish the divine light within them.”²⁹

In the Book of Mormon, this same kind of false imagination that leads one to close off relations to God and others is found in the metaphor of “hardening one’s heart.” In the demonic forms of this kind of hardening, one imagines oneself as an image of God, as transcending the world and being in control of all things. In the Book of Moses, when Cain chooses against further relationality with his brother Abel and kills him, he

imagines himself as master and as free:

And Satan sware unto Cain that he would do according to his commands. And all these things were done in secret.

And Cain said: Truly I am Mahan, the master of this secret, that I may murder and get gain. Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan, and he gloried in his wickedness.

And Cain went into the field, and Cain talked with Abel, his brother. And it came to pass that while they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him.

And Cain gloried in that which he had done, saying: I am free. . . (Moses 5:30–33)

Unfortunately for him, Cain's badly imagined freedom ultimately leads to his isolation and vagabondism on the earth. All other beings are his enemies. Brigham Young carries this further when he argues that the isolation of sons of perdition leads to dissolution:

They will be decomposed, both soul and body, and return to their native element. I do not say that they will be annihilated; but they will be disorganized, and will be as it they had never been; while we live and retain our identity and contend against those principles which tend to death or dissolution.³⁰

Lucifer and Cain dwell in a fantasy. They see themselves as self-made men independent of others and free of relation and responsibility. Like Korihor, they think we deserve what we gain by our strength or talent (Alma 30:17). To them, being a "God" means to be free from the give and take of relation with another and instead to impose raw power upon the other. The irony, of course, is that this is the way that traditional theologies have largely thought of God—as a being apart, sitting on top of a topless throne, completely self-sufficient.

As commentator Andrew Weeks writes, for Boehme, Satan is the "prince of hierarchy."³¹ He seeks to be God in the sense of an independent being that transcends and controls all of reality. But this is a fantasy that can take place only in the mind and not in the presence of the other; thus Satan's earthly model, Cain, must kill his brother to imagine himself free.

This fantasy of escape from relationships represents is not simply the absence of the truth but a feverish opposition to it. If actualized, Cain's and Lucifer's acts and imaginations would return all of creation to the centerless chaos of non-being through the creation of billions of pseudo-centers, a universe of little Gods focused on themselves. The demonic hope is self-destructive—it cannot be realized. A being with a demonic attitude refuses to accept the existence of the Other as an equal, instead projecting her- or himself as the unique center of its world. Whether God or man, devil or angel, the demonic sees the Other as the source of continual pain because the demonic imagines the Other as the source of its misery, as the limitation of the possibility of realizing the demonic vision of a private universe.³²

There is a great similarity between Boehme's conception of the demonic and the Mormon understanding of the Council in

Heaven, in which Lucifer outlined his project to be god only to be thwarted by Jehovah, who eliminated the possibility of Lucifer fulfilling his project by calling his imagining into question.

Boehme describes hell as that darkness where each of the damned blames the others for his or her despair:

In the Darkness there is in the essence only a perpetual stinging and breaking, each form being enemy to the other—a contrarious essence. Each form is a liar to itself, and one says to the other, that it is evil and adverse to it, that it is a cause of its restlessness and fierceness. Each thinks in itself: If only the other form were not, thou wouldst have rest; and yet each of them is evil and false. Hence it is, that all that is born of the dark property of wrath is lying, and is always lying against the other forms, saying they are evil; and yet it is itself a cause thereof, it maketh them evil by its poisonous infection.³³

This is the same hell Jean-Paul Sartre describes in his play "No Exit" when one of his characters states: "Hell is others."³⁴ Hell is others because others constantly interfere with my making it to the top of the food chain.

To hold this view of others, one naturally desires the destruction of all others—an outcome actually described by the Marquis de Sade in his book, *120 Days of Sodom*.³⁵ In this work, torturer "godlings" end up torturing each other and finally destroying each other in their desire for ultimate power. It is de Sade writing from his madhouse and fantasizing the final destruction of all Being. The Book of Mormon ends in a similar orgy of death when the damned can no longer forgive the others and live only to kill and be killed.

CONCLUSION

BOTH JOSEPH SMITH and Jacob Boehme had similar intuitions about the hellishness of a Platonic-type eternity. For them, a God who is fully "in the mix" with others is far superior to one who is completely self-sufficient and ultimately unaffected by the choices of others. For both, a God can be God only in relationship. Ideals cannot exist in and for themselves. Love requires a lover and a beloved. God's ultimate act, as in the movies analyzed in this article, is in God's movement to commit to others. Our most important acts are to commit in the same way to other persons. The promises we make to them unite the past, present, and future of our lives as we say that we will be the same towards them over time. I believe this is also the meaning of God's promise to be the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Even with the many similarities between Smith and Boehme, Mormon views of God and humans have gone far beyond what Boehme imagined. Mormonism replaces the God of traditional Western theism with the Gods of Zion, with the idea of a blessed community in which the hierarchy of being is replaced by the equality of Zion. In this equality, Gods share the Divine Nature, having achieved perfect love and fully embracing relationality with all beings. This understanding of

Zion and deification in Mormonism sits within but also goes radically beyond the Christian heterodox tradition that began with Boehme and flowered in the writings of Schelling and the idealists, romantics, and personalists who followed. ☞

NOTES

1. Though opinions vary on Jacob Boehme's importance and place in the history of Western thought, he has earned the acclaim of some of his most important successors. G. W. F. Hegel called Boehme the founder of German philosophy. Intellectual biographers also note his influence on Johann Gottlieb Fichte as well as the later philosophy of F. W. J. Schelling and Boehme's disciple Franz von Baader. Boehme was also read by such divergent minds as Sir Isaac Newton, John Amos Comenius, John Milton, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, William Law (the British politician, not the early member of the LDS First Presidency), Emanuel Swedenborg, Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, and William Blake. Nicholas Berdyaev points to the importance of Boehme's influence (via Schelling) on the Slavophiles and says that his influence can also be found in the second generation of Russian philosophers beginning with Soloviev and including Bulgakov, Frank, and the Symbolist poets Blok, Beyli, and Ivanov. Berdyaev also acknowledges his own debt to Boehme.

The idea of two Ultimates is not unknown in the history of religious and philosophical thought in the East and West. Ramanuja's qualified non-dualism is a Hindu version of this, as is Nagarjuna's affirmation of the reality of both samsara and nirvana in Mahajana Buddhism. This position is developed in the twentieth century by Nishida Kitaro and the Kyoto School of Japanese Buddhism. In the West, besides Boehme, the position shows up in personalistically oriented philosophers such as Schelling, Edgar Sheffield Brightman, George Holmes Howison, and, once again, Nicolas Berdyaev. Process theology is not necessarily personalistic, but it, too, affirms two Ultimates.

2. John L. Brooke has argued that there is a line of influence between Boehme and Smith, but it is impossible to demonstrate. See his *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For more on Feodorov's and Soloviev's notions of resurrection, see Nicolas Feodorov, "The Question of Brotherhood or Relatedness, and of the Reasons for the Unbrotherly, Dis-Related, or Unpeaceful State of the World, and of the Means for the Restoration of Relatedness," trans. Ashleigh Moorhouse and George Louis Kline, in *Russian Philosophy*, Vol. III, *Pre-Revolutionary Philosophy and Theology, Philosophers in Exile, Marxists and Communists* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 11–54; George M. Young Jr., *Nicolai Feodorov: An Introduction* (Belmont, Mass: Nordland Publishing Company, 1979); Vladimir Soloviev, *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, trans. Peter Zouboff, revised and edited by Boris Jakim (Hudson, New York: Lindesfarne Press, 1995); Vladimir Soloviev, *The Justification of the Good: An Essay in Moral Philosophy*, trans. Natalie Duddington (Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans, 2005); D. Stremoukhoff, *Vladimir Soloviev and His Messianic Work*, trans. Elizabeth Meyendorff (Belmont, Mass: Nordland Publishing Company, 1980).

The theme of resurrection and overcoming the alienation of fathers and sons shows up strongly in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Feodorov and especially Soloviev were both close associates of Dostoevsky. See Marina Kostalevsky, *Dostoevsky and Soloviev: The Art of Integral Vision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). Strangely enough, the theme of resurrection even shows up among the Bolsheviks in the person of Anatoli Lunacharski, who was Lenin's Peoples Commissar for Education. See George L. Kline, "The God Builders: Gorky and Lunacharski" in *Religious and Anti-Religious Thought in Russia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 103–26.

3. John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 13–14.

4. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy III: Paradiso*, trans. Charles Singleton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), Canto XXXIII: 123, 379.

5. "Long-Haired Preachers," *Little Red Songbook*, 5th ed. (n.p.: Industrial Worker, 6 March 1913).

6. Moses 1:39; Alexandre Koyré, *La philosophie de Jacob Boehme* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), 392; Jacob Boehme, *Mystérium Magnum, or an Exposition of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, trans. John Sparrow (Kessinger Publishing Reprint, 2002), 71:20.

7. D&C 93, 130; Koyré, *La philosophie de Jacob Boehme*, 348–49; Boehme, *Mystérium Magnum* 2:9.

8. D&C 88:6–16; Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed.

Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 346–47.

9. 2 Nephi 2:11–25; Boehme, *Mystérium Magnum* 1:3.

10. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 345–46.

11. The most famous proponent of the idea of the world advancing toward higher and higher forms through a dialectical process was Schelling's old college roommate Georg Wilhelm Fredrich Hegel. Hegel looked at history as a progress toward perfect knowledge and freedom. This happened through the unfolding of the absolute idea in the conflict of the world. Hegel's dialectic is usually caricatured as an idea (a thesis) being challenged by another idea (an antithesis) and, after conflict, coming together in a more adequate notion or synthesis. This works nicely until we realize that Hegel never used these terms to describe what he was doing.

But let me try to illustrate using concepts used in this article. In Hegel's famous analysis of masters and slaves, he says that the master believes he is completely independent, the essential being, not realizing that he is dependent on the slaves. Try as you might, you cannot be a master without them. Also, they do all the work, which makes them more interesting than the master. Hegel follows this master/slave idea through time and finds that we have often thought of God and humanity in just these terms. We have also thought of government (nobility and subjects) this way. Eventually we will get to a more humanized religion, a more democratic government, and a complete (absolute) way to think about all things.

Schelling's view is close to Hegel's, but Schelling believes that freedom prevents complete or absolute knowledge and the end of history. This is why he, like Boehme and unlike Hegel, can be called a "dialectical voluntarist." For Schelling, there is something about freedom that can't be explained by reason; it remains an "irreducible remainder." This might be an interesting way to think about what Mormons call "eternal progression," for though we will constantly advance to greater and greater understanding and love, we will never completely eliminate the otherness of another. They are always free.

The world as we now behold it, is all rule, order and form but the unruly lies ever in the depth as though it might again break through, and order and form nowhere appear to have been original, but it seems as though what had initially been unruly had been brought to order. This is the incomprehensible basis of the reality of things, the irreducible remainder which cannot be resolved into reason by the greatest exertion but always remains in the depths. Out of this which is unreasonable, reason in the true sense is born. (F. W. J. Schelling, *Of Human Freedom*, trans. James Gutmann [Chicago: Open Court, 1936], 34)

12. For a good outline of this debate, see Daniel H. Ludlow, et. al., eds., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), s.v., "intelligence," by Dennis J. Packard. See also Truman G. Madsen, *Eternal Man* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 24, note 5.

13. *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-Day Saints' Book Depot, 1860), 26:25–26.

14. In his book, *The Mormon Doctrine of Deity*, Roberts lays out his notion of a "generic idea of God" in the larger sense that God is the community of intelligences:

Man being by the very nature of him a son of God, and a participant in the Divine Nature—he is properly a part of God; that is, when God is conceived of in the generic sense, as made up of the whole assemblage of divine Intelligences that exist in all heavens and all earths. (B. H. Roberts, *The Mormon Doctrine of Deity* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1903], 166)

15. Roberts writes:

To this Supreme Intelligence are the other intelligences necessary? He without them cannot be perfect, nor they without him. There is community of interest between them; also of love and brotherhood; and hence community of effort for mutual good, for progress, or attainment of the highest possible. Therefore are these eternal, Divine Intelligences drawn together in oneness of mind and purpose—in moral and spiritual unity. (B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2:399)

16. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 354.

17. Plato, *The Symposium in The Works of Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: The Dial Press, 1936), 342–43.

18. Augustine of Hippo, *The Enchiridian on Faith Hope and Love* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1996). Elsewhere Augustine writes that from God's view, which transcends time and space, all is beautiful—it is the perfect creation of the ultimate artist:

To thee there is no such thing as evil, and even in thy whole creation

taken as a whole, there is not; because there is nothing from beyond it that can burst in and destroy the order which thou hast appointed for it. But in the parts of creation, some things, because they do not harmonize with others, are considered evil. Yet, those same things harmonize with others and are good, and in themselves are good. . . . I no longer desired a better world, because my thoughts ranged over all, and with sounder judgment I reflected that the things above were better than those below, yet that all creation together was better than the higher things alone. (Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998], 7:13)

19. Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* contains a wonderful example of this movement from egoism to love in Dmitri's statement about Grushenka:

I revere her, Alexei, I revere her. . . . Before was nothing! Before it was just her infernal curves that fretted me, but now I've taken her whole soul into my soul, and through her I've become a man.

Dmitri has moved past the purely egoistic desire for Grushenka's body to really loving her, and this means that she affects him. Now life has finally become serious because of relation to another person. (Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky [New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1990], 594)

20. Slavoj Žižek, *Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters* (London: Verso, 1996), 53.

21. F. W. J. Schelling, "Stuttgart Seminars" in *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory*, trans. and ed. Thomas Pfau (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 210.

22. Boehme, *Mystérium Magnum*, 1:2.

23. Koyré, *La philosophie de Jacob Boehme*, 320.

24. *Ibid.*, 315.

25. Boehme, *Mystérium Magnum*, 1:3.

26. *Ibid.*, 26:37.

27. Boehme does not see evil as an eternally existing actuality. For him, the potentiality for evil is the negative side to the freedom that is located in each individual's passionate nature, but he also sees the passionate nature positively because only in projecting our nature do we realize individuality. Freedom cannot be passive indifference; it is activity and has a tendency to manifest itself. From freedom is born Being, nature, and all reality. This aspiration to create contains within itself all of the possible contraries and thus explains the possibility of evil, though not its actuality. Thus, for Boehme, it is possible that evil could be destroyed because evil is only a *potential* reality that presently exists in actuality but is not a *necessary* part of reality.

28. Jacob Boehme, *The Signature of All Things; Of the Supersensual Life, Of Heaven and Hell; Discourse Between Two Souls*, trans. John Sparrow (Kessinger Publishing Reprint, 1997), 16:7.

29. David Walsh, *The Mysticism of Innerworldly Fulfillment: A Study of Jacob Boehme* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1983), 44.

30. *Journal of Discourses*, 7: 57. See also John A. Widstoe, "Who Are the Sons of Perdition?" *Evidences and Reconciliations* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 212–14; John A. Widstoe, *Rational Theology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 79.

31. Andrew Weeks, *Boehme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth Century Mystic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 199.

32. It is interesting that Vladimir Soloviev saw the third temptation of the devil in the book of Matthew in much the same terms that Mormons see Satan's plan in the Council of Heaven: as an effort to eliminate freedom and force goodness and happiness. Soloviev thought this is the strongest of the temptations. After the rejection of the second temptation, Christ has attained a moral height and is conscious of himself as higher than the rest of creation. From here, humanity can be perfected if he only takes power and compels their perfection. He could become like

Dostoevsky's Inquisitor, willing to take on the yoke of freedom and make everyone else a happy slave. He could do the worst possible thing out of love of humanity. Notice how close this is to what the Inquisitor says about weak humanity. The temptation is actually to believe that evil (coercion) is more real than good (love) and thus to worship evil. (Soloviev, *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, 162–63). Soloviev says that Christ humanized his divinity by descending into human form. In overcoming the three temptations, he divinized his humanity and called all humanity to divinization.

Soloviev (1853–1900) began his *Lectures on Divine Humanity* in 1878, completing the series in 1881, which was while Dostoevsky was writing *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dostoevsky and Soloviev were close friends at the time and influenced each other's thought. Many think that Soloviev was the prototype for both Alyosha and Ivan Karamazov.

Like Dostoevsky, Soloviev had read Schelling, but Soloviev read him in German and was even more profoundly influenced by the German romantic than was Dostoevsky. One cannot help but notice the similarity to what Soloviev says about the third temptation and the story of the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov*. The Inquisitor is the Mormon Satan. He alone is free—all others are slaves, but it is all for their happiness and good.

33. Jacob Boehme, *Six Theosophical Points and Other Writings*, trans. John Rolleston Earle (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958), 9:2.

34. Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit and Three Other Plays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976). "No Exit" has three characters in Hell, where the economy is such that the inmates torture each other. All that is necessary is that others be there to smash the others' illusions of greatness and independence. Sartre's plays always reflected his philosophy, and "No Exit" reflects the notion of "the desire to be god" from Sartre's philosophical masterpiece *Being and Nothingness*. The desire to be god is a general term for our desire to see ourselves the way we want to be seen, to have the world run the way we like it, to feel ourselves as completed and thus godlike. Others constantly remind us that this is not the case, so "Hell . . . is other people."

35. Marquis de Sade, *120 Days of Sodom and Other Writings* (Berkeley: Grove Press, 1987).

