

## TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

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Jacob 3–4

**Filthiness and the Atonement**

We're on the book of Jacob. I've decided that more than any book in the Book of Mormon this has the ring of absolute truth, historical and everything else. When they first arrived there, you'll notice, the first thing they did was go scrambling after gold and silver because there was a lot in the mountains. That happened, of course, in Utah within the first year. By the second year everybody was going out in all directions looking for gold and silver. All sorts of projects were launched, and Brigham Young had his hands full just trying to keep a few home. Everybody was looking for it. Along with that in the second year, 1849, the returning members of the Mormon Battalion discovered gold in Sutter's Mill. It was Mormons who discovered the gold that brought on the Gold Rush. Sam Brannan, who came around the horn bringing a host of Saints to go to Utah, became the richest man in California. He was a very influential man. He wanted them to move on [to California], but Brigham was against that and fought it. What happened?

As we read in Mark Twain's *Roughing It*, etc., what about these mining towns? What kind of places were they? Well, everything was up for grabs. Everybody was competitive. There were two or three murders in Virginia City or Carson City every day. Naturally, we have the stock theme that Hollywood picks up—the house full of beautiful ladies and absolutely no morals at all because these guys are out making themselves rich. They are independent. They shoot each other, and it becomes a hell. Nothing could be worse than the mining cities in Nevada during the sixties. That's the sort of thing we have here [in the book of Jacob]. Mark Twain, who edited a newspaper in Nevada at that time, saw this in the background of the Book of Mormon [and thought] this was where Joseph Smith got it—forgetting that the Book of Mormon was written twenty years earlier than the Gold Rush was heard of. But this is the sort of thing that comes along.

Right across the street from my sumptuous manse is a green house where old Sister Buckley used to live. The second mountain south of Y mountain, the high one, is called Buckley Mountain. Her husband was Buckley, and Brigham Young told him that if he ever worked on Sunday he would never strike any gold or silver at all. He was looking for silver. He went up and dug in Rock Canyon with his sons. They would go up every Sunday and work all day long from dawn to dark. Sister Buckley told this story years ago, and we talked a lot about it. They put tracks down Rock Canyon and those big mines with all those tailings up there that are now being sealed up because they are dangerous. An enormous lot of work went on up there. There are huge tailings from three different mines up in Rock Canyon. "They worked for over twenty years," she said. They would come down dog tired every Sunday night for twenty years, and they never found a bit of silver. They never found anything at all, though at the time on Little Mountain, just south of here at the foot of Timp, one person came back with a hat full of nuggets from the streams that had washed them into a little depression there. That caused a big excitement in American Fork, and everybody went up looking for gold there. The same sort of thing happens in the book of Jacob here.

The poor people are trying to hang on and hold to some shred of morality and sanity. Jacob is encouraging them in chapter 3. He tells the pure in heart to look to God, hang on, and do the best they can. “Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions.” They were obviously having a rough time. Good people do. They did in Nevada mining towns, just as Suffragettes did in American towns when they got beaten up and everything else. They wanted the women’s vote. And also the prohibitionists in their time. People that try to be conscientious minorities in some societies have a very rough time. You know that. But he told them not to be silly. Being pure, you have your faith to “console you in your afflictions. . . . O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever.” But your minds had better be firm; don’t go off the deep end with all sorts of wild propositions, visionary nonsense and things like that. You’ll know the real thing when it is there. The firm mind goes along with this faith and this way of life. It isn’t enough to do things that are easy.

Then he talks about two types of filthiness. They are very important because along with this is the attitude toward the Indians that many people in Utah have had. The most violently racist person I ever knew was a senior missionary companion of mine from southern Utah. He became a very rich sheep man later on. But boy did he hate Indians. He couldn’t stand them, and he lived among them. They are very genial people down there in Orderville. It’s crazy, but this was the idea. They became awful snobs here, and a mutual resentment was building up. They knew already that Laman and Lemuel hated Nephi, and that tradition was handed on to their children, as he is going to tell us here. There was that prejudice, but now in reply the Nephites are building up their prejudice. It’s just as bad and even worse, he says. Verse 3: “But, wo, wo, unto you that are not pure in heart, that are filthy this day before God [notice he uses the word *filthy* here; he uses it in the next verse, and then he uses it right across the page there in verse 9, but in different senses]; for except ye repent the land is cursed for your sakes [they were the ones who were to be so blessed]; and the Lamanites, which are not filthy like unto you, nevertheless they are cursed with a sore cursing, shall scourge you even unto destruction.” That was the prophecy that was made to Nephi, of course, and he got it from Nephi too, I suppose. This is turning the tables, isn’t it? The Lamanites are bad enough. They are cursed with a sore cursing, but just because they are bad people doesn’t make you good people. My friend’s enemy is my enemy, etc. If you are an enemy to the wicked, that must make you righteous [they supposed]. But it’s the wicked that destroy the wicked. Remember, the Lord said, “The wicked shall destroy the wicked.” That’s the way it is going to happen. No other people ever go to war with each other except those that are both wicked—both sides are wicked. The Lamanites shall “scourge you even unto destruction [that’s strong stuff, and they’d better do something about it]. And the time speedily cometh that except ye repent they shall possess the land of your inheritance [you were meant to inherit this land, but they will get it if you don’t repent; we find out at the end that they didn’t], and the Lord God will lead away the righteous out from among you.” That’s the principle—God leads out the righteous to precious lands. If a certain land won’t contain them anymore, he leads them away somewhere else. There’s this constant motion—Israel in the wilderness, always wandering, always being led. That was Abraham, of course, *Lekh Lekhā*, always wandering from one place to another. “Behold, the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness.” See, they are filthy in that sense; there’s a difference between the *foedus* and *spurcus*. It’s a very interesting thing. I once made a study for H. R. W. Smith’s class in Latin epigraphy. He was the editor of the great *Corpus*

*Vasorum*, and I did this term paper on the Roman graffiti from Herculaneum and Pompeii—thousands of graffiti in which naughty boys wrote the dirtiest things they could think of on the walls everywhere. But the things that are approved and even encouraged by the eminent Dr. Ruth are thrown at people as the worst thing. The worst thing you could ever say to a Roman in the most depraved period of their history, which was plenty depraved, was to call him *spurcus*, to call him nasty or immoral—having uncontrolled appetites. Pure hedonism is what it is; if it feels good, that’s that. There was a lot of that then, but they were ashamed of it. It was under cover. You read a great deal about homosexuality then, but again, they hid it. For a person to admit that would be the last thing in the world. It’s a very interesting thing. How our morals would be worse than those of the decadent Romans is pretty alarming.

But being *foedus* is just being dirty, not being properly washed, not bathing often enough. E. R. Bevan, a classical scholar, wrote a very good study way back in the 1920s on the Roman passion for bathing. See, because of their morals they felt dirty, and they thought they would be clean if they bathed all the time. The emperor Caligula, a very immoral man, bathed eight times a day. You see the two kinds of dirtiness. He thought he could be clean with that. You may notice the great emphasis on cleanness in the soap operas. They talk everlastingly about cleaning substances, cleaning, being in the shower, and being washed—this soap and that cleanser and the thing that makes you whitest, etc., as if that could make you white. “All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand,” says Lady MacBeth. “Out, damned spot,” etc. Then MacBeth says,

Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood  
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather  
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,  
Making the green one red.

The Romans had this passion for bathing, and we see some disturbing signs around here of the same sort of thing. We are too close to the ancient world in the moments before its collapse. Verse 5: “Behold, the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness [you think you are more righteous because of that, but that won’t do], . . . for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord . . . that they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none [a concubine was considered legal], and there should not be whoredoms committed among them.” We don’t even call them whoredoms anymore. We just call it “living with your companion or your lady friend” or something like that. It’s daily news, and it’s on the TV all the time—who’s with whom, etc. Nobody even considers that it is necessary to be married anymore. You can be if you want; that’s nice. But you’ll break up very soon if you do, so why bother? Do it the other way. That has become general practice, just like the Nephites here. But the Lamanites don’t do that, not whoredoms. Verse 6: “And now, this commandment they observe to keep; wherefore, because of this observance . . . the Lord God will not destroy them, but will be merciful unto them; and one day they shall become a blessed people [they will be rewarded for that]. Behold, their husbands love their wives, . . . [they love their children]. . . . How much better are you than they in the sight of your great Creator?” Notice, that he uses filthiness in two different ways. He says, Your filthiness and their filthiness is not the same. In verse 5 he says, You hate them because of their filthiness [paraphrased], but in verse 9 he says it differently. It’s the same thing here [in verse 8] with whiteness. You can use it in two different senses. “How much better are you than they [and] . . . their skins will be whiter than yours [using this white in the moral sense of the meaning of white].

Verse 9: “Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, which is the word of God, that ye revile no more against them [he is saying, ‘No more of this racism; this is no good at all that you think you are superior because of their lower culture] because of the darkness [he doesn’t call it *blackness*; it’s dark because their way of life has turned it dark; that’s the proper word to use; if you go out and live like them, you’ll become dark, too] of their skins; neither shall ye revile against them because of their filthiness; but ye shall remember your own filthiness [see, there are the two kinds of filthiness; you say they don’t wash enough; I say you wash too much], and remember that their filthiness came because of their fathers [they inherited this tradition; they’ve stuck to it and it has made them worse]. Wherefore, ye shall remember your children . . . [keep the next generation in mind]. . . . And also, remember that ye may, because of your filthiness, bring your children unto destruction [your filthiness will bring destruction on them just as sure as anything], and their sins be heaped upon your heads at the last day. O my brethren, hearken unto my words; arouse the faculties of your souls.” You have to make an effort; it’s exactly like a drugged sleep that you get into. You get deeper and deeper, and it takes you right out of this world. To be wakened up is going to take an awful lot of black coffee, walking back and forth, and shaking your shoulders. This awakening isn’t gentle. It’s rude, decisive, and urgent, but it must be done, he says. You’ve got to wake up to this. “Arouse the faculties of your souls; shake yourselves that ye may awake from the slumber of death; and loose yourselves from the pains of hell that ye may not become angels to the devil [to be captive], to be cast into that lake of fire and brimstone which is the second death.” Do we make any effort there? Then this is what he is talking about. Verse 12: “And now I, Jacob, spake many more things unto the people of Nephi, warning them against fornication and lasciviousness [that’s the general hedonism of our time; anything goes, you see], and every kind of sin, telling them the awful consequences of them.” It isn’t as light as you think. [Hedonism] invites instant yielding. To any temptation at all you are supposed to yield, and there’s the jaded, hypocritical taste. He talked about the morals here because that was a very important issue. These are the commandments of God here. Then the larger plates deal with the wars and contentions and reigns of kings. We go into them; that’s the usual history. They are called the “plates of Joseph,” and they were made by the hand of Nephi.

Now we have this marvelous fourth chapter which introduces us to the fifth chapter. Chapter 4 is the ongoing doctrine of the Atonement. First he talks about the plates by which they are handing it down. They are handing their tradition down on these plates. He talks a lot about them here. They take them very seriously because this is the only way they can do it. “(And I cannot write but a little of my words, because of the difficulty of engraving our words upon plates).” The *Copper Scroll* shows that very nicely here, where it is talking about John Allegro’s book on copper plates. He said, “The business of writing on such plates was hard and distasteful work. The scribe, not without reason, appears to have tired toward the end [we think of Jacob here], and the last lines of writing were badly formed and rather small. One can almost hear his sigh of relief as he pushed out the last two words in the middle of the final line.’ How clearly this recalls protests and exclamations of our Book of Mormon writers where Jacob says, ‘I cannot write but little of my words because of the difficulty of engraving our words upon plates.’ Mormon says, ‘I would write it also if I had room on the plates, but I have not.’ Writing on the plates requires a cramped and abbreviated script [Moroni explains that you have to have another script], and Allegro also notes that writing on copper plates actually produces a new kind of writing that is peculiarly difficult to read, characterized by mixing forms of letters, ignoring proper space between words, running over from one line to the next in the middle of a word, and general neglect of vowels. He says, ‘The greater deficiency lies in

ourselves; we simply do not possess sufficiently comprehensive, technical Hebrew vocabulary to deal with a text of this kind.’ ”

So it’s a good thing we don’t have the gold plates. We would be fighting tooth and nail through the generations about them and never come to an agreement. They would cause nothing but trouble. Better still, you have an inspired translation here, and you can go by that. And, as Emma Smith said, whenever Joseph came to a proper name, he would spell it out. He would see it in his mind and spell it out. He would not try to pronounce it. Here an illiterate man was talking to an illiterate scribe, Oliver Cowdery. If he tried to pronounce those names, and then Oliver Cowdery was supposed to write them down phonetically, you would never recognize any of them. It’s very fortunate that they have been spelled out for us because you can recognize their Oriental structure very plainly here. But in this fourth chapter he talks about the engraving and the words. Verse 2: “But whatsoever things we write upon anything save it be upon plates must perish and vanish away.” That’s true—there are many things that perish. [They had] stone, paper, and parchment. Of course, they had tapa made of bark and things like that. Gold is the one thing that lasts, but gold plates are not cheap.

The Mandaean go clear back to the Dead Sea Scrolls people. They moved up to the north of Mesopotamia and then down, and they are the people that live in the swamps today. There are just a couple of thousand of them left. They have preserved their records from early Christian times, and they had to preserve them on lead plates. Mrs. [Ethel] Drower has been able to get hold of some of those plates. She went down to live with [the Mandaean] and studied [their records]. Remember they are the marsh Arabs that live on floating islands and build these magnificent buildings of nothing but reeds. They have nothing but reeds to build with, and they do these marvelous things down there. They are Baptists and passionate baptizers with their rites. They put great emphasis on the garment—on the sash, the cap, the apron, and all those things. They say they came from the Jordan in the early days of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and there are many connections between them. It’s surprising that so many of their writings would be in Coptic of all things. But Coptic is Egyptian. What are they doing down there at Basra with all this stuff [writing]? So lead plates don’t perish, and gold plates don’t perish. If they are on stone or baked clay, that’s good. If it is on stone or clay it will last as long as some fossils will last. It’s a matter of millions of years then. It will just go on and on forever and never wear out if it is fossilized. But there are ways of preserving these things.

He [Jacob] says, “but we can write a few words upon plates, which will give our children . . . a small degree of knowledge concerning us, or concerning their fathers [this shows his concern for future generations]. Now in this thing we do rejoice; and we labor diligently to engraven these words upon plates [it’s a big thing], hoping that our beloved brethren and our children will receive them [a sad story, but it’s a happy story too] with thankful hearts, and look upon them that they may learn with joy and not with sorrow [the Book of Mormon is a sad and sorrowful book, but it is written for our joy], neither with contempt, concerning their first parents. For, for this intent have we written these things, that they may know that we knew of Christ.” Now here we get the continuing line. There has always been an alert cadre, a bridging of time; I think the Baptists call it “a trail of blood” (something like that). The doctrine of atonement is *at-one-ment* in many ways. It’s a good word, you see—bringing things at one. The body and the spirit are brought at one in the resurrection. Four chapters of John talk a great deal about in what sense the Father and the Son are one, and may the apostles be one with them “even as we are one.” And may those whom they convert also be one with them. There’s this idea of everything

at one and bringing everything together. That's the whole idea of the temple, of course; that's what a temple is. The Babylonian word for it is *markas shemaiemu eršiti*. It is the "knot point," the bringing together point of all the heavens and the earth. It's halfway between heaven and earth. It's *Midgard* and it's at the center of all horizontal distances, so the sign of it is the quadrature circle with the four points of the compass on it. That's what *templum* (Latin for *temple*) is. In Latin *temple* is a *template* in which you locate yourself in the universe. You make your circle; it's the *quadrata*. You divide it into the four parts—north, south, east, and west. One is called the *decumanus*; the other is called the *cardo*. The *haruspex*, for example, judges things by the flight of birds. How can you know the direction of birds' flight and the significance unless it is with reference to some plot or plan? We get this in Egypt too. He sits with his back to the central stone, right at the center, and faces due south. Then he is able to take his bearings and know the significance either of the motion of the stars, or the flight of birds, or whatever it is he is watching. We have here this bringing together of all things. Remember, "a gathering together of all things," and that includes the records. In the Salt Lake Temple, until there were too many for it to hold them, all the records of the past were kept there. All our genealogy was kept in the basement of the temple because the whole thing looks toward the past, the present, and the future. We are doing work for those who lived before us, and the whole thing looks toward the eternities and the things which are going beyond [the world].

Here he ties everything together. I had completely ignored this fourth chapter [of Jacob] in all this stuff I have been doing on atonement, and it's the best ongoing description I have seen of the Atonement anywhere. This holds the whole tradition together from the earliest times. So he says here in verse 4: This is why we have written these things, to tie all these things together and have this ongoing atonement, a perennial order of things. "For, for this intent have we written these things, that they may know that we knew of Christ [see, it will show the future children that they knew], and we had a hope of his glory many hundred years before his coming [it's going to tie them together here]; and not only we ourselves had a hope of his glory, but [now he is taking it back] also all the holy prophets which were before us. Behold, they believed in Christ and worshiped the Father in his name, and also we worship the Father in his name." Then he takes it back to the law of Moses. We are talking about atonement. The atonement was the celebration, and he is going to refer to it throughout this chapter of the great celebration of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, when the offerings and the firstfruits were brought, etc., as we are told in the book of Mosiah. But here, it's particularly good. "And for this intent we keep the law of Moses, it pointing our souls to him [so they go clear back to the law of Moses because it points them forward; now we are getting this connection; they are the link between all these things, and it goes on]; and for this cause it is sanctified unto us for righteousness [if we do it we will be blessed; then it takes it clear back to Abraham, long before Moses], even as it was accounted unto Abraham in the wilderness to be obedient unto the commands of God in offering up his son Isaac." The Jews still think that the sacrifice of Isaac was the atonement, but it didn't take place; Isaac was not sacrificed. A ram, which they say had the name of *Isaac*, was to take his place. The vicarious work, the proxy, is the important thing. When the Lord saw that Abraham was willing to go through with it, the Lord wouldn't let him do it. Abraham was demonstrating to himself, you see. "Lay not they hand upon the lad for now I know." He was determined to be faithful, but he didn't have to go through with it because a sacrifice had already been provided. It was the ram in the thicket, and the ram was sacrificed instead as a similitude of the One who would be sacrificed for all of us. So Isaac didn't have to be sacrificed; He [the Savior] was to be sacrificed instead. This is the Atoning Sacrifice that he is referring to

here. This was celebrated by the Jews on the Day of Atonement. They called it the *Atonement*, the *Kippur*, and the *kāfar* is to atone.

I was quoting a very interesting study on the subject by a Jewish scholar named Rosenberg. Here it is. Jacob tells us here that Abraham's sacrifice "is a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son." That was Isaac. When they say that Isaac was the atoning sacrifice for the world, that's not so because he wasn't sacrificed. That was only a similitude for what was to come because it was repeated again in the temple every year. They went through this on the Day of Atonement. In verse 6 he says, "Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy." Notice the presence of living prophets doesn't supersede the teachings of the others. Remember when the Lord came to the Nephites. At the end of the gospel of Mark, he tells that the Lord opened the scriptures to them, and then their eyes were opened. After the Resurrection, the Lord explained the scriptures to them, and then their eyes were opened. We are not given the sermon he gave to them on that occasion, and that's very important. That's why any very early writing from the church that's discovered now is almost sure to bear a title something like "The Secret Teachings that Jesus Gave the Apostles after the Resurrection." Then they went forth. Before that, they had scattered—gone home, gone fishing, etc. They didn't know—the Resurrection hadn't really registered on them yet until He started appearing. Remember, when John and the women went and reported the Resurrection, the apostles didn't want to believe them. They said, "You're crazy."

So this is the similitude here. "Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy [we are carrying on; we are right in the tradition. But you have to have the record too, beginning with Moses and the prophets. Jacob explained the scriptures though he is right with them himself]; and having all these witnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus." Notice we have a very peculiar community here. Those that really kept on are in the full flood of the tradition that the Jews had lost at this time. The temple was destroyed shortly after Lehi left Jerusalem. And this is a very interesting thing: The *kapporeth*, the tent, the Holy of Holies were never restored. The second temple didn't have them at all. People don't realize that, but Jastrow and others have written about that particular subject. We read a good deal about that in the *Talmud*. "We truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea." Notice he is using hyperbole here about the trees, the mountains, and the waves of the sea. Notice in verse 18 at the end of this chapter, he apologizes for having gone a little too far and got too excited about it. "I will unfold this mystery unto you; if I do not, by any means, get shaken from my firmness in the Spirit, and stumble because of my overanxiety for you." He is overanxious; he is pouring it on here. But these are more than figures of speech, you know. In what sense do we control the elements? A mountain climber thinks he subdues a mountain or something like that. This great fervor comes with the big picture they have here. Notice, he gets excited because here they are living out by themselves, etc. How far does power go? He says if you have faith enough you would be amazed what can happen. Then he sees the whole natural world as entering into cooperation with this in verse 8, which I had overlooked, incidentally. "Behold great and marvelous are the works of the Lord [then he goes into a special nature documentary here]. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God."

Then he starts talking about the bottom line, which is power. Back up in verse 7 he says: "The Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of men, that we have power to do these things." Well, to what extent did they do them? I guess you have subdued a mountain if you cut off the top of it and put a temple on it, or something like that. These are figures of speech, and he says he is carried away. And after all, if you can "plow through the seas," as the ancient poets used to say, you have "conquered Neptune." You have conquered the sea; you are stronger than it is. You have defied the elements. But we really don't at all. Just to take a ship across the water isn't to conquer the water. We dump garbage in them, and they are getting pretty well conquered now. But that's another thing. Verse 9: "For behold, by the power of his word man came upon the face of the earth [as we read in Moses 1:4, 38, he gave the command and the work was done; we are talking about the Council in Heaven, etc.], which earth was created by the power of his word [there's *power* again]. Wherefore, if God being able to speak and the world was, and to speak and man was created, O then, why not able to command the earth, or the workmanship of his hands upon the face of it, according to his will and pleasure?" See, he is talking about the whole natural world and everything else in it.

Remember, matter and particles are, as Heisenberg showed, completely impartial. They'll do anything you want them to do. They won't make any moral objections or fight back. If you know the rules for controlling them, you are the one who's in charge. They are very easy to push around, actually, you find out in many cases. There's creation by the power of your word. There's that marvelous *Shabako Text* of the Egyptians. The concept of his mind became his word, and then this was carried out. It's possible, you see. That's what we do; we control the elements. We control physical things, and they don't put up any resistance at all once we know the way to approach them. You can handle wood very nicely, very carefully, if you know what to do with it. I have a son who can make wood do absolutely anything, but you have to know how to work with it. You have to understand grain and quality. He can name any wood that ever was, etc. Then nature will obey you. It will obey your thoughts and the workmanship of your hands. It will obey your works. But that goes to other things, of course, now that we are using nuclear physics. We are getting into particles, but we're having an awful time controlling them. This nuclear waste, for example. Nobody has the vaguest idea how to get rid of the nuclear waste. It's ghastly and frightening. It's going to swamp the earth in a short time. So we don't have the elements within our power, but if we had the knowledge we would have. God has the knowledge. It's not so surprising. Long before this world was it was decided that this should be done, and we are in on it. We are being tested somehow or other.

Verse 10: "Wherefore, brethren, seek not to counsel the Lord [he knows the answers, and you don't. I like this passage here; I remember we once had to learn it], but to take counsel from his hand [ask him how to do it; don't try to do it yourself, wise guy. You'll get into a lot of trouble. The mad scientist ends up in the soup, you know]. For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works." He will tell you only what is wise, what is just, and what is merciful. What more do you want? That covers everything. Do men counsel in wisdom, and justice, and mercy? Over in the Eyring Building, their prize display is Farnsworth's display of inventing the television, a great accomplishment. It says, "The processes by which such an invention is achieved." It begins, "First of all, you ask the question, 'Is there a market for it?'" Well, this is a very interesting thing. That's not the first question. You should start out by asking, "Will it do more harm than good?" But, of course, how can you tell whether it will do more harm than good? We could have a nice debate—"Has television

done more harm than good so far?” It has the capacity for doing great good, but what mischief it’s done. It has crippled our minds and made us idiots, walking around in sort of a daydream all the time, living imaginary lives and the like waiting for the next soap to come on. [Some people] wouldn’t miss it for the world. Remember, when the second moon landing was broadcast, a flood of complaints came in. Here’s man landing on the moon, his greatest achievement for ages. The stations were just flooded with complaints, “You cut off our favorite soap opera.” You cut off our favorite science fiction to see somebody really landing on the moon. This is an example of how we don’t take things seriously anymore. Jacob says we should take our counsel from God; he knows about these things. He has not only wisdom, but he has justice and mercy. He knows what the long—term effects of things will be.

Verse 11: “Wherefore, beloved brethren, be reconciled unto him through the atonement of Christ, his Only Begotten Son.” As I said, the word for *atonement* today is translated in the Revised Standard Version as *reconciliation*. They don’t use *atonement* anymore in the Revised Standard text. But *reconciliation* means the same thing, you see. *Concilio* is a *seating together* in a *council*. Our word *council* comes from that. *Reconciliation* is to be called back to the council and sit down again. You are called to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to return. Every term, every translation, every equivalent of *atonement* has the idea of *coming back*. *Redemption* means you will be *bought back again*. You must have been with him before if he buys you back again, after the Fall. *Resurrection* is to *rise up again*. After you have been in the flesh before, then you rise up again but now in a resurrected body. It all has to do with the return to a former state. You can’t get along without the preexistence here, which comes in very strongly.

Well, what happened to the preexistence? I told you about how St. Augustine fought with that subject. If you can’t have *preexistence*, you must have *predestination*. That’s what St. Augustine went for, so we will put *predestination* down on the board. (St. Augustine died in A.D. 425) That was accepted until the ninth century when it was challenged by Hincmar, the abbot of Fulda [Reims]. Then there was this big fight. He wanted to soften infant damnation. St. Augustine hated the doctrine of infant damnation, but he said you can’t get along without it. [According to him] infants that are born into this world have the original sin, so unless they are baptized they are damned. The only explanation he could find for that was a “gentle damnation.” It didn’t please him, and it never pleased anybody.

Then there are the doctrines that go along with that—God gives us supporting grace, etc. But there is a virtue in the Lord’s dealing with us in the predestination. It sounds cruel to be predestined. We mentioned before that [according to this doctrine] you are predestined to be damned or predestined for salvation, and there’s nothing you can do about it. It’s in the will of God entirely. But, he says this is the softening of it. (What is the word he uses for it? On Monday morning I’m no good at all.) You don’t know which one you are; that’s the whole point. You have the satisfaction of not knowing. There is a good chance that you may not be damned, but you don’t know. That’s the whole thing. You may be damned, but He decides it. Then along came Raban Maurus, and he tried to soften damnation. In fact, he wanted to get rid of predestination, but he was opposed. In the second half of the ninth century, from 848 on, there was a lively interchange of debates, exchange letters, and literary combat. It ended with an all-out victory for predestination. Every major split, every major breaking off of a new church from the original was always on the basis of predestination because people didn’t like it. Later on Luther and Melancthon made a joint statement on the subject of predestination. But

there was no escaping it—that man was damned and that he had no capacity of his own to do good, none whatever. You were damned or you were blessed, and there was nothing you could do about it. Melancthon didn't like that, so he started to soften it. There was a break between the two, and Luther won that round. Then along came John Calvin and the extremists. He was all for damnation. He had a double damnation. There were various interpretations. Zwingli, who was a Swiss, opposed that. In fact, he said, "This goes altogether too far." Then there was a showdown, and the Consensus of Geneva in 1550 decided that predestination should win. That led to more trouble.

In the north there was the Arminian controversy, the Dutch Reformed Church, etc. Arminius wanted to do away with the doctrine; he didn't like it. But when the first Prince of Orange was heir to the throne, he came to Holland and decided for the Calvinist side. This was the famous Arminian showdown in 1618–19. We ought to write down the Arminian Controversy because this was a strong one. This is why we are having trouble in South Africa today, because of the Arminian Controversy. The Prince of Orange decided for the Calvinistic side, and Barneveldt and the great Hugo Grotius were put in jail because they were the humanists and they didn't like this doctrine. Well, nobody liked the doctrine, as far as that goes, but they had no alternative. They couldn't do anything about it; they had nothing to take its place. Here an infant is born who has never existed before. He has to come in with the original sin. He is sinful and wicked, so that's that. As I said, infant damnation drove people wild. Then there were other splits after that. But the reason for the trouble in South Africa is that it was a very close decision. The Dutch Humanists were very strong at that time. It was Jacobus Arminius, and people like Grotius and the great Barneveldt against the Prince of Orange and the Calvinist party. The Calvinist party won, and because of the fighting and contention which went on for years, the feeling was very strong. They built up this idea and philosophy that you are absolutely right or wrong, absolutely damned or absolutely blessed. Everything was black and white, which is what you get with the stubborn Dutch in South Africa today. They will not make concessions and this sort of thing. We are stuck with that because of a vote in 1619 at the Council of Dordrecht they decided for the strict Calvinistic, absolute damnation or absolute blessedness. We are the good guys; you are the bad guys—absolutely good or absolutely bad, black and white. We are still having trouble because of that.

That was the reason why in 1741 John Wesley and George Whitefield split. They worked together. Neither of them wanted to leave the Church of England, but again it was the problem of predestination that arose. St. Augustine's idea of predestination was accepted, and it had its effect on society. It makes people cruel, as a matter of fact, if they think of somebody as damned. Augustine's idea that you would never know who was blessed and who was damned had softened that part of it. "We know we're the blessed and you're the damned." But Whitefield wanted to temper it again. In 1741 there was a break in the Methodist Council. Wesley became the standard, and Whitefield went off to America on tours and gave 18,000 speeches, etc. But they have always split on this subject of predestination. Why? Nobody likes it. It's not a good doctrine, but the only alternative is preexistence. For Aristotle that was a no-no. That's why they got rid of it. I mean preexistence was an absolutely solid doctrine in the early Christian writings; the earliest fathers were full of it. But later on they got rid of it because Aristotle said, "There can't be another world; there can't be other intelligent beings. We are the only ones that are possible." So there we go.

But this is very important to be reconciled. Reconciliation is coming back. These words from the Latin that begin with *re* always imply *going back to a former state, returning*

home again. And, of course, the Hebrew word for it is *teshûvâh* and then *yeshîvâh*. The *teshûvâh* is *return home*; the *yeshîvâh* is *sit down when you get home*. We repeatedly have the formula in the Book of Mormon, “Will you have place with us?” Come in and have place to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then he goes on here in verse 11: “Wherefore, beloved brethren, be reconciled unto him through the atonement of Christ [it’s the Atonement that reconciles you; it’s the *at-one-ment* that brings you back home to sit down in the company of the whole family. Joseph Smith couldn’t have known this. You see, all this comes in beautifully], his Only Begotten Son [the Son of the family; the Son and the Father are completely reconciled, and we are to be reconciled to them], and ye may obtain a resurrection [there it is, a rising again], according to the power of the resurrection [the power that will raise you again] which is in Christ, and be presented as the first-fruits of Christ unto God [it was on the Day of Atonement that the Jews had to bring their first fruits, and they had to make an offering of the best thing they owned; it had to be the best of the first fruits, which was a symbol of the atonement of the Father who “so loved the world that he gave his Only Begotten Son,” just as Abraham was willing to do the same thing, and every Jew had to do the same. Everyone had to bring his sin offering on the Day of Atonement, and they were the first fruits. So notice how nicely all these things tie together in the old temple economy], having faith, and obtained a good hope of glory in him before he manifesteth himself in the flesh.” The atonement always anticipated the Messiah, preceded by Elijah, etc., and it was the first fruits brought in on the Day of Atonement. So this all hangs together beautifully.

Verse 12: “And now, beloved, marvel not that I tell you these things; for why not speak of the atonement of Christ [that’s what he is talking about], and attain to a perfect knowledge of him, as to attain to the knowledge of a resurrection and the world to come?” Notice, there are two stages. The Atonement accomplishes two things; it accomplishes the Resurrection, and then it accomplishes the second resurrection, the second life or eternal life to come with the judgment. To accomplish our early career is a major gain, the first one, “as to attain to the knowledge of a resurrection.” Then to get back into the eternal order of things—that’s the important thing. That’s why you have to be baptized, etc., and that’s why we have to face the judgement to get back on track again after we have come here. Well, why did we offer to come here? Why did we throw the whole thing away? Everything was running smoothly, and then interrupted it with this ghastly life. The scriptures don’t say nice things about this life at all. Here we have no abiding kingdom, etc. “While you are here, fear and tremble,” said Paul to the Corinthians. It’s because we return with greatly enhanced knowledge and experience. Before we can proceed on the way, there are a few things we have to learn. There’s a particularly nasty kind of evil that we had never become acquainted with before we came here. As Irenaeus and Origen, the two earliest Christian fathers, both tell us, “They taught that in the early church, but we don’t teach it anymore.” So we have the Resurrection and the world to come.

Then he says: “For the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not.” This is a major issue in science today. What is real? This is the whole thing. He has been talking about this which is all very spiritual. But, like John, he is going to make the whole thing real. You cannot make it spiritual in John. He makes the thing quite tangible. Remember, he starts out (first letter of John), We tell you what we have seen, what we have felt with our hands, what we have heard with our ears. I’m not just making this up [paraphrased]. Then he repeats that again and again. “This is what we have actually seen of Jesus Christ.” Notice in verse 13 that the Spirit “speaketh of things as they really are [he wants to be literal

about this], and of things as they really will be; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly for the salvation of our souls. But behold, we are not witnesses alone in these things; for God also spake them unto prophets of old.”

But the Jews didn’t want to take it that way. They didn’t want to take it literally. They were too wise, he says, and the next stage is exactly what you suppose would be there. “But behold, the Jews were a stiffnecked people; and they despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets. . . . Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark [always being too smart], they must needs fall; for God hath taken away his plainness from them. They don’t want to settle for a plain doctrine. You notice that your Jewish friends are always arguing; Woody Allen is typical. He shows you that sort of thing. He is always fretting, always arguing, always psychoanalyzing himself, never settling for any particular answer. Well, it’s good to have an inquiring mind. There’s nothing more exhilarating than to live among those people, but it drives you nuts. They have been doing the same thing all these years, just like reading the *Talmud* all the time. It’s great, but, as Jacob says, “God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they cannot understand because they desired it [they like this sophisticated talk and all that Woody Allen chatter]. And because they desired it God hath done it, that they may stumble [and, of course, there’s a great deal of stumbling], . . . that by the stumbling of the Jews they will reject the stone upon which they might build and have safe foundation.”

Again, Jacob knows the traditions here, you see. That’s the *eben shetiyyāh*, the foundation stone upon which the world must be founded. There’s a great deal of legend and speculation about the *eben shetiyyāh*. The problem is what is the world founded on. One thing stands on another and another on another, but in the end what do you stand on? It’s the stone of foundation, the *eben shetiyyāh*. It’s related to our word *sit*, the stone of sitting on, the stone of establishments. Both *sit* and *stand* are related to it. Verse 16: “But behold, according to the scriptures, this stone shall become the great, and the last, and the only sure foundation, upon which the Jews can build. And now, my beloved, how is it possible that these, after having rejected the sure foundation, can ever build upon it, that it may become the head of their corner? [he asks an important question which is not a rhetorical question; then he says he is going to give them the answer to it; these very people are the ones upon whom the Lord is going to build] Behold, my beloved brethren, I will unfold this mystery unto you [he is going to tell them how in the next chapter, but he says, I have to control myself; I get shaken up by these things; he is really passionate]; if I do not, by any means, get shaken from my firmness in the Spirit, and stumble because of my overanxiety for you.”

Then he goes into the story of the olive tree. We’re not going to have time for that. Here are seventy-seven verses all about the olive tree, of all things. Do you notice what the idea of it is? Do you labor through it? Do you enjoy reading it again and again? Does it enlighten you? I see somebody it doesn’t enlighten. It’s the ethnic picture of the New World. Notice what we have here. This is Abraham’s seed sown among all the nations of the earth. What we have here is this long, fitful motion and mixing and separation and collision and ebb and flow and breaking and joining and scattering—springing there, expanding here, withering there. Absorbed, rejected, leavening the whole lump, like yeast—this constant churning around that makes all of the blood of Israel. There isn’t anybody here who doesn’t have the blood of Israel in him [or her]. This is the way these things mix up. If you have gone into genealogy, you know that is so. You cannot keep

certain things out of your genes, so we are all Jews. No, we aren't—Judah is just one of the tribes of Israel. We'll take up with the olive tree. Fortunately, in the next chapter after it he explains it. He says, "I'm going to explain the olive tree now." There is a reason for his putting this in here, and he dwells on it.

For the people to whom he was writing this, it would be very exciting actually. It's a very interesting sort of thing. We can't get too much of this type of literature.