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The Way of Eternal Life—The Everlasting Gospel

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Having now as background the knowledge that may be had of the universe, somewhat of its nature, extent, and grandeur; some knowledge of its inhabitants and the controlling power of harmonized, divine intelligences within it; some knowledge of the origin of man and his nature; likewise, some knowledge of the purpose of God in relation to man's earth life; we are prepared to consider the way to, and the way of, that eternal life.

Sources of authority. We again take occasion to remind the reader that we shall discuss this part of our treatise in the light of all the knowledge that is to be had from all the revelations of God given in all ages, in all dispensations of the gospel, and from among all people who have received any dispensation of the word of God in relation to this subject. That will at least include all that is to be found in the Old Testament and the New; the fragments of the writings from Moses^a as revealed to Joseph Smith, known as the book of Moses; and the fragments from the writings of Abraham, known as book of Abraham; both of which fragments are found in the Pearl of Great Price. Also we shall appeal to the Book of Mormon, which contains the revelations of God to the ancient inhabitants of America; and also the revelations given directly of God to Joseph Smith, the Prophet of this New Dispensation of the gospel, which revelations received by him are collected and published in the Doctrine and Covenants. All these books are accepted

^aRoberts's use of the word "fragments" in connection with the book of Moses should not be construed to refer to an actual written document from which Joseph Smith translated the book, but rather to affirm that Joseph restored, by inspiration, a portion of the ancient writing of Moses. Roberts discusses Joseph Smith's Inspired Version of the book of Genesis in his *Comprehensive History of the Church* 1:238-39.

as scripture by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹ All these scriptures will be freely quoted in what we have to say in revelation to the way in which God has designed to bring to pass his purposes with reference to man in his earth life and his eternal life; and all this, without further explanation for using as authoritative reference works, these ancient and modern revelations of God. To the writer, these scriptures are all of equal authority, all of them dependable sources of knowledge. Also we remind the reader again that we shall depend upon the reasonableness, the beauty, the order, the exactness, and the wholeness of God's planned way to bring to pass the immortality and the eternal life of man, to carry conviction of its truth to the mind of the reader, rather than an appeal to any special texts, however apropos to the subject they may be.

Let it be our first concern, then, to present a larger view of this way than is ordinarily entertained, keeping in mind, however, that such revelations as our prophets and seers have received are limited in their application to our earth and its heavens, and that they concern intelligences, spirits, angels, men—the human race—that pertain to our earth and its heavens.

The one and only gospel: This everlasting. Already we have quoted the scripture in the letter of Paul to Titus, giving out the fact that St. Paul lived “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2). This at once declares the existence of God's plan for the eternal life of man before the world began, so that we may say that God's plan of the way for man's eternal life is older than the earth. This “plan of eternal life,” or way, is referred to in other scriptures as the “everlasting gospel.” St. John so speaks of it, in describing the coming of a new dispensation of that gospel subsequent to his own day, and as coming forth in “the hour of his ⟨God's⟩ judgment.” Therefore in the last days he said:

I saw another angel fly⟨ing⟩ in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach [un]to them that dwell ⟨upon⟩ [on] the earth. . . . Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come. (Rev. 14:6-7)

The only use we make of this quotation here is to show that the gospel is referred to as the “everlasting gospel,” the plan of eternal life which God promised before the world began. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the blood of the Christ is referred to as “the blood of the everlasting

¹For a treatise on these several books, the reader or student may consult Roberts, *Seventy's Course in Theology*, first year.

covenant” (Heb. 13:20). In Revelation, Jesus is spoken of as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). Also a war in heaven is spoken of, where “Michael and his angels fought against the dragon (the devil); and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their (peace) [place] found any more in heaven” (Rev. 12:7-8).^b Undoubtedly this “war in heaven,” was Lucifer’s rebellion in the spirit world, before the earth life of man began, and had some relationship to man’s earth life and to the purposes of God in regard to that life; all which will have further consideration later on. Enough, perhaps, is set forth here to establish the great antiquity of “the everlasting gospel,” God’s planned way for man’s eternal life.

Let us now get the important fact established that there exists but one way for the bringing to pass of that eternal life plan of God, in other words, but one gospel; and that there has been, and never can be, but ~~one gospel~~, one way. So sure was St. Paul of this, that in writing the church at Galatia, where certain schisms and divisions appeared, that he reproved them by saying sarcastically:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we [have] preach[ed] unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (Gal. 1:6-9)

And to the schismatic factions at Corinth he wrote, reproving them for saying, as these factions did say, we are of Paul, we are of Christ; and then came this thundering question, “Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Cor. 1:13). All this makes it clear that there is but one gospel and ever shall be but one, and that, “the everlasting gospel,” God’s one plan for man’s salvation, God’s promise of eternal life to be wrought out in all ages by various dispensations of that one gospel plan.

Dispensation: The meaning of. This brings us to the necessity of defining a dispensation. The word in the revelations of God is used in its ordinary meaning of “giving out,” as dispensing food to the hungry, clothing to the needy, or dispensing just judgments to violators of the law; giving out. So as to the gospel, giving out knowledge of its truths

^bThe reading, “neither was there peace found” was probably a transcriptional error.

by revelation from God; **revealing it in whole or in subdivisions or part of it**, by bestowing through the administration of angels, or otherwise divine authority upon men, the priesthood, by which man may be authorized to teach and preach in the authority of God, or administer in its ordinances, baptisms[†] for the remission for sins, or the laying on of hands for reception of the Holy Ghost, or consecrate the emblems of the holy sacrament, which represent the crucified body and the shed blood of the Christ for the redemption of man. These are the outgivings comprising knowledge of gospel truth, and outgivings of authority to administer to man the ordinances of that gospel. All the while, however, let it be held in mind, that there is but the one gospel and these dispensations are but acts of God, directly or indirectly giving out knowledge and authority with reference to that one gospel.

Sometimes also a dispensation marks off an epoch in the continuous stream of God's providence towards man; as the Adamic dispensation, meaning by that, all the dispensations of God's truth, which may take place during Adam's life time, or with extension beyond Adam's life, so long as there is unbroken succession as *to* those things instituted during his life time. The Noachian dispensation or the dispensation of God's truth and authority to Noah and succeeding prophets until some developing event required a still further dispensing of some part of the one gospel, as in the matter of the dispensation which called Abraham and set him apart to bring to pass some special purpose of God; the Mosaic dispensation; and the Christian dispensation, comprising that wonderful era made glorious by the personal ministry of the Christ, the offering of the supreme sacrifice which was to redeem and save a world, the very heart of the whole gospel scheme. And beyond that is mentioned another dispensation—a dispensation of the fullness of times spoken of by the apostle Paul in Ephesians, in which it is promised that God will “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him” (Eph. 1:10); indicating that there will be a dispensation of dispensations, a dispensation of the fullness of all times; and of all dispensations, both in heaven and in earth, a dispensation which will include all that has gone before, and which figuratively may be **represented as ~~the gathering together of~~ all the streams of earth ~~and emptying~~ flowing** them into the ocean, to be held by that ocean in one great union of all the river systems and all the seven seas. So with the dispensation of the

[†]The committee of the Quorum of the Twelve objected to the term *baptisms*: “Baptisms for the remission of sins.’ We question the plural.” Reporting to President Clawson on October 10, 1929, George Albert Smith explained: “We have but one baptism.”

fullness of times, as all rivers to the ocean trend, so all dispensations come into and are included in this one last and completed dispensation, in which all things both in heaven and in earth shall be gathered together in one, even in Christ. Such the meaning of a dispensation of the gospel; and such the meaning *also* of the dispensation of the fullness of times, the dispensation to which we now have come, and in which we labor for the achievement of God's great purpose in all the labor and travail of our earth and its heavens, and all the human race that have been or shall be associated with our earth and its heavens, and with all the intelligences and the angels and spirits that have or shall belong to it, all entering into this ~~one~~ dispensation^c which unites and completes all dispensations.

The war in heaven. The "war in heaven" described by St. John in his book of Revelation, and briefly referred to above, requires more detailed consideration. I give St. John's account of it in full:

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Rev. 12:7-11)

There is liable to be confusion arising from St. John's description of this "war in heaven" on account of connecting it with persecuting earth-powers to which the "Dragon" of "the war in heaven"—the Devil and Satan—gives his power, and wrath, and vindictiveness—in efforts made to destroy the church of God. This dragon, or Satan being the underlying force and inspiration of those earthly powers which persecuted the saints, and chiefly, in John's time, the persecuting Roman Emperors. The "war in heaven," however, in reality took place in heaven before the advent of man on the earth; and it was doubtless on that occasion to which Jesus referred when he said to the triumphantly returning seventy from their mission, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall

^cRoberts was one of the earliest in the latter-day Church to describe what is meant by the term dispensation. For more on this topic, see the introduction to volume one of his *Comprehensive History of the Church*.

from heaven” (Luke 10:18). The whole circumstance of this rebellion, as before stated, took place before man’s advent to the earth, and among the preexistent spirits of the spirit world.

One naturally wonders why there should be rebellion and war in heaven, and what it could be all about. Satan—as we shall see—was with his angels overwhelmed; and all were cast out into the earth for seeking to overthrow the plans of God. It is significant that in an earlier verse of the chapter from which we quoted John’s account of the “war in heaven,” that the great Dragon drew after him “the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth,” doubtless meaning the number of those who in the “war in heaven” fought on the Dragon’s side (Rev. 12:4).

Again: Why this “war in heaven,” and what was it all about? The book of Revelation supplies no definite answer to that question, nor is there any enlightenment in the Old Testament or the New. By revelation in modern days, however, in this New Dispensation of the gospel in which all things are being gathered together in Christ, important additions of knowledge are brought to light concerning this great event. In the fragment, the book of Abraham, it is said that the Lord revealed to Abraham the existence of the intelligences that were organized before the world was. Meaning, doubtless, the intelligences which had been begotten spirits, therefore he beheld in his vision these pre-existent spirits destined for habitancy on the earth.

And among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto [me] ⟨Abraham⟩: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born. (Abr. 3:22-23)

The great, noble, and good. In addition to the fact of preexistence so clearly stated here, there are two other facts that deserve emphasis, viz., (1) that certain spirits, at least are chosen before they are born, and their earth missions assigned to them; (2) the other fact that is to be emphasized is that the basic reason for the selection of these special spirits for leadership in their projected earth life and missions is that they are “great” souls, that they are “noble” souls, and that they “are good”; and does not this make up the sum of all virtues that enter into leadership? They are great, they are noble, they are good! Under these generalizations may be assembled all the virtues; and these, God decreed, should be his “rulers,” more especially chosen, doubtless, as his representatives in the earth as prophets, seers,

teachers, inspired of God. Abraham was one of them, and doubtless a type of the class whom God would use for the unfolding of his truth and his purposes in the earth.

The plan proposed. We resume our quotation from the book of Abraham:

And there stood one among them (the great, noble, and good spirits) that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them; And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever. (Abr. 3:24-26)

It will be seen that the purpose of the creation of the proposed earth is that these spirits which existed before the world was, which the Lord revealed to Abraham, and among whom Abraham was, is that the spirits might be “added upon” if they kept their first estate, which was their preexistent spirit life, and those who did keep their earth life, these will have added upon them glory forever and forever—in other words, will be put in the way of eternal progress. This God’s covenant with these spirits, which established “the hope of eternal life” referred to by St. Paul when he said, that he lived in such hope of eternal life, “which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2).

The Savior chosen. To resume again our quotation:

And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered [and said]: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first. And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him. (Abr. 3:27-28)

“Whom shall I send?” Why it was necessary to send any one, does not appear in the book of Abraham, but from other revelations we learn both the significance of the question and the answer to it. First from the book of Moses, where the Lord in revealing unto Moses the things pertaining to our earth and its heaven and concerning his purposes with reference to man’s life on the earth, is given an account of Satan and his rebellion and the “war in heaven” that is illuminating; for early in his career as a prophet, Moses had come in

contact with Lucifer, and had successfully resisted him and his temptations; and then God said:

That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of ⟨my⟩ [mine] Only Begotten, is the same which was ⟨in⟩ [from] the beginning, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor. But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever. Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast ⟨out⟩ [down]; And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice. (Moses 4:1–4)

The controversy in heaven, then, and Lucifer's ultimate rebellion concerned the plan, "the way," in which should be carried out the purposes of God with reference to the earth life of man, and what was to be attained through it; that is, the manner in which the hosts of spirits existing before the world was should receive those additions to their spirit life that would put them in the way of being "added upon"; increase of intelligence and power and glory without limitation: how they should be put in the way of eternal progress; and how, in some way, there would be a redemption for them from the complications that might arise in carrying out that scheme of things; and hence, one must needs ~~come~~ **be chosen** as a Redeemer. That bright spirit, a son of the morning, called "Lucifer," because of his high intelligence—"light bearer,"^d proposed to save all men—spirits when incarnate in human bodies—irrespective of what they might do. "Behold," said he, "here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1). Also Lucifer's proposal would strike down the agency of man, and save him on compulsion—not one should be lost.^e "Give me," however, "thy glory," is the spirit in which he spake. And then the Beloved Son, chosen from the beginning—determined upon of God—spake! Listen to him (and contrast his spirit with the

^dThe Latin name Lucifer means "Light Bearer." It is a translation of the Hebrew *beylél*, which connotes "shining one." The phrase *beylél ben shachar*, which first appears in Isaiah 14:12, has been variously translated as "shining one, son of dawn," "morning star," or "Lucifer, son of morning."

^eSee Moses 4:3.

spirit of Lucifer): “Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever” (Moses 4:2). The answer to Lucifer was not obscure. Already it was known that the Father had decreed that those who kept not their first and second estates should not have glory in the same kingdom with those who kept those estates. That was the will of the Father, and therefore the Christ’s answer: “Father, thy will be done; and the glory be thine forever”; and with this he offered himself as the Redeemer. The agency of man in this offer was preserved, and likewise the glory of God.

And this was the One, the preexistent spirit of the Christ, who in earth life shall be known as Jesus of Nazareth, “Immanuel,”—“God with us.” He was chosen to be the Redeemer of men. And because Lucifer and his scheme of salvation for man was rejected, he rebelled against God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, chosen to be the Redeemer. But Lucifer and the hosts which followed him were overwhelmed, and were cast out of heaven, and took up their abode on earth, there to resist and defeat, if possible, the designs of God in bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man—as man; as spirits, united with earth elements, that they might have power to receive a fullness of joy, and which, as we have already seen, they could not receive without forming this inseparable connection with material elements.

More light on “the war in heaven.” There still remain other enlightening utterances about this “war in heaven,” and these given by direct revelation from God to the Prophet of the New Dispensation:

And it came to pass that Adam, being tempted of the devil—for, behold, the devil was before Adam, for he rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power; and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency (the “third part of the stars of heaven” of St. John’s Revelation (12:4)); And they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels; And, behold, there is a place prepared for them from the beginning, which place is hell. And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet—Wherefore, it came to pass that the devil tempted Adam, and he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the commandment, wherein he became subject to the will of the devil, because he yielded unto temptation. (D&C 29:36–40)

In this quotation we see repeated some of the former elements entering into the rebellion of Lucifer, with the added item that one-third of the hosts of heaven followed Lucifer, because of their agency,

because they were free, even as spirits, to accept or reject the things proposed of God, subject, of course, to consequences.

One other, and the final quotation on this head, and from the same source of authority—a revelation of God given to the Prophet of the New Dispensation. It occurs in the noted vision given to the Prophet in February 1832, in which is set forth, as nowhere else, both the past and the future of preexistent spirits; of spirits in earth life, and the glory it is possible for them to attain through obedience to the gospel. In that part of the revelation which accounts for Lucifer's rebellion, and the "war in heaven," the Prophet says:

And this we saw also, and bear record, that an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God, who rebelled against the Only Begotten Son whom the Father loved and who was in the bosom of the Father, was thrust down from the presence of God and the Son, And was called Perdition, for the heavens wept over him—he was Lucifer, a son of the morning. And we beheld, and lo, he is fallen! is fallen, even a son of the morning! And while we were yet in the Spirit, the Lord commanded us that we should write the vision; for we beheld Satan, that old serpent, even the devil, who rebelled against God, and sought to take the kingdom of our God and his Christ—Wherefore, he maketh war with the saints of God, and encompasseth them round about. (D&C 76:25-29)

Then follows the statement as to the condition of those whom he overcomes by his wiles, but upon which, at this point, it is not pertinent to our developing theme to say more.

What God's plan of man's eternal life includes. We now have before us, from divine authoritative sources, the reason of Lucifer's rebellion and the war in heaven. By the development of the reasons for that war, we have come to know the solemn covenant of God with the preexistent spirits of men, the promise to give to them eternal life—life everlasting—immortality; and under circumstances that would make for their eternal progression—to make it possible for those who keep both their first and their second estates to have glory added upon their heads forever and ever; and this through acceptance of and obedience to the one and only gospel. This gospel will include the Fall of Adam, to bring about the broken harmonies in which man must learn his lessons in good and evil, in joy and sorrow, in hope and disappointment, in sickness and in health, in life and death: learning to appreciate the sweet by tasting the bitter, having wisdom with the passing years by the lessons that things in conflict and opposition have to teach. It will include his spiritual death—separation from God; for

man's spiritual life depends upon his sustained union with God; that union broken, spiritual death results.² It will include reunion with God, the rebirth of the spirit into fellowship with God; it will include resurrection from the dead; a reunion of the spirit with such elements of the body as may be necessary for its everlasting garment. All this to get the equipment—the indissoluble union of spirit and element in one sole being, eternal, deathless; with God's highway opening at each soul's feet for the journey of progress up through the heights of being in an endless and inexhaustible universe of progress.

Such the plan of god for the advancement of intelligences. First, through their habitancy of a spirit body; second, habitancy of a human mortal body, by birth into this earth life; third, habitancy of an immortal body, by a greater birth, resurrection from the dead into a deathless life. Such the plan which the wisdom of God has devised for bringing to pass “the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39)—the everlasting joy of man.

A supposed purpose of “the world's author” by a philosopher: The late Mr. Wm. James, in his *Pragmatism*,^f has a very wonderful passage bearing upon the whole thought of this chapter, and so pregnant with

²The statement scarcely needs the support of argument. Spiritual life means relation to and participation in all the higher and better things—the good, the true, the beautiful, the pure, the refined, the noble, the courageous, the unselfish, the merciful; united with truth, justice, knowledge, wisdom, power, intelligence. The heart of all this—the very center and circumference of it, and the life for it, is and must be God; and to so deport ones self that he is thrown out of harmony with all this, severed from fellowship with God by separation from him who is the life of all this volume of higher and better things, this body of soul-quality, this ocean of righteousness—is death indeed—spiritual death; death as real as physical death—the separation of spirit and body. Following is an inspired statement of the spiritual death:

Wherefore, it came to pass that the devil tempted Adam, and he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the commandment, wherein he became subject to the will of the devil, because he yielded unto temptation. Wherefore, I, the Lord God, caused that he should be cast out from the Garden of Eden, from my presence, because of his transgression, wherein he became spiritually dead, which is the first death, even that same death which is the last death, which is spiritual, which shall be pronounced upon the wicked when I shall say: Depart, ye cursed. (D&C 29:40–41; cf. 2 Ne. 9:10–12)

^fWilliam James (1842–1910) was a devoutly religious philosopher and psychologist. He was the pioneer of physiological psychology and a leader in the philosophical movement of pragmatism.

suggestion relative to our theme, so supported by philosophical thought and analysis of human nature, both strong and weak, that one marvels at so close a parallel of our doctrine, given to the Church of the Latter-day Saints—*in large part*—in the very early years of her existence. The following is the passage from Mr. James:

Suppose that the world's author put the case to you before creation, saying: "I am going to make a world not certain to be saved, a world the perfection of which shall be conditional merely, the condition being that each several agent does its own 'level best.' I offer you the chance of taking part in such a world. Its safety, you see, is unwarranted. It is a real adventure, with real danger, yet it may win through. It is a social scheme of co-operative work genuinely to be done. Will you join the procession? Will you trust yourself and trust the other agents enough to face the risk?"

Should you in all seriousness, if participation in such a world were proposed to you, feel bound to reject it as not safe enough? Would you say that, rather than be part and parcel of so fundamentally pluralistic and irrational a universe, you preferred to relapse into the slumber of nonentity from which you had been momentarily aroused by the tempter's voice?³

Of course if you are normally constituted you would do nothing of the sort. There is a healthy-minded buoyancy in most of us which such a universe would exactly fit. We would therefore accept the offer—"Top! *und Schlag auf Schlag!*" It would be just like the world we practically live in; and loyalty to our old nurse Nature would forbid us to say no. The world proposed would seem 'rational' to us in the most living way.

Most of us, I say, would therefore welcome the proposition to add our *fiat* to the *fiat* of the creator. Yet perhaps some would not; for there are morbid minds in every human collection, and to them the prospect of a universe with only a fighting chance of safety would probably make no appeal. There are moments of discouragement in us all, when we are sick of self and tired of vainly striving. Our own life breaks down, and we fall into the attitude of the prodigal son. We mistrust the chances of things. We want a universe where we can just give up, fall on our father's neck, and be absorbed into the absolute life as a drop of water melts into the river or the sea.

The peace and rest, the security desiderated at such moments is security against the bewildering accidents of so much finite experience. Nirvana means safety from this everlasting round of adventures

³Of course, this proposition of relapsing into "nonentity" is no part of our (*Latter-day Saint*) scheme or thought, since the actual proposition of our revelations was made to intelligences alike uncreated and uncreatable, and alike indestructible; so that while in the exercise of their freedom these intelligences might decline participation in the scheme of things proposed, they could not sink back into nonentities, they would merely remain status quo.

of which the world of sense consists. The hindoo and the buddhist, for this is essentially their attitude, are simply afraid, afraid of more experience, afraid of life.

. . . I find myself willing to take the universe to be really dangerous and adventurous, without therefore backing out and crying 'no play.' I am willing to think that the prodigal-son attitude, open to us as it is in many vicissitudes, is not the right and final attitude towards the whole of life. I am willing that there should be real losses and real losers, and no total preservation of all that is. I can believe in the ideal as an ultimate, not as an origin, and as an extract, not the whole. When the cup is poured off, the dregs are left behind for ever, but the possibility of what is poured off is sweet enough to accept.

As a matter of fact countless human imaginations live in this moralistic and epic kind of a universe, and find its disseminated and strung-along successes sufficient for their rational needs. There is a finely translated epigram in the Greek anthology which admirably expresses this state of mind, this acceptance of loss as unatoned for, even though the lost element might be one's self:

A shipwrecked sailor, buried on this coast,
Bids you set sail.
Full many a gallant bark, when we were lost,
Weathered the gale.

. . . It is then perfectly possible to accept sincerely a drastic kind of a universe from which the element of 'seriousness' is not to be expelled. Whoso does so is, it seems to me, a genuine pragmatist. He is willing to live on a scheme of uncertified possibilities which he trusts; willing to pay with his own person, if need be, for the realization of the ideals which he frames.⁴

A startling parallel. Such [is] the voice of a modern, and, without disparagement of others, we may venture to say, one of our foremost American philosophers. In this statement, as we said in introducing it, Professor James puts the case of the proposed earth existence of man in a close parallel to that set forth in the early revelations to the Church of the Latter-day Saints—so closely a parallel that it is startling. The proposition put to intelligences before the earth was made, in each case; and earth life full of adventure and danger, safety not guaranteed in each case; the counter plan proposed that would guarantee safety rejected; and yet the existence of some "morbid minds" among the spirits—found "in every human collection," to whom "the prospect of a universe with only a fighting chance" made no appeal, and accordingly their rejection of it; in both cases enough heroic souls to accept the adventurous proposition of a scheme of things involving real losses.

⁴James, *Pragmatism*, 290-92, 296-98.

We may thank God that the Christ in the great council prevailed, as also he prevailed in the war of the rebellion in heaven, which followed upon that council's decision. The Christ's spirit stood for freedom of man in that great controversy. He stood for a serious earth life for intelligences, in which, though there would be some losses, many losses in fact, yet also there would be great gain and glory. Gain, however, that could not be obtained but through great strivings; the exercise of all the great virtues, of trust and patience, endurance and courage, wisdom and temperance, together with faith and hope and charity. Thank God, we say, that Jesus the Christ, in the preexistence stood for all those things which make earth life worthwhile, and existence itself endurable—for the moral freedom of man.

Further references recommended by Roberts for this lesson: James, *Pluralistic Universe*; Roberts, "History of the 'Mormon' Church"; Smith, *History of the Church* 3:385-92; D&C 29; 76; 84; 88; Moses; Abraham.