

# “The Law and the Light”

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B.K.P.

My title is taken from 3 Nephi 15:9:

Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life.

## **Introduction**

What I shall present is a personal conviction for which I am willing to take full personal responsibility. I ask for your forbearance if I speak longer than is my practice.

The Book of Mormon records generations of contention between the Nephites and the Lamanites; it then describes one time when peace and righteousness prevailed. “There was no contention in the land.” There were no “manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ” (4 Nephi 1:15, 17). That is worth keeping in mind as we open a discussion on the origin of man, a subject which often leads defenders of opposing views to controversy and to label one another. In the spirit of the Book of Mormon, please, may we drop all labels, all of the “ites,” and “isms,” and “ists”? Let there be no “evolutionists” nor “creationists” nor any manner of “ists”; just seekers after truth.

One need not be labeled a creationist to accept the hand of God in a separate creation of man. And I surely will not qualify as an evolutionist notwithstanding I believe that many things evolve, for I believe that many other things do not. Views can change, evolve, if you will, toward the truth. I declare the gospel to be both true and inclusive of every true element of any philosophy, indeed the gospel is a fulness of the truth in all of them. Those who defend opposing views on the origin of man use the same words but sometimes attach very different meanings to them. I will define some words in the hope that you will understand what I mean.

## **The Law**

The first word is *law*. A law is an invariably consistent rule, independent and irrevocable in its existence. Consequences always follow the observance of, the breaking of, even the ignoring of a law. Laws govern the physical universe with such constancy and precision that once man has discovered them, he can demonstrate their existence, generally by their effect, with unfailing accuracy. Laws do not change. A law, like truth, “abideth and hath no end” (D&C 88:66). A theory is tentative, subject to change, and may or may not be true. A theory is a means to an end, not the end in itself.

The point of my presentation is this: There are moral and spiritual laws pertaining to values, good and evil, right and wrong; laws as constant, precise, and valid as those which govern the physical universe. If there is a crucial point of divergence between views on the origin of man, it is whether law governs *both* the physical, or temporal, and the moral, or spiritual, in the universe. If you reject the premise that unchangeable law governs both, I shall have great difficulty

communicating my view as to how man came to be. I am counting on Latter-day Saints agreeing that laws governing spiritual things were irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundation of the earth (D&C 130:20). More often it is students of the physical universe who fail to accept moral and spiritual laws as valid and authoritative because such laws are not measured by methods they have been accustomed to use in their studies. Physical or natural laws are generally more visible and therefore much easier to demonstrate.

These students tend to gather endless examples of the effects of *natural law* to support their theory on the origin of man. But all their examples put together—compelling or not, true or not, whether they prove natural laws or not—cannot disprove the existence of *moral* and *spiritual* laws. To study mankind and his beginnings by analyzing his physical body and environment only is to study but half of him. Regardless of how much physical truth is discovered, it is but half the truth.

Man is a dual being, “For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy” (D&C 93:33).

## Conscience

We are separated from animals by more than upright posture, an articulated thumb, and the size of our brain. We are separated by a conscience.

*Conscience* is a most interesting word. It is made up of the prefix *con*, meaning “with,” and the word *science*, meaning “to know.” The *Oxford English Dictionary* says it comes from the Latin *conscientia*, meaning “knowledge [knowing] within one-self.” The first definition listed there is “inward knowledge, consciousness, inmost thought, mind.” The second one is “consciousness of right and wrong,” or in just two words, “moral sense.”

Our conscience might be described as a memory, a residual awareness of who we really are, of our true identity. It is perhaps the best example of the fact that we can become aware of truths because we *feel* them rather than by knowing them because we perceive them through the physical senses.

The scriptures teach us of the light of Christ, “the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the *law* by which all things are governed” (D&C 88:13; emphasis added; compare John 1:9; D&C 84:45-47; 88:6), and the “Spirit of Jesus Christ . . . [which] giveth light to *every* man that cometh into the world” (D&C 84:45-46; emphasis added; compare D&C 88:1-13; John 1:9; Moroni 7:15-19). This is of profound importance. As Lehi taught, “Men are instructed sufficiently that they *know* good from evil. And the *law* is given unto men” (2 Nephi 2:5; emphasis added).

Whether this inner light, this knowledge of right and wrong, is called the light of Christ, moral sense, or conscience, it moderates our actions unless, that is, we subdue it or destroy it. It is an ingredient which has no counterpart in animals. Conscience affirms the reality of the Spirit of Christ in man with sensitivities that animals do not possess. It affirms, as well, the reality of good and evil, justice, mercy, honor, courage, faith, love, and virtue, as well as their necessary opposites, hatred, greed, brutality, and jealousy (2 Nephi 2:11, 16). Such values, though intangible, respond to laws, with cause and effect relationships as certain as any resulting from physical laws.

## A Simple Example of Moral Law

I shall state a simple moral law from the Book of Mormon by way of example. “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). That is as demonstrable as a physical law but by methods

different from those used to study the physical universe. However different the method, the effects are no less certain. Our own experiences, lives recorded in history, the observed behavior of individuals in society, even the interaction of characters in the literature of every civilization, testify that wickedness never was happiness.

If conscience is the only thing which sets us apart from animals, it sets us a very long way apart indeed.

The many similarities between the human body and the physical bodies of animals do not, in my mind, confirm a common ancestor. Not at all! It confirms the sovereignty of physical laws. If a hip joint in the human body is of the same design as that in animals, it simply means that the ball and socket conforms to physical laws which govern space, stress, strength, motion, and articulation. If you want articulation, that design works in the flesh and bone of either man or animal, or for that matter in machines.

It is on the premise that law controls both the moral and spiritual, and the physical natures of man that I have established my conviction on his origin. All laws, even those devised by man, are established under the assumption that violation of them carries penalties. If man is no more than a highly specialized animal, there are substantial questions as to whether moral laws can apply to him.

If there is no moral law, there is no sin. The New Testament makes that clear (see Rom 5:13; Heb 10:26; 1 John 3:4), and Lehi said:

If ye shall say there is no *law*, ye shall also say there is no sin. If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness. And if there be no righteousness there be no happiness. And if there be no righteousness nor happiness there be no punishment nor misery. And if these things are not there is no God. And if there is no God we are not, neither the earth; for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon; wherefore, all things must have vanished away (2 Nephi 2:13; emphasis added).

Moral law assumes accountability; no accountability, no penalties! Moral law will self-destruct if enforced against those not accountable. It is *not moral* to do so.

One of the strongest statements in all scripture speaks to those who would make little children accountable.

Behold I say unto you, that he that supposeth that little children need baptism is in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; for he hath neither faith, hope, nor charity; wherefore, should he be cut off while in the thought, he must go down to hell (Moroni 8:14; compare D&C 18:42; 29:46-49; 68:25; 137:10).

Those who mentally remain children are likewise innocent (D&C 29:50).

Animals cannot be responsible for breaking moral laws. If man is but an animal, he cannot morally be made accountable for restraints governing reproduction, social relationships, power, wealth, life, and death. The laws of morality themselves tell us that. "Where there is no law given there is no punishment; and where there is no punishment," Nephi said, "there is no condemnation" (2 Nephi 9:25). Alma, in his remarkable counsel to his son Corianton on the subject of repentance, said:

Now, how could a man repent except he should sin? How could he sin if there was no law? How could there be a law save there was a punishment? Now, there was a punishment affixed, and a just law given, which brought remorse of conscience unto man (Alma 42:17-18).

There is that word *conscience* again, that obvious part of human nature not found in animals.

Moral law regulates the behavior of human beings and sets man apart from, and above, the animal kingdom. If moral law is *not* an issue, then organic evolution is no problem. If moral law is an issue, then organic evolution as the explanation for the origin of man is *the* problem.

## The Effect Upon Society

The comprehension of man as no more than a specialized animal cannot help but affect how one behaves. A conviction that man did evolve from animals fosters the mentality that man is not responsible for moral conduct. Animals are controlled to a very large extent by physical urges. Promiscuity is a common pattern in the reproduction of animals. In many subtle ways, the perception that man is an animal and likewise controlled by urges invites that kind of behavior so apparent in society today. A self-image in which we regard ourselves as children of God sponsors one kind of behavior. A conclusion which equates man to animals fosters another kind of behavior entirely. Consequences which spring from that single false premise account for much of what society now suffers. I do not speak in theoretical terms; it matters very much in practical ways. The word *abortion* should suffice as an example.

Will you accept, for the moment, the governance of law in *both* the physical and the spiritual, or, at least, understand that I accept it? The Book of Mormon speaks the truth. “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10)! It might be otherwise if we did not have a conscience.

Many Church members are entirely unaware that fundamental doctrines cannot co-exist with a belief that man evolved from lower forms of life. From the scriptures I will briefly review fundamental doctrines on the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. Before doing so, however, let me tell you how I feel about you who study or teach or work in the fields of science.

## The Sciences

I envy your opportunity to work in fields of scientific discovery: anthropology, paleontology, geology, physics, biology, physiology, chemistry, medicine, engineering and many others. Just think of the opportunity to study the laws of the physical universe and harness the power inherent in obeying them for the good of mankind. It gives me feelings of wonder, of reverence.

No Latter-day Saint should be hesitant to pursue any true science as a career, a hobby, or an interest, or to accept *any truth* established through those means of discovery. Nor need one become a scientist at the expense of being a Latter-day Saint of faith and spiritual maturity.

Science is seeking; science is discovery. Man finds *joy* in discovery. If all things were known, man’s creativity would be stifled. There could be no further discovery, no growth, nothing to decide—no agency. All things not only *are not* known but *must not* be so convincingly clear as to eliminate the need for faith. That would nullify agency and defeat the purpose of the plan of salvation. Tests of faith are growing experiences. We all have unanswered questions. Seeking and questioning, periods of doubt, in an effort to find answers, are part of the process of discovery. The kind of doubt which is spiritually dangerous does not relate to *questions* so much as to *answers*. For that and other reasons, it is my conviction that a full knowledge of the origin of man must await further discovery, further revelation.

Latter-day Saints may safely follow an interest in science and pursue it with commitment, dedication, and with inspiration. Laws which govern *both* the temporal and the spiritual are ordained of God. After all of the tomorrows have passed and after all things have been revealed, we will know that those laws are not in conflict, but are in harmony. The Lord said that not at any time has he given either a law or a commandment which is temporal (D&C 29:34-35). Of

course he has not! Temporal means *temporary* and, whether they govern the physical or the spiritual, his laws are eternal!

## **Physical Knowledge Cumulative**

Know this: Knowledge of the physical universe and of the laws which govern it is cumulative. Thus each generation builds upon and expands the knowledge gained from discoveries of the past. Contributions to scientific and practical knowledge are gathered from one generation to the next. As greater light and knowledge are discovered, tentative theories of the past are replaced.

Unlike knowledge of the physical universe, the moral knowledge of each generation begins where the previous began rather than where they *left off*. For example, the remedy for an infection in the physical body has changed dramatically over the centuries; the remedy for infidelity, not at all. Morality is not so easily conveyed from one generation to the next. It is acquired more from example, ideally in the home.

This apparent imbalance in accumulating knowledge can easily contribute to a spirit of arrogance in students of the physical world, especially in so-called intellectuals. They may feel they have inherited the larger and more valuable legacy of knowledge.

The Book of Mormon warns of “the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish. But to be learned is good, *if they hearken unto the counsels of God*” (2 Nephi 9:28-29; emphasis and comma added; see also 2 Nephi 9:42, 28:15; Alma 32:23; D&C 58:10).

## **Clergy**

For generations, the clergy of the Christian churches (including ours) have been labeled as bumbling and naive because they rejected the theory of evolution and believed in a separate creation of man. Those who have only the Bible have just enough in the Old and New Testaments about men as the children of God, about law and sin, to enforce their belief that man is accountable for his conduct, that accountability requires a special status, a special creation. Confronted by the sophisticated arguments of articulate scientists with impressive visual evidence to support the theory of organic evolution, the clergy could but quote scriptures or testify of inner feelings. This meant little or nothing to the scientist.

Do not despise those who over the years defended these doctrines in spite of intellectual mocking. Do not belittle their efforts. However foolish they may have appeared to some, there is substance to the position they have defended. I say, God bless them!

You should not be hesitant to pursue knowledge; indeed you should excel in fields of scientific inquiry. I repeat, if you respect the truths of moral and spiritual law, you are in little danger for your soul in any field of study. You may safely study the adaptation of living things to the environment. Study “things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth,” fossils of plants and fishes and reptiles and animals; “things which have been,” dinosaurs, mastodons and mammoths, saber-tooth tigers, and, as a bird watcher, I must add pterodactyls. You may safely study “things which are,” quasars and quarks, and specimens of every kind of living thing; “things which are at home, things which are abroad” (see D&C 88:79; 101:32-34). Study to your heart’s content any worthy field of inquiry, just remember that all knowledge is not equal in

value. You may then discover “things most precious, things that are above, and things that are beneath, things that are in the earth, and upon the earth, and in heaven” (D&C 101:34).

“Seek learning, even by study and also by *faith!*” (D&C 88:118; emphasis added). Cultivate faith, that one ingredient essential to spiritual discovery. Then you will understand the *meaning* of what you see through microscopes or telescopes or any other scopes. Your knowledge will expand, even to a knowledge of “things which must shortly come to pass” (D&C 88:79). That is the spirit of prophecy. Do not mortgage your testimony for an unproved theory on how man was created. Have faith *in* the revelations; *leave man in the place the revelations have put him!*

## **The Creation**

Now, about the Creation. What is said in the revelations about the Creation, though brief, is repeated in Genesis, in the Book of Mormon, in Moses, in Abraham, and in the endowment. We are told it is figurative insofar as the man and the woman are concerned. We could hardly understand the Creation at all if we did not have the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ, and the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

## **Who was the Creator?**

The scriptures tell us *who* created the earth. Christ, who was the principal creator under the Father, said, “Worlds without number have *I* created; and *I* also created them for mine own purpose” (Moses 1:33; emphasis added).

We know the purpose for the Creation, “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality [that is, resurrection] and eternal life [or, exaltation] of man” (Moses 1:39).

The scriptures say only this about *how* the earth was created:

And *by the word of my power* have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth. . . . And by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten (Moses 1:32-33; emphasis added).

## **Purpose**

The scriptures use the words “organize” and “form” when discussing the Creation (Abr 4:1, 12, 15, 25, 30). The earth was created or formed of imperishable substance, for the revelations tell us that “the elements are eternal” (D&C 93:33). Matter already existed, but it was “without form, and void” (see Gen 1:2; Moses 2:2).

That word *beginning* applies only if *create* is defined as *form* or *organize*. There was no beginning and there shall be no end to matter. This is also said of intelligence, that spiritual part of man. “Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be” (D&C 93:29).

## **This Earth Is But One of Many**

We know from the revelations also that this earth is but one of an innumerable host of worlds.

And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying: “The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine. And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words” (Moses 1:37-38).

*But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you.* For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them (Moses 1:35; emphasis added).

When man was created, there was no need for trial and error, or chance. Think! Pray! Open your minds to the majestic vision of the universe unfolded in the revelations! How the earth was made, I do not know! I do know that even that will be revealed (see D&C 101:32-34).

## **The Sequence Is Given!**

All things were created spiritually before they were naturally upon the face of the earth (see Moses 3:5). And we are told, and this is crucial, the sequence of the creation. We know it from Genesis, from Moses, from Abraham, and from the endowment. We know it from the Book of Mormon.

The Spirit of God “moved upon the face of the water” (Gen 1:2). The water was divided. Light was divided from darkness. In turn came grass and herbs, and trees yielding seed and fruit. Then came fishes and fowl, beasts and creeping things. All things which were created, each in its *separate* kind, were commanded to multiply each *after its own kind* (see Gen 1-2; Moses 2-3; Abr 4-5).

How long this took, I do not know. How it was done, I do not know. This I do know: After it was declared to be good, it was not yet complete, for man was not yet found upon the earth. Man was created separately and last.

## **In the Image of God**

However brief the information on the creation of man, one point is emphasized by repetition above all others—man, his physical body, was created, in the very beginning when it was created, in the image of God (see Abr 4:26-27). “In the *day* that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him” (Moses 6:8; emphasis added).

When the brother of Jared appealed for light for their vessels, he saw the finger of the Lord and was overcome. The Lord bade him to arise and said, “Sawest thou more than this?” Imagine his courage when the brother of Jared answered, “Nay; Lord, show thyself unto me” (Ether 3:9-10). The Lord revealed himself and said: “Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even *all* men were created *in the beginning* after mine own image. Behold this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh” (Ether 3:16; emphasis added). Oh, were there but time to say more of that interview. After the Creation came the fall of man.

## **The Fall**

It is easier for me to understand the word *fall* in the scriptures if I think both in terms of *location* and *condition*. The word *fall* means to descend to a lower place.

Knowledge and agency were given to man in the Garden of Eden—on the day of creation (see Moses 7:32). Choice can not exist unless both good and evil are options. The fall of man was a move from the presence of God to mortal life on earth. That move down to a lower place came as a consequence for breaking a *law*.

Whatever else happened in Eden, in his supreme moment Adam made a choice. He had his agency, he had knowledge of the law, was given a commandment with consequences, was accountable. “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25).

*Fall* may also describe a change in *condition*. For instance, one can *fall* in reputation, or from prominence. The word *fall* describes well what transpired when Adam and Eve were driven from the garden. A transformation took place which made them “a little lower than the angels.” (In the Hebrew text, the word “angel” is given as “gods,” see Ps 8:5, Heb 2:7-9.) The bodies formed for mankind became temporal or physical bodies. The scriptures say “the life of all flesh is in the blood thereof” (Lev 17:11-13; Deut 12:23; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* 199-200, 367 Kimball 5-6).

After the transformation caused by the Fall, bodies of flesh and bone and *blood* (unlike our spirit bodies), would not endure forever. Somehow the ingredient blood carried with it a limit to life. It was as though a clock were set and a time given. Thereafter, all living things moved inexorably toward mortal or temporal death. Temporal, I repeat, means temporary.

Mortal death, the penalty imposed upon Adam and his posterity, is in fact a mechanism of rescue. It is the process by which we may return to the presence of God. Man *must* be released from mortality lest he live forever in his sins. Without mortal death, the plan of happiness would not just be disturbed or delayed, it would be destroyed! Alma was right when he said, “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 42:8).

How the transformation of the Fall occurred, I do not know. I do know it resulted from choice, and law, and accountability, and consequence. The separate creation of man in the image of God and his subsequent fall were essential if the condition of mortality were to exist and the plan proceed.

If man is but an animal, then logic favors freedom without accountability or consequence. Had man evolved from animals, there could have been no fall, no law broken, no penalty, no need for a mediator. The ordinance of baptism would be an empty gesture since it is for a remission of sins. Many who perceive organic evolution to be law rather than theory do not realize they forsake the Atonement in the process.

## **The Atonement**

If you do not accept spiritual laws to be as fixed as the laws which govern nature, I know of no way to explain what the word *atonement* means in the scriptures. While justice required that the broken law be satisfied, that same justice required that man be punished for his own sins and not for Adam’s transgression. The Atonement was a vicarious act of the Messiah. Through the Atonement, all mankind *will* be redeemed from mortal death by resurrection: and, through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel, all mankind *may* be redeemed from spiritual death, if they repent. The events from the creation to the final winding-up scene, all governed by law, are not based on *chance*; they are based on *choice*! It was planned that way from before the world was.

## **The Laws of Nature**

Would you be surprised that natural law exerts a very positive influence on my testimony? I believe that temporal laws have profound *spiritual* value. In their own way, physical laws attest to a durable interdependence between the physical and the spiritual in man.



The scriptures tell us that:

All kingdoms have a law given; And there are many kingdoms; for there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or a lesser kingdom. And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions (D&C 88:36-38).

They also say that “*the spirit and the body are the soul of man*” (D&C 88:15; emphasis added), and that combined—*combined*—“they might receive a fulness of joy,” and are subject to *both* natural and physical law (D&C 93:33; 138:17).

The tenderest spiritual and emotional feelings of the human heart respond to manifestations of the physical universe as seemingly unspiritual as formulae of mathematics or physics. For instance, our perception of beauty is activated by abstract, cold, and impersonal physical law. That which gives beauty and variety to the face of the land and stirs the very soul of mankind conforms to rigid and inflexible laws which at once provide absolutely limitless variations.

## Music

Man discovered that a cord stretched and plucked will vibrate and make a sound; if cut in half, that sound is exactly one octave higher. Divide that half, and the phenomenon recurs. If the string is three-quarters as long, the sound is one-fourth higher; if two-thirds as long, one-fifth higher. Cords arranged in lengths and intervals according to precise mathematical formulas will resonate, or vibrate, in harmonious response. Adjust the spelling of *cord* (c-o-r-d) and you have *chord* (c-h-o-r-d).

When vibrations are produced on the strings of a harp, or piano, or on an organ or horn, or on a drum, an infinite variety of sounds can be composed in endless combinations to form music; all kinds of music. There can be no end of the combinations possible—all within order and law.

New words were invented to describe what happened: resonance, harmony, symmetry, and rhythm, *accord*, or *discord*. That resonance, or vibration in response, could calm or excite the feelings and emotions of man. The spirit, the very soul of man, can respond in sympathetic resonance, in *accord* or in *discord*.

Those rigid formulas of mathematics or geometry were found everywhere in nature and connected the spirit of man with what he could see as well as what he could *hear*.

## The Visible

I want to present a short lesson in geometry. It would be infinitely easier if I had a surface upon which to draw simple diagrams, a square, and a compass. But I must use words alone. I hope I do not lose you, for I assure you there is a very important point at the other end of it.

If a simple rectangle is formed so that the short side has the same proportional relationship to the long side as the long side does to both sides put together, it has a precise mathematical ratio of 1.618. Without knowing that figure, you can draw that rectangle easily and very accurately with nothing more than a square and a compass.

The relationship of those two segments to one another was known anciently as the golden segment, and is referred to in literature as the “divine proportion,” for it embodies qualities of both precision and beauty. When offered a selection of many rectangles, invariably most people will choose one of this proportion simply because it pleases them most.

Draw a vertical line through the rectangle so that one division is a square, the other will be a rectangle of exactly the same proportion as the larger one. You can divide the small rectangle to form a square and yet a smaller rectangle. Repeat that process until they become invisibly small.

Each rectangle, though smaller in size, has exactly the same proportion. That would be true if you made them larger. It is an infinite proportional relationship, which continues forever, much as the mirrors in the sealing room of the temple form a corridor of diminishing images which goes out of sight and on into infinity.

Somehow this proportion activates that part of human nature which responds to beauty. “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” (Hungerford). There is something in that eye, that human eye, which is pleased with shapes which embody that proportion. Whether angular, spherical, conical, or of spiral dimension, it is *felt* to be beautiful. The musical words *harmony*, *symmetry*, *rhythm*, and *balance* are used to describe paintings and statues and also buildings and creations of every kind which embody this proportion. They are regarded as beautiful. Why? Because there is some interconnection between the perception of man and that mathematical proportion.

Scribe an arc through the square formed inside the rectangle, continue it in the next smaller one and the next and you form a spiral, a logarithmic spiral with precise mathematical proportions of the golden segment and quite remarkable properties. The logarithmic spiral is found everywhere in nature. It appears in sea shells. It allows the horns of animals to grow, each horn spiraling in an opposite direction. It appears in the arrangement of seeds on flowers, in the arrangement of limbs on a tree, in their height from one another, and in the way they are arranged on the stem at just the right angle to catch the most light. Spirals of one kind or another are found from the smallest virus to the largest galaxy. Where living things must change size but maintain the same shape, the logarithmic spiral appears.

Actually, you need look no farther than your own physical body to find an application of the golden segment. An example is as close as your own hand. Whether you are short or tall, slim or stout, the second and third bones in your finger equal the length of the other, longer one—the golden segment 1.618. That is just the beginning. This body of ours embodies that golden segment in a dozen ways and more. With billions of us on the earth, no two of us are exactly alike. But measure a number of us, each different, and the proportion emerges with mathematical precision. All that variety conforms to law—fixed, rigid law—which at once allows an infinite variety.

That golden segment embodied order and precision with such practical application that painters and designers, sculptors, musicians, masons and especially architects were guided by it. Architecture, which embodies it, has been described as “frozen music.” I have but touched on the subject, but a professor of physics or mathematics, or art or music could dazzle you with examples of how these and other laws are expressed in the universe about us.

There is a testament to law right under our feet. The very mud upon which we walk, when dried, cracks into three angles—each 120 degrees. Together that adds up to 360 degrees—a perfect circle, a compass. The examples are everywhere, some as small as the double helix of DNA, others as large as the orbits of celestial bodies. I know that Dr. Hugh Nibley could impress you with examples in the writing of the ancients.

## **The Ancients**

Anciently, alchemists, astrologers, and magicians supposed that they had discovered the secrets of the universe, and could prove them with mathematical precision. Beginning with Pythagoras and his Pythagoreans, societies and orders of many descriptions were formed to contemplate these so-called secrets of the universe. Others claiming to be sorcerers found it easy to astonish the superstitious with marvels that were simple evidence that the universe is ruled by order and law. And always (and of course, as the Book of Mormon warns us) there have been

those whose works are works of darkness, for those who worship the evil one adopted some of these geometric designs as symbols of their wicked mischief.

Now what do I make of all of this? Nothing more nor less than that there is *law* and *order* and *precision* in the universe that is awesome! What is physical interconnects with the spiritual; what is spiritual, or eternal, or moral resonates with the physical. We respond in our very souls to the order in the universe. How we respect those interconnections will have profound effect upon our happiness or sorrow.

## Statement of Charles Darwin

In support of this, I will quote from one who must be regarded as an expert witness of the subject. It was written in the later years of his life:

I have said that in one respect my mind has changed during the last twenty or thirty years. Up to the age of thirty, or beyond it, poetry of many kinds, such as the works of Milton, Gray, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, gave me great pleasure, and even as a schoolboy I took intense delight in Shakespeare, especially in the historical plays. I have also said that formerly pictures gave me considerable, and music very great delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry: I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost any taste for pictures or music.— Music generally set me thinking too energetically on what I have been at work on, instead of giving me pleasure. I retain some taste for fine scenery, but it does not cause me the exquisite delight which it formerly did.

Our writer continues:

This curious and lamentable loss of the higher aesthetic tastes is all the odder, as books on history, biographies and travels (independently of any scientific facts which they may contain), and essays on all sorts of subjects interest me as much as ever they did. My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts, but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone, on which the *higher tastes*, depend, I cannot conceive. A man with a mind more highly organized or better constituted than mine, would not I suppose have thus suffered; and if I had to live my life again I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week; for perhaps the parts of my brain now atrophied could thus have been kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of *happiness*, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature (emphasis in the original).

Let me repeat that last sentence, “The loss of these tastes is a loss of *happiness*, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.” That remarkable confession is from the autobiography of Charles Darwin, who conceived the theory of organic evolution (138-9).

There are too many interconnections uniting the physical and the spiritual in man to suppose that they came at random or by chance—not in a billion years or a billion times a billion years! It is against the law! What law? The law of common sense!

## Declaration of Conviction—Conclusion

Now in conclusion: It is my conviction that to the degree the theory of evolution asserts that man is the product of an evolutionary process, the offspring of animals—it is false! What application the evolutionary theory has to animals gives me no concern. That is another question

entirely, one to be pursued by science. But remember, the scriptures speak of the spirit in animals and other living things, and of each multiplying after its own kind (D&C 77:2; 2 Nephi 2:22; Moses 3:9; Abr 4:11-12, 24).

And I am sorry to say, the so-called theistic evolution, the theory that God used an evolutionary process to prepare a physical body for the spirit of man, is equally false. I say I am sorry because I know it is a view commonly held by good and thoughtful people who search for an acceptable resolution to an apparent conflict between the theory of evolution and the doctrines of the gospel.

I give six reasons for my conviction:

### **Reason 1**

The revelations from God. The revelations testify of the separate creation of man in the image of God—this after the rest of creation was finished. When the revelations do not fully explain something (and there is purpose in their not doing so), there is safety in clinging to whatever they do reveal. The creation of man and his introduction into mortality by the Fall as revealed in the scriptures conform to eternal laws governing *both* body and spirit.

If the theory of evolution applies to man, there was no Fall and therefore no need for an atonement, nor a gospel of redemption, nor a redeemer.

### **Reason 2**

An understanding of the sealing authority. The sealing authority with its binding of the generations into eternal families cannot admit to ancestral blood lines to beasts. Let me repeat: *An understanding of the sealing authority with its binding of the generations into eternal families cannot admit to ancestral blood lines to beasts.* That should be reason enough for any endowed and sealed Latter-day Saint!

### **Reason 3**

Statements of the prophets and apostles. When the First Presidency speaks, we can safely accept their word.

And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place. But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest (D&C 124:45-46).

Twice the First Presidency has declared the position of the Church on organic evolution. The first, a statement published in 1909 entitled “The Origin of Man” (75-81), was signed by Presidents Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund. The other, entitled “Mormon View of Evolution,” signed by Presidents Heber J. Grant, Anthony W. Ivins, and Charles W. Nibley, was published in 1929 (1090-91). It follows very closely the first statement, indeed quotes directly from it. The doctrines in both statements are consistent and have not changed. One paragraph from the first will give you a feeling for their content.

It is held by some that Adam was not the first man upon this earth, and that the original human being was a development from lower orders of the animal creation. These, however, are the theories of men. The word of the Lord declares that Adam was “the first man of all men” (Moses 1:34), and we are therefore in duty bound to regard him as the primal parent of our race. It was shown to the brother of Jared that all men were created in the beginning after the image of

God; and whether we take this to mean the spirit or the body, or both, it commits us to the same conclusion: Man began life as a human being, in the likeness of our heavenly Father (“The Origin of Man” 80; see the full texts of both statements in Appendix A below).

Statements have been made by other presidents of the Church and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles which corroborate these official declarations by the First Presidency.

I should take note of one letter signed by a president of the Church addressed to a private individual. It includes a sentence which, taken out of context, reads, “On the subject of organic evolution the church has officially taken no position.” For some reasons the addressee passed this letter about. For years it has appeared each time this subject is debated.

Letters to individuals are *not* the channel for announcing the policy of the Church. For several important reasons, this letter itself is not a declaration of the position of the Church, as some have interpreted it to be. Do not anchor your position on this major issue to that one sentence! It is in conflict with the two official declarations, each signed by all members of the First Presidency. Remember the revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants, “Every decision made by . . . [the First Presidency] must be by the unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member . . . must be agreed to its decisions. . . . Unless this is the case, their decisions are not entitled to the same blessings which the decisions of a quorum of three presidents were anciently, who were ordained after the order of Melchizedek, and were righteous and holy men” (D&C 107:27, 29).

#### **Reason 4**

Moral laws of force and validity. If the laws of genetics alone governed the reproduction and adaptation of living things, then the theory of evolution might convincingly apply to man. But they do not. There are moral laws of force and validity which govern that spiritual part of man, the power to reason, the conscience, which animals do not possess.

Can you not see how careful, how clever, the adversary is? He need not even challenge the *existence* of moral laws; simply convince us that, as animals, we are not accountable and are therefore exempt from them. To regard myself as but an animal would cost me my agency, my accountability; I would forfeit justice, mercy, love, faith, the *Atonement*—all that endures beyond mortality—values more dear than life itself. I will not do it!

#### **Reason 5**

The word *beauty*. Beauty itself cannot be imagined as having come by accident. The precision, harmony, and symmetry of the physical universe and the compelling interrelationship of natural laws with the spirit and emotion of mankind attest to an order directed by divine intelligence.

#### **Unanswered Questions**

Those reasons leave questions yet unanswered. How old is the earth? I do not know! But I do know that matter is eternal. How long a time has man been upon the earth? I do not know! But I do know that man did not evolve from animals.

Both questions have to do with time. Time is a medium for measurement, perhaps no more than that. Occasionally I wonder if time exists at all. Quantum physicists are now beginning to say strange things like that. “Time” comes from the word “tempus”; so do temporal and temporary. The revelations say that the day will come when “there shall be time no longer” (Rev 10:6; D&C 84:100). In any case, they say “time only is measured unto men” (Alma 40:8).

## What Can I Offer You?

What help can I offer as you face persuasive advocates with visible evidence supporting their premise that man evolved from animals when you have little visible evidence to the contrary? Faith!

Faith is not to have a *perfect knowledge* of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are *not seen*, which are true (Alma 32:21; emphasis added).

Again:

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things *not seen* (Heb 11:1; emphasis added).

Notice that both scriptural definitions of faith include the words “not seen.” All the answers as to how man was created have not been discovered by scientists; neither has God revealed them, but he has promised that he will reveal them.

Yea, verily I say unto you, in that day when the Lord shall come, he shall reveal all things— Things which have passed, and *hidden things* which *no man knew*, things of the *earth*, *by which it was made*, and *the purpose* and *the end* thereof— Things most precious, things that are above, and things that are beneath, things that are in the earth, and upon the earth, and in heaven (D&C 101:32-34; emphasis added).

When confronted by evidence in the rocks below, rely on the witness of the heavens above. Do not be contentious. Speak of conscience, values, moral law. Perhaps others will also see the spiritual side to man and his creation. From that may come a humility and a willingness to see together in faith. You will not be left alone. God has promised a comforter, “Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world . . . seeth . . . not, neither knoweth” (John 14:17).

### Reason 6

The Light. I said I would give six reasons for my conviction, and I have listed only five. The sixth is *personal revelation*. Most of you know how to receive revelation. “Study it out in your mind; then . . . ask” (D&C 9:8).

Man is the child of God, formed in the divine image and endowed with divine attributes, and even as the infant son of an earthly father and mother is capable in due time of becoming a man, so the undeveloped offspring of celestial parentage is capable, by experience through ages and aeons, of evolving into a God.

If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal (D&C 42:61).

Here we are, spirit children of God, clothed in flesh, sojourning in mortality for a season. Know that your body is the instrument of your mind, and the foundation of your character. Do not mortgage your soul for unproved theories; ask, simply ask! I have asked, but not how man was created; I have asked if the scriptures are true. And I have a witness and a testimony, and I give it unto you: That Jesus is The Christ, the Son of God; that he is our Redeemer and our Messiah; that there was the fall of man; and that he is our Mediator and our Redeemer; that he wrought the Atonement; that he is our Lord. I know him. I bear to you a witness of him, a special witness of him.

Remember what he told the Nephites:

Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life (3 Nephi 15:9).

## NOTES

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