

Teachings Concerning the The Fall of Adam

The Importance of Studying the Fall

Ezra Taft Benson (President)

The Book of Mormon Saints knew that the plan of redemption must start with the account of the fall of Adam. In the words of Moroni, “By Adam came the fall of man. And because of the fall of man came Jesus Christ, . . . and because of Jesus Christ came the redemption of man” (Mormon 9:12).

Just as a man does not really desire food until he is hungry, so he does not desire the salvation of Christ until he knows why he needs Christ.

No one adequately and properly knows why he needs Christ until he understands and accepts the doctrine of the Fall and its effect upon all mankind. And no other book in the world explains this vital doctrine nearly as well as the Book of Mormon.

Brethren and sisters, we all need to take a careful inventory

of our performance and also the performance of those over whom we preside to be sure that we are teaching the “great plan of the Eternal God” to the Saints.

Are we accepting and teaching what the revelations tell us about the Creation, Adam and the fall of man, and redemption from that fall through the atonement of Christ? Do we frequently review the crucial questions which Alma asks the members of the Church in the fifth chapter of Alma in the Book of Mormon?

Do we understand and are we effective in teaching and preaching the Atonement? What personal meaning does the Lord’s suffering in Gethsemane and on Calvary have for each of us?

What does redemption from the Fall mean to us? In the words of Alma, do we “sing the song of redeeming love”? (Alma 5:26). (*Ensign*, May 1987, 85)

Aspects of the Story of the Fall are Symbolic

Bruce R. McConkie (Quorum of the Twelve)

As to the Fall itself we are told that the Lord planted “the tree of knowledge of good and evil” in the midst of the garden. (Moses 3:9.) To Adam and Eve the command came: “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou

eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Moses 3:16–17.) *Again the account is speaking figuratively.* What is meant by partaking of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is that our first parents complied with whatever laws were involved so that their bodies would change from their state of paradisiacal immortality to a state of natural mortality. (“Christ and the Creation,” *Ensign*, June 1982, p. 15; emphasis added)

The Condition of Adam and Eve in the Garden

Joseph Fielding Smith (Quorum of Twelve - President)

We find Adam in the Garden of Eden with the promise that he can live there, he can stay there, he can enjoy himself as far as is possible under the conditions, as long as he wants to, as long as he does not do something he is told not to do, and that is to partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He was told that in the day that he should eat of that fruit he should surely die.

We find, then, Adam’s status before the fall was:

1. He was not subject to death.
2. He was in the presence of God. He saw him just as you see your fathers; was in his presence, and learned his language. Now if any of you are professors from our schools of language, and have an idea that language came as these theorists say, I am going to tell you that Adam had a perfect language, for he was taught the language of God. That was the first language upon this earth. So much for those theories.
3. He had no posterity.
4. He was without knowledge of good and evil. He had

knowledge, of course. He could speak. He could converse. There were many things he could be taught and was taught; but under the conditions in which he was living at that time it was impossible for him to visualize or understand the power of good and evil. He did not know what pain was. He did not know what sorrow was; and a thousand other things that have come to us in this life that Adam did not know in the Garden of Eden and could not understand and would not have known had he remained there. That was his status before the fall. (*Doctrines of Salvation* 3 Vols. Ed. By Bruce R McCockie [1954-56], 1:107-108)

Bruce R. McConkie (Quorum of the Twelve)

Thus we learn that the initial creation was paradisiacal; death and mortality had not yet entered the world. There was no mortal flesh upon the earth for any form of life. The Creation was past, but mortality as we know it lay ahead. All things had been created in a state of paradisiacal immortality. It was of this day that Lehi said: “And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they

were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end." (2 Ne. 2:22.) If there is no death, all things of necessity must continue to live everlastingly and without end.

Continuing the divine commentary about the Creation, we read: "And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also; nevertheless, all things were before created; but spiritually were they created and made according to my word." (Moses 3:7.) How filled with meaning are these words! The physical body of Adam is made from the dust of this earth, the very earth to which the Gods came down to form him. His "spirit" enters his body, as Abraham expresses it. (See Abr. 5:7.) Man becomes a living, immortal soul; body and spirit are joined together. He has been created "spiritually," as all things were because there is as yet no mortality. Then comes the Fall; Adam falls; mortality and procreation and death commence. Fallen man is mortal; he has mortal flesh; he is "the first flesh upon the earth." And the effects of his fall pass upon all created things. They fall in that they too become mortal. Death enters the world; mortality reigns; procreation commences; and the Lord's great and eternal purposes roll onward.

Thus, "all things" were created as spirit entities in heaven; then "all things" were created in a paradisiacal state upon the earth; that is, "spiritually were they created," for there was as yet no death. They had *spiritual bodies* made of the elements of the earth as distinguished from the *mortal bodies* they would receive after the Fall when death would enter the scheme of things. Natural bodies are subject to the natural death; spiritual bodies, being paradisiacal in nature, are not subject to death. Hence the need for a fall and the mortality and death that grows out of it.

Thus, as the interpolative exposition in the divine word explains, "I, the Lord God, planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there I put the man whom I had formed." (Moses 3:8.) Adam, our father, dwelt in the Garden of Eden. He was the *first man of all men* in the day of his creation, and he became the *first flesh of all flesh* through the Fall. Because of the Fall "all things" changed from their spiritual state to a natural state. And thus we read: "And out of the ground made I, the Lord God, to grow every tree, *naturally*, that is pleasant to the sight of man; and man could behold it. And it became also a living soul. For it was *spiritual* in the day that I created it." (Moses 3:9; italics added). ("Christ and the Creation," *Ensign*, June 1982, p. 14)

Orson Pratt (Quorum of the Twelve)

This tree, of which they both ate, was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Why was it thus termed? I will explain a mystery to you, brethren, why this was called so. Adam and Eve, while in the garden of Eden, had not the knowledge you and I have; it is true, they had a degree of intelligence, but they had not the experience, they had not the knowledge by experience, which you and I have: all they knew was barely what they knew when they came there; they knew

a commandment had been given to them, and they had sufficient knowledge to name the beasts of the field as they came up before them; but as for the knowledge of good, they had not got it, because they never had anything contrary to good placed before them.

We will bring up an example. For instance, suppose you had never tasted anything that was sweet--never had the sensation of sweetness--could you have any correct idea of the term sweetness? No. On the other hand, how could you understand bitter if you never had tasted bitterness? Could you define the term to them who had experienced this sensation, or knew it? No. I will bring another example. Take a man who had been perfectly blind from his infancy, and never saw the least gleam of light--could you describe colors to him? No. Would he know anything about red, blue, violet, or yellow? No; you could not describe it to him by any way you might undertake. But by some process let his eyes be opened, and let him gaze upon the sun beams that reflect upon a watery cloud, producing the rainbow, where he would see a variety of colors, he could then appreciate them for himself; but tell him about colors when he is blind, he would not know them from a piece of earthenware. So with Adam previous to partaking of this fruit; good could not be described to him, because he never had experienced the opposite. As to undertaking to explain to him what evil was, you might as well have undertaken to explain, to a being that never had, for one moment, had his eyes closed to the light, what darkness is. The tree of knowledge of good and evil was placed there that man might gain certain information he never could have gained otherwise; by partaking of the forbidden fruit he experienced misery, then he knew that he was once happy, previously he could not comprehend what happiness meant, what good was; but now he knows it by contrast, now he is filled with sorrow and wretchedness, now he sees the difference between his former and present condition, and if by any means he could be restored to his first position, he would be prepared to realize it, like the man that never had seen the light. Let the man to whom all the beauties of light have been displayed, and who has never been in darkness, be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, deprived of his natural sight; what a change this would be to him; he never knew anything about darkness before, he never understood the principle at all; it never entered the catalogue of his ideas, until darkness came upon him, and his eye-sight was destroyed: now he can comprehend that the medium he once existed in was light. Now, says he, if I could only regain my sight, I could appreciate it, for I understand the contrast; restore me back again to my sight, and let me enjoy the light I once had; let me gaze upon the works of creation, let me look on the beauties thereof again, and I will be satisfied, and my joy will be full. It was so with Adam; let the way be prepared for his redemption, and the redemption of his posterity, and all creation that groans in pain to be delivered--let them be restored back again to what they lost through the fall, and they will be prepared to appreciate it. (*Journal of Discourses* 26 Vols. [1855-86], 1:285)

The Account of the Fall

Bruce R. McConkie (Quorum of the Twelve)

We do not know how the fall was accomplished any more than we know how the Lord caused the earth to come into being and to spin through the heavens in its paradisiacal state. We have been given only enough information about the creation and the fall to enable us to understand the purposes of the Lord, to exercise faith in him, and to gain our salvation.

As to the fall, the scriptures set forth that there were in the Garden of Eden two trees. One was the tree of life, which figuratively refers to eternal life; the other was the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which figuratively refers to how and why and in what manner mortality and all that appertains to it came into being. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat," the Lord told our first parents, "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Moses 3:16-17.)

Eve partook without full understanding; Adam partook knowing that unless he did so he and Eve could not have children and fulfill the commandment they had received to

multiply and replenish the earth. After they had thus complied with whatever the law was that brought mortality into being, the Lord said to Eve: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." To Adam the decree came: "Cursed shall be the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." Thus the paradisiacal earth was cursed; thus it fell; and thus it became as it now is.

Adam was then told that he would surely die, returning through death to the dust whence his physical body had come. And then the Lord said to his Only Begotten: "Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand and partake also of the tree of life and eat and live forever [in his sins!], therefore I, the Lord God, will send him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken." (Moses 4:22-29.) Such is the ancient account of the fall. (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 85-86)

Results of the Fall

Orson F. Whitney (Quorum of the Twelve)

- The fall had a twofold direction—downward, yet forward. It brought man into the world and set his feet upon progression's highway. But it also brought death, with all its sad concomitants. Not such a death as the righteous now contemplate, and such as both righteous and unrighteous must undergo, as a change preparatory to resurrection; but eternal death—death of the spirit as well as the body. There was no resurrection when Adam fell—not upon this planet. (*Saturday Night Thoughts* [1921], p.93)
- Adam's fall was a step downward, but it was also a step forward—a step in the eternal march of human progress; and it is by means of this everlasting Gospel, and our own individual efforts in making use of the powers that God has given us, that we lay hold upon eternal life, and go on to perfection. (Conference Report, April 1908, p.90)

Joseph Fielding Smith (Quorum of Twelve - President)

- Adam's status after the fall was:
 1. He was banished from the presence of God and partook of the spiritual death. Now that was a terrible calamity. At least, as we read in the 9th chapter of 2nd Nephi, it would have been a most terrible thing, that banishment from the presence of God, if there had been no remedy."
 2. He also partook of the temporal or physical death, and that would have been also a terrible calamity if there had been no remedy for it."
 3. He gained knowledge and experience—knowledge of good and evil.
 4. He obtained the great gift of posterity. (*Doctrines of*

Salvation, 3 Vols. Ed. By Bruce R McCockie [1954-56], 1:111)

- Because of Adam's transgression, a spiritual death—banishment from the presence of the Lord—as well as the temporal death, were pronounced upon him. The spiritual death came at the time of the fall and banishment; and the seeds of the temporal death were also sown at that same time; that is, a physical change came over Adam and Eve, who became mortal, and were thus subject to the ills of the flesh which resulted in their gradual decline to old age and finally the separation of the spirit from the body.

Before this temporal death took place the Lord, by his own voice and the visitation and ministration of angels, taught Adam the principles of the gospel and administered unto him the saving ordinances, through which he was again restored to the favor of the Lord and to his presence. Also, through the atonement, not only Adam, but all his posterity were redeemed from the temporal effects of the fall, and shall come forth in the resurrection to receive immortality. (*Doctrines of Salvation* 3 Vols. Ed. By Bruce R McCockie [1954-56], 1:111-112)

Brigham Young (President)

If the Scriptures are true, it proves that sin is in the world, and the question arises, Is it necessary that sin should be here? What will the Latter-day Saints say? Is it necessary that we should know good from evil? I can answer this to suit myself by saying it is absolutely necessary, for the simple reason that if we had never realized darkness we never could have comprehended the light; if we never tasted anything bitter, but were to eat sweets, the honey and the honeycomb, from the time we come into this world until the time we go out

of it, what knowledge could we have of the bitter? This leads me to the decision that every fact that exists in this world is demonstrated by its opposite. If this is the fact--and all true philosophy proves it--it leads me to the conclusion that the transgression of our first parents was absolutely necessary, that we might be brought in contact with sin and have the opportunity of knowing good and evil. It may be deemed strange and singular by the Christian world that we should believe such a thing; but the Scriptures inform us, in Genesis iii., 22, that the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil." (Journal of Discourses 26 Vols. [1855-86] 14:70-71)

Bruce R. McConkie (Quorum of the Twelve)

The fall of Adam brought temporal and spiritual death into the world. Temporal death is the natural death; it occurs when body and spirit separate, thus leaving the body to return to the dust whence it came. Spiritual death is to be cast out of the presence of the Lord and to die as pertaining to the things of righteousness. Adam died spiritually when he was cast out of the heavenly presence found in the garden, and he remained spiritually dead until he repented and was born again through baptism and the receipt of the Holy Spirit. Having thus the companionship of the Holy Ghost, he became alive in Christ and was again guided and directed from on high. He was again in the presence of the Lord. Adam died temporally when his spirit separated from his mortal body. (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 86-87)

Russell M. Nelson (Quorum of the Twelve)

To bring the plan of happiness to fruition, God issued to Adam and Eve the first commandment ever given to mankind. It was a commandment to beget children. A law was explained to them. Should they eat from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:17), their bodies would change; mortality and eventual death would come upon them. But partaking of that fruit was prerequisite to their parenthood.

While I do not fully understand all the biochemistry involved, I do know that their physical bodies did change; blood began to circulate in their bodies. Adam and Eve thereby became mortal. Happily for us, they could also beget children and fulfill the purposes for which the world was created. Happily for them, "the Lord said unto Adam [and Eve²⁶]: Behold I have forgiven thee thy transgression in the Garden of Eden" (Moses 6:53). We and all mankind are forever blessed because of Eve's great courage and wisdom. By partaking of the fruit first, she did what needed to be done. Adam was wise enough to do likewise. Accordingly, we could speak of the fall of Adam in terms of a mortal creation, because "Adam fell that men might be" (2 Nephi 2:25).²⁷

Other blessings came to us through the Fall. It activated two closely coupled additional gifts from God, nearly as precious as life itself—agency and accountability. We became "free to choose liberty and eternal life . . . or to choose captivity and death" (2 Nephi 2:27). Freedom of choice cannot be exercised without accountability for choices made. (*Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 34)

Dallin H. Oaks (Quorum of the Twelve)

To the first man and woman on earth, the Lord said, "Be fruitful, and multiply" (Moses 2:28; Genesis 1:28; see also Abraham 4:28). This commandment was first in sequence

and first in importance. It was essential that God's spirit children have mortal birth and an opportunity to progress toward eternal life. Consequently, all things related to procreation are prime targets for the adversary's efforts to thwart the plan of God.

Necessity of the Fall

When Adam and Eve received the first commandment, they were in a transitional state, no longer in the spirit world but with physical bodies not yet subject to death and not yet capable of procreation. They could not fulfill the Father's first commandment without transgressing the barrier between the bliss of the Garden of Eden and the terrible trials and wonderful opportunities of mortal life.

For reasons that have not been revealed, this transition, or "fall," could not happen without a transgression—an exercise of moral agency amounting to a willful breaking of a law (see Moses 6:59). This would be a planned offense, a formality to serve an eternal purpose. The Prophet Lehi explained that "if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen" but would have remained in the same state in which he was created (2 Nephi 2:22).

"And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin" (v. 23).

But the Fall was planned, Lehi concludes, because "all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things" (v. 24).

Eve's wisdom and courage

It was Eve who first transgressed the limits of Eden in order to initiate the conditions of mortality. Her act, whatever its nature, was formally a transgression but eternally a glorious necessity to open the doorway toward eternal life. Adam showed his wisdom by doing the same. And thus Eve and "Adam fell that men might be" (v. 25).

Some Christians condemn Eve for her act, concluding that she and her daughters are somehow flawed by it. Not the Latter-day Saints! Informed by revelation, we celebrate Eve's act and honor her wisdom and courage in the great episode called the Fall (see Bruce R. McConkie, "Eve and the Fall," in *Woman* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979], pp. 67–68). Joseph Smith taught that it was not a "sin" because God had decreed it (see *The Words of Joseph Smith*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook [Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980], p. 63). Brigham Young declared, "We should never blame Mother Eve, not the least" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:145). Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said: "I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin. . . . This was a transgression of the law, but not a sin . . . for it was something that Adam and Eve had to do!" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56], 1:114–15).

Contrast between sin and transgression

This suggested contrast between a sin and a transgression reminds us of the careful wording in the second article of faith: "We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression" (italics added). It also echoes a familiar distinction in the law. Some acts, like murder, are crimes because they are inherently wrong. Other

acts, like operating without a license, are crimes only because they are legally prohibited. Under these distinctions, the act that produced the Fall was not a sin—inherently wrong—but a transgression—wrong because it was formally prohibited. These words are not always used to denote something different, but this distinction seems meaningful in the circumstances of the Fall.

First parents knew the Fall's necessity

Modern revelation shows that our first parents understood the necessity of the Fall. Adam declared, "Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God" (Moses 5:10).

Note the different perspective and the special wisdom of Eve, who focused on the purpose and effect of the great plan of happiness: "Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient" (Moses 5:11). In his vision of the redemption of the dead, President Joseph F. Smith saw "the great and mighty ones" assembled to meet the Son of God, and among them was "our glorious Mother Eve" (D&C 138:38–39).

When we understand the plan of salvation, we also understand the purpose and effect of the commandments God has given his children. He teaches us correct principles and invites us to govern ourselves. We do this by the choices we make in mortality.

We live in a day when there are many political, legal, and social pressures for changes that confuse gender and homogenize the differences between men and women. Our eternal perspective sets us against changes that alter those separate duties and privileges of men and women that are essential to accomplish the great plan of happiness. We do not oppose all changes in the treatment of men and women, since some changes in laws or customs simply correct old wrongs that were never grounded in eternal principles. (*Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 72–74)

Orson Pratt (Quorum of the Twelve)

And what was the fullest extent of the penalty of Adam's transgression? I will tell you—it was death. The death of

what? The death of the immortal tabernacle—of that tabernacle where the seeds of death had not been, that was wisely framed, and pronounced very good: the seeds of death were introduced into it. How, and in what manner? Some say there was something in the nature of the fruit that introduced mortality. Be this as it may, one thing is certain, death entered into the system; it came there by some means, and sin was the main spring by which this monster was introduced. If there had been no sin, old father Adam would at this day have been in the garden of Eden, as bright and as blooming, as fresh and as fair, as ever, together with his lovely consort Eve, dwelling in all the beauty of youth.

By one man came death—the death of the body. What becomes of the spirit when the body dies? Will it be perfectly happy? Would old father Adam's spirit have gone back into the presence of God, and dwelt there eternally, enjoying all the felicities and glories of heaven, after his body had died? No; for the penalty of that transgression was not limited to the body alone. When he sinned, it was with both the body and the spirit that he sinned: it was not only the body that eat of the fruit, but the spirit gave the will to eat; the spirit sinned therefore as well as the body; they were agreed in partaking of that fruit. Was not the spirit to suffer then as well as the body? Yes. How long? To all ages of eternity, without any end; while the body was to return back to its mother earth, and there slumber to all eternity. That was the effect of the fall, leaving out the plan of redemption; so that, if there had been no plan of redemption prepared from before the foundation of the world, man would have been subjected to an eternal dissolution of the body and spirit—the one to lie mingling with its mother earth, to all ages of eternity, and the other to be subject, throughout all future duration, to the power that deceived him, and led them astray; to be completely miserable, or, as the Book of Mormon says, "dead as to things pertaining to righteousness;" and I defy any such beings to have any happiness when they are dead as to things pertaining to righteousness. To them, happiness is out of the question; they are completely and eternally miserable, and there is no help for them, laying aside the atonement. That was the penalty pronounced upon father Adam, and upon all the creation of which he was made lord and governor. This is what is termed original sin, and the effect of it. (*Journal of Discourses* 26 Vols. [1855–86], 1:284)

The Natural man

Spencer W. Kimball (President)

- The competition for our souls is described in Mosiah.

"For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ . . . and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father." (Mosiah 3:19.)

The "natural man" is the "earthy man" who has allowed rude animal passions to overshadow his spiritual inclinations. (*Ensign*, Nov. 1974, p. 112)

Moses 6:48-49

And he said unto them: Because that Adam fell, we are; and by his fall came death; and we are made partakers of misery and woe.

Behold Satan hath come among the children of men, and tempteth them to worship him; and men have become carnal, sensual, and devilish, and are shut out from the presence of God.

Moses 6:55

And the Lord spake unto Adam, saying: Inasmuch as thy children are conceived in sin, even so when they begin to grow up, sin conceiveth in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good.

2 Nephi 2:16

Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.

2 Nephi 2:27-29

Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.

And now, my sons, I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, and hearken unto his great commandments; and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit;

And not choose eternal death, according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate, to bring you down to hell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom

Mosiah 3:16,19

And even if it were possible that little children could sin they could not be saved; but I say unto you they are blessed; for behold, as in Adam, or by nature, they fall, even so the blood of Christ atoneth for their sins. . . .

For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.

Alma 41:11

And now, my son, all men that are in a state of nature, or I would say, in a carnal state, are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; they are without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God; therefore, they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness.

Alma 42:7-10

And now, ye see by this that our first parents were cut off both temporally and spiritually from the presence of the Lord; and thus we see they became subjects to follow after their own will.

Now behold, it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this temporal death, for that would destroy the great plan of happiness.

Therefore, as the soul could never die, and the fall had brought upon all mankind a spiritual death as well as a temporal, that is, they were cut off from the presence of the Lord, it was expedient that mankind should be reclaimed from this spiritual death.

Therefore, as they had become carnal, sensual, and devilish, by nature, this probationary state became a state for them to prepare; it became a preparatory state.

Ether 3:2

O Lord, thou hast said that we must be encompassed about by the floods. Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with

thy servant because of his weakness before thee; for we know that thou art holy and dwellest in the heavens, and that we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires

D&C 20:17-20

By these things we know that there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them;

And that he created man, male and female, after his own image and in his own likeness, created he them;

And gave unto them commandments that they should love and serve him, the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship.

But by the transgression of these holy laws man became sensual and devilish, and became fallen man.

Neal A. Maxwell (Quorum of the Twelve)

- The natural man is actually at cross purposes with God's plans. The natural man really has different ends, seeks different outcomes, marches to different drummers. (*Men and Women of Christ* [1991], p. 8)

- There are those who, reading certain scriptural descriptions about the nature of man (such as that man is "carnal, sensual, and devilish," Alma 42:10) brush by these scriptures hurriedly, even nervously, because they feel so uncomfortable upon reading them. Such readers may feel, wrongly, that these scriptures sound much like a Calvinistic denigration of man. Such offended readers may even say those adjectives do not sound like most of the people they know. The same brush-by occurs regarding the numerous scriptures concerning "darkness" and "light."

There is a danger, however, in ignoring these scriptures and the profound message they contain. Calvinism focused unnaturally on the natural man and lacked the lifting dimension contained in the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, with its exalting perspectives and sweeping promises. Though these scriptural insights concerning the natural man may seem to put us sternly in our place, when they are combined with the fullness of the gospel, we are shown our immense possibilities and what we have the power to become. Are we not wiser to understand our fallen nature and then, with equal attention, to be taught about how we can be lifted up? Indeed, for one to ask "Where do we go from here?" he must know where "here" is! (*Notwithstanding My Weakness* [1981], p. 70)

Bruce R. McConkie (Quorum of the Twelve)

- As we understand the plan of salvation, we came into this sphere of existence for two purposes. First: We came to gain this natural body, this tangible body, this body which here in this life is a temporary house for the eternal spirit, but which body we will receive back again in immortality through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Second: We came here to see if we would have the spiritual integrity, the devotion to righteousness, to overcome the world, to put off the natural man, to bridle our passions, to curb and control the appetites that are natural in this type of existence. (*Conference Report*, April, 1955, p. 115)

- The natural birth creates a natural man, and the natural man is an enemy to God. In his fallen state he is carnal, sensual, and devilish by nature. Appetites and passions govern his life and he is alive -- acutely so -- to all that is evil and wicked in the world. (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], p. 282)

Brigham Young (President)

- As I have told you, your spirit is continually warring with the flesh; your spirit dictates one way, your flesh suggests another, and this brings on the combat. (*Journal of Discourses* 26 Vols. [1855-86], 3:212)
- When we receive the Gospel, a warfare commences immediately; Paul says, "for I delight in the law of God, after

the inward man," but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." We have to fight continually, as it were, sword in hand to make the spirit master of the tabernacle, or the flesh subject to the law of the spirit. If this warfare is not diligently prosecuted, then the law of sin prevails, and in consequence of this some apostatize from the truth when crossing the plains, learn to swear instead of to pray, become high-minded and high tempered instead of learning to be patient and humble, and when they arrive in these vallies they feel so self-sufficient that they consider themselves the only ones that are really right; they are filled with darkness, the authority of the Spirit is not listened to, and the law of sin and death is the ruling power in their tabernacles. (*Journal of Discourses* 26 Vols. [1855-86], 9:287-288)

Probationary State

2 Nephi 2:19-21

And after Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit they were driven out of the garden of Eden, to till the earth.

And they have brought forth children; yea, even the family of all the earth.

And the days of the children of men were prolonged, according to the will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh; wherefore, their state became a state of probation, and their time was lengthened, according to the commandments which the Lord God gave unto the children of men. For he gave commandment that all men must repent; for he showed unto all men that they were lost, because of the transgression of their parents.

Alma 12:24

And we see that death comes upon mankind, yea, the death which has been spoken of by Amulek, which is the temporal death; nevertheless there was a space granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead.

Alma 42:3-13

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

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

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

But behold, it was appointed unto man to die--therefore, as they were cut off from the tree of life they should be cut off from the face of the earth--and man became lost forever, yea,

they became fallen man.

And now, ye see by this that our first parents were cut off both temporally and spiritually from the presence of the Lord; and thus we see they became subjects to follow after their own will.

Now behold, it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this temporal death, for that would destroy the great plan of happiness.

Therefore, as the soul could never die, and the fall had brought upon all mankind a spiritual death as well as a temporal, that is, they were cut off from the presence of the Lord, it was expedient that mankind should be reclaimed from this spiritual death.

Therefore, as they had become carnal, sensual, and devilish, by nature, this probationary state became a state for them to prepare; it became a preparatory state.

And now remember, my son, if it were not for the plan of redemption, (laying it aside) as soon as they were dead their souls were miserable, being cut off from the presence of the Lord.

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

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

D&C 29:41-45

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.

But, behold, I say unto you that I, the Lord God, gave unto Adam and unto his seed, that they should not die as to the temporal death, until I, the Lord God, should send forth

angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption, through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son.

And thus did I, the Lord God, appoint unto man the days of his probation--that by his natural death he might be raised in immortality unto eternal life, even as many as would believe;

And they that believe not unto eternal damnation; for they cannot be redeemed from their spiritual fall, because they repent not;

For they love darkness rather than light, and their deeds are evil, and they receive their wages of whom they list to obey.