

## Chapter 5

# The Meaning of Atonement

Jesus came to earth to teach us how to live. By taking upon ourselves his nature, we become at-one with him and live “more abundantly” (John 10:10). Jesus also came to die and to resurrect from the dead, giving us hope of our own resurrection. Because he did so, he gained the power to “draw all men” to follow him, become like him, and dwell again with him in the celestial city of God.

The opening two chapters of the Bible describe the Garden of Eden and the last two describe the heavenly city of God. It appears that the Garden of Eden was patterned after the Garden “in the midst of the paradise [city] of God” (Rev. 2:7). For example, both environments reveal a pattern where divine harmony exists and where discord is not known. Moral and intellectual darkness, disease, and death are not found. In both places, premortal man and Adam and Eve walk and talk with God. The spiritual estrangement that now characterizes our mortal experience was unknown. Moreover, the situation of Adam and Eve in Eden, and the decision they were called upon to make, appears to parallel the figurative situation but real decision facing all premortal spirits in the city of God.

Belief in the pre-earth life of humankind helps to make sense of the fall of humankind (John 9:2; Acts 17:28; Rom.