own carnal nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state” (Mosiah 16:5). In such rebellion, one is left without excuse. As explained by Samuel the Lamanite:

Whosoever doeth iniquity, doeth it unto himself; for behold, ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free. He hath given unto you that ye might know good from evil, and he hath given unto you that ye might choose life or death [Hel. 14:30–31; see also Agency].

The apostle Paul speaks of the natural man as being in a state incapable of understanding spiritual truth. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). Moreover, the natural man “walk[s] according to the course of this world, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Eph. 2:2–3).

Because the natural man is unrepentant and indulgent, one must overcome this condition through repentance and submission to the Spirit of God. President Brigham Young stated that God “has placed us on the earth to prove ourselves, to govern, control, educate and sanctify ourselves, body and spirit” (JD 10:2, in Discourses of Brigham Young, ed. J. Widtsoe, p. 57, Salt Lake City, 1971). Parley P. Pratt, an apostle, explains how the Holy Ghost aids in the process:

[It] increases, enlarges, expands and purifies all the natural passions and affections; and adapts them, by the gift of wisdom, to their lawful use. It inspires, develops, cultivates and matures all the fine-toned sympathies, joys, tastes, kindred feelings and affections of our nature [Key to the Science of Theology, 10th ed., p. 101, Salt Lake City, 1973].

Repentance is manifested as “[yielding] to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, . . . [being] 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). Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has pointed out that humility and selflessness develop a capacity for discipline and a control of natural appetites. This is a difficult process, which requires that “men and women of Christ magnify their callings without magnifying themselves” (p. 16).

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NATURE, LAW OF
Rational inquiry into nature (physis) was for Greek philosophers the way to know reality. The natural was originally radically distinguished from law (nomos), which identified merely human conventions. Thus, for example, it is natural for humans to speak, but it is not natural to speak Greek. Hence, law was not initially thought of by such philosophers as natural, though it was natural for humans to be governed by such conventions. Later the terms “natur” and “law” began to be linked to describe a prepolitical golden age without rules, contracts, property, or marriage. Understood in this way, “natural law,” after the decline from the golden age, did not provide the model for civil law, but instead identified a realm accessible to reason that transcends the world. Roman Catholic theologians eventually borrowed the expression “natural law” from pagan philosophy to ground a structured social ethic. Thomas Aquinas, in his Aristotelian restructuring of Christianity, distinguished four levels of law: eternal, divine, natural, and human. Eternal law, the mind of God and structure of reality, he held, is known both through revelation as divine law and through reason as natural law, and human law should strive to reflect the natural law.

Though Latter-day Saints sometimes speculate about the reasons for the positive law given through divine revelation and also about the moral sense of mankind (see ETHICS), a moral natural law is not clearly delineated in the LDS canon. Some suggest that rough equivalents for a moral natural law might be elicited from scripture. But theology, grounded in philosophical speculation, is typically seen as a competitor to divine revelation. Such speculation remains tentative and problematic. Hence, there is little talk of a moral natural law among Latter-day Saints.

LDS scriptures, rather than relying upon notions of a moral natural law, speak of God’s commandments, statutes, and ordinances, of God’s will
and plans and purposes, of the ordering of the world (including its metes and bounds) of law given by God, and so forth. The laws mentioned in the scriptures seem, instead, to be instances of divine positive law, though they are not arbitrary, since as moral prescriptions they form the terms of the covenant entered into in the hope that blessings will flow from obedience to God. It is assumed that God's commandments rest on reasons not fully accessible to human inquiry or explication.

There is, however, another strand of thought among Latter-day Saints, one that affirms what might be called the "laws of nature," where that term identifies the regularities found by the sciences. These laws are seen as descriptive, not prescriptive or normative. They are thought either to be set in place by God or to exist independently of God's will and hence function as conditions that must be managed as plans are worked out by man in cooperation with God. Such views are entertained by many Latter-day Saints, especially those trained in the natural sciences, but they have not been systematically set forth or integrated with the teachings in the scriptures.

It is the prophetic gift that makes available the terms of the covenant with God, and such covenants are accompanied by blessings and cursings. Latter-day Saints thus emphasize obedience to what amounts to divine positive law and not to the dictates of nature as known by human reason.

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NAUVOO

Nauvoo, Illinois, headquarters of the Church and home for many of its members from 1839 to 1846, began and ended as a community in exile. In 1838–1839 Latter-day Saints fled from Missouri seeking religious refuge from mob persecution. They found shelter in eastern Iowa and western Illinois, where they established new communities. Joseph Smith named the principal city Nauvoo, meaning, he said, "a beautiful location, a place of rest." When the Saints left Nauvoo for the Rocky Mountains seven years later, they were again religious exiles in search of a home.

The community at Nauvoo grew rapidly on land purchased from settlers and speculators willing to sell on contract. Joseph Smith, acting as agent for the Church, bought the Illinois farms of Hugh and William White and investment tracts from Isaac Galland and Horace Hotchkiss—in all, 660 acres. He resold one-acre Nauvoo lots surveyed on the flats along the river, in competition with other LDS developers who platted land on nearby bluffs. A survey established streets three rods wide within city boundaries overlaying existing "paper" towns of Commerce and Commerce City. In December 1840, Nauvoo became a legal entity under the Nauvoo Charter, issued by the Illinois legislature and providing the Saints better legal protection than they had ever known. Nauvoo was now home.

Map of the City of Nauvoo, Illinois, on the Mississippi River, c. 1842.