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Title: The Vitality of "Mormonism": An Address

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Release date: June 26, 2014 [EBook #46099]

Language: English

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The Vitality of "Mormonism"

An Address

BY

JAMES E. TALMAGE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE, CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

PUBLISHED BY THE CHURCH

Salt Lake City

1917

PREFATORY NOTE

The following pages embody an address delivered by invitation at a meeting of the Denver Philosophical Society, at Denver, Colorado, December 14th, 1916, by Dr. James E. Talmage.

The address has already been printed through the daily press and in magazine pages; and it is presented herewith in convenient form, suitable for preservation.

The conciseness, clearness, and accuracy with which the subject is treated commend it to the attention of interested and studious readers.

THE PUBLISHERS.

Salt Lake City, Utah, January, 1917.

The Vitality of "Mormonism"

Why does "Mormonism" persist? Determined attempts were made both openly and by stealth to strangle the system at its birth, to destroy the mustard seed at the time of the planting; and, as the fact of its survival has become prominent the certainty of its impending demise has been announced time and again; the fall of the umbrageous tree, amidst whose branches the birds of search continue to find food and shelter, has been often predicted.

On the 6th of April, 1830, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized as a body corporate at Fayette in the State of New York; and the names of but six persons are of record as those of actual participants. True, by that time a few times six had identified themselves with the new and unprecedented movement; but, as the laws of the State specified six as the required number of incorporators, only that number took part in the legal procedure. And they, save one, were relatively unknown and in fact obscure.

The name of Joseph Smith had already been heard beyond his home district. He was at the time a subject of rapidly spreading notoriety if not of enviable fame. The Book of Mormon, purporting to be a record of the aboriginal peoples of the Western Continent, particularly an account of the dealings of God with those peoples, in short the Scriptures of what came afterward to be called the New World, had already been published. It was in reference to the title page of this work that the appellation "Mormon," first given in derision as a nickname, was fastened upon the members of the Church.

Such a beginning as that of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may seem to afford little ground of either hope or fear as to future developments; nevertheless, the newly established Church was made the subject of assault

from its inception. What was there to cause hostile concern over the voluntary association of six men and a few of their friends in an organization of openly expressed purpose, and that purpose the peaceful promulgation of what they verily believed to be. the uplifting religion of life, the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Whatever may be the answer to the query, the fact that the Church met determined opposition, increasingly severe from the beginning, is abundantly attested by history. While active persecutors and openly avowed assailants were comparatively few, the majority of those who gave any attention to the matter treated "Mormonism" with aggressive disdain; and contempt in the affairs of human endeavor has not infrequently proved itself a more effective weapon than physical assault. In this instance violence and outrage resulted.

I invite your attention to "The Vitality of 'Mormonism'" under a convenient classification, though, as will be seen, the divisions are inter-related and merge intimately together. Let us consider:

1. Facts attesting the vitality and virility of the Church.
2. Some causes thereof.
3. Some of the results.

1. Facts attesting the Vitality and Virility of the Church.

Today the "Mormon" Church is known by name at least throughout the civilized world as well as amongst most of the semi-cultured peoples in the remoter parts of the earth and on the islands of the sea. Since 1830 every year has witnessed an increase in membership and an extension of "Mormon" propaganda. The six have increased to over half a million adherents. In Utah and adjacent States, in Canada and Mexico, between seventy and eighty "Stakes of Zion" have been established, each Stake comprising several Wards, of which there are now over seven hundred and fifty; and the greater part of North America outside the established Stakes, as also many foreign countries, are covered by well organized Missions, each with its component Conferences and Branches.

The growth of the Church is apparent to even the poorly informed. But the Church has not only grown; it has developed. Between growth and development there is a difference of the most essential kind; and not a few of the grave mistakes of men, even in every day affairs, in business, in politics, in statesmanship are traceable to our confusing and confounding the two. Growth alone is the result of accretion, the accumulation of material, the amassing of stuff. Development involves an extension of function, a gradation of efficiency, a passing from immaturity to maturity, from infancy to manhood.

Growth produces big things, and not only things of this sort but men. Between bigness and greatness, however, there is a distinction of kind, not alone of degree. Growth is a measure of bulk, of quantity; it is defined as "so many" or "so much." Development is a gradation of quality; its terms are "so good" or "so bad." America boasts of a constantly increasing host of big men; the great men of the land may be more easily counted. And as with men so with institutions.

Dead things may grow, as witness the tiny salt crystal in its mother-brine at first a microscopic cube, then a huge hexahedron limited only by the size of the container or other external conditions. Development, however, is the characteristic of life to which mere growth is essentially secondary and subordinate. The acorn holds in potential reserve all the possibilities of the stately oak; within the tiny egg of the butterfly lies the future caterpillar and the hidden glory of the mature imago.

The vital character of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was evident from the first. In masterly parable, superb in conception and application, the kingdom of heaven has been likened unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal; and, behold, from it the mass became leavened. I make bold to affirm that the leaven of "Mormonism" is leavening the world and its theology.

The most objectionable feature of "Mormonism" today appears to be its name. The fundamental principles of the system, its revealed truths, are more readily accepted when unlabeled. Every studious reader of recent commentaries on the Holy Scriptures, and of theological treatises in general, is aware of a surprising progressiveness in modern views of things spiritual, amounting in many instances to an abandonment of what were once regarded as the fundamentals of orthodoxy.

In the new theology "Mormonism" has pioneered the way. I admit that so radical an assertion calls for evidence; and in its support I shall ask your unbiased consideration of a few illustrative instances. As the examples to be cited, however, must have place in any exposition of the causes to which the vitality of the "Mormon" system of religion is to be ascribed, and as I assume that the actuality of the growth and vitality of "Mormonism" will not be contested, I pass in the interest of brevity to the second division.

2. Some Causes to which the Vitality of "Mormonism" is due.

"Mormonism" is definite and incisive in its claims. It speaks to the world in no uncertain tone. Its voice is virile; its activities are strong. It presents an unbroken front, and is unafraid. Its attitude is not tile, nevertheless it is strongly aggressive. Its methods of work are those of reason and persuasion, coupled with a fearless affirmation of testimony as to the surpassing importance of its message, which message it labors to convey to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

"Mormonism" lives because it is healthy, normal and undeformed. In general, a healthy organism is assured of life, barring destruction from external violence or deprivation of physical necessities; whereas one that is abnormal and sickly is doomed to decline. Opposition to the Church, the pitiless maltreatment to which its people have been subjected, comprising mobbings, drivings, spoliation, scourgings, assassination, and murder marked by every

conceivable accompaniment of barbarity, have operated to strengthen the Church, body and soul. True, the heat of persecution has scorched and withered a few of the sickly plants such as had no depth of sincerity; but the general effect has been to promote a fuller growth, and to make richer and more fertile the Garden of the Lord.

"Mormonism" thrives and is extending its influence, leavening the thoughts of men, because its distinctive doctrines are those of progression, in accord with the better manifestations of the spirit of the times, best adapted to meet the vital needs of the age. The timeliness of its establishment is significant and largely explanatory of its success.

The seed of the restored Gospel was planted by the Divine Husbandman only after due preparation of the soil. The place of planting was no less carefully selected than the time of seeding. In the economy of God, America, which is veritably the land of Zion, was aforetime consecrated as the home of a free and independent nation. Only in such soil could the germ of the Gospel of true liberty sprout and thrive.

"Mormonism" lives because its claims are consistent and its position impregnable. It affirms the literal fulfilment of scriptural predictions of a great falling away from the truth, a cessation of spiritual gifts and Divine authority, in short a world-wide apostasy from the Church established by the Lord Jesus Christ in the meridian of time. This condition of apostasy is that pictured by Isaiah:

"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." (Isaiah 24:5.)

And by Amos, in his fateful utterance:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." (Amos 8:11, 12.)

The certainty of a general declension in spirituality among men, the rise of false Christs and false prophets, of mystic and deceiving voices from the desert and from secret chambers was foretold by the Christ Himself (Matt. 24:4-5, 10, 13, 25-26). So avowed also the Apostles Peter (2 Peter 2:1-3), and Paul (Acts 20:29-30, 1 Tim. 4:1-3, 2 Tim. 4:1-4, 2 Thess. 2:3-4), Jude (17, 18), and John (Rev. 13:4, 6-9).

The apostate condition of Christendom has been recognized and affirmed by high ecclesiastical authority. Let a single citation suffice. The Church of England thus proclaims the fact of degeneracy, as set forth in her "Homily against Peril of Idolatry," published about the middle of the sixteenth century and retained to this day as an official declaration:

"So that laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women, and children of whole Christendom an horrible and most dreadful thing to think have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry; of all other vices most detested of God, and most damnable to man; and that by the space of eight hundred years and more."

No less definite than the prophecy of apostasy is the scriptural prediction of a restoration in the last days:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (Rev. 14:6-7.)

"Mormonism" affirms that the "everlasting Gospel" has been restored to earth in the manner specified, that is by angelic ministration. The necessity of a restoration postulates the prior removal of the thing restored; and the restoration of the Gospel is proof of the precedent apostasy of mankind. But, it may be asked, had not we the Holy Bible, the scriptural repository of the Gospel record? The letter, yes. But surely the Gospel is more than a book. The Holy Bible prescribes administrative ordinances as essential to salvation baptism by water and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost by the authoritative imposition of hands, the rebirth of water and of the Spirit, without which, unless the Lord Christ spoke to Nicodemus falsely, no man can enter the kingdom of God. Who will venture to affirm that a possession of a copy of the Holy Bible, or even a letter-perfect memorization of the contents thereof, can give to men the right to administer in the ordinances therein prescribed?

The angel seen by the Revelator while on Patmos was to restore not the letter of requirement as to baptism and other essentials, for this the world had; but he was to bring again to earth the commission to officiate in those saving ordinances, that is, to restore the authority of the Holy Priesthood.

"Mormonism" affirms that on the 15th of May, 1829, a heavenly messenger descended in light and glory, and, laying his hands upon Joseph Smith and his companion in the ministry, Oliver Cowdery, bestowed upon them the Lesser or Aaronic Priesthood, saying:

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins."

The angelic personage announced himself as John, known of old as the Baptist, and declared that he acted under instructions from Peter, James, and John, who held the presidency of the Higher or Melchizedek Priesthood in the apostolic dispensation of old. At a later date Joseph Smith and his fellow laborer were visited by Peter, James, and John, who ordained the two to the Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, which comprises all the authority operative in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Whatever criticism may be offered, exception taken, or denial asserted against these solemn declarations, the consistency of the claims themselves must be admitted. Authority to officiate in the ordinances of the Gospel was brought by angel messengers, and they the very ones in whom were vested the powers of the respective order of Priesthood in the earlier Gospel dispensation. This same strict consistency appears in subsequent manifestations. Thus Moses appeared in the Temple at Kirtland, Ohio, and conferred the keys of the gathering of the tribes of Israel after their long dispersion, which work is abundantly predicted in ancient scripture as a characteristic feature of the latter days the time immediately precedent to the glorious advent of the Son of Man. Elijah the prophet, in literal fulfilment of Malachi's prediction (Mai. 4:5-6) has brought and committed to the modern prophet the authority of vicarious labor in behalf of the dead, by which the hearts of the departed fathers are turned to their living posterity, and the hearts of the yet mortal children drawn to their progenitors in the spirit world. True to this particular commission, the restored Church rears temples to the name and service of the living God, and in those sacred structures carries forward vicarious service for the redemption of the uncounted dead who have passed away in ignorance as to the necessity of compliance with the laws and ordinances of the Gospel, without which compliance no man may see the kingdom of God.

Such facts as those cited attest the consistency of the distinctive claims of "Mormonism"; and consistency goes far to establish genuineness. "Mormonism" would long since have gone the way of all false creeds and systems had its precepts been inconsistent, incongruous, or unscriptural.

"Mormon" doctrines are characteristically advanced and progressive, and herein lies a further explanation of the virility of the system. While in no respect at variance with earlier scriptures, "Mormonism" carries principles forward, and many of the obscure passages of ancient writ are illumined by the rays of modern revelation. As stated, "Mormonism" leads the way to higher truths. Now, by way of a few examples as promised:

(A) The unscriptural and repellent dogma of inherent degeneracy and the contaminating effect of original sin, by which every child is born vile in the sight and judgment of God, long cast its dark shadow over the minds of men. From this conception sprang the practise of infant baptism and the perverted doctrine of assured damnation for all innocent babes who die unbaptized. Even the Catholic church has modified its teaching on this subject and today permits its members to believe that children who die without baptism pass to a state of partial happiness and content, though forever denied the supreme blessing of the beatific vision of God. It is conceded, of course, that no dictum, dogma, or doctrine of men can determine the fate of souls, infant or adult, in the hereafter; nevertheless, theological teachings have direct effect upon the thoughts and lives of mankind. It is cheering to know that practically all Christendom today repudiates the frightful heresy of the eternal condemnation of babes who die without baptism.

Hear now the word of "Mormonism" on the matter and note the time of its enunciation. In 1830 the Book of Mormon was given to the world. Therein we read, in an epistle of the ancient prophet Mormon to his son Moroni:

"Listen to the words of Christ, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Behold, I came into the world not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance: the whole need no physician, but they that are sick; wherefore little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin; wherefore the curse of Adam is taken from them in me, that it hath no power over them; and the law of circumcision is done away in me. And after this manner did the Holy Ghost manifest the word of God unto me; wherefore my beloved son, I know that it is solemn mockery before God, that ye should baptize little children. Behold I say unto you, That this thing shall ye teach, repentance and baptism unto those who are accountable and capable of committing sin; yea, teach parents that they must repent and be baptized, and humble themselves as their little children, and they shall all be saved with their little children. And their little children need no repentance, neither baptism. Behold, baptism is unto repentance to the fulfilling the commandments unto the remission of sins. But little children are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world." (Moroni 8:8-12.)

In the revelations of the current dispensation we read that children are accounted innocent before God until they come to the age of understanding and accountability, and that baptism is required of all who have attained that condition. Thus we read:

"All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church." (Doctrine and Covenants 20:37.)

(B) The one-time general conception of heaven and hell is regarded today as antiquated, unreasonable, unscriptural and untrue. I speak of the heaven and the hell once thought of as the only places or conditions prepared for the souls of men, to one or the other of which states every being that has or shall have tabernacled in the flesh is to be consigned, perhaps on a very narrow margin of merit or desert. True, the support of scriptural warrant was lacking for the churchly dogma; but many centuries were required for the world to discover the fact. Paul, writing to the Corinthians in the long ago, said:

"There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." (I Cor. 15:40-42.)

To this portentous scripture a very narrow exposition was accorded in the dogmatic exegesis of the earlier commentaries, and the dictum of a heaven and a hell was scarcely shaken thereby. Belief in graded conditions in the hereafter is widespread today, and in this rational substitution of ennobling truth for degrading error, "Mormonism" is again the world's teacher. Joseph Smith avowed that in February 1832 he received a Divine revelation, in which conditions in the hereafter were shown to be the direct result of the individual life in mortality, and by which the existence of distinct kingdoms of glory, each with its own numerous gradations, was made plain. These are called in

descending order the Celestial, the Terrestrial and the Telestial. Far below the lowest of these is the state prepared for the hopelessly unregenerate, those who have sinned against light and knowledge, those who, having learned the laws of righteousness and having received the testimony of the Christ have ruthlessly trodden the priceless pearls into the mire, those few who are fit companions for the devil and his angels throughout eternity, those who are known by the awful name "sons of perdition." Of them the revelation last referred to avers:

"Thus saith the Lord, concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves, through the power of the devil, to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power They are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born, For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity; Concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come, Having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father having crucified him unto themselves, and put him to an open shame. These are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels, And the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power; Yea, verily, the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath." (Doctrine and Covenants 76:31-38.)

In immeasurable contrast is the state of those who attain not only salvation but exaltation in the Celestial kingdom. We read:

"They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given, That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power. And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true. They are they who are the church of the First Born. They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things—They are they who are Priests and Kings, who have received of his fullness, and of his glory, And are Priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son; Wherefore, as it is written, they are Gods, even the sons of God Wherefore all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's and Christ is God's. And they shall overcome all things; Wherefore let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet—These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ for ever and ever. These are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven, to reign on the earth over his people. These are they who shall have part in the first resurrection. These are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just." (Verses 51-65.)

Of those who attain the lesser glory of the Terrestrial it is written:

"And again, we saw the terrestrial world, and behold and lo, these are they who are of the terrestrial, whose glory differs from that of the church of the First Born, who have received the fullness of the Father, even as that of the moon differs from the sun in the firmament. Behold, these are they who died without law, And also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it. These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men. These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fullness. * * * These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God." (Verses 71-76, 79.)

And of the inhabitants of the Telestial:

"And again, we saw the glory of the telestial, which glory is that of the lesser, even as the glory of the stars differs from that of the glory of the moon in the firmament. These are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus. These are they who deny not the Holy Spirit. These are they who are thrust down to hell. These are they who shall not be redeemed from the devil, until the last resurrection, until the Lord, even Christ the Lamb shall have finished his work. * * * And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one, for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world; For these are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas. These are they who say they are some of one and some of another some of Christ and some of John, and some of Moses, and some of Elias, and some of Esaias, and some of Isaiah, and some of Enoch; But received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant. Last of all, these all are they who will not be gathered with the saints, to be caught up unto the church of the First Born, and received into the cloud. These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie. * * * These are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fullness of times when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under his feet, and shall have perfected his work, * * * But behold, and lo, we saw the glory and the inhabitants of the telestial world, that they were as innumerable as the stars in the firmament of heaven, or as the sand upon the sea shore, And heard the voice of the Lord, saying these all shall bow the knee, and every tongue shall confess to him who sits upon the throne for ever and ever; For they shall be judged according to their works, and every man shall receive according to his own works, his own dominion, in the mansions which are prepared, And they shall be servants of the Most High, but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end." (Verses 81-85, 98-103, 106, 109-112.)

"Mormonism" proclaims the possibility of eternal advancement within the several kingdoms provided in the hereafter and teaches that even repentance is possible beyond the grave. It utters solemn warning, however, against procrastination and wilful neglect here, holding that this life is strictly a probationary period given unto men for

repentance and valiant service, and that to neglect is to lose the ability to repent. It repudiates what it regards as a strained and irrelevant exposition of a certain isolated passage from the Preacher of old: "If the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." (Eccles. 11:3.) This we do not believe was ever intended to mean that as the man is when he dies so shall he be eternally; nor do we admit that the tenor of Holy Writ supports any such inference. Neglect, wilful procrastination, evil life here shall surely be a handicap to eternal progress; but however far behind his more faithful fellows a sinner may fall, he shall yet advance if he will but repent and try. Is it empty assumption to say that such doctrine as this, given to the world through the Book of Mormon in 1830, is more vital than the dogmas of neverending torment and eternal damnation?

(C) It was long taught that the body is a hindrance and a burden to the spirit, a thing to be contemned and despised. Carried to its inevitable extreme this belief led to the abnormalities of asceticism, monastic isolation, celibacy, and resultant evils. The spirit of this age impels to healthful living, to the preservation of the body and the conservation of its God-given functions, to the prudent observances of sanitation and hygiene, to abstinence from intoxicants, narcotics and stimulants generally. As early as February the Lord gave a revelation to the Church touching matters of hygiene and diet. "The Word of Wisdom" it has been rightly called; and its precepts are now proclaimed by the teachers of men. Hear it:

"That inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father, only in assembling yourselves together to offer up your sacraments before him. And, behold, this should be wine, yea, pure wine of the grape of the vine, of your own make. And, again, strong drinks are not for the belly, but for the washing of your bodies. And again, tobacco is not for the body, neither for the belly, and is not good for man, but is an herb for bruises and all sick cattle, to be used with judgment and skill. And again, hot drinks are not for the body or belly. And again, verily I say unto you, all wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man. Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with prudence and thanksgiving. Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly; And it is pleasing unto me that they should not be used only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine. All grain is ordained for the use of man and of beasts, to be the staff of life, not only for man but for the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and all wild animals that run or creep on the earth; And these hath God made for the use of man only in times of famine and excess of hunger. All grain is good for the food of man, as also the fruit of the vine, that which yieldeth fruit, whether in the ground or above the ground. Nevertheless, wheat for man, and corn for the ox, and oats for the horse, and rye for the fowls and for swine, and for all beasts of the field, and barley for all useful animals, and for mild drinks, as also other grain. And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel, and marrow to their bones; And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint; And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. Amen." (Doctrine and Covenants 89:5-21.)

Hot drinks against which the people are warned have been and are understood to include tea and coffee, and the inhibition was preached and published prior to the discovery by chemists that theine, caffeine and kindred alkaloids are of pronounced deleterious and actually poisonous effect. Here again has "Mormonism," as a living teacher, led the way to the paths of a better life, not for the hereafter alone, but for this world.

The most potent of all forces operating to maintain the vitality of "Mormonism" is found in the Divine source of its powers and authority. It teaches the actuality of present day revelation as the needs of the Church require. The system lives and shall never die because it is imbued with the spirit of eternal life. Men cannot destroy the Divine; the mortal is impotent in assault upon the immortal; the finite is powerless to prevail against the infinite.

3. Some of the Practical Results.

Had "Mormonism" died in its infancy the splendid results of its effects upon mankind would be unknown even as history. To the vitality of the system, to its inherent virility, is due the development at which today the world marvels. Among the practical results of "Mormonism" are the following.

(A) A system of church organization unknown, since the disintegration of the Primitive Church through apostasy. This organization comprises all the essential offices and officers of the olden Church-apostles, high priests, seventies, elders, bishops, priests, teachers, deacons. The religion of "Mormonism" is practical, dealing with the spiritual it is true, but also in a prominent degree with the essentials of every day life.

(B) An effective missionary system, by which the Gospel message is proclaimed throughout the world, and that message of salvation is delivered without money or price. Elders and missionary women are sent out into the several fields, bearing their own expenses except so far as they may receive assistance through the generosity of the people amongst whom they labor.

(C) A coherent and mutually helpful body, in which the ties and prejudices of diverse nationality and of varied tradition are swallowed up in the common love for the Gospel and in the individual testimony of its genuineness. When one of the early presiding officers of the Church was asked by an earnest investigator wherein lay the secret of the marvelous influence by which so great an aggregation of foreign and otherwise diverse people were governed, the answer was: "We teach them correct principles and they govern themselves."

This effect of the Gospel is apparent in the happiness and satisfaction manifest among those who have become members of the Church after real repentance. Apostasy from the Church is a rare phenomenon. Even excommunication for failure to live aright is more common; and, be it known, that the Lord's revelations to the Church provide that transgression, if not followed by sincere contrition and earnest effort to make amends, is to be visited by disfellowshipment.

Every Latter-day Saint is expected to be true to the sanctity of his individual testimony. He is directly answerable to his God. As to his conviction that the Gospel taught by the Church is genuine, he is held to have undergone the test prescribed by the Christ that of doing the will of God and thus learning for himself that the doctrine is true. The peace and satisfaction evinced by converts to "Mormonism" well nigh surpasses human belief.

(D) A self-supporting organization, not dependent upon the gifts of a wealthy few, but upon the proportionate giving of all. In the material support of the Church as a human institution the widow's penny is as acceptable as are the goldpieces of the millionaire. The system of tithepaying has been a success in the Church from the first. Every member should consider it a duty to pay a tenth of his income, whether that tenth for any given period be a dime or a thousand dollars; but no payment is arbitrarily exacted, for compliance with the law of the tithe, to be acceptable before God, must be voluntary and willing. The people are taught that while the Lord needs their tithes and offerings, their need to be tithed is many times greater. Besides the tithing other free-will offerings are made. On the monthly fast day each family is asked to contribute the cost-equivalent of the meals from which the members have fasted; and the means so obtained is administered by the bishops for the relief of the deserving poor. Special offerings are called for and willingly given as occasion requires. A recent request for aid to the war sufferers resulted in the voluntary and eager giving of over \$30,000 in a single day; and this amount was forwarded and distributed without diminution for commission or other administrative expense, the Church organization proving ample for the purpose.

(E) A series of auxiliary associations which operate as helps in government. These include the Relief Society, the Sunday School Union, the Young Men's and the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations, the Primary Association, and the Religion Classes. The purpose of these is in general indicated by the names. Church schools are maintained for such members as prefer denominational to secular education; and these institutions range from the kindergarten to the normal school and the college. We believe that true education comprises the development of body, mind, and spirit; and facilities for this symmetrical training are provided. To "Mormon" pupils in the public schools of both common and secondary grades instruction in religion and ethics is given through the Religion Classes, which are conducted outside the regular school hours and as a supplement to the secular curriculum. This instructional feature, now advocated by eminent educators for all public schools, has been in successful operation among the Latter-day Saints for over a quarter of a century.

(F) A community whose vital statistics tell of prolonged life, high birth and low death rates, high marriage rate, few divorces, and general material prosperity. I present to you a few comparisons of data obtained from the Presiding Bishopric of the Church, showing the condition of Latter-day Saints in the organized stakes of Zion, for the six-year period ending with the year 1915, as contrasted with the latest reports for such States of the Union as maintain statistical bureaus and are classed in official reports as the registration area.

Among the Latter-day Saints resident in the Stakes. In the country at large so far as reported

Birth rate per 1,000.....	39.....	25
Death rate per 1,000.....	8.7.....	14.1
Marriage rate per 1,000.....	16.....	13
Divorces per 10,000.....	4.....	10
Average age at death.....	38.....	32

The statistics of infant mortality are strikingly significant. Deaths from all causes among children under one year of age averaged for the three years ending with 1915 fewer than 59 per thousand births in "Mormon" families, while the latest report from the United States registration area shows 249 deaths per thousand. Deaths of children under five years of age, including those who die under one year, separately reported, average 82 per thousand births among "Mormons" and 349 for the country at large.

A letter from the Presiding Bishopric to the author, accompanying the statistical report from which the foregoing items have been culled, contains the following statement: "A detailed record is kept of all the causes of death among Latter-day Saints in the intermountain region. This is carefully supervised by local officers and compiled, and we think it is even more accurate than are the average statistics of the best regulated States of the Union. Details concerning any group of causes of death under the international classification are on file subject to examination by any who may be interested."

One of the certified causes of death in which "Mormons" lead the country is old age. In Latter-day Saint communities the families owning their own homes constitute 75 per cent of the whole number of families. Think what this means the absence of rent-collector or landlord, whose shadow too often converts the home into a dreary house.

Yes, "Mormonism" is alive. The world is better for its presence. It extends to all peoples the invitation to come, to drink at its fountains, to partake of its fruits, and to rejoice in the countless blessings offered by the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord.

ARTICLES OF FAITH OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

1. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.
2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.
3. We believe that, through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: First, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of Hands for the Gift of the Holy Ghost.
5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by "prophecy, and by the laying on of hands," by those who are in authority, to preach the gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.
6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc.
7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.
8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God, as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.
9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.
10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes. That Zion will be built upon this continent. That Christ will reign personally upon the earth, and that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisaical glory.
11. We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where or what they may.
12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers and magistrates, in obeying, honoring and sustaining the law.
13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to ALL MEN; indeed we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul, "We believe all things, we hope all things," we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy we seek after these things. JOSEPH SMITH.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE VITALITY OF "MORMONISM": AN ADDRESS ***

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