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POSITION \*\*\*

# **THE STRENGTH OF THE "MORMON" POSITION.**

By Elder Orson F. Whitney,

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Upon the pinnacle of the Temple in Salt Lake City, there stands the gilded statue of an Angel, in the act of sounding a trumpet, symbolizing the restoration and proclamation of the Everlasting Gospel, in fulfillment of the Scripture which says:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to 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."—Revelation 14:6-7.

### **Early Christian Annals.**

History, tinged with tradition, affirms these to be the circumstances under which those words were uttered: The Savior had chosen Twelve Apostles, and had commissioned them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Obedient to the divine mandate, they had gone forth, and within fifty years had lifted the Gospel standard in every considerable city of the Roman Empire, which then had sway over the known world. One by one the Apostles had been taken: James was slain with the sword at Jerusalem; Peter was crucified, and Paul beheaded, at Rome; all had suffered martyrdom for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus—all save one, concerning whom Peter had inquired: "Lord, what shall this man do?" And the Savior, answering, had said: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (St. John 21:21-22.)

Modern revelation confirms the ancient tradition that John, the beloved disciple, did not die, but obtained a promise from the Lord that he should remain upon earth, not subject to death, and bring souls to Him. He was to "prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples", and continue till the Lord came in His glory. (Doctrine and Covenants, Section 7.) An attempt was made upon John's life, but it proved ineffectual. He was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, but escaped miraculously.

### **John on Patmos.**

In the ninety-sixth year of the Christian era, this man was on the Isle of Patmos, in the Aegean

Sea. Patmos was the Roman Siberia. To that desolate place the Empire banished its criminals, compelling them to work in the mines. John was an exile for the Truth's sake. But the Lord had not forgotten His servant, though men had rejected him and cast him out. The Heavens were opened, and he was shown many things pertaining to the future. He foresaw the apostasy of the Christian world, its departure from "the faith once delivered to the saints", the "falling away" foretold by the Apostle Paul (2 Thes. 2:3). But John also looked forward to a time when that faith would be restored, and when the hour of God's judgment would come. The dead, small and great, would stand before the Great White Throne, and be "judged out of the things written in the books", every man according to his works. (Rev. 20:11-13.)

### **Joseph Smith.**

To the Latter-day Saints, these are the days of that predicted restoration, and Joseph Smith was the divinely appointed agent for bringing back the Everlasting Gospel. Who was this Joseph Smith? He was a farmer's boy, born among the mountains of Vermont, December 23, 1805, but living with his parents in the back-woods of western New York, when his career as a prophet began. He had been much exercised upon the subject of his soul's salvation, a religious revival having recently occurred in his neighborhood. The ministers of the various sects united in calling upon the people to repent; each one urging them to join his particular congregation, and disputing among themselves upon points of doctrine and authority. The situation bewildered the boy, who was an honest seeker after light, anxious to know the true Church, in order that he might join it. One day while reading the Scriptures, he chanced upon the following passage:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5.)

Profoundly impressed by these sacred words, he resolved to test the promise by asking from God the wisdom of which he stood in need. With that object in view, he retired to the woods near his father's home, and knelt in prayer. No sooner had he begun to pray, than he was seized upon by a power which filled his soul with horror and paralyzed his tongue so that he could no longer speak. So terrible was the visitation, that he almost gave way to despair. But he continued praying; for there are two ways of offering prayer—"orally and in secret." He had been praying orally, but could not now supplicate in that manner, being unable to move his lips. Yet he continued to pray—with "the soul's sincere desire"; and just at the moment when he feared that he must abandon himself to destruction, he saw, directly over his head, a light more brilliant than noonday. In the midst of a pillar of glory he beheld two beings in human form, One of whom, pointing to the Other, said: "This is my beloved Son, hear Him".

As soon as the Light appeared, the boy found himself delivered from the fettering power of the Evil One. When he could again command utterance, he inquired of his glorious visitants which of all the religious denominations was right—which one was the true Church of Christ? To his astonishment he was told that none of them was right; that they had all gone out of the way, and were teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. The Lord did not recognize any of them, but was about to restore the Gospel and the Priesthood and establish his Church once more in the midst of mankind.

This was Joseph Smith's first vision and revelation. It came in the spring of 1820, when he was a few months over fourteen years of age. The greater part of this wonderful manifestation was the part that did not speak, the silent revealing of God as a personage; a truth plainly taught in the Scriptures (Gen. 1:26, 27; Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 1:13-15; Heb. 1-3), but ignored or denied by modern Christianity.

Three years later the youth received a visitation from an Angel, who gave his name as Moroni, the same who is represented by the statue on the Salt Lake Temple. This Angel announced himself as the last of a line of prophets who had ministered to an ancient people called Nephites, a branch of the house of Israel—not the Lost Tribes, as is often asserted, but a portion of the tribe of Joseph. They had crossed over from Jerusalem about the year 600 B. C., and, with a remnant of the tribe of Judah, which joined them later, had inhabited the Americas down to about the beginning of the fourth Christian century. At that time the civilized though degenerate nation was destroyed by a savage faction known as Lamanites, ancestors of the American Indians.

### **The Book of Mormon.**

The Angel showed to Joseph where a record of the Nephites had been deposited, and subsequently delivered it into his hands, with interpreters, Urim and Thummim, by means of which the youth translated the record into English and gave to the world the Book of Mormon. It was so named for its compiler, the Nephite prophet Mormon, whose son and survivor, Moroni, had buried the metallic plates containing it in a hill, where they were found September 22nd, 1823. The Hill Cumorah, called "Mormon Hill" by the present day inhabitants of that region, is between Palmyra and Manchester, in the State of New York. For their belief in the Book of Mormon, the Latter-day Saints are termed "Mormons", and their religion, "Mormonism".

This book tells how the Savior, after his resurrection, made himself known to the Nephites—the "other sheep" referred to in John 10:16—and organized his Church among them, after the pattern of his Church at Jerusalem. Choosing twelve special witnesses, he gave to three of them the same

promise that he had given to the Apostle John—that they should remain upon earth, superior to death, and bring souls to Him. He prophesied concerning America, the Land of Zion, the place for the New Jerusalem, a holy city to be built by a gathering of scattered Israel prior to His second coming. The Nephite record, containing the fulness of the Gospel as delivered to that ancient people, is a history of this chosen land and a prophecy of its future. It predicts the great work introduced by the Latter-day Prophet, a work so marvelous in some of its phases that most men reject it, deeming it a fable.

But the Christian world, with the Bible in its hands, should have been prepared for something of this kind. The Hebrew seers prophesied concerning it. Isaiah foretold "a marvelous work and a wonder", declaring at the same time that the wisdom of the wise should perish, and the understanding of the prudent be hid; meaning, evidently, that human sagacity and worldly knowledge would stand confounded before it. That prophet, speaking in the name of the Lord, gave as the reason for such innovation: "This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men" (Isaiah 29:13, 14). A brief yet comprehensive description of the state of the religious world at the time of the advent of "Mormonism".

### **Divine Authority.**

While the Book of Mormon was in course of translation, John the Baptist, as an angel from God, conferred upon Joseph Smith and his scribe, Oliver Cowdery, the Aaronic Priesthood, which holds the keys of outward ordinances and ministers in temporal things. Subsequently the Melchizedek Priesthood, holding the keys of spiritual mysteries, and including the Aaronic as the greater includes the less, was conferred upon them by three other heavenly messengers—the Apostles Peter, James and John. Thus empowered, the two young men, with four associates, organized on the sixth of April, 1830, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This event took place in Fayette, Seneca County, New York.

Thus was restored the Ancient Faith, with the powers of the Eternal Priesthood, the delegated divine authority that enables men to act as God's representatives, and without which no man can lawfully administer the sacred ordinances of the Gospel. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron". (Heb. 5:4.) Thus was re-established the true Church of Christ, and the prophetic Ensign lifted for the gathering of scattered Israel (Isaiah 11:12); an event preparatory to the Savior's second coming.

### **A Catholic Utterance.**

Many years ago a learned man, a member of the Roman Catholic Church, came to Utah and spoke from the stand of the Salt Lake Tabernacle. I became well acquainted with him, and we conversed freely and frankly. A great scholar, with perhaps a dozen languages at his tongue's end, he seemed to know all about theology, law, literature, science, and philosophy. One day he said to me: "You Mormons are all ignoramuses. You don't even know the strength of your own position. It is so strong that there is only one other tenable in the whole Christian world, and that is the position of the Catholic Church. The issue is between Catholicism and Mormonism. If we are right, you are wrong; if you are right, we are wrong; and that's all there is to it. The Protestants haven't a leg to stand on. For if we are wrong, they are wrong with us, since they were a part of us and went out from us; while if we are right, they are apostates whom we cut off long ago. If we have the apostolic succession from St. Peter, as we claim, there was no need of Joseph Smith and Mormonism; but if we have not that succession, then such a man as Joseph Smith was necessary, and Mormonism's attitude is the only consistent one. It is either the perpetuation of the Gospel from ancient times, or the restoration of the Gospel in latter days."

My reply was substantially as follows: "I agree with you, Doctor, in nearly all that you have said. But don't deceive yourself with the notion that we "Mormons" are not aware of the strength of our position. We are better aware of it than anyone else. We have not all been to college; we cannot all speak the dead languages; we may be 'ignoramuses', as you say; but we know that we are right, and we know that you are wrong". I was just as frank with him as he had been with me.

### **An Episcopal View.**

At a later period I conversed with another man of culture, a bishop of the Episcopal Church. He affirmed that if Joseph Smith, at the outset of his career, had become acquainted with the Episcopalians, he would have been content and would have looked no further for spiritual light. "The trouble is", said the Bishop, "Joseph encountered the Methodists, the Baptists, the Presbyterians and others, with their conflicting creeds and claims. These failing to satisfy him, he sought elsewhere. Now the Episcopalians have an unbroken succession of authority all down the centuries, and if Joseph Smith had become informed as to them, he would never have taken the trouble to organize another church."

And these are some of the views that learned men take of "Mormonism". With all their learning, they are not able to come to a knowledge of the truth. They do not begin to dream of the greatness of God's work, the grandeur of Christ's cause. They have no idea of the real strength of its position. They assume that Joseph Smith stumbled upon something of which he did not know the true value, and that it was sheer luck which gave to "Mormonism" its vantage ground, its

recognized strength of position. Never was there a grosser error. There are concepts as much higher than these, as the heavens are higher than the earth. The "Mormons" are not the "ignoramuses" when it comes to a consideration of the Gospel's mighty themes.

### **The Real Reason.**

Yet it is not because of human "smartness"—not because the followers of Joseph Smith are brainier than other people, that they have a greater knowledge of God and are capable of loftier ideals in religion. It is because they have received, through the gift of the Holy Ghost, a perceptive power, a spiritual illumination which the world, with all its culture, does not possess, and without which no man can know God or comprehend His purposes. It cannot be had from books and schools. Colleges and universities cannot impart it. It can come only in one way—God's way, not man's. The Latter-day Saints have it, not because of any greater natural ability than other men and women possess, but because they have bowed in obedience to the divine will, thus making themselves worthy to receive this inestimable boon. All mankind may have it upon precisely the same conditions.

### **Another Objection.**

The Episcopal Bishop whom I have mentioned remarked to me on another occasion, that his main objection to "Mormonism" was that we "Mormons" were not interested in anything going on outside of our own community. He declared that we gave no credit to other peoples or to other systems for the good they were accomplishing. "For instance", said he, "we retranslate the Scriptures, making them more plain, more intelligible, with a view to enlightening mankind thereon; but you give us no credit for that. We uncover ancient cities, buried civilizations, here in America and elsewhere; we decipher old-time inscriptions on obelisks, in documents, etc., seeking to acquaint the present with the past; but you put no value on such work. We found hospitals and infirmaries, maintain missions, carry the name of Christ to the heathen, publish the Bible by millions of copies, and are endeavoring to place one in every home. But you take no account of these things; you are not interested in our efforts; you think them all vain and of no worth".

### **Not a Narrow Religion.**

The remark surprised me. I was astonished that any well informed person could entertain such an opinion respecting us and our religion. There may be such a thing as a narrow "Mormon"; there may be such a thing as a narrow notion in the mind of some "Mormon"; but there never has been and there never will be such a thing as a narrow "Mormonism". Far from ignoring what other peoples and other systems are doing, it takes account of everything, and assigns it to its proper place in the universal scheme. "If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report, or praiseworthy, we seek after these things." So says the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in one of its Articles of Faith.

"Mormonism" is a much bigger thing than Catholic scholars or Episcopal bishops imagine. It is the greatest system of philosophy that the world has ever known, the grandest poem that Divine Genius ever created, the mightiest melody ever struck from the vibrant harps of Eternity. It is the sublime drama of all the ages, and the last act is now on, the final scene about to unfold.

### **What "Mormonism" Stands For**

"Mormonism" stands for the restoration of the Gospel in this dispensation; but that is not all. It stands for the Gospel itself in all the dispensations, as those periods are termed during which God has spoken to man and dispensed from heaven these saving principles and powers. This is but one of a number of such periods, reaching from the days of Adam down to the present time. The Gospel preached by the ancient Twelve was a restored Gospel, just as much as it is to-day. It had been upon Earth before the age of the Apostles. "Christianity", the faith of the once despised "Christians", is now "Mormonism", the religion of the unpopular "Mormons". What matter the names bestowed upon it by men? Truth is not to be disposed of by pelting it with epithets. The character of a jewel is not changed by covering it with rubbish and dirt. A diamond is a diamond, whether it sparkle in the dust at your feet, or glitter in the diadem of a queen.

"Mormonism" is not a product of the Nineteenth Century. Joseph Smith did not originate it, nor did any other man. What is called "Mormonism" is the Everlasting Gospel, the religion of all the ages, God's great plan for the salvation of the human family; and not only their salvation, but their exaltation if they obey it in fulness. The Gospel has a three fold power; it redeems, saves, and glorifies. Redemption is resurrection, but that is not sufficient; it is not enough that man be brought forth from the grave. All men, good and bad, will be resurrected; but resurrection is not salvation, any more than salvation is exaltation. Many redeemed from the grave will be condemned at the final judgment, for evil deeds done in the body; and many will be saved, yet come short of the glory that constitutes exaltation.

God's greatest gift, eternal life, has been offered to man again and again, in a series of dispensations of which this is the greatest and the last. The "winding up scene", the final act of the play—such is the dispensation now opened, wherein will be brought to a glorious finale the

whole of God's mighty work pertaining to this planet; a work begun at the very dawn of creation, and continued down to this day. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him". (Eph. 1:10.)

### **The God Story.**

What is generally termed "The Gospel" relates to "the laws and ordinances of the Gospel". (See L.D.S. Articles of Faith.) But the term in its broadest sense means far more. The English word "Gospel" comes from the Anglo-Saxon "Godspell" or God-Story. Hence we have "the four gospels"—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—all narratives of the Christ, but in reality only parts of the complete God Story, which comprises the heavenly as well as the earthly career of our Redeemer. Three personages compose the Godhead—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and it was the second of these who became the Saviour, "The Word" who was "made flesh", as mentioned by St. John. (1:1-4.) The Gospel in its fulness signifies everything connected with Jesus Christ, past or present—the Son's entire career, from the time he left his celestial throne, to the time he returned thither, glorified with that glory which he had with the Father before the world was. The Son is one with the Father—not in person, but in power, will, wisdom, and authority. He is God, but is called the Son of God because he came forth from the Father to manifest in the flesh the "fulness of the Godhead bodily."

### **The Path to Perfection.**

The Gospel had its origin before the foundation of the world. God, "finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself". (Joseph Smith, "Times and Seasons," August 15, 1844.) The Gospel, therefore, is not a mere fire-escape—a way out of a perilous situation. It is a divine plan for human progress, the Path to Perfection, and was instituted as such before man was in a position to be redeemed or saved, before any such exigency had arisen. It was established before Adam's fall, and in the prospect of that fall, which was a step in the onward march to the eternal goal. "Adam fell that men might be"—that is, mortal men; for by the fall those spirits in the midst of which God found himself were to secure bodies and become souls, capable of endless increase and advancement. Adam did that for the race; he gave us one of the most precious boons that man can possess—a body, without which the spirit would be imperfect and could not be exalted.

But Adam could do no more, and a still greater boon had to be given, in order that the fall might be effectual, and the Gospel plan be made operative for the ends in view. The machinery was ready, but the Power had to be turned on. The fall had a twofold direction—downward, yet forward; and though designed as a blessing, there was a penalty attached. Death came into the world—spiritual and temporal death, eternal banishment from the Divine Presence; and man's progress would have halted then and there, would have utterly and permanently ceased, had not something been done to lift him from his fallen state, and open the way that he might go on to perfection. Adam gave us earthly life; but the greater boon—eternal life—is the gift of the Redeemer and Saviour. Descending from his glorious throne, he became mortal for man's sake, and by dying burst the bands of death, thus making eternal progression possible.

### **Fall and Redemption.**

Adam's transgression was *malum prohibitum*, or wrong because forbidden; not *malum in se*, or wrong in itself. It had a beneficent purpose, but it put the world in pawn, and Death was the pawnbroker, with a twofold claim upon all creation. Adam could not redeem himself, and the human race, which sprang from him, was likewise powerless. No part of what had been pledged could be used as the means of redemption. Something not subject to death was the required ransom. The life of a God was the price of the world's freedom; and that price was paid by the sinless One, the Lamb "without spot or blemish", who made himself a redemptive sacrifice, to mend the broken law, pay the debt to justice, reposit the unbalanced scale, and restore the equilibrium of right. Christ, the World-Deliverer, was as a greater Moses, leading an enslaved universe out from the Egypt of sin, out from the bondage of death.

### **The Principle of Obedience.**

In return for this mighty deliverance, and in order to perfect his work—to save and glorify what he died to redeem, our Lord requires from us obedience, the great fundamental principle upon which all blessings are predicated, and upon which alone they can be obtained. (Doc. and Cov. 130:20, 21.) This principle redeemed Adam from the Fall. It is the only way whereby man can be redeemed. There is but one path to God, and it is open to the peasant as well as to the king. All secure salvation upon the same terms. There is no royal road to heaven—no favoritism. There is nothing so absolutely democratic as the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every man may share it, but he must help to save himself. He is in a pit and must come up out of it. A ladder has been provided and let down to him, and he must climb that ladder, or he will never rise above his fallen state, never re-enter the presence of God.

### **Round by Round.**

The first round of salvation's ladder is faith in Jesus Christ; the second, repentance, or turning away from sin; third, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and fourth, the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands of men having divine authority. But there are other rounds to the ladder, other principles to be obeyed by those who would attain the fulness of God's glory. These principles have been revealed to man many times. But there is a proneness in human nature to depart from the truth and "turn to fables"; the "natural man" being "an enemy to God". And this has rendered necessary the various restorations of the Gospel.

### **All in One.**

In order to understand "Mormonism" aright, one must grasp the idea of a series of Gospel dispensations, interrelated and connected like the links of a mighty chain, extending through the whole course of time. The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times proposes to bring together and weld into one the broken links of the Gospel chain. This was the dominant thought in the mind of the Prophet Joseph Smith as his last day on earth drew near. He expressed it in these words:

"It is necessary, in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times, ... that a whole and complete and perfect union and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time; and not only this, but things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this the dispensation of the fulness of times." (Doc. & Cov. 128:18.)

"Mormonism" is all-comprehensive. It claims the past and lays its hand upon the future. The past is necessary to explain the present and the future. What is cannot be clearly understood without some knowledge of What Has Been and What Will Be. Accordingly, the Spirit of Truth, manifesting the things of God, "brings things past to remembrance", and "shows things to come."

### **The Mission of Elijah.**

"Mormonism" signifies the restitution of all things. It stands for law and order—a place for everything, and everything in its place. This is the significance of the mission of Elijah—the turning of the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest earth be cursed and smitten at the Saviour's coming. (Malachi 4:5, 6.) Past and present are related; it is the relationship of parent and child; and they must be joined, in order that perfection may reign. We cannot be made perfect without our ancestors, nor can they be made perfect without us. Consequently temples are built by God's people, and work done in them—vicarious work, for and in behalf of the departed. Baptisms, endowments, marriages for eternity, in person or by proxy, are prominent features of this sacred labor. Joseph Smith received the keys of Elijah (Doc. & Cov. 110:14-16), and ministered for the sealing of the present to the past, the union of the living and the dead. It was the beginning of the restitution of all things.

### **Many Gospel Dispensations.**

"Mormonism" is the religion that saved Adam. Adam, therefore, was the original "Mormon." His religion was also that of Enoch, of Noah, of Abraham, of Moses and Aaron, and of the Apostles upon both hemispheres. And it has come back, in this final dispensation, to bring together all things that are Christ's.

In the Pearl of Great Price, one of four doctrinal standards with the Latter-day Saints—the other three being the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants—we are informed that Adam, after his fall, was divinely commanded to build an altar and offer a lamb thereon, typical of the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world. Already slain theoretically in the heavens, where he had been chosen for his earthly mission, he was yet to be slain literally upon this planet; and Adam was told to look forward to that sacrificial event, and in the light of it to practice the principles of salvation.

"And thus the Gospel began to be preached from the beginning, being declared by holy angels, sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost. And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam by a holy ordinance, and the gospel preached, and a decree sent forth that it should be in the world until the end thereof. And thus it was, Amen". (Moses 5:58, 59.)

Joseph Smith "saw Adam in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman". (Doc. & Cov. 116.) That is, he beheld him in vision, retrospectively. Bowed with age, the great Patriarch blessed his posterity, foretelling what should befall them to the latest generation. It was the mightiest patriarchal blessing ever given. Joseph affirms that Adam will come again, will come as the Ancient of Days, and call his children together at that very place, Adam-ondi-Ahman, and hold a council to prepare them for the coming of the Lord. Thus is indicated the relationship between the First and the Final Dispensations. Adam presides over all the dispensations (Church History, Vol. 4, pp. 207-209), and all must be bound together in the great day of unity and restoration.

In Enoch's day the Gospel was preached with such power and success, that his City became sanctified and was translated or taken into Heaven: a symbol, a foreshadowing of the greater Zion of the last days, which is to prepare the way for the Lord's glorious advent. As part of the

universal restitution, that ancient city will return; Zion from above will meet and blend with Zion from below, and a social order prevail similar to that which characterized Enoch's commonwealth, concerning which it is written: "And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them". (Moses 7:18.) Such a condition must again be realized before the Lord comes. "This is Zion—the pure in heart"; "every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God". (Doc. & Cov. 97:21; 82:19.)

Next we reckon with the dispensation of Noah. He preached the Gospel for a hundred and twenty years, but saved only eight souls, including his own. All the rest were swept away by the Deluge, their disembodied spirits being shut up in the prison house to await the due time of their deliverance (Moses 8:24). The Savior said regarding that dispensation: "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be". (Matt. 24:37-39.) In the days of Noah this planet was baptized with water; in a day to come it will be baptized with cleansing fire. Its elements will melt with fervent heat; it will die and be resurrected, or converted into a celestial sphere, an abode of the righteous forever. Such is the destiny of Mother Earth. "Mormonism" will not have accomplished its mission until it has made of earth a Heaven, and of man a God.

### **The House of Israel.**

Abraham held the keys of a dispensation, and Elias delivered those keys to Joseph the Prophet (Doc. & Cov. 110:12.) Abraham is "the father of the faithful." Through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, those great progenitors of the House of Israel, the world had been sprinkled with believing blood, and spirits answering to that blood have been sent through their lineage to minister for the salvation of mankind. This is the reason—the main reason why Israel was dispersed among the nations, and why he still suffers persecution. Through that chosen seed comes salvation, and it comes by no other route. It is the lineage of the one and only Saviour. They who have scattered Israel, and trampled him in the dust, are dependent upon him for their eternal welfare. Christ himself is the model. He died that the human race might live. "Greater love than this hath no man, that he will lay down his life for his friends." More than man is he who lays down his life for his enemies. The Son of God died not only for his friends, but for his foes, that salvation might come to all. In a lesser degree the House of Israel has been martyred for a similar purpose—that the whole world might be blessed.

The Latter-day Saints are numbered among Abraham's descendants. The first to embrace the restored Gospel were called out from the nations because they had his blood in their veins. Joseph Smith lifted the Ensign from the gathering of scattered Israel, but lived only long enough to assemble a portion of the half tribe of Ephraim, to which he belonged. The work that he commenced, however, will go on until all the tribes of Israel are gathered and the way prepared before the coming of the Son of God.

### **"The Shoulders of the Philistines."**

Ephraim, in ancient times, "mixed himself among the people". (Hosea 7:8.) Consequently the Latter-day Saints, who are mostly of Ephraim, also have "Gentile" blood in their veins. "Gentile" is not a term of reproach with us. It springs from "gentilis", meaning "of a nation", and was used anciently to designate those nations that were not of Israel. Japheth, son of Noah, is the sire of the "Gentile" race, while Abraham and his seed are descended from Japheth's brother Shem. We "Mormons" have no quarrel with the "Gentiles". They are virtually our co-laborers in this great work of preparation. We cannot do it alone. It is too vast, too arduous. We need the help of the "Gentiles", their wealth, their power, their wonderful insight into and command over material things, their intelligence and skill in manipulating temporalities. We need their means of rapid transit and communication. We could not gather God's people without the aid of the "Gentiles". "They shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the West." So wrote Isaiah concerning Israel, with prophetic eye upon this very period. "The shoulders of the Philistines" are the ships and railroads of the "Gentiles".

Our friends on the outside—our fellow "Gentiles" shall I call them?—have not always understood us, nor have we always understood them. There has been much bitterness and estrangement between the two classes. I am convinced that if the "Gentiles" knew us better, and we more fully realized our relationship to them, all would feel kinder and more charitable. We would recognize that we are engaged in the same great cause—for so we are, in a general way—and that we have no right to hate each other, no right to work against each other—that is, when in the line of our duty, doing what God has given us to do.

The "Gentiles" have not the fulness of the Gospel, nor the powers of the Priesthood; they are not the oracles of God, nor the ministers of salvation. These are prerogatives of the House of Israel. But the children of Japheth doubtless have their special mission, and it is a part of the divine plan for human progression. This is God's work, and he is doing it in his own way. He has instruments outside as well as inside the Church. Whether men know it or not, they are working out the ends he has in view. He may not always notify them of their appointment to serve him, nor does he ask permission to use them; but he uses them just the same. We are here not only to act, but to be acted upon. The Lord put his spirit upon Columbus and impelled him across the great waters to discover the Land of Zion. He nerved the arm and fired the soul of Washington, when he and his ragged regiments were fighting for freedom, for independence, for the founding of a government

—though they knew it not—under which God's work could come forth and not be crushed out by the tyranny of man. The God of Israel was with those "Gentiles", the founders of the American Republic, who were probably of a mixed lineage, having much of the blood of Israel in their veins. And He is with all good and great men whose hearts are set to do right and to uplift humanity. He is with them, whether they recognize it or not. Their strength is a part of his omnipotence.

### **Moses and the Gathering.**

Moses, who led Israel out of Egypt, held the keys for the gathering of God's people; and those keys had to be restored, that there might be a greater gathering, of which the Egyptian exodus was typical. Moses, as a ministering angel, delivered to Joseph Smith the keys of the Gathering. (Doc. & Cov. 110:11.) But for this, the children of Ephraim, such as are now Latter-day Saints, would still be in Babylon, many of them in distant lands, from which they have come like sheep at the call of the Shepherd. Moses had a dispensation of the Gospel, and sought to sanctify his people that they might look upon the face of God, as he had done. But they were not prepared for it; and so Moses was taken, with the Melchizedek Priesthood and the fulness of the Gospel (Doc. & Cov. 84:19-28), and Israel was left for fifteen centuries under the Aaronic Priesthood and the Lesser Law, which Paul likened unto a schoolmaster, to bring them to Christ.

In due time came the Saviour and the Meridian Dispensation. Twelve Apostles were chosen upon the Eastern Hemisphere, and Twelve upon the Western, and sent forth to preach the Gospel as a witness before the end. And the end came—the end decreed at that time—the downfall of the Jewish commonwealth, and later the destruction of the Nephite nation. Those terrible calamities were typical of one more terrible still—the downfall of all wickedness, the approaching End of the World.

And now, after the lapse of nearly two thousand years, the Gospel and the Priesthood have come back again. Once more, the pure word of God is going forth, this time as the immediate forerunner of the decreed Consummation.

"Mormonism" means far more than the restoration of the Gospel at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. Such a definition, such a presentation of the subject would be manifestly imperfect. Ignorant indeed would be that "Mormon" who confined his thinking to so narrow a field. "Mormonism" is not a mere sect among sects, one more broken off fragment of a degenerate and crumbling Christianity. It is the pure, primitive Christianity restored—the original faith, the root of all religion; and it was not accident, but design, that gave it the strength of its position.

### **Alma's Aspiration.**

Let me now quote a passage from the Book of Mormon, the words of the Nephite prophet Alma, who lived about seventy-five years before the birth of the Saviour:

"Oh, that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people;

"Yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with the voice of thunder, repentance, and the plan of redemption, that they should repent and come unto our God, that there might not be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth.

"But behold, I am a man, and do sin in my wish; for I ought to be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto me.

"I ought not to harrow up in my desires the firm decree of a just God, for I know that he granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he alloteth unto men according to their will, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction.

"Yea, and I know that good and evil have come before all men; he that knoweth not good from evil is blameless; but he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires, whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience.

"Now, seeing that I know these things, why should I desire more than to perform the work to which I have been called?

"Why should I desire that I was an angel, that I could speak unto all the ends of the earth?

"For behold, the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word; yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true.

"I know that which the Lord hath commanded me, and I glory in it; I do not glory of myself, but I glory in that which the Lord hath commanded me; yea, and this is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God, to bring some soul to repentance; and this is my joy." (Alma 29:1-9.)

Does that sound as if "Mormonism" took no cognizance of what is going on in the outside world?



How can any intelligent reader arise from a study of the "Mormon" religion, honestly convinced that the Latter-day Saints are interested in nothing beyond the bounds of their own system? That one passage from the Book of Mormon suffices to refute the false notion.

### **"Of Their Own Nation and Tongue."**

God's truth has been taught all down the ages by men bearing the Priesthood, the authority to represent Deity. But other men, not bearing that authority, wise and worthy teachers, have been raised up in various nations to give them that measure of truth which they were able to receive. Hence, such men as Confucius, the Chinese sage; Zoroaster, the Persian; and Guatama of the Hindus; men not wielding divine authority, not empowered to present the Gospel, nor to officiate in its ordinances; but nevertheless endowed with wisdom, with profundity of thought and learning, to deliver, each to his own people, that portion of truth which the all-wise Dispenser sees fit that they should have; people who, if given a fulness of the truth, might trample it under foot to their condemnation. Therefore they "die without law" (Doc. & Cov. 76:72); that is, without the higher law, the Gospel, which, however, will reach after them in a future life.

The world's poets and philosophers, artists and musicians, scientists, discoverers, warriors and statesmen, good and great characters in general—all have their work and mission under an over-ruling Providence. If some of God's children are not worthy of the fulness of Truth, and would not make a wise use of it were it sent to them, that is no reason why they should not be given as much truth as they can wisely use?

### **The Case of Islam.**

Carlyle, in splendid phrasing, presents this view most strikingly, in his vivid portrayal the coming of Mahomet to the Arabs, who were thus converted from idolatry, the worship of "sticks and stones", to the worship of one god—Allah, with Mahomet as his prophet:

"To the Arab Nation it was as a birth from darkness into light; Arabia first became alive by means of it. A poor shepherd people, roaming unnoticed in its deserts since the creation of the world: A Hero-Prophet was sent down to them with a word they could believe: see, the unnoticed becomes world-notable, the small has grown world great; within one century afterwards, Arabia is at Grenada on this hand, at Delhi on that—glancing in valor and splendor and the light of genius, Arabia shines through long ages over a great section of the world. Belief is great, life-giving. The history of a Nation becomes fruitful, soul-elevating, great, *so soon as it believes*. These Arabs, the man Mahomet, and that one century—is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark, on a world of what seemed black unnoticeable sand; but lo, the sand proves explosive power, blazes heaven-high from Delhi to Grenada! I said, the Great Man was always as lightning out of Heaven; the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they too would flame."—Heroes and Hero Worship—Lecture II, p. 306.

### **President Smith's Pronouncement.**

President Joseph F. Smith, until recently the head of God's Church on earth, touched in a discourse the general theme here under consideration. Said he:

"Knowledge is increasing throughout the world, with reference to material things; and all this knowledge that has been restored to the world through science has been inspired of God. ... The men who are led to wonderful discoveries are inspired by the spirit of understanding that cometh from God, that giveth them light and knowledge. ... So, Latter-day Saints acknowledge those men who discovered how to control the lightning, how to control and utilize the power of steam that prevails so universally among men today, and all those who have discovered all the other secrets of nature, like the telegraph, the telephone, and all other means of communication—all these discoveries are by the promptings of the Spirit of God that giveth to the mind and spirit of men understanding." (Improvement Era, July, 1917)

President Smith, however, drew a distinction, as do all orthodox preachers of "Mormonism", between the light that illumines, in greater or less degree, every soul that comes into the world, and the Holy Ghost as a personage, the third in the Godhead. He also differentiated the universal divine spirit, enjoyed to some extent by all men, from the gift of the Holy Ghost, a special endowment reserved for the members of the Church of Christ.

### **The Poet's Mission.**

An American poet, Doctor J. G. Holland, has this to say of the poet and his mission: "The poets of the world are the prophets of humanity. They forever reach after and foresee the ultimate good. They are evermore building the Paradise that it is to be, painting the Millennium that is to come. When the world shall reach the poet's ideal, it will arrive at perfection, and much good will it do the world to measure itself by this ideal and struggle to lift the real to its lofty level."

In the light of such a noble utterance, how paltry the ordinary concept of the poet as a mere verse builder. His true mission is to lift up the ideal and encourage the real to advance towards it and eventually attain perfection. The poet, in this age of money worship, is often ridiculed as a "dreamer"; but the ridicule, when applied to a genuine son of song, is pointless. The poet *is* a

dreamer; but so is the architect, and the projector of railroads. If there were no dreamers, there would be no builders; if there were no poets, there would be no progress. Poets are prophets of a lesser degree, and the prophets are the mightiest of the poets. They hold the key to the symbolism of the universe, and they alone are qualified to interpret it. There are plenty of rhymesters who are neither poets nor prophets, and there are poets and prophets who never build a verse, nor make a rhyme.

Rhyme is no essential element of poetry. Versification is an art employed by the poet to make his thought more attractive. The rhyme helps the sentiment to reach the heart. A musical instrument, say a piano or an organ is painted and gilded, not to improve its musical powers, but to make it beautiful to the eye, poetry as paint or gold leaf to the organ or piano, and no more.

The essence of poetry is in its idealism. God has built his universe upon symbols, the lesser suggesting and leading up to the greater; and the poetic faculty, possessed by the prophet in fulness, recognizes and interprets it. All creations testify of their creator. They point to something above and beyond. That is why poetry of the highest order is always prophetic, or infinitely suggestive; and that is why the poet is a prophet, and why there is such a thing as poetic prose.

A thing is poetic when it suggests something greater than itself. Man, fashioned in the divine image, suggests God, and is therefore "a symbol of God", as Carlyle affirms. But Joseph Smith goes further. He declares God to be "an exalted Man." To narrow minds this is blasphemy; but to the broad-minded it is poetry—poetry of the sublimest type.

In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, what is there of sacred efficacy in the bread and water, taken alone? There is not water enough in the ocean, nor bread enough in all the bakeries of the world, to constitute the Lord's Supper. All that makes it effective as a sacrament is the blessing pronounced upon it by the priesthood, and the symbolism whereby those elements are made to represent something greater than themselves, namely, the body and blood of the Saviour. What is done then becomes a holy ordinance, full of force and effect, a poem in action.

The same is true of baptism. Jesus said: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." He meant baptism, which symbolizes birth or begetting. The priest when baptizing performs in a mystical or spiritual way the function of fatherhood. Motherhood is symbolized by the baptismal font. "Children of my begetting", is a phrase used by the ancient apostles to characterize their converts, who are also referred to as "babes in Christ", fed upon "the milk of the word". Paul says, concerning baptism: "We are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life". (Romans 6:4.) This shows that baptism, when properly administered, is a symbol of burial and resurrection—rebirth. But the symbolism must be perfect or the ordinance is void. To sprinkle or pour water upon the candidate for baptism, destroys the symbolism, or the poetry of the ordinance. It does not represent a birth—a burial and a resurrection. When the body is immersed, however,—and that is the meaning of the Greek term to baptize—descent into the grave is typified; and when the body is brought up out of the water, birth or coming forth from the grave is symbolized. To be baptized or resurrected is equivalent to being "born again." The soul, cleansed from sin, is typical of the soul raised to immortality. Such is the poetry of baptism and the resurrection.

Jesus Christ, the greatest of all prophets, was likewise the greatest of all poets. He comprehended the universe and its symbolism as no one else ever did, and he taught in poetic parables, taking simple things as types, and teaching lessons that lead the mind upward and onward toward the ideal, toward perfection. We must not despise poetry; it is indispensable, even in practical affairs. The Gospel of Christ is replete with poetry. None but the ignorant pass it by as a thing of naught.

### **What of Philosophy?**

Philosophy is "the account which the human mind gives to itself of the constitution of the world". So says that great modern philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Here is a passage from Plato the Greek, as translated by Emerson the American: "Let us declare the cause which led the Supreme Ordainer to produce and compose the universe. He was good; and he who is good has no kind of envy. Exempt from envy, he wished that all things should be as much as possible like himself. Whosoever, taught by wise men, shall admit this as the prime cause of the origin and foundation of the world, will be in the truth."—Representative Men, Lecture II.

Very similar to this, is that utterance of Joseph Smith's giving the origin and purpose of the Gospel. (See paragraph "Path to Perfection"; also "The Book of Abraham" 3:22-26.) But Joseph did not get his philosophy from Plato; he had it directly from God, the source of Plato's inspiration. There is no plagiarism in this semi-paralleling of a sublime thought. Confucius taught, in a negative way, the Golden Rule, afterwards taught affirmatively and more fully by Jesus of Nazareth.

"Truth is truth, where'er 'tis found,  
On Christian or on heathen ground;"

And whether uttered by an ancient sage or by a modern seer, it is worthy of all acceptance. I have mentioned Emerson. Here is a sample of that great writer's wisdom:

"Our strength grows out of our weakness. Not until we are pricked and stung and sorely shot at, awakens the indignation which arms itself with secret forces. A great man is always willing to be little. While he sits on the cushion of advantages he goes to sleep. When he is pushed, tormented, defeated, he has a chance to learn something; he has been put on his wits, on his manhood; he has gained facts; learns his ignorance; is cured of the insanity of conceit; has got moderation and real skill. Blame is safer than praise. I hate to be defended in a newspaper. As long as all that is said is said against me, I feel a certain assurance of success, but as soon as honeyed words of praise are spoken for me I feel as one that lies unprotected before his enemies. In general, every evil to which we do not succumb, is a benefactor.

"The history of persecution is a history of endeavors to cheat nature, to make water run up hill, to twist a rope of sand. The martyr cannot be dishonored. Every lash inflicted is a tongue of flame; every prison a more illustrious abode; every burned book or house enlightens the world; every suppressed or expunged word reverberates through the earth from side to side. The minds of men are at last aroused; reason looks out and justifies her own, and malice finds all her work vain. It is the whipper who is whipped and the tyrant who is undone.

"Such, also, is the natural history of calamity. The changes which break up at short intervals the prosperity of men, are advertisements of a nature whose law is growth. Evermore it is the order of nature to grow ... We cannot part with our friends. We cannot let our angels go. We do not see that they only go out, that archangels may come in. We are idolaters of the old ... We do not believe there is any force in to-day to rival or recreate that beautiful yesterday ...

"And yet the compensations of calamity are made apparent to the understanding also, after long intervals of time. A fever, a mutilation, a cruel disappointment, a loss of wealth, a loss of friends seems at the moment unpaid loss, and unpayable. But the sure years reveal the deep remedial force that underlies all facts. The death of a dear friend, wife, brother, lover, which seemed nothing but privation, somewhat later assumes the aspect of a guide or genius; for it commonly operates revolutions in our way of life, terminates an epoch of infancy or of youth which was waiting to be closed, breaks up a wonted occupation, or a household, or style of living, and allows the formation of new ones more friendly to the growth of character. It permits or constrains the formation of new acquaintances and the reception of new influences that prove of the first importance to the next years; and the man or woman who would have remained a sunny garden flower, with no room for its roots and too much sunshine for its head, by the falling of the walls and the neglect of the gardener, is made the banyan of the forest, yielding shade and fruit to wide neighborhoods of men."—Essay III. Compensation.

Poetry and philosophy appeal to some, when the Gospel in its fulness might offend; "the meat of the word" being too strong for them. The plain blunt message of the man of God, who comes proclaiming, "Thus saith the Lord," antagonizes many. They turn from it; but will listen to the philosopher, with his clear, delightful reasoning, or to the poet, with his apt and appealing illustrations. All kinds of teachers go before the prophet, preparing his way, or come after him, confirming his testimony. And the sum of it all will be the betterment and eventual salvation of the race.

### **The Power of Music—Seeing for One's Self.**

Music softens the heart, and helps men and women to receive the Gospel. Tourists come in a constant stream, to listen to the wonderful tones of the great organ and the singing of the splendid choir in the Salt lake Tabernacle. The Gospel is not always preached to them; they do not always want the Gospel; but they are mellowed by the music, and they go away with kinder feelings toward, and a better understanding of, the people who build such instruments, who organize such choirs, and rear such structures. Their works speak for them. Grapes are not gathered from thorns, nor figs from thistles. Depraved wretches, such as the "Mormons" are falsely represented to be, do not love music, poetry and philosophy, do not cultivate the arts and sciences, do not turn deserts into gardens, nor rear Tabernacles and Temples unto God.

I well remember when President Grant came to Utah—the first President of the United States to set foot within the Territory, now a State. It was at a time when, all over this broad land, the bitterest prejudice prevailed against the Latter-day Saints; and it was freely asserted that the man who had finished with the South, would "make short work of Utah and the Mormons." Among the places visited by the President and his party while in Salt Lake City, was the Tabernacle, where they heard the great organ. I do not know what he thought of it, but Mrs. Grant, her face streaming with tears, turned to Captain Hooper, who had been Utah's delegate in Congress, and said with deep feeling: "I wish I could do something for these good Mormon people." The music had touched her heart, and perhaps the heart of her noble husband; for General Grant was noble, though yielding at times to strong prejudice.

Before reaching the Tabernacle, he had passed up South Temple Street, lined on both sides with Sunday School children, neatly and tastefully attired, waving banners and mottoes of welcome to the Nation's Chief. Riding in an open carriage, and running the gauntlet of applause and cheers, the honored guest turned to Governor Emery, who sat at his side, and inquired concerning the juvenile host: "What children are these?" "Mormon children," replied Emery. Grant was silent for a moment, and then was heard to murmur, "I have been deceived."

But he never was deceived again—not in the same way. He could trust his eyes when he looked upon those beautiful children: they were not the product of crime and depravity, not the offspring of savages and criminals. He could trust his ears, too, when he heard that choir and organ. No one could make him believe, after that, that the "Mormons" were as black as they had been painted.

### **No Substitute for the Gospel.**

There is more than one way to reach the human heart, and God has legitimate use for everything good, wise, virtuous and praiseworthy. Let it not be supposed, however, that music, poetry, painting, sculpture, philosophy, science, or anything else, can take the place of the Divine Plan whereby He proposes to save this world, as He has saved millions of worlds like it. He will use everything good and true and beautiful to melt the hearts of his children and prepare them for salvation; but salvation itself comes only by one route—the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the Great Ideal, and it must be honored as such. In dealing with it, no Procrustean process is permissible. It must not be chopped off because men think it too long, nor stretched out because they deem it too short. God did not send his Truth into the world to be mutilated. Men's theories, however plausible, cannot supersede divine revelation. The gifts of God, however precious, are no standard by which to judge the Giver. The Truth as Heaven reveals it is the Standard, and the opinions and theories of men must give way. There is no substitute for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **Propositions to be Reconciled.**

Referring now to a passage previously quoted, concerning the days of Adam, when a decree went forth that the Gospel should be in the world "until the end thereof." I was once asked to reconcile that passage with the idea of a new dispensation, the question coming in this form: "If the Gospel was to be in the world from the days of Adam 'until the end', what was the need of restoring it—bringing it back again?"

There are two ways of reconciling these propositions. They do not really contradict each other. The Gospel has been in the world from the beginning by a series of dispensations, reaching through the entire range of human history. Our finite minds are prone to tangle themselves up in little details that cause endless quibbles and often give us a great deal of trouble; but God sweeps the whole universe with his infinite gaze, and what seem mountains to men are less than molehills in his sight. The gaps between the Gospel dispensations are not so wide to Deity as they are to us. The Lord has found it necessary at different times to temporarily withdraw the Gospel and the Priesthood from the midst of men; and yet, by repeated restorations, forming a continuous chain of dispensations, he has kept them in the world from the beginning down to the present, thus making good his ancient decree.

### **A Twofold Creation.**

But there is more to this argument. God's works are two-fold, firstly spiritual, secondly temporal; and the most important part of creation is the spiritual part. Man and woman were made first as spirits, and the same is true of earth and all that it contains—beasts, birds, fishes, trees, plants and flowers; in short, all created things. (Moses 3:4-9.) Given bodies, they become souls—not all human souls, but souls nevertheless; for the spirit and the body constitute the soul. It is the soul that is redeemed and glorified. The spirit alone cannot advance that far; it can live without the body, but the body without the spirit is dead. Evidently, therefore, the spirit is the more important. What wonder? God created the spirit; but when it came to creating the body—bodies in general—He delegated to man that portion of His work. Man can make the body of man, and can destroy it, but cannot destroy the spirit; it is beyond his power.

Now the planet upon which we dwell has a spirit. Hence there is a Spirit World; and there the Gospel has been preached for ages, so that the dead, or the departed—for they are no more dead than we are—might have opportunity to embrace it and be "judged according to men in the flesh". (1 Peter 4:6.) And the withdrawal of the Gospel from the temporal world would not necessarily involve its withdrawal from the spiritual world. Thus the divine decree, that the Gospel should be in the world "until the end thereof," receives additional vindication. God's word cannot fail.

### **The World of Spirits.**

"The Spirit World," says Parley P. Pratt, "is not the heaven where Jesus Christ, His Father, and other beings dwell, who have, by resurrection or translation, ascended to eternal mansions and been crowned and seated on thrones of power; but it is an intermediate state, a probation, a place of preparation, improvement, instruction, or education, where spirits are chastened or improved, and where, if found worthy, they may be taught a knowledge of the Gospel. In short, it is a place where the Gospel is preached, and where faith, repentance, hope and charity may be exercised, a place of waiting for the resurrection or redemption of the body; while, to those who deserve it, it is a place of punishment, or purgatory or hell, where spirits are buffeted till the day of redemption. As to its location, it is here on the very planet where we were born" (Key to Theology, Chapter 14. Compare Alma 40:11-14).

Joseph Smith tells us that our departed friends are very near to us. We need not sail off into space to be in the spirit world. We have only to pass out of the body; for the spirit world is right around us. Parley continues:

"The earth and other planets of a like order have their inward or spirit spheres, as well as their outward or temporal. The one is peopled by temporal tabernacles, and the other by spirits. In this spirit world there are all the varieties and grades of intellectual beings which exist in the present world. For instance, Jesus Christ and the thief on the cross both went to the same place, and found themselves associated in the spirit world."

Jesus, it will be borne in mind, had been crucified between two thieves, one of whom derided him, insulting his dying agonies. The other, being penitent, prayed: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." To him the Savior said: "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Because of this utterance, well meaning though uninspired minds have jumped to the conclusion that the penitent thief was promised immediate heavenly exaltation, for repenting at the last moment and professing faith in the Redeemer. And this notion is still entertained. The criminal who has forfeited his life and is under sentence of death because unfit to dwell among his fallen fellow creatures, is made to believe that by confessing Christ even upon the scaffold, he is fitted at once for the society of Gods and Angels, and will be wafted to eternal bliss. Jesus never taught such a doctrine, nor did any authorized servant of God. It is a man-made theory, based upon faulty inference and misinterpretation. The Bible plainly teaches that men will be judged according to their works. (Rev. 20:12-13.) It was best for the thief, of course, to repent even at the eleventh hour; but he could not be exalted until prepared for it, if it took a thousand years. Jesus Christ and the thief both went to the world of spirits, a place of rest for the righteous, a place of correction for the wicked. Parley goes on to say:

"But the One was there in all the intelligence, happiness, benevolence and charity which characterized a teacher, a messenger anointed to preach glad tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort those who mourned, to preach deliverance to the captive, and open the prison to those who were bound; or, in other words, to preach the Gospel to the spirits in prison, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh; while the other was there as a thief, who had expired on the cross for crime, and who was guilty, ignorant, uncultivated, and unprepared for resurrection, having need of remission of sins and to be instructed in the science of salvation.

"In the world of spirits there are Apostles, Prophets, Elders, and members of the Church of the Saints, holding keys of priesthood, and power to teach, comfort, instruct and proclaim the Gospel to their fellow spirits, after the pattern of Jesus Christ.

"In the same world there are also the spirits of Catholics, and Protestants of every sect, who have all need to be taught and to come to the knowledge of the true unchangeable gospel in its fulness and simplicity, that they may be judged the same as if they had been privileged with the same in the flesh.

"There is also the Jew, the Mahometan, the infidel, who did not believe in Christ while in the flesh. All these must be taught, must come to the knowledge of the crucified and risen Redeemer, and hear the glad tidings of the Gospel.

"There are also all the varieties of the heathen spirits; the noble and refined philosopher, poet, patriot, or statesman of Rome or Greece, the enlightened Socrates and Plato, and their like, together with every grade of spirits, down to the most uncultivated of the savage world.

"All these must be taught, enlightened, and must bow the knee to the eternal King, for the decree hath gone forth, that unto Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.

"Oh, what a field of labor, of benevolence, of missionary enterprise now opens to the apostles and elders of the Church of the Saints! As this field opens they will begin to realize more fully the extent of their divine mission, and the meaning of the great command to 'preach the gospel to every creature'."

Parley P. Pratt, a modern Apostle, was a friend and follower of Joseph Smith. He sat at the feet of Joseph, as Paul at the feet of Gamaliel. These are Joseph's doctrines, the doctrines of "Mormonism", which stands for the Gospel in all the ages, and for the salvation of the living and the dead. God will judge no man for an opportunity that he never possessed. Faith and repentance are just as possible and just as effectual in the spirit world as they are in this sphere. But the ordinance of baptism—immersion in water for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost—with other sacred ceremonies, must be done here, in places dedicated for the purpose. This vicarious work is absolutely essential, in order that the departed may be duly admitted into the Church of Christ and share in all its blessings.

### **The Hell of Dante.**

In the Thirteenth Century a great Italian poet, the immortal Dante, produced a wonderful work, "La Divina Comedia" ("The Divine Comedy"). In one part of the poem, the author represents himself as passing through Hades or Hell. In the first circle of the infernal depths—a region called "Limbo", which a footnote in my copy of the poem describes as a place "containing the

souls of unbaptized children and of those virtuous men and women who lived before the birth of our Savior"—he meets some of the noble characters whom the Apostle Parley mentions as inhabiting the Spirit World, and the guide says to him:

—"Inquirest thou not what spirits  
Are these, which thou beholdest? Ere thou pass  
Farther, I would thou know, that these of sin  
Were blameless; and if aught they merited,  
It profits not, since baptism was not theirs,  
The portal to thy faith. If they before  
The Gospel lived, they served not God aright;  
And among such am I. For these defects  
And for no other evil, we are lost;  
Only so far afflicted, that we live  
Desiring without hope."—Hell, Canto IV, Lines 29-39.

And this was all that Thirteenth Century theology could say for such men as Homer, Virgil, Plato, Aristotle and others, the best and brightest spirits of their times!

### **According to Their Works.**

Was it not imperative that the Heavens should again open and God's Word go forth once more upon its mission of justice and mercy? The Gospel of Christ is consistent and reasonable. It does not pre-judge men, nor save nor damn them regardless of merit or demerit. Rewarding all according to their works, it gives to every creature, living or dead, a chance to accept or reject it, before final judgment. Is it not evident that Joseph Smith and "Mormonism" were indeed a necessity at the dawn of the Nineteenth Century, when even the Christian world had lost the knowledge of the true God, proclaiming him either a nonentity incapable of act or utterance, or a monster unmerciful and unjust?

### **Sons of Perdition.**

God is not trying to damn the world, but to save it. All will be saved except "the sons of perdition", those who have had every opportunity to be saved—yes, saved and exalted. They who have known God, and have "tasted of the powers of the world to come", and then have thrown it all away, trampling upon the Truth as a thing of naught, denying the Holy Ghost, and "crucifying the Lord afresh";—these cannot be saved, for salvation is predicated upon repentance, and such have sinned away the power to repent. This is what makes their case hopeless. But comparatively few go that far. All the rest will be saved, and eventually glorified.

### **Different Degrees of Glory.**

There are different degrees of glory—a glory of the sun, a glory of the moon, and a glory of the stars. So Paul taught (1 Cor. 15:40-42); and Joseph Smith taught it even more plainly. (Doc. & Cov. 76.) They who inherit celestial glory, of which the sun in the firmament is typical, are they who receive the Gospel in this life, and are valiant for it and endure to the end, giving to God the fulness of their obedience. They who inherit terrestrial glory, which differs from the celestial as the moon differs from the sun, are they who receive not the Gospel here, but afterwards receive it; souls not valiant, and who therefore "win not the crown". The inheritors of telestial glory, typified by the stars, "are they who are thrust down to hell", where they pay their debt to Justice, after which Mercy claims its own, and they are ushered into a light and freedom greater than the finite mind can comprehend.

Such is "Mormonism's" astounding declaration—the only religion on earth that dares to say THE DAMNED CAN BE SAVED! Yes, anyone can be saved who will repent, even in the depths of hell. But why go there to repent? Why not make Peace with Heaven here?

### **A Nautical Illustration.**

I was crossing the Atlantic on an ocean liner. I was a first cabin passenger; and besides myself there were upwards of a hundred others in that part of the vessel. The second cabin had about twice as many passengers, and in the steerage were several hundred more. The first cabin berths were not only the best furnished, but the most favorably situated for comfort, convenience, and safety. Every courtesy was shown to the passengers; the captain and other officers were their associates; their food was of the choicest, and they had the full freedom of the ship. They might go down into the second cabin, or lower down, into the steerage, and return, without hindrance or question. They had paid for these privileges and were therefore entitled to them. But it was different in the second cabin. There the food was not so good, the berths were less comfortable, and the privileges fewer. Passengers might descend into the steerage, but were not permitted upon the upper deck. In the steerage, conditions were even less favorable. The food was still poorer, and the restrictions were more rigid. The occupants of that section were not allowed even in the second cabin. Having paid only for steerage accommodations, these were all that they could consistently claim. Viewing the situation, I said to myself: What a striking analogy to the final destiny of the human race, as set forth in the revelations of God! All men rewarded

according to their works—saved according to their merits, in the eternal mansions of the Father! And I resolved anew that I would be a first cabin passenger over the ocean of life into the haven of Celestial glory.

### **Mormonism's Magnanimity.**

Joseph the Seer, after gazing upon the glories of eternity, outlining the ultimate destiny of the human race, had another vision in which he "beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability, are saved in the Celestial Kingdom". He also saw his father, his mother, and his brother Alvin in that Kingdom. His parents had received the Gospel; but Alvin died before it came. He was a good man, however, and had faith in what the Prophet told him. He simply had not been baptized. Nevertheless, Joseph beheld him in celestial glory, the highest glory of all, and it caused him to marvel. Then fell this word from Heaven:

"All who have died without a knowledge of this Gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the Celestial Kingdom of God; also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that Kingdom, for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts." (Joseph Smith's Teachings, p. 19; Church History, Vol. 2, pp. 380-318).

Could justice, mercy, magnanimity, go further? And yet there are people who imagine "Mormonism" to be something small, narrow and illiberal. By the contrary, it is broad, generous and charitable, as all its teachings testify.

### **The Source of Its Strength.**

"Mormonism's" strength is not in the number of its adherents, who are comparatively few; nor in the sagacity of its leading men, who are only mortals. Rather does it reside in the fact that every worthy man and woman connected with it is entitled to and receives a personal, direct testimony of its truth. The Church of Christ is founded upon this rock—the Rock of Revelation—against which the waves of sophistry, the billows of bigotry, the breakers of persecution, beat and dash in vain. All who fight the truth are fardoomed to defeat. The Gates of Hell cannot prevail against it. "Mormonism" is strong because God is its Author—the Engineer directing its course; and all the might of Omnipotence is behind it, impelling it on to its destiny. It is the Everlasting Gospel, the saving, glorifying power of God, the power by which He carries on His mighty and marvelous work, bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

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