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Author: Lycurgus A. Wilson

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OUTLINES OF MORMON PHILOSOPHY ***

**Outlines of Mormon Philosophy
OR
The Answers Given by the Gospel, as
Revealed Through the Prophet Joseph
Smith, to the Questions of Life.**

By Lycurgus A. Wilson,

Author of the Life of David W. Patten.

"Mormonism, as a theory, offers the most comprehensive and consistent explanation of the great mystery of existence."—Non-Mormon.

Salt Lake City,

Utah

1905

Dedication.

To the Memory of The Prophet Joseph Smith Through whom the Lord revealed these principles to man, and who gave his life in testimony of their truth, this book is reverently dedicated.

PREFACE.

Every person, whether consciously or not, gradually builds up, from his observations and reason, a system of philosophy by which he explains, to himself at least, the problems that the new experiences of his life present for solution. It is of great importance, therefore, that, instead of basing one's system of thought upon the contradictory hypotheses of speculative philosophy, we start right, so that our ideas on the questions of life may square with the truth as it is known to the Lord. And these considerations are the excuse for this work.

This work is designed rather for study than for reading. To the hasty, illusioned reader, it will prove a short, dull book; but the studious reader, who can render a thought into experience, will find it a voluminous work, profusely illustrated with pictures such as no painter ever transferred to canvas; for to him, because of the nature of the subject, it will tell the whole beautiful story of life.

The thanks of the author are due, most of all, to the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for the helpful criticism of their committee of this work; and, next, to the scores of friends who have given him the benefit of their suggestions.

L. A. W.

Salt Lake Temple,

Salt Lake City, Utah, 1905

DIAGRAM AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTORY

CONDITIONS PRECEDENT

[Space](#)

[Time](#)

[Matter](#)

[Intelligences](#)

THE GOSPEL

[Inception](#)

[Purpose](#)

[Plan](#)

[Covenants](#)

[Perpetuity](#)

CONDITIONS SUBSEQUENT

[Nature](#)

[Man](#)

CONCLUSION

BY WAY OF TEXT.

"What a thoughtful man most longs for is some firm center about which he can organize his knowledge of the world, his experiences of life, a point of view from which he can gather all into an intelligible unity and from which he can press forward with a deep assurance of divine guidance and an adequate outcome."—Selected.

INTRODUCTORY.

History relates of Hypatia, the daughter of Theon, an eminent mathematician of Alexandria, that before being committed to the flames by an ignorant mob, she exclaimed:—

"Who am I, whence am I, and whither am I going?"

These questions, elaborated and particularized, are universal. They belong neither to any time, nor sect nor civilization. They are the questions of life. They recur to us at every turn in life, and when life nears its close, the master-thought with studious men is that they shall soon know the answer.

But from that bourne no traveler returns, as the poet has it, to enlighten those who remain. And so we are beset by limitations. Swung into space with no means of exploring it, bound to this whirling ball, circumscribed in all our activities, without power to determine our lot here, the moment of our entrance, nor to extend the time of our exit; when we seek to know the mysteries of life, our condition is, in a way, as would be that of a family, inhabiting from time out of mind, a miniature island in mid-ocean, without means of communication with the world, should they, by conjecture, try to learn the history and civilization of mankind.

Our means of observation of the forces about us are very limited,^[1] tradition is cut off at our birth, reason stands powerless for want of analogy, and the only recourse we have for direct communication with reality, is revelation. Professor Lewes, in his *Biographical History of Philosophy*, closes the door of inquiry upon us in this way: "To aspire to the knowledge of more than phenomena, their resemblances and successions, is to aspire to transcend the limitations of human faculties. To know more we must be more."^[2]

In the midst of these perplexities comes the Gospel to us as a welcome, gracious visitor from the realms beyond the reach of our knowledge.

The object of this work as intimated by the text, is to suggest a firm central point about which may be grouped in orderly arrangement, all our knowledge, and our guide shall be revelation. In this endeavor we shall be assisted materially, if we attempt, however crudely, a classification of the subject-matter; and we shall, therefore, consider:

First,—The universal, all-prevailing, eternal conditions of existence, under the head of,

1. CONDITIONS PRECEDENT.

Second,—The inception, purpose, plan, covenants and perpetuity of this system of organization in which we now find ourselves, under the head of,

2. THE GOSPEL.

Third,—The results, the fruits of this All-wise arrangement, under the head of,

3. CONDITIONS SUBSEQUENT.

It may be said at the outset that the attempt here made is to present in order and to hold up, as the answer to all the problems of life, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as restored to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

There are only two reasons that come to mind, why this effort may not be acceptable; one is a disbelief on the part of the reader in the divinity of the Gospel, the other, is the inadequacy of this presentation.

To the former objection it is sufficient for the inquiring mind to say, Judge for yourself whether or not the Gospel as here set out answers every requirement of life, where other systems of philosophy all fail; to the latter we reply, No attempt is here made to present in detail the principles of the Gospel, but only to sketch the outlines; and, moreover, the reader is at perfect liberty to supply whatever deficiency he may detect.

PART I.
CONDITIONS PRECEDENT.

SPACE.

TIME.

MATTER

INTELLIGENCES.

I.
AS TO SPACE.

The school-boy is told that the idea held by people generally in the days of Columbus was that if the venturesome ships were to sail too far out on the ocean they would fall off into space; and in his silent meditations he often wonders where, in such a case, those ships would have gone. The natural answer to his mind is that they would have gone down; but when he learns later that the words "down" and "up" relate only to the earth, and that in speaking of space, there are no such terms as up or down, or east or west, or north or south, all his ideas of direction are at sea. His conception of space increases, however.

Later in school life he studies with interest the movements of the planetarium, and is surprised to find the earth, whose geographical extent has hitherto seemed so vast, represented by such an insignificant ball, so near the sun. This, however, is only the beginning of his surprises. He is told later that, large as the solar system seems, yet if our sun, viewed from one of the fixed stars, were as large as the orbit of Neptune, it would be eclipsed by a pin-head held at arm's length. And so his ideas of space continue to enlarge as he grows in understanding.

As we study Herschel's diagram of the group of stars in which we dwell and let the mind contemplate with the astronomer the nebulae, supposed by some to be other groups of stars, much more magnificent than our own, the mind is lost in wonder at the immensity of space and the grandeur of the works of God. But even this is simply a beginning.

The Lord gives us a still deeper insight into the situation when He reveals to us the fact that all these vast systems, as well as other systems of which as yet we know nothing, are revolving about other systems which are all controlled from a common centre, His "first creation,"^[3] the great Kolob.^[4]

When, therefore, the Lord, standing in the midst of His works, comprehending and controlling them all, speaks to us of the "immensity of space,"^[5] how shall mortal, finite man, state his conception of space! How far is the philosopher advanced above the school-boy with his query about the ships of Columbus?

So far as reason can answer the question as to the bounds of space, it is answered by Professor Orson Pratt. Discussing the necessity for endless time and boundless space, he says:

"That there must be an endless duration and a boundless space, are necessary truths which cannot possibly be conceived to be otherwise than they are. These are necessary truths, whether any being exists to conceive them as such or not. Indeed, if there were no being in existence, the same unalterable and unchangeable necessity would characterize these truths. Endless space and duration cannot be created nor annihilated by any being, but their continuance has been and must be eternal. These truths do not admit of being proved; for that which has no beginning cannot be preceded by a cause, and where no cause exists, there cannot possibly be any foundation for reasoning. There can be no reason why space and duration are as they are and yet we perceive a necessity for them to be as they are."^[6]

But we have a more sure word than unaided reason can offer. We are not left without revelation on this subject, meager though the reference may be. The Prophet Joseph Smith, speaking of the

light of the sun, remarks:

"The sun has no beginning nor end; the rays which proceed from himself have no bounds, consequently they are eternal."^[7]

From this simple statement we receive more information than any man in our present condition, uninspired by the Lord, could ever obtain. Indeed, this very question is classed by the philosopher, Herbert Spencer, as among those the answer to which is "unknowable." But when we have this basic fact from which to reason, we are safe in concluding that if there are no bounds to the light of the sun, then it must follow that space is boundless.

II. AS TO TIME.

Another of the questions of life, the answer to which is classed by Herbert Spencer as among the "unknowable," is time; and of the same mind apparently is Thomas Carlyle, who says:

"The illimitable, silent, never-resting thing called 'time,' rolling, rushing on—this is forever very literally, a miracle, a thing to strike us dumb."

All sorts of ideas have been advanced in all ages of the world as to the mystery of time, and even its very existence has been called into question, as witness the following;

"But the present has no duration and is not time at all. It is but the plane which, without thickness, divides past and future. Time then is not made up of past, present and future, but of past and future only; and, as these do not exist, time itself cannot exist."^[8]

But the only question that concerns us here, in our search for eternal conditions, is as to the duration of time. As to this, we may again refer to the reasoning of Orson Pratt; and we have, also, an additional and final assurance from the Lord, when He says, in speaking to Abraham:

"If there be two spirits, and one shall be more intelligent than the other, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal."^[9]

The inference is plain. If spirits always existed and always will exist, there never was a beginning and there never will be an end, of time.

III. AS TO MATTER.

Some writer has characterized the passage in Genesis, "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light," as the perfection of beauty in expression; but we venture to place over against it another, this, however, directly from a Divine source through the Prophet Joseph Smith. What could be more succinct or beautiful or more richly laden with truth respecting conditions precedent than the words, "The elements are eternal?"^[10]

That expression is worth more to the scientist who will receive it, than all the fine-spun theories of so-called philosophy. An acceptance of this truth would put to rest no end of controversy. Since the earliest times investigators have believed in the transmutation of matter, that if they could only find the secret, they could, for instance, turn silver into gold; and, again, it has been the belief until recent years, that matter could be annihilated.

Now, however, the idea is accepted throughout the entire scientific world that no particle of matter can be destroyed. It may be changed from one form into another, as water is converted into steam, but the elements remain unchanged.

The transmutation theory, however, still haunts the human mind.

"The elements are eternal." The Prophet Joseph Smith adds to this nugget of truth another beautiful thought, when he says:

"Hence we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos—chaotic matter, which is element, and *in which dwells all the glory*."^[11]

From which we may be assured that in the Gospel scheme of organization, this life's drama in the large, matter plays no unimportant part.

We, therefore, may conclude:

That all the matter now existing always existed and always will exist.

That there never was any more matter than there is at present and there never will be any more than there is now.

IV. AS TO INTELLIGENCES.

Notwithstanding the desire for knowledge, the simplicity of truth has ever entailed upon it an unfriendly reception at the hands of men. It seems to be almost a law of the human mind that our preconceived notions, whether true or false, stand in the way of new ideas, and usually our principal effort is put forth in trying to reconcile a new thought with the old theory, rather than in an endeavor to give to each its proper valuation. And this is preeminently the case in relation to our ideas on the eternal existence of personal, individual intelligences. We can easily conceive of eternally existing matter, but not so of spirits.

Perhaps an excuse is afforded us in the fact that God is our Father; but no earthly father who understands the Gospel thinks for a moment that his children had no existence until they were begotten by him. He knows they have existed in the spirit world co-equally with himself. He is their father by reason of having given them a tabernacle in which to dwell, and in the same way did God become our Father.

Man has a spiritual body as well as a body of flesh and bones, or, as Paul has it, "There is natural body and there is a spiritual body."^[12] This explains the teachings as to the body, the astral body, and the aura, of the Yogis, of India, and is explained by the Lord as follows:

"For I, the Lord God, created all things of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men; and not yet a man to till the ground; for in heaven created I them; and there was not yet flesh upon the earth; neither in the water; neither in the air ... And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also; nevertheless all things were before created; but, spiritually, were they created and made according to my word."^[13]

But the whole scheme of the progress of the spirit is detailed in another revelation from the Lord. This, however, is in the Doctrine and Covenants:

"For by the power of my Spirit created I them; yea, all things, both spiritual and temporal.

"Firstly, spiritual—secondly, temporal, which is the beginning of my work; and again, firstly, temporal—and secondly spiritual, which is the last of my work."^[14]

That is to say: first, the spirit is clothed upon with a spiritual body, and afterwards with a temporal, or mortal body; secondly the spirit, at the time of the resurrection, is again clothed upon with the same body, just as it is laid down; and afterwards, the body, at the time of the restoration, undergoes a change by which it is not only restored to its proper form in case of malformation,^[15] but is rendered immune to the disabilities of mortality, as was the case with the Savior when He passed into the room where the Twelve were assembled, though the door was locked, or with the Angel Moroni when he passed up through the ceiling of the room at the close of his first interview with the Prophet Joseph Smith, or made himself visible or invisible at will.^[16]

Another cause of misconception is the meaning we attach to the word Creator, in describing our relationship to the Lord. We usually take the expression, "He is our Creator," to mean that we had no existence as individuals until He called us into being, and this in the face of His own declaration to the contrary. He says to Abraham, as hereinbefore quoted:

"If there be two spirits, and one shall be more intelligent than the other, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, have no beginning, they existed before; they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum or eternal."^[17]

The construction of this statement seems purposely designed to negative the doctrine that spirits

owe their origin to God, for, in that case, one might well question the justice of the Creator in giving one spirit so much more intelligence than another.

But the fact is, as the Prophet Joseph Smith has said: "God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all. God himself could not create himself."

As if determined so to state the fact that his meaning could not be misunderstood, the Prophet Joseph further says:

"I have another subject to dwell upon, which is calculated to exalt man. But it is impossible for me to say much on this subject. I shall, therefore, just touch upon it; for time will not permit me to say all. It is associated with the subject of the resurrection from the dead, the mind of man, the immortal spirit. Where did it come from? All learned men and doctors of divinity say that God created it in the beginning. But it is not so. The very idea lessens man in my estimation. I do not believe the doctrine. I know better."

Continuing, he adds:

"We say that God himself is a self-existent being. Who told you so? It is correct enough; but how did it get into your heads? Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles? Man does exist upon the same principles. The mind or the intelligence which man possesses, is co-equal with God himself."

And again:

"There never was a time when there were not spirits, for they are co-equal with our Father in Heaven."^[18]

From all of which we may conclude:

That all the spirits now existing always did and always will exist.

That the spirits now existing are all that ever did, or that ever will exist.

SUMMARY OF CONDITIONS PRECEDENT.

Summarizing conditions precedent, we, therefore, find:

I. That space is, always has been, and ever must be, without bounds.

II. That time never had a beginning and cannot have an end.

III. That matter is uncreated, indestructible, eternal.

IV. That intelligences always were and always will be individual entities, and, however varied in capacity, never had a beginning and can never be annihilated.

Abroad in boundless space, therefore, with unlimited time in which to learn, and labor, are intelligences surrounded by matter.

PART II.

THE GOSPEL.

INCEPTION.

PURPOSE.

PLAN.

COVENANTS.

PERPETUITY.

V. INCEPTION OF THE GOSPEL.

"The glory of God is intelligence."

Perhaps our best conception of chaos, in miniature, may be had by observing the floating, restless, erratic particles of matter to be seen in the path of a ray of sunshine, when admitted into a dark room. One's uppermost longing at such a time is to introduce order into this jarring, discordant sphere. And that condition and that sentiment have no doubt met before. The psychologist would trace the desire back to a time before the formation of Kolob, when myriads of eternal, self-existent spirits lived in the midst of boundless space, surrounded by unlimited, indestructible, unorganized matter, in a universal chaos. It may be asked if there ever was such a chaotic condition. So far as the creations of God are concerned, it would appear that there was, for we are informed that Kolob is the "first creation."^[19]

Turn now from this chaos in the streak of sunshine, chaos in the small, and let the mind contemplate that chaos at large, before any of the vast concourse of worlds that roll in space were formed, when the matter composing Kolob was yet unorganized; and the first desire that presents itself to the mind is to know how all this beautiful system by which we are not surrounded was evolved from that riot of matter, where this order had its inception, how God came to be God.

In what is without doubt the most wonderful revelation ever given to mankind, in that it reaches the farthest back and states some of the most important truths, the Prophet Joseph Smith, speaking at the funeral of Elder King Follett, at Nauvoo, explains in the simplest terms the sublime conception.^[20]

First, however, let him state his purpose:

"In order to understand the subject of the dead, for the consolation of those who mourn for the loss of their friends, it is necessary that we should understand the character and being of God, and how He came to be so; for I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and will take away and do away the veil, so that you may see."

The mind is here carried back to a time antedating anything of which we have an account anywhere else in the world, and that there may be no doubt as to the time and the personage referred to, the Prophet is very explicit.

With reference to the time he says:

"You ask the learned doctors why they say the world was made out of nothing; and they will answer, 'Doesn't the Bible say He created the world?' And they infer from the word create, that it must have been made out of nothing. Now, the word create came from the word baurau, which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize—the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos—chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Elements had an existence from the time He had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed. They may be organized and reorganized but not destroyed. They had no beginning, and can have no end."

As to the personage meant, one may say, There are many Gods, an almost endless chain of creators; to which one does the Prophet refer? We are not left in doubt, for he explains:

"If the veil were rent today, and the great God, who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by His power, were to make Himself visible,—I say, if you were to see Him today, you would see Him like a man in form."

And further:

"My object is to find out the character of the only wise and true God, and what kind of a being He is."

With these prefatory remarks, the Prophet Joseph proceeds to tell how God came to be God, in what must appeal to one as among the divinest words ever uttered. He says:

"God himself, 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. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory and intelligence which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits."

No wonder that, in the ecstasy of the moment, he exclaimed:

"This is good doctrine. It tastes good, I can taste the principles of eternal life, and so can you. They are given to me by the revelations of Jesus Christ; and I know that when I tell you these words of eternal life as they are given to me, you taste them, and I know you believe them. You say honey is sweet, and so do I. I can also taste the spirit of eternal life. I know it is good; and when I tell you of these things which were given me by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, you are bound to receive them as sweet, and I rejoice more and more."

Here, then, is the inception of the Gospel; the course of study under which we are now working; the plan of salvation, by virtue of which all the creations of God, beginning with Kolob, were made; instituted in the beginning by our Father, to which Jesus the Christ acceded in the grand council in heaven before this earth was made.

Whether or not, in the vast eternities preceding the creation of Kolob, other plans had been tried and found wanting, we are not told; but the fact that, as the Prophet Joseph tells us, God "worked out His Kingdom with fear and trembling," would indicate that He had seen many failures.

It should be noted here, that the ruling sentiment in the inception of the Gospel was the most unselfish love of the Great God for His fellow-creatures. Not satisfied with His own power, glory and intelligence, He must, by force of His affection for those of lesser estate, formulate a plan by which they might arrive at the same station as Himself. It will not, therefore, be surprising to find that Love occupies a high place among the virtues cultivated by the Gospel.

VI. PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL.

The instructor in school or college, before commencing his work, carefully lays out his courses of study with a definite purpose in view for each course, and is able at the outset to give not only an outline of the work to be done, but the purpose of each course, so that he can tell the applicant for instruction which course will fit him, for example, for practice as a civil engineer. And this line of procedure is of great importance.

Under such an arrangement, the student at every stage of his advancement, will have in mind the purpose of his work, and whatever the obstacles in his path may be, will be impelled to press on with confidence in the wisdom of each step, and an assurance that success will finally crown his best endeavors.

It is, therefore, necessary for us to inquire the purpose for which the Gospel was instituted; and, aside from the inference that may be drawn from what has already been said on the inception of the Gospel, the Lord has given us a direct statement of His designs. After giving an account of a vision in which Moses "beheld the earth and all the inhabitants thereof," the record proceeds:

"And it came to pass that Moses called upon God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, why these things are so, and by what thou madest them?"

"And, behold, the glory of God was upon Moses, so that Moses stood in the presence of God, and he talked with him face to face; and the Lord God said unto Moses, For mine own purpose have I made these things. Here is wisdom, and it remaineth in me. And by the word of my power have I created them, which is my Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth. And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten. And the first man of all men have I called Adam, which is many. But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For, behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many also which now stand, and numberless are they, unto man, but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them.

"And it came to pass, that Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, Be merciful unto thy servant, O God, and tell me concerning this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, and also the heavens, and then thy servant will be content.

"And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying, The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man, but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine, and as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof, even so shall others come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words.

"For this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."^[21]

We have here, then, a plain statement of the purpose of the Lord in formulating the Gospel, and we may now inquire as to the course of procedure to be followed to accomplish the object in view.

VII. PLAN OF THE GOSPEL.

We may use still further the comparison of instructor and pupil. The plan of the work he is to pursue is laid before the student at the outset. All the steps of his progress are pointed out to him from the opening of his course until his graduation. In outline he can trace his work throughout, and can tell at any stage of his advancement how far he has come, and what yet remains to be done before he can claim his diploma.

Just so the Lord has outlined the course of procedure under the Gospel plan, and, as with the student, so we may know how far we have advanced.

Following is a remarkable disclosure in which we have the plan outlined:

"And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate, shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate, shall have glory added upon their heads forever and ever."^[22]

When the time had arrived for the council in heaven to name a Savior, according to the plan of the Father, to come to the earth in the meridian of time and make possible the resurrection from the dead, there was a rebellion, the account of which gives us an indication of the dividing point in our progress between the first and second estates. It reads as follows:

"And the Lord said, Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first. And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate, and at that day, many followed after him."^[23]

Additional information as to the proportion of that host of spirits who "followed after him," is given in the Doctrine and Covenants:

"For, behold, the devil was before Adam, for he rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power: and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency; and they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels."^[24]

We learn, therefore:

That, according to the plan of the Gospel, there are two estates, with varying glories attached to each.

That one-third of the host of heaven into the midst of whom the Lord came down in the beginning, had not made sufficient progress when the time came for peopling this earth, to keep their first estate, and

That the two-thirds who remained faithful up to that time, were introduced to the next step of advancement by being permitted to take bodies upon this earth, and are, accordingly, on the way to the keeping of the second estate, to which is attached the glory of eternal lives.

Here, then, with an illustration in the case of this earth, is the outline plan of the Gospel.

VIII. COVENANTS OF THE GOSPEL.

Pursuing the comparison of instructor and student still further, we find that their relations are governed by an implied contract from beginning to end. The student who sets out to take a course of instruction in civil engineering, for instance, agrees, on his part, to follow the directions of the instructor throughout the term of years prescribed to complete the work. On the part of the instructor an agreement is made that if the student will so follow the course laid out, for the stated number of years, he shall receive a diploma as a civil engineer.

It is proper, therefore, for us to make an inquiry as to the agreement, if any, entered into in the beginning between the Great Formulator of this course of study we are pursuing, and the world

of mankind.

It is interesting to note here that the late President Lorenzo Snow looked upon the passage about to be quoted, "I came down in the beginning in the midst of all the intelligences thou hast seen," as going the farthest back of any of the revelations we have, direct from the Almighty.

We may here gather from the following quotation, the covenant entered into by the spirits, "in the beginning:"

"I came down in the beginning in the midst of all the intelligences thou hast seen.

"Now, the lord had shewn unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; and God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them, thou wast chosen before thou wast born.

"And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; and we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them."^[25]

The spirits, therefore, after this plan of the Gospel had been presented to and accepted by them, had agreed to "do all things whatsoever the Lord their God should command them." In accord herewith is the statement of President Joseph F. Smith that not order, but obedience, is the first law of heaven.

As to the covenant made by the Lord in His part of the contract, we read in the Doctrine and Covenants:

"And also all they who receive this Priesthood receiveth me, saith the Lord; for he that receiveth my servants receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth my Father; and he that receiveth my Father, receiveth my Father's Kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him; and this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the Priesthood. Therefore, all those who receive the Priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break."^[26]

As it is designed in the Gospel plan for the redemption of the dead, that all men who have arrived at years of accountability and who during their life time here were subject to law, shall have the Priesthood conferred upon them, either in person or by proxy, it will be seen how wide the application of this covenant will extend.

The great covenants pertaining to the Gospel are, accordingly; on the part of the spirits, obedience to whatever law is given them; on the part of the Lord, to those who are the most faithful, a fullness of His glory. But, as will be seen hereafter, provision is made for all, even for the least of His creatures.

IX. PERPETUITY OF THE GOSPEL.

Certainly a system of such grandeur and comprehensiveness as the Gospel must have within itself the seeds of perpetuity. No catastrophe the mind of man can contemplate would compare with that which would result if all this beautiful fabric should at some time, by any mischance, go to pieces. But the elements not only of continuity but of continuous growth, are in the Gospel, and the wisdom of God shall not be destroyed.

The spirits, whether they place themselves under the course of instruction provided for in the Gospel or not, are eternal, as are, also, the elements with which, under its plan, they become united; and by following the thought behind the revelations here to be quoted, we may trace therein the design of the Maker for the stability of His work.

In relation to the union of spirit and element, we read in the Doctrine and Covenants:

"For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receiveth a fullness of joy; and, when separated, man cannot receive a fullness of joy."^[27]

Here, without doubt, it may be noted in passing, we have one of the great discoveries by which God came to be God.

As to the continuity of the union between spirit and matter, we quote the words of the Prophet Amulek, recorded in the Book of Mormon:

"Now, behold, I have spoken unto you concerning the death of the mortal body, and also concerning the resurrection of the mortal body. I say unto you that this mortal body is raised to an immortal body; that is, from death, even from the first death unto life, that they can die no more, their spirits uniting with their bodies, *never to be divided*, thus the whole becoming spiritual and immortal, that they can no more see corruption."^[28]

Our next step will be a consideration of the Priesthood, which is designed by the Gospel plan to form a never-ending bond of union between those who arrive at their exaltation under its provisions.

We read in the Book of Mormon:

"This High Priesthood being after the order of His Son, which order was from the foundation of the world—or, in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to His foreknowledge of all things."^[29]

We may now turn to a consideration of the process by which an increase of the dominion of all those who are faithful, is provided for in the Gospel. In the Doctrine and Covenants, we read:

"And, again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power, and the keys of the Priesthood; and it shall be said unto them, ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection; and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths—then shall it be written in the Lamb's Book of Life, that he shall commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, and if ye abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity, and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds for ever and ever.

"Then shall they be Gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be Gods, because they have all power."^[30]

It is not the purpose of this work to go outside of the strict boundaries of revelation, but one cannot refrain at this point from giving a little rein to the spirit of inquiry. When this glorious consummation shall have been attained, will not the whole process of world-making and world-peopling, in this order of spirits, be gone all over again? Shall spirits who have never heard of this plan of organization be visited by such a being, who shall afterward be in a position to say, "In the beginning I came down into the midst of these spirits, and taught them this same Gospel plan, a new earth was formed, another Adam came upon it, a Savior was provided?"

In the enduring union between the spirits and element, in the eternal nature of the bond entered into by those who receive the Holy Priesthood, and in the never-ending increase of those who properly contract the marriage relation, is manifest, therefore, the wisdom of God in providing for the perpetuity and growth of His dominion, as well as for the exaltation of those spirits who render obedience to the Gospel.

SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL.

Summarizing the Outline of the Gospel here presented, we find:

I. That the Gospel had its inception when "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."

II. That the purpose of God in so doing was "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."

III. That under the plan of the Gospel there are two estates, the keeping of both of which shall entitle the spirits to be "added upon for ever and ever."

IV. That the covenants entered into by the parties involved were, on the part of the spirits, obedience in all things to whatsoever the Lord their God should command them, or, in other words, to the best light under which they lived upon the earth; and, on the part of the Lord, that all who receive the Holy Priesthood and are faithful thereto, shall receive a fullness of His glory.

V. That the perpetuity of the Gospel plan is assured by the increased power of those who receive bodies, with which their spirits shall be inseparably connected; by the eternal bond entered into under the covenant of the Holy Priesthood; and by the enduring union of the sexes in a never-ending increase of posterity.

PART III.

CONDITIONS SUBSEQUENT.

NATURE,

MAN

1. General,

2. Special.

X. NATURE.

"But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you."—Book of Moses 1:35.

We come now to consider the fruits of this tree of life, the Gospel, as relates to nature, the environment of man. While we may view with wonder and with awe the marvelous works of God about us in the heavens, still our interests, as ourselves, are confined to the earth upon which we dwell.

It is true, the Lord has given us some notion of the vastness of His works, of Kolob, "the first creation, nearest the celestial or residence of God; first in government, last pertaining to the measurement of time," whose day "is equal to a thousand years, according to the measurement of this earth;"^[31] of "Oliblish, which is the next grand governing creation, holding the key of power also, pertaining to other planets;"^[32] and has revealed to us that "were it possible that men could number the particles of the earth, yea, and millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of His creations;"^[33] yet a knowledge of His dominions, except in this general way, concerning any other of His creations than this earth, is withheld from us.

We have, however, a number of revealed truths concerning the earth that would add greatly to the interest as well as to the enlightenment of the scientific world, if they were accepted. If, for instance, it had been known to and received by science, that "this earth was organized or formed out of other planets, which were broken up and remodeled and made into the one on which we live,"^[34] how many vain theories and how much useless work would have been saved!

How many times the earth, or portions of it in another planet, was peopled by the Lord before Adam was placed upon it, we are not informed; but from the fact that he was commanded to replenish, or re-fill it, we may infer that it had, in some form, been inhabited before our first parents came here. But of this no account is given us by revelation.

How fully and how wisely the earth was prepared before being sent on its present voyage, with provisions, with material for clothing, with fuel, and with all the necessities and comforts of life, is matter of common knowledge.

The Lord has given us the name by which this part of His dominion is known to Him, as "Idumea,"^[35] and, as to the order to which it belongs among His diversified creations, we have a wonderful revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants, as follows:

"The poor and meek of the earth shall inherit it. Therefore it must needs be sanctified from all unrighteousness, that it may be prepared for the celestial glory; for after it hath filled the measure of its creation, it shall be crowned with glory, even with the presence of God the Father; that bodies of the celestial kingdom may possess it for ever and ever; for, for this intent was it made and created, and for this intent are they sanctified.

"And, again, verify I say unto you, the earth abideth the law of a celestial kingdom, for it filleth the measure of its creation and transgresseth not the law, wherefore, it shall be sanctified; yea, notwithstanding it shall die, it shall be quickened again, and shall abide the power by which it is

quickened, and the righteous shall inherit it."^[36]

The following passage respecting the final condition of the earth, gives further light upon this beautiful thought. The Prophet Joseph Smith says:

"This earth, in its sanctified, immortal state, will be made like unto crystal, and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon, whereby all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom, or all kingdoms of a lower order, will be manifest to those who dwell on it; and this earth will be Christ's."^[37]

As to the final condition of the animals and plants of the earth, the Lord explains:

"For all old things shall pass away, and all things shall become new, even the heaven and the earth, and all the fullness thereof, both men and beasts, the fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea; and not one hair; neither mote shall be lost, for it is the workmanship of mine hand."^[38]

From all of which, and from other like revelations, too numerous to mention here, we gather:

That while we may speculate upon the multitude of the Lord's creations, we have, except from our observations of the heavens about us, and the meager information vouchsafed us by revelation, no detailed account of any planet but of the earth on which we dwell.

That the earth is on the way to eternal, celestial glory, where it will shine of its own light, in which condition it will be inhabited by celestial beings, not only by mankind, but by the elect of the animal and vegetable kingdoms as well.

XI. MAN.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

"And it came to pass that Moses looked and beheld the world upon which he was created, and as Moses beheld the world and the ends thereof, and all the children of men which are, and which were created of the same, he greatly marveled and wondered."—Book of Moses 1:8.

The fruits of the Gospel as relates to the peopling of the earth through Adam, are not fully ripe. The generations of that lineage are still incomplete; but it is interesting to study the general outline of the plan which was laid for that purpose before the earth was formed, a part of which has now been rendered into history. As made known to John the Revelator on the Isle of Patmos, this plan, presented to him by signs the meaning of which was revealed^[39] to the Prophet Joseph Smith, contemplated the division of human history into seven periods of one day each, according to the Lord's reckoning.

The first should be a day of peace; the second, a day of war and conquest; the third, a day in which commerce should have its rise; the fourth, a day of war; the fifth, a day of persecution; the sixth, a day of preparation for the Sabbath, or Millennium; the seventh, a day of peace and rest. Let the student follow down the history of the world with this outline in mind, and he cannot fail to be impressed with the coincidence, so far, of the prophecy and its fulfillment.

Not only were the periods set, and the work to be accomplished in each determined, but the order in which the spirits to take bodies on this earth should come forth, was outlined before the earth was made. Abraham says, as hereinbefore quoted:

"Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was, and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; and God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said, These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and He said unto me, Abraham, thou art one of them, thou wast chosen before thou wast born."^[40]

When we recall the promise made to Abraham, after his advent upon the earth, that through him and his seed should all the children of the earth be blessed; when we see in the history of the world how the seed of Israel has been scattered among all nations; and when we witness the purpose of the Lord, now going forward, to gather into one family under that lineage all the descendants of Adam, this passage and that promise take on peculiar significance.

Furthermore, that the course of the star of empire was set from the first, is evident from the revelation given to Adam three years before his death at the altar of Adam-ondi-Ahman, as related in the Doctrine and Covenants. We read:

"And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost *predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation.*"^[41]

Among those spirits in the midst of whom the Lord stood when He saw and chose as His rulers the noble and great ones, there were no doubt many who were less intelligent. How could these spirits be so placed in the generations of Adam's race as to make the most of them? The solution of the problem is disclosed in the following extract from the Book of Mormon:

"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."^[42]

Superior minds, that is to say, have been sent to the earth, among all peoples, in all ages of the world, to teach, to bring forth new inventions, to give laws, to make discoveries, to establish or to overthrow governments, according to the varying capacities and intelligence and necessities of the peoples among whom they were appointed by the Supreme Head to labor.

The sentiment awakened by a contemplation of this passage of scripture, is one of the utmost reverence, admiration and love for a Being of such wisdom and mercy.

But not only has the Lord determined the general course of civilization on the earth, but even the work of individuals, apart from His prophets, has been under His direction, as was that of Columbus, of whom we read in the Book of Mormon, as follows:

"And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles who was separated from the seed of my brethren by many waters; and beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land."^[43]

Instances of this character, however, are too numerous to mention here, but they show that not only in a general way, but in many details, the peopling of the earth has proceeded under a well-defined, predetermined plan.

Not only has the history of mankind on the earth been outlined from the beginning, but the rewards awaiting them, according to the light they have received and their obedience thereto, have been fixed. For it will be remembered from what was developed under the head of "Covenants of the Gospel," that all who have taken bodies upon the earth in the lineage of Adam, are under the same promise of obedience to "whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them," in their day and generation.

After describing the torment of those spirits who become sons of perdition, the revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, continues:

"And again, we bear record, for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ, concerning them who come forth in the resurrection of the just, 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 Priests and Kings, who have received of his fullness, and of his glory. And are Priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchisedek, 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 are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood. These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical.

"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 on 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 receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fullness of the Father; wherefore they are bodies terrestrial, and not bodies celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun.

"These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God. And now this is the end of the vision which we saw of the terrestrial, that the Lord commanded us to write while we were yet in the Spirit.

"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.

"These are they who receive not of his fullness in the eternal world, but of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the terrestrial; and the terrestrial through the ministration of the celestial; and also the celestial receive it of the administering of angels who are appointed to minister for them, or who are appointed to be ministering spirits for them, for they shall be heirs of salvation.

"And thus we saw in the heavenly vision, the glory of the telestial, *which surpasses all understanding*, and no man knows it except him to whom God has revealed it.

"And thus we saw the glory of the terrestrial, which excels in all things the glory of the telestial, even in glory, and in power, and in might, and in dominion.

"And thus we saw the glory of the celestial, which excels in all things— where God, even the Father, reigns upon his throne for ever and ever; before whose throne all things bow in humble reverence and give him glory for ever and ever. They who dwell in his presence are the church of the first born, and they see as they are seen, and know as they are known, having received of his fullness and of his grace; and he makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion.

"And the glory of the celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one.

"And the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one.

"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;

"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. When he shall deliver up the kingdom, and present it unto the Father spotless, saying—I have overcome and have trodden the wine-press alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. Then shall he be crowned with the crown of his glory, to sit on the throne of his power to reign for ever and ever.

"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."

From all of which it appears that the history of mankind was pre-arranged from beginning to end, before the foundations of the earth were laid.

XII. MAN.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS.

"Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." —II Nephi 2:25.

Many of the results of the Gospel with regard to man have been dwelt upon in the discussion up to this point, but there remain some considerations of importance yet to be detailed, particularly the object of his coming to this earth. We turn now, therefore, to a study of the special end in view under the Gospel plan, in clothing the spirit with mortality.

The purpose of man's existence here is two-fold. One object is manifest from a revelation already quoted, as follows:

"For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receiveth a fullness of joy; and when separated, man cannot receive a fullness of joy."^[44]

The spirit of man, we here learn, must become inseparably connected with element in order to receive the fullness of joy designed for him by the Gospel, therefore, he must take upon him a mortal tabernacle, and, for that reason, after having advanced in intelligence far enough to retain his first estate, he is sent to an earth. Under the Divine plan, a Savior, one who is given power to lay down His life and to take it up again, is provided, to become the first fruits of the resurrection, to open the grave, that the spirit and body may be reunited, nevermore to be separated.

Another object of our coming here is equally important, and relates to our spiritual growth. We may use a comparison.

The teacher in school, acquainted with the order in which the different powers of the mind develop in childhood, adapts his instructions to the growth in progress at any particular period. While not at all neglecting the general training of the child, he will direct his efforts particularly, at different stages of progress, to the development for example of perception, of imagination, of comparison or reason, in his pupil, as the mind under his charge grows in power. This procedure is necessary from the fact, that, as psychologists tell us, unless the powers of the mind are exercised as they develop, they remain dormant or only partially developed, as, for instance, the love of poetry or of music, if these pleasures are not cultivated in childhood.

And just so, we may be assured, is the plan of the Gospel adapted to the development of the powers of the spirit of man in the different stages of his progress through the first and second estates.

At what stage of progress, then, it may here be asked, have we now arrived; and what powers of the soul are the experiences of mortality specially designed to enlarge?

Man finds himself thrust into the world, surrounded by sorrow, injustice and poverty, and, if he contemplates these conditions without knowing the purpose of the Lord in sending him here, he may exclaim with Schopenhauer, "If God made the world, I should not care to be God." But the Gospel testifies to the mercy and wisdom and goodness of the Lord, for in it we learn that the very conditions of which the philosopher complains are designed to develop the attributes for the full growth of which the spirit is given the schooling of mortality.

Let us consider. We are here cut off from any understanding of our pre-existent state or any knowledge of the hereafter, and must perforce accept the providences of the Lord and His designs for our future welfare on trust, and so the attribute of faith is developed.

Furthermore, notwithstanding all the failures and sorrows and trials of life, we are impelled by an innate self-renewing power to press onto the end, thus exercising hope. Dr. Johnson has well said:

"It is necessary to hope, though hope should be always deluded; and its frustrations, however frequent, are yet less dreadful than its extinction."

And, again, all our environments, as children, as husbands or wives, as parents, as brothers or sisters, as rulers, as ruled, as king or shepherd, as neighbors, as citizens, call our our affections; and, so is love developed.

The attributes of faith, hope and love, or, as Wagner has it, in his "Simple Life," confidence, hope and kindness, are, moreover, ever spoken of by inspired writers as those most to be cultivated.

And, too, these qualities and the means for their exercise are universal. They obtain alike with all classes, in all ages of the world.

Man, therefore, is placed upon the earth to develop spiritually, in faith, in hope and in love, but most of all, as is consonant with the part that sentiment played in the inception of the Gospel, in love. Accordingly, Paul exclaims:

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."^[45]

Further and final evidence as to the importance of the cultivation of love is found in the reply of the Savior to the lawyer who asked, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" for, "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."^[46]

That there is a reason, and what the reason is, for the paramount importance of the cultivation of the attributes of faith, hope and love in the present stage of our progress, is disclosed in a remarkable passage in the Book of Mormon. It reads as follows:

"Behold, I will show unto them that faith, hope and charity, bringeth unto me—the fountain of all righteousness. And I, Moroni, having heard these words, was comforted, and said, O Lord, thy righteous will be done, for I know that thou workest unto the children of men according to their faith; for the brother of Jared said unto the mountain Zerin, remove, and it was removed. And if he had not had faith, it would not have moved; wherefore thou workest after men have faith, for thus didst thou manifest thyself unto thy disciples. For after they had faith, and did speak in thy name, thou didst show thyself unto them in great power.

"And I also remember that thou hast said that thou hast prepared a house for man; yea, even among the mansions of thy Father, in which man might have more excellent hope; wherefore man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared.

"And again I remember that thou hast said that thou hast loved the world, even unto the laying down of thy life for the world, that thou mightest take it again to prepare a place for the children of men. And now I know that this love which thou hast had for the children of men, is charity; wherefore, except men shall have charity, they cannot inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy Father."^[47]

We may here summarize the last topic:

Why is man thrown into the world without a knowledge of his pre-existence, of the purpose for which he is here, or of his destination?

That faith may be engendered in his bosom.

Why is his life made up of failures, of disappointments, of sorrow?

That he may cultivate hope.

Why is he surrounded by the ties of kinship; why are sickness and sorrow and death all about him; why are care and responsibility the portion of each individual in every station in life?

That the attribute of sympathy, of affection, of love, may be developed within him.

Why does he stand in particular need at this stage of his advancement of faith, hope and love?

He has kept his first estate and is well on the way toward his trial for the keeping of his second estate, where he will require the attributes of a God, and these three, faith, hope and love, are the means by the exercise of which he must acquire the power to reach that exalted destination.

Herein is the justice of God in His dealings with mankind made manifest; for, in the light of eternity, who should care for worldly honors or a seat among the mighty? The poor and humble have within their reach every facility for advancement that is vouchsafed to any, in this state of probation. Indeed, it would seem that even more opportunity to gain eternal riches is afforded the meek of the earth than is given to those most highly favored of the world.

The Gospel is, therefore, at once the true incentive to, and the sufficient justification of, the simple, the courageous, the hopeful and the kindly life.

CONCLUSION.

What, then, of our text? Does the Gospel, as revealed by the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith, furnish a thoughtful man with "a firm center about which he can organize his knowledge of the world?" Could any man originate a system of philosophy at once so simple, so reasonable, so comprehensive and so beneficent? Do not the answers it gives to the questions of life bear all the marks of Divinity?

In answer, we shall here revert, both by way of summary, and by way of conclusion, to those universal questions with which we opened this discussion, and answer them in behalf of each son and daughter of Adam.

Who am I? Whence am I? Why am I here? Whither am I going?

From the time when, as an intelligent, self-existent, independent being, abroad in boundless space, surrounded by exhaustless, indestructible matter, with limitless time in which to operate, I received a knowledge of the Gospel plan which was formulated by the Great God who upholds

this world and all worlds and all things by His power, I have been pursuing the course of advancement therein provided; under the covenant that if I shall render obedience to Him in all things, I shall become like Him; or that, failing in so high an exaltation, I shall have glory added upon my head forever, in degree according to my faithfulness.

Having kept my first estate, I am here to take upon my spirit a body, thus inseparably connecting spirit and element; and to exercise particularly the attributes of faith, hope and love; that in so doing I may gain power, and may thereby be enabled to keep my second estate.

From this state of probation I am going to the world of spirits for a season, and later to a reunion with my body, when I shall be given all the glory I am capable of receiving; conditioned always upon my faithfulness to the light the Lord has given me here.

For this is the message of the Gospel to each soul in the world:

Be true to the light God gives you and perform with integrity the work He has assigned you, exercising faith, hope and charity; so doing, you may rest your soul secure in the arms of His love.

Footnotes

[1] "In this series of light rays it is plain that there are two gaps, or unknown regions, regarding which we have to confess total ignorance relative to the part they play in the economy of the universe. May there not exist vibrations still more rapid? That question we are not permitted to answer. Be that as it may, the invisible rays are incomparably more numerous than the visible ones. Our eyes thus see almost nothing of that which exists. Our assumed knowledge is only an insignificant islet in the midst of the ocean of the infinite."—Sir William Crookes.

[2] Introduction.

[3] Pearl of Great Price, Book of Abraham, Diagram No. 2, Fig. 1. No attempt is made here, nor in other references to this passage of Scripture, to place a limitation to the activities of the Great Creator. It is sufficient to say that He has given us information so far back and no farther.

[4] Book of Abraham, 3:1-4, and Diagram No. 2.

[5] Doctrine and Covenants 68:12.

[6] Great First Cause, Par. 1.

[7] Compendium, p. 287.

[8] Brown's Metaphysics p. 220.

[9] Book of Abraham 3:18.

[10] Doctrine and Covenants 93:33.

[11] Journal of Discourses, VI., p. 6.

[12] 1 Corinthians 15:44.

[13] Pearl of Great Price, Book of Moses 3:5-7.

[14] Doctrine and Covenants Sec. 29:31, 32.

[15] Sermon by Pres. Joseph F. Smith, at the funeral services of Wm. C. Staines, 1881.

[16] The late James S. Brown, in telling his experience at the time his leg was amputated, related that his spirit left his body, and, as the spirit hovered above the mutilated and lifeless remains, he could see that, while the leg of flesh and bones had been removed, yet the spiritual body remained whole, and the place from which the leg had been removed was still occupied by the spiritual leg, over which the knife and saw of the surgeon had no power. There was the spirit, the life, hovering above the death bed, there was the spiritual body only partially enveloped by the mutilated remains, and there was the mortal body dismembered and cold in death. The common experience of those who have had any limb amputated, that they, without thinking, try to use the dismembered part, is to the same effect.

[17] Book of Abraham 3:18.

[18] Journal of Discourses VI., p. 6.

- [19] Book of Abraham, Diagram No. 2, Fig. 1.
- [20] Journal of Discourses VI., First Discourse.
- [21] Pearl of Great Price, Book of Moses 1:30-39.
- [22] Book of Abraham 3:26.
- [23] Book of Abraham 3:27, 28.
- [24] Sec. 29:36, 37.
- [25] Book of Abraham 3:21-25.
- [26] Sec. 84:35-40.
- [27] Sec. 93:33, 34.
- [28] Alma 11:45.
- [29] Alma 13:7.
- [30] Sec. 132:19, 20.
- [31] Book of Abraham, Diagram No. 2, Fig. 1.
- [32] Book of Abraham, Diagram No. 2, Fig. 2.
- [33] Pearl of Great Price, Book of Moses 7:40.
- [34] Compendium, p. 287.
- [35] Doc. and Cov. 1:36.
- [36] Sec. 88:17-26.
- [37] Doc. and Cov. 130:9.
- [38] Doc. and Cov. 39:24, 25.
- [39] Doc. and Cov. Sec. 77.
- [40] Book of Abraham 3:22, 24.
- [41] Sec. 107:56.
- [42] Alma 29:8.
- [43] 1 Nephi 13:12.
- [44] Doc. and Cov. 93:33, 34.
- [45] I Cor. 13:13.
- [46] Matt. 22:35-39.
- [47] Ether 12:28-34.

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