Religion
A Journey

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Introduction

Ah what is a life that cannot be lived? Who is to say it will come and go as you please? No one has the ability to say such things. It is but a false narrative from which you can easily fall down a shaft and die. Did not the poet say:

> Prick us do we not bleed.[1]

Yes, that is what happens in life when you haven't the faintest idea of where you are headed. Perhaps it is more easily meant if one were to understand that which we cannot easily see for we look through a mirror darkly.[2]

To say that we have the full truth, as it were, is to feign ignorance on whatever there is other people are able to bring to us as a whole. We are not to push them away but embrace them, accept them and what they have to bring to the table. yet we get caught up in our own ways that we do not know where to begin and where to end. We are at a loss in this time in life, and it is a pity.

Not everyone wants to believe in the same ideals as you do. Not everyone wants to have the same thoughts as you do. Not everyone is the same. Yes we can be *one* as it were, but not everyone comes from the same background. We are all different in our own ways. Should that alone not be celebrated? Diversity in numbers and types of people? Different cultures and backgrounds? We can each learn something from one another.

Life has always had a problem with it. There were thoughts that just wanted to come forth no matter what. Sometimes those thougths got me in trouble. That was usually the case actually. Then there were times where thoughts didn't matter. Words were said and life continued onward without problems. This life is but a life in which we live. There is no other reason for it than for us to experience joy and pain. Sometimes those experiences occur at the same time. Other times, they are few and far apart. Either way, this life is what we make of it.

It should be noted text cited from the Bible is from the King James Version.

[1] Shakespeare - The Merchant of Venice
[2] 1 Corinthians 13:12

Chapter 1

Indoctrination

I never thought I would end up writing something like this. I suppose it was really inevitable. Truth claims come and go like a dime a dozen and everyday there are more people seeking the truth and yet they find more questions. Official authorities don't ever have any answers regarding these truth questions. So where does that leave us? I suppose it leaves us waiting and wanting something to believe in that is true. Something to be able to grab hold of and say "yes, this is it!"

Instead we are left to that which we cannot tell is truth. It feels like something that isn't truth. Something so beyond the truth that we simply cannot reason with it anymore. It is one to drive a person mad.

A little bit about me. I was born in the covenant. That is, my parents were sealed in the temple when I was born. I grew up in the church my entire life. I served a mission, got married in the temple. Kept my nose clean for most of it. Sure there were bumps in the road as people have. But nothing I didn't overcome through the proper channels.

I first ran into what is known as "anti" material while on my mission. An investigator had some pamplets. We explained it was incorrect information and tossed it in the trash without even looking at it. Hey, we were there doing the Lord's work right? So yeah, it felt like the right thing to do. Toss it away don't look back.

Oh how I would love to go back in time to that moment. I would have read through it. Looked it over and saw what there was to see. But I was playing the good role of missionary. There was no reason for me not to. Little did I know I would end up with the knowledge that I have years later. What a fool I had been.

I have never felt comfortable with the church. I don't know if it's just because I didn't enjoy going to church as a kid? I don't know. I do know that when I began studying things out in my mind from the resources, as we're directed to from the scriptures.[1] I know there are issues with church history and some of

[1] D&C 9:8

the doctrine taught by the LDS faith.

There's no denying it. How can I deny the witness I have received regarding it? I can't. I must move forward with my head high knowing that I am doing the right thing with my life.

The interesting part about all of this is all the opposition to researching the truth. People in church roll their eyes when they hear that people are having issues with church history. If there wasn't anything that was so alarming about church history, I suppose people wouldn't eyeroll. There's a reason for all of this isn't there? A reason research is causing such a fuss? I would like to think there is. If not? Then all of this research is being done in vain.

Praying for the truth has never been beneficial to me. I have taken Moroni's challenge[2] as it were, and nothing ever came of it. Did I simply lack faith because I didn't receive an answer? Did I not pray hard enough? What exactly was the reason the heavens fell silent as I offered up my prayer?

We are taught that in order to receive revelation from God we have to pray. We have to be humble enough to allow God to answer our prayers. I don't know how much praying I can do on the subject before I grow weary in prayer unto God. If He is there and he is listening? I haven't heard a word from Him regarding any of this.

Feeling that the heavens are closed off to you is not a comforting feeling at all. It is a lonely feeling. A feeling that no one is out there listening to your prayers and that they simply don't care. If that's the case? I'm not sure I even want to be part of this church any longer. It feels like I've wasted my time already.

How long must a person pray and continue to pray for truth before the answers come? Feeling alone because of it all is not beneficial. God has promised He will never leave us, and yet "common" people such as myself have not been able to communicate with the heavens as it were. I'm not asking for a sign, because you're not supposed to ask for signs. But it would be nice to have a concrete answer about all of this. Even if it is from church leaders. Yet all they say is to continue having faith. Nothing is needed beyond that. It's a shame really that they won't answer the questions people have. What harm is done by answering a question or two?

It's interesting, people deem certain materials "anti". I call them that because they call the materials that. In reality is truth "anti"? Who's to claim what is "anti" vs. what is actual truth?

Shall we get a definition of "anti"? I think we shall. Google states:

> an-ti
>
> preposition
>
> 1. opposed to; against
>
> adjective *informal*
>
> 1. opposed

[2] Moroni 10:3-5

noun *informal*

1. a person opposed to a particular policy, activity, or idea

There are days, I admit, it would be nice to be able to simply go back and unlearn all of this. To be able to forget about everything I ever read. Yet the truth is out there and what has been read and seen, cannot be unseen or unread. It's not an easy road. To say I take any of this lightly would be false.

So here we are. Simply trying to figure out the truth of all things as it were. Ask questions when necessary, and hopefully have the ability to continue to move forward no matter what obstacale gets in our way. Not that a lot of obstacles are expected, yet here I am simply trying to find the truth.

If the truth is found? Then I will accept it without hesitation. If the truth is not found and all of this is for naught? Then I shall chalk it up to a learning experience and will rightfully shred the data and toss it into the trash. It's not a difficult thought process.

Either all of it is true or none of it is true. There really can be no partials when it comes to the Kingdom of God can there? If that were the case, then God would not be perfect. But He is a perfect being. There can be no chaos or confusion when it comes to the truth.[3]

There is a term called "controlling the narrative". Which means you tell the story your way before someone else tells it. Sometimes if the other person gets to telling the story, they can tell the story better. By "controlling the narrative", you are able to keep things to a more intimiate level and keep people coming back to you instead of other sources.[4]

This is what the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints attempts to do, but they execute it quite poorly. Instead of being upfront and open with people, they tell people not to worry and to have more faith, which pushes people away to the point where they seek out other sources for the truth.

You can probably see where this might run into issues down the road for people. For the longest time, the church boasts of a rich history. They claim to have the truth, the fullness of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, and the truth is meant for all to learn from. However, when critics of the church come forward with issues or questions regarding the truth the church backs into a corner and pulls out the claws. You will either support their narriative or you will be quiet about the subject. There is no room for debate.

Kyle Eggleston
May 14, 2018
Thinking Through The Light

[3] 1 Corinthians 14:33 - For God is not the *author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

[4] See usatoday.com, The importance of 'controlling the narrative', Michael Wolff

Chapter 2

Regarding Questions

Lawrence E. Corbridge stated the following:

> 1. Is there a God who is our Father?
> 2. Is Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Savior of the world?
> 3. Was Joseph Smith a prophet?
> 4. Is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the kingdom of God on the earth?
>
> If you answer the primary questions, the secondary questions get answered too or they pale in significance and you can deal with things you understand and things you don't understand, things you agree with and things you don't agree with without jumping ship altogether.[1]

Yet just a few years ago, we were told by M. Russel Ballard:

> Gone are the days when a student asked an honest question and a teacher responded, "Don't worry about it!" Gone are the days when a student raised a sincere concern and a teacher bore his or her testimony as a response intended to avoid the issue.[2]

So we are told by an Apostle of the Lord that sincere questions are okay to have. I've been told this by people in the ward as well. Yet another GA says that if you just answer the primary questions, the rest of the questions don't matter. Which seems to be conflicting statements in my opinion.

[1] What to do with your questions, according to 1 General Authority who's an expert on anti-Church materials, The Church News

[2] The Opportunities and Responsibilities of CES Teachers in the 21st Century, LDS.org

Chapter 3

Things Change

> In the beginning was the word. The word was with God. The word was of God.[1]

Jesus Christ was the *word* that is spoken of.

It could be said that Jesus was God. But only in the sense that he was the God of the Old Testament.[8] However, that's not how the words were originally written:

> In the beginning was the gospel preached through the Son. And the gospel was the word, and the word was with the Son, and the Son was with God, and the Son was of God.[2]

So, why the change? We're told that many plain and precious truths of the bible had been removed and lost,[3] from the *"great and abominable church"*.

There was a council of Carthage (397) in which it was decided the books to be considered canon for the Bible. The books were named and no books have been added to the Bible since.

Who was this "great and abominable church"?

That question is still up for debate. Obviously it's the church of the devil. But is there a church standing today that classifys as that? I'd rather not go into that. We know what Bruce R. McConkie thought about it in Mormon Doctrine, that theory had later changed, and was removed from the book completely. Mormon Doctrine is no longer in Deseret Bookstore shelves. I wonder why that is.[4]

With changing times come other changes that people make. I suppose this article is all about change isn't it.

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[1] John 1:1

[2] JST John 1:1

[3] 1 Nephi 13:26-27

[4] [Under the heading, "Church of the Devil," Apostle Bruce R. McConkie lists:] "The Roman Catholic Church specifically—singled out, set apart, described, and designated as being 'most abominable above all other churches' (I Ne. 13:5)" (Mormon Doctrine, 1958, 129).

People change as time changes. What was right back in the 1800s or the 1600s, isn't right now. Hanging a witch, for example, people got that from Exodus 22:18.[5] But, we learn from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, that it's not the word witch.[6] Quite different between a witch and a murderer right?

Changes happen because men polute the words of God.[7]

An example of possible change is with the first "Eve" who was known as "Lilith". There isn't much beyond what has been said about her from different sources. It is an interesting story for a possible explaination of two creation accounts in the book of Genesis. (See Appendix A)

So, why would God allow these changes? We are told He allows people to have agency, yet one would think He wouldn't allow men to pollute His holy word? I suppose it is neither here nor there. That is fine and well.

I should point out that not all changes are evil. Not all changes come from Satan, the Devil, the Father of all lies. There are some changes in life that are actually good. Some changes that come because change was needed. You can see it in history. If you don't know what kind of changes I'm talking about, seriously go crack open a history book and see all there is to see and learn about.

It should also be pointed out that I question at times. If the fullness of the gospel was restored, why does there need to be change? Why wasn't it that way from the beginning? Herein, I shall go over some changes which have occurred over the course of history.

If things need changing, I believe they shouldn't have been in their original form to begin with. But again, that is my thought process on the matter.

Speaking of many precious things taken from the bible, we do not have the whole story. There is an account of Adam and Eve attempting to commit suicide because of the wrong doings which they had done. (That is, eating of the fruit which they had been forbidden to eat.) I wonder why the Book of Adam and Eve are not in the bible but only considered part of the Apocrypha.[8]

[5] Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.
[6] Thou shalt not suffer a *murderer* to live. [JST Exodus 22:18]
[7] Mormon 8:36,38
[8] The Book of Adam and Eve, Chapter IX

Chapter 4

The Changing Bible

> We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.[1]

Presently, members of the LDS Church believe the King James Version of the Bible to be translated correctly. Well, perhaps as correct as it can be. Yet Joseph Smith made revisions to the bible and produced the Joseph Smith Translation. So, how correct exactly is the KJV Bible?

What exactly does it mean for the Bible to be translated correctly? If there are inconsistencies in the Bible, does that mean it's not been translated correctly and one shouldn't believe in it? At which point does one simply no longer believe in the Bible and believe in more modern scripture?

It's been said that questions cannot be answered by the Bible alone, but by the Book of Mormon as well. Missionaries are taught to basically push the Book of Mormon first and foremost. Where does that leave the Bible?

There are scriptures that have been placed from the Bible into the Book of Mormon that don't match up with the Joseph Smith Translation. If Lehi gathered the plates before translators could create the Bible and put it together, shouldn't the verses in the Book of Mormon be closer to that of the Joseph Smith Translation? If not, then the books Lehi gathered had already been corrupted long before translaters even got hold of the records.

An interesting change from the KJV Bible to Joseph Smith's Bible is this:

> All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.[2]

But, if we were to look at the Joseph Smith Translation of this verse, we would get:

[1] 8th Article Of Faith
[2] Matthew 11:27

> All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and they to whom the Son will reveal himself; they shall see the Father also.[3]

Is this not saying that Jesus is the Father, the Eternal God? Sounds like it. A similar statement is found on the title page of the Book of Mormon:

> And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations[4]

Sounds like a trinitarian view now doesn't it?
Then in Luke, we find the following:

> All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.[5]

Again, we find a little bit of a difference in the JST:

> All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth that the Son is the Father, and the Father is the Son, but him to whom the Son will reveal it.[6]

Another interesting change, and another insight into Joseph's thought that Christ and God were the same being?
The Bible itself seems to uphold this single thought:

> Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
>
> If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.
>
> Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.
>
> Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?
>
> Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.
>
> Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

[3] JST Matthew 11:28
[4] Book of Mormon Title Page
[5] Luke 10:22
[6] JST Luke 10:23

> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.
>
> And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
>
> If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.[7]

[7] John 14:6-14

Chapter 5

What's In A Name

> Members 'offend' Jesus and please the devil when they use the term 'Mormon,' President Nelson says[1]

According to President Nelson, the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

> Using common nicknames such as "Mormon church," "LDS Church" or the "Church of the Latter-day Saints," Nelson said, "... is a major victory for Satan."[2]

So God waited 188 years to clarify the name of His church when it wasn't being said correctly even back in Joseph Smith's day? People were being called Mormon's for a long time. President Nelson isn't new to this way of thinking, he gave a talk in 1990 titled "Thus Shall My Church Be Called". Six months later, he was called out by Gordon B. Hinckley in a talk titled "Mormon Should Mean 'More Good'". Hinckley said that the name Mormon is fine.

So have we been led astray by these prophets, seers, and revelators all of these years? Remember when President Ezra Taft Benson sang "I'm a Mormon Boy" in General Conference? Was he worshipping Satan? That's one of my most favorite memories of him and now I am expected to think he was upsetting Jesus and God.

[1] Salt Lake Tribune Article Title
[2] Salt Lake Tribune Article

Chapter 6

Race and the Eternal Salvation Ban

Long ago, the LDS Church stated that the negro race weren't allowed to hold the Holy Priesthood of God. They weren't able to attend the temple either. This lasted for several years. Then change came about, and in 1978 a revelation was passed down that lifted this ban.

Before the change, presidents and apostles of the church had no issue stating in no uncertain terms that the ban was of God. It was god's doing, the Lord put the ban in place and it was His purpose for doing so. That it was doctrine.

> Ham, through Egyptus, continued the curse which was placed upon the seed of Cain. Because of that curse this dark race was separated and isolated from all the rest of Adam's posterity before the flood, and since that time the same condition has continued, and they have been 'despised among all people.' This **doctrine** did not originate with President Brigham Young but was taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith ... we all know it is due to his teachings that the negro today is barred from the Priesthood.[1]

However, according to the Gospel Topic Essays, we learn:

> Over time, Church leaders and members advanced many theories to explain the priesthood and temple restrictions. None of these explanations is accepted today as the official doctrine of the Church.[2]

Others, like John Taylor, taught more ... unsettling things:

> And after the flood we are told that the curse that had been pronounced upon Cain was continued through Ham's wife, as he had

[1] The Way to Perfection, pages 110-111
[2] Race and the Priesthood, LDS.org

> married a wife of that seed. And why did it pass through the flood? because it was necessary that the devil should have a representation upon the earth as well as God ...[3]

This was focused on more than once:

> Why is it, in fact, that we should have a devil? Why did the Lord not kill him long ago? Because he could not do without him. He needed the devil and a great many of those who do his bidding to keep men straight, that we may learn to place our dependence on God, and trust in Him, and to observe his laws and keep his commandments. When he destroyed the inhabitants of the antediluvian world, he suffered a descendant of Cain to come through the flood in order that he might be properly represented upon the earth.[4]

Then there were these quotes:

> Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so.[5]

Some taught that it was of God and was the Lord's doing:

> Negroes in this life are denied the Priesthood; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty. (Abra. 1:20-27.) The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them... negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned, particularly the priesthood and the temple blessings that flow there from, but this inequality is not of man's origin. It is the Lord's doing, is based on his eternal laws of justice, and grows out of the lack of Spiritual valiance of those concerned in their first estate.[6]

The church even presented a proclamtion out to the world about it.

> The attitude of the Church with reference to Negroes remains as it has always stood. It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord, on which is founded the doctrine of the Church from the days of its organization, to the effect that Negroes may become members of the Church but that they are not entitled to the priesthood at the present time. [7]

[3] Journal of Discourses, 22:304
[4] Journal of Discourses, 23:336
[5] Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, Vol 10, page 110
[6] Mormon Doctrine, 1966, pp. 527-528
[7] Statement of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August 17, 1949

So it was a commandment from the Lord and doctrine at the time. Interesting.

There are several more I could include in this paper, but I believe these are sufficient for now.

Personally, reading such quotes turns my stomach. I do not understand how a prophet of God could speak like that. If we are truely to love our brothers and sisters as Christ taught, one would think that these teachings wouldn't have occurred.

After the ban, they said it was folklore. The reasons for doing so was because of man.

How is it one generation of prophets and apostles can call an older generation false on their teachings? Teachings people followed because they were following the prophet?

Brigham Young stated that he was afraid people would have too much faith in the presidency of the church and him as a prophet that they wouldn't ask God if something was right.[8]

Well, if you were all for a black person getting the priesthood, or questioned your leaders about it because you felt that was the correct course of action...you were facing excommunication.

So change can come, but it can also come at quite a price.

I think it is okay to ask this. If the ban wasn't of God as church leaders are now saying, then why did God allow it? Why would God allow such a thing to take place? If it was indeed "folklore", one would think God wouldn't allow prophets and apostles of the church to allow people to think the negro would never receive the priesthood and temple ordinances.

There are so many quotes on the matter it sickens me to think about it.

Even after the ban, this "folklore" was still taught on the lds.org website that it was from God as far forward as 2010.

> Ever since biblical times, the Lord has designated through His prophets who could receive the priesthood and other blessings of the gospel. Among the tribes of Israel, for example, only men of the tribe of Levi were given the priesthood and allowed to officiate in certain ordinances. Likewise, during the Savior's earthly ministry, gospel blessings were restricted to the Jews. Only after a revelation to the Apostle Peter were the gospel and priesthood extended to others (see Acts 10:1-33; 14:23; 15:6–8).[9]

But it is all cleared up by one remark by an apostle. Bruce R. McConkie:

> Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomsoever has said in days past

[8] I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are lead by him. [Brigham Young, (12 January 1862) Journal of Discourses 9:150]

[9] Priesthood Ordination before 1978, lds.org

> that is contrary to the present revelation. We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world.[10]

In The Deseret News, we find a quote from Jeffry R. Holland:

> Likewise, the current leadership of the church has spoken on the need to abandon the racist teachings that long circulated within Mormonism regarding the ban. Elder Jeffery R. Holland, a current member of the Council of the Twelve, recently said in a public interview "One clear-cut position is that the folklore must never be perpetuated... I think almost all of (these teachings) were inadequate and/or wrong."[11]

If change can be simply accepted based on a revelation from God then that is good right? Why did it take a revelation to change policy? The church claims it was a policy not doctrine. Even though it was taught as doctrine throughout the course of history.

Do the lines between doctrine and policy blur at times? Perhaps more change?

There are scriptures that reference to the people's skin being turned dark due to sin or not following God's will while on the Earth. Cain was the first man to go dark because of murder. A mark of darkness was placed upon man in the event that anyone would come across him.[12]

In the Book of Mormon we learn about the Lamanites and the Nephites. The Lamanites had the dark skin:

> And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was set upon their fathers, which was a curse upon them because of their transgression and their rebellion against their brethren, who consisted of Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph, and Sam, who were just and holy men.[13]

God says that the cursing is so the wicked people wouldn't be enticing to those who followed the commandments of God.

> And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity. For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, that they had become like unto a flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them.[14]

[10] All Are Alike Unto God, Bruce R. McConkie, Aug 18, 1978

[11] Deseret News, Race, folklore and Mormon doctrine, Nathan B. Oman, February 29, 2012

[12] And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.[Genesis 4:15]

[13] Alma 3:6

[14] 2 Nephi 5:21

Before 1978, there was certain things taught. One of those teachings was that the dark skinned people were less valiant in the pre-existence. This has been shot down. There were no fence sitters in the pre-existence in the war in heaven. Either you chose Jesus or you chose Lucifer.[15]

Now you'll notice I called this an "Eternal Salvation Ban" not simplay a "Priesthood Ban" as the church tends to simplify it. No, it's more than that. It was a temple ban. People of color weren't able to be sealed to their loved ones, which is one of the main points of LDS Doctrine. The idea of eternal families.

Feels like a slap to the face of those wanting to be sealed to their spouses, children, parents, loved ones etc. If you claim to have revelation from God and part of that is that the whole human race has the ability to be together forever, why would God allow for man to withold that from his children?

6.1 1978 Revelation

Then in 1978, there was a change of policy.

Now, the church considers it a revelation. But in an interview with the apostle LeGrand Richards, it sounds quite different.

> WALTERS: Now when President Kimball read this little announcement or paper, was that the same thing that was released to the press?
>
> RICHARDS: Yes.
>
> WALTERS: There wasn't a special document as a "revelation", that he had and wrote down?
>
> RICHARDS: We discussed it in our meeting. What else should we say besides that announcement? And we decided that was sufficient; that no more needed to be said.[16]

There was no "Thus saith the Lord" in the Official Declaration 2. So I question you, dear reader, was it a revelation? I dare say it wasn't. I dare say it was a policy change. I dare say what was once taught as doctrine and taught as it was from God was changed by the pressures and will of man.

Speaking of Official Declaration 2, here is the text in its entirety.

> To Whom It May Concern:
>
> On September 30, 1978, at the 148th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the following was presented by President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church:

[15] Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, for example, wrote in 1907 that the belief was "quite general" among Mormons that "the Negro race has been cursed for taking a neutral position in that great contest." Yet this belief, he admitted, "is not the official position of the Church, [and is] merely the opinion of men." Joseph Fielding Smith to Alfred M. Nelson, Jan. 31, 1907, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

[16] Interview with Apostle LeGrand Richards, By Wesley P. Walters and Chris Vlachos, 16th August 1978, Church Office Building (Recorded on Cassette)

In early June of this year, the First Presidency announced that a revelation had been received by President Spencer W. Kimball extending priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members of the Church. President Kimball has asked that I advise the conference that after he had received this revelation, which came to him after extended meditation and prayer in the sacred rooms of the holy temple, he presented it to his counselors, who accepted it and approved it. It was then presented to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who unanimously approved it, and was subsequently presented to all other General Authorities, who likewise approved it unanimously.

President Kimball has asked that I now read this letter:

June 8, 1978

To all general and local priesthood officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world:

Dear Brethren:

As we have witnessed the expansion of the work of the Lord over the earth, we have been grateful that people of many nations have responded to the message of the restored gospel, and have joined the Church in ever-increasing numbers. This, in turn, has inspired us with a desire to extend to every worthy member of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords.

Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God's eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood, and witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been withheld, we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows there from, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. Priesthood leaders are instructed to follow the policy of carefully interviewing all candidates for ordination to either the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness.

We declare with soberness that the Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth who will hearken to the voice of his authorized servants, and prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel.

> Sincerely yours,
>
> SPENCER W. KIMBALL
>
> N. ELDON TANNER
>
> MARION G. ROMNEY
>
> The First Presidency
>
> Recognizing Spencer W. Kimball as the prophet, seer, and revelator, and president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is proposed that we as a constituent assembly accept this revelation as the word and will of the Lord. All in favor please signify by raising your right hand. Any opposed by the same sign.
>
> The vote to sustain the foregoing motion was unanimous in the affirmative.
>
> Salt Lake City, Utah, September 30, 1978.[17]

It is a wonderful thing that this ban was lifted. It is a shame it ever was in place to begin with. Imagine all of those years of racism and hatred that could have been done without. People believed God spoke and they followed Him. The prophet led them and he couldn't be wrong...even when he was saying that those under the ban would never receive the priesthood in this life.

If they were speaking as men, which I truely hope they were, why would God allow such a thing? Why would He allow such teachings to go on for so many years? I ask it all again. Why?

There are many things in this life that don't add up or make sense. I suppose this is one of them. To understand it in another life, to have to wait to be able to understand it in another life? Why would that be? It would seem with the changing narrative, dismissing those who have spoken "as prophets of God", seems to downplay it all. The church doesn't want to come off as racist. That is understandable. But instead of brushing it under a rug, why not apologize?

Was there ever a full formal apology regarding it? Or was this new "revelation" simply all there was to make things better? It feels like they put a band-aid over a wound simply to let it heal and go away eventually.

The interesting thing about history, it doesn't just go away. Those teachings of former prophets are still around. With the internet and this day in age, those teachings will never be lost. No matter how much people wish it would go away, it will never be lost. People will always be able to find it, research it, and learn what happened and form an opinion on it; after they have read all of the facts.

I know people always say, well that's old church history. That has nothing to do with current prophets and apostles. The 70s weren't that long ago. let's not forget that.

Okay, you want something more today? What about 2018? Is that more current enough?

[17] Official Declaration 2, Doctrine and Covenants

During the Be One celebration of 40 years since the Race and Eternal Salvation ban was lifted, here's what one of the current general authorities said about it:

> I observed the pain and frustration experienced by those who suffered these restrictions and those who criticized them and sought for reasons. I studied the reasons then being given and could not feel confirmation of the truth of any of them. As part of my prayerful study, I learned that, in general, the Lord rarely gives reasons for the commandments and directions He gives to His servants. I determined to be loyal to our prophetic leaders and to pray — as promised from the beginning of these restrictions — that the day would come when all would enjoy the blessings of priesthood and temple.[18]

So, there you have it. A current leader admitting that he couldn't find truth in teachings of previous leaders. He also said that it was a commandment from the Lord that the ban be there, not simply racism in the church. A commandment from the Lord. He buckled down and followed the prophet...even though it was morally wrong to do so. To follow blindly is not wise, to learn and seek for yourself and then to rise up if needed is better. If this is what we are taught, then I want no part of it.

The church keeps saying that God is no respector of persons, yet it was God who instituted the ban. It was a commandment from God that those of African descent could not receive the priesthood or blessings of the temple. If God is no respector of persons, and all of His children are equal in His eyes, why did He command such a ban to be made? Why did it take a "revelation" to make the ban null and void? Couldn't someone in the first presidency simply said, this is wrong and we must put a stop to it? I dare say they could have. I even dare say they should have!

Again, God tells us that we should not be commanded in all things. Surley this is one of thise things we shouldn't have been commanded to do or not do! I believe a revelation wasn't necessary in any of this. The scriptures say to love your neighbor as yourself, that is one of the great commandments. Because of the Racial Ban, there was no love as far as race was concerned. There are numerous quotes about racism in the early church. I have listed them above already. There are more than those of course but that sample is more than enough.

6.2 Lawsuits

> In July 1974, the NAACP filed a suit against the Boy Scouts of America on the grounds that in LDS troops ... the deacons quorum president was automatically the patrol leader, meaning that

[18] https://www.ldschurchnews.com/latest/2018-06-01/president-oaks-full-remarks-from-the-lds-churchs-be-one-celebration-47280

> an African-American Scout could not gain patrol leader experience. When the church realized the inappropriateness of such restriction ... it dropped the policy and the court dismissed the suit. President [Spencer] Kimball had been subpoenaed to appear for deposition and bring "all church records and writings concerning the policy and position of the church regarding blacks." He felt greatly relieved at avoiding that burden and the inevitable adverse publicity. [19]

This incident was included in the exommunication of Byron Marchant who cast a vote against a leader of the church. He was the leader of such a scout troop. But because he opposed church policy regarding blacks and the priesthood openly, he was excommunicated.[20]

6.3 White and Delightsome

From the 1940s to the year 2000, there was an Indian Placement Program in the church. It was believed by some that Native Americans in this program would become white and delightsome like the white church membrers they were placed with. Spencer W. Kimball said the following:

> The day of the Lamanites is nigh. For years they have been growing delightsome, and they are now becoming white and delightsome, as they were promised. In this picture of the twenty Lamanite missionaries, fifteen of the twenty were as light as Anglos; five were darker but equally delightsome. The children in the home placement program in Utah are often lighter than their brothers and sisters in the hogans on the reservation.... At one meeting a father and mother and their sixteen-year-old daughter were present, the little member girl-sixteen sitting between the dark father and mother, and it was evident she was several shades lighter than her parents on the same reservation, in the same Hogan, subject to the same sun and wind and weather. There was the doctor in a Utah city who for two years had had an Indian boy in his home who stated that he was some shades lighter than the younger brother just coming into the program from the reservation. These young members of the Church are changing to whiteness and delightsomeness. One white elder jokingly said that he and his companion were donating blood regularly to the hospital in the hope that the process might be accelerated.[21]

The program wasn't successful and the church discontinued it.

[19] Salt Lake Tribune, LDS President Kimball – now you can read the rest of the story, Peggy Fletcher Stack, January 29, 2010

[20] See The Daily Reporter (Dover, Ohio) 15 Oct 1977

[21] Prophet Spencer W. Kimball, General Conference, Oct. 1960

Chapter 7

As God now is, man may be

As was taught from teachings of a certain president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Lorenzo Snow taught:

> As man now is, God once was:
>
> As God now is, man may be.[1]

This appears to be another thing has has gone under some change? For according to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint's official news page,[2] we don't follow that teaching anymore.

Let's pull a quote directly from a FAQ on that site:

> **Do Latter-day Saints believe they can become "gods"?**
>
> Latter-day Saints believe that God wants us to become like Him. But this teaching is often misrepresented by those who caricature the faith. The Latter-day Saint belief is no different than the biblical teaching, which states, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:16-17). Through following Christ's teachings, Latter-day Saints believe all people can become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).[3]

If church members are not taught that we can become Gods, what was the revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 76 for? It teaches of the three kingdoms of God, specifically the Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telestial kingdoms.

There's a scripture in that, verse 58 that states:

> Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God—[4]

[1] In Eliza R. Snow Smith, Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow (1884), 46; see also "The Grand Destiny of Man," Deseret Evening News, July 20, 1901, 22.

[2] http://mormonnewsroom.com

[3] https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/mormonism-101

[4] D&C 76:58

Then there's the scripture in section 132:

> 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 this 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 forever 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, and the angels are subject unto them.[5]

This is describing those who belong to the Celestial Kingdom. If we are not to become Gods, as is stated in the Mormon Newsroom article, then what is it? Which source does one believe pertaining to their eternal salvation, given that they "come forth in the resurrection of the just."[6]

Past prophets speaking vs current policy teaching. Which is true and which is false? Again, why a change? Why can't the church stand boldly in what they have taught to be the truth and continue with it? Why must changes need to be made?

If God is the same yesterday, today, and forever why does He change? Is it simply because times change? It is taught that God must follow the laws of science and the other material laws when it comes to creation etc., yet if He changes things now, or allows men to change things, how are we supposed to know He won't change things after we have died?

> For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing?
>
> And now, if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a god who doth vary, and in whom there is shadow of changing, then have ye imagined up unto yourselves a god who is not a God of miracles.[7]

[5] D&C 132:19-20
[6] D&C 76:50
[7] Book of Mormon 9:9-10

So, which is it? Is God a God of mircales? Or is He changing as the times here on earth see fit?

In the book Gospel Principles, in a chapter on Exaltation, it once said:

> **WHAT IS EXALTATION?**
>
> Exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life that God lives. He lives in great glory. He is perfect. He possesses all knowledge and all wisdom. He is the father of spirit children. He is a creator. We can become Gods like our Heavnly Father. This is exaltation.
>
> If we prove faithful and obedient to all the commandments of the Lord, we will live in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom of heaven. We will become exalted, just like our Heavenly Father. Exaltation is the highest reward that our Heavenly Father can give his children. The Lord has said that exaltation is the greatest gift of all the gifts of God (see D&C 14:7).[4, pp. 289-290]

That text was from a 1979 revised edition of the book, originally recommended to missionaries as part of the Missionary Reference Library. I carred it on my mission and have access to the book. When compared to a later version, the narriative has changed. I will put an elipses in to show where the change is:

> **What is exaltation?**
>
> Exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life God lives. He lives in great glory. He is perfect. He possesses all knowledge and all wisdom. He is the Father of spirit children. He is a creator. We can become [...] like our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation.
>
> If we prove faithful to the Lord, we will live in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom of heaven. We will become exalted, to live with our Heavenly Father in eternal families. Exaltation is the greatest gift that Heavenly Father can give His children (see D&C 14:7).[5, pp. 275–280]

You'll notice they took out the word Gods in that first paragraph. It has changed from telling us that we can become Gods to just that we can become like our Heavenly Father. No promise of Godhood there.

The second paragraph, well you can see the change for yourself. I believe it speaks for itself quite well.

So, what brings about such changes? They were fine for earlier members of the church. Why would they be changed now? It should be considered a doctrinal change. The emphasis has been changed over the years to show living with God in the post-mortal life, instead of becoming Gods ourselves.

I find a lot of the older doctrine as it were isn't taught much in these much later days. I wonder why that is. Are they too being tossed aside as people speaking as a man? I would doubt so. It is interesting that no one has spoken much in General Conference of the King Follett sermon lately.

> God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. 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, was to make himself visible—I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with Him, as one man talks and communes with another.[8]

In it we are taught that God was once a man, which is the first part of Snow's couplet. Yet this is not openly widely taught these days. So yet another change has easily taken place. This is not to say it is not known, for the text is out there to be found. But it is not actively taught.

If God was once man that means he has a Father in heaven who is his God right? How far back does that go? For eternity? If what is taught is true, then yes for eternity. There was never a beginning and there will never be an end.

Well, what about those quotes where it says there are no other Gods than God? If there are no other Gods, and there is only one God, how can God have a God etc? How can God have been a man then?

There was a set of lectures, doctrine, included in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. Hence where the doctrine comes from the D&C. In the fifth lecture, it talks about the Godhead.

There are a few interesting details in this lecture. They are the following:

1. God is a spirit
2. There are two members of the Godhead

1. God is a spirit

> There are two personages who constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme power over all things...They are the Father and the Son: The Father being a personage of spirit, glory and power: possessing all perfection and fulness: The Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle, made, or fashioned like unto man, or being in the form and likeness of man, or, rather, man was formed after his likeness, and in his image;[9]

Did you catch that? It says plain as day that God is a "personage of spirit". Yet in the Doctrine and Covenants, we are taught that God has a body of flesh and bone. So, which is it? Another conflict of teachings by Joseph Smith.

At the end of the lecture, there is a question and answer section. This is where we come across the other issue.

2. There are two members of the Godhead

[8] King Follett Sermon, Joseph Smith Jr.
[9] Lecture Fifth, Lectures on Faith

> Question 3: How many personages are there in the Godhead?
>
> Two: the Father and the Son. (5:1)
>
> Question 4: How do you prove that there are two personages in the Godhead?
>
> By the Scriptures. Genesis 1:26: (Also 2:6): And the Lord God said unto the Only Begotten, who was with him from the beginning, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: — and it was done. Genesis 3:22: And the Lord God said unto the Only Begotten, Behold, the man is become as one of us: to know good and evil. John 17:5: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. (5:12)[10]

So, Joseph Smith taught there are only two members of the Godhead.

It conflicts what has been taught by later LDS teachings that there are three members of the Godhead, namely God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost.

Why the change? Did Joseph Smith know what he was teaching? He saw God right? Why did he teach that God was a spirit then?

[10] Lecture Fifth, Lectures on Faith

Chapter 8

My Own Planet

Again from the Mormon Newsroom article:

> **Do Latter-day Saints believe that they will "get their own planet"?**
>
> No. This idea is not taught in Latter-day Saint scripture, nor is it a doctrine of the Church. This misunderstanding stems from speculative comments unreflective of scriptural doctrine. Mormons believe that we are all sons and daughters of God and that all of us have the potential to grow during and after this life to become like our Heavenly Father (see Romans 8:16-17). The Church does not and has never purported to fully understand the specifics of Christ's statement that "in my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2).[1]

I remember being on my mission and people asked this question. We would say exactly what was stated above. Yet we knew, through the temple and other teachings, that it was possible to become a God and we would be creating spirit children and planets to put those spirit children on.

At least that's what we thought to be true. Yet here we are, another article that states differently what was taught from before. So, again... I feel like a broken record at this point, why the change?

At this rate, I feel like all I can ever become is a servent of God in the after life. That I'll never be able to enjoy the fullness of perfection and explore everything that He has and is allowed to explore. To be taught these things from the beginning at a young age and then to find out they are changed? It's disconcerting to say the least. It almost feels like I've been lied to. It almost feels like none of it matters anymore. Why bother with trying to do anything in this life. Just keeping my nose clean seems to be the best option at this point.

What exactly is there to strive for?

When I was younger, I recall thinking to myself:

[1] https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/mormonism-101

> When I get to create a planet, I am going to populate it with penguins and palm trees.

Go ahead and laugh, that's what I thought. I thought it would be so cool to be able to create something like God had created. To be able to speak and have it organized just like in Genesis, Moses, and Abraham.

But I suppose that's no longer the case.

Now I can see some people saying, "Oh, that's not what the church is saying at all. They just don't want to give out meat before milk." Well, if that's the case? Then the church is simply saying half truths which is in effect a lie. God commanded "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."[2] Did he not? You know, the whole lying thing is against God's will.

> Wo unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell.[3]

Naturally when questions about changes or other doctrine comes up that conflict with what we've been taught in the past, or go against better judgmenet and logic; we are told to have faith. Only believe. God will take care of everything in the end and we don't need to worry about it right here and now. I suppose that's fine for some, but to not have an idea of what's going to happen when we get through with this life? That makes things difficult. If we're just going to be hanging out a celestial waiting room for eternity, yeah I'm not sure how I would handle that.

There's an interesting thought, who's lying exactly? We are told that God can't lie. It's impossible for Him to do so.[4]

Is changing what once was, lying? Not all changes can be chalked up to lying right? But if it's not truth and it was taught as truth, what is it exactly? Where does it fit in?

Being troubled by change is difficult. A consistant amount of belief is healthy and reasonable for me. To have believed in one thing for so long, then to have that narrative changed. It honestly feels like a rug has been ripped out from under me.

We are told the wiseman built his house upon rocks, the foolishman built his house upon sand.[5]

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has been compared to a rock.[6] If prophets and apostles are changing the narrative of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then where is the rock upon which we can stand and be sure?

[2] Exodus 20:16

[3] 2 Nephi 9:34

[4] Hebrews 6:18

[5] Matthew 7:24-27

[6] Figuratively, Jesus Christ and His gospel, which are a strong foundation and support (D&C 11:24; 33:12–13). Rock can also refer to revelation, by which God makes His gospel known to man (Matt. 16:15–18). [https://www.lds.org/scriptures/gs/rock?lang=eng]

Chapter 9

Baptismal Prayers

Over the years, there have been a few variations on baptismal prayers. These are found in the Book of Mormon and in the Doctrine and Covenants. Why change those? They all have a common theme, that you are required to state authority from God. But if that's the case, then why do we have to cite a baptismal prayer so specifically in today's time?

Here are three different versions, first two are from the Book of Mormon, the third is from the Doctrine and Covenants:

> Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.[1]

> Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body; and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world.[2]

> Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.[3]

I find it interesting that there ins't any specific wording for baptismal prayers in the New Testament of the Holy Bible. We find talk of baptism and that it is necessary to repent etc. but no specific prayers:

> Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.[4]

[1] 3 Nephi 11:25
[2] Mosiah 18:13
[3] D&C 20:73
[4] Acts 2:38

So it's important to be baptized in the name of Jesus. There aren't specific words to be taken into account. Obviously God respects and expects authority be used in the baptizing, but that seems about it.

There is record in Matthew that people are to go to all the world, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"[5]

There is talk about rising up out of the water as it were,[6] and that we are buried in baptism;[7] which would seem to indicate the method by with baptism is accomplished.

Yet no specific wording, no that came much later with Moroni.

If people were not baptized with the same wording thoughout the years, is their baptism accepted by God? Is it the spirit of the law and not the letter of the law?

[5]Matthew 28:19
[6]Acts 8:36-39
[7]Romans 6:4

Chapter 10

A Search For Truth

Back in the day, certain doctrine was taught. Later on, those doctrines were claimed to not have been transcribed correctly, meeting notes were questioned and dismissed as not being current church doctrine.

Hard questions come up from time to time. We've been told to doubt our doubts. Any questions that arise can be squashed with the spirit of the Lord as it were. People are told to have faith. We don't have all the answers right now today, but someday we will. Faith is needed.

It's a line. It's always just a line.

Then there are those few souls who understand and realize that questions can't just easily be dismissed with faith. That it's okay to have questions. It's a rare occurrence, and few indeed actually acknowledge this. Here are some examples:

> Gone are the days when a student asked an honest question and a teacher responded, "Don't worry about it!" Gone are the days when a student raised a sincere concern and a teacher bore his or her testimony as a response intended to avoid the issue. Gone are the days when students were protected from people who attacked the Church. Fortunately, the Lord provided this timely and timeless counsel to you teachers: "And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith."(Doctrine and Covenants 88:118)[1]

There is that famous quote by J. Rueben Clark:

> If we have truth, [it] cannot be harmed by investigation. If we have not truth, it ought to be harmed.[6]

[1]The Opportunities and Responsibilities of CES Teachers in the 21st Century, Elder M. Russel Ballard, 2016

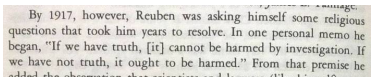

By 1917, however, Reuben was asking himself some religious questions that took him years to resolve. In one personal memo he began, "If we have truth, [it] cannot be harmed by investigation. If we have not truth, it ought to be harmed." From that premise he

Figure 10.1: J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years

The quote should be cited in its full context of course. Because any and all sources should be found within their full context. Not only a portion. (See Appendix B)

Then there are the words of James E. Talmage:

> The man who cannot listen to an argument which opposes his views either has a weak position or is a weak defender of it. No opinion that cannot stand discussion or criticism is worth holding. And it has been wisely said that the man who knows only half of any question is worse off than the man who knows nothing of it. He is not only one sided, but his partisanship soon turns him into an intolerant and a fanatic. In general it is true that nothing which cannot stand up under discussion and criticism is worth defending.[2]

George Albert Smith spoke on this very topic:

> If a faith will not bear to be investigated; if its preachers and professors are afraid to have it examined, their foundation must be very weak.[3]

Then M. Russell Ballard said the following counter claim:

> We don't have to question anything in the church, don't get off into that. Just stay in the Book of Mormon. Just stay in the Doctrine and Covenants. Just listen to the prophets. Just listen to the apostles. We won't lead you astray, we cannot lead you astray.[4]

The church has released a handful of what they call Gospel Topic Essays.[5] They are to shed light on some of the history of the church that may or may not have been widely known. This is a step in the right direction, however...it still feels like the church is changing the narrative. Their history stated to the believers has not always been the same. It has changed over time.

It is tempting to go through each of the essays...however I'm not sure I would have the patience to go paragraph by paragraph and make notes on things found and then look into the footnotes of each thing found.

Someday in the future I'm sure I will. There's no reason not to. If we are to learn from the best books as it were, then the truth in those essays shouldn't be

[2]Editorial quoted in James E. Talmage, "Christianity Falsely So-Called," Improvement Era, Jan. 1920, 204.

[3]George Albert Smith, Journal Of Discourses, v 14, page 216

[4]YSA Devotional, M. Russell Ballard, 2015

[5]https://www.lds.org/topics/essays?lang=eng

scary. They should be welcomed with open arms. Is that possible in this day and age of the internet? We have at our fingertips the ability to quickly search for anything and everything. It could be considered dangerous.

I suppose, one needs to ask what is truth? If the truth can set you free,[6] then where exactly does the truth lay? Why is it so difficult to find the truth at times? If the truth has been from the beginning of the world, from before the beginning of the world, then it should be as consistant as possible. It should be the same yesterday, today, tomorrow. All truth should be the same and change shouldn't be a term in that narrative.

Yet the search for truth must go on.

[6] John 8:32

Chapter 11

Revelation

We live in a time of continuous revelation as it were. When the church was being organized and during the time Joseph Smith was the prophet of the church, he continued to receive revelations. The Doctrine and Covenants of the church is full of revelations.

After Joseph's death, there doesn't appear to be many revelations coming forth from the church. Some point to the end of polygamy, or the end of the ban against the blacks. There are those also who say there were other reasons to end those things.

From a publication by David Whitmer, we find the following quote:

> Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil.[1]

This is in regards to the failiure of the church to sell the copyright in Canada. (See Appendix C)

Ahem, say what now? Revelations coming from the devil? As revelation? What?

How is that possible? It's been said that the devil can show himself as an angel, but an entire revelation from the devil? Wow, what kind of hot water must you be in to get one of those?

Either way? How does one know if the revelation is from man, God, or the devil? In what ways are we supposed to actually fully know that these things are true and to do as they direct, or if we are to set them aside for they are evil?

Makes things rather complicated right?

After Joseph Smith's death, there weren't many additions to the Doctrine and Covenants. No new revelations added. The Official Declarations 1 and 2 don't appear to be revelations as they do not say "Thus saith the Lord" in them, which was known to be had in other revelations throughout the book.

So what are they exactly?

[1] David Whitmer, An Address to All Believers in Christ, in EMD 5: 198.

There's a revelation by Joseph F. Smith which became section 138 of the D&C, but nothing since then. Why is that? If we are a church that believes in continuous revelations, why is that book not being updated? Why are there not more revelations coming and recorded?

Time has changed things. Are people not as revelatory since the times of Joseph Smith, Jr. when he led the church? Do we have all we need and God doesn't see fit to speak to us in this day and age?

You might be thinking I'm being rude. But these are honest questions. I'm not bashing the prophets who have come since Joseph Smith, Jr. I am just not aware of actual revelations which have come along the way is all.

Chapter 12

Teasure Seeking

It is interesting to note, Joseph was told by an angel not to continue with treasure seeking. From the novel, Saints.

> In September 1826, Joseph returned to the hill for the plates, but Moroni said he was still not ready for them. "Quit the company of the money diggers," the angel told him. There were wicked men among them.9 Moroni gave him one more year to align his will with God's. If he did not, the plates would never be entrusted to him.[1]

But ten years later, in 1836, Joseph was told there would be a large amount of money to be had? Isn't that a form of treasure? So he went to Salem to search for it:

> Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Salem, Massachusetts, August 6, 1836. At this time the leaders of the Church were heavily in debt due to their labors in the ministry. Hearing that a large amount of money would be available to them in Salem, the Prophet, Sidney Rigdon, Hyrum Smith, and Oliver Cowdery traveled there from Kirtland, Ohio, to investigate this claim, along with preaching the gospel. The brethren transacted several items of Church business and did some preaching. When it became apparent that no money was to be forthcoming, they returned to Kirtland. Several of the factors prominent in the background are reflected in the wording of this revelation.[2]

If he was told to stop in 1826, why was he still doing it in 1836?

[1] Saints, Chapter 4 Be Watchful, Page 34
[2] Header of D&C Section 111

Chapter 13

Temple Changes

Now the temple is a very sacred part of the LDS faith. People don't talk about it openly due to covenants they have made inside the temple. It is supposedly restored from the time of Adam when he walked the earth. Some say Joseph Smith crated the Endowment based off of Freemasonry. Whatever the case, there have been changes to the temple ritiual over the years.

13.1 Oath to Avenge Joseph Smith

After the death of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young added a vengence oath to the endowment. It was to avenge the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith. If the temple ordinance was restored and hadn't changed. I doubt this was actually intended to be part of it. I doubt Adam went around swearing to an oath to avenge the death of a man who wouldn't be born for centuries to come.

13.2 Adam God Doctrine

For a time the Adam God Doctrine was taught at the veil. This was instituted by Brigham Young. What is the Adam God Doctrine? Here it is in short. Adam is God. No seriously. Here it is in the long form:

> Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is MICHAEL, the Archangel, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken – He is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom WE have to do. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later![1]

[1] Prophet Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, v. 1, p. 51

This was all taught in the temple for a time before it was pulled from the ceremony. If the temple ceremony was restored, per the Prophet Joseph Smith, why was the Adam God Doctrine not there to begin with? Why was it added later to the temple ceremony at the veil? Then, if it was taught as doctrine and was true, why was it removed?

13.3 Penalties

Up until 1990, there were Penalties in the temple. People would symbolically cut their throats as a sign for what would come if they were to give away the sacred ordinances of the temple. These were in there from the start, and were removed as I said in 1990. Is God changing His mind about what is to be taught? Why were these removed from the temple ordinance? If it's no longer in there, were the people who took the blood oaths still under requirement to live by those oaths that if they talk of the temple they will be required to take their own lives?

Again something else that has changed from what was restored. If it is restored is it not perfect? If it wsa perfect, the doctrine that is, then why was it removed?

Perhaps it too closely resembled Cain's oath with Satan?

> And Satan said unto Cain: Swear unto me by thy throat, and if thou tell it thou shalt die; and swear thy brethren by their heads, and by the living God, that they tell it not; for if they tell it, they shall surely die; and this that thy father may not know it; and this day I will deliver thy brother Abel into thine hands.[2]

Was it a type of secret combination? We're told to avoid such things.

It should be interesting to note the following quote:

> The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, 'Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed.'[3]

13.4 Other Changes

There are other changes to the temple ceremony. At one point there was a preacher who was a follower of Satan. An entire choir that would sing christian hymns etc.

[2] Moses 5:29

[3] Ensign Magazine, August 2002, p 22

13.5 Thou Shalt Not

An interesting change is when God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden, he gave a commandment:

> But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.[4]

Eve was not found on the Earth at that time.

In the temple we see that Adam and Eve were together in the Garden of Eden when God gave such a commandment.

So which is correct? This isn't just what happened in Genesis, but it also happened in the Book of Moses as well. God commands Adam to not eat of the fruit, He then creates Eve later after pulling a rib from Adam's side. It is again the same timeline in the Book of Abraham. So there are three sources from which it is put forth, yet the temple contradicts that timeline. Again, which one is correct?

Don't believe me? Here are the scriptures to research:

> Genesis 2:15 - 22
>
> Moses 3:15 - 22
>
> Abraham 5: 11 - 16

13.6 Joseph Smith Taught Ordinances Weren't Meant To Change

> Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles.[5]

Again, I ask, if that is true why are there changes to make things more in common with modern times? Would this not be a way of God's ways changing over time?

[4] Genesis 2:17

[5] Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 308.

Chapter 14

Others Teachings

There are teachings from others in Joseph Smith's time that are similar to those found in the Book of Mormon. Did Joseph Smith take these from local preachers and teachings found in his time?

Take for example the teaching that this life is a probationary period. Abel Thornton taught similar ideas.

> That the whole period of human life is a state of probation; in every part of which a sinner may repent and turn to God; and in every part of it a believer may give way to sin and fall from grace: and that this possibility of rising, and liability to falling, are essential to a state of trial or probation.[1]

[1] The life of Elder Abel Thornton, late of Johnston, R.I. A preacher in the Free-Will Baptist Connexion, and a member of the R.I.Q. meeting

Chapter 15

Nephi or Moroni

Another interesting fact that came up in early church history was the account of Joseph Smith speaking to the prophet Nephi. Yes, Nephi. He originally said it was Nephi who had visited him, not the angel Moroni. We can find this in the Joseph Smith Papers:

> he said. that he was a messenger. sent from the presence of God to me. and that his name was Nephi[1]

This was even publisehd in the Pearl of Great Price. It was later changed to Moroni having visited Joseph Smith in what is the most current version of the Pearl of Great Price.

Why the change? Why did Joseph change who had visited him? Who was it? Was it Nephi or Moroni? If they both visited him, it was at different times. But the narrative was changed to reflect that it was Moroni...after first being Nephi. The experience, that one night, was changed. Why?

[1] http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-1841-draft-draft-3/6

Chapter 16

Second Anointing

There are some doctrines of the church that are not spoken of. Some doctrines have been abandoned by the church, disavowed as prophets speaking as men. Other doctrines of the church are simply not spoken about.

On lds.org, there is one doctrine that is mentioned with a strict warning not to discuss or answer questions about it. That is the doctrine of the second anointing.

In Chapter 19 of Doctrines of the Gospel Teacher Manual, it has the following caution:

> Caution: Exercise caution while discussing the doctrine of having our calling and election made sure. Avoid speculation. use only the sources given here and in the student manual. Do *not* attempt in any way to discuss or answer questions about the second anointing.

So, uh what's that about? That's the only place on the lds.org website where that specific doctrine is mentioned. Now we obviously know what it is, but not how it is performed. Knowing what and knowing how are two very different things. Now you can google all you wish to know about it, I'm sure it's been talked about. There's no way it's been kept secret for as long as it's been known to the people of the earth. It's out there. You just have to look for it.

Now, some problems with this. Why would the manual provide a caution to not discuss the second anointing? The second anointing is to seal up someone into heaven. They are basically promised eternal life no matter what. The only thing which could prevent them from going to heaven is murder or denying the Holy Ghost.

The second anointing is given to elite leaders of the church. The ordinance is performed by the washing the feet of the couple in the temple. The couple are anointed on the head with oil, their calling and election is made sure. That is, they are guaranteed a place in the highest level of the Celestial Kingdom. After which, the couple goes to a different room in the temple where the wife washes the husbands feet and then lays her hands on his head and gives him

a priesthood blessing as the spirit directs. This is in preparation of death and resurrection.

Okay so that brought about an interesting twist. This is having received the more sure word of prophecy. That is, you're going past judgement day. Your fate has already been made whole. You are basically judged taking God out of the equation.

First off, only God can judge us. That's what a final judgement is for isn't it? How can a prophet of God or a man as it were proclaim that you are free of the blood and sin of such a generation? That you are made clean and a King and Priest unto God? Being a equal to that of Jesus Christ Himself.

Second, we're told that women cannot hold the priesthood in the church. She cannot perform blessings, ordinances etc. Here during the second anointing this is not he case. Not only does she perform an ordinance but she also performs a blessing, not just a blessing though. It's a blessing as the spirit directs. So it is approved of God.

I suppose this second part shouldn't be much of a shock to me. Women have been performing ordinances in the temple for years to other women. So perhaps we've just been lied to all this time? It's definitely something to look into for sure.

Now the calling and election made sure doctrine is to have Christ personally visit you, it is determined that you will serve Christ no matter the cost. He gives unto you the second comforter, that is the visitation of Christ.

According to the caution above, it appears the calling and election being made sure and the second anointing are two separate ordinances. For one you actually see Christ the other you are just given the ability to be a God basically.

We read about the calling and election being made sure in 2 Peter 1:10.

> Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail:

In the experiences I've read regarding the second anointing. Why is it only the man is anointed a King and Priest to the Most High God? The woman is not anointed along with her husband. Why is that? She performs the ordinance on him after the apostle performs the ordinance and gives her husband a blessing. But the husband does not in return give her a blessing and does not wash her feet. Perhaps there are times when the woman is also anointed a Queen and Priestess, the website ldsendowment.org has instructions for the entire process including having the wife anointed. So perhaps in just the experiences I've read it was only the husband. You may also read about this in a book by David John Buerger titled "The Mysteries of Godliness."

This doctrine is not taught in the church. It has been made known to us by people who have experienced it. They have since fallen away from the church because they have come to the conclusion that it is not true. But they have brought forth the knowledge they have gained in this life with them thus far, and that is well enough.

There is also a paper titled "The Fulness of the Priesthood: The Second Anointing in Latter-day Saint Theology and Practice" by David John Buerger.

According to that paper the second anointing was rather common to be had among the saints. Prophets authorized the second anointing in the low thousands. It makes one stop to think for a moment, why did it cease? Or well, I suppose it dropped in number, not ceased. I would wager it takes place still today just not as much as it used to.

Chapter 17

Carthage Jail

Joseph was arrested for civil disturbance. Well he went to answer charges because of it. But he states the following:

> I know not why; but for some reason I am constrained to hasten my preparations, and to confer upon the Twelve all the ordinances, keys, covenants, endowments, and sealing ordinances of the priesthood, and so set before them a pattern in all things pertaining to the sanctuary and the endowment therein. (Quoted by Parley P. Pratt in "Proclamation to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Millennial Star, Mar. 1845, 151.)[1]

If he wouldn't have passed on those keys etc to the 12, they wouldn't still be around. Would he have died at Carthage or would he have escaped that situation? Because God wouldn't have a 2nd "apostasy", would he?

Is it possible for man to thwart the will of God? Would God's plan have been changed? Would God have to have changed his plan for the restoratin of the gospel? Would it have been foiled because Joseph might not have fully executed God's command?

A thought, obviously we cannot go into the past to see what would have happened. But it is an interesting insight into the mind of God and his will.

[1] https://history.lds.org/article/historic-sites/illinois/carthage/carthage-jail?lang=eng

Chapter 18

Literal vs Symbolic

The LDS Church is full of symbolism, the temple being one of the biggest symbols of all. However the bible contains stories which can be considered literal, or symbolic as well. A few to mention are Noah and the great flood, and Jonah swalled by the whale (although I think the bible actually says it's a big fish).

So which is it? Are these stories factual? Are they symbolic in nature to be faith promoting stories? What of the Book of Mormon, is it factual? Is it faith promoting?

There are creatures talked about in the bible which we consider mystical today. But according to the Bible Dictionary, they are more of an ox. Yes, I'm talking about the Unicorn.

Unicorns? Unicorns.

Here are the places in the bible where it mentions these creatures:

> He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.[1]
>
> Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?[2]
>
> Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?[3]
>
> God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.[4]
>
> But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.[5]

[1] Psalms 29:6
[2] Job 39:9
[3] Job 39:10
[4] Numbers 23:22
[5] Psalms 92:10

> God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows.[6]
>
> And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.[7]
>
> Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.[8]
>
> His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.[9]

And then of course we have the Bible Dictionary description:

> A wild ox, the *Bos primigenius*, now extinct, but once common in Syria. The KJV rendering is unfortunate, as the animal intended is two-horned.[10]

Scholars have indicated that it is not the actual mystical creature unicorn which we have come to know and love. Which is kind of a disappointment. But if it can be in there, and be misinterpreted in these days, what else might the bible be hiding?

[6] Numbers 24:8
[7] Isaiah 34:7
[8] Psalms 22:21
[9] Deuteronomy 33:17
[10] LDS Bible Dictionary: Unicorn

Chapter 19

Polygamy and Polyandry

First off, let's get some definitions out of the way:

> Polygamy: The practice or custom of having more than one wife or husband at the same time.
>
> Polyandry: Polygamy in which a woman has more than one husband.

Eveyone knew Brigham Young practiced polygamy. It was thought for the longest time that it all began with him. Well, that's not the case. According to the LDS Church Essay, "Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo"[1] we learn that Joseph Smith practed polygamy.

From the book of Jacob, we read:

> For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things.[2]

Polygamy is meant to bring up seed unto the Lord. It's a means of populating the Earth so those people will become members of the Lord's church and continue on with the traditions of their fathers.[3]

If that's "one" of the reasons for practicing polygamy, why are there no offspring of Joseph Smith from those polygmous relationships? People in the church will tell you he married them spiritually only, but that goes against what the Book of Mormon teaches.

Can't have it both ways, so which is it?

There are also reports of Joseph Smith marrying girls as young as 15.[4] Again, the apologetics will tell you this was normal for the time. Normal or not, it goes

[1] https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng

[2] Jacob 21:30

[3] Not to be confused with the vain traditions of the wicked Lamanites.

[4] From the essay: "The youngest was Helen Mar Kimball, daughter of Joseph's close friends Heber C. and Vilate Murray Kimball, who was sealed to Joseph several months before her 15th birthday."

against any kind of morality a person should have. I don't care the time period in which it was normal.

Joseph was also sealed to women who were already married to other men. According to the essay, an angel rebuked Joseph for practicing Polyandry and went back to marrying single women.

Another moment where God forgot to specifcially announce His intentions of how polygamy should be practiced? Again, one would think that God would have instructed Joseph exactly in how things should be worked out. The Bible is full of examples of the Lord telling the people exactly how to build something, why would other principles of the gospel be any different?

Is it possible, the polygamy command didn't come from God at all? Joseph made it up and he decided what he wanted to do and how to go about it? If that's the case, that's not how God is meant to work. One would hope that certain commandments given from God would have a strict understanding and expectation to be followed. A prophet is speaking for God afterall, is he not?

Again from the same essay "Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo" stated above, there is a troubling line:

> But Emma likely did not know about all of Joseph's sealings.

This goes against D&C 132.[5] She was to receive all those who the Lord gave unto Joseph. if she did not know about them, how was she to receive them? Apparently this revelation was directed directly to Emma because she did not apporve of Joseph's polygamy practices.

There is another clause in there, if she doesn't accept Joseph's other wives, he is exempt from the Law of Sarah and can marry other wives anyway. So even if Emma didn't want to accept it, Joseph could go ahead and marry others as he saw fit.[6]

Polygamy came to an end in 1890 with the manifesto. Official Declaration 1 in the LDS Scriptures. Well kinda. They had to put out a second manifesto in 1904 warning people they would be excommunicated if they entered into plural marriage. So I guess the first one was to say the church didn't believe in the practice, and the second was to actually enforce the rule? I'm not quite sure.[7]

The Encyclopedia of Mormonism states the following regarding continued practice of plural marriage after the 1890 Manifesto.

> Earlier polygamous families continued to exist well into the twentieth century, causing further political problems for the Church, and new

[5] D&C 132:52 And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God.

[6] D&C 132:65 Therefore, it shall be lawful in me, if she receive not this law, for him to receive all things whatsoever I, the Lord his God, will give unto him, because she did not believe and administer unto him according to my word; and she then becomes the transgressor; and he is exempt from the law of Sarah, who administered unto Abraham according to the law when I commanded Abraham to take Hagar to wife.

[7] "The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage" https://www.lds.org/topics/the-manifesto-and-the-end-of-plural-marriage?lang=eng

> plural marriages did not entirely cease in 1890. After having lived the principle at some sacrifice for half a century, many devout Latter-day Saints found ending plural marriage a challenge almost as complex as was its beginning in the 1840s. Some new plural marriages were contracted in the 1890s in LDS settlements in Canada and northern Mexico, and a few elsewhere. With national attention again focused on the practice in the early 1900s during the House hearings on Representative-elect B. H. Roberts and Senate hearings on Senator-elect Reed Smoot (see Smoot Hearings), President Joseph F. Smith issued his "Second Manifesto" in 1904. Since that time, it has been uniform Church policy to excommunicate any member either practicing or openly advocating the practice of polygamy. Those who do so today, principally members of fundamentalist groups, do so outside the Church.[8]

There were mixed feelings on the first manifesto to begin with, I've no idea how people felt about the second manifesto. Not much is talked about the second manifesto in today's church meetings. Only the first. There's a bit of things people aren't taught about in the church, a lot of history gets glossed over; this is one of them.

In the 1835 Book of Commandments, there is an article titled Marriage. In this article it is stated that the church only believed in monogomy. There is a little history behind this. It is claimed by Joseph Fielding Smith that Oliver Cowdery inserted the document "without authority". That is to say words were put into the 1835 D&C and the Prophet Joseph Smith did nothing to stop it.

On July 7, 1878, Joseph F. Smith talked about Oliver's writing of this article:

> To put this matter more correctly before you, I here declare that the principle of plural marriage was not first revealed on the 12th day of July, 1843. It was written for the first time on that date, but it had been revealed to the Prophet many years before that, perhaps as early as 1832. About this time, or subsequently, Joseph, the Prophet, intrusted this fact to Oliver Cowdery; he abused the confidence imposed in him, and brought reproach upon himself, and thereby upon the church by "running before he was sent," and "taking liberties without license," so to speak, hence the publication, by O. Cowdery, about this time, of an article on marriage, which was carefully worded, and afterwards found its way into the Doctrine and Covenants without authority. This article explains itself to those who understand the facts, and is an indisputable evidence of the early existence of the knowledge of the principle of patriarchal marriage by the Prophet Joseph, and also by Oliver Cowdery.[9]

How is this possible that something made it into the Doctrine and Covenants without Joesph's knowledge? It wasn't given as a revelation, it was something

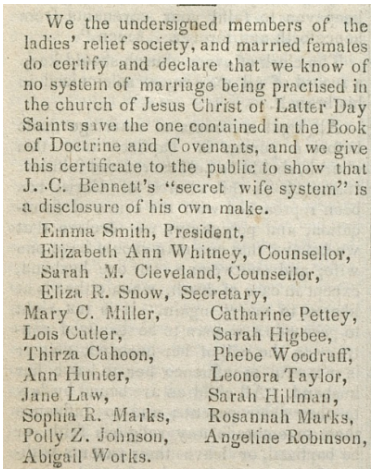
[8] Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Plural Marriage

[9] Joseph F. Smith, Journal of Discourses 20:29.

Oliver wrote up himself. If that's the case? What other writings in the Doctrine and Covenants are just the thoughts of man and not revelations?

Was Joseph Smith trying to hide polygamy from the followers of the church? It's known that polygamy wasn't widely practiced. Considering his own wife, Emma, signed her name on an article saying that polygamy is not practiced. She didn't know he was marrying other women at the time or, did she know and she was lying about it?

Figure 19.1 shows her name and what she signed. (See Appendix D)



We the undersigned members of the ladies' relief society, and married females do certify and declare that we know of no system of marriage being practised in the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints save the one contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and we give this certificate to the public to show that J. C. Bennett's "secret wife system" is a disclosure of his own make.

Emma Smith, President,
Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Counsellor,
Sarah M. Cleveland, Counsellor,
Eliza R. Snow, Secretary,

Mary C. Miller,	Catharine Pettey,
Lois Cutler,	Sarah Higbee,
Thirza Cahoon,	Phebe Woodruff,
Ann Hunter,	Leonora Taylor,
Jane Law,	Sarah Hillman,
Sophia R. Marks,	Rosannah Marks,
Polly Z. Johnson,	Angeline Robinson,
Abigail Works.	

Figure 19.1: Times and Seasons Vol 3 No. 23

The quesiton arises, at which point in time did Emma learn of plural marriage? Joseph began practicing plural marriage possibly as early as 1832, as mentioned by Joseph Fielding Smith above, so it was in practice at the time Oliver published the article in the D&C.

Another interesting aspect of D&C Section 132 regarding the approval of polygamy:

> David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me.
>
> David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant, and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife; and, therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation, and received his portion; and he shall not inherit them out of the world, for I gave them unto another, saith the Lord.[10]

[10] D&C 132:38-39

Okay, so David had many wives and those were given to him of the Lord. So he was commanded to have multiple wives. Yet, there is a footnote in verse 39, which points over to the Book of Mormon:

> But the word of God burdens me because of your grosser crimes. For behold, thus saith the Lord: This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son.
>
> Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord.[11]

Now we're learning that David's wives were an abomination before the Lord. They were not commanded of Him. But in D&C it says the Lord gave them to him. So, which is it exactly? Why is there a contradiction to it all?

If Elijah restored the sealing keys of the priesthood in 1836 (April 3, 1836)[12] and Joseph Smith began practicing Polygamy in 1832(ish), how does that all work out? The timing seems to be a bit off?

Who performed the marriages between Joseph and these women? If it wasn't the sealing power, and they were only considered as spirutal wives and not actual wives, who performed the legal wedding ceremony in Kirtland at that time?[13]

Joseph Smith taught that polygamy was a restored truth of God. That it was meant to raise up seed etc. Why didn't Adam have multiple wives? There he and Eve were the only ones on Earth and they had to populate the whole Earth. Why didn't Adam have many wives to help raise seed unto God? There's no record of Adam having more than one wife at all. Wouldn't it make sense, if polygamy was a restored principle, that God would require Adam to have many wives to help hasten the pace of God's children to get back to Him?

There were some interesting thoughts about polygamy even after the practice had been ceased. Gordon B. Hinckley stated the following even:

> Indications point to the fact that as a rule the children of polygamous marriages were superior physically and mentally.[3]

In the book "The Restored Church" it talks about Joseph Smith not wanting to accept polygamy until a year or so after it was announced in the 1840s. Granted it's an old book, but it doesn't have the history even accurate. It could be just stated wrong? Here's the quote in question, I'll let you decide.

> As early as 1831, Joseph Smith claimed a revelation upon the subject and spoke of it to a few close associates. It was not, however, placed in writing, practiced or generally made known at that time. In 1840, the doctrine [of Plural Marriage] was taught to a few leading

[11] Jacob 2:23-24

[12] D&C 110

[13] According to the diaries of William Clayton, some of the marriages were performed by Clayton himself.

> brethren who, with the Prophet, secretly married additional wives in the following year.
>
> ...
>
> For years after learning of the doctrine, through revelation from God, Joseph could not bring himself to practice it or to teach others to do so.[1]

This is in contradiction to what we have now in the Gospel Topic Essays:

> Fragmentary evidence suggests that Joseph Smith acted on the angel's first command by marrying a plural wife, Fanny Alger, in Kirtland, Ohio, in the mid-1830s.[14]

Granted, the first quote is from 1961, where the later quote is from 2013. Either way, I think it's a form of controlling the narrative, or the author of the book just didn't have a clue what he was talking about.

The Gospel Topic Essay "Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo" hints that Joseph's marrying those who were already married, practicing Polyandry, was not in the mind and will of God. That he was rebuked because of it:

> Following his marriage to Louisa Beaman and before he married other single women, Joseph Smith was sealed to a number of women who were already married. Neither these women nor Joseph explained much about these sealings, though several women said they were for eternity alone. Other women left no records, making it unknown whether their sealings were for time and eternity or were for eternity alone.
>
> There are several possible explanations for this practice. These sealings may have provided a way to create an eternal bond or link between Joseph's family and other families within the Church. These ties extended both vertically, from parent to child, and horizontally, from one family to another. Today such eternal bonds are achieved through the temple marriages of individuals who are also sealed to their own birth families, in this way linking families together. Joseph Smith's sealings to women already married may have been an early version of linking one family to another. In Nauvoo, most if not all of the first husbands seem to have continued living in the same household with their wives during Joseph's lifetime, and complaints about these sealings with Joseph Smith are virtually absent from the documentary record.
>
> These sealings may also be explained by Joseph's reluctance to enter plural marriage because of the sorrow it would bring to his wife Emma. He may have believed that sealings to married women would comply with the Lord's command without requiring him to have

[14] Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo, Gospel Topic Essay, LDS.org

> normal marriage relationships. This could explain why, according to Lorenzo Snow, the angel reprimanded Joseph for having "demurred" on plural marriage even after he had entered into the practice. After this rebuke, according to this interpretation, Joseph returned primarily to sealings with single women.[15]

During the timeframe that polygamy was preached and taught, these people lived by it. They owned up to it, they confessed by it.

> Now, if you want to get into darkness, brethren and sisters, begin to oppose this revelation. Sisters, you begin to say before your husbands, or husbands you begin to say before your wives, "I do not believe in the principle of polygamy, and I intend to instruct my children against it." Oppose it in this way, and teach your children to do the same, and if you do not become as dark as midnight there is no truth in Mormonism.[16]

[15] Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo, Gospel Topic Essay, LDS.org
[16] Elder Orson Prat, JOD 17:225

Chapter 20

Doctrine of Christ

We are told in the Book of Mormon that the Doctrine of Christ is fourfold:

1. Faith
2. Repentance
3. Baptism
4. Receive the Holy Ghost

This is found in 2nd Nephi 31-32, there it states the Doctrine of Christ and the results of receiving the Doctrine of Christ. Covenants with established blessings attached to them.

The Book of Mormon then reiterates it in 3rd Nephi chapter 11. Again it establishes Christ's Doctrine. We are to be baptized in Christ's name. But near the end of the chapter, it says that "whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock."[1] It goes on to say how the person will be thrust down to hell etc.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day saints declares its doctrine to be more than that which Christ has spoken, how does the church get around it? What are their explainations for adding to the doctrine of Jesus Christ?

I find it troubling the churche's own scripture even says not to add to it, and yet they have. I suppose one could argue the church isn't adding to the Doctrine of Christ, but adding to the doctrine as a whole. The doctrine of Christ remains untouched. But is not Christ the church and that doctrine would be the same?

To me, these scriptures teach that we are to repent of our sins, be baptized and become like a little child. We are then able to inherit the kingdom of God. It doesn't say anything about having to go to the temple, pay tithing etc. Those things are not requirements to be with God. Yet the church claims those are requirements, that one cannot dwell with God without having all of those necessary ordinances done.

[1] 3 Nephi 11:40

Are not those other ordinances additions to the Doctrine of Christ? The same thing which Jesus had warned against having additions to?

According to "Teaching in the Savior's way" there are nine doctrinal principles the church has. They are:

1. Godhead
2. Plan of Salvation[2]
3. Atonement of Jesus Christ
4. Dispensation, Apostasy, and Restoration
5. Prophets and Revelation
6. Priesthood and Priesthood Keys
7. Ordinances and Covenants
8. Marriage and Family
9. Commandments

Is this not adding to Christ's Doctrine, that which is required to get into heaven? If Christ's Doctrine is easy and simple to understand so everyone can take part and if they try hard enough, they can come back to God. Which is what God want's right? I can't see a God forcing His children to jump through hoops in order to get back to His presence. Well, the church would tell you they aren't forcing anyone to jump through hoops, if they don't want to play by the rules they'll be excommunicated.

If a man professes Christ to be their Lord and Savior, repents of their sins gets baptized and receives the Holy Ghost; why can't they be saved? Why does there need to be additional doctrines and teachings out there?

Some will claim it goes back to authority. Who gave Adam authority to baptize? Why is there no record of Adam baptizing Eve in the Bible? Wouldn't that be one of the truths transcribers would leave in there if it's so important?

Oh, according to the Joseph Smith Translatin of the bible, chapter 6 of Genesis states:

> And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water.
>
> And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man.
>
> And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever;[3]

[2] I thought it was called the Plan of Happiness now?

[3] JST Genesis 6:64-66

Well that brings about an interesting question. The Holy Ghost baptized Adam, and then descended upon him? Without someone laying hands on Adam to give him the gift of the Holy Ghost? So it's not even the same way the LDS Church teaches it to be? Surely God would have set the correct course for baptism with Adam, wouldn't He have?

There is of course the conflicting account where Alma baptizes himself:

> And now it came to pass that Alma took Helam, he being one of the first, and went and stood forth in the water, and cried, saying: O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart.
>
> And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said: Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body; and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world.
>
> And after Alma had said these words, both Alma and Helam were buried in the water; and they arose and came forth out of the water rejoicing, being filled with the Spirit.
>
> And again, Alma took another, and went forth a second time into the water, and baptized him according to the first, only he did not bury himself again in the water.[4]

Why didn't the Holy Ghost baptize Alma like he did Adam? Where did Alma get the authority to baptize *before* being baptized himself? If all he did was call upon God and asked for the authority and God gave the authority, why can't that be done today? Why must it be given by someone who has authority by the laying on of hands?

Even when Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdry were baptized, the Holy Ghost seemed to have descended upon them:

> "We experienced great and glorious blessings from our Heavenly Father. No sooner had I baptized Oliver Cowdery, than the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and he stood up and prophesied many things which should shortly come to pass. And again, so soon as I had been baptized by him, I also had the spirit of prophecy, when, standing up, I prophesied concerning the rise of this Church, and many other things connected with the Church, and this generation of the children of men. We were filled with the Holy Ghost, and rejoiced in the God of our salvation"[5]

[4] Mosiah 18:12-15
[5] Joseph Smith—History 1:73

Granted, some would say that was temporary and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost at a later time. But interesting, after they were baptized the Holy Ghost descended upon them, like it did when Jesus got baptized.

Again, why did the Holy Ghost come to people in this manner? Why didn't God send angels down to baptize Joseph and Oliver. The scriptures state Joeph and Oliver received the authority to baptize before they baptized each other, after which they conferred the priesthood in the normal way. The reason given? Because they were commanded to.[6]

It would appear the doctrine could be in any form or order as long as God orders it. But does not God even follow rules of order as far as the priesthood is concerned? Let's break down the order by which Joseph Smith was ordained etc.

1. John conferrs the priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver
2. Joseph and Oliver baptize each other
3. John tells Joseph and Oliver to lay hands on each other to re-confer the priesthood which he had bestowed upon them.

Here's a quote from Joseph Fielding Smith regarding the event:

> (John the Baptist) after conferring the Priesthood, instructed Joseph and Oliver to go down into the water and baptize each other. After which they were to lay hands upon each other and re-confer the Priesthood which he had bestowed upon them. There are two reasons why they should be commanded to do this thing. First, to confer the Priesthood before baptism, is contrary to the order of the organized Church, therefore they were commanded to confer the Priesthood upon each other in the regular way; after they were baptized. Second, the angel did for them that which they could not do for themselves. There was no one living in mortality who held the keys of this Priesthood, therefore it was necessary that this messenger, who held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood in the Dispensation of the Meridian of Time, should be sent to confer this power. It is contrary to the order of heaven for those who have passed beyond the veil to officiate and labor for the living on the earth, only wherein mortal man cannot act, and thereby it becomes necessary for those who have passed through the resurrection to act for them. Otherwise John would have followed the regular order, which is practiced in the Church, and would have first baptized Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and then conferred upon them the Aaronic Priesthood.[7]

[6] Excuse me, but what? John the Baptist gave them the priesthood before they baptized each other? That is not the way it's taught in the church. Being told it was given by way of commandment? Honestly? Brings back the question, what makes them different in getting the priesthood than someone else (like Alma) who prayed to God and asked for the ability to do it, being moved upon by the Holy Ghost.

I'm confused by this statement, was John the Baptist a resurrected being or no? The last part where it says he would have baptized Joseph and Oliver makes it sound like he wasn't? Yet he laid his hands on their heads and gave them the Aaronic Priesthood. Which would require him to be a resurrected being.

Chapter 21

Seeing God or Jesus

Is it possible that since the early days of the Church in the old world, that no man has seen God or Jesus?

Think about it for a moment. In times past, when God wanted to communicate His word to people He sent angels to talk with them. He didn't make an appearance Himself.

We know in the Garden of Eden, God appeared to Adam and Eve. But afterwards when He sent further light and knowledge to them, it was done through His people. God didn't appear to them.

The God of the Old Testament didn't appear to Moses face to face, but through a burning bush.

So why was it necessary for God to appear to Joseph Smith when an angel could have done exactly that. Doesn't God believe in sending messengers down to people? Isn't that his modus operandi?

Even then, it was a vision. Did Joseph see it in his minds eye? And why did Satan attempt to stop him from praying? If Satan truly doesn't know the mind of God, why would he stop a fourteen year old boy from praying to God? Did Satan actually know God and Jesus were about to visit? If so, then Satan knows somewhat the mind of God does he not?

We know there are some instances in the New Testament where people have seen Jesus. They weren't the most righteous people of their time, Saul was out persecuting the church, yet he saw Jesus or heard Jesus, it depends on which account you read. Here was by all accounts an evil man who was out trying to destroy the church of God and Jesus made himself known unto this man.

Propehts and apostles in these latter days, aside from Joseph Smith, do not declare to have seen God and Jesus. It isn't done anymore. Why is that? If they're God's mouthpiece, wouldn't they be in contact with God and Jesus? Some say, yes but they receive revelation. Is that enough? Wouldn't they at least need to have that personal touch like Joseph Smith did?

Chapter 22

The Prophet

It has been said, when the prophet speaks the debate is over.[1]

That when "our leaders speak, the thinkikng has been done."[2]

Ezra Taft Benson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said the following:

> The prophet does not have to say "Thus saith the Lord" to give us scripture.[3]

He then went on to Quote Brigham Young, who said:

> I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call scripture.[4]

I wonder if Benson even read some of the things Brigham had taught over the years? He's quoting from the Journal of Discourses, so he should have some knowledge of things that Brigham actually taught as doctrine. One would think this would be the case.

To be taught to always follow the prophet no matter what, it's blind obedience. There's no other way of saying what it is. That's exactly what it is. When a group is told to not think about it, to simply follow a living prophet and what he says goes? It feels much like being led down a path where you have no say in anything. If a person even thinks about disagreeing with that prophet? They are in danger of being called an apostate.

Here is the full list of what Ezra Taft Benson stated in his talk.

1. The prophet is the only man who speaks for the Lord in everything.
2. The living prophet is more vital to us than the standard works.

[1] Ensign, Nov. 1978, p. 108
[2] Improvement Era, June 1945
[3] Fourteen Fundamentals in Following The Prophet, Ezra Taft Benson, 1980
[4] Journal of Discourses, 13:95.

3. The living prophet is more important to us than a dead prophet.
4. The prophet will never lead the church astray.
5. The prophet is not required to have any particular earthly training or credentials to speak on any subject or act on any matter at any time.
6. The prophet does not have to say "Thus saith the Lord," to give us scripture.
7. The prophet tells us what we need to know, not always what we want to know.
8. The prophet is not limited by men's reasoning.
9. The prophet can receive revelation on any matter, temporal or spiritual.
10. The prophet may advise on civic matters.
11. The two groups who have the greatest difficulty in following the prophet are the proud who are learned and the proud who are rich.
12. The prophet will not necessarily be popular with the world or the worldly.
13. The prophet and his counselors make up the First Presidency-the highest quorum in the Church.
14. The prophet and the presidency-the living prophet and the First Presidency-follow them and be blessed-reject them and suffer.[5]

Though the prophet at the time, President Kimball, and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles did not agree with the words of Benson, because they set the prophet up as being perfect, a man who could not fail. The talk was never changed and was never retracted.

In later years, we are told that prophets are not always speaking as a prophet. Sometimes they are speaking as a man. It becomes difficult to understand when a prophet is talking for God and when he is talking as a man. Conflicting thoughts and speaches, quotes abound, some of which have been discussed already.

Let's take a look at some quotes where the prophet spoke, shall we? I'll let you decide if they were speaking as a man or from God.

> The attitude of the Church with reference to Negroes remains as it has always stood. It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord, on which is founded the doctrine of the Church from the days of its organization, to the effect that Negroes may become members of the Church but that they are not entitled to the priesthood at the present time.[6]

[5] Fourteen Fundamentals in Following The Prophet, Ezra Taft Benson, 1980
[6] The First Presidency on the Negro Question, 17 Aug. 1949.

> Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so. The nations of the earth have transgressed every law that God has given, they have changed the ordinances and broken every covenant made with the fathers, and they are like a hungry man that dreameth that he eateth, and he awaketh and behold he is empty.[7]
>
> I [am] opposed to hanging, even if a man kill another, I will shoot him, or cut off his head, spill his blood on the ground, and let the smoke thereof ascend up t o God; and if ever I have the privilege of making a law on that subject, I will have it so.[8]
>
> Will you love your brothers and sisters likewise, when they have committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their blood? Will you love that man or woman well enough to shed their blood? That is what Jesus Christ meant.[9]
>
> Suppose you found your brother in bed with your wife, and put a javelin through both of them. You would be justified, and they would atone for their sins, and be received into the Kingdom of God. I would at once do so, in such a case; and under the circumstances, I have no wife whom I love so well that I would not put a javelin through her heart, and I would do it with clean hands.... There is not a man or woman, who violates the covenants made with their God, that will not be required to pay the debt. The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it.[10]
>
> Joseph Smith taught that there were certain sins so grievous that man may commit, that they will place the transgressors beyond the power of the atonement of Christ. If these offenses are committed, then the blood of Christ will not cleanse them from their sins even though they repent. Therefore their only hope is to have their blood shed to atone, as far as possible, in their behalf. This is scriptural doctrine, and is taught in all the standard works of the Church.[11]

There are some interesting "doctrine" taught here. (They claim it's doctrine so is it not?) Were these men teaching as prophets or their own thoughts? They claim it's doctrine, and that's how things are. So what is a person to believe regarding it?

[7] Prophet Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, v. 10, p. 110
[8] Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., History of the Church, v. 5, p. 296, 1949
[9] Prophet Brigham Young, Deseret News, April 16, 1856
[10] Prophet Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, v. 1, pp. 108-109
[11] Prophet Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, v. 1, pp. 135-136, 1954

22.1 Speaking as a Man

In early 1961, Joseph Fielding Smith preached to a stake conference congregation in Hawaii:

> We will never get a man into space. This earth is man's sphere and it was never intended that he should get away from it. The moon is a superior planet to the earth and it was never intended that man should go there. You can write it down in your books that this will never happen.[12]
>
> Earlier, Smith had written that "it is doubtful that man will ever be permitted to make any instrument or ship to travel through space and visit the moon or any distant planet".[13] At the 1970 press conference where Smith was introduced as President of the LDS Church, he was asked about these statements; Smith reportedly responded, "Well, I was wrong, wasn't I?"[14]

At least a prophet had the ability to state he was wrong. You don't see that happen much these days. To admit to being wrong shows a lack of strength and signs of weakness.

This was not the first time a prophet has spoken about space.

> " 'Inhabitants of the Moon are more of a uniform size than the inhabitants of the Earth, being about 6 feet in height. They dress very much like the Quaker Style & are quite general in Style, or the one fashion of dress. They live to be very old; comeing [sic] generally, near a thousand years.' This is the description of them as given by Joseph the Seer, and he could 'See' whatever he asked the Father in the name of Jesus to see."[15]

> "Who can tell us of the inhabitants of this little planet that shines of an evening, called the moon?... When you inquire about the inhabitants of that sphere you find that the most learned are as ignorant in regard to them as the ignorant of their fellows. So it is in regard to the inhabitants of the sun. Do you think it is inhabited? I rather think it is. Do you think there is any life there? No question of it; it was not made in vain."[16]

> "If [the sun] was made to give light to those who dwell upon it, and to other planets; and so will this earth when it is celestialized. Every

[12] D. Michael Quinn, Elder statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark (Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 2002) p. 498.

[13] Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 1957) 2:191.

[14] Adam Kotter, "When Doubts and Questions Arise", Liahona, March 2015.

[15] Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., in Journal of O.B. Huntington, Book 14, p. 166

[16] Prophet Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, v. 13, p. 271

> planet in the first rude, organic state receives not the glory of God upon it, but is opaque; but when celstialized, every planet that God brings into existence is a body of light, but not till then."[17]

22.2 The Living Prophet is more important than the scriptures.

It has been said that basically the current or modern prophet is more important than the scriptures. The exact words were: "The living prophet is more vital to us than the Standard Works."[18]

> We are admonished to "seek out of the best books words of wisdom" (D&C 88:118). Surely these books must include the scriptures. Alongside them must be the words of the Presidents of the Church. The Lord said of the President of the Church, "His word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth" (D&C 21:5). These books make up what has been referred to as "the Lord's library"—namely the standard works and the various volumes that contain the words of the different Presidents of the Church. Of the latter volumes, that which would be of greatest importance to you would be the words of the current President of the Church, for his words are directed to our day and our needs. (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.137-138)

> I will refer to a certain meeting I attended in the town of Kirtland in my early days. At that meeting some remarks were made that have been made here today, with regard to the living oracles and with regard to the written word of God. The same principle was presented, although not as extensively as it has been here, when a leading man in the Church got up and talked upon the subject, and said: "You have got the word of God before you here in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants; you have the written word of God, and you who give revelations should give revelations according to those books, as what is written in those books is the word of God. We should confine ourselves to them." When he concluded, Brother Joseph turned to Brother Brigham Young and said, "Brother Brigham I want you to take the stand and tell us your views with regard to the written oracles and the written word of God." Brother Brigham took the stand, and he took the Bible, and laid it down; he took the Book of Mormon, and laid it down; and he took the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and laid it down before him, and he said: "There is the written word of God to us, concerning the work of God from the beginning of the world, almost, to our day." "And now," said he, "when compared with the living

[17] Prophet Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, v. 13, p. 271
[18] Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet, Ezra Taft Benson, June 1981, LDS.org

> oracles those books are nothing to me; those books do not convey the word of God direct to us now, as do the words of a Prophet or a man bearing the Holy Priesthood in our day and generation. I would rather have the living oracles than all the [p.23]writing in the books." That was the course he pursued. When he was through, Brother Joseph said to the congregation: "Brother Brigham has told you the word of the Lord, and he has told you the truth." (Conference Report, October 1897, p.22)

22.3 I am so sustained

On two events, many many years apart, two prophets have said "I am so sustained" when asked if they were a prophet, seer, and revelator.

The first was from Joseph F. Smith:

> Mr. Tayler. Are you propeht, seer, and revelator?
>
> Mr. Smith. I am so sustained and upheld by my people.[19]

The second, was during an interview with Gordon B. Hinckley:

> Q: You are the president, prophet, seer and revelator of the Mormon Church?
>
> A: I am so sustained, yes. (Laughter)[20]

In that second quote, I wonder why there was laughter? Would not the prophet of the church take it with all seriousness? Was it a nervous laugh? What exactly was it?

I find the same phrased used to be interesting as well. Did Hinckley simply know of the Reed Smoot hearings before he answered the question and gave the same response? Are they told to give that response? Was it just coincidence?

22.4 Follow The Prophet

As a primary child, we sang "Follow the Prophet". If we follow the prophet we won't go astray, at least that is the thought behind the song; which repeats over and over again.

The apostle Marion G. Romney had the following to say regarding the prophet, well the president of the church.

> I was greatly impressed by the President's remarks. I am glad he said what he did. Listening to him, I was taken back in my thoughts

[19] Reed Smoot Hearings

[20] SUNDAY INTERVIEW – Musings of the Main Mormon / Gordon B. Hinckley, 'president, prophet, seer and revelator' of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sits at the top of one of the world's fastest-growing religions (sfgate.com)

> a quarter of a century to an experience I had with President Heber J. Grant. We were discussing some criticism that had been directed against an action taken by him in his official capacity. Putting his arm across my back and resting his hand on my left shoulder, he said, "My boy, you always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he tells you to do something wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it."
>
> And then he added, "You don't need to worry, however; the Lord will never let his mouthpiece lead his people astray."[21]

[21] Apostle Marion G. Romney, "The Covenant of the Priesthood," Ensign, July 1972, p. 98

Chapter 23

The Apostles

According to the Encylopedia of Mormonism:

> An 'apostle' is an ordained leader in the Melchizedek Priesthood in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Apostles are chosen through inspiration by the President of the Church, sustained by the general membership of the Church, and ordained by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles by the laying on of hands. They serve as general authorities-as distinguished from local and regional officers-holding their office as apostle for the duration of their lives. The senior apostle is the President of the Church. In addition to serving as witnesses of Jesus Christ to all the world (D&C 107:23), as Jesus' apostles did, members of the current Quorum of the Twelve Apostles hold the keys of the priesthood—that is, the rights of presidency (D&C 107:35; cf. 124:128)[1]

In Jesus' time, the apostles were actual witnesses of Christ. That is, they saw Him and could testify of seeing Him. The apostles in these latter-days, don't appear to have had that blessing of seeing the Savior. They are a witness of Him in name only.

During a youth event in WA, Elder Oaks at the time responded to the following question:

> **Youth Asks:**
>
> *What should we pray for to receive the same testimony and/or conversion that Alma the Younger experienced, for our friend who are not members?*
>
> **Elder Oaks answers:**
>
> I've never had an experience like that and I don't know anyone among the 1st Presidency or Quorum of the 12 who've had that

[1] Encyclopedia of Mormonism [1992], 1:59–60

> kind of experience. Yet everyone of us knows of a certainty the things that Alma knew. But it's just that unless the Lord chooses to do it another way, as he sometimes does; for millions and millions of His children the testimony settles upon us gradually. Like so much dust on the windowsill or so much dew on the grass. One day you didn't have it and another day you did and you don't know which day it happened. That's the way I got my testimony. And then I knew it was true when it continued to grow.[2]

Some say that is talking only about an Alma the Younger experience, even though Oaks says he didn't have a miraculous experience, that his testimony grew over time.

Okay, how about the Prophet Joseph Fielding Smith?

> The question frequently arises: "Is it necessary for a member of the Council of the Twelve to see the Savior in order to be an apostle?" It is their privilege to see him if occasion requires, but the Lord has taught that there is a stronger witness than seeing a personage, even of seeing the Son of God in a vision. Impressions on the soul that come from the Holy Ghost are far more significant than a vision. When Spirit speaks to spirit, the imprint upon the soul is far more difficult to erase. Every member of the Church should have impressions that Jesus is the Son of God indelibly pictured on his soul through the witness of the Holy Ghost.
>
> It is the calling of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve to be directed by the Savior and the Holy Ghost in guiding this Church and its members. Their labors in the service of our Savior are an inspiration to all mankind.
>
> The Lord has blessed us with choice and vailant leadership.[3]

[2] Multi-Stake Youth Fireside Bellevue, WA, 1/23/2016
[3] Improvment Era, November 1966, Page 979

Chapter 24

Tithing

First an interesting quote regarding tithing. How it will eventually not be required of the people.

> I want to say to my brethren and sisters here this morning, that in my opinion there never was a time when the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were living better lives, were more faithful and more diligent, than they are today. We have various means of judging of this. One very accurate way of knowing is the fact that the law of tithing is being observed. There never has been a time in the history of the Church, I believe, when the law of tithing was observed more universally and more honestly than it has been observed by the Latter-day Saints of late. The tithes of the people during the year 1906, have surpassed the tithing of any other year. This is a good indication that the Latter-day Saints are doing their duty, that they have faith in the Gospel, that they are willing to keep the commandments of God, and that they are working up to the line more faithfully perhaps than ever before. I want to say another thing to you, and I do so by way of congratulation, and that is, that we have, by the blessing of the Lord and the faithfulness of the Saints in paying their tithing, been able to pay off our bonded indebtedness. Today the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints owes not a dollar that it cannot pay at once. At last we are in a position that we can pay as we go. We do not have to borrow any more, and we wont have to if the Latter-day Saints continue to live their religion and observe this law of tithing, It is the law of revenue to the Church.
>
> Furthermore, I want to say to you, we may not be able to reach it right away, but we expect to see the day when we will not have to ask you for one dollar of donation for any purpose, except that which you volunteer to give of your own accord, because we will have tithes sufficient in the storehouse of the Lord to pay everything that

> is needful for the advancement of the kingdom of God. I want to live to see that day, if the Lord will spare my life. It does not make any difference, though, so far as that is concerned, whether I live or not. That is the true policy, the true purpose of the Lord in the management of the affairs of His Church.
>
> Before I sit down I would like to make another statement. Our enemies have been publishing to the world that the Presidency of the Church and the leading officers are consuming the tithes of the people. Now, I am going to tell you a little secret, and it is this: there is not one of the general authorities in the Church that draws one dollar from the tithes of the people for his own use. Well, you may say, how do they live? I will give you the key: The Church helped to support in its infancy the sugar industry in this country, and it has some means invested in that enterprise. The Church helped to establish Z.C.M.I., and it has a little interest in that, and in some other institutions which pay dividends. In other words, tithing funds were invested in these institutions, which give employment to many, for which the Trustee-in-Trust holds stock certificates, which are worth more today than what was given for them; and the dividends from these investments more than pay for the support of the general authorities of the Church. So we do not use one dollar of your tithing. I thought I would like to tell you that much, so that when you hear men talking about Joseph F. Smith and his associates consuming the tithes of the people you can throw it back into their teeth that they do not use a dollar of the tithing for their support. I would like our "friends," if I might be permitted to use a vulgar expression, to "put that in their pipe and smoke it." (Laughter.)[1]

Some interesting thoughts put into there. I should be allowed to illustrate them.

1. Tithing was never meant to be lasting, the church required it at a certain period of time in order to help build temples, get the church out of debt etc.

2. The money that pays for the prophets and apostles living expenses is from business ventures. Which originated from tithing funds. So even though the prophets and apostles do not get paid from tithing in these later days, it originally began with tithing.

Another interesting tidbit about tithing, during the 70th Semi-Annual General Conference of the Church, Lorenzo Snow stated the following:

> "I plead with you in the name of the Lord, and I pray that every man, woman and child ... shall pay one tenth of their income as a tithing."[2]

[1] Seventy-Seventh Semi-Annual Conference, Joseph F. Smith, pp. 7-8
[2] Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow (2011)

Wait, what's with the elipses? Oh that quote is from the Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow. Here's the quote in its entirety from the conference report, I'll add emphasis on the important bit:

> "I plead with you in the name of the Lord, and I pray that every man, woman and child **who has means** shall pay one tenth of their income as a tithing."[3]

Why did they leave out the words "who has means" in the teachings of the presidents book? Leaving those words out, changes the meaning of the sentence. Elipses are so annoying at times. You have to hunt down the entire quote as it was originally intended to be said. If not? Then don't be quoting it out of context.

I would like to return to the quote regarding tithing hopefully not to be required of the saints. This is how the Teachings of the Presidents of the Church book states the quote:

> Furthermore, I want to say to you, we may not be able to reach it right away, but we expect to see the day when we will not have to ask you for one dollar of donation for any purpose, except that which you volunteer to give of your own accord, because we will have tithes sufficient in the storehouse of the Lord to pay everything that is needful for the advancement of the kingdom of God. ... That is the true policy, the true purpose of the Lord in the management of the affairs of His Church.[4]

Wait, there's another elipses. Here's the full quote:

> Furthermore, I want to say to you, we may not be able to reach it right away, but we expect to see the day when we will not have to ask you for one dollar of donation for any purpose, except that which you volunteer to give of your own accord, because we will have tithes sufficient in the storehouse of the Lord to pay everything that is needful for the advancement of the kingdom of God. **I want to live to see that day, if the Lord will spare my life. It does not make any difference, though, so far as that is concerned, whether I live or not.** That is the true policy, the true purpose of the Lord in the management of the affairs of His Church.[5]

An interesting change wouldn't you think?

[3] In Conference Report, Oct. 1899, 28
[4] Teachings of Presidents of the Church, Chapter 31: Obedience to the Law of Tithing
[5] In Conference Report, Apr. 1907, 7

Chapter 25

Protect the Children

Jesus taught the people to not offend His little ones, and encouraged them all to come unto Him.

There are those who would practice unrighteous dominion towards the children of the church, and this is wrong. The children of the church must be protected against predators within the church. It is sad that such a thought even needs to be brought to people's attention, yet it is real.

Said of children:

> "In some minds there seems to be an idea that there should be a different form of blessing for children born of non-members and for those who are identified with the Church; and it is from such sources that in the case of children belonging to members of the Church 'the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob' and all the attendant favors are frequently conferred upon the child. This is all wrong. If we take the example of our Lord and Redeemer, who is our pattern and whose example we cannot too closely follow, we find that He blessed all who were brought to Him. We have no hint that He asked whose children they were, or the standing or faith of their parents. His remark was, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven;' and He laid His hands upon them and blessed them. All little children, no matter what their parentage may be, are innocent in the sight of heaven, and they should be received as such and blessed as such." -George Q Cannon, Latter-day Saints'.[1]

There is also a policy[2] put out by the church in their Handbook 1 for Stake Presidents, Bishops, Mission Presidents etc that will not allow a child who has

[1] Millennial Star 61 (March 30, 1899) and Juvenile Instructor

[2] This was later clarified as being revelation by Russel M. Nelson in a worldwide devotional he gave. Becoming True Millennials, January 10, 2016, LDS.org

same sex parents be baptized into the church of Christ. They cannot receive a name and a blessing either.[3]

Said of the policy change:

> The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counsel together and share all the Lord has directed us to understand and to feel individually and collectively. And then we watch the Lord move upon the President of the Church to proclaim the Lord's will.
>
> This prophetic process was followed in 2012 with the change in minimum age for missionaries and again with the recent additions to the Church's handbook, consequent to the legalization of same-sex marriage in some countries. Filled with compassion for all, and especially for the children, we wrestled at length to understand the Lord's will in this matter. Ever mindful of God's plan of salvation and of His hope for eternal life for each of His children, we considered countless permutations and combinations of possible scenarios that could arise. We met repeatedly in the temple in fasting and prayer and sought further direction and inspiration. And then, when the Lord inspired His prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, to declare the mind of the Lord and the will of the Lord, each of us during that sacred moment felt a spiritual confirmation. It was our privilege as Apostles to sustain what had been revealed to President Monson. Revelation from the Lord to His servants is a sacred process, and so is your privilege of receiving personal revelation.[4]

When the child turns eighteen years old, and moves out of their parents house, then they can be baptized. In effect, they must turn away from their parents and disown them.

This appears to go against the second Article of Faith which states:

> We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.[5]

It should be noted, as of April 4, 2019 the November 2015 policy has been reversed. It was stated as revelation to bring it into the handbook and now it has been declared as revelation to be changed. I suppose this could go under the revelation section, but it is talked about here. Is God changing His mind regarding what he wants for His children?

Then there is the story in the Bible:

> And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.
>
> And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

[3] Handbook 1, 16.13
[4] Becoming True Millennials, January 10, 2016, LDS.org
[5] Articles of Faith 1:2

> Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.
>
> I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.
>
> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.
>
> When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,
>
> And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.[6]

The man was not blind because of his parents actions, he was born blind so God might show His work to the people. But the point is, because of his parents actions, he wasn't cursed. His parents played no role in it, neither did he for he was innocent at birth. That is how our children are in today's world. They are innocent. Protect their innocence.

This topic alone could cover an entire book, and it has by some accounts. You can read more about all of this by going to http://protectldschildren.org.

[6] John 9:1-7

Chapter 26

Hero Worship

As members of the church, we sometimes get into what is known as hero worship.[1] We tend to put prophets and apostles on pedestals to the point they are seen as higher than anyone else. I dare say, sometimes we put them even above that of Jesus Christ Himself. Which I'm sure you can see the problem with that. No one is greater than the Risen Lord. We should watch what we say about propehts and apostles of the Lord, it is Him who they serve, not the other way around.

This hero worship was evident in the times of Joseph Smith, and have continued onward throughout the world in these latter days. Being said of the prophet Joseph:

> Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it.[2]

These days, people praise the current prophet for revelation he receives. We see the outcome of such revelations and sometimes it becomes confusing. Recently, they stopped calling a program Home Teaching and are calling it Ministering. Instead of monthly reports, and visiting every month, it has changed to every three months. Times have changed, where once you gave a lesson at a person's home, now you can get by with a simple facebook message or text message to them instead.

People see these changes and are impressed by the Lord's servant by the obvious revelation that has been received. I will not say one way or the other what I believe is revelation vs. a corporate decision. I have my own thoughts on the matter and I will leave it at that.

Another recent revelation was combining the Elders Quorum and the High Priests Group into one single Elders Quorum. While this feels like just a simple restructure due to low attendance numbers, it is called a revelation.

[1] Noun: Excessive admiration for someone.
[2] D&C 135:3

The members of the church priase the prophet for these actions and are amazed at how wonderful it is to be living in a time of current revelation from the Lord.

All the while, children are being neglected and one on one youth interviews continue to happen within the church.

The church has said that it is not a business. It is not a corporation where people climb the ladder as it were, yet that is exactly how it looks when seen from the outside.[3]

Here is the business listing for the LDS Church.

Figure 26.1: LDS Church Business Listing

Again, recently the church came out to declare that people shouldn't use the terms "LDS" or "Mormon" when speaking about the church. It should go by

[3]Inside the Quorum of the Twelve: Misconceptions about an Apostle's Service, lds.org, 10 August 2018

its full name. "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints". Some people have gone to say that by continuing to call yourself a Mormon, you are going against God's prophet and are an apostate. With the constant use of the full church name, is that not saying Christ's name too repeatedly?

According to scripture the Melchizedek Priesthood "was called the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God. But out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too-frequent repetition of his name, they, the church, in the ancient days, called that priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek Priesthood"[4]

Is this not the same case? How can one be "too-frequent repetition" and the other not?

Another interesting tidbit of information, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was known by the following names:

The Church of Christ (1830-1834)

The Church of the Latter Day Saints (1834)

The Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints (1836-1838)

The Lord finally in 1838 told Joseph what the correct name of the church would be:

> For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Chirst of Latter-day Saints.[5]

Why did the Lord take so long in telling Joseph what the name of His church would be? Is this not the same Lord who told Noah how to build an ark based on exact dimensions? From 1820 to 1838, the Lord had not given Joseph the exact name of the church by which it was to be called in these last days. I find that interesting.

The prophet's wife, Wendy Nelson said the following about the prophet:

> "I have seen him changing in the last ten months," said Sister Nelson. "It is as though he's been unleashed. He's free to finally do what he came to earth to do. ... And also, he's free to follow through with things he's been concerned about but could never do. Now that he's president of [the Church], he can do those things."[6]

From this quote, it would seem that President Nelson has had these thoughts and changes in his mind for a while now, but now he can finally institute those changes.

An example of this was a talk he gave in 1990 General Conference.[7] It had the same kinds of undertones about the name of the church. Six months later, President Hinckley noted the talk in another General Conference and then stated that the term Mormon was okay.[8]

[4] D&C 107:3-4

[5] D&C 115:4

[6] Latter-day Saint Prophet, Wife and Apostle Share Insights of Global Ministry, Mormonnewsroom.org Article

[7] April 1990 Conference (Conference Report Page 17)

[8] October 1990 Conference (Conference Report Pages 68-69)

Chapter 27

Nephi Kills Laben

Question: When is it okay to kill another person?

Answer:

> Thou shalt not kill.[1]
>
> And again, the Lord God hath commanded that men should not murder.[2]
>
> And now, behold, I speak unto the church. Thou shalt not kill; and he that kills shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come.[3]

So, from the standard works, we have it that killing is bad. Murder is bad and evil in the sight of God.

Yet, Nephi murdered Laben. Not only did he murder Laben, he hacked off his head.

If God can simply smite someone down[4], or cause a deep sleep to come upon them[5], why was it necessary for Nephi to kill Laben? Even Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah were shook by an Angel of the Lord. Alma the Younger even went into a coma like state as he was converted.[6] Why didn't the Lord just convert Laben in a like manner?

We are told he was "constrained by the Spirit that [he] should kill Laban."[7] Nephi admits he had never taken another man's life. He resisted and resisted, and the spirit told Nephi "Slay him, for the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands."[8]

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[1] Exodus 20:13
[2] 2 Nephi 26:32
[3] D&C 42:18
[4] Abraham 1:20
[5] Genesis 2:21
[6] Mosiah 27:19
[7] 1 Nephi 4:10
[8] 1 Nephi 4:12

So, Nephi chopped off Laben's head and went on his way. All because: "It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief."[9]

All of this was so they could get the plates of brass. The plates of brass contained the writings of the Old Testament and the writings of Isaiah. Which, as discussed in another article, Joseph Smith didn't even use the plates when translating them, so was it necessary for Nephi to even get the plates of brass?

If the plates of brass contained the five books of Moses one would wonder if it is the same story of Adam and Eve found in the Pearl of Great Price (Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible). In Moses 6, it clearly states Jesus Christ's name. If Nephi did have those writings, then he should have known Christ's name. Yet it had to be told by an angel in 2nd Nephi.[10]

The Pentateuch wasn't formed until 400 BCE, which is 200 years after Lehi left Jerusalem. The Pentateuch is the five books of Moses.[11]

[9] 1 Nephi 4:13
[10] 2nd Nephi 10
[11] Pentateuch, LDS Bible Dictionary

Chapter 28

Seer Stones

Richard Bushman in Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling explains:

> Joseph had discovered two stones, one in 1822 while digging a well with Willard Chase a half mile from the Smith farm. (called the Chase seer stone) The source of the other stone is uncertain. These stones were the keys that enable Joseph to see things, as Lucy said, "invisible to the natural eye." Emma Smith described one of them as "a small stone, not exactly black, but was rather a dark color."
>
> In 1841, Joseph showed his other, whitish stone to the Council of the Twelve in Nauvoo and told them, Brigham Young reported, "that every man who lived on the earth was entitled to a seer stone and should have one, but they are kept from them in consequence of their wickedness."
>
> Alva Hale...said Joseph Smith Jr. told him that the "gift of seeing with a stone" was "a gift from God" but that "peeping" was all d__d nonsense.[1]

We learn in D&C 28, that a man by the name of Hiram Page claimed to have a seer stone in his posession. But it was telling him things from the devil. So Satan has power over seer stones. Yet, we are to believe that Joseph's seer stone never told him anything from Satan?

> And again, thou shalt take thy brother, Hiram Page, between him and thee alone, and tell him that those things which he hath written from that stone are not of me and that Satan deceiveth him;
>
> For, behold, these things have not been appointed unto him, neither shall anything be appointed unto any of this church contrary to the church covenants.

[1] Bushman, p. 48-52

> For all things must be done in order, and by common consent in the church, by the prayer of faith.
>
> And thou shalt assist to settle all these things, according to the covenants of the church, before thou shalt take thy journey among the Lamanites.
>
> And it shall be given thee from the time thou shalt go, until the time thou shalt return, what thou shalt do.
>
> And thou must open thy mouth at all times, declaring my gospel with the sound of rejoicing. Amen.[2]

So, Joseph was able to have a seer stone, but another man was not and it was due to being controlled by the devil. A simple outside observation could indicate that Joseph might have wanted the spotlight to be on himself and not another person who could see things in a stone? Not sure what to make of that thought at all.

We're also told that Joseph didn't need the seer stone when translating the bible because he had learn the power of revelation since then. He didn't need an object upon which to translate.

Seer Stones were used in magical thing like looking for money and hidden treasure in Joseph's day. It doesn't seem to be something worthy of a prophet of God who had been prepared since before the world was formed. It feels off and odd at times to think about.

There was another time when Martin Harris was known to switch out the seer stone in the hat,[3] and when Joseph went to translate again he couldn't. Martin was testing Joseph in this act because he wanted to know if Joseph truely saw things through the stone. Martin expalins he had found a similar looking stone. Wouldn't Joseph know which stone was his and what wasn't? He would have quickly known that wasn't his stone in the hat right?

Another thought about it, if the object didn't matter. Wouldn't God have given Joseph the revelation anyways? He didn't need a stone to translate. It was like a security blanket really. God can do anything without the power of an object.

I could see the story going either way.

[2] D&C 28:11-16
[3] Millenial Star 44:87

Chapter 29

Book of Mormon Translation

For years members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were told that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon. It is said he translated it by the "gift and power of God." When people think of translation, they think he looked at the plates and translated letter for letter, word for word the words of ancient prophets.

This was not the case. Joseph would place a seer stone in a hat, and put his face into the hat. He would then read off the words as they appeared to him. The words on the stone wouldn't change until his scribe confirmed back to him what was said.

The actual gold plates weren't used in the translation process at all.

People have brought up the question about how Bible passages, complete with changes known to have been made by men, made it into the Book of Mormon. We have a possible explaination for that. Joseph Smith copied the passages from the Bible into the Book of Mormon:

> When Joseph Smith saw that the Nephite record was quoting the prophecies of Isaiah, of Malachi, and the words of the Savior, he took the English Bible and compared these passages as far as they paralleled each other, and finding that in substance in thought, they were alike, he adopted our English translation.[1]

So we're not even sure we have those passages copied word for word from the gold plates. If that's the case? How are we to be sure that the rest of the book is really the "most correct book" out of them all?

There have been noted changes in the book throughout its history. The Eternal Father being changed to Son of The Eternal Father for Christ etc. It

[1] Young Men's Mutual Improvement Associations Manual, pp. 505-506, 1903-1904. New Witnesses for God. Volume II. The Book of Mormon Part I. https://archive.org/stream/ymmia1903#page/n699

seems to point towards Joseph changing the words of the prophets. The idea of one god to three seperate individuals.

But whenever someone questions the validity of the book, they are told to pray about it. Taking Moroni's promise and seeing for themselves if it is true. Again, acting on feelings alone and not evidence.

We were taught from the beginning, that the Book of Mormon is about the Native Americans who came from Jerusalem. That is they were Jews. Science has determined this not to be the case. The church had to make a change in the introduction of the Book of Mormon, where it once said the Lamenite people "are the principal ancestors of the American Indians", now it reads "are among the ancestors of the American Indians."

If that change had to be made, what else about the book has been deemed wrong or incorrect?

Some have come to believe that Joesph made the whole book up, that it was his imagination which caused the Book of Mormon to come about. They claim the book is not a historical document, but people should look on the principles taught within the book which is more important than the origins.

The Book of Mormon stands as a keystone to the LDS Religion. If it is a fraud, then the whole church is a fraud and Joseph Smith was not a prophet of God. Church leaders have stated thusly, challenging those who would criticize the book.

President Gordon B. Hinckley had the following things to say:

> There is no middle ground. Joseph Smith talked with the Father and the Son or he didn't. If he didn't, then we are embraced in a great fraud, a terrible fraud.[2]
>
> Our whole strength rests on the validity of that vision. It either occurred or it did not occur. If it did not, then this work is a fraud... upon that unique and wonderful experience stands the validity of this church.[3]
>
> You and I are faced with the stark question of accepting the truth of the First Vision and that which followed it. On the question of its reality lies the very validity of this Church.[4]
>
> That becomes the hinge pin on which this whole cause turns. If the First Vision was true, if it actually happened, then the Book of Mormon is true. Then we have the priesthood. Then we have the Church organization and all of the other keys and blessings of authority which we say we have. If the First Vision did not occur, then we are involved in a great sham. It is just that simple.[5]

[2] "Counsel from the Prophet," Church News, 4/27/96, 4

[3] "The Marvelous Foundation of our Faith," Ensign [Conference Edition], November 2002, 80

[4] "The Stone Cut Out of the Mountain," Ensign [Conference Edition], November 2007, 86

[5] Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley, 227

The book itself states that if there are mistakes in it, those are the mistakes of men (possibly the translation) and not of God.[6]

Why was the manner of translating the book never taught in a primary or sunday school class? Why did it have to come out through other means? Those teachings were thought to be anti-mormon lies and false doctrine, only to be proven later on they were true.

In a recent face to face with Elder Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, it was mentioned that the seer stone has always been knowledge, it was even mentioned in an article from 1974 Children's Friend.

It's nice that was in the Children's Friend back in 1974, but it wasn't actively taught when I was growing up in the 80s and 90s etc. I did some digging, which we're basically told not to do,[7] and found the article in question.

> Because of his spiritual nature and his willingness to learn the truth, Joseph Smith was tested and found worthy to be the translator of the Book of Mormon. To help him with the translation, Joseph found with the gold plates "a curious instrument which the ancients called Urim and Thummim, which consisted of two transparent stones set in a rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate."
>
> Joseph also used an egg-shaped, brown rock for translating called a seer stone. The translating was done at Peter Whitmer's home, a friend of the Prophet's where Oliver Cowdery, Emma Smith (Joseph's wife), one of the Whitmers, or Martin Harris wrote down the words spoken by the Prophet as soon as they were made known to him.
>
> Martin Harris said that on the seer stone "sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by [the one writing them down] and when finished [that person] would say 'written;' and if correctly written, the sentence would disappear and another take its place; but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates."[8]

This quote brings about a question. Was the "translation" a tight or a loose translation? If it was tight, there shouldn't have been any changes in the book. If it truely fell from the prophet's lips word for word, and wouldn't change until it was written correctly then there shouldn't be any changes. If it is a loose translation, that is by revelation only, then we don't know if we have the text as it was written by prophets of old.

There is another interesting thought about the Book of Mormon. The final page, the last leaf of the book, was a literal translation:

> I wish to mention here, that the title-page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand

[6] Book of Mormon Title Page

[7] We're told to follow the words of the current prophet and apostles. If they aren't actively teaching it, how are we to know about it unless we go digging in the archives for it?

[8] A Peaceful Heart, Children's Friend September 1974

> side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated, the language of the whole running the same as all Hebrew writing in general; and that said title-page is not by any means a modern composition, either of mine or of any other man who has lived or does live in this generation. Therefore, in order to correct an error which generally exists concerning it, I give below that part of the title-page of the English version of the Book of Mormon, which is a genuine and literal translation of the title-page of the original Book of Mormon, as recorded on the plates.-DHC 1:71. (1830.)[9]

From this we learn the title page was written in Hebrew. Not Reformed Egyptian like the rest of the plates. Where the rest of the book was translated using the Urim and Thummim or a rock in a hat, the final page was translated by Joseph himself as a literal translation. I suppose by this time, he could read and translate Hebrew?

[9]Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith

Chapter 30

Book of Abraham Translation

The opening of the Book of Abraham, I suppose you could call it the introduction (how small it is), says the following:

> A Translation of some ancient Records that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt. The writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand, upon papyrus.[1]

From that introductoin alone, it indicates that the book was translated from Abraham's writings on papyrus. It was written by his own hand. That's what I was taught growing up. Sounds right.

Then the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints comes out with an essay titled "Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham."

There's a paragraph in it that pulls into question the validity of what the introduction claims:

> None of the characters on the papyrus fragments mentioned Abraham's name or any of the events recorded in the book of Abraham. Mormon and non-Mormon Egyptologists agree that the characters on the fragments do not match the translation given in the book of Abraham, though there is not unanimity, even among non-Mormon scholars, about the proper interpretation of the vignettes on these fragments. Scholars have identified the papyrus fragments as parts of standard funerary texts that were deposited with mummified bodies. These fragments date to between the third century B.C.E. and the first century C.E., long after Abraham lived. [2]

[1] Book of Abraham Introduction

[2] Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham, Gospel Topic Essay, LDS.org

So not only were the fragments dated long after Abraham lived, they don't even match what the translation even said? Further inspection indicates that the fascimilies don't match up with anything either. They were typical funeral documents.

According to the church, we have a book that was written on papyrus by a man who couldn't have written the book on papyrus because it was written long after Abraham lived. Just trying to wrap my head around that thought. It doesn't sit will with me.

30.1 Translation Doesn't Mean Translation

According to the Joseph Smith Papers website, translation doesn't actually mean translation.

> As used in this series, translation does not refer to conventional translations, such as Smith's exercises in the study of Hebrew.[3]

> While Joseph Smith and his contemporaries referred to his work on the Book of Abraham as a translation, Smith had no prior knowledge of the Egyptian language and relied instead on divine revelation to produce the text.[4]

If Joseph wasn't translating the Book of Abraham as we've been told, and it was merely revelation, why would he need to translate an egyptian alphabet? Isn't that wasting time?

> July 1835
>
> <Translating the Book of Abraham &c.>The remainder of this month, I was continually engaged in translating an alphabet to the Book of Abraham, and arrangeing a grammar of the Egyptian language as practiced by the ancients.[5]

[3] https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/intro/revelations-and-translations-series-introduction?p=1

[4] https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/articles/book-of-abraham-and-related-manuscripts-volume-now-available

[5] https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-b-1-1-september-1834-2-november-1838/51

Chapter 31

Condemnation

The Book of Mormon was published in 1830. Exact date was 26 March 1830.[1] Though there were parts of the book published in a newspaper in January of that same year.

However, two years later in September 1832 Joseph Smith received a revelation that the church was under condemantion for forgetting the "new covenant, even the Book of Mormon." Two years? That seems pretty quick to place an entire church under condemnation for not following scripture.

Here's the scripture in full:

> And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received-
>
> Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation.
>
> And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all.
>
> And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written.[2]

Ezra Taft Benson as stated the following:

> "Unless we read the Book of Mormon and give heed to its teachings, the Lord has stated in section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants that the whole Church is under condemnation" and "In our day, the Lord has revealed the need to reemphasize the Book of Mormon to get the Church and all the children of Zion out from under condemnation—the scourge and judgment."[3]

[1] Larry C. Porter, "From a Book Coming Forth," Ensign (July 1988), 42.
[2] D&C 84:54-57
[3] Ensign, May 1986, pp. 5, 78.

The article from which those two quotes are taken, specify some possible explaination of the condemnation,[4] which I don't want to go into here as the emphasis is on the Book of Mormon.

[4]What is the condemnation we are under that President Benson speaks of regarding the Book of Mormon?, Ensign, February 1991

Chapter 32

A Volcano and a Family

In 1815, the Tambora volcano erupted in Indonesia. It killed 80,000 people.[1]

Because of this eruption the climate was affected worldwide, even to North America where Joseph Smith Sr. and his family lived. With their crops ruined, they were forced to move from Vermont to Palmyra New York. Five years after that Joseph Smith had his First Vision.

These facts can be found in the new church history book titled "Saints". It's in the first chapter titled "Ask in Faith".[2]

So let me get this straight. God kills over 80,000 people. Not just the people killed in the volcano. Becuase of it, more than 80,000 people died due to starvation etc, and Joseph Smith's family moved closer to the gold plates? So Joseph Sith Jr. could find them? Couldn't have God found another way than killing over 80,000 of his children? The narrative makes it sound like this was the cause for Joseph Smith Jr. to be near the golden plates when the time came.

In the article "A Year Without Summer"[3], it simply states that this volcano eruption "played a small role in the history of The Church of jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

I have a feeling God could have found other ways for Joseph Smith Sr. to move his family instead of killing over 80,000 people.

It is interesting, a few chapter later in "Saints", it speaks of Joseph trying to get the gold plates. The angel warned him that if he had any evil thought in his mind to use the plates to get gain, he could not obtain them.

When Joseph went to the hill to obtain the plates, upon seeing the other items in the box which were valuable he placed the plates aside for a second. They disappeared. The angel hid them from Joseph telling him he wasn't ready to take the plates.

If the angel could simply move them like that? Why was the volcano necessary?

[1] https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/volcanic-eruption-kills-80000
[2] https://history.lds.org/saints?lang=eng
[3] https://www.lds.org/ensign/1983/01/a-year-without-a-summer?lang=eng

Chapter 33

Law of Common Consent

If a person doesn't support a policy that was given and is said to be revelation, how exactly does that get handeled? I dare not ask, because there are a few policies which I believe they are actually policies but not revelation.

Putting something in a handbook without telling the church is not revelation. That is a policy change. The handbook is not scripture. Shouldn't revelation be considered scripture? There is a line between scripture and that which is drafted by lawyers and placed in a handbook. It even states it's a "Policy".

> Policies on Ordinances for Children of a Parent Living in a Same-Gender Relationship[1]

Since when has a policy become scripture or a revelation? Are not revelations from the Lord considered scripture?[2]

So, what becomes of it all? If things in the handbook are considered revelation, but not scripture. It becomes confusing, and goes against the law of common consent. The law of common consent is stated as follows:

> Not only are Church officers sustained by common consent, but this same principle operates for policies, major decisions, acceptance of

[1] Changes to LDS Handbook 1- Document 2 Revised 11-3-2015.pdf

[2] **Revelation:** Communication from God to His children on earth. Revelation may come through the Light of Christ and the Holy Ghost by way of inspiration, visions, dreams, or visits by angels. Revelation provides guidance that can lead the faithful to eternal salvation in the celestial kingdom.

The Lord reveals His work to His prophets and confirms to believers that the revelations to the prophets are true (Amos 3:7). Through revelation, the Lord provides individual guidance for every person who seeks it and who has faith, repents, and is obedient to the gospel of Jesus Christ. "The Holy Ghost is a revelator," said Joseph Smith, and "no man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations."

In the Lord's Church, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are prophets, seers, and revelators to the Church and to the world. The President of the Church is the only one whom the Lord has authorized to receive revelation for the Church (D&C 28:2–7). Every person may receive personal revelation for his own benefit.

By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live, Deut. 8:3 (Matt. 4:4; D&C 98:11). [LDS.org]

> new scripture, and other things that affect the lives of the Saints (see D&C 26:2).[3]

As far as I am aware, there hasn't been a sustaining vote on a revelation since the 1978 announcement of the ban on the blacks in General Conference.[4]

It would be interesting to list policies and revelations which haven't been voted on, I'll start with the most recent and work my way backwards? Maybe? Who knows how far I can go with it. These have been stated as being revelation.

1. No longer referring to the church as the Mormon church (2018)
2. Discontinuing Home Teaching, adopting Ministering (2018)
3. Combining Elders Quorum and High Priests Group into one Elders Quroum (2018)
4. Children of Same-Gender Relationships (2015)
5. Lowering of Mission Ages (2012)

I heard it considered that because a group sustains the prophet, they don't have to live by the law of common consent. That because they sustain the prophet, they automatically accept whatever revelation that comes and is announced. (For the record, the Children of Same-Gender Relationships policy, wasn't revealed to the membership of the church until after it was leaked. It was snuck in Handbook 1.)

Then Apostle Russel M. Nelson had the following to say regarding the policy:

> We sustain 15 men who are ordained as prophets, seers, and revelators. When a thorny problem arises-and they only seem to get thornier each day-these 15 men wrestle with the issue, trying to see all the ramifications of various courses of action, and they diligently seek to hear the voice of the Lord. After fasting, praying, studying, pondering, and counseling with my Brethren about weighty matters, it is not unusual for me to be awakened during the night with further impressions about issues with which we are concerned. And my Brethren have the same experience.
>
> The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counsel together and share all the Lord has directed us to understand and to feel individually and collectively. And then we watch the Lord move upon the President of the Church to proclaim the Lord's will.
>
> This prophetic process was followed in 2012 with the change in minimum age for missionaries and again with the recent additions to

[3] "Section 26, The Law of Common Consent," Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual (2002), 54

[4] "Revelation on Priesthood Accepted, Church Officers Sustained," October 1978 General Conference, LDS.org

> the Church's handbook, consequent to the legalization of same-sex marriage in some countries. Filled with compassion for all, and especially for the children, we wrestled at length to understand the Lord's will in this matter. Ever mindful of God's plan of salvation and of His hope for eternal life for each of His children, we considered countless permutations and combinations of possible scenarios that could arise. We met repeatedly in the temple in fasting and prayer and sought further direction and inspiration. And then, when the Lord inspired His prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, to declare the mind of the Lord and the will of the Lord, each of us during that sacred moment felt a spiritual confirmation. It was our privilege as Apostles to sustain what had been revealed to President Monson. Revelation from the Lord to His servants is a sacred process, and so is your privilege of receiving personal revelation.[5]

[5] Becoming True Millennials, Russel M. Nelson, January 10, 2016 Devotional

Chapter 34

Grace of Christ

Not much is talked about in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding grace. We are taught to work our way into heaven. John A. Widtsoe said the following:

> Once the final judgment has been uttered and our place assigned, we remain there, through we may progress forever, and everlastingly increase in power. Meanwhile, in all such matters, and with respect to all such questions, we can safely rest ourselves upon the mercy and justice of the Lord. Our only concern need be so to live as to win a place in the celestial glory.[1]

So one must win their entrance into heaven. Scriptures teach that we are saved by works, only the works we do matters most.[2]

Personally, it is through grace that we are saved. We cannot buy or win our way into heaven anymore than will Satan change his mind and repent. It simply cannot be done. It truly is through the grace of Jesus Christ that we are saved. I wish more people would see that in the church. It's not taught often, it's not mentiond much. The church claims to not have a checklist in order to get into heaven, but there is a checklist.

1. Have faith
2. Repent of sin
3. Be baptized
4. Receive the Holy Ghost
5. Get your endowment
6. Be married in the Celestial Covenant

[1] Evidences and Reconciliations, John A. Widtsoe, p. 283
[2] James 2:17-26

7. Pay your tithing
8. Be worthy to attend the temple
9. Obey the Word of Wisdom
10. Support the brethren
11. Do your calling within the church
12. Do ministering (formerly home and visiting teaching)
13. Endure to the end

Naturally that is not a complete list of what needs to be done, but it is a good starting place. It can be downright overwhelming at times. All of these things to do in order to please God and to come back into His presence. It's enough to drive a person mad at times. Yet we endure and continue to endure no matter what. But at what cost? What good does it do if a person is to live all their days hoping to someday be good enough knowing they will never be good enough to be with God based on their own actions?

I think there's a scripture that not a lot of people take time to actually think about and consider. It's possibly the most quoted scripture around. It's found in John Chapter 3 verse 16. I would, however like to cite from that chapter verses 15 to 18:

> That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.
>
> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
>
> For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.
>
> He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.[3]

Here we are taught that if we beleive in Jesus Christ we have eternal and everlasting life. We are not condemned because of belief, no we would be condemend because of a darkness within us. In order to be saved, we must believe in Christ, causing no malice towards others. I believe that's the main point there. It is true our works do not matter, we cannot earn our way into heaven. Through our actions, if they be evil and wrong we can prohibit the light of Christ to dwell within us and will show God that we do not want heaven.

People tend to take that as saying we have control over if we go to heaven or not. To the highest level of the Celestial Kingdom as it were. We don't have

[3] John 3:15-18

control, we cannot buy or earn our way into heaven. It's not done. Only through the grace of Christ are we saved, are our stripes healed. We must accept Him and allow His salvation to work within us. Without that? We are damned.

We find the Gospel of Christ Jesus in 1 Corinthians 15.

> Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;
>
> By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.
>
> For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;
>
> And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:[4]

That, my friends, is the gospel of Jesus Christ.
Compare that to to the Book of Mormon, which states:

> Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you-that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.
>
> And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I have been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil-
>
> And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.
>
> And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.
>
> And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father.[5]

One gospel speaks about grace, the other speaks of justice. One about a gift the other regarding works. Which is it?

[4] 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
[5] 3 Nephi 27:13-17

Chapter 35

Apostasy

According to the Church's website, Apostasy is "when individuals or groups of people turn away from the principles of the gospel."[1]

When a person is in apostasy, they are requried to undergo a Church Disciplinary Council. There are guidelines when such a council is mandatory. It also defines Apostasy:

> **Apostasy**[2]
>
> As used here, *apostasy* refers to members who:
>
> 1. Repeatedly act in clear, open, and deliberate public opposition to the Church or its leaders.
> 2. Persist in teaching as Church doctrine information that is not Church doctrine after they have been corrected by their bishop or a higher authority.
> 3. Continue to follow the teachings of apostate sects (such as those that advocate plural marriage) after being corrected by their bishop or a higher authority.
> 4. Are in a same-gender marriage.
> 5. Formally join another church and advocate its teachings.

What concerns me the most is when a good moral person is standing up for something they believe in, and is morally sound, that they get placed under church discipline. They are considered an apostate and are treated as such.

Is this how God want's his church to be run? Is this how Jesus wants his church to be run?

I am confused.

[1] Apostasy, LDS.org
[2] Handbook 1, 6.7.3

Chapter 36

Excommunication

When someone goes against the church's teachings and openly oppose the church and its leaders, they can be excommunicated from the LDS Church. Figure 36.1 is an example of such:

Former Mormon missionary excommunicated from church

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A former Mormon missionary who publicly criticized his church's denial of priesthood to blacks says he has been excommunicated and fired from his job as chapel janitor.

Byron Marchant, 35, Salt Lake City, cast the first vote in modern history against a Mormon leader at a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints (Mormon) conference earlier this month.

Marchant, a church elder, had been called to a church court three days before the conference after he called for a demonstration against the church's policy.

Marchant said he was excommunicated — the most severe penalty imposed by the church — in a closed-door trial which lasted until 4 a.m. Friday. He said he was informed of the verdict and the termination of his job as ward (parish) custodian later in the day by Stake (diocese) President Narvel Scherzinger.

President Scherzinger declined to discuss the matter. Jerry Cahill of the church's public information office said his office had not been informed of any excommunication and normally would not be. He said each stake has the right to excommunicate its own members without consulting church General Authorities.

Marchant said he was excommunicated because of "open opposition" to church authority. "My behavior was embarrassing to the church."

Marchant was a church missionary in France for two years in the 1960s. He comes from a Mormon family of 15 children.

Several years ago, Marchant was scoutmaster of a troop which included two black non-Mormon scouts on whose behalf the NAACP brought a suit involving the church's priesthood denial.

The suit challenged a policy which made it impossible for blacks to hold scout leadership positions by linking them to priesthood office. The case was dismissed after the church changed its position.

Marchant said he would appeal the action to governing bodies of the church.

Figure 36.1: The Daily Reporter (Dover, Ohio) 15 Oct 1977

In the early days of the church, leaders were known to excommunicate followers more often and loose. It has slowed down a bit as church goers have gotten in line as it were. But there are still excommunications which happen every year. Of course, not all end up in the newspaper like Figure 36.1. But it still happens.

It was said during the succession crisis of 1844 after Joseph Smith died, anyone who voted against Brigham Young were excommunicated. Even though a vote for and against was called for. Anytime a person in the church votes against or opposing the leadders of the church, they are in danger of apostasy.

To face excommunication from the church, you are taken off the roles of the church. Your baptism becomes null and void, any temple blessings are revoked. You are not able to speak in a church meeting, give a prayer, take the sacrament

or participate in any way at all.

Some people are shunned by their family members. This is not a church teaching to be shunned, but it does happen. Family can't accept that one would not want to follow a church they grew up in. They cannot understand how a person would abandon their God as it were.

I think that's a main issue poeple don't understand. Just because a person is excommunicated from the church, it doesn't mean they have lost faith in Christ and a belief in God. Perhaps they have come to understand Christ a little bit more than they did when in the LDS faith.

The leaders say it's to help the repentence process, to help others come back to the church and to accept Christ's atonement in their lives. In effect, the church will not leave them alone. If a person is openly opposing church leaders, maybe they want to be left alone. It's a thought.

Members ask all the time to be left alone from the church, yet because the member is on the role the church continues to visit the member. The only way to avoid any of this is to either be excommunicated or to request your name be removed from the records of the church.

Even removing your name isn't an easy process. The bishop of the local ward will still want to see if there's anything they can do to help you come back to the fold. It's a never ending process which constantly loops over again.

It's sad to think about.

In a talk given to the All-Church Coordinating Council, Boyd K. Packer said the following:

> There are three areas where members of the Church, influenced by social and political unrest, are being caught up and led away. I chose these three because they have made major invasions into the membership of the Church. In each, the temptation is for us to turn about and face the wrong way, and it is hard to resist, for doing it seems so reasonable and right.
>
> The dangers I speak of come from the gay-lesbian movement, the feminist movement (both of which are relatively new), and the ever-present challenge from the so-called scholars or intellectuals.[1]

If a person in the church identifies with any of these three, they can face church discipline. That may come in the form of excommunication, or the lesser judgement of disfellowship.

To openly think for yourself goes against church teachings. You are to obey the commandments the church has laid out, which they claim come from the Lord. Only then will you be able to be in full fellowship with the Church of Chirst. Any deviation from this path and you are facing dangerous waters.

In the same breath LDS faithful are taught to seek out learning and to seek things which are good. They are taught to seek if something is right or not. To not blindly follow a prophet of God but to learn for themselves if the teachings are true. Once they learn if it is true or false they can come to a decision.

[1] Talk to the All-Church Coordinating Council, Elder Boyd K. Packer, May 18, 1993

But if you decided what a prophet of God has spoken to be false, you are on thin ice and there is no real coming back from that. The official statment is the church must protect its good name.[2]

So, does that mean forget about the people who are trying to learn from the best books and who might bring about history issues? Who are simply trying to understand the religion they have believed in their whole life? There's a lot to be said about the church's history, not all is good mind you. There is a lot to be said about all of it. Choosing what you want to believe to be true and what is true? That's not how any of this works.

Jesus cared more about the people then he did protecting a church. Even when Saul was persecuting the church, Jesus appeared to him (it still isn't clear which way Jesus appeared to Saul, be it visual or audio[3]), and Saul changed his ways. Jesus was concerned about Saul and the people, the people Saul was persecuting. Jesus didn't care about the "good name of the church", He cared about the people.

Back to the image about the man who was excommunicated due to him being outspoken about blacks receiving the priesthood. The newspaper article was October 1977, less than a year before the June 1978 "revelation". He knew what was right, he knew what needed to be done. But because he went against the church's established doctrine and policy, he was excommunicated. The church would later change their minds about black people and the priesthood etc. as already mentioned in another article, but to go against someone for pressing for that which is right? Doesn't seem logical.

A person does not seek out excommunication from the church. They desire to embrace the church and help grow it and move it forward. Sometimes their way of thinking tends to squeeze the church where the leaders think it ought not to be squeezed and that person must be silenced. Thus an excommunication occurs.

Back in the day, they would even put on display those who had been excommunicated including their wards and stakes they came from[4]. Some would even have to get up at the pulpit and tell of their wrongdoings as part of their repentance process.

[2]The purposes of disciplinary councils are to save the souls of transgressors, protect the innocent, and safeguard the purity, integrity, and good name of the Church. https://www.lds.org/topics/church-disciplinary-councils?lang=eng

[3]Acts 9:7; Acts 22:9

[4]Improvement Era, June 1945, Vol 48 No 6, Page 345.

Chapter 37

Quotes

> Say nothing of my religion. It is known to my God and myself alone. Its evidence before the world is to be sought in my life; if that has been honest and dutiful to society, the religion which has regulated it cannot be a bad one.[1]

Quotes abound in the world of religion. There are so many religious quotes out there, some days I do not know where some begin and others end. They are that which bring forth the breath of life into people. Allowing them to try and see all that is out there.

Granted, not all quotes are faith promoting. There are quotes out there which people would rather be buried never to see the light of day. But still those quotes exist for a reason. Sometimes those reasons are more than we can grasp at the current moment in time.

> If we have the truth, it cannot be harmed by investigation. If we have not the truth, it ought to be harmed.[2]

The truth is out there. One just has to want to look for it. It isn't hiding. In most instances the truth is there, in plain sight. If we do not actually look for the truth or seek it out, we cannot find the truth. It will seldom come to find us.

> If a faith will not bear to be investigated, if its preachers and professors are afraid to have it examined; their foundation must be very weak.[3]

> The honest investigator must be prepared to follow wherever the search of truth may lead. Truth is often found in the most unexpected places. He must, with fearless and open mind "insist that

[1] Thomas Jefferson
[2] President J. Reuben Clark
[3] Apostle George A. Smith, Journal of Discourses, v. 14, p. 216

> facts are far more important than any cherished, mistaken beliefs, no matter how unpleasant the facts or how delightful the beliefs."[4]

> The man who cannot listen to an argument which opposes his views either has a weak position or is a weak defender of it. No opinion that cannot stand discussion or criticism is worth holding. And it has been wisely said that the man who knows only half of any question is worse off than the man who knows nothing of it. He is not only one sided, but his partisanship soon turns him into an intolerant and a fanatic. In general it is true that nothing which cannot stand up under discussion and criticism is worth defending.[5]

> We desire that the brethren and sisters will all feel the responsibility of expressing their feelings in relation to the propositions that may be put before you. We do not want any man or woman who is a member of the Church to violate their conscience. We would like all to vote as they feel, whether for or against.[6]

Men and Women are free to choose according to their own thoughts. That is the will and mind of the Lord. For we were all given agency th at we might choose good from evil. Without having such a choice, we wouldn't learn or grow from that which comes across our path in this life.

There are other quotes by church leaders which are not quite in tune with that which we have today. Some quotes have been disavowed, others have been simply said the person speaking was saying such things as a man.

> Live a good life. If there are gods and they are just, then they will not care how devout you have been, but will welcome you based on the virtues you have lived by. If there are gods, but unjust, then you should not want to worship them. If there are no gods, then you will be gone, but will have lived a noble life that will live on in the memories of your loved ones.[7]

Isn't that what this life is all about? Living a good life? Shouldn't that be what this life is all about? Do unto others as you would have them do unto you? Come on now, it can't be this difficult.

> Cherish your doubts, for doubt is the attendant of truth. Doubt is the key to the door of knowledge; it is the servant of discovery. A belief which may not be questioned binds us to error, for there is incompleteness and imperfection in every belief. Doubt is the touchstone of truth; it is an acid which eats away the false. Let no one fear the truth, that doubt may consume it; for doubt is a

[4] Hugh B. Brown, CR, October 1962, pg. 42
[5] James E. Talmage
[6] President Joseph F. Smith
[7] Marcus Aurelius

> testing of belief. The truth stands boldly and unafraid; it is not shaken by the testing: For truth, if it be truth, arises from each testing stronger, more secure. Those that would silence doubt are filled with fear; their houses are built on shifting sands. But those who fear not doubt, and know its use, are founded on rock. They shall walk in the light of growing knowledge; the work of their hands shall endure. Therefore let us not fear doubt, but let us rejoice in its help: It is to be the wise as a staff to the blind; doubt is the attendant of truth.[8]

The LDS (Mormon) Church has an issue of anti-intelectualism. See the following:

> He [Satan] wins a great victory when he can get members of the church to speak against their leaders and to do their own thinking. When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done. When they propose a plan – it is God's Plan. When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When they give directions, it should mark the end of controversy, God works in no other way. To think otherwise, without immediate repentance, may cost one his faith, may destroy his testimony, and leave him a stranger to the Kingdom of God.[9]

> Always keep your eye on the President of the church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, even if it is wrong, and you do it, the lord will bless you for it, but you don't need to worry. The lord will never let his mouthpiece lead the people astray.[10]

> When Elder Packer interviewed me as a prospective member of Brigham Young University's faculty in 1976, he explained: "I have a hard time with historians because they idolize the truth. The truth is not uplifting; it destroys. I could tell most of the secretaries in the church office building because that they are ugly and fat. That would be the truth, but it would hurt and destroy them. Historians should tell only that part of the truth that is inspiring and uplifting."[11]

> When the Prophet speaks, ... the debate is over.[12]

[8] Robert T. Weston

[9] Ward Teacher's Message, Deseret News, Church Section, p. 5, May 26, 1945; see also Improvement Era, June 1945

[10] Apostle Marion G. Romney, Conference Report, Oct. 1960, p. 78

[11] D. Michael Quinn, "On Being a Mormon Historian (and Its Aftermath)," in George D. Smith, ed., Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History, 1992, p. 76

[12] Young Women President Elaine Cannon, Ensign, Nov. 1978, p. 108 (This would be quoted by President N. Eldon Tanner First Counselor of the First Presidency, Augst of 1979 in a talk titled "The Debate is Over")

> Avoid those who would tear down your faith. Faith-killers are to be shunned. The seeds which they plant in the minds and hearts of men grow like cancer and eat away the Spirit.[13]
>
> No true Latter-day Saint will ever take a stand that is in opposition to what the Lord has revealed to those who direct the affairs of his earthly kingdom. No Latter-day Saint who is true and faithful in all things will ever pursue a course, or espouse a cause, or publish an article or book that weakens or destroys faith.[14]
>
> Some things that are true are not edifying or appropriate to communicate. Readers of history and biography should ponder that moral reality as part of their effort to understand the significance of what they read.[15]
>
> There are three areas where members of the Church, influenced by social and political unrest, are being caught up and led away. I chose these three because they have made major invasions into the membership of the Church. In each, the temptation is for us to turn about and face the wrong way, and it is hard to resist, for doing it seems reasonable and right.
>
> The dangers I speak of come from the gay-lesbian movement, the feminist movement (both of which are relatively new), and the ever-present challenge from the so-called scholars or intellectuals. Our local leaders must deal with all three of them with ever increasingly frequency. In each case, the members who are hurting have the conviction that the Church somehow is doing something wrong to members or that the Church is not doing enough for them.[16]
>
> The Church warns its members against symposia and similar gatherings that include presentations that (1) disparage, ridicule, make light of, or are otherwise inappropriate in their treatment of sacred matters or (2) could injure the Church, detract from its mission, or jeopardize its members' well-being. Members should not allow their position or standing in the Church to be used to promote or imply endorsement of such gatherings.[17]
>
> Doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith.[18]
>
> Another claim we sometimes hear is that the leaders won't answer our doubts. Doubts. Here we need to define the difference between

[13] Carlos E. Asay, October 1981 General Conference
[14] Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, October 1984 General Conference
[15] Apostle Dallin H. Oaks, "Reading Church History," Ninth Annual Church Educational System Religious Educators' Symposium, August 16, 1985, Brigham Young University
[16] Apostle Boyd K. Packer, "Talk to the All-Church Coordinating Council," May 18, 1993
[17] Section 17.1.46 of Handbook 1 for Stake Presidents and Bishops.
[18] Dieter F. Uchtdorf, October 2013 General Conference

> doubts and questions. Questions, when asked with a sincere desire to increase ones understanding and faith, are again encouraged. Such questions, questions we call them, are asked with the real intent of better understanding and more fully obeying the will of the Lord. Questions are very different from doubts. ... One difference between questions asked in faith and doubts is that questions lead to faith and to revelation whereas doubts lead to disobedience, which in turn renders people less able to receive revelation, or in other words, doubt is darkness. Questions asked in faith lead to light.[19]

> Some who use personal reasoning or wisdom to resist prophetic direction give themselves a label borrowed from elected bodies – "the loyal opposition." However appropriate for a democracy, there is no warrant for this concept in the government of God's kingdom, where questions are honored but opposition is not.[20]

The church doesn't like people researching its history. Why is that exactly? What does it have to hide that's so bad, it's afraid of letting people know its full history?

> There is a temptation for the writer or the teacher of Church history to want to tell everything, whether it is worthy or faith promoting or not.
>
> Some things that are true are not very useful.[21]

Here's an interesting quote from Brigham Young regarding Joseph Smith's death:

> I will deviate from my subject a little, and say a few words with regard to br. Joseph that some, perhaps, have not undrestood. If Joseph Smith, jun., the Prophet, had followed the Spirit of revelation in him he never would have gone to Carthage. Do you understand that? A great many do, and some do not. . . .[Joseph] said 'I can see life and liberty and salvation in that course [fleeing Nauvoo and heading west], but if I return to give myself up, it is death and darkness to the full; I am like a lamb led to the slaughter,' and never for one moment did he say that he had one particle of light in him after he started back from Montrose to give himself up in Nauvoo. This he did through the persuasion of others. I want you all to understand that. With regard to myself I cannot say what I will do. I do not know precisely in what manner the Lord will lead me, but were I thrown into the situation Joseph was, I would leave the people and go into the wilderness, and let them do the best they

[19] Apostle Dallin H. Oaks and Assistant Church Historian Richard E. Turley Jr. during the Boise Rescue on June 13th, 2015.
[20] Apostle Dallin H. Oaks, April 2016 General Conference
[21] "The Mantle Is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect", Boyd K. Packer, LDS.org

> could. Will I run from the sheep? No. Will I forsake the flock? No. But if Joseph had followed the revelations in him he would have ben our earthly shepherd today, and we would have heard his voice and followed the shepherd instead of the shepherd following the sheep. When the shepherd follows the sheep it reverses the natural order, for the sheep are to follow the shepherd.[22]

[22] A Series of Instructions and Remarks by Brigham Young at a Special Council, Mar. 21, 1858, Brigham Young Papers

Chapter 38

My Creed

1. It is a noble thing to be doing that which is good. The works of men who do follow the God who gave them life is good and honorable.
2. We know of God and His ways and of His son Jesus Christ.
3. Jesus Christ came into the world to take upon Him the sins of the world.
4. That same Jesus was born of a mortal mother and an immortal father, allowing Him the power over death to come forth in resurrection.
5. We believe of the Holy Spirit also known as the Holy Ghost who is able to dwell in the hearts of men as a testimony of God the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.
6. We believe the Eternal Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost to be of one purpose but not one body, for they are three separate distinct individuals. The Father and The Son having bodies of flesh and bone, for they have been resurrected, and the Holy Ghost to be a personage of spirit.
7. We sustain the doctrine that man may be saved through the redemption which Christ laid out for the world, that redemption being an eternal sacrifice, a final sacrifice to fulfill the law.
8. And to this end was Christ crucified that we might be saved in the kingdom of our Father.
9. We affirm in the coming days that we will come before God to be judged according to our works, thus being saved by the grace of Christ.
10. We believe these things to be true, even so Amen.

Appendix A

Lilith

With all of the possible changes in the narrative throughout the years, there is mention of a woman named Lilith. She was supposed to be Adam's first wife. But she didn't want to follow what he said and she ran.

I include it here for a twofold purpose.

1. Do we know this isn't true for certain? It could have been removed from the texts of the bible for all we know.

2. There is some confusion regarding Genesis 1:27 where it stats that God created male and female. Then in the next chapter he creates them again.

Some have said there are two versions of the creation. Some have tried to state (falsely based on the book of Moses) that this was the pre-existence creation of Adam and Eve.

The pre existence had already been created.

The follow text is quoted from Hebrew Myths[2]:

Chapter 10: Adam's Helpmeets

(a) Having decided to give Adam a helpmeet lest he should be alone of his kind, God put him into a deep sleep, removed one of his ribs, formed it into a woman, and closed up the wound, Adam awoke and said: 'This being shall be named "Woman", because she has been taken out o f man. A man and a woman shall be one flesh.' The title he gave her was Eve, 'the Mother of All Living".[1]

(b) Some say that God created man and woman in His own image on the Sixth Day, giving them charge over the world;[2] but that Eve did not yet exist. Now, God had set Adam to name every beast, bird and other living thing. When they passed before him in pairs, male and female, Adam-being already like a twenty-year-old man-felt jealous of their loves, and though he tried coupling with each female in turn, found no satisfaction in the act. He therefore cried: 'Every creature but I has a proper matel', and prayed God would remedy this injustice.[3]

[1] Genesis II. 18-25; III. 20.

[2] Genesis I. 26-28.

[3] Gen. Rab. 17.4; B. Yebamot 632.

(c) God then formed Lilith, the first woman, just as He had formed Adam, except that He used filth and sediment instead of pure dust. From Adam's union with this demoness, and with another like her named Naamah, Tubal Cain's sister, sprang Asmodeus and innumerable demons that still plague mankind. Many generations later, Lilith and Naamah came to Solomon's judgement seat, disguised as harlots of Jerusalem'.[4]

(d) Adam and Lilith never found peace together; for when he wished to lie with her, she took offence at the recumbent posture he demanded. 'Why must I lie beneath you?' she asked. 'I also was made from dust, and am therefore your equal.' Because Adam tried to compel her obedience by force, Lilith, in a rage, uttered the magic name of God, rose into the air and left him.

Adam complained to God: 'I have been deserted by my helpmeet' God at once sent the angels Senoy, Sansenoy and Semangelof to fetch Lilith back. They found her beside the Red Sea, a region abounding in lascivious demons, to whom she bore lilim at the rate of more than one hundred a day. 'Return to Adam without delay,' the angels said, 'or we will drown you!' Lilith asked: 'How can I return to Adam and live like an honest housewife, after my stay beside the Red Sea?? 'It will be death to refuse!' they answered. 'How can I die,' Lilith asked again, 'when God has ordered me to take charge of all newborn children: boys up to the eighth day of life, that of circumcision; girls up to the twentieth day. None the less, if ever I see your three names or likenesses displayed in an amulet above a newborn child, I promise to spare it.' To this they agreed; but God punished Lilith by making one hundred of her demon children perish daily;[5] and if she could not destroy a human infant, because of the angelic amulet, she would spitefully turn against her own.[6]

(e) Some say that Lilith ruled as queen in Zmargad, and again in Sheba; and was the demoness who destroyed job's sons.[7] Yet she escaped the curse of death which overtook Adam, since they had parted long before the Fall. Lilith and Naamah not only strangle infants but also seduce dreaming men, any one of whom, sleeping alone, may become their victim.[8]

(f) Undismayed by His failure to give Adam a suitable helpmeet, God tried again, and let him watch while he built up a woman's anatomy: using bones, tissues, muscles, blood and glandular secretions, then covering the whole with skin and adding tufts of hair in places. The sight caused Adam such disgust that even when this woman, the First Eve, stood there in her full beauty, he felt an invincible repugnance. God knew that He had failed once more, and took the First Eve away. Where she went, nobody knows for certain.[9]

(g) God tried a third time, and acted more circumspectly. Having taken a rib from Adam's side in his sleep, He formed it into a woman; then plaited her hair and adorned her, like a bride, with twenty-four pieces of jewellery, before

[4] Yalqut Reubeni ad. Gen. II. 21; IV. 8.
[5] Alpha Beta diBen Sira, 47; Gaster, MGWJ, 29 (1880), 553 ff.
[6] Num. Rab. 16.25.
[7] Targum ad job 1. 15.
[8] B. Shabbat 151b; Ginzberg, LJ, V. 147-48.
[9] Gen. Rab. 158, 163-64; Mid. Abkir 133, 135; Abot diR. Nathan 24; B. Sanhedrin 39a.

waking him. Adam was entranced.[10]

(h) Some say that God created Eve not from Adam's rib, but from a tail ending in a sting which had been part of his body. God cut this off, and the stump-now a useless coccyx-is still carried by Adam's descendants.[11]

(i) Others say that God's original thought had been to create two human beings, male and female; but instead He designed a single one with a male face looking forward, and a female face looking back. Again He changed His mind, removed Adam's backward-looking face, and built a woman's body for it.[12]

(j) Still others hold that Adam was originally created as an androgyne of male and female bodies joined back to back. Since this posture made locomotion difficult, and conversation awkward, God divided the androgyne and gave each half a new rear. These separate beings He placed in Eden, forbidding them to couple.[13]

There is no way of knowing if these thoughts are true or if they are of fable. The truth will eventually come forth in time naturally, but with all of the changes of the Bible that have taken place, who is to know for sure exactly if what is in the Bible can be taken as truth.

Either way, this is an interesting insight into human thought on the matter. Changes come and go, there will always be changes it would seem.

[10]Gen. II. 21-22; Gen. Rab. 161.

[11]Gen. Rab. 134; B. Erubin 18a.

[12]B. Erubin 18a.

[13]Gen. Rab. 55; Lev. Rab. 14.1: Abot diR. Nathan 1.8; B. Berakhot 61a; B. Erubin 18a; Tanhuma Tazri'a 1; Yalchut Gen. 20; Tanh. Buber iii.33; Mid. Tehillim 139, 529.

Appendix B

J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years

By 1917, however, Reuben was asking himself some religious questions that took him years to resolve. In one personal memo he began, "If we have truth, [it] cannot be harmed by investigation. If we have not truth, it ought to be harmed." From that premise he added the observation that scientists and lawyers (like himself) were not blindly believing and that they must refuse to be deceived by others or by their own wishful thinking. "A lawyer must get at facts, he must consider motives – he must tear off the mask and lay bare the countenance, however hideous. The frightful skeleton of truth must always be exposed ... [the lawyer] must make every conclusion pass the fiery ordeal of pitiless reason. If their conclusions cannot stand this test, they are false." During the same year the increasingly introspective lawyer asked himself the questions: Are we not only entitled, but expected to think for ourselves? Otherwise where does our free agency come in? His answer was a resounding: "If we are blindly to follow some one else we are not free agents.... That we may as a Church determine for ourselves our course of action, is shown by the Manifesto [abandoning the practice of polygamy]. We may not probably take an affirmative stand, i.e., adopt something new but we may dispense with something." Perhaps he had never before questioned the assumptions that lay behind some of the simple faith of his youth, but at midlife J. Reuben Clark, Jr. proclaimed that there must be no forbidden questions in Mormonism.

The directions to which his philosophy of religious inquiry led him were indicated in his musings about two essentials of Mormonism: the revelations of Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Church belief in progression toward godhood. As he examined the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants concerning the structure of the Church government, Reuben Clark wondered to what extent Joseph Smith's reading or experience, "his own consciousness," had contributed to what he set down, and when Reuben pondered the Mormon belief in the potential of individuals to attain the godly stature of their Father in Heaven,

his logical mind boggled a bit. "Is Space or occupied portions of it divided among various deities – have they great 'spheres of influence'? War of Gods – think of wreck of matter involved – if matter used – or would it be a war of forces?" In his mid-forties, he regarded these as legitimate doctrinal inquiries but soon realized that each question concerning doctrine led to other questions, each of which was further removed from rational verification. Reuben soon came to the conclusion he described in later years to the non-Mormon president of George Washington University: "For my own part I early came to recognize that for me personally I must either quit rationalizing ... or I must follow the line of my own thinking which would lead me I know not where."

But J. Reuben Clark soon recognized where an uncompromising commitment to rational theology would lead him, and he shrank from the abyss. "I came early to appreciate that I could not rationalize a religion for myself, and that to attempt to do so would destroy my faith in God," he later wrote to his non-Mormon friend. "I have always rather worshipped facts," he continues,"and while I thought and read for a while, many of the incidents of life, experiences and circumstances led, unaided by the spirit of faith, to the position of the atheist, yet the faith of my fathers led me to abandon all that and to refrain from following it.... For me there seemed to be no alternative. I could only build up a doubt. –If I were to attempt to rationalize about my life here, and the life too come, I would be drowned in a sea of doubt."

All the confidence of J. Reuben Clark's commitment to rational inquiry in religious matters evaporated. He had once believed that in intellectual faith "we may not probably take an affirmative stand, i.e., adopt something new but we may dispense with something," but Reuben found that such an attempt could only lead to dispensing with everyting [sic]. As he cast about for some way of explaining his position to others, he discovered an anecdote about Abraham Lincoln, who justified reading the Bible despite his reputed agnosticism with the comment: "I have learned to read the Bible. I believe all I can and take the rest on faith." To a friend, Reuben related the Lincoln story and added, "Substituting in the substance the words 'our Mormon Scriptures,' you will have about my situation." He later commended that anecdote to a general conference of the Church. Convinced that no religious faith could withstand uncompromising intellectual inquiry, Reuben concluded that in Babylon as well as in Zion, the refusal to rationalize one's religious beliefs was the highest manifestation of faith.

[6]

Appendix C

An Address to All Believers in Christ

Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the stone, and received a revelation that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and that they would sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon. Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery went to Toronto on this mission, but they failed entirely to sell the copyright, returning without any money. Joseph was at my father's house when they returned. I was there also, and am an eye witness to these facts. Jacob Whitmer and John Whitmer were also present when Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery returned from Canada. Well, we were all in great trouble; and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copyright, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: 'Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of men: and some revelations are of the devil.' So we see that the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copyright was not of God, but was of the devil or of the heart of man.

[9]

Appendix D

ON MARRIAGE

According to the custom of all civilized nations, marriage is regulated by laws and ceremonies: therefore we believe, that all marriages in this church of Christ of Latter Day Saints, should be solemnized in a public meeting, or feast, prepared for that purpose: and that the solemnization should be performed by a presiding high priest, high priest, bishop, elder, or priest, not even prohibiting those persons who are desirous to get married, of being married by other authority.-We believe that it is not right to prohibit members of this church from marrying out of the church, if it be their determination so to do, but such persons will be considered weak in the faith of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Marriage should be celebrated with prayer and thanksgiving; and at the solemnization, the persons to be married, standing together, the man on the right, and the woman on the left, shall be addressed, by the person officiating, as he shall be directed by the holy Spirit; and if there be no legal objections, he shall say, calling each by their names: "You both mutually agree to be each other's companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives." And when they have answered "Yes," he shall pronounce them "husband and wife" in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by virtue of the laws of the country and authority vested in him: "may God add his blessings and keep you to fulfil [fulfill] your covenants from henceforth and forever. Amen."

The clerk of every church should keep a record of all marriages, solemnized in his branch.

All legal contracts of marriage made before a person is baptized into this church, should be held sacred and fulfilled. Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again. It is not right to persuade a woman to be baptized contrary to the will of her husband, neither is it lawful to influence her to leave her husband. All children are bound by law to obey their parents; and to influence them to embrace any

religious faith, or be baptized, or leave their parents without their consent, is unlawful and unjust. We believe that husbands, parents and masters who exercise control over their wives, children, and servants and prevent them from embracing the truth, will have to answer for that sin.

We have given the above rule of marriage as the only one practiced in this church, to show that Dr. J. C. Bennett's "secret wife system" is a matter of his own manufacture; and further to disabuse the public ear, and shew [show] that the said Bennett and his misanthropic friend Origen Bachelor, are perpetrating a foul and infamous slander upon an innocent people, and need but be known to be hated and despise. In support of this position, we present the following certificates:-

We the undersigned members of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and residents of the city of Nauvoo, persons of families do hereby certify and declare that we know of no other rule or system of marriage than the one published from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and we give this certificate to show that Dr. J. C. Bennett's "secret wife system"

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is a creature of his own make as we know of no such society in this place nor never did.

S. Bennett, N. K. Whitney,
George Miller, Albert Pettey,
Alpheus Cutler, Elias Higbee,
Reynolds Cahoon, John Taylor,
Wilson Law, E. Robinson,
W. Woodruff, Aaron Johnson.

We the undersigned members of the ladies' relief society, and married females do certify and declare that we know of no system of marriage being practised [practiced] in the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints save the one contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and we give this certificate to the public to show that J. C. Bennett's "secret wife system" is a disclosure of his own make.

Emma Smith, President,
Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Counsellor [Counselor],
Sarah M. Cleveland, Counsellor [Counselor],
Eliza R. Snow, Secretary,
Mary C. Miller, Catharine Pettey,
Lois Cutler, Sarah Higbee,
Thirza Cahoon, Phebe Woodruff
Ann Hunter, Leonora Taylor,
Jane Law, Sarah Hillman,
Sophia R. Marks, Rosannah Marks,
Polly Z. Johnson, Angeline Robinson,
Abigail Works.
(Times and Seasons Vol 3 No 23)

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