

Why "Mormonism"?

By

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Number One.



"They have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." (Isaiah 24:5.)

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue and people, saying * * * Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come." (St. John's Revelation 14:6-7.)

"Mormonism" is here to bring in and establish a new dispensation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, subsequent to the apostolic age, and promised of God.

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Why "Mormonism"?

The whole world asks that question. It ought to be answered; and the whole world should listen to the answer, since the whole world asks the question.

"Mormonism" has grown to such proportions, occupies so much space in the world's thought, and has so persisted in its existence, despite opposition, that it has won its right to a hearing, and to speak for itself.

Some "Mormon" Achievements.

The movement known as "Mormonism" began a hundred years ago. In that time it has survived the most severe religious persecution of modern times: first, in the expulsion of from twelve to fifteen thousands of its members from the state of Missouri—1838, 1839; and second, in the murder of its first prophet, in Illinois, followed by the expatriation of between twenty and thirty thousand of its adherents from the confines of the United States into Mexican territory—1844-1847. This migration, however, resulted in the founding of a number of American commonwealths in the western inter-mountain country of the United States, also in the establishment for an extent of well-nigh fifteen hundred miles through the plateau valleys of the Rocky Mountains—from Alberta, Canada, on the north, to the Mexican States of Chihuahua and Sonora on the south—no less than a thousand settlements, a number of them prosperous towns of large manufacturing as well as of large agricultural and trade interests. The chief city of the "Mormons," near the shores of the Great Salt Lake—with its temple and tabernacle, is world renowned. These people are widely known as superior colonizers, and have been and are now eagerly

sought for such enterprizes because of their well known sobriety, honesty, frugality, and industry—the qualities that constitute empire builders. In their extended settlements they are building in the states and countries which they inhabit, an educational system, including the founding of universities and colleges, in their principal centers. On this head a noted educator, speaking at the general conference of the "Mormon" Church, held in the great tabernacle, Salt Lake City, April, 1922, said:

Testimony of a Noted Educator.

"I have been in this community a number of times, and I have frequently thought that here was the best place in the world to study the science and the art of nation-building in the field. My subject is Political Economy, sometimes called 'the science of statesmanship.' Some things pertaining to this subject we can get out of books, but it seems to me that here is the one place in the world where we can see it in operation, in the field itself, the processes going on under which a great nation is built. If 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' as your President [i.e. President Heber J. Grant, President of the Church] has said, the 'Mormons' must be a great people, for their fruits are good. I have not only been impressed, in several visits, by what is to be seen in this immediate neighborhood. It has also been my privilege to visit some of the smaller communities in the southern part of the state, and some in central Idaho; and in the small communities, as well as in the large, I have seen in operation the science and the art of community-building, which is nation-building in miniature, and everywhere it has my unbounded admiration."

This was the utterance of Thomas Nixon Carver, of Harvard University.

The Spiritual Side.

Another educator, on the same occasion, a man from the neighboring state of Utah on the west, Nevada, said:

"The world has made much advance in mechanical things, during our recorded race history. It has made relatively small advance in spiritual things. Your fathers [meaning the Mormon Pioneers] in the marvelous pioneer pilgrimage came into this valley, and with their hands builded here a perfect temple, that the souls might open in this temple towards the spiritual power, and perhaps, in larger and larger measure, be imbued with that power from above. It is my belief and strong hope that in the years just ahead men are going to illuminate

life in spiritual terms; that just as they have, within these twenty-five years, on the mechanical side, touched that marvelous thing we call radium and learned that it gives fifty million times the energy of other substances science has been handling, so there lies within us, if we will but open our souls and receive the endowment that freely has always been offered, many, many, many times the spirit power men have known. My impress from the hours I have had in your city is that this people are holding their souls open, and the great Giver of life and power will answer their prayers."

This was the utterance of Walter E. Clark, President of the University of Nevada.

The "Mormons", whose community life and activities are alluded to above on the spiritual side of their service to humanity, continuously keep a corps of missionaries in the field, numbering from fifteen to eighteen hundred, to carry the message of "Mormonism" to the world—to every "nation, kindred, tongue and people". Their message has been accepted by hundreds of thousands of people from all parts of the world. One of their chief scripture books—The Book of Mormon—has been translated into and published in fifteen languages, running through many editions in the English and some other languages. The movement is also creating a literature, embracing history, poetry and philosophy. All this, I insist, makes the question Why "Mormonism", important—a question startlingly worth while.

But there are deeper reasons than the mere achievements of "Mormonism" that make the question Why "Mormonism" important. And these deeper reasons lead us to the question—

What is "Mormonism"?

Let me describe it first by saying what it is not:

"Mormonism" is not a new religion. It is not a new gospel. It is not a new church. It does not set forth new or strange gods. It does not preach another Christ, or advocate another Redeemer for man than Jesus of Nazareth. It does not present a new scheme of salvation for man. It does not introduce new ordinances to be observed, or new symbols for the realities of saving grace and power. It teaches no new terms of fellowship with God and Christ

and the Holy Ghost. It suggests no new priesthood as a means of divine authority for doing sacred things or administering holy ordinances. It teaches no other righteousness than the moral law of the gospel of Christ. It makes no other summary of the law and the prophets than "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: * * * Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It gives no substitute for the Ten Commandments, or for the Sermon on the Mount.

"Mormonism", so called, is merely a New Dispensation of the Old Religion; of the old, the first, and the only Gospel, "the Everlasting Gospel" of Jesus Christ, and all that goes with it, and belongs to it. Did it claim to be a new religion, a new gospel, then men could quickly dispose of it; they would know that it could not be true, for there is but one religion—"One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." There is no other gospel but one: "None other name under heaven given among men whereby we must [or can] be saved" (Acts 4:12); and "though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, * * * let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8). "Mormonism" claims only to be a New Dispensation of the One and only Gospel.

This leads us to the consideration of another question:

What is a Dispensation of the Gospel?

By dispensation, in general, we mean "giving out or dispensing"; as dispensing alms to the poor; or, as courts through their decrees, dispense justice. As associated with the gospel a dispensation is the act of God in giving out knowledge of divine things, and granting authority to man to minister in them, such as making known the divine plan for man's redemption, and authorizing men to set forth the symbols of that covenant, in the offering of sacrifices which indicate its nature, or which authorizes the performance of the sacraments through which its saving grace is applied to man, such as holy baptism, or the administering of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper for the perpetuating of the

spiritual life of man. Such is a dispensation when contemplated in connection with the gospel.

Many Dispensations.

Since God has thus many times given out knowledge of divine things, and authority to teach them, and to minister in them, it follows that there have been many "dispensations", or out-givings, of the gospel, in part or in whole. Such dispensations were given to Adam, Noah, Abraham and Moses.

The Meridian Dispensation.

A dispensation of the gospel was given also to John, the Baptist, and to the Messiah and his apostles (see all the books of the New Testament). Many have supposed that this dispensation, in which the Christ appeared among men and made his atonement for the sins of the world, and in which the inspired apostles wrought, was the very last dispensation that would be. That after it there would be no other. Yet from its location in the time scheme of things, the time which went before it—from the Christ backward to Adam—roughly estimated at 4,000 years, to the time which follows after the Christ—2,000 years and thence forward, it may be more properly considered the Dispensation of the Meridian of Times, or the Meridian Dispensation.

It has been very generally thought, however, that the work of God, with respect to the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth, was finished in that dispensation in which the Christ wrought; that revelations of God to man thereafter had ceased; that angels would no more visit the earth, or communicate the will of God to man; that the volume of "the scripture was completed and forever closed;" that the "awful voice of prophecy" would be heard no more; that miracles had ceased—no more would the spiritual gifts of the gospel be enjoyed—the sick be healed, the deaf hear, the blind see, the lame be cured by faith, or that such things as visions, inspired dreams, inspirational guidance, the

speaking in new tongues, the interpretations thereof, or any other palpable spiritual gift manifested, such as characterized the gospel in the days of the Christ and the apostles— (see I Cor. 12). All that was ended. The scriptures, however, are very definite in their prophetic proclamation of a dispensation later than the one in which Christ and the apostles wrought, viz: "The Times of the Restitution of all Things", or the "Dispensation of the Fulness of Times." Peter speaks of it under the first title and Paul under the second.

Peter's Testimony of the Coming of a Dispensation Subsequent to the One in Which he Wrought.

Peter, explaining to a crowd of Jews the power by which the paralytic at the gate of the temple had been healed, announced that the healing had been achieved through faith in Christ, the prince of life, whom the Jews had killed. He granted that "through ignorance they had done it", as also their rulers; "But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." Then he cried unto them:

"Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; Whom the heaven must receive until the Times of the Restitution of all Things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21).

There can be no doubt as to this passage having reference to some dispensation of the gospel future from the time in which Peter was speaking, and in which there will be a "restitution of all things", which plainly had not taken place in the time of St. Peter. A second sending of Jesus Christ, which before had been preached unto them. Doubtless this dispensation called "The Times of the Restitution of all Things" would include the restitution of the Jews to their land of promise, and the establishment of Jerusalem. Immediately before which, however, Jerusalem shall be in sore straits, being besieged by many nations. Then shall Jesus Christ, "Which before was preached unto them", be sent

unto their deliverance. "Then they shall look upon me [the Lord Jesus] whom they have pierced." * * * And one shall say unto him, "What are these wounds in thine hands?" Then he shall answer, "These with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Then shall they know indeed their Messiah—which "was before preached unto them;" and now sent unto them a second time, the heavens having received and retained him until the "times of the restitution of all things."

Testimony of Paul of the Coming of a Dispensation Subsequent to the One in Which he Wrought.

Paul writing to the saints at Ephesus tells how God had made known the mystery of his will "which he hath purposed in himself—That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him". (Eph. 1:9-10).

That this has in view the same thing as Peter's "restitution of all things", can admit of no doubt, since one proclaims the coming of the times of the restitution of all things, and the other declares the coming of the dispensation of the fulness of times in which all things shall be gathered together in Christ, "even in him."

The Fulness of Times.

"All rivers to the ocean trend"! So likewise all these many dispensations of the gospel given to man through the ages of his existence in the earth, trend to, are gathered up, enter into, and are made the dispensation of the fulness of times. The time in which this shall ultimately be accomplished is also the times of the restitution of all things. And as the rivers find their way to the ocean, and are received into it; so, too, all dispensations, at last, find their way to, and are received into, unite with, and become, the dispensation of the fulness of times—their ocean.

The Overthrow of the Meridian Dispensation Predicted.

Moreover, not only is a dispensation of the gospel subsequent to the one in which the Christ and his apostles wrought promised, but the world's departure from the order of things established by the Christ is a subject of very clear and definite prophecy of the scriptures. And let it be remembered that "prophecy is but history reversed." History records the events that are past; prophecy foretells the events that shall come to pass hereafter.

A peculiar sanctity attaches to prophecy—to history foretold. It is a sort of miracle, and particularly gives evidence of a divine power in the prophet. "Show us things that are to come hereafter", says the Lord through Isaiah: "That we may know that ye are Gods". (Isaiah 41:23). This is a challenge to the false prophets whom Israel, it appears, was prone at times to follow.

So much as to prophecy in general, and its value. Through it inspired men pre-write history, and this should be remembered as we consider the prophecies relating to the departure of the world from the Christ-order of things in the Meridian Dispensation.

Isaiah's Prophecy of the Breaking of "The Everlasting Covenant".

Let us consider first a passage in Isaiah:

"The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; *because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.* Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." (Isaiah 24:4-6).

A moment's reflection on this passage will be sufficient to establish the fact that it does not relate to anything that occurred within the experience of ancient Israel. Nothing like this occurred previous to the time of the earth-ministry of the Christ. And not even yet are the "inhabitants of

the earth burned, and few men left" (vr. 6), that is a judgment yet for the future.

Moreover, the moving cause of all this earth-desolation, the thing that is at the heart of it, could not have been realized the other side of Messiah's earth-life; for the whole thing was to be caused by transgressing the laws, changing the ordinance, and breaking "*the everlasting covenant.*" Nor can this refer to the Mosaic covenant; for that was but a temporary covenant—the Mosaic law—given, as Paul explains, to be Israel's "schoolmaster" to bring that people to Christ; which, having achieved its end, no longer was in effect but was fulfilled in Christ. (See Gal. 3; especially vr. 8, 19-25.

Neither can Isaiah's prophecy refer to any special covenant made with Abraham, or Noah. There is but one "everlasting covenant," and that is identical with "the everlasting gospel" (Rev. 14:6); being also identical with that "hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2); of which the "blood of Christ" is the sign and seal as spoken of by the Apostle Paul, saying:

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus * * * through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will." (Heb. 13:20, 21).

Paul's Prophecy of "The Falling Away" and the Reign in the Earth of "The Son of Perdition".

Paul also becomes prophetically a chronicler of this same thing, this "Falling Away" from the Christian institution, his words having direct bearing upon the very work to which he was then giving his life's energies.

It should be noted that in the first chapter of II Thessalonians, the prophet is dealing with the promise of the early and glorious reappearing of the Christ—the hope of the Church in those days—saying:

"To you who are troubled and distressed with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." (II Thess. 1:7-10).

Also the prophet doubtless had in mind the promise of the angel who spake to the apostles as they gazed upon the receding form of the Christ at the time of his bodily separation from them soon after the resurrection:—

"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11).

Let us now trace the events that shall precede this looked for glorious event, as given by Paul's prophecy: (Let the reader here turn to II Thessalonians, Chapter 2, and read from the 1st to the 12th verse.)

The saints are gathering together in earnest expectancy of the fulfilment of this promise. Then the warning:

Be not soon shaken in mind about this, nor be troubled; neither by word, nor by letter; for this day of the Christ's reappearing will not come—

"Except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition"—Satan!

He will exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped:

He will usurp authority, and sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Paul in conversation had before told them these things; and the saints with whom he had conversed at Thessalonica knew what restrained the present development of that evil power. It was that he might be revealed in his time.

The mystery of iniquity that would eventually produce the "falling away" was even then at work, but he who was then hindering its development would continue to hinder it, until taken out of the way.

That hindering power was the divine authority of God held by the inspired Apostles, who with clear vision saw the working of Satan "with all signs and lying wonders", and were thwarting, for the time, the mischief he would work.

But when they with their divine power are taken away, what then? Why then indeed shall that "Wicked One be revealed, the Son of Perdition", with all his "signs and lying wonders." Then will he exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is legitimately worshipped. Then will he sit in the temple of God, usurp power, and reign as God in the world of men.

And he shall continue so to dominate until he shall be destroyed by the brightness of the Lord's coming, "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved."

Such the great historic prophecy of Paul respecting the fate of the dispensation of the gospel and of the fabric, the church, for which he worked.

It will be sufficient here to say, that in all these matters History answers to Prophecy, as face answers to face in a mirror. The prophetic utterances were fulfilled in every particular.

The Admissions of Christian Writers to the Departure of the World from the Christian Institutions— The Gospel and the Church.

That there has been such a departure from Christian institutions as is set forth in the foregoing is evident from the following utterances of eminent Christian authorities who confess to the truth.

State of Morals in Tenth Century.

Dr. Milner, the historian, attempted to prove that there had been a succession of pious men since the founding of the church by Messiah, and to "trace the goodness of God taking care of his church in every age by his providence." In his great history of the church he says of the tenth century:

"Infidel Malice has with pleasure recorded the vices and the crimes of the popes of this century. Nor is it my intention to attempt to palliate the account of their wickedness. It was as deep and atrocious as language can paint; nor can a reasonable man desire more authentic

evidence of history than that which the records both of civil and ecclesiastical history afford concerning *the corruption of the whole church.*" (Milner's Ch. Hist. Vol. III, Cent. X, ch. 1).

The Church of England, in her Homily on the Perils of Idolatry, says that—

"Laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women, and children of whole Christendom (an horrible and most dreadful thing to think) have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry, of all other vices most detested of God, and most damnable to man, and that by the space of eight hundred years and more. And to this end is come that beginning of setting up of images in churches, then judged harmless, in experience proved not only harmful, but exitious and pestilent, and to the destruction and submersion of all good religion universally." ("Perils of Idolatry", American Edition of 1855, p. 216).

In Smith's Dictionary of the Bible (page 163)—the work is endorsed by sixty-three learned divines and Bible scholars—the following occurs:

"We must not expect to see the church of Christ existing in its perfection on the earth. It is not to be found thus perfect, either in the collected fragments of Christendom, or still less in any one of those fragments."

John Wesley said that the reason why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the church (in the dark ages) was "because the love of many waxed cold, the Christians had turned heathens again and only had a dead form left."

Dr. Adam Clark, commenting on the fourth chapter of Ephesians—treating upon church officers and the gifts bestowed upon them—says:

"All those officers and the gifts and graces conferred upon them were adjudged necessary by the great head of the church for its full instruction in the important doctrines of Christianity. The same officers and gifts are still necessary, and God gives them, but they do not know their places."

As recently as October, 1922, a writer in "The Hibbert Journal" (John Richards Mosely) said:

"In all human history, there never has been a system whose adherents persecuted unbelievers and heretics so persistently, so cruelly, and over so long a series of centuries, as Christianity" (page 20).

And no circumstance can more clearly mark off the utter departure from the true Christian religion, its complete subversion, than the possession and exercise of that same spirit of persecution. A church once becoming a persecuting

church is no longer the Church of Christ. Judged by such a standard all churches of the dark ages register as no longer churches of Christ. And with the church thus destroyed there is no method for its revival but a New Dispensation of the Gospel and renewal of divine authority by revelation.

Of the things I have here set forth this is the sum: From Adam to Messiah numerous dispensations of the gospel were given to men; but these dispensations were limited in their effectiveness, owing to the proneness of men to reject the truth, and to walk in darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Yet God left himself not without witnesses in the earth, for there were a few in all dispensations that honored him and his righteous laws. Finally, when the appointed time was come, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, came and made the appointed Atonement for the sins of the world, and brought men under the dominion of his mercy. He taught the gospel; he brought life and immortality to light; he brought into existence his church, and then ascended on high to his Father. For a time the gospel in its purity was preached in the world by the chosen apostles, though even in their days men began to mar it with their vain philosophies, their doctrines of science, falsely so called; and when the apostles were all fallen asleep in death, then corruptions ran riot in the church, doctrines of men were taught for the commandments of God; a church made by man was substituted for the church of Christ; a church full of pride and worldliness; a church which while it clung to forms of godliness ran riot in excesses and abominations—until spiritual darkness fell like a pall over the nations; and thus they lay for ages.

In vain men have sought to establish reforms, and through them bring back the religion of Jesus Christ, and the Church of Christ. To do that, however, was beyond the power of these men, however good their intentions. The gospel taken from the earth, divine authority lost, the church of Christ destroyed in the earth, there was but one way in which all these could be restored, viz: by re-opening the heavens and dispensing again a knowledge of the gospel;

by once more conferring divine authority upon men, together with a commission to teach all the world, and re-establish the church of Christ on earth. In a word, it would require the incoming of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times to restore all things, and gather together in one all things in Christ, both in heaven and in earth. The "times of refreshing" must needs come from the presence of the Lord—the "Time of the Restitution of all Things which God hath spoken by the mouths of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Such a dispensation as the above is promised of God. And what the world calls "Mormonism" claims to be that dispensation. It is the only church or religious movement in the earth that makes that claim, and through that fact we reach again our main question—Why "Mormonism"? And the answer now fashions itself in the presence of what has here been said; viz.

To bring in the great Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, promised of God; the Times of the Restitution of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began: to re-establish the very Church of Christ in the earth—the Church of Jesus Christ—of the Latter-day Saints: that faith in God, repentance from sin, the baptism in water for the remission of sin, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit for man's reunion with the spirit-life of God—all administered by a divine authority—might again in verity be realized in the experiences of men, leading to the salvation of men, and to the glory and joy of God.

All this "Mormonism" is here to accomplish.

Why "Mormonism"? Number Two, answers: To restore the True Knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, whom to know is eternal life (St. John 17:3.) Be sure to read it.