

Why "Mormonism"?

By

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Christ of Latter-day Saints.



Number Three



"Mormonism" is here to teach the purpose of God in the earth-life of man; and how man may fulfill that divine purpose.

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Psalms 8:3-6).

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Why "Mormonism"?

Resume.

Number One of this series answering the question WHY "MORMONISM", held that "Mormonism" is here to bring in and establish a New Dispensation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, subsequent to the Apostolic Age, and which was promised of God.

Number Two of the series answered the question WHY "MORMONISM", by setting forth that "Mormonism" proclaims through a New Dispensation of the Gospel, a true knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

Number Three, this tract, answers the question WHY "MORMONISM", by saying that it is here to teach the purpose of God in the creation, and especially to teach the purpose of God in the Earth-life of Man, and how man may fulfil that divine purpose.

The Question of Questions.

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Psalms 8: 3-6).

A mighty subject this! Of deep import! A great question—What is the purpose of God in the creation of man? What man can answer it? No man. I should despair if I looked to man for the answer. I know man's knowledge is not equal to answering that question. As man by search-

ing may not find out the Almighty unto perfection, but is dependent upon God to reveal God; so is man dependent upon the revelations of God to know the full purpose of God in the creation of man.

Hence I trust it will not be considered presumption in me to deal with this great subject, since I only undertake to develop what God has revealed concerning it, confessing myself, apart from what God has revealed about it, as ignorant as other men must confess themselves to be. And men—all men—perforce must so confess themselves ignorant of this subject. What man has said anything adequate upon it? Who among men has answered in any satisfactory manner the question: What is the purpose of God in the creation, and more especially in the creation of Man? No one has given a satisfactory answer. Philosophers have not answered it. Theologians have not answered it, nor can they; no, neither from the Old Testament, nor from the New Testament. I say it boldly, the answer is not revealed even there, in any satisfactory way. The question is asked in the Bible, but no answer is given. The Psalmist questions and Paul repeats the question (Heb. 2:6-8); but neither answers it.

I write this in full remembrance of all that is recorded of what the Christ is reported to have said even approaching the subject in hand, including his words to the effect that he had come that his disciples "might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (St. John 10:10). I write also in the light of his declaration that he would give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him (St. John 17:2); and wherein he prayed that the disciples might be one, even as he and the Father are one (verse 11). All this I have in mind. But while these expressions of the Christ inspire the thought that his scheme of things contemplates eternal life for man, and oneness or union with God, they do not disclose the purpose of God either in the mortal or in the eternal life of man, nor the purpose of the union of man with God. What this is all for—eternal life and union

with God—nowhere appears in either the Old or in the New Testament.

The nearest approach to a consideration of the subject, the purpose of God in the creation, is found in the Book of Revelation:

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11).

And one other scripture:

"The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." (Proverbs 16:4).

This is as far as we can learn anything in the scriptures—in the Old Testament or the New, on this subject; and they are the only possible authority for Christians on such a subject. Will you tell me, frankly, if the statements of purpose are satisfactory? God hath made all things for his pleasure, and for himself? Do these give the enlightenment the world needs? Do they tell you, Reader, the purpose of your earth-existence? I make bold to assume that they do not. And if the scriptures, the Old and the New Testaments, are not satisfactory on this subject, one need scarcely look elsewhere. The philosophers, I assure you, cannot help, nor the poets, though the latter may be a sort of prophets. The greatest of them at his best can but exclaim of man—

"What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a God! The beauty of the World! The paragon of animals!"

This is generally accounted fine, but it says nothing to the purpose. Empty exclamation, merely, except to imply a certain inherent nobility possessed by man; but it touches nowhere the deep purpose of human life, nor elsewhere does Shakespeare disclose it.

Nor could old Omar with all his wisdom unravel "the Master Knot of human fate", though hard he tried, and, when young, "did eagerly frequent doctor" and saint, and heard great argument about it and about: but ever more

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came out by the same door where in he went. With them the seed of wisdom did he sow, and with his own hand wrought to make it grow; and this was all the harvest that he reap'd—

"I came like Water, and like Wind I go—

"Into this Universe, and Why not knowing,
Nor Whence, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not Whither, willy-nilly flowing.

"What, without asking, hither hurried Whence?
And, without asking, Whither hurried hence!

* * * * *

"Up from Earth's Center through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many a Knot unravel'd by the road;
But not the Master-Knot of Human Fate.

"There was the Door to which I found no Key;
There was the Veil through which I might not see;
Some little talk a while of Me and Thee
There was—and then no more of Thee and Me.

"Earth could not answer; nor the Seas that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn;
Nor rolling Heaven, with all his Signs reveal'd
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

"Then of Thee in Me who works behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
A Lamp amid the Darkness; and I heard
As from without—the Me within Thee Blind!"

And so stands it with practically all our poets and all men. None knows the purpose of the "Master Mind" in man's creation, but all confess themselves unlearned. And if these theologians, philosophers, olden prophets, and poets who are among the favored sons of God, do not know, you may be assured none of the common herd of men knows. All is chaos, I tell you, both in human thought and in divine revealing, on this great theme, up to the opening of the New Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. And what if the New Dispensation has a message for the world, on this high theme,

as we found it had on the subject of God—(see Number Two), how important, then, that this present message, like the other, should be made known!

The New Dispensation has such a message. It is found in three of its own scripture passages; and I am about to put them on record that the world may try them out, test their wisdom, and their sufficiency.

The first comes from a fragment of the writings of Moses not found in the Five Books of Moses, but revealed to Joseph Smith and published by the Latter-day Saints Church in a miscellaneous collection of his writings called the Pearl of Great Price, in which God makes the declaration:

"Behold this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Book of Moses, Ch. 1:39, in Pearl of Great Price, Ed. of 1921).

In this passage is raised a subordinate question to the main one under discussion—but important nevertheless—viz., the question, Is life worth while? And it is answered emphatically in the affirmative. So much is it worth while that God proposes to make it eternal. That is what he is working at. That is his purpose. And a moment's reflection will readily convince one that it is only through making life eternal that mortal life can be made to appear worth while. Suppose the end of a man's mortal life were the "be all and the end all" of life for him. Would life then be worth while? Indeed one could then very well entertain the question whether it were better "to be or not to be." For who would say that life as men know it from the cradle to the grave, with all its "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," its "sea of troubles", with "the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to"; with "its drops of joy", only, and its "drafts of ill between"; with its mere "gleams of sunshine, amid renewing storms"; all to be presently "rounded out" with probably a profound sleep in absolute oblivion—who would say that life under these circumstances would be worth while, or desirable? This present life is of no conceivable importance only as it may

be viewed in connection with the extension of life, under different and better conditions, into a future life; that in some way may afford compensation for the failures, the disappointments, and the lack of completion in this present life. Only under some such plan may this present life be justified. God in the scripture passage quoted above announces it as his work and his glory to bring to pass the eternal life of man, in which, no doubt, will exist those conditions that shall result to the utmost advantage of man and justify the present life as leading to immortal life, and affording its larger and higher opportunities for fulfilling the possibilities which one can but feel exist in man, if only there were given time and environment for their development. God in the scripture revealed above declares it to be his work and his glory to bring to pass such a form of existence, that is, "Eternal Life."

The second scripture to be considered comes through a revelation given to the Prophet of the New Dispensation, in 1833, in which it is said:

"Man is spirit. [That is the main fact of him.] The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, [i. e. matter] inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy; and when separated, man cannot receive a fulness of joy. The elements are the tabernacle of God; yea, man is the tabernacle of God." (Doctrine and Covenants, Section 93:33-35).

This scripture takes us one step farther on our way to the solution of the problem, the purpose of God in the earth-life of man. The first scripture brought us the knowledge that it is "the work and glory of God to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." This second scripture tells us that the union of spirit and element is essential to the fulness of the joy of man.

This leads us to the question of life itself, what it is, mortal and immortal; physical and spiritual.

Definition of Life.

What is life? It is acceptably defined, as to the physical aspect of it, as "The quality which distinguishes an animal

or plant from inorganic, or from dead organic bodies, and which is especially manifested by change—i. e. growth, reproduction, and internal powers of adaptation to environment; the property by which the organs of an animal or plant are conceived as maintained in the performance of their functions; . . . or the state in which all or any of the organs of a plant or animal are capable of performing all or any of their functions."

From the scriptures life may be described as a union of spirit and of element, or what might be called—as to the latter—inanimate matter, by which are brought to pass action and reaction, resulting in change which men call life, and with life, growth, up to a certain fulness, wherein maturity is reached. As illustration of the union of spirit and element reference is here made to the account of the creation of Adam. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." (Gen. 2:7). Dust and spirit, two things united; result, life. And death comes in the separation of these two things—spirit and element—body. "Father", said the Christ on the cross, "into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." (St. Luke 23:46). The spirit took its departure, and the body was dead. Death came as always by the separation of the spirit from the body. The dust returns "to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Eccl. 12:7).

Let it be observed here, in evidence of life resulting from union of spirit and element, that life is manifested only in connection with what we call matter—i. e. in bodies of one form or another, as plant or animal. Electricity is known only through its manifestations, so life is known only through its manifestations. Mortal life comes through birth into this world by the union of spirit and element; immortal life comes through the resurrection—through a second and more perfect union of spirit and element, which could well be regarded as a greater birth, and the former, a lesser birth; since birth into this world leads but to a

temporary or lesser life; and the resurrection opens to an eternal or the greater life.

It must be evident that the eternal life is the only life that can be satisfactory, since that alone would give any adequate ground for such achievements as would be satisfactory to existence. If existence is better than non-existence, then undoubtedly eternal existence is better than limited or temporary existence. So of life. If conscious life is better than death—wherein insensibility ensues for the elements of the body, and imperfect expression of the possibilities of the spirit, then one can readily understand why the Eternal One proclaims it to be his work and his glory to bring to pass an eternal union of spirit and element—the eternal life of man; because, as the scripture of the New Dispensation in effect declares, it is quite easy to see that only in an eternal union of element and spirit—eternal union of tabernacle (body) and spirit—can a "perfect joy" for man be hoped for.

We have considered two scriptures. The third is from the Book of Mormon, in which one of the ancient American prophets, speaking about 500 B. C.—and I ask that the beauty of the passage be noted as well as the doctrinal value of it—says:

"Behold all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things; Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." (II Nephi 2:24-25).

This is so direct and perfect that it needs no exposition. Only the single inquiry: What have we here—"Men are that they might have joy?" Have we here the reappearance of the old Epicurean doctrine, "Pleasure is the supreme good, and chief end of life?" No, verily! Nor any form of the old Greek ethics of gross self-interest. For mark, in the first place, the different words "Joy" and "Pleasure". They are not synonymous. The first does not necessarily arise from the second. "Joy" may arise from quite other sources than "pleasure"; from pain, even, when the endurance of pain is to eventuate in the achievement of some good; such as the travail of a mother in bringing forth her offspring;

the weariness and pain and danger of toil by a father, to secure comforts for loved ones. The "joy" contemplated in the Book of Mormon passage is to arise out of man's knowledge of evil as well as of good; through knowing misery, sorrow, pain and suffering; through seeing good and evil locked in awful conflict; through a consciousness of having chosen in that conflict the better part, the good; and not only in having chosen it, but in having wedded it by eternal compact, made it his by right of conquest over evil. It is a "joy" that will arise from a consciousness of having "fought the good fight", of having "kept the faith". It will arise from a consciousness of moral, spiritual, and physical strength; of strength gained in conflict; the strength that comes from experience; from having sounded the depths of the soul; from experiencing all emotions of which mind is susceptible; from testing all the qualities and strength of the intellect. A "joy" that will come to man from a contemplation of the universe, and a consciousness that he is an heir to all that is—a joint heir with Jesus Christ and God; from knowing that he is an essential part of all that is. It is a "joy" that will be born of the consciousness of existence itself—that will revel in existence—in thoughts of and realizations of existence's limitless possibilities; a "joy" born of the consciousness of the power of eternal increase; a "joy" arising from association with the intelligences of innumerable heavens; a "joy" born of a consciousness of being an intelligence; possessing faith, knowledge, light, truth, mercy, justice, love, glory, dominion, wisdom, power; all feelings, affections, emotions, passions; all heights and all depths! "Men are that they might have joy"; and that "joy" is based upon and contemplates all that is here set down.

And now let these three modern scriptures be brought into one view:

1. This is God's work and glory, to bring to pass the eternal life of man.

2. The inseparable union of eternal element and spirit is essential to a fulness of joy for men; therefore God's

purpose is to bring about first, mortal life, through mortal birth into earth-life; and second, to bring to pass, through the resurrection, immortal life—the eternal life of man.

3. Men are that they might have joy; and joy through the consciousness of everlasting life, and righteousness, and endless progress as intelligences.

There is the statement, from the revelations of God in the New Dispensation, the declared purpose of God in the creation of man. Match it who can from the philosophies or theologies concocted by man through all the ages! I challenge any and all to match it from either the Old or the New Testament, or both. Match it, ye ministers of Christendom! You who have mocked our Prophet of the New Dispensation, Joseph Smith, and declared him ignorant, and a false prophet—these were his teachings from God's revelations to him. Now match these declared doctrines of God on the subject of which they treat, the purposes of God in the earth-life of man. Match them for strength, beauty, power, consistency, in worthiness of God, and in that which is becoming to the dignity of man. Match them or else, with hand on mouth, remain silent when next you are tempted to speak derisively of Joseph Smith. And all ye people to whom this word shall come, give heed to what is here proclaimed, and hearken further for I am yet to say in this tract

How Man May Fulfil the Divine Purpose in the Earth-existence of Man.

We have found that the purpose of God in providing the earth-life of man is that man may have eternal life, and that in that eternal life he might have joy. This so far has contemplated physical life-existence, self conscious existence. We have yet to consider spiritual life and death. Physical life we have found to be a union of element (matter) and spirit, especially manifested in change, growth, reproduction, and in internal power of adaptation to environment. Spiritual life, in close analogy, also is a union, the union of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God. And when man is

severed from union with God, he is spiritually dead; just as when spirit is separated from the physical body, man is physically dead. This spiritual death must have been the death which God especially had in mind when he said to Adam in Eden concerning the forbidden fruit: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Yet after partaking of the forbidden fruit Adam lived physically nine hundred and thirty years. So that physically he did not die in the day he partook of the forbidden fruit; but spiritually he died, for he was driven from the presence of God in the very day that he transgressed God's law, and became fallen man—separated from God by transgression of law, which is sin (I John 3:4). This is why separation from the presence of God in the judgment day is called "the second death", which is the same death as that which occurred when God cast man out of Eden through which he became "spiritually dead"—separated from God. (Doctrine & Covenants Sec. 29:40-41).

Redemption from physical death is provided for through the resurrection from the dead, which is to be as universal as death; "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). But in the matter of spiritual death, and rebirth to spiritual life—union with God—we are dealing with another order of facts.

As a ground plan for the restoration of man's spiritual life is the atonement of Jesus Christ, by which satisfaction was rendered for the broken law; by his atonement the Christ became the propitiation for Adam's sin and for man's sin—"for the sins of the whole world" (Rom. 3:25; I John 2:2); for a propitiation of Adam's sin unconditionally: for man's individual sins a propitiation on condition of man's acceptance of the plan, his repentance from sin, and perseverance in well doing. That is to say, man's restoration to full spiritual life—union with God—depends upon his knowledge of and his acceptance of God's plan for his salvation—the Gospel.

Hence faith becomes a condition of salvation from sin. "Without faith it is impossible to please him [God];

for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him". (Heb. 11:6).

Also man must believe in the Christ as the Savior of man, each must own him as his individual Savior, the one through whom he comes to God. Jesus saith: . . . "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (St. John 14:6).

Man must also believe in the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of Truth, that bears witness of the Father and of the Son (St. John 15:26); which guides into all truth, and teaches all things pertaining to God (St. John 16:7-15); but whom the world cannot receive; fellowship with him is a special blessing for those who believe and accept God's plan of spiritual life (St. John 14:15-18).

The Holy Ghost is the agency through which is brought to pass the spiritual birth of man. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," said the Christ. And in further explanation he said "Except a man be born . . . of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (St. John 3:3, 5).

So far, faith in these things is the condition necessary to participation in God's plan of spiritual life. Now we come to action: to repentance, which may be defined as sorrow for sin accompanied by a turning away from it. "Except ye repent ye shall . . . perish", was the oft repeated warning of the Christ (Luke 13:1-5). "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead; . . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." (St. Luke 24:46-47).

"Repent and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations", said the Lord to ancient Israel, and it reflects the true doctrine of repentance now (Ezek. 14:6).

Then to apply all this to the individual and make it effective by visible symbolic acceptance, baptism in water, and baptism of the Holy Ghost—the "birth of the water and of the Spirit"—of the Christ's teaching—are required. To the

inquiry of the multitude on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what shall we do"? Peter answered:

"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. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:38-39).

By this ordinance, performed in the proper manner—by immersion, the complete burial of the one baptized—is shown forth the Christ's death, burial, and resurrection to newness of life; so, too, with the person baptized are the death and burial of the old man of sin, and the rising of the new man pledged unto newness of life. Through the confirmation prayer with the laying on of the hands—following the birth of the water—comes the baptism of the Spirit, by which one enkindled soul, acting under authority from God, enkindles another. And so men are born again. Born into fellowship with God. Born into spiritual life—union with God through the Holy Ghost. So born, it is for men, "giving all diligence", to add to their "faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Peter 1:6-8).

By taking this course shall men cooperate with God, become fellow workers with him in bringing about the purposes of God in the earth-life of man.

And this is the Gospel of the Christ, the good tidings of great joy, which is unto all peoples. Repent, therefore, all ye people, unto whom this message comes; and know ye that the kingdom of heaven is at hand; that God has spoken and calls all men to worship him and obey his truth, whereof we are witnesses, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

TRUTH GEMS.

From the Teachings of Joseph Smith.

The glory of God is intelligence.

It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance.

Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

There is a law irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated; and when we obtain any blessing from God it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.

This is the work and glory of God: to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

Adam fell that men might be; and men are that they might have joy.

The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end. Jesus was in the beginning with the Father: man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.

The spirit and the body is the soul of man; and the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul.

It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the character of God; and to know that man (as Moses) may converse with him as one man converses with another.

Also man should know the everywhere-ness of God through the projection of "the light of truth" from the presence of God, which is "the same light" that quickeneth the minds of men; "which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to all the immensity of space. The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law (i. e. the power) by which all things are governed, even the power of God who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things."

"The things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man, if thou wilt lead a soul unto Salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity—Thou must commune with God."