

Mormonism and the Christian Faith

I. Origin

Joseph Smith claimed that in 1820, during a time of prayer in the woods of Manchester, New York, he was visited by God the Father, and Jesus Christ. He was fifteen years old¹. *The Pearl of Great Price*² relates that Joseph Smith was in prayer asking God to reveal to him which denomination he should join. Smith claimed that Jesus Christ instructed him to join none of them because, “all their creeds were an abomination in [God’s] sight: that all those professors were corrupt; that: ‘they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.’”³

II. Authorities

In September of 1823, Joseph Smith claimed to have experienced his first visitation by an angel sent from God. This first angel, according to Smith, revealed the location of some golden plates, plates that purportedly contained the history of a Jewish tribe called Nephites. The *Book of Mormon*, first published in 1830, was allegedly translated from these golden plates. Smith claimed many subsequent angelic visitations and revelations, a number of which were codified into another of Mormonism’s scriptures; a book called *Doctrines and Covenants*.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) affirms the following books as their scriptures: *The Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, *The Pearl of Great Price*, and the Bible (but only insofar as the Bible is translated correctly). Furthermore, they believe that God’s Church was restored by Joseph Smith and is, therefore, the only true church, and that through its living prophet, i.e., the current head of the LDS church, their church is kept from falling into error.

With his message of new revelation and the restoration of God’s Church, Joseph Smith began to spread his new “gospel”. Opposition to this new movement caused Smith and his followers to move from New York, first to Ohio (in February of 1831), and then to Independence, Missouri (in July of the same year). Shortly after arriving in Independence, Smith claimed to have a revelation that God’s “Zion” and God’s Temple would be built there. He left several of his followers in Independence, instructing them to purchase land and build up the Church there. He returned to Ohio, and lived there for a time, but opposition to his message and his claim of ongoing revelations from God kept growing wherever he and his followers went. This opposition led to atrocities being committed by both sides; Mormon and non-Mormon. Ron Rhodes and Marian Bodine relate that, “[f]inally, in October of 1838 [Governor Boggs of the state of Missouri] issued an order to the militia stating that because of ‘the attitude of open and avowed defiance of the laws, and of having made open war upon the people of this state... the Mormons must be treated as

enemies and exterminated or driven from this state.’ The Mormons scattered. Some were killed and others were jailed, but many made it out of Missouri to Illinois, where they built an attractive city called Nauvoo (which, Joseph Smith asserted, was Hebrew for ‘beautiful place,’ While there, Smith was the mayor of the city, the general of his own army, a candidate for president of the United States, and the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator of the Mormon Church”.⁴

“On June 7, 1844, a group of dissident Mormons published a newspaper detailing the grievances they had against Smith.... Smith knew that the charges of polygamy and of his mishandling of church funds (among others) would cause much trouble for him. Days later, his city council decided to destroy the printing office and the presses. This act resulted in Smith’s arrest for treason, and he, his brother Hyrum, and two other Mormon leaders were jailed in Carthage, Illinois. On June 27, a mob stormed the jail, killing Joseph and Hyrum Smith and wounding the other men. Before Smith died, however, he used a six-shooter to wound a few of the men in the mob during the blazing gun battle. Smith’s role as God’s ‘Prophet, Seer, and Revelator’ came to an abrupt end in bloody violence.”⁵

These events brought about the first serious split among Smith’s followers, with those following the self-proclaimed second Prophet, Brigham Young, opposed by Smith’s widow who claimed that Joseph had anointed his eldest son to succeed him. The followers of Brigham Young became the LDS Church as we know it today, and the followers of Smith’s son formed the Reorganized Church of Latter-day Saints. “Since the inception of the Mormon Church there has been over 100 separate restorationist groups all claiming their authority comes from the prophet Joseph Smith.”⁶

III. Distinctive Doctrines

1 – There are many, countless Gods. Though, as far as we on Earth are concerned, there are only three Gods with whom we have to do; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

2 – The reason for this is that God the Father was once a man, who through obedience to his “Father” God was able to evolve and advance, eventually attaining what Mormon’s refer to as exaltation, becoming a God himself. “God Himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret.... I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see.... He was once a man like us.... Here, then, is eternal life – to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves.”⁷ Prior to his exaltation, God was a man who, along with his many wives, lived not on this earth, but on another planet similar to ours. They had many children, the first of whom was Jesus and the second, Lucifer, and, like us they all lived and died. But, due to their obedience, they were resurrected

and eventually exalted. After exaltation, God the Father, along with his God-wives, were given their own world to populate and perpetuate the cycle of birth, obedience, death, resurrection, and exaltation. The peoples of the Earth are, literally, their offspring.

3 – Jesus is the spirit-brother of Lucifer. When God the Father sought someone to be the savior of the world, Lucifer volunteered, but Jesus was selected instead. This angered Lucifer, who then rebelled, persuading one-third of the spirits in heaven to follow him.

4 – Salvation⁸ in Mormonism is equivalent to resurrection. Since, according to LDS doctrine, everyone is an immortal spirit, virtually everyone will be resurrected⁹. This form of *general* salvation, therefore, belongs to everyone. *Individual* salvation (exaltation), on the other hand, is merited through good works and obedience to God. In exaltation, men and women become Gods. Jesus' plan to save mankind involved giving them freedom of will so that men and women could freely choose to prove themselves worthy of exaltation. Lucifer wanted to force mankind to be saved, doing everything himself, and that was why his offer to be the savior was rejected.

5 – God's written revelation is not limited solely to the Bible, but as stated earlier involves several other writings: *The Book of Mormon*, *Doctrines and Covenants*, and *The Pearl of Great Price*.

6 – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true church; individual salvation and exaltation to Godhood is found in no other body.

7 – God preserves his church from error by means of the living prophets who oversee the LDS church.

IV. Comparing and Contrasting Mormon Doctrine with Scripture

1 – *There are many Gods.*

Scripture, however, clearly teaches that there is only one God. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4, ESV). "'You are my witnesses,' declares the LORD, 'and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am He. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior'" (Isaiah 43:10, ESV). "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.... Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any" (Isaiah 44:6, 8, ESV). "I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other" (Isaiah 45:5-6, ESV). "For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens" (Psalm 96:5, ESV).

2 – God was once a man who through obedience and good works was exalted, and became a God.

Rather than teaching that God started as a man, and then progressed to Godhood, the Bible teaches that God has always been God. “Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God” (Psalm 90:1-2, ESV). “For I the LORD do not change” (Malachi 3:6, ESV). “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will not he do it? Or has he spoken, and he will not fulfill it?” (Numbers 23:19, ESV). Furthermore, in contradistinction to Mormon doctrine, rather than a man earning exaltation and evolving upward to Godhood, the true God condescended to become man, in order to secure our salvation.¹⁰ “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1:1-3; 14, ESV). “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9, ESV). See also Philippians 2:1-11.

3 – Jesus is the spirit-brother of Lucifer, and the literal, physical offspring of God the Father and his God-wife.

The Bible nowhere teaches that Jesus and Lucifer/Satan are spirit-brothers. Rather, Jesus is the eternal God. “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father [or Father of Eternity], Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6, ESV). “He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn (Greek: prototokos, which points to a position of preeminence; see verse 18 where Jesus is referred to as the firstborn from the dead. See also how it is used as a title of the Messiah in Psalm 89:27.) of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. *And he is before all things*, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:15-17, ESV). Moreover, according to Scripture, Jesus is the unique Son of God, the second person of the trinity. He is not one “son” among many. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, *glory as of the only Son from the Father*, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14, ESV). Jesus’ prayer, just prior to his crucifixion and resurrection, was to ask the Father, “And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed” (John 17:5). Note that the LORD revealed to Isaiah that He alone has glory: “I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other...” (Isaiah 42:8). Therefore, if Jesus shared glory with the Father, that must mean that Jesus is God just as the Father and Holy Spirit are God; these three are One.¹¹

4 – *Salvation in Mormonism is equivalent to resurrection (Note: this is to be contrasted with exaltation, which is the achieving of Godhood).*

Salvation in the Bible is not mere resurrection, as all will be resurrected: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2, ESV). “Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28-29, ESV).

Salvation, scripturally-speaking, is holistic; it is a complete reversal of our fallen, rebellious state, and full restoration of ourselves back to God. As such, salvation requires that all our sins be forgiven, that we be clothed, covered in the perfect righteousness of Christ, and that we be granted the empowerment and renewal of the Spirit. Jesus said, “I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins” (John 8:24, ESV). “Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19, ESV). “In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace” (Ephesians 1:7). “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:10, ESV). “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him (i.e., Jesus) we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21, ESV).

Salvation is also, as it must be, not an act of man’s will, but is rather an act of God on our behalf for “apart from [Christ we] can do nothing” (John 15:5b, ESV). “For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them’” (Galatians 3:10). Therefore, “God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do” (Romans 8:3, ESV). Salvation is God’s work: “He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 3:5-6, ESV).

5 – *God’s written revelation is comprised of more than just the Bible.*

God’s revelation must always be consistent with itself; it never contradicts. We should be like the Bereans who, “were more noble than [the Jews] in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so” (Acts 17:11, ESV). Do the Mormon “scriptures” align with biblical teachings, or do they contradict the teachings of the Old and New Testaments? Furthermore, the writer of Hebrews certainly appears to speak of the culmination of God’s revelation being found in the person of Christ, and nowhere implies a greater, or future revelation from God that would come afterwards. “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but

in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Hebrews 1:1-2, ESV).

6 – *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God’s only true, restored church.*

The main premise behind this assertion is the claim that God’s Church had become so completely and utterly corrupted, in both life and doctrine, as to need a new “Prophet” to restore it to the truth. However, this flies in the face of Jesus’s own words regarding his church. After the Father opened Peter’s eyes to see who Jesus is, Jesus told him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:17-18, ESV). For the LDS Church to be who they claim to be, it would mean that the gates of hell had prevailed against God’s church. But, Jesus says this is an impossibility!

7 – *God preserves the LDS Church by means of contemporary living prophets who prevent the church from ever descending into error again.*

See the attached handouts outlining the Adam-God doctrine¹² promoted by Brigham Young, the second Prophet of the LDS Church, and the LDS Church’s twelfth prophet, Spencer W. Kimball, who in 1976 called this teaching a heresy¹³. One cannot have it both ways, either Brigham Young erred in his doctrine, or Spencer Kimball erred in his, but one cannot rationally maintain that the Prophets of the LDS Church are inerrant in what they teach.¹⁴

Further Resources

Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Mormons by Ron Rhodes and Marian Bodine

<http://vintage.aomin.org/Mormonism.html> (List of excellent resources by James White)

<http://vintage.aomin.org/MEMVER.html> (100 Verse Memorization System for witnessing to Mormons by James White)

<http://www.utlm.org/> (Ministry founded by two former Mormons, Jerald and Sandra Tanner)

<http://mit.irr.org/>

¹ Some accounts list his age as being fourteen when he received this alleged vision.

² *The Pearl of Great Price* is one of the books considered by Mormons to be authoritative and on par with Scripture with reference to what one is to believe, and how one is to live one’s life.

³ Joseph Smith, *The Pearl of Great Price* (Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah 1981), “Joseph Smith – History 1:19”, p. 49.

⁴ Ron Rhodes & Marian Bodine, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Mormons* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1995), p. 25.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <http://www.letusreason.org/LDS16.htm> (last accessed, February 27, 2016).

⁷ Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1972), pp. 345-46; 371.

⁸ Notice how Mormons, in line with other pseudo-Christian cults, use Christian terminology, but pour completely different meanings into those very terms.

⁹ Only the “sons of perdition” (mainly those who apostatize from the LDS faith) are excluded from being resurrected. Their fate is to be condemned to “outer darkness.”

¹⁰ See Spurgeon’s sermon, “The Condescension of Christ”, for a powerful, and humbling, meditation on Christ’s condescension: <http://www.romans45.org/spurgeon/sermons/0151.htm>

¹¹ Only the Trinitarian understanding that God is triune can make sense out of verses such as John 1:1 which teach that Jesus, the Word, is both *with* God and *is* God. The same holds true for John 17:5 which teaches that both the Father and Son share the same glory, and yet Isaiah asserts that God does not share His glory with anyone else. This only makes sense if God is a trinity of “persons”.

¹² <http://journalofdiscourses.com/1/8> (Last accessed, February 17, 2016).

¹³ <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1976/10/our-own-liahona?lang=eng>

¹⁴ Of course, I would argue that both are in error and that the Bible alone is infallible and inerrant.

1. [Journal of Discourses](#)
2. [Volume 1](#)
3. Discourse 8

Self-Government—Mysteries— Recreation and Amusements, Not in Themselves Sinful—Tithing—Adam, Our Father and Our God

Brigham Young

It is my intention to preach several discourses this evening, but how many I do not know....

[The following is excerpted from the above discourses. The full text can be read at the link below.]

My next sermon will be to both Saint and sinner. One thing has remained a mystery in this kingdom up to this day. It is in regard to the character of the well-beloved Son of God, upon which subject the Elders of Israel have conflicting views. Our God and Father in heaven, is a being of tabernacle, or, in other words, He has a body, with parts the same as you and I have; and is capable of showing forth His works to organized beings, as, for instance, in the world in which we live, it is the result of the knowledge and infinite wisdom that dwell in His organized body. His son Jesus Christ has become a personage of tabernacle, and has a body like his father. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Lord, and issues forth from Himself, and may properly be called God's minister to execute His will in immensity; being called to govern by His influence and power; but He is not a person of tabernacle as we are, and as our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ are. The question has been, and is often, asked, who it was that begat the Son of the Virgin Mary. The infidel world have concluded that if what the Apostles wrote about his father and mother be true, and the present marriage discipline acknowledged by Christendom be correct, then Christians must believe that God is the father of an illegitimate son, in the person of Jesus Christ! The infidel fraternity teach that to their disciples. I will tell you how it is. Our Father in Heaven begat all the spirits that ever were, or ever will be, upon this earth; and they were born spirits in the eternal world. Then the Lord by His power and wisdom organized the mortal tabernacle of man. We were made first spiritual, and afterwards temporal.

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. They came here, organized the raw material, and arranged in their order the herbs of the field, the trees, the apple, the peach, the plum,

the pear, and every other fruit that is desirable and good for man; the seed was brought from another sphere, and planted in this earth. The thistle, the thorn, the brier, and the obnoxious weed did not appear until after the earth was cursed. When Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, their bodies became mortal from its effects, and therefore their offspring were mortal. When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family; and when he took a tabernacle, it was begotten by his Father in heaven, after the same manner as the tabernacles of Cain, Abel, and the rest of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve; from the fruits of the earth, the first earthly tabernacles were originated by the Father, and so on in succession. I could tell you much more about this; but were I to tell you the whole truth, blasphemy would be nothing to it, in the estimation of the superstitious and overrighteous of mankind. However, I have told you the truth as far as I have gone. I have heard men preach upon the divinity of Christ, and exhaust all the wisdom they possessed. All Scripturalists, and approved theologians who were considered exemplary for piety and education, have undertaken to expound on this subject, in every age of the Christian era; and after they have done all, they are obliged to conclude by exclaiming "great is the mystery of godliness," and tell nothing.

It is true that the earth was organized by three distinct characters, namely, Eloheim, Yahovah, and Michael, these three forming a quorum, as in all heavenly bodies, and in organizing element, perfectly represented in the Deity, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost....

I bless you, and may the Lord bless you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

- Brigham Young

[NOTE: The full text of this particular set of discourses can be read at the link below]

(Retrieved from: <http://journalofdiscourses.com/1/8> , last accessed February 27, 2016)

Papyrus Joseph Smith 1 and Facsimile No. 1

Joseph Smith used this section of papyrus (PJS 1) as the basis for what is now Facsimile No.1 in the Book of Abraham. LDS and non-LDS Egyptologists agree that Joseph inaccurately restored the missing portions of PJS 1 when he produced Facsimile No. 1, and that this demonstrates his lack of knowledge of ancient Egyptian.



A FACSIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

No. 1



<http://mit.irr.org/papyrus-joseph-smith-1-and-facsimile-no-1> (Last accessed Feb. 27, 2016).

1. [Journal of Discourses](#)
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3. Discourse 8

Self-Government—Mysteries— Recreation and Amusements, Not in Themselves Sinful—Tithing—Adam, Our Father and Our God

Brigham Young

It is my intention to preach several discourses this evening, but how many I do not know.

I will in the first place bear testimony to the truth of many remarks made by brother Hunter, and especially his exhortation to the Seventies and Elders, and those men who wish to go on missions. I wish also to urge the necessity of your proceeding on your missions immediately, and of going to the place of your destination full of the Holy Ghost, preaching righteousness to the people; and while you do this, live up to the principles you preach, that you may teach also by your example, as well as by precept. Go, ye Elders, and now consider yourselves from this time forth missionaries. If the Gospel is in you like a flaming fire, to be poured upon the people, gather your neighbors together, and give your brethren an invitation to your house, and set before them the duties of man; and preach, if you can speak but for five minutes, occupying that time to the best advantage. Continue to preach, study, and learn, by faith and prayer, until your minds and mouths are opened, and you understand most perfectly the love of Christ.

It is not uncommon for Elders to say, "If I could have a mission, and be sent among strangers, I could speak to them, because they have not been instructed in the way of life and salvation; I could lay before them the principles of the Gospel, which have been taught to me, without that diffidence of feeling, and fear, which I experience while speaking to my brethren." It is very true that the first principles of the Gospel taught by the Elders of this Church are easy to be understood, compared with what it is to preach them to our families, or to our neighborhood, and to govern and control ourselves by the principles of righteousness which the Gospel inculcates. Again, to gather the Saints, to preach the Gospel to the world, and convince them of the truth, are much easier tasks than to convince men that you can master yourself, and practice the moral principles inculcated by your religion. That is a small portion of the duty required of you in order to obtain crowns of glory, immortality, and eternal lives. I will here remark, that it is natural for the people to desire to know a great deal of the mysteries; this, however, is not universally the case, though it is so with a great many of the Elders of Israel. I do not suppose it will apply to those who compose this congregation; your object in being here this evening is not to hear some great mystery of the Kingdom, which you never understood before. The greatest mystery a man ever learned, is to know how to control the human mind, and bring every faculty and power of the same in subjection to Jesus Christ; this is the

greatest mystery we have to learn while in these tabernacles of clay. It is more necessary for the Elders to learn and practice upon this lesson in the midst of the Saints at headquarters than in the world; for their facilities for learning are much greater, and I will tell you wherein. Let a Bishop, a High Priest, a President of any Stake or Quorum, any who are Elders in Israel, or any individual Saint from the first to the last of them, fall into error, and it is at once made manifest; he cannot pursue that course any further, for he is where he can learn his duties, and know how to walk straight in the paths of righteousness. Here is the place for you to teach great mysteries to your brethren, because here are those who can correct you. This fault the Elders of Israel do not fall into in this Tabernacle, although they may in private houses and neighborhoods. When a man is capable of correcting you, and of giving you light, and true doctrine, do not get up an altercation, but submit to be taught like little children, and strive with all your might to understand. The privileges of those who dwell here are greater than the privileges of those who are abroad. When your duties call you into foreign lands, and you there exhaust your stock of knowledge and wisdom, and you are not in possession of the keys to obtain that instruction which you desire, it is because you are far from the right fountain—far from the body, where all the members are in lively operation—where the eye can see, the ear hear, the nose smell, and the mouth speak, and so forth. When your face is turned from the body, let mysteries alone, for this is the only place for you to be corrected if wrong. Preach the simple, unadorned truth; work out your salvation with diligence, and do that which will guarantee you a warranted deed, an undeniable title to eternal lives.

If you feel prayer in you, pray; and if you feel the spirit of preaching in you, preach; call in your brethren, and read the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Book of Covenants, and the other revelations of God to them; and talk over the things contained in those books, and deal them out to your brethren and neighbors; pray with them, and teach them how to control themselves; and let your teachings be sustained by your own example. Teach your families how to control themselves; teach them good and wholesome doctrine, and practice the same in your own lives. This is the place for you to become polished shafts in the quiver of the Almighty. This will answer for one sermon.

I feel much inclined to talk to the brethren: I have not had the privilege of preaching much for some time, because of the inconvenience of our former meeting place. Now, as we have a good, convenient place to meet in, and my health will serve me, I expect to improve the time. I love to preach at home with the Saints. I love to meet with them, and look upon their happy countenances, lit up with the joys of eternity. In short, I love the society of all good men, and to preach salvation to them.

You may consider what I shall now lay before you a small matter; but I think it of some importance. When the Elders of Israel leave this place and go forth among the wicked, it is not their privilege to mingle with them in any of their worldly exercises; for if they do, the devil will obtain an advantage over them, and succeed in drawing them away from the path of their duty. For instance—suppose you and I, with many more of the brethren, meet together in a convenient place in the Valley, and dance to the sweet strains of the violin; we could do so with a perfect good will; but if we should be called to England, and there have an invitation to join with the wicked in their pastimes and recreations, and we in our feelings bow down to this, and suffer our spirits to be subject to their commandments, we suffer ourselves to be ruled over by them, and at once become their servants.

While I am here, I am in the midst of the Priesthood of heaven, and in the center of the kingdom of God. We are before the Lord, where every hand I shake is the hand of a Saint, and every face I see, when I look upon the assembled thousands, is the countenance of a Saint. I am the controller and master of affairs here, under Heaven's direction; though there are those who do not believe this. I invite those who are not subject to me as their President, not to contaminate my friends; for were I and my friends to become subject to those who object to us, we are then on the ground of the devil, and subject ourselves to him they serve.

Never suffer yourselves to mingle in any of those recreations that tend to sin and iniquity, while you are away from the body of the Church, where you cannot so fully control yourselves. Let the Elders who are going out from this place carry this instruction with them into the other portions of the earth. Whatever a man does, let him do it in the name of the Lord—let him work in the name of the Lord, let all his acts through life be in the name of the Lord; and if he wants light and knowledge, let him ask in that name.

You are well aware that the wickedness of the world, or the apostasy of the Church, is so great, that those who now profess religion cannot enjoy their own natural privileges in the world. In many places their folly and superstition are so great that they would consider they had committed the sin of blasphemy if they happened to hear a violin. The whole world could not hire a good, honest, sound Presbyterian, of the old fashion and cut, to look into a room where a company of young men and women were dancing, lest they should sin against the Holy Ghost. This overrighteous notion is imbibed by the generality of professors of religion, but it is because they themselves have made it a sin. Let us look at the root of the matter. In the first place, some wise being organized my system, and gave me my capacity, put into my heart and brain something that delights, charms, and fills me with rapture at the sound of sweet music. I did not put it there; it was some other being. As one of the modern writers has said, "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast." It has been proved that sweet music will actually tame the most malicious and venomous beasts, even when they have been stirred up to violent wrath, and make them docile and harmless as lambs. Who gave the lower animals a love for those sweet sounds, which with magic power fill the air with harmony, and cheer and comfort the hearts of men, and so wonderfully affect the brute creation? It was the Lord, our heavenly Father, who gave the capacity to enjoy these sounds, and which we ought to do in His name, and to His glory. But the greater portion of the sectarian world consider it sacrilege to give way to any such pleasure as even to listen to sweet music, much more to dance to its delightful strains. This is another short sermon.

I wish now to say a few words to the brethren upon the subject of tithing. It is well known to the majority of this Conference what transpired, last Conference, upon the stand in the old Bowery. At that Conference I had good cause to find fault with the Bishops, and I took the liberty to brush them down a little. From that day to this there has been more accomplished by our Bishops in the short space of seven months, than was accomplished by them for the space of years previously. This gives me great satisfaction. The Bishops have done as well as men could do: their conduct in fulfilling the duties of their calling has truly been praiseworthy, and I feel to bless them, and pray the Lord to bless them all the day long, for they have done first rate. When we consider the ignorance of the world, their unbelief in God, and realize that the veil of the covering is over the face of all nations,

and remember the ignorance we were once in ourselves, having to commence like babes at the rudiments of learning, knowing also how faltering men are in their faith, and then look at what this people have accomplished, we are led to exclaim, "It is marvelous in our eyes!" Were I to say, "Elders of Israel, you that feel to put your all upon the altar, rise upon your feet," who would be left? [All present rose up simultaneously.] Where is there another people upon the earth who would have done this? I have no tithing, but all—all I have is the Lord's. You know the word sacrifice: as brother Banks said today, it is a mere burlesque—a nonsensical term. No man ever heard me say I had made a sacrifice. I possess nothing but what my heavenly Father has been pleased to give me, or, in other words, He has loaned it to me while I remain here in this mortal flesh.

Is it not marvelous, considering the weakness of man, to see the willingness of this whole people to die if necessary for the truth? How do you suppose it makes me feel? Though I may sometimes chastise my brethren, and speak to them in the language of reproof, there is not a father who feels more tenderly towards his offspring, and loves them better than I love this people; and my Father in heaven loves them; my heart yearns over them with all the emotions of tenderness, so that I could weep like a child; but I am careful to keep my tears to myself. If you do wrong, it grieves my heart, and it also grieves the heart of my heavenly Father. I feel continually to urge my brethren to cease from all evil, and learn to do well.

The fullness of the heavens and the earth is the Lord's—the gold and the silver, the wheat, the fine flour, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; and when we fully understand His works, we shall know that He is in all the earth, and fulfills His will among the children of men, exalting and debasing them according to His pleasure; for the systems, creeds, thrones, and kingdoms of the world are all under His control. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it" —or that He doth not control? The Lord controls the whole; and in the end, you will find He has regulated all things right, for all will be consummated to His glory.

The children of men are made as independent in their sphere as the Lord is in His, to prove themselves, pursue which path they please, and choose the evil or the good. For those who love the Lord, and do His will, all is right, and they shall be crowned, but those who hate His ways shall be damned, for they choose to be damned.

As I was meditating on the philosophy of the day, it occurred to my mind how visible it must appear to all eyes that the Lord does indeed work, that it is He who blesses this people; and yet it seems as though they cannot see His hand. The Lord fills the immensity of space. What saith the Psalmist? "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me." I was trying to think of the place where God is not, but it is impossible, unless you can find empty space; and there I believe He is not. If you can find such a place, it will become useful for a hiding place to those who wish to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord, in the great day of accounts. I will close this sermon, as I intend to preach another before I present the subject I more particularly wish to speak upon.

My next sermon will be to both Saint and sinner. One thing has remained a mystery in this kingdom up to this day. It is in regard to the character of the well-beloved Son of God, upon which subject the Elders of Israel have conflicting views. Our God and Father in heaven, is a being of tabernacle, or, in other words, He has a body, with parts the same as you and I have; and is capable of showing forth His works to organized beings, as, for instance, in the world in which we live, it is the result of the knowledge and infinite wisdom that dwell in His organized body. His son Jesus Christ has become a personage of tabernacle, and has a body like his father. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Lord, and issues forth from Himself, and may properly be called God's minister to execute His will in immensity; being called to govern by His influence and power; but He is not a person of tabernacle as we are, and as our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ are. The question has been, and is often, asked, who it was that begat the Son of the Virgin Mary. The infidel world have concluded that if what the Apostles wrote about his father and mother be true, and the present marriage discipline acknowledged by Christendom be correct, then Christians must believe that God is the father of an illegitimate son, in the person of Jesus Christ! The infidel fraternity teach that to their disciples. I will tell you how it is. Our Father in Heaven begat all the spirits that ever were, or ever will be, upon this earth; and they were born spirits in the eternal world. Then the Lord by His power and wisdom organized the mortal tabernacle of man. We were made first spiritual, and afterwards temporal.

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. They came here, organized the raw material, and arranged in their order the herbs of the field, the trees, the apple, the peach, the plum, the pear, and every other fruit that is desirable and good for man; the seed was brought from another sphere, and planted in this earth. The thistle, the thorn, the brier, and the obnoxious weed did not appear until after the earth was cursed. When Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, their bodies became mortal from its effects, and therefore their offspring were mortal. When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family; and when he took a tabernacle, it was begotten by his Father in heaven, after the same manner as the tabernacles of Cain, Abel, and the rest of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve; from the fruits of the earth, the first earthly tabernacles were originated by the Father, and so on in succession. I could tell you much more about this; but were I to tell you the whole truth, blasphemy would be nothing to it, in the estimation of the superstitious and overrighteous of mankind. However, I have told you the truth as far as I have gone. I have heard men preach upon the divinity of Christ, and exhaust all the wisdom they possessed. All Scripturalists, and approved theologians who were considered exemplary for piety and education, have undertaken to expound on this subject, in every age of the Christian era; and after they have done all, they are obliged to conclude by exclaiming "great is the mystery of godliness," and tell nothing.

It is true that the earth was organized by three distinct characters, namely, Eloheim, Yehovah, and Michael, these three forming a quorum, as in all heavenly bodies, and in organizing element, perfectly represented in the Deity, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Again, they will try to tell how the divinity of Jesus is joined to his humanity, and exhaust all their mental faculties, and wind up with this profound language, as describing the soul of man, "it is an immaterial substance!" What a learned idea! Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven. Now, let all who may hear these doctrines, pause before they make light of them, or treat them with indifference, for they will prove their salvation or damnation.

I have given you a few leading items upon this subject, but a great deal more remains to be told. Now, remember from this time forth, and forever, that Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. I will repeat a little anecdote. I was in conversation with a certain learned professor upon this subject, when I replied, to this idea—"if the Son was begotten by the Holy Ghost, it would be very dangerous to baptize and confirm females, and give the Holy Ghost to them, lest he should beget children, to be palmed upon the Elders by the people, bringing the Elders into great difficulties."

Treasure up these things in your hearts. In the Bible, you have read the things I have told you tonight; but you have not known what you did read. I have told you no more than you are conversant with; but what do the people in Christendom, with the Bible in their hands, know about this subject? Comparatively nothing.

I will now again take up the subject of tithing. The brethren have done well. They have been willing and obedient, no people could have been more so; for this I thank my Father in Heaven. I could not wish a people to work more kindly in the yoke of Jesus than this people do; the yoke grows more and more easy to them. It seems that every man will not only pay his tithing, but give all he has, if the Lord requires it: still I see wherein they may do better. I asked the people today to assist to pay our Church liabilities. The offer of three or four yoke of oxen only, we do not want; but I will lay before you what we wish you to do. By the manifesto which has been read, you have learned the precise situation of the property of the Church. What has incurred this debt? Why does it exist in the shape in which it now appears? And wherein could we have obviated the difficulty, and done better? A fourth part of the money already paid out, did not come in upon tithing. This money we have had to borrow in order to keep the public works in progress. You may say, wherein could we have done better, for we have paid our tithing punctually? But has that brother, who sent \$100 back to the East for merchandise, paid \$10 of it into the tithing office? Or did the brother who has sent \$500 back, let us have \$50? No; these have used it themselves, and thereby involved those who bear the responsibilities of the Trust. Again, those who have not possessed sufficient money to send back for merchandise, have been necessitated to pay out what they had. Thousands of dollars have been paid here for merchandise. Has one-tenth of all that money been paid into the tithing office? It has not. And where is the tithing that should have come in from England and California. Instead of tithing their money, they have used it for other purposes, and paid it in property, with which we could not pay our debts. This is wherein we have failed to liquidate our debts. The people go to these Gentile stores, on the Saturday, in crowds, to purchase goods. I think we shall not overrate the amount, if we say that \$500,000 has been paid, in these valleys, to the merchants. But suppose they have

received no more than \$50,000 from this community, \$5,000 of that money ought to have been first paid into the tithing office; and we could have sent it to the States, and purchased goods ourselves, for one-third or one-half less than we have to pay the merchants here. And \$25,000 more should have come into the tithing office from the Church in the United States. The brethren in California have made no less than \$100,000; the tenth of which is due this tithing office. For want of this money, we are brought into bondage and we must now apply our faith and works to raise means to liquidate our indebtedness, which has accumulated by purchasing goods at high and extortionate prices. I find no fault with the merchants, for they came here to gather gold by the hundred weight.

Now, brethren, and Bishops, look over this matter, and try to think what your feelings would be if you were laid under the same responsibility that I and my brethren have upon our shoulders. We are required to see the Gospel preached to the nations afar off, to build council houses and temples, to cope with the united wisdom and craft of legislative assemblies, and with the powers of darkness in high places; and then place yourselves in the circumstances we are now placed in! Besides all this, see the hundreds who come to us everyday to be administered to in various ways: some want fruit, some sugar, others tea, and all want clothing, &c. Then step into our private rooms, where we commune with the people, and you will see and hear all this, and a great deal more. Instead of every man bringing his picayune, or his sixpence, or his \$5, &c., as tithing on the money in his possession, it is all used for something else, and the storehouse of the Lord is left empty. Suppose nothing had been put in there but what the people have put in, the workmen would have been naked. Walk into the storehouse, and examine for yourselves. To be sure there has been a little clothing put in lately; for instance, there was an old silk dress put in for \$40, that had been lying for years rotting in the chest: this is a specimen of the rest. What are such things worth to our workmen? Why, nothing at all. We wish you to put in strong and substantial clothing. Good, strong, homemade stuffs make the most suitable clothing for those who are building up the public works.

Will you help us out of this thralldom, and have it credited to your future tithing? There is already a great deal more due than would liquidate all our debts, but we cannot command it now. Do you feel willing to put your shoulder to the wheel, and continue to roll it forward, and still continue, you that have faith to continue, to increase in faith? For the business of this kingdom will increase, and the responsibility also; the labor will and must grow, and continue to increase, until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our God and His Christ. So much on tithing; you see where the failure is; it is in that point, and nowhere else.

It is not for any man to think he is a cipher—that what he can do will not tell in this matter, and say, "They will get along well enough without me;" but it is every man's duty to lay it to heart, and help what he can with his earthly substance; though I wish you to understand distinctly that it is no commandment—you are left to act freely.

Let all the sheep stay in the Valley; also the cows; for they will give milk and butter, and replenish the stock. But when we speak of the horses, mules, and oxen, let every man look up his spare stock of this description, and with them help to liquidate these debts. Stock will now pay debts. I will use my stock for this purpose, and my brethren will do the same, until we have enough. I do not enjoin this upon you, as you have already paid the tithing which is required of you; except in some instances in the money tithing. Had we received the money due to us, we should have had no

debts; but this failure has been, and is now, in existence. I will take every kind of spare stock I have, except my cows and sheep, and wipe off these debts until they are cancelled; and now every man who will do the same, let him rise upon his feet. [The whole congregation of two thousand men rose up to a man.] Do you suppose we want to deprive you of your teams? It is not so, but we wished to know the state of your faith, so that when we are ready to call upon you, we can be sure our call will be responded to. I would not cripple any man, I would rather give him five yoke of oxen, than destroy his team, and you know it. [Some of the brethren in the stand, not believing their own eyes, that the whole congregation rose, it was tried over again, to satisfy them, when the congregation all rose again to a man.] Brother Hunter now knows what to do. Many of the brethren are killing their calves; don't do this; if you cannot raise them, it will be better to give them away to those who can.

I bless you, and may the Lord bless you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

- Brigham Young

(Retrieved from: <http://journalofdiscourses.com/1/8> , last accessed February 27, 2016)