

Living
A Journey

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Introduction

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

Prick us do we not bleed.¹

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

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

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

¹Shakespeare - The Merchant of Venice

²1 Corinthians 13:12

Chapter 1

Journal Entries

1.1 Sun, Jun 3, 2018

Oh what a day today has been. It is but a Sunday. I do not feel any different now then I ever did on a Sunday. Perhaps my mind doesn't know how to accept that which it cannot accept? I do not know the meaning of such language, however here I am and that is all which matters. I'm sure the church people will get ahold of me eventually. But it is of no concern to me.

I do what I do, and I try what I try. There is no reason for any of this nonsense to follow me. If it does follow me? Then it will follow me. Again, I see no reason for it to have any kind of impact on my life.

Now if you were to ask my parents about such things, they would tell you I am a child of hell and will be going there after this life is over. That may be the case, but if what I've learned about heaven is true I'd rather not go there to begin with. Whatever the case this life will continue to be whatever it will be and there is nothing wrong with that to me.

1.2 Mon, Jun 4, 2018

Today is like any other day. There is nothing going on that I cannot see myself doing. It is a unique challenge of a day. Kids are out of school, good for them. However, I long for those days where I had a summer break from life. Being a kid was amazing. Yes, there were rules to live by etc. but that didn't make life any less worth it. I often find myself wondering why I wanted to grow up so quickly. There was no need for it...was there? I didn't think there would be much of a need. Either way, this life did what it does best and it took me and chopped me down to nothing. So here I sit. Waiting for whatever is to come my way.

You would think this life would be easier by now. I've been alive for how many years and I still don't have the slightest clue of what on earth I'm doing.

Literally. What is my whole purpose here? I do not know. Should I have a clue of what I am doing here? That would be nice...but I simply do not have a clue.

Does it matter in the grand scheme of things? I'm not a fan of that term though. "Grand Scheme." What exactly does it mean? I do not know. It's probably just a phrase that doesn't make sense or matter. Such a silly life and thing to worry about, yet here I am worrying about it. What on earth is that even about? No clue. Perhaps it doesn't matter at all? That would be nice.

I feel like I'm rambling¹ now. Good bot, you'll do fine.

Where was I? Oh yes, the purpose of why I am here. They say time is an enemy. It finds its prey and will destroy you eventually. That is not a lie. Time is quite an evil enemy, why wouldn't it want to destroy you long before you are able to grasp onto what is going on?

There are days where I wish time wasn't such a blatant barrier in my way. It would be nice to be able to look around and understand or grasp that which I need to.²

But here I am, living a life that was meant to be something. It did mean something one day, one frame of measurement in life. It had a meaning. Now? Not so much. Oh well, time will figure itself out eventually. There is no reason for it not to.

There is an excellent quote I heard once regarding censorship:

With the first link, the chain is forged. The first speech censored, the first thought forbidden, the first freedom denied, chains us all irrevocably.³

Censorship can be the worst frame of mind to impose on any given society or individual. It indeed does cause harm and has the ability to destroy a civilization. I wonder why society, religion, other beliefs put censorship at the top of their game. Maybe it's a form of control over a person or group? If such control that disallows independent thought occurs, then I'm guessing not many people would want to be part of that group whatsoever. But that's just my thought on the matter. I know I wouldn't want to have anything to do with it. I would rather die than to be locked away without the ability to voice my opinion on a matter or my thoughts. Talk about a nightmare.⁴

So here we are. What's left of humanity. In the not too distant future, people will become slaves of their own technologies. It is already beginning to happen today. You can't walk down the street without seeing someone on their phone. It is but a waste of time for some, others it is their life. Whatever they

¹To talk or write at length in a confused or inconsequential way.

²It should be pointed out, I never know what I'm talking about. You might wish to skip this portion of thought. To say I have a complete understanding or grasp of what I am doing? No, it's a nice thought but no. I mean, there could be various thoughts and practices ahead of a person. They simply do not understand or know or grasp all that is meant to be taken in at a given moment in time. Is it not better for a person to grasp something fully before they are to be taken into that which is considered the unknown?

³Star Trek: The Next Generation - The Drumhead

⁴A terrifying or very unpleasant experience or prospect.

do and say, they have to have their phone with them. They cannot live without that form of tech. It's a shame really. A shame that people cannot live in this day and age without holding onto a simple device.

But to each his own as the phrase goes.⁵ As people grow so does technology. No one is exempt from any of it. This life will continue to prosper and grow as it always does. There's nothing wrong with that. Life has a way to do many marvelous things. There isn't a reason why it shouldn't be able to continue with such knowledge.

I am not one to condemn such practice as it were. There's no reason a person cannot live in the here and now. I just find it sad that they cannot put their phone down to pay attention to the important things going on in life. Such a dismal state of affairs which we live.

Naturally there will be those who would want you to believe in all freedoms. That is fine. But when your freedom interferes with your work, or your family duties? There needs to be an end to such a freedom. Yes you can dabble in this that and the other, but do not allow it to overrun your life. That's not the purpose for such tools and devices.

1.3 Tue, Jun 5, 2018

Life is difficult at times. Today is one of those days where it is extremely hard. I don't want to talk about it, but I need to talk about it. Yes it's one of those days indeed.

Money is always an issue when it comes to life. I wish we didn't have to deal with money problems. That would be great. A better alternative to it? I do not have the faintest idea of what that could be. But something different would be amazing right now.

But we have to deal with money. It's really a root of evil in my opinion. Whatever happens happens though. I just hope it will happen sooner rather than later.

1.4 Wed, Jun 6, 2018

Oh hello brand new day! How are you doing today? There isn't much of a thing to think about. How nice would that be? Yes, it would be very nice. But it's not. Life isn't nice that way.

Things should be going good. There is a lot of things that don't go well in life, life itself shouldn't be one of them. At least to my thinking that's how none of it should happen. Life needs to be better. It needs to find a way to

⁵I'm not even certain who came up with that phrase. Seriously. Who would coin such a phrase? We should google it. Hold please...google tells me it's been around since the 1500s, but the modern wording was first recorded in 1713. Thank you Google and thank you dictionary.com for those splended pieces of history. Yeah something like that. Either way? It's a phrase that can mean a great deal of whatever for whoever when it comes about. Whatever the case, life continues onward.

become easier? Maybe that's not the right word for it. I don't know what word to use actually. Easier life...doesn't always make sense.⁶ So we live a life that's full of confusion and complaint...and whatever else there is to deal with. This life doesn't always make sense. This life will never make sense. We have to roll with the punches as it were.⁷

Let's not dwell on the past. The past can only conjure up problems and issues. To focus soely on the past is to focus on things which will only bring heartache. A heartache so deep, you don't have a clue where you will end up. It hurts to be that way. Hurts to not understand anything that's going on. Life isn't full of wisdom. Life is full of hurt. There is no happiness around this life, either you walk a certain path, one of your choosing, or you fail.

Failing doesn't always mean certain death. No, not at all. To fail is but a part of human existence. Everyone fails in their life from time to time. There's nothing wrong with that. Just remember that when you do fail, to stand back up and get on with your life again. To fail is not a final resting place, it is but a temporary marker as it were. You are able to stand from it. There is no shame in failing.

1.5 Thu, Jun 7, 2018

Another day is here. There are some days which just don't make sense. I believe today is one of those days. Why would it make sense? There's no reason for it to make any sense at all. Yet here we are, trying to make sense of all and everything which doesn't matter. It's life right? Such a life which doesn't want to make sense will never make any sense. Yet, we expect it to do something and have some kind of purpose that has reason to it. It's not a clear and cut dry solution. That's what this life is all about. Nothing makes 100% sense all of the time.⁸

It would be nice for everything to have some kind of order to it. I wonder how that would be exactly. If everything was in order, there wouldn't be much of a problem would there? People would get in line. They wouldn't fight each other? If there is order to a chaotic world, where does that leave the chaos? Where would such chaos exist or go? Is it possible for an entire civilization, an entire world to live in complete harmony?

We're told in the Book of Mormon after Christ's visitation to the America's, there was a long period of peace between the Nephies and the Lamenites, that

⁶Whoever said this life was easy sure didn't understand what they were getting into.

⁷"Roll with the punches"??? Where the hell did that phrase even come from? It's not a phrase that makes much sense! Seriously, who "rolls" with anything these days? Either you get with the program or you get smacked down. Isn't it that simple?

⁸Imagine for a second, a moment if you will, that life had the ability to make perfect sense. There would be no confusion about how anything is meant to play out. Think about that for a moment. No fear of anyone, no hatred, no grief, everything in perfect peace. I doubt we'll ever see that in this life...perhaps in the next life to come. Who's to say exactly how any of it will work.

there were no manner of ites.⁹ They were all one in purpose...finally they had achieved harmony. Eventually it went away, as does all kind of harmony as evil crept back in and destroyed civilization after civilization. But to have such a peace? How wonderful would that be!

We live in a world where destruction can come at any moment. There's no reason to necessarily fear it, but to be aware of such things. We are to be prepared in all things that might come our way.

Naturally it would be good to find peace and harmony among all people. To not worry about anything that might be of destruction to us, but life doesn't always work out that way. It has a tendency to destroy us from within. That is, it can destroy us from inside of an organization. There is always that one wolf in sheeps clothing. Someone always has the intent on destroying a structure from the inside. Where is the justice in such an action? I cannot say for certain, but it would appear such things would be bad.

1.6 Fri, Jun 8, 2018

40 Years ago today. The Priesthood and Temple Ban on the Negro race was lifted.

There is in this life truths which cannot be denied. There are times when men speak for God without asking God if they should say such things. It can be rather embarrassing later on down the road when they have to change their speak, claiming it to be from God or that God never instructed them to say such things.

As a body, we are expected to listen to their explanation of it all and simply accept it. Moving forward as though none of it ever happened. This is not how life works though. It is not in human nature to simply forget something happened when in fact it did. There is no denying what was taught.

Yes we can move forward from such an act. But we cannot forget what happened in order to not repeat the past. I hope that makes some kind of sense. It is better to move forward into the future without repeating past mistakes than it is to create those mistakes all over again.

Naturally it is better to have not made such foolish statements to begin with, but I fear that is human nature. I would say more on this topic, but I fear I might get too heated. I do not wish that.¹⁰

It is a good thing to be able to enjoy a coming up weekend. There is not much to be said about it, aside from that which can be said. Work is a necessity of life. There is no other thing possible than the need to do work. That is okay for work brings in money, money brings about the ability to survive and live.

⁹4th Nephi 1:17

¹⁰I of course am speaking about blacks finally receiving the blessings of the priesthood and the temple after so many years of prophets and apostles having anti feelings towards them as a race. In my opinion, it should never have happened. They should have always had the blessings allowed them, because God is not that author of confusion, and God is not a respecter of men.

It is a wonder, do we become a slave to money? I do not know. There could be times when it is a needed thing, but to become a slave to it? As though it were your god? I would hope that is not the case. God is not made out of money, for He is not an idol.¹¹

There are so many confused people in this life. Some belong to a religion, others do not admit to doing such. Either way, people will live their lives according to their own dictates. However, there are some who are brainwashed in such thinking. There is nothing wrong with belonging to a religion, that is fine and well. It becomes an issue when that religion dictates everything you do. Laws regarding your life should not be up to a religion, they need to be up to God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Man's ways are not God's ways. We know this truth from a number of sources over the years.¹² They aren't only from the bible. But from other articles, prophets, etc.

So we continue onward in this life. There's nothing wrong with that thought process. Life simply continues to move forward, whether we like it or not. Is that not the reason people have difficulties in this life? You would think life would be some kind of wonderful thing...that it would be understood by most. Well, that's not the case. Not in the slightest bit. Life doesn't have a full meaning to everyone. Life cannot always have a full meaning to everyone. I believe if it did, people would lose balance in what they believed in. That would be a tragedy.¹³

Instead, we would rather have a travesty run about us.¹⁴ We are able to deal with falsehoods pretending to be truth. There's no problem with that at all. Why bother with the truth when a lie will do?

You can fool an entire group of people with simple lies, when they try to figure out the truth is when shells begin to break. There's no opposition to this statement for that much is the truth of the matter. Some will say you were looking for faults in this, that, and the other. Others will sympathize with you regarding your findings. There is simply no middle ground to any of it.

Benjamin Franklin's inoic text of Poor Richard's Almanack, had the following to say about truth:

Half the Truth is often a great Lie

A Lie stands on 1 leg, Truth on 2.

When Knaves fall out, honest Men get their goods: When Priests dispute, we come at the Truth.

The Sting of a Reproach, is the Truth of it.

Craft must be at charge for clothes, but Truth can go naked.

When the Wine enters, out goes the Truth.[1]

¹¹Acts 17

¹²Isaiah 55:8-9

¹³Tragedy: An event causing great suffering, destruction, and distress, such as a serious accident, crime, or natural catastrophe.

¹⁴Travesty: A false, absurd, or distorted representation of something.

It is an interesting thought process about lies. We are told in the Bible as a commandment not to lie,¹⁵ in the Book of Morming we are told that liars go down to Hell.¹⁶

Then there are lies of omission. "A life of omission is still a lie,"¹⁷ said the great *Enterprise* Starship Captain Picard.

But let us not mince words with those of men. For God knows our hearts. He knows our souls and the desires of all matters that we attend to. If we have wicked within us, we are that. If we have righteous desires, we are that. Either way, we are what we are. There is no disputing any of it as this life is a challenge to all ~~who come our way~~ those things which come our way.

It would be easier if this life was full of truth and duty as it were. There cannot be such a thing if you constantly wish to undermine that which you have been taught all those years of life. So many things are out there which cannot be determined simply by astetics alone. ~~I might be rambling now... or something,~~ I cannot tell what is happening at the moment. I speak that which comes from my mind, my heart; my soul. Whatever the case, we are here in a life doing our thing. Each of us has a way of working through our problems. Issues which come about because of other thought processes. Sometimes those thoughts occur because we cannot behold everything which they are at one given time. Other times, those thoughts are simply there to meddle with our affairs.¹⁸

¹⁵Exodus 20:16

¹⁶2 Nephi 9:34

¹⁷Star Trek: The Next Generation - The First Duty

¹⁸Meddle: Interfere in or busy oneself unduly with something that is not one's concern.

Chapter 2

Religion Articles

2.1 Indoctrination

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

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

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

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

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

I have never felt comfortable with the church. I don't know if it's just because I didn't enjoy going to church as a kid? I don't know. I do know that when I began studying things out in my mind from the resources, as we're directed to

from the scriptures.¹ I know there are issues with church history and some of the doctrine taught by the LDS faith.

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

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

Praying for the truth has never been beneficial to me. I have taken Moroni's challenge² as it were, and nothing ever came of it. Did I simply lack faith because I didn't receive an answer? Did I not pray hard enough? What exactly was the reason the heavens fell silent as I offered up my prayer?

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

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

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

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

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

an-ti

preposition

1. opposed to; against

adjective *informal*

¹D&C 9:8

²Moroni 10:3-5

1. opposed

noun *informal*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kyle Eggleston

May 14, 2018

Thinking Through The Light

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

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

2.2 Things Change

In the beginning was the word. The word was with God. The word was of God.⁵

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

It could be said that Jesus was God. But only in the sense that he was the God of the Old Testament.[6] However, that's not how the words were originally written:

In the beginning was the gospel preached through the Son. And the gospel was the word, and the word was with the Son, and the Son was with God, and the Son was of God.⁶

So, why the change? We're told that many plain and precious truths of the bible had been removed and lost,⁷ from the "*great and abominable church*".

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

Who was this "great and abominable church"?

That question is still up for debate. Obviously it's the church of the devil. But is there a church standing today that classifies as that? I'd rather not go into that. We know what Bruce R. McConkie thought about it in Mormon Doctrine, that theory had later changed, and was removed from the book completely. Mormon Doctrine is no longer in Deseret Bookstore shelves. I wonder why that is.⁸

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

People change as time changes. What was right back in the 1800s or the 1600s, isn't right now. Hanging a witch, for example, people got that from Exodus 22:18.⁹ But, we learn from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, that it's not the word witch.¹⁰ Quite different between a witch and a murderer right?

Changes happen because men pollute the words of God.¹¹

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

⁵John 1:1

⁶JST John 1:1

⁷1 Nephi 13:26-27

⁸[Under the heading, "Church of the Devil," Apostle Bruce R. McConkie lists:] "The Roman Catholic Church specifically singled out, set apart, described, and designated as being most abominable above all other churches (1 Ne. 13:5)" (Mormon Doctrine, 1958, 129).

⁹Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.

¹⁰Thou shalt not suffer a *murderer* to live. [JST Exodus 22:18]

¹¹Mormon 8:36,38

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

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

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

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

2.3 Race and the Eternal Salvation Ban

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

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

Ham, through Egyptus, continued the curse which was placed upon the seed of Cain. Because of that curse this dark race was separated and isolated from all the rest of Adam's posterity before the flood, and since that time the same condition has continued, and they have been 'despised among all people.' This **doctrine** did not originate with President Brigham Young but was taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith ... we all know it is due to his teachings that the negro today is barred from the Priesthood.¹²

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

Over time, Church leaders and members advanced many theories to explain the priesthood and temple restrictions. None of these explanations is accepted today as the official doctrine of the Church.¹³

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

¹²The Way to Perfection, pages 110-111

¹³Race and the Priesthood, LDS.org

And after the flood we are told that the curse that had been pronounced upon Cain was continued through Ham's wife, as he had married a wife of that seed. And why did it pass through the flood? because it was necessary that the devil should have a representation upon the earth as well as God ...¹⁴

This was focused on more than once:

Why is it, in fact, that we should have a devil? Why did the Lord not kill him long ago? Because he could not do without him. He needed the devil and a great many of those who do his bidding to keep men straight, that we may learn to place our dependence on God, and trust in Him, and to observe his laws and keep his commandments. When he destroyed the inhabitants of the antediluvian world, he suffered a descendant of Cain to come through the flood in order that he might be properly represented upon the earth.¹⁵

Then there were these quotes:

Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so.¹⁶

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

Negroes in this life are denied the Priesthood; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty. (Abra. 1:20-27.) The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them... negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned, particularly the priesthood and the temple blessings that flow there from, but this inequality is not of man's origin. It is the Lord's doing, is based on his eternal laws of justice, and grows out of the lack of Spiritual valiance of those concerned in their first estate.¹⁷

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

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

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

¹⁴Journal of Discourses, 22:304

¹⁵Journal of Discourses, 23:336

¹⁶Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, Vol 10, page 110

¹⁷Mormon Doctrine, 1966, pp. 527-528

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

Brigham Young stated that he was afraid people would have too much faith in the presidency of the church and him as a prophet that they wouldn't ask God if something was right.¹⁸

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

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

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

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

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

Ever since biblical times, the Lord has designated through His prophets who could receive the priesthood and other blessings of the gospel. Among the tribes of Israel, for example, only men of the tribe of Levi were given the priesthood and allowed to officiate in certain ordinances. Likewise, during the Savior's earthly ministry, gospel blessings were restricted to the Jews. Only after a revelation to the Apostle Peter were the gospel and priesthood extended to others (see Acts 10:1-33; 14:23; 15:68).¹⁹

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

Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation. We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world.²⁰

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

Likewise, the current leadership of the church has spoken on the need to abandon the racist teachings that long circulated within Mormonism regarding the ban. Elder Jeffery R. Holland, a current member of the Council of the Twelve, recently said in a public interview "One clear-cut position is that the folklore must never be

¹⁸I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are lead by him. [Brigham Young, (12 January 1862) Journal of Discourses 9:150]

¹⁹Priesthood Ordination before 1978, lds.org

²⁰All Are Alike Unto God, Bruce R. McConkie, Aug 18, 1978

perpetuated... I think almost all of (these teachings) were inadequate and/or wrong.”²¹

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

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

There are scriptures that reference to the people’s skin being turned dark due to sin or not following God’s will while on the Earth. Cain was the first man to go dark because of murder. A mark of darkness was placed upon man in the event that anyone would come across him.²²

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

And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was set upon their fathers, which was a curse upon them because of their transgression and their rebellion against their brethren, who consisted of Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph, and Sam, who were just and holy men.²³

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

And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity. For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, that they had become like unto a flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them.²⁴

Before 1978, there was certain things taught. One of those teachings was that the dark skinned people were less valiant in the pre-existence. This has been shot down. There were no fence sitters in the pre-existence in the war in heaven. Either you chose Jesus or you chose Lucifer.²⁵

Now you’ll notice I called this an “Eternal Salvation Ban” not simply a “Priesthood Ban” as the church tends to simplify it. No, it’s more than that. It

²¹Deseret News, Race, folklore and Mormon doctrine, Nathan B. Oman, February 29, 2012

²²And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.[Genesis 4:15]

²³Alma 3:6

²⁴2 Nephi 5:21

²⁵Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, for example, wrote in 1907 that the belief was “quite general” among Mormons that “the Negro race has been cursed for taking a neutral position in that great contest.” Yet this belief, he admitted, “is not the official position of the Church, [and is] merely the opinion of men.” Joseph Fielding Smith to Alfred M. Nelson, Jan. 31, 1907, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

was a temple ban. People of color weren't able to be sealed to their loved ones, which is one of the main points of LDS Doctrine. The idea of eternal families.

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

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

WALTERS: Now when President Kimball read this little announcement or paper, was that the same thing that was released to the press?

RICHARDS: Yes.

WALTERS: There wasn't a special document as a "revelation", that he had and wrote down?

RICHARDS: We discussed it in our meeting. What else should we say besides that announcement? And we decided that was sufficient; that no more needed to be said.²⁶

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

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

To Whom It May Concern:

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

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

President Kimball has asked that I now read this letter:

²⁶Interview with Apostle LeGrand Richards, By Wesley P. Walters and Chris Vlachos, 16th August 1978, Church Office Building (Recorded on Cassette)

June 8, 1978

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

Dear Brethren:

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

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

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

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

Sincerely yours,

SPENCER W. KIMBALL

N. ELDON TANNER

MARION G. ROMNEY

The First Presidency

Recognizing Spencer W. Kimball as the prophet, seer, and revelator, and president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is proposed that we as a constituent assembly accept this revelation as the word and will of the Lord. All in favor please signify by raising your right hand. Any opposed by the same sign.

The vote to sustain the foregoing motion was unanimous in the affirmative.

Salt Lake City, Utah, September 30, 1978.²⁷

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

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

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

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

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

2.4 As God now is, man may be

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

As man now is, God once was:

As God now is, man may be.²⁸

This appears to be another thing that has gone under some change? For according to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint's official news page,²⁹ we don't follow that teaching anymore.

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

Do Latter-day Saints believe they can become "gods"?

²⁷Official Declaration 2, Doctrine and Covenants

²⁸In Eliza R. Snow Smith, Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow (1884), 46; see also "The Grand Destiny of Man," Deseret Evening News, July 20, 1901, 22.

²⁹<http://mormonnewsroom.com>

Latter-day Saints believe that God wants us to become like Him. But this teaching is often misrepresented by those who caricature the faith. The Latter-day Saint belief is no different than the biblical teaching, which states, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:16-17). Through following Christ’s teachings, Latter-day Saints believe all people can become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).³⁰

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

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

Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God³¹

Then there’s the scripture in section 132:

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

Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.³²

This is describing those who belong to the Celestial Kingdom. If we are not to become Gods, as is stated in the Mormon Newsroom article, then what is it?

³⁰<https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/mormonism-101>

³¹D&C 76:58

³²D&C 132:19-20

Which source does one believe pertaining to their eternal salvation, given that they “come forth in the resurrection of the just.”³³

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

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

For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing?

And now, if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a god who doth vary, and in whom there is shadow of changing, then have ye imagined up unto yourselves a god who is not a God of miracles.³⁴

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

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

WHAT IS EXALTATION?

Exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life that God lives. He lives in great glory. He is perfect. He possesses all knowledge and all wisdom. He is the father of spirit children. He is a creator. We can become Gods like our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation.

If we prove faithful and obedient to all the commandments of the Lord, we will live in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom of heaven. We will become exalted, just like our Heavenly Father. Exaltation is the highest reward that our Heavenly Father can give his children. The Lord has said that exaltation is the greatest gift of all the gifts of God (see D&C 14:7).[3, pp. 289-290]

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

What is exaltation?

Exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life God lives. He lives in great glory. He is perfect. He possesses all knowledge and all wisdom. He is the Father of spirit children. He is a creator. We can become [...] like our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation.

³³D&C 76:50

³⁴Book of Mormon 9:9

If we prove faithful to the Lord, we will live in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom of heaven. We will become exalted, to live with our Heavenly Father in eternal families. Exaltation is the greatest gift that Heavenly Father can give His children (see D&C 14:7).[4, pp. 275-280]

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

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

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

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

God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by His power, was to make himself visible I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with Him, as one man talks and communes with another.³⁵

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

2.5 My Own Planet

Again from the Mormon Newsroom article:

Do Latter-day Saints believe that they will “get their own planet”?

No. This idea is not taught in Latter-day Saint scripture, nor is it a doctrine of the Church. This misunderstanding stems from

³⁵King Follett Sermon, Joseph Smith Jr.

speculative comments unreflective of scriptural doctrine. Mormons believe that we are all sons and daughters of God and that all of us have the potential to grow during and after this life to become like our Heavenly Father (see Romans 8:16-17). The Church does not and has never purported to fully understand the specifics of Christ's statement that "in my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2).³⁶

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

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

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

What exactly is there to strive for?

When I was younger, I recall thinking to myself:

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

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

But I suppose that's no longer the case.

Now I can see some people saying, "Oh, that's not what the church is saying at all. They just don't want to give out meat before milk." Well, if that's the case? Then the church is simply saying half truths which is in effect a lie. God commanded "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."³⁷ Did he not? You know, the whole lying thing is against God's will.

Wo unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell.³⁸

Naturally when questions about changes or other doctrine comes up that conflict with what we've been taught in the past, or go against better judgment and logic; we are told to have faith. Only believe. God will take care of everything in the end and we don't need to worry about it right here and now. I

³⁶<https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/mormonism-101>

³⁷Exodus 20:16

³⁸2 Nephi 9:34

suppose that's fine for some, but to not have an idea of what's going to happen when we get through with this life? That makes things difficult. If we're just going to be hanging out a celestial waiting room for eternity, yeah I'm not sure how I would handle that.

There's an interesting thought, who's lying exactly? We are told that God can't lie. It's impossible for Him to do so.³⁹

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

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

We are told the wiseman built his house upon rocks, the foolishman built his house upon sand.⁴⁰

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has been compared to a rock.⁴¹ If prophets and apostles are changing the narrative of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then where is the rock upon which we can stand and be sure?

2.6 Baptismal Prayers

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

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

Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.⁴²

Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body; and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world.⁴³

³⁹Hebrews 6:18

⁴⁰Matthew 7:24-27

⁴¹Figuratively, Jesus Christ and His gospel, which are a strong foundation and support (D&C 11:24; 33:1213). Rock can also refer to revelation, by which God makes His gospel known to man (Matt. 16:1518). [<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/gs/rock?lang=eng>]

⁴²3 Nephi 11:25

⁴³Mosiah 18:13

Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.⁴⁴

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

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.⁴⁵

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

There is record in Matthew that people are to go to all the world, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"⁴⁶

There is talk about rising up out of the water as it were,⁴⁷ and that we are buried in baptism;⁴⁸ which would seem to indicate the method by which baptism is accomplished.

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

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

2.7 A Search For Truth

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

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

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

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

Gone are the days when a student asked an honest question and a teacher responded, "Don't worry about it!" Gone are the days

⁴⁴D&C 20:73

⁴⁵Acts 2:38

⁴⁶Matthew 28:19

⁴⁷Acts 8:36-39

⁴⁸Romans 6:4

when a student raised a sincere concern and a teacher bore his or her testimony as a response intended to avoid the issue. Gone are the days when students were protected from people who attacked the Church. Fortunately, the Lord provided this timely and timeless counsel to you teachers: “And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:118)⁴⁹

There is that famous quote by J. Reuben Clark:

If we have truth, [it] cannot be harmed by investigation. If we have not truth, it ought to be harmed.^[5]

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

Then there are the words of James E. Talmage:

The man who cannot listen to an argument which opposes his views either has a weak position or is a weak defender of it. No opinion that cannot stand discussion or criticism is worth holding. And it has been wisely said that the man who knows only half of any question is worse off than the man who knows nothing of it. He is not only one sided, but his partisanship soon turns him into an intolerant and a fanatic. In general it is true that nothing which cannot stand up under discussion and criticism is worth defending.⁵⁰

George Albert Smith spoke on this very topic:

If a faith will not bear to be investigated; if its preachers and professors are afraid to have it examined, their foundation must be very weak.⁵¹

Then M. Russell Ballard said the following counter claim:

We don't have to question anything in the church, don't get off into that. Just stay in the Book of Mormon. Just stay in the Doctrine and Covenants. Just listen to the prophets. Just listen to the apostles. We won't lead you astray, we cannot lead you astray.⁵²

⁴⁹The Opportunities and Responsibilities of CES Teachers in the 21st Century, Elder M. Russel Ballard, 2016

⁵⁰Editorial quoted in James E. Talmage, “Christianity Falsely So-Called,” Improvement Era, Jan. 1920, 204.

⁵¹George Albert Smith, Journal Of Discourses, v 14, page 216

⁵²YSA Devotional, M. Russell Ballard, 2015

The church has released a handful of what they call Gospel Topic Essays.⁵³ They are to shed light on some of the history of the church that may or may not have been widely known. This is a step in the right direction, however...it still feels like the church is changing the narrative. Their history stated to the believers has not always been the same. It has changed over time.

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

Someday in the future I'm sure I will. There's no reason not to. If we are to learn from the best books as it were, then the truth in those essays shouldn't be scary. They should be welcomed with open arms. Is that possible in this day and age of the internet? We have at our fingertips the ability to quickly search for anything and everything. It could be considered dangerous.

I suppose, one needs to ask what is truth? If the truth can set you free,⁵⁴ then where exactly does the truth lay? Why is it so difficult to find the truth at times? If the truth has been from the beginning of the world, from before the beginning of the world, then it should be as consistent as possible. It should be the same yesterday, today, tomorrow. All truth should be the same and change shouldn't be a term in that narrative.

Yet the search for truth must go on.

2.8 Revelation

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

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

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

Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil.⁵⁵

This is in regards to the failure of the church to sell the copyright in Canada. (See Appendix C: An Address to All Believers in Christ)

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

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

⁵³<https://www.lds.org/topics/essays?lang=eng>

⁵⁴John 8:32

⁵⁵David Whitmer, An Address to All Believers in Christ, in EMD 5: 198.

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

Makes things rather complicated right?

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

So what are they exactly?

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

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

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

2.9 Temple Changes

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

2.9.1 Oath to Avenge Joseph Smith

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

2.9.2 Adam God Doctrine

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

Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his

wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is MICHAEL, the Archangel, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken. He is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom WE have to do. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later!⁵⁶

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

2.9.3 Penalties

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

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

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

And Satan said unto Cain: Swear unto me by thy throat, and if thou tell it thou shalt die; and swear thy brethren by their heads, and by the living God, that they tell it not; for if they tell it, they shall surely die; and this that thy father may not know it; and this day I will deliver thy brother Abel into thine hands.⁵⁷

Was it a type of secret combination? We're told to avoid such things. It should be interesting to note the following quote:

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, 'Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed.'⁵⁸

⁵⁶Prophet Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, v. 1, p. 51

⁵⁷Moses 5:29

⁵⁸Ensign Magazine, August 2002, p 22

2.9.4 Other Changes

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

2.9.5 Thou Shalt Not

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

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.⁵⁹

Eve was not found on the Earth at that time.

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

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

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

Genesis 2:15 - 22

Moses 3:15 - 22

Abraham 5: 11 - 16

⁵⁹Genesis 2:17

.1 Appendix A: Lilith

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

I include it here for a twofold purpose.

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

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

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

The pre existence had already been created.

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

Chapter 10: Adam's Helpmeets

(a) Having decided to give Adam a helpmeet lest he should be alone of his kind, God put him into a deep sleep, removed one of his ribs, formed it into a woman, and closed up the wound, Adam awoke and said: 'This being shall be named "Woman", because she has been taken out o f man. A man and a woman shall be one flesh.' The title he gave her was Eve, 'the Mother of All Living'.⁶⁰

(b) Some say that God created man and woman in His own image on the Sixth Day, giving them charge over the world;⁶¹ but that Eve did not yet exist. Now, God had set Adam to name every beast, bird and other living thing. When they passed before him in pairs, male and female, Adam-being already like a twenty-year-old man-felt jealous of their loves, and though he tried coupling with each female in turn, found no satisfaction in the act. He therefore cried: 'Every creature but I has a proper matel', and prayed God would remedy this injustice.⁶²

(c) God then formed Lilith, the first woman, just as He had formed Adam, except that He used filth and sediment instead of pure dust. From Adam's union with this demoness, and with another like her named Naamah, Tubal Cain's sister, sprang Asmodeus and innumerable demons that still plague mankind. Many generations later, Lilith and Naamah came to Solomon's judgement seat, disguised as harlots of Jerusalem'.⁶³

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

⁶⁰Genesis II. 18-25; III. 20.

⁶¹Genesis I. 26-28.

⁶²Gen. Rab. 17.4; B. Yebamot 632.

⁶³Yalqut Reubeni ad. Gen. II. 21; IV. 8.

Adam complained to God: 'I have been deserted by my helpmeet' God at once sent the angels Senoy, Sansenoy and Semangelof to fetch Lilith back. They found her beside the Red Sea, a region abounding in lascivious demons, to whom she bore lilim at the rate of more than one hundred a day. 'Return to Adam without delay,' the angels said, 'or we will drown you!' Lilith asked: 'How can I return to Adam and live like an honest housewife, after my stay beside the Red Sea?? 'It will be death to refuse!' they answered. 'How can I die,' Lilith asked again, 'when God has ordered me to take charge of all newborn children: boys up to the eighth day of life, that of circumcision; girls up to the twentieth day. None the less, if ever I see your three names or likenesses displayed in an amulet above a newborn child, I promise to spare it.' To this they agreed; but God punished Lilith by making one hundred of her demon children perish daily;⁶⁴ and if she could not destroy a human infant, because of the angelic amulet, she would spitefully turn against her own.⁶⁵

(e) Some say that Lilith ruled as queen in Zmargad, and again in Sheba; and was the demoness who destroyed job's sons.⁶⁶ Yet she escaped the curse of death which overtook Adam, since they had parted long before the Fall. Lilith and Naamah not only strangle infants but also seduce dreaming men, any one of whom, sleeping alone, may become their victim.⁶⁷

(f) Undismayed by His failure to give Adam a suitable helpmeet, God tried again, and let him watch while he built up a woman's anatomy: using bones, tissues, muscles, blood and glandular secretions, then covering the whole with skin and adding tufts of hair in places. The sight caused Adam such disgust that even when this woman, the First Eve, stood there in her full beauty, he felt an invincible repugnance. God knew that He had failed once more, and took the First Eve away. Where she went, nobody knows for certain.⁶⁸

(g) God tried a third time, and acted more circumspectly. Having taken a rib from Adam's side in his sleep, He formed it into a woman; then plaited her hair and adorned her, like a bride, with twenty-four pieces of jewellery, before waking him. Adam was entranced.⁶⁹

(h) Some say that God created Eve not from Adam's rib, but from a tail ending in a sting which had been part of his body. God cut this off, and the stump-now a useless coccyx-is still carried by Adam's descendants.⁷⁰

(i) Others say that God's original thought had been to create two human beings, male and female; but instead He designed a single one with a male face looking forward, and a female face looking back. Again He changed His mind, removed Adam's backward-looking face, and built a woman's body for it.⁷¹

(j) Still others hold that Adam was originally created as an androgyne of male and female bodies joined back to back. Since this posture made locomotion

⁶⁴Alpha Beta diBen Sira, 47; Gaster, MGWJ, 29 (1880), 553 ff.

⁶⁵Num. Rab. 16.25.

⁶⁶Targum ad job 1. 15.

⁶⁷B. Shabbat 151b; Ginzberg, LJ, V. 147-48.

⁶⁸Gen. Rab. 158, 163-64; Mid. Abkir 133, 135; Abot diR. Nathan 24; B. Sanhedrin 39a.

⁶⁹Gen. II. 21-22; Gen. Rab. 161.

⁷⁰Gen. Rab. 134; B. Erubin 18a.

⁷¹B. Erubin 18a.

difficult, and conversation awkward, God divided the androgyne and gave each half a new rear. These separate beings He placed in Eden, forbidding them to couple.⁷²

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

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

.2 Appendix B: J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years

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

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

⁷²Gen. Rab. 55; Lev. Rab. 14.1; Abot diR. Nathan 1.8; B. Berakhot 61a; B. Erubin 18a; Tanhuma Tazri’a 1; Yalchut Gen. 20; Tanh. Buber iii.33; Mid. Tehillim 139, 529.

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

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

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

[5]

.3 Appendix C: An Address to All Believers in Christ

Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the stone, and received a revelation that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and that they would sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon. Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery went to Toronto on this mission, but they failed entirely to sell the copyright, returning

without any money. Joseph was at my father's house when they returned. I was there also, and am an eye witness to these facts. Jacob Whitmer and John Whitmer were also present when Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery returned from Canada. Well, we were all in great trouble; and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copyright, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: 'Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of men: and some revelations are of the devil.' So we see that the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copyright was not of God, but was of the devil or of the heart of man.

[7]

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