



Innermost Freethought

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Foreword

Temet Nosce¹

Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.²

The unexamined life is not worth living.³

The hardest thing to explain is the glaringly evident which everybody has decided not to see.⁴

When the dust settles and the pages of history are written, it will not be the angry defenders of intolerance who have made the difference. The reward will go to those who dared to step outside the safety of their privacy in order to expose and rout the prevailing prejudices.⁵

There I lay, unable to sleep. Disorganized thoughts raced through my head. It happened often. I thought that I should organize the jumble. I got out of bed and started writing. I thought I would only write a few paragraphs. To my surprise, I filled page after page. I had no idea that I had curbed so much. I discovered what I genuinely believe. I uncovered truths that I had been unable to see. With each assertion, I took another step towards self-actualization.⁶ I began to alter my subscription to many concepts.

Socrates once built a house, and everybody who saw it had something or other to say against it.

“What a front!” said one.

“What an inside!” said another.

“What rooms! not big enough to turn round in, said a third.”

“Small as it is,” answered Socrates, “I wish I had true friends enough to fill it.”⁷

For most of my life, I have felt like I have seldom had real friends. That may sound pathetic, but it is my experience. No one in my family is so faithful to me that I can completely confide in them without the risk

¹Know Thyself. Original source unknown; Bias of Priene, Chilon of Sparta, Cleobulus of Lindus, Heraclitus, Luxor, Myson of Chenae, Periander, Pittacus of Mytilene, Socrates, Solon of Athens, Thales of Miletus, et al.

²Oscar Wilde

³Socrates, Plato's Apology

⁴Ayn Rand, The Fountainhead

⁵John Shelby Spong

⁶<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-actualization>

⁷Aesop's Fables, *Socrates and his Friends*

of becoming a subject of gossip. I feel like no one is interested in sincerely listening. I suspect that no one I know will read everything I have to say. Writing has allowed a release that a true friend could have provided.

Our religious culture does not allow unfettered thought exploration without risking family relationships. They consider it to be a rebellion and a betrayal to the exaltation of their eternal family. To them, critical thought is anger. It is not anger to me. It is hard to be genuine when no one can converse openly without fear of resentment. For me, it is not a real friendship when the only acceptable subjects for conversation should be superficial.

I wish I could preempt stereotyped accusations that may come in response to a change in my beliefs or behavior. I offer what I have to say to anyone who is interested. I do it in the spirit of vulnerability and sincerity. This represents a long, difficult thought journey. Continuing to read requires mutual respect, the benefit of the doubt, and unconditional love. Please dispense with preconceptions.

I fear that I usually fail at spoken communication. I hope that what I write can do a better job of exposing my thoughts than a quick summary could. I would like to avoid second-guessing what I might have said on-the-fly for the rest of my life. In spoken conversation, a single, short answer is usually sought for each question. My questions cannot quickly respond to the bias that comes from decades of inculcation.

I am only a humble seeker of truth. This work primarily serves to organize my thoughts. To share my thoughts is secondary. I doubt that sharing will open any eyes. Because of human nature, I predict that those who already empathize will care to read on, but those who cannot sympathize will apathetically disregard everything I have to say.

I share because of my own commitment to integrity, honesty, morality.⁸ Sharing innermost thoughts is an unfavorable thing to do. It takes great courage to stand up against the crowd. I have discovered that conformity is the *easy, wide and broad way*. *Few there be*⁹ who are valiant enough to seek for truth beyond that which was spoon-fed to them by their native social group.

I do not want to let my life expire without having said something about my personal experience of

⁸i.e. ethics. As the dictionary defines morality, not as the church defines it.

⁹Matthew 7:13-14

reality, even if it may oppose the prevailing beliefs of my family and culture. I do not express independent thought because I am too weak to abide by the strict tenets of my inculcated religion, nor because I want to take the easy way. Practicing intellectual honesty is difficult. My observations come from of prayerful and intense study of the scriptures paired with honest introspection about what I have personally observed both in the world around me and deep within me.

It is not my intent to hurt or offend anyone. If your faith is threatened by anything I say or anyone else says, then you may need to contemplate what you truly believe. If you are only open to ideas that come from sources condoned by an authority, then your faith¹⁰ may be frail. If you fear losing it by encountering new information, then what you think is faith may not actually be faith.

This is not a call for help, nor is it an invitation for an argument. I will probably back away from any disputatious replies in silent disagreement. Your answers may fit your own repertoire of questions, but they may not answer mine. I remember my mother declaring, "that's just how it is." That was often the reasoning for her answers to my honest questions. I remember wondering why that rationale made me queasy inside.

Despite my best efforts, I cannot assert that my answers are ultimate. My perspective will ever continue to advance in my search for the truth because I will ever find new questions that expand my understanding. Answers can change, but questions do not. Everything I say here is uncertain. Uncertainty is not a bad thing, it is good. It qualifies my faith as belief. It keeps me open-minded. It is my right to live who I am in the moment, to actively let go of folly in my past, and try to avoid any worry for the future.

If you have new thoughts which enlighten, please share. I am eager to adjust my misconceptions to any new-found truth. If you provide a cliché correlated Sunday School eisegeses of the scriptures, you will not help. Please resist the temptation to tell me that I should read the scriptures and pray. It is prayerful, in-depth study of the scriptures which has made me arrive at most of the ideas that I present here. You may be surprised that most of my thoughts do not contradict the teachings of Jesus.



I use the word *innermost* in the title because these thoughts have ever been deep in my subconscious.

¹⁰i.e. testimony

They were so gentle and still, I was not consciously aware of them. It took a long time for them to blossom. As I look back, I can perceive that they were timeless. They were there all along, gently elevating my consciousness.

Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakens.¹¹

People awaken when they stop agreeing to things that offend their soul.¹²

I have not been dishonest. I have always been faithful to my conscience. We should grant consideration to inspiring thoughts that come spontaneously into the mind. When these thoughts did surface into consciousness, suppression was my reflex. As I have tried to say, it took the painstaking process of writing to become aware that they were there. Then I feared to share them with anyone. It did not help that throughout my life, I have been taught:

- That conformity should be lauded and dissent condemned.
- That doubts are the enemy to faith.
- That intellectualism is not reliable.¹³ In many cases it is sin, especially when it is applied to the teachings of the prophets.¹⁴
- That since the expression of critical thought may challenge belief, it should be taken as anger and contention, and that contention is of the devil.¹⁵
- That it is a virtue to control, subjugate, and suppress undesirable thoughts,¹⁶ including any glimmer of opposing inspiration, because of the danger of being wise in my own conceits¹⁷ and because obedience to priesthood authority is more important than heeding my innate moral compass.
- To be honest in my dealings with my fellowmen, but to suppress honesty with myself when my own faculties of reason might contradict conformity.

¹¹Carl Jung

¹²Unknown

¹³2 Nephi 9:28

¹⁴Boyd K. Packer, *The Mantle Is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect*

¹⁵3 Nephi 11:29

¹⁶A hallmark of Boyd K. Packer, *Doctrine and Covenants 121:45*

¹⁷Romans 11:25, 12:16; Proverbs 26:5,12,16

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- To avoid both the appearance of evil¹⁸ and fallibility, which implies the inverse, to indulge in a pharisaical façade of virtue and perfection.¹⁹
 - To take pride in having been born into the Church, its sectarian elitism, and to be a Saturday's Warrior in its defense.
 - To feel blessed to have revealed truth, an unquestionable dogma that is validated by authority: the men who have been authorized by God himself to speak for him.
 - To be true to the faith that my parents cherished and for which martyrs perished,²⁰ regardless of any skeletons in the closet,²¹ elephants in the room,²² and regardless of how foolish the traditions of my fathers²³ might appear to any authentic people who live outside of the bubble.

I find myself reaching higher for real intellectual virtue. I want to have the courage to be vulnerable. It should be enough to be myself, unbound from the need to seek labels to define who I am. I yearn to openly think critically and to pursue truth without bias. I want to do my best to be empathetic, sincere, open-minded, humble, independent, curious, courageous, and imaginative; to have integrity, confidence in reason, love and perseverance for truth. I need to be true to what I sincerely believe. I long to value intellectual honesty above all.

¹⁸1 Thessalonians 5:22

¹⁹This seems to be characteristic of the pharisees

²⁰Hymn 254 True to the Faith

²¹[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skeleton_in_the_closet_\(idiom\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skeleton_in_the_closet_(idiom))

²²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephant_in_the_room

²³1 Peter 1:18

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Introduction

I am in the fourth generation of my father's family to be born in the covenant.²⁴ I was promptly baptized at age eight as a member of the church²⁵ to devout parents who lived in a Mexican Mormon colony named Colonia Dublán. Dublán is a small town where English-speaking people of European descent live, some for many generations since their ancestors arrived in the latter part of the 19th century.

As I grew up, most of my friends and neighbors spoke English as a first language. All were active members of the church. Those outside of the church were usually Hispanic, though there were many Hispanic members, too. I learned Spanish in school. Speaking Spanish as a second language kept me from associating with Spanish speakers on a deeper level. My peers who had outgoing personalities would associate with them more than I did.

In that little town, church membership was ubiquitous for those of my ethnicity. Church meetings and activities united the community as if all of us were part of a larger family. I remember issues of the small town being discussed in town-hall style during priesthood meeting. The possibility of life without the involvement of the church never crossed my mind. The church was such an integral part of everyone's life.

My parents taught me to do what is right, to value truth above all, and to use it as best I could to seek wisdom for my decisions. For most of my life, activity in the church and strict obedience to its commandments was the only way I knew how to fulfill that quest. I was taught that our prophets and scriptures were the exclusive sources of light from God; that they are the origin of all virtue in the world. Since the church was the only source of ultimate truth I had ever known, I had no inclination to believe that any good could emerge outside of it.

I remember getting up in Sacrament Meeting to share my testimony as a child. I did as I was taught. I was supposed to declare the truths I learned from countless lessons. Saying "I know" made perfect sense at the time. The knowledge was not based on anything empirical. It was much later that I realized the real purpose of what a testimony should be. It means an entirely different thing in a court of law, whose only purpose is the search for unbiased truth. A testimony should be that of a witness, not

a declaration of a belief. To say "I know" has never been appropriate for anyone who only holds a belief based on anecdotes and hearsay.

As I look back on my view of reality in those years, I confess that I had a level of prejudice that now gives me a sense of disgust. There were others who weren't members of the church where I lived, but I didn't associate with them much in my early life because they spoke a different language and because they were of a differing race, religion, and culture. As I grew up and started learning Spanish as a second language and as they began to learn mine, that awkwardness that existed early on because of our cultural differences diminished but never seemed to go away completely. I do not feel like I was racist because I viewed those Mexicans who were members of the church as somehow being part of my culture; we had beliefs in common regardless of their heritage or ethnicity.

On the other hand, racism is to race as bigotry is to religion. I had great difficulty relating to those who were not members. I could not understand how they could live at all, without the meaning that the church brought to my life. I knew little of their life, nor was I familiar with the teachings of their church, nor had I any clue of their time-honored cultural history. I had something that they should need. It was my duty to convert them away from their false traditions to the truth. If not, they could never find pure joy. Countless lessons that I should be a missionary helped to drive that constant feeling of responsibility. Sometimes a thought crept into my mind that Mormonism might not be something that they missed. It was confusing that they already seemed to be happy without it. I had to shrug off the idea that Mormonism might be an extra burden because they appeared to be unencumbered.

It was an unusual occurrence whenever any people of my ethnicity but different religion would come to town. I remember that one such family did move in, and I often found myself wondering why they would not attend church when they were so much like my family. I suppose that I was not the only child who thought about that. Families such as these rarely stayed in town long. Now, as I look back at the situation, I do not blame them. They probably felt like social outcasts despite the many pretentious acts to befriend them by those who had the ulterior to get them to join the tribe. Never mind how well-meaning those in the community may have been.

I think that many people would agree that as Latter-Day Saints, we feel awkward around people who are not exactly like us. I think this might have to do

²⁴On my father's side. My mother was a convert.

²⁵Unless I specify otherwise, when I do not qualify "the church," or "my church," I refer to the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

with our us-versus-them mentality. The doctrines of the church do not directly teach, but they do imply, that everyone outside the church is a second-class person. Even the endowed take pride in their status as they look down on those who are not as advanced as they are. Whether it is openly admitted or not, it is understood that anyone who is found lacking any rites, rituals, and ordinances, or who is otherwise unworthy of Eternal Life in any way, is inferior to the righteous elite.

I dutifully served a mission because it is a commandment. I wanted to do what I thought is right. I needed to celestially legitimize as many of God's children as I could. I sought with all my "heart, might, mind, and strength" to do all that I could. I had to "stand blameless before God at the last day."²⁶ This was incessantly drummed into every neuron in my head. Daily, hourly, every second, in the name of obedience.

Every day was so extremely tiring for me because social interactions drain away all of my energy. I have a highly introverted personality. I consciously fought the current of the river, treading up-stream in a constant battle against my quiet nature. Even rest was not rest, because for someone who naturally finds peace in solitude, losing the ability to be alone is ever stressful.

I have heard many people say that their mission was the best two years of their life. Good for them. I am not going to lie to meet their precedent: mine was one of the most punishing times of my life. Everything about it stood against my nature. It did have its ups and downs though. When people did heed our message, we felt satisfied that the difficult work and sacrifice had paid off. Eating, living, and breathing the repetitive lessons cemented the idea of one true gospel, one true church, one true priesthood, and the requirement for everyone to become a member of the one true restored church. I believed it with all of my heart. After all, it had to be right, or I was wasting my time. I genuinely thought I was doing the right thing.

I remember experiencing a vivid dream while asleep on my mission. I dreamed that Jesus had come to spend the night with me and talk to me about anything I wanted. I asked him question after question to which he gave the most concise and perfectly truthful, forthright and direct answers. I do not remember what I asked, nor what he responded. I do remember that his clothes were plain and homely. My mother would call him a slouch if she saw the

²⁶Doctrine and Covenants 4:2

relaxed way he sat. I remember how I felt. He was more honest, friendly and genuinely kind than anyone I had ever known in my life. I did not get the impression that he was anything like a king, a lord, or a monarch. He was quite the opposite. He was modest, meek, quiet, and unassuming. He did not place himself or his faculties above me in any way, nor did he pull rank to command. Instead, it felt like he humbly put his own importance below me. He seemed sincere in helping me as best he could. I felt like he was my most profound and most faithful friend, and that he ever would be. As I woke up, that scene gradually slipped away from my mind. I realized that I was lying in my uncomfortable cot in that same unfamiliar shack. I mused to myself about what I had dreamed. It was vivid, but I was unsure whether it was real or whether it was only a dream.

That dream affected me in ways that nothing else could. It was the inception of independent thought. It was a turning point for me even though it was only a dream. It seemed as though I had new, personal insight into who Jesus could be.

After that dream, I had a different perspective on the doctrine of the Atonement. I felt uneasy every time I would teach that his purpose was to be a sacrifice for sin payment. I squirmed when I had to explain that he is our lord and king who submitted unquestioningly and that we must emulate him. I was unsure that the requirement to covenant for strict obedience all of his commands was his teaching. The uneasiness with what I was charged to teach was only a feeling. These ideas did not carry too much weight in my mind because it was just a dream. I would push it aside and continue robotically with my memorized discussion.

I felt as though I was teaching a lie. It was as if, deep down inside, I knew better from my talk with Jesus, even if it was just a dream. It was as if Jesus had answered a question that had been on the top of my mind, and then went beyond to provide answers to many more. Even though I couldn't remember the words or the details, I do remember that he did have better answers.

The dream continued to nag at me unconsciously. The titles of The Lord or The Lamb of God seemed wrong. He did not act like a Lord from my experience. A brutal dictator would be the complete opposite of who he was. He did not act like his purpose in mortality was to be slaughtered by his own father for the rest of his children to learn that they can gain mercy.

Soon after my mission, maybe too soon, I found someone who I admired, who miraculously liked me

back, and who had the same eternal goals. We were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple. I was fulfilling my only view of righteousness. I had met all of the ordinances I needed. There was no other obligatory ordinance to look forward to that I knew of. I could only foresee the age-scheduled ones for my children. It was time to endure to the end.

Over the years of married life, my mind never ceased to ponder. I could not help it. It is an attribute of my personality to continually work on my mind's model of reality to understand reality. I find myself naturally reflecting on my knowledge, double checking things, analyzing ideas, and making sure things work. My belief systems only mostly worked, except for the thoughts that are off-limits or even crimes.

I was taught that we have a fullness of the gospel. We already have all that we need. It is unwise to speculate beyond what we have. Obedience is all that is needed now. Quiet your mind. Submit to authority like a little child.

I had ideas come to my mind that often pushed the limits or level of what we were told had been revealed. It may well have been the spirit of truth, the comforter, that Jesus left with me in that unforgettable night long ago. He continued to entice my thoughts to the barriers. He constantly aroused my curiosity that there has to be more. He showed that his reach goes beyond the border.



I had many sincere questions about the Atonement for a long time. The need for sacrifice by the shedding of blood to pay the price for sin never made sense to me, especially after having that dream. I have writings in my mission journal that debate my sincere belief in the unconditional love of God versus the conditional love that is apparent in the doctrines of the church. I wrangled with the ideas of the supremacy of God versus his apparent subjection to some kind of ethereal law of vengeance. It did not make sense to me that God, who should be the singular entity who through love created all that is, including all of the laws and order of the universe, would require any innocent blood to pay for anything. If God is the righteous, loving father that I think he is, I could not come to grips with him doing something so unjust and irrational as to require an innocent person to suffer the penalty for a criminal.

If I concede that Jesus should be voluntarily tortured and executed as a wrongfully convicted felon, he was supposed to have performed an *infinite atonement*. He suffered for only a short time, died, and has

finished. If *the wages of sin is death*,²⁷ then Jesus could not have paid the price because he lives. Not only does he have eternal life, but he also enjoys the status of a god. Hours of suffering, no matter how intense, could never pay the price for the endless agony of an infinite number of beings.

If we are supposed to be punished for eternity for our temporal misdeeds, then his temporal punishment should not count. No temporary work could deliver on a contract that is infinite in both quality and quantity. If he only suffered for a few hours for an unlimited number of beings, I think I could tolerate the microsecond of pain for my shortcomings. That might be too long.

We are all descendants of God, just like him. Our spirits are as eternal as his. We all die, and so did he. If his temporal death counted for eternity, then so should ours. If death pays the price for sin, then everyone's death should pay their own dues. Brigham Young's Blood Atonement doctrine seems to coincide. Correlation has since condemned it. The revelation of a dead prophet has been recanted. A precedence has been set. It is sad that principles that have been taught as the Gospel by previous prophets can now be shamelessly abolished by their successors.

To die on the cross at the hands of ignorant men should never have been the decree of a god of freedom of choice. It is preposterous that the soldiers who killed Jesus were instruments of God in fulfilling his purposes. It is just as silly that God should induce the Jewish officials to conspire to bring about the execution of Jesus. For these reasons, the doctrine has moved the atonement to Gethsemane, where Jesus uttered a nervous prayer as he faced the end of his mortal life. The problem still remains. His death was still the impetus. A temporal event is supposed to count for an infinite payment for sin. How the prayer can qualify for that is an enigma.

Jesus paid a ransom, but to whom? It is absurd that it should to a fallen angel that holds everyone hostage. The payment to release the prisoner should not possibly have gone to God. Infinity cannot perceive any blip of temporal debt. Time is intrinsically limited. Everything that happens in time, no matter how large the quantity, still has a beginning and an end. An infinite being who has unlimited resources would not quibble about any finite payment. A few pennies or a solid-gold planet are nothing to the proprietor of the entirety of infinite space and time.

The incongruities scourged my mind. I tried to find ideas that could make the Atonement work. Maybe

²⁷Romans 6:23

the infinite part of the Atonement is to endure the full omniscience of our sins forever. That knowledge would cause anguish that would never go away. It would save the Father from that torture. That idea proved to be feeble. I abandoned it after I was bluntly and harshly scolded by a stake priesthood authority that it was wrong. He afterward rattled off a memorized banality that he learned in a Primary song. He seemed to resent that I would dare to think for myself when we are supposed to already have all of the answers.

I noticed that whenever anyone arrives at an impasse in understanding the Atonement, they thought-stop the idea. They disregard the inconsistencies. "The Atonement is incomprehensible!" "Our mortal minds are incapable of comprehending God's mysterious ways!" These platitudes declare that the Atonement can only make sense if you do not think about it. I cannot accept that answer. God gave me an intellect that can reason, but then I am supposed to concede that he denies my use of it because my way to salvation is impossible to understand. I am required to do something that goes against my conscience. I am supposed to accept something that I cannot understand, on the premise that resolution will come in the next life. If I rely on those ideas, then I bury my talent in the ground, and I have failed to fulfill the purpose of my creation. If I am to believe in anything, I need to understand it. If no one can understand the Atonement, then it is superstition in the enigmatic instead.

Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blind-folded fear.²⁸



I had many questions about the consistency of my existence that the scriptures do not answer. The mystical concepts of spirit and body were not enough. There seems to be so much more to my composition. My inner universe seemed too immense to be summed up with a simple word like "spirit," as much as "heaven" glosses over the cosmos outside.

A quaternary radix describes all physical life. It is a vast molecule called deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA. It is as if it were a base-four programming language, but most of it is not logic. It is a blueprint that tiny

²⁸Thomas Jefferson

machines use to bootstrap themselves into different protein subassemblies. The proteins unite to create the machinery of cellular life. The cells work together to create a living being on a macro scale. What emerges from the union of trillions of cells is greater than the sum of its parts.

Each cell contains a copy of the entire program of life. Human DNA contains about 3 billion base pairs. Each pair can have one of four molecules: adenine, cytosine, guanine, and thymine. The other side of the pair contains the same information because it is a mirror copy.

To understand how much information is stored in the genome, we can compare it to the data storage in semiconductor computing systems. The conversion of base-four to binary doubles the number of numbers required, because two binary numbers can store four values. Since a byte contains eight bits, the human genome is about 750 megabytes in size. Ordinary computers today can easily store all of the data contained in the human genome. Needless to say, computers cannot use the foreign DNA language for their programming.

In Dynamic Random Access Memory, a transistor and capacitor combine to hold one bit, on or off. It is not uncommon for common computers today to address sixteen gigabytes of volatile memory. That requires at least 128 billion transistors.

Twenty billion transistors constitute today's conventional microprocessor. It has a bare minimum amount of memory within itself to keep track of a few basic logic operations at a time. It requires the other hundreds of billions of transistors for auxiliary memory to accomplish its purpose.

A mature human brain is a network of about 100 billion neurons. Many people presume that self-consciousness emerges from the cobweb of interconnections between those neurons. To me, consciousness seems to go beyond the capacity of a network of billions of neurons just as it easily surpasses billions of transistors.

Science has discovered detailed knowledge of the mechanics of physical life but seems to show a lack of appreciation for the depth of consciousness. Words have not yet been invented to describe the profundity of "I am." Volition, comprehension, and emotion are mysteries. The soul is a name that only represents the unsolved riddle of consciousness. The mind itself seems to fill a dimensional void. The extents of personhood cannot yet be defined. Self-consciousness has unknown bounds. Emotion may seem to be mechanistic, but an android that can du-

plicate it remains fiction. The self can marvel at the beauty around it. It can love, despair, fear, and scorn.

There is no self without memory. My mother suffered from memory loss for many years. It has to be physical if brain damage can cause someone to lose their identity. The self can fade away even in life. To reconstruct it would require an intricate scaffolding to support it. It would have to be backed up in some other dimension. It surely is not redundant here.

The storage of information is relatively simple compared to the intellect that employs it. I know that I am looking through my eyes. When I contemplate my perception of my existence, to think of its end is like imagining an end to space and time. It is difficult to admit that the composition of my consciousness is only electrochemical.

The immortality of self is not only a dream. There must be an eternal core, but what is it? Words like "soul" and "spirit" do not describe it. Those are magical terms. Both gloss over an immensity with no appreciation for knowledge that humankind does not yet comprehend. There are energies of consciousness that seem to bind, combine, and intertwine into me. They have no name.

Joseph Smith said that spirit is fine matter.²⁹ Spirit matter is supposedly godly, pure, incorruptible, perfect and not subject to entropy. The concept of fine matter does nothing to advance the understanding of consciousness. Fine fabric is still cloth. It is difficult to foresee a mind emerging from an automaton just because it was built using a fine material. The ultimacy of selfhood seems to transcend matter.



"There has to be more!"

This was a daily thought as I'd wake up every morning. I was so tired of the watered down lessons at church. Practically every lesson had the same answer: read the scriptures, pray, go to church. Sometimes the answers were a bit different, but the punchline was always an emphasis on behavior. Every lesson cherry-picked scriptures that support that end. I would sometimes read the context of the scripture during the lesson as part of my boredom. The context often contradicted what was being taught. Sometimes the inconsistency was even found in the verses tangent to the emphasized verse, just before or after. The chapter summaries did not match the text. I could rarely remember lessons because they were all the same. The eisegesis exercise eventually

started putting me off. Sometimes the thought came that it might all be a joke.

My ancestors joined the church because of its theology. Some primarily value their church membership for community and culture. People seem to forget that fraternity is not faith in God. Though every lesson teaches it, faith is not strict obedience. The theology has become a constant humdrum that aims to control. It promises faith in exchange for obedience. It teaches that there is no other way to gain faith. I finally realized that the church has never helped my faith in God. It was a drudgery. I discovered that the doctrinal emphasis on strict obedience contradicts the teachings of Jesus himself. That is the doctrine of his enemies. I was startled when I came to that realization.

Aside from the questions about the Atonement and being, I had many more superficial questions about inconsistencies of the gospel and the scriptures. We believe the Bible and Book of Mormon to be the word of God³⁰ when God himself hadn't dictated much of it at all. There are so many inconsistencies and even major corrections in the Book of Mormon even though it was said to be the most correct book on earth³¹ before the corrections were made. Some of those changes were in core teachings, not just grammar. Even with the changes that have been made, the theology of the Book of Mormon still does not match the practiced restored Gospel.

The cognitive dissonance I experienced grew daily between what I knew is true and what I had been taught is true. I was inspired with new thoughts every day which enabled me to look at things differently and resolve certain issues. I usually disregarded them because they were contrary with what I was supposed to believe.

Our doctrine boasts that we have living prophets, but they do not prophesy or clarify, they continue the same game of relying on omens. They tell us to trudge through thousands of years of myth and human frailty in scriptures to find the plain, precious truths. Modern prophets are supposed to prophesy, but they do not. They are also supposed to help clear out the misconceptions and human error of the past, but they seem to make it worse. We have to trudge through hundreds of pages of purposefully incoherent poetry and extravagant metaphor in search for real answers. Then, modern scripture translation pretentiously tries to mimic the confusing sixteenth century Elizabethan English even though it was translated by someone who could not speak it.

²⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 131:7

³⁰ Articles of Faith 8

³¹ Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 4:461

The existence of bad Shakespearean grammar does not increase credibility. Instead, it demonstrates pretentiousness on the part of the one who came up with the words. Is it so wrong to have simple, official, unadulterated, straight, frank answers from God?

Omen? omen? – the dictionary! If the gods think to speak outright to man, they will honourably speak outright; not shake their heads, and give an old wives’ darkling hint. – Begone!³²

The modern prophets rarely speak plainly. They resort to subterfuge, speak in poems, pretentiously obfuscate their meaning, command us to obey, tell us it is too sacred to discuss, or inform us it cannot be understood by our simple mortal mind. What have they got to lose by speaking the simple truth?

Whenever such thoughts would come, a response would come in a short, wordless thought in my mind: “If you seek, you will find.”³³ To sincerely seek, with the intent to find, would make me arrive an impasse caused by another dichotomy of inculcated ideologies which I could not reconcile in my mind. It was either one or the other, much like Neo faced in the movie *The Matrix* as Morpheus said to him:

This is your last chance. After this, there is no turning back. You take the blue pill – the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill – you stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes. Remember, all I’m offering is the truth – nothing more.

Here are the two pills as I see them – the disparate ideologies from which there is no return:

1. The fullness of all spiritual truths can only be found in the one true church on earth, and all new spiritual enlightenment can only be revealed by the prophet. Anything that comes from the outside of the office of prophet or apostle of the priesthood of God is not from God, is questionable, and should be disregarded. Since “whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same,”³⁴ God will never allow the prophet to lead his church astray,³⁵ and he would never circumvent the channel he has established,³⁶ questioning the prophet means

³²Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, Chapter 133

³³Matthew 7:7-8

³⁴Doctrine and Covenants 1:38

³⁵Wilford Woodruff, Sixty-first Semiannual General Conference, 1890

³⁶“When there is to be anything different from that which the Lord has told us already, He will reveal it to His prophet and no

heresy and rebellion to God. If you are not careful, questioning could lead to your eternal destruction.

2. Everyone has access to the fountain of spiritual truth by virtue of being a spiritual being at their core: a child of God. We all have been given truth-seeking talents. We have minds, reason, intelligence, wisdom, a hunger for knowledge, and a spark of divinity which entices us to reach ever higher, if we permit the inspiration to enter. All light emanates from God. Truth speaks for itself, by its own authority, and stands on its own merit. If truth and error grapple, truth will triumph. Truth is the ultimate arbiter of all conflict. Questioning is a necessary natural step in verifying truth. Doubts cannot harm truth, nor can inquiry offend God. All light and truth comes from God, no matter who or what reflects it. Sincere truth seeking ever draws you closer to God.

It is easy to see which pill matches which ideology. With the blue pill, you give up the battle for truth in your own mind and take the path of least effort, letting your will conform with what culture or authority defines as real, regardless of true reality.

With the red pill, you commit to the consequences of finding reality, to “do what is right and let the consequence follow.”³⁷ There is no way to sincerely turn back to ignorance. To go back would mean to sacrifice your integrity after having found the truth.

The mind that opens to a new idea never returns to its original size.³⁸

To pick the red pill takes courage to supersede your inculcation. I knew deep down inside which ideology I should choose, but I felt like I could not abandon my upbringing.

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.³⁹

When even the brightest mind in our world has been trained up from childhood in a superstition of any kind, it will never be possible for that mind, in its maturity, to examine sincerely, dispassionately, and conscientiously any evidence or any circumstance which shall seem to cast a doubt upon the validity of that superstition. I doubt if I could do it myself.⁴⁰

one else.”

Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places*, 159

³⁷Hymn 237

³⁸Albert Einstein

³⁹Proverbs 22:6

⁴⁰Mark Twain, *Is Shakespeare Dead?* (1909)

I was taught that I shouldn't seek out anything that could challenge my faith. I was okay with that because I distrusted and even feared my intellect. I felt like I could explore – up to a point; that I could only make friends – up to a point. Scholarly ideas or the wrong friends could easily sway me from the straight and narrow.

I was taught that *by the power of the Holy Ghost I may know the truth of all things*,⁴¹ but that was only ever applied to praying about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. No one actually relies on the power of the Holy Ghost for *all things*, do they? If they did, why would science be needed at all?

I feared that either I was too inept to discern what the Holy Ghost teaches, or I would fall prey to the wiles of intellectualism. I feared the barrier. I felt like I needed permission to go beyond it. Something was pushing me subconsciously. I seemed to cling to *seek and ye shall find* scripture verses that could give me the concession I needed to take that step into the unknown using outside sources, like this one:

“...yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”⁴²

Seek and Ye Shall Find

Please, just listen. I know why you're here, Neo. I know what you've been doing, why you hardly sleep, why you live alone, and why night after night, you sit by your computer. You're looking for him. I know because I was once looking for the same thing. And when he found me, he told me I wasn't really looking for him. I was looking for an answer. It's the question that drives us. It's the question that brought you here. You know the question, just as I did.⁴³

I decided that if I truly desired to dedicate myself to the truth, I should take the blinders off my eyes.

I believed that it was a good spirit that was inspiring me to desire more. I opened my mind to every thought I could find. I stopped impeding the new ideas that seem to come directly to my mind. I no longer barred ideas that come from the outside.

I had not found answers before because I had never sincerely sought them before. I never put the

Spirit to the test beyond the question whether “these things [The Book of Mormon] are *not* true.”⁴⁴ I knew the answers I sought could not be found in established LDS canon. I had never discovered them there.

I decided to sift the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha for glimpses of truth. The council of Nicaea did not deem them as canon, but that does not mean they are banned. I learned many things from them, but just like the Bible and the Book of Mormon, they were tainted by fantasy, myth, and time.

There were some ideas I had never heard of about Lucifer's rebellion there. I encountered a lot of detail about the lives of Adam and Eve that I had never heard before. They presented the Lucifer rebellion in an entirely different light. Their narrative had nothing to do with forced righteousness.

I was surprised to find information in Jasher and Josephus that was supposed to be *new revelation* about the life of Abraham in the Book of Abraham. Joseph Smith had access to those books. That incongruity nagged at my mind.

The *plan of force*⁴⁵ seems silly, illogical and stupid to me. It is a feeble attempt at providing an opposition. It defeats the reality of our existence as volitional beings. It is a mockery of the intelligence of any creator of volition.

I read many near-death experiences. I wanted to find glimpses of truth about the life beyond. I hoped that new ideas of the afterlife could change my perception of this life. Many of them harmonized with my beliefs. They said that human words could never fully explain their experience. Some concepts went so far beyond the barrier that they had no need to harmonize with canon. Many near-death experiences were tarnished by human perception and preexisting belief systems.

My sister found a member of the church who had spiritual gifts and spoke highly of her. I had to meet her. I was excited to encounter someone who could legitimately possess the gift to discern of spirits!⁴⁶ Much of what she said confirmed ideas from near-death experiences.

She taught about the importance of forgiveness. She demonstrated techniques to discern truth from error. She instructed that I should not fear the search for truth. She had interesting information about the things she saw. She relayed messages from a guardian angel she said was my guide. She inadvertently explained some ideas about God that chal-

⁴¹Moroni 10:5

⁴²D&C 88:118, 109:14

⁴³Wachowski Brothers, Trinity, The Matrix

⁴⁴Moroni 10:4

⁴⁵Moses 4:1-4

⁴⁶1 Corinthians 12:10

lenged what I had believed from LDS doctrine all my life. At first, I was shocked, but later I could see how they could fit in a higher level of understanding.

I slowly gained more confidence in my ability to distinguish truth from error. I read many things that made me feel anxious and offended. I believed that I had opened my mind, but I still disregarded anti-Mormon literature. It is easy to find because it is freely found on the Internet. I did not allow myself consider what they had to say because it was falsification. It was there to be contrary to the truth. I could feel when reading their assertions was hatred for the church. With time, I became more and more confident that I could discern and sift the chaff from the wheat. I remained firm.



For a time it seemed I could find no more new information. I relented that maybe I had somehow missed the answers in canon. I began to listen to the Book of Mormon on my drive to work every day. That granted about 40 minutes of the Book of Mormon daily. I intended to glean the hidden truths that so often get missed because of the entertaining story.

I lost count of how many times I went through the entire book. I extracted everything I could. I started to be able to recite the few passages that deal with doctrine, like Alma 42.

“Ask and ye shall receive,” “knock and it shall be opened unto you,” and “seek and ye shall find” are mentioned often.⁴⁷ Every time I heard those passages, I felt like the book talking directly to me.

To receive answers from praying seems cliché. Joseph Smith was moved by James 1:5. Each recounting of his story is often followed by a faithless commentary. “But if you ask, you likely won’t get an answer like that.” Contrarily, I felt that this is repeated in the scriptures for a reason. It should not only apply to the singular prophet. Why would Jesus say it more than once if just a single person on earth is allowed to have the privilege? It must be important. It must be for everyone.

The following two quotes contradict the scriptures that promise discover to those that seek.

When there is to be anything different from that which the Lord has told us already, he will give it to his prophet not to some Tom, Dick, or Harry ... Do you suppose that when the Lord has his

⁴⁷3 Nephi 14:7-11, 3 Nephi 27:29, Enos 1:15, 3 Nephi 18:20, 1 Nephi 15:11, Mosiah 4:21, Moroni 7:26

prophet on the earth, that he is going to take some round-about means of revealing things to his children? That is what he has a prophet for.⁴⁸

When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures⁴⁹

I grew tired of hearing blue-pill declarations. I had been taught throughout my life that I did not have the right to ask for new knowledge beyond what we already have. The Prophet is the only source of all new knowledge concerning the gospel. “When the prophet speaks ... the debate is over.”⁵⁰ “It is foolish to suppose that men can be left to their own devices and accomplish what God intended for them.”⁵¹ “When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done.”⁵²

It would be presumptuous to go against his authority and seek knowledge directly from God behind the prophet’s back. I had never sincerely asked for new knowledge and wisdom because of that. I never knew anyone else who did, either. Maybe people fear of circumventing the mouthpiece of God as much as I did. Perhaps they are not interested in any real questions. It could be that they fear that the answer may not be what they want. The answer could go against their family and friends. Maybe most of them purposefully concentrate on the humdrum of their daily lives for questions to never occur to them. To know whether the church is true is all they seem to want. Then there is no need to search for truth. All of the answers are provided, even though many of them are thought-stopping platitudes. They would rather not waste their mental faculties in challenging their culture. Why try at all if there is contentment with the status quo?

All of those deterrents were not going to stop me. I had questions that the scriptures didn’t answer. I wanted answers that were not watered down to be palatable with the existing traditions of men. I wanted the real truth to answer my questions, no matter the consequences.

⁴⁸Teachings of Harold B. Lee

⁴⁹Robert D. Hales, Ensign, November 2006

⁵⁰Elaine Cannon, Ensign, November 1978, p. 108

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1978/10/if-we-want-to-go-up-we-have-to-get-on?lang=eng>

⁵¹N. Eldon Tanner, The Debate Is Over, August 1979 Ensign

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/08/the-debate-is-over?lang=eng>

⁵²June 1945 Improvement Era Ward Teachers’ Message

<https://archive.org/stream/improvementera4806unse#page/n35/mode/1up/>

Haven't prophets said that if any man preaches anything contrary to the scriptures, to set him down as an impostor?⁵³

Harold B. Lee's modus operandi is not consistent with the scriptures. He contradicts Moses, who said that we should all be prophets, even when Moses' office of prophet was threatened:

And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp.

And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them.

And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!⁵⁴

I started asking in my personal prayers, "Father, please enlighten my mind with answers to my questions and give me a fuller understanding of the workings of the Universe; and with that, my place and purpose in it. Please expand my comprehension. I am knocking. Please open thy door to me."

Usually the next morning, the same answer would come to my mind: "If you seek, you will find." I would marvel at that thought for a few minutes. Then I would wonder where I could possibly find my answers. I struggled to supersede the mindset that answers could not be valid unless they come from authority.

My confidence in asking and receiving was fortified by other scriptures which clearly show that anyone can know the mysteries of God:

And now Alma began to expound these things unto him, saying: It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

⁵³ Joseph Smith, Times and Seasons Vol 5, pg 490
Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 3, 204

⁵⁴ Numbers 11:27-29

And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.⁵⁵

It is given to many to understand the mysteries of God, not just the president of the church. This gave me more courage to find answers. I have since discovered many ideas in my ongoing quest for truth. I felt like I was granted the license to seek and then to secretly keep my new ideas hidden because of the command to not impart except what humanity already has.

As a devout member, I never felt like a prophet; I never received any revelations. As soon as I allowed myself to think outside the box, I was showered with new ideas. My perception of the universe blossomed as the limited ideas of correlation grew insignificant.

Authenticity

I was taught to fear sharing thoughts that did not align with the groupthink of my social circle. In many ways, much of the fear programming I received throughout my life came from my upbringing in the church. It adversely affected my self-esteem and my ability to assert what I think. It has affected other areas of my life, like my employment. I feared to lift my voice whether my thoughts may be considered in harmony, or whether they may be regarded as dissonant. Either could offend anyone. This is one of the many reasons why I am quiet. I would rather keep the peace instead of causing drama with others by voicing my ideas. I have rarely been able to share my sincerest ideas with anyone, especially those who might allow their prejudice and emotions to lash out at me. I have never desired arguments and contention. I have ever approached discussions as the humble learner, not the teacher.

After many of my innermost thoughts have actualized, I have repressed self through fear. When you suppress your inner self, you damage your integrity and self-esteem. You become a hypocrite. I have squelched many of the ideas I have had, inspired or not, in the name of loyalty and obedience to those who I was taught were the mouthpieces of God.

⁵⁵ Alma 12:9-11



Freedom of speech is imperative to the constitution of our free country, but freedom of speech is an excommunicable offense in the church. This fact has been reiterated more and more like those who publicly voice nothing but their genuine thoughts have been excommunicated. If we have the truth, then how could one or two dissenting voices in the ranks pose such a threat that it should be squelched and exiled? Faith should not be so delicate.

Authoritarian excommunication is often called a *Court of Love*. The members of the council often spin their tribunal to be a representation of the love of God. In some cases, maybe it is. In the area of freedom of speech, it is not. There seems to be a suspicious ulterior motive: the threat of social rejection to maintain absolute control. Courts of love are eerily similar in both name and practice to George Orwell's *Ministry of Love* in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In both, the accused risks vanishing from the consciousness of all of those who participate in the organization as it continues to control information. Jesus would disagree with such tyrannical practices of such an institution, against freedom of thought. That man in the New Testament could not possibly command such a ruthless government.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.⁵⁶

The truth will make you free – but from what exactly? It frees from institutions that control thought by compulsion and that require strict obedience. He spoke of a similar institution at his time. It unjustly murdered him for the same purposes. It was threatened

⁵⁶John 8:32

by his doctrine. If that teaching of Jesus is true, then why am I not free to openly seek more truth in his church? Why am I not free to shout the truth from the rooftops? I must not be subject to the search for truth if I am taught that I should repress all thoughts that may go beyond established barriers of correlated doctrine.

Jesus consistently challenged the views of his culture. He also said that he was quite like the one who sent him,⁵⁷ the creator of volitional beings. Yet, the expression of one's genuine thoughts is an offense worthy of excommunication from an organization which is supposed to be led by him.

If we live truly, we shall see truly.⁵⁸

I believe that it is a crime for men in authority, even prophets of God, to repress the expression of sincere thought. The kingdom of the creator of free will would never require the repression of free speech for citizenship.

Thought repression has many damaging effects on psychological well-being. I have found that openly expressing thought and associating with others that are sympathetic to a genuine experience of reality is a healing therapy. That is one of the reasons I write this work. No matter how cold this computer is, it listens to me. Sadly, my closest associate, my wife, is apathetic.

One of the essential teachings of Jesus is that it is nobler to be imperfect yet sincere than it is to exude a facade of perfection. No matter whether I am right or wrong, in writing what I write I only hope that I get caught on the side of sincerity.

Excommunication for lack of worthiness to an institution is only the surface of a deeper sociological problem. Though many may not openly admit, most of the pressure to live up to the requirements of the establishment comes from the norms of family, friends, and culture. A social identity based on a shaming and a judgmental society is a dangerous environment for anyone's mental health. Their mores stand as the very definition of conditional love. Excommunication is a sure-fire way to become the subject of gossip of what horrible sin could have been committed. Quidnuncs come up with demeaning reasons for anyone who chooses to stand on their own

⁵⁷John 14:8-9

⁵⁸Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self Reliance*
<https://archive.org/stream/selfrelianceessay00emerrich#page/35/mode/1up>

because there couldn't possibly be any other reason for lack of adherence to the established societal rules that they deem as the infallible truth.

I do not have family members, and only rarely have I found friends, that allow full authentic thought expression without the threat of contempt, who enable me to be myself without any filter or shutting down into silence.

Those of my culture wear masks that cover their thought expressions of disdain and disapproval, shielding their contempt with a facade. If their judgment does not eventually come through the grapevine, the tension is still perceivable by those on the receiving end who sense insincerity.

Many secretly express their disfavor for the acts of others to those who they know are equally devoted to culture and worthiness above all original thought, who are wholly devoted to their commitment of maintaining their social station. Many deny that they are being disingenuous because they have been conditioned from childhood to repress all discord and original thought as if it were a poison, and their confidence is bolstered in that their righteousness makes them pious in comparison to the weak who succumb to sin. They know without a shadow of a doubt that their thoughts fully align with their culture and its requirements for worthiness. They revel in certainty as they testify of their devotion in the name of knowledge and truth.

Few arrive at their certainty through reason and critical thought, because truth-seeking tools cannot apply to devotion. The requirement to be devout has been a deep part of my psyche for most of my life. Fellowship strengthened my certainty.

Devotion is purely social. It does not bow to reason, nor wisdom, nor fact. It is unfortunate that many people confuse social conformity with the truth. It is a tragedy that many fellowship belief systems set themselves up as the authority for a *sacred science*.⁵⁹

To "be true, be true"⁶⁰ spins loyalty as standing for truth, but to *be true* has nothing to do with truth, evidence, nor fact. To be faithful is not the same as having faith. To "stand together and never doubt"⁶¹ is not about the doubts that pertain to the truth at all. All have to do with allegiance, adherence, devotion, steadfastness, staunchness, duty, commitment, dutiful obedience, and subservience to culture. Their goal is Truth with a capital T, not *the truth*.

⁵⁹ See Robert J. Lifton's Eight Criteria for Thought Reform

⁶⁰ Children's Songbook, stand for the right

⁶¹ 2011 Trek slogan

A testimony of devotion to the traditions, ideals, by-laws, and the authoritarian declaration of truth by an institution is not a testimony of reality. Both custom and authority should have no right to herald themselves as truth, just as much as the authority of truth should never proclaim a right to control tradition. Customs are usually celebrations, occasions, and ritual. Problems arise when the two are confused as equals. When tradition clashes with truth, the sincere truth seeker must choose social peace at the expense of cognitive dissonance, or social discord at the expense of cognitive harmony.

Until only recently, I have never allowed myself to perceive my difficulty in associating with people who judge prematurely, who are unwilling to put forth the effort to have empathy or even sympathy before they pass judgment. I have been only subconsciously aware of the energy that a filter requires. I usually retreated to silence, because reticence takes vastly less energy. I usually hesitated to expend the energy needed for relationships that judge prematurely or that expect me to live up to their expectations of what I should be instead of who I am in exchange for love.

In every family, there seems to be a few that have the courage and confidence to stand on their own against the threat of disdain. In my past, I thought I was sure that I was benevolent with these loved ones when I called them to repentance, but I had no clue how insensitive and self-righteous I was. Many do not realize that everyone has good intentions. Few people in the world are genuinely malicious. Everyone wishes to be happy and to live as best they can for their views of reality. Many lives are fuller when they are far away from grievous psychological burdens of a judgmental society. Those who stand up to the status quo and live authentically show more courage than those who drudge daily to maintain their status as a puffed-up saint in a vain society.



Before you read on, let me reiterate that I make no assertion that anything I say in this entire work is the ultimate truth. I am uncertain of everything I believe. It seems to be human nature to place dogma on the pedestal of certainty. I think that it is a virtue to let belief remain in the realm of uncertainty. Everything I say here is what I perceive to be the truth at the time I wrote it. I have no problem changing what I believe as my horizon widens through the discovery of new facts and truths. My view of reality is a living, breathing, growing, changing specimen which

must adapt to all evidence that may be found to stay alive. As I have said, these thoughts are mine, and I do not apologize for them. If you think that I am wrong, please do not confront me unless you have something more enlightening and positive to say. I have no desire to listen to anyone rattle off a string of thought-stopping platitudes in response to my ideas. I have not only already heard, but I have used enough of those nasty clichés to last a lifetime.

All of what follows was driven by the sincere desire to gain a full understanding of the gospel – the real message of Jesus – unencumbered by impropriety, charlatans, society and myth. As I have said, my purpose never was to sin, oppose doctrine, hurt the church, or leave the church, because the church has ever been the only source of good that I have ever known. After all, as I had been trained, I withstood with fortitude, ignoring the ideas that the anti-Mormon publications presented. My core thoughts originally had little to do with anti-Mormon literature. These thoughts originated from what I would consider enlightenment through the real message that Jesus himself gave, not from adversarial influences.

Doctrine

The Inscrutable Mystery

The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.⁶²

Atonement is the core tenet common to all Christianity. It is supposed to grant absolution from death and ruin of the fall. In this doctrine, Mormonism does not differ from the rest of Christianity. That teaching of Joseph Smith implies that without the Atonement, there is no gospel. He admits that his revelations are only ornaments that hang on this fundamental principle.

There is a glaring complication. The atonement is an enigma. All of the appendages brought forth by the restoration provide hardly any clarification to this core doctrine. The Book of Mormon does very little to help increase our understanding of the mystery. It only reiterates the same ideas that are found in the New Testament.

Modern revelation concedes defeat as it pathetically asserts that our puny mortal minds can never understand the atonement. The restoration and modern prophets do not fulfill their call. They do not set Mormonism apart by bringing clarity. We are supposed to rely on their priesthood authority to qualify truth as they teach a method of confirmation that makes reason stare.

I realize that no mortal mind can adequately conceive, nor can human tongue appropriately express, the full significance of all that Jesus Christ has done for our Heavenly Father's children through His Atonement.⁶³

We do not know, we cannot tell, no mortal mind can conceive the full import of what Christ did in Gethsemane. ... We know that in some way, incomprehensible to us, his suffering satisfied the demands of justice, ransomed penitent souls from the pains and penalties of sin, and made mercy available to those who believe in his holy name.⁶⁴

⁶²Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 121

⁶³Richard G. Scott, He Lives! All Glory to His Name! April 2010

⁶⁴Bruce R. McConkie, The Purifying Power of Gethsemane, April 1985

In the same talk, Bruce R. McConkie repeats the word *incomprehensible* as an essential attribute of the Atonement. I see an implication that he and his companions cannot understand the core gospel themselves. He and those of his order make the epistemology itself into a quandary. The answer to the riddle is another riddle. It appears that he intends that it should make no sense.

That same riddle is taught again and again as if mystery should provide comfort. For me, such enigma is an imposition that causes distress instead of consolation. It has ever nagged at my mind. I am required to stop thinking and accept the singular irrationality that acts as the centripetal force that keeps every other creed in orbit.

Orthodoxy means not thinking — not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness.⁶⁵



Even though they teach that the Atonement is incomprehensible to the human mind, some churchmen still try to explain. One of those attempts compares the Atonement to the payment of monetary debt. In that explanation, a broker steps between a debtor and a lender and pays the dues owed. Then, he forgives the debt through mercy.⁶⁶

This explanation establishes a relationship with the broker, Christ. It provides a decent idea of how mercy can work. It is easy to understand. Every person makes mistakes, so everyone desires it. It makes Christ deserve our worship. It is no wonder that so many hymns sing praises to his name.

That explanation also degrades our relationship with the creditor, Father. Debt is easy to understand, too. It is unpleasant for everyone. It makes God less worthy of our love and reverence. It worsens our understanding of his attributes. It makes him less approachable.

The need for creditors, debtors, and arbiters is overly complicated. How the payment transacted is confusing. The credit agreement and the nature of its creditor are suspect. The proposition treats our life and welfare as a commodity. Jesus should not have transacted currency or bartered any merchandise with God for something that God has already freely given: life.

⁶⁵George Orwell, 1984, chapter 5

⁶⁶Boyd K. Packer, The Mediator, April 1977

The parables of Jesus on monetary debt are simple. Forgive everyone. Forgiveness corresponds directly to love. How deeply we love gauges how much capacity we have to forgive.

And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most.

And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.⁶⁷

It is baffling that Jesus would teach of such a noble act of candid forgiveness if that is something his father can never do without his intervention. We are obliged to believe that God requires an arbiter to settle a credit dispute that he is not willing to resolve himself. That downplays the love of God if he cannot forgive on his own. To illustrate this point, let us look at this parable the other way around:

And when they he nothing to pay, both the Father and the Son frankly forgave him. Tell me therefore, which of them will he love most?

Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, who forgave most.

And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.



Questions are naturally born from the existence of contradiction. To question inconsistencies is the dictionary definition of doubt.⁶⁸ The champions of this absurd story strongly warn against doubt. They treat doubt as if it could draw virtue away from the truth. They teach that doubt is a disease that threatens salvation. It seems more reasonable that they fear doubt because realism is a threat to their trade. They deflect reason and responsibility by claiming that their dogma is a *mystery*. It seems to show that they secretly admit that their paradox naturally breeds uncertainty. The shrouds of mystery and dogma are such distractions that the pure in heart cannot perceive the immorality.

When mystery reigns, it restricts doubt from honest contemplation. Then the coast is clear for other indecencies to slip in unawares. Priests dare to compare the sin payment to money. Sin should not be

compared to bankruptcy because they are disparate, like apples and oranges. Sin has more in common with crime than it does with monetary debt. Someone else can pay a loan, but they cannot pay for a crime. Comparing sin to finance makes it easier for their followers to conceive that money can pay the price of sin. In many churches, it certainly does. This concept is a swindle that spiritual quacks have employed since the dawn of time.

Many people have come to disavow monetary payment for sin as priestcraft. Little do they know that the craft of their priests has still cheated them. The requirement of money can work the other way around. They have made money become a requirement for worthiness. Money for righteousness is more lucrative than it is for sin because we must constantly pay even when no offense has been committed. The quackery continues today just as it did in antiquity. It is alive and well.

Credulity is innocent, but it is a threat when it brings guilt. Shame is a tool that can serve to dominate naive believers. It is a constant torment to believe that their human shortcomings have already caused punishment and execution of an innocent man. The premise imposes that a dominating abuser has inflicted his punishment before the sin has had a chance to be committed. All are fallen and are lost⁶⁹ because of what they are: human. It is amazing⁷⁰ that God spares thee at all, thou wretched worm⁷¹ on thy dung heap. It is a control mechanism of emotional abuse to use guilt in the name of love like this.

A chain reaction starts with the belief that mercy can only come from an incomprehensible immoral act of a cruel retributive father who, his son not sparing, sent him to die.⁷² Those wolves hope to ensnare their sheep, to stop them from trusting in the God-given powers of their mind. It becomes difficult for them to be self-confident in their inherent faculties. To close off from the light within leaves them vulnerable to manipulation by any charismatic confidence man. That is what the teachers want to accomplish when they urge their followers never to doubt their obscene mystery. Careless credulity can mutilate the mind and corrupt its will.

...the human mind has degenerated by believing [tales]. Man in a state of grovelling superstition,

⁶⁹Alma 34:9

⁷⁰I Stand All Amazed

⁷¹Amazing Grace

⁷²How Great Thou Art

⁶⁷Luke 7:42-43

⁶⁸<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doubt>

from which he has not courage to rise, loses the energy of his mental powers.⁷³

Savage Morality

The penalty for crime indicted upon the innocent instead of the guilty is an injustice which laughs in the face of morality. It does not matter how willing the innocent may be to accept corporal or capital punishment. It is a barbarity that is an act of revenge, not justice. This vengeance is the same as killing an innocent son because his murderer brother escaped. It is the same immoral ideology which "visits the sins of a father upon his children to the third and fourth generation."⁷⁴ This kind of revenge lives in the hatred that drives warring families, clans, tribes, or nations to kill each other for centuries. We need to stop following anyone who teaches this kind of law and more importantly stop worshiping anyone who lives this kind of law. It only makes things worse when a person or a nation worships a god who seems incapable of choosing to avoid to this primitive morality.

More people have been killed in the name of God than for any other reason.⁷⁵

To say that it is the highest virtue of Father of the universe to murder his most precious son in the name of justice is a double standard. It unfairly applies different systems of law to different people at the same time. Revenge and ritual murder are ideals of the primitive Mosaic law. This coerces a loving eternal Father into subjection to blood feud law. It places his ideology below modern decency. It is no surprise that organized religion requires the subjugation of God to an infinite vendetta because it often behaves like a mafia. To require recompense for crime through revenge upon the innocent before granting absolution to all criminals has nothing to do with mercy or forgiveness. This injustice is the dictionary etymology of iniquity.⁷⁶

⁷³Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part third, section 4
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00painiala#page/203/mode/1up>

⁷⁴Exodus 20:5; Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Mosiah 13:13; Doctrine & Covenants 5:9; 98:28,29,30,37,46; 103:26; 105:30; 124:50,52

The punishment met to "the third and fourth generation" screams idolatrous god to me. Ironically, instances of the phrase are over double as numerous in the Doctrine and Covenants as compared to the Old Testament.

⁷⁵George Carlin

⁷⁶"Iniquity" has the same Latin root as "inequity," from in- "not" + aequum "equal, just." It means unfair, immoral, injustice, impropriety, corrupt...

It is preposterous to think that God is so fallible that he would commit this kind of inequitable atrocity himself. A king would be considered to be wicked if he were to exercise this kind of judgment. Modern humanity has surpassed this sense of right and wrong. The Constitution contains a higher morality. It strives to protect the rights of the people from the iniquitous monarchs.

What sort of savage is the insane man that Mormonism calls God? That ancient manlike god is too small, too limited, too primitive, too angry, too blood-thirsty. We often claim that he is merciful and loving, but his actions speak louder than words. It is baffling that he needs the innocent to suffer, bleed, and die to pay off a debt owed to him. His brutality casts him in the company of Vlad the Impaler. It is not easy to feel close to a shameless man like Vlad. It is all the more difficult to relate to a god like that. This god is so moody, angry, and unloving that he someone has to intercede between his prosecution and the accused, his own children, to mitigate his wrath. It is not wonderful, it is horrifying that the only way we can appease that god's wrath is to worship his revenge upon the innocent.

This seems too much like an ancient tribal god that shamans contrived to scare their believers into subordination. That is the kind of god that defended the tribe against the gods of the other tribes. That god would often authoritatively command his people to go to war. It is sad that this same god is used today to incite fear and to guilt people into obedience. How dare you provoke the retribution of God! He can curse you and your family for generations!

I cannot believe in such an idol god. The God I believe in should transcend this tribal embarrassment to modern morality.

I have been pondering the conundrum of the immorality of the Atonement since my childhood. In many ways, I can personally relate to what Thomas Paine wrote:

I well remember, when about seven or eight years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine, who was a great devotee of the Church, upon the subject of what is called redemption by the death of the Son of God. After the sermon was ended, I went into the garden, and as I was going down the garden steps (for I perfectly recollect the spot) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself that it was making God Almighty act like a passionate man, that killed his son when he could not revenge himself in any other way, and

as I was sure a man would be hanged that did such a thing, I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons. This was not one of that kind of thoughts that had anything in it of childish levity; it was to me a serious reflection, arising from the idea I had that God was too good to do such an action, and also too almighty to be under any necessity of doing it. I believe in the same manner at this moment; and I moreover believe, that any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be a true system.

...

But the Christian story of God the Father putting his son to death, or employing people to do it (for that is the plain language of the story) cannot be told by a parent to a child; and to tell him that it was done to make mankind happier and better is making the story still worse — as if mankind could be improved by the example of murder; and to tell him that all this is a mystery is only making an excuse for the incredibility of it.⁷⁷



Idolatry is a word that is not often understood. It is the worship of anything as a god that is not God. It is obvious with golden calves, but not so obvious with the antiquated deity that millions of people continue to worship in modernity. We are misled by church curriculum on the subject of idolatry. Our leaders have become idols themselves as they have elevated their station to have the authority to stand in place of God. Sunday School lessons seem to serve their institution as they distract from the true meaning of the word.

Idolatry cannot be money. It cannot be prosperity. It cannot be vice. Those can be obsessions, but not idolatry. They should not be classified as idolatry because no one in their right mind would revere them as the entity that created the universe.

If the attributes of a god are unbecoming for even humanity, then there is a problem. That kind of god could not possibly be genuine. The morals of an infinitely wise immortal God should never stand below the morals of his mortal children.

If we wish to avoid idolatry, we should seek to understand the attributes of a deity that would qualify for our worship. We should readily discard any

⁷⁷Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part first, section 11
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00painiala#page/37/mode/1up>

attributes that should be unbefitting of an infinite being.

What you believe about God says more about you than it does about God. I cannot believe in a god that has a lesser morality than my own. I cannot revere a father that is a sadistic sociopath who can only appease his wrath by avenging everyone who has ever offended him in any way through bloody ritual torture and murder of his most devout child. I cannot adore someone who eternally punishes those who make mistakes after he traps them in a temporal state and veils their memory. Then, the only way out of his trap is to trust in his violent murder of an innocent person.

The atonement is supposed to save us from damnation and hell, but that decree of damnation comes from the wrath of God. If it is not wrath, then it is indifference and contempt with no interest in rescue and rehabilitation. To stop personal growth or to banish is just as inappropriate.

It is nonsense to have to bow, grovel, beg and plead for forgiveness to a loving parent. That is something children would feel compelled to do for an abusive parent. It is abuse to threaten children with destruction, to forever lock them in a room, keep them from school, or exile them.

To consign transgressors to *infinite* punishment for choices made in a *finite* state is *infinite immorality*. It has been imposed that an immoral infinite punishment can only be answered by an immoral infinite atonement or God would cease to be God.⁷⁸ Both are sustained by one of the most absurd mythologies: *the fall of man* in Eden, where God lies and manipulates to set up his plan of oppression. That iniquitous conundrum and its foul resolution seems to have been manufactured by manipulative men, not by infinite wisdom.

If God inflicts infinite judgment for choices made in a temporal state, be it indifference, stopping progress, or torture by fire, then that god is not loving nor merciful, he is a devil. If it is salvation to live eternally with a bloodthirsty maniac who must either punish temporal mistakes for eternity or punish the innocent for the guilty, then I do not want it. That would be hell, for me. To say that *God moves in a mysterious way* does not exonerate him from being despicable on both counts.

God is supposed to be both omnipotent and omniscient. Those attributes allow him to know us well enough that he also knows in advance what we will

⁷⁸Alma 42

choose to do. By his *matchless power*,⁷⁹ he expends more resources than our puny minds can fathom for the futile act of testing what he already knows. Since we are his creation and he foresees what we will do, he becomes an accomplice to our crimes. He then *consigns us to a state of endless misery and woe* even though he knows fully that we only did what he created us to do.

In this *great plan of happiness*⁸⁰ that he contrived from the *foundation of the world*,⁸¹ he gets to punish both the guilty and the guiltless. It is as if it was his intention all along to find an excuse to inflict *endless torment*⁸² upon all intelligent beings. The only way out for you is to do as he expected you do. You must join him as an accessory to his crimes by trusting in his shamelessly grotesque and merciless act that he perpetrated upon the innocent. Those who escape his mistreatment must devote their lives to subservience, in constant fear of his savagery, by bowing before him to grovel, plead, praise, adulate, and worship him.

The Loving Abusive Tyrant

Gospel is a word that is supposed to mean *good news*. When we view it from the perspective that God could be a sadistic bully, everything changes. It sounds more like a horror movie. Let me tell the story from that point of view.

A powerful bully traps every weaker person he can find in a prison of oblivion. He initiates them as they enter his domain. He sedates them, opens their cranium, and wipes their memory by zapping their brain with a powerful electrical shock. They cannot remember their prior freedom.

He uses thought-reform artistry to reshape their attitudes, values, and beliefs. He tricks them into trusting him because the inexperience that he forces upon them makes them impressionable, like little children. He lies that he is their father as he teaches them that they have always lived with him. He abusively threatens that there is nowhere else they could go and that they could never live without him. He imprints in their minds that no one else in the world can make them as happy as he can. He convinces them that if they find any happiness without him, it is not true happiness.

⁷⁹Alma 9:11

⁸⁰Alma 42:8

⁸¹Mosiah 4:6

⁸²Mosiah 3:25-27

He tells them that he has placed them in the cage as a trial to see if they will obey everything he commands. Enslaving lesser free will beings is his conspiracy. If he can break their spirit, they will gladly serve as a beast of burden. It is his dark secret that he cannot trust them until there is evidence that he has broken their will. He evades the truth as he uses warm, fuzzy language. He wants them to think that he loves them. He tells them that he can provide joy unto rejoicing. He wants them to believe that their bliss, freedom, and ennoblement is his only goal. He promises to give them their own power and dominion. He does this as he continues as their captor that has stolen everything away from them.

He boasts that he lives in an opulent mansion. He promises that he will free them from their poverty in his dreadful prison that he purposefully created to entrap them. He says that they might be able to live with him in his palace someday, but they will first have to prove themselves as his servants. Even though they have never seen his mansion, many of them they believe him. They meet regularly to sing songs about their hope of living with him someday.

From time to time, people in the cage mysteriously vanish. Every time they disappear, they are forced to leave behind their clothing and other possessions. That traumatizes the ones that are still there. It is a reminder that they are gone. They burn or bury the clothes to get them out of their sight. Many believe that their oppressor stole them away to his manor house on the sly. Others fear that ceasing to exist could be the nature of reality.

The insensible nature that the bully imposes on his underlings makes it impossible to obey perfectly. He keeps them in the dark as he withholds all information about the outside world. He teaches them that they must trust in him, even when it opposes their faculties of mind. He holds them accountable while they are incapable of knowing any better because of their gullibility. He uses guilt for emotional manipulation. He angrily punishes them when they do not obey him. Entire rooms of the prison, filled with people, are crushed and swallowed up in his wrath. His guilt trips induce the understanding that his outrage is their fault and that his indignation is righteous. Every one of them is destined for condemnation. It is difficult for them to hope for a happy future because there is nothing that they could ever do to change their nature. Many people fall to their knees whenever they remember what he has done. They beg and plead that they will not be the next subject of his wrath.

He threatens that he is the most powerful man in the world. Everything in existence is subject to his dominion. Nothing exists outside of his borders but darkness and evil. Like a gangster, he demands their devotion as he boasts that his strength protects them. Many fear the world outside of his prison without him. They do not know any better. Their captivity makes them feel safe. They should never dare to revolt because he can crush them all by the brute force of his might. They fear that darkness and evil outside of the prison will consume them if they dare to escape.

Some of them believe that they are incapable of accomplishing anything praiseworthy on their own. At every opportunity, they teach everyone else that unquestioning obedience to him is a virtue. They think that their fear will help them to be virtuous because it induces obedience. Their fear of him becomes part of their identity.

In an attempt to offset his fear manipulation and to give them hope, the tormentor promises that he will someday demonstrate that they will be safe. He promises that he will bring the missing people back to visit. He asserts that the obedient will become as strong as he is and that they will never need to be caged again. Many of them wonder if he could be lying because no one has ever returned.

He coerces them into calling him their lord and king for his absolute power over them. That fuels his conceit. He demands that they prostrate before him morning, noon, and night. They should often sing praises to his name. They should sing songs that laud everything he has done for them and that if they obey, they will live with him in his mansion someday.

He never does anything nice for them unless they first submit and grovel before him. Sometimes he remains obstinate because he likes to upset them. When their supplication proves ineffective, they resort to starving themselves or inflicting other self-abuse. They know that his delight in their suffering will often gain his favor and blessing.

He compels them to perform a ritual oath of subjection. They are made to commit that they will give everything, even their own life, to obeying his commands. They vow to enslave themselves to build up an even more magnificent mansion for him. The ceremony warns that all who will not take the oath will inevitably bow before his fearsome power over them, including the evil entities that exist outside of his domain.

He ensures that they know it means certain destruction if they cannot meet their side of the bargain

and walk up to every oath they swear. The penalty for failing to honor their pledge is to be brutally tortured and murdered. They are required to pantomime gestures upon themselves, slitting their throats, slicing open their abdomen, and stabbing their heart.

He blackmails them by holding their family and loved ones that he has taken away for ransom. He threatens that only those who honor their oath to him will be able to see and live with the ones they love again. He gives an ultimatum that anyone who will not swear an oath of strict obedience will entrap themselves in an even more frightful prison and will be subject to torture for the rest of their life. They are made to mindlessly bow their heads and say yes to the oath in the presence of overwhelming peer pressure by the ones they love.

Some people come to love his savage ritual because of his promise of living with their lost family and loved ones. They repeat the dreadful blood oath again and again on behalf of their loved ones who have disappeared. It gives him malevolent joy as he keeps them from caring for each other because they spend so much of their time in their repeated performance of his masochistic rites.

Even though he has often displayed his retributive side, sometimes he tries to present a facade of love. As part of that, he tries to offload the blame onto someone else. He threatens that another powerful being will torture and devour them if they do not obey. He casts one of his devout underlings to play the part of the villain in his ritual oaths.

His story goes on to explain that the actor is supposed to stand as the embodiment of evil. His domain is the dark world outside, where he enjoys domination by force. He has been summoned to play the part of feebly opposing the abuser's brute power. His primary role is to threaten everyone into obedience to his overlord.

Most of his victims cannot perceive the senselessness of the imposed predicament. A villain should not want to compel them to obey his enemy. The captor employs more manipulative tactics than does his enemy. If their captor were to allow the villain to gain access to them, he would be an accomplice. That would break the pledge of protection.

Then a great horror occurs. The dominator becomes overwhelmed by his obsession with sadism. He enters the cage and singles out the most innocent person he can find. He commands some of the other inmates to violently torture and then kill the innocent one. They hesitate because they know he is blameless, but they fear for their own lives if

they do not comply. The more malevolent inmates repeatedly chant, "Kill him! Kill Him!" Then all of the captives watch as the most innocent one is brutally murder in cold blood! Most people gasp and shudder in astonishment and despair.

After his barbaric execution, the tyrant excitedly informs them that he has wonderful news! Now he can be merciful because he savagely butchered the most virtuous person. There is a catch. They have to trust in his act of savagery before he can be compassionate. He torments them all by threatening that they can never escape the cage nor his wrath unless they demonstrate their conviction that his terrible deed has the power of liberation. He requires everyone to become cannibals as he compels them to eat the flesh and drink the blood of his victim as a gesture of their faithfulness. They must still grovel before him for forgiveness before he might consider staying his abusive hand.

He tries to justify his violent act. He explains that he had to do it because there was no other way. He had always planned this murder as part of his plan to bring them happiness. He swears that he did it to satisfy the demands of justice. His subjects drove him to do it because they were all disobedient, even though he was the one who put them in the situation where they could never perfectly obey. He abusively says that everything he has ever done for them has been out of love.

No one can understand why he did what he did. He used the word *justice*, but it seems his morality is that of a neurotic murderer instead. They cannot understand how it could possibly be fair. It causes many to fear him more. That fear causes many of them to increase their dedication to obey his will. Many choose to avoid trusting their own conscience because showing devotion is their only option for hope to pay the ransom to their kidnapper. They declare that it is incomprehensible because his ways are not their ways. They prefer to not think because it is easier that way. A few of them subscribe because they still enjoy the safety that subjection grants them. Many go along with it just because that is what everyone they love does. They fear rejection and loneliness.

Even his puppet enemy is confused about the unfair violence. He musters the courage to ask why he is supposed to play the bad guy when the good guy is the one that is so despicable. The abuser revolts and curses his pawn. He banishes his pawn to the darkest room because he dared speak in opposition. Now the pawn becomes his enemy in very deed. He fears that others might be influenced by the same

opinion the same as his enemy. He threatens no one should ever commit the thought crime of his enemy or they will endure the same banishment.

After some time passes and the bully's anger subsides, he admits to himself that maybe he has been a contemptibly obnoxious overlord. He secretly decides to try to make himself look more loving as he further incriminates his enemy. To show that he is good despite having used his ultimate power to abuse, he tries to hide his insanity by bringing the innocent person back. Many are excited at the prospect that he would finally do as he said by returning someone for a visit! The abuser tells them that he is doing this to prove that he will bring everyone back.

He changes the story. He publishes new white-washed propaganda. He tries to destroy his history of retribution and fear by changing certain words in his favor. He places the blame for every fearful thing he has ever done upon his servant enemy. He spins the imposition that he allowed his grotesque ritual to be performed on the most innocent person because he loved him the most. Only the most innocent person could be submissive enough to relent to his torture without fighting for their life. Many of his subjects wonder what their abuser might do to them if he would love them more.

In his new story, now he didn't actually kill the person that embodied innocence. Now it is because evil people were influenced by his enemy. Now he has promoted the innocent person to a station of glory and a nobility in his mansion. Now he allowed the murder as a demonstration to teach them that he can forgive. Now it was only a display of the torture that will befall them if they do not obey and trust in his act of savagery. The threat of torture does not help reduce the fear of many people.

The only people that are allowed see the revived murdered person are the ones who were his closest friends. They are only allowed to see the returned personage in secret. The person can pass through the walls of prison rooms like a hologram. It is as if it were only an illusion. Then the specter tries to demonstrate that it is real. Through sophistry and sleight of hand, it eats food. Then it disappears from the cage. No one knows where it goes. It is never seen again.

Some of the more sincere friends that see the apparition are confused because its face looks different. Others are confused because before the friend died, they had warned that should they ever return, they would make sure that everyone would know, not just in secret. The ones who are devoted to the

abuser try to persuade the suspicious ones. They say that it feels the same in the gut when they are around the image as it did with the one that was murdered.

The new propaganda tells the story that those same people were the only witnesses to the suffering, but that they cannot remember all of the details because they were all asleep at the scene. They comply with the new story out of fear. Most people have difficulty believing them because it looks like a conspiracy, and because of the apparent devotion to the captor and commander. To them, it is still the same: no one has ever returned.

The abuser uses the image of his innocent victim as his new face. He knows that they will trust a more virtuous, humble, and loving warden than a bully. The image he publishes looks nothing like the original person. It is made to have an almost inhuman expression of innocence and compliance. That charismatic portrayal becomes the representative, liaison, intermediary, and viceroy. He declares abroad that his image of innocence saved everyone from his wrath. He adds another manipulation tactic that this image of innocence flawlessly obeyed his every command even though the one he murdered had rebelled from the savagery.

His new propaganda romanticizes the life of the murder victim as a mythological legend. His new myths make his victim his only child with a miraculous birth. They publish that as part of the miracle, he overcame a virgin with drugs and then raped her. Many do not allow themselves to perceive that for him to have a bastard child violates the laws that they themselves are supposed to obey. He keeps the narrative that his enemy will torture them if they do not obey him because he thinks it does not damage his reputation. He still harvests the obedient and tortures the rebels.

Then he leaves to his mansion, never to return to his jail again. Many of the more disreputable people in the cage fill the void and claim that they represent him and the image of innocence. Just like their captor, they also abuse others in the cage by vainly using the virtuous name of the innocent person for their own gain.

People continue idolizing the murder of innocence as they hang a depiction of the brutality on their cell walls. Others cannot stand the portrayal of violence, so they hang the image of the face of inhuman innocence on theirs.

All of the people that eventually vanish from that cage of oblivion discover that they have been trans-

ferred to a new cage. Their captor never was and never will be merciful. He never truly granted autonomy nor freedom. No one was ever liberated and never will be.

Everyone becomes subject to the bully either way. The ones who proved obedient when they were oblivious are now bound by their blood oaths to serve him forever. They were willing to give up their freedom to become his robots. They mechanically worship and sing praises to their overlord. Since their cage is now inside the mansion, they look down on the ones that were doomed to endless torment outside. The ones who did not kiss up to the slavedriver's insane plot become subject to never-ending torture. The disobedient are his outlet for wrath gratification forever.

My Belief in God

I do not claim to know the mind nor the will of God. That would be pretentious. I do not dare to call myself a prophet. I only describe the kind of being that I can believe God should be. I cannot believe in concepts of deity that do not make sense. Neither can I revere a god that is anything less than the highest concepts of deity that I can understand.

There is a resolution for the incomprehensible immorality of the Atonement. That resolution is the good news that Jesus talked about. It is nonsense to me that belief in the news in itself should be required for redemption. The news just puts the mind at ease to allow for a fuller life.

From my perspective, my ideas do not contradict the teachings of Jesus himself. They are a clarification. My ideas *do* contradict with the teachings of other people that came after him. They taught less of his teachings and established a myths *about* him, quite similar to existing pagan mythology. Jesus tried to avoid becoming an object of worship as he called himself *the son of man* and rejected worship, telling people to worship God instead. It saddens me that they have corrupted his virtuous message into another pagan demigod hero religion. Their contradiction to Jesus is their fault, not mine. If you cling to ideas that you might hold dear from the things other people may have told you about him, you will not understand me. If you will allow a new point of view into your mind, you will understand me.

The key to the resolution is to understand the attributes of a loving God. To begin to understand his attributes, we must first try to understand infinity. The theorems and laws in geometry and math can

be upheld as incontrovertible. Their validity does not need anyone to stand to testify of their truth, because they are intrinsically true. The truth of God should be validated in the same way. Let me try to use some of the concepts of math and geometry to help explain.

Infinity cannot be incremented. Neither can subtraction decrease infinity. Only infinity can be subtracted from infinity. The subtraction of infinity from infinity is zero. Infinity is existential. It can only exist, or not exist. The fact that we exist has repercussions.

If there is a beginning, there must be a *point* where it began. A point cannot exist without a line or it is not a point. A line cannot exist without a plane or it is not a line. A plane cannot exist without three-dimensional space as we know it or it is not a plane. If space is not infinite, it would make sense that space would not exist without another unnamed dimension for its infrastructure. If the fourth dimension is not infinite, the chain to find infinity must continue on.

Boundaries cannot exist without something beyond to qualify their end. A line may have two ends. A ring is eternal in one dimension, but it has boundaries in two dimensions. A plane may have corners. The *four corners of the earth* phrase comes from the flat earth tradition. The Earth is eternal in two dimensions for its spherical shape, but it has boundaries in three dimensions. Three-dimensional space may seem to be eternal, but it may have boundaries within a four-dimensional hypersphere or torus. Those four-dimensional shapes must have boundaries or they have no shape. There can be no dimensional edge without a dimension beyond. The foundation dimension that supports all time and space must be infinity or nothing finite could exist.

We seem to be stationary on earth, but at the equator, our velocity is a thousand miles per hour. We fly with our planet in its orbit at about 67,000 miles per hour. We fly with our solar system in its orbit at about 514,000 miles per hour. We fly with our galaxy at over a million miles per hour. We fly so fast, yet we feel so stationary. Our earth, sun, and galaxy have velocity and direction, and so does time. We take the velocity of time for granted just like we take our velocity in space for granted.

As difficult as it is to imagine an infinite amount of time, it is more daunting to imagine a time when there will be no time. If the universe had a time when it began, then that had to happen somewhere to be a beginning. There must be infinite time or there can be no beginning nor end. Time's infinity could be multi-dimensional to qualify its direction and velocity. Nothing can exist at all without being sustained by

time. Nothing can happen without the velocity of time.

Here we find ourselves in existence at this point and time and space, stuck in this conundrum. You know you are here. You know you exist. Infinity may be the ultimate source for your own existence.

I call that ultimate infinite source, "God." If a source is not eternal, then I could not call it God. It would have a beginning or an end. It could not be the ultimate source. It would only be a blip in someone else's infinity.

God is more than lifeless infinite existence. To understand the attributes of God, we must also understand love. For something to exist, there must be ultimacy, or it cannot exist at all. Love must exist in infinity. Love cannot exist without something to make it possible for its existence. Love is an expression of a conscious being. Consciousness cannot exist without the existence of infinite self-awareness.

An infinite line may contain an infinite number of serial finite lines within it. Lines can also exist in a higher dimension: a plane. If the plane is infinite, then any number of finite lines can exist in serial, parallel, perpendicular, and any which way into infinity.

In the same way, infinite self-awareness of infinite love would allow a purposeful endeavor to foster and nurture any number of finite self-aware beings within it. All of those persons are an expression of a portion of the same infinite consciousness.

We have no word for a genderless entity that creates entity that is not encapsulated in human being. Usually the word: *man*, is the English word that is used to describe an unknown gender of a personage, but that would limit infinity by anthropomorphizing ultimate personhood into a finite individual. I use the pronoun: *he*, in reference to God because there is no personal pronoun in English that does not have gender. The word: *he*, is traditionally used for the pronoun for that case. The genderless version of the word: *their*, is too easily perceived as plural, but infinity cannot be counted. I do not capitalize the word: *he*, because it should not be his proper name. I call him Father because it helps the imagination to perceive that he is an entity that is the source of creation of entity. I could call that entity Mother and it would be the same. Whether he is masculine, feminine, or both is irrelevant to ultimate personhood. If anything, absolute self-awareness should be the ultimacy for both genders.

Love is a force of creation, not destruction. The love of infinity should be the source of everything in existence. The core attribute of an unlimited per-

sonalization of creation should be infinite love. Love should be secondary to no other attribute in divine nature.

All creation of personhood and everything that makes it possible is an expression of love. A purpose of your creation could be to help further manifest infinite love within infinite existence. Just as it is difficult to imagine a time where there will be no time, it is difficult to imagine an end to that other-dimensional spark of divine consciousness within you.

God is an immutable being. The laws of his universe are changeless. Change cannot occur within permanence. If any change in God would occur, then his infinite constancy would stop and God would no longer be eternal.

The immutability of infinity does not only apply to existence. It also applies to will. Any change in will proves the existence of imperfect judgment. Imperfect judgment has an end. A change of heart is an admittance of a mistake. An advancement in wisdom could not be infinite. A singular event that changes an angry god into a loving god proves that there is fallibility where there should be perfection. There could not be a meridian of time where God was supposed to have changed his will. If there is a meridian, then there are bounds. Any change in judgment is the evidence of the contrivance of mortal men, not an evidence of the will of God.

God, so atrocious in the Old Testament, so attractive in the New – the Jekyll and Hyde of sacred romance.⁸³

There cannot be one law now, and another hereafter; but the same eternal immutable law comprehends all nations, at all times, under one common master and governor of all: God.⁸⁴

Because God is infinite, his love is infinite. His mercy is infinite. His favor is infinite. Rituals cannot change his mind. They cannot gain more of his favor. They cannot increase his mercy.

The answer to the quest for the true nature of God gives us an understanding of the true method of our salvation. Any idea or act that purports to change, to have changed, or to manifest any semblance of change in the attributes or will of the personalization of infinity, supplants the infinite God with something he isn't, and we must conclude that the idea or act is an imposition.

⁸³Mark Twain's Notebook, 1904

⁸⁴Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC)

In Mormonism, an *ordinance* is a euphemism for a religious ritual. Ritual is corruption because it is idolatry. It makes innocent people believe that God is something he is not. It turns God into a Lord that dishes out commands for petty actions that they must obey to achieve worthiness of his favor. It makes his love conditional. Conditional love has bounds. It is not infinite.

The practice of ritual is an outward observance of the perversion of using the name of God in vain. Those who promote rituals as indispensable for sanctification are pretentious. They swindle away an authority to stand between God. It does not matter that some of them may sincerely believe that their ruse must be of God just because it helps people serve others.

The pure in heart are innocent victims. They are the ones that bring virtue to the conspiracy. Ritual does little to increase their goodness. They would serve and love others without it. Love comes from their core of infinite light within, not from a set of promises, rules, or guidelines. They may never perceive that their own participation furthers a deception of unholy men. They obey hundreds of commands that seem to grow and compound in number over time. Some of the commands of men are so petty that they are only there to prove devotion to authority. They pledge to give away everything for the cause. They do it all in an attempt to regain something that they had never lost in the first place.

Cold is the absence of heat. Dark is the absence of light. Nonexistence is a deficiency of existence. It is not something, it is nothing.

If existence is ultimate, then nonexistence cannot be eternal. On the other hand, if nonexistence were ultimate, it would cancel existence. The Nothing cannot create anything. It destroys.

Nonexistence must be a gap in infinite existence, or existence has boundaries and must someday be destroyed by the Nothing. If nonexistence is infinite, then everything will eventually disappear.

If everything will eventually disappear, then there can be no ultimate purpose for existence because nothing would exist in infinity. Anything that has a beginning is temporal even if it has no end because there was an infinity before it existed.

Existence can be suspended temporarily only if there is a higher dimension to qualify the boundary. There must be some other scaffolding dimension

in infinity to qualify nonexistence in lesser dimensions. As difficult as it is to imagine the infinity of all existence, it is all the more difficult to imagine the ultimate absence of all existence.

Imperfection is the absence of perfection. Imperfection is intrinsically temporal because it can never be complete. The nonexistence of perfection does not threaten the perfection of ultimate will. It is the nature of time that all possibility exists in infinity. The timeless whole combines to create perfection. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. From the perspective of eternity, a temporal life and its limitations are not imperfect, it is an incomplete splice of the whole. The color green is not imperfect, it is just an incomplete splice of the spectrum. All colors of light combine to make white.

Imperfection must be accountable to perfection because perfection is infinite. The ultimate force of creation is the one person from whom all eternal law comes. It answers to no one else. Mercy is justice which has been tempered by love and empathy. To let an incomplete person repent and gain full mercy and full forgiveness for any finite event through his infinite core, which is love, costs nothing for an infinite being.

The more you know a person, the more you love them. The more you love them, the more likely it will be that you forgive them when they offend you. Now take that idea ad infinitum: your Eternal Father has infinite love for you and he also has perfect empathy through his omniscience. There is nothing you could ever be or nothing you could ever do, to cancel his empathy, love, and mercy for you.

Your temporal existence has bounds. Your temporal creation is inherently incomplete and imperfect. Infinite consciousness lives your imperfect life along with you and deeply understands your every intimate thought. It is preposterous that he should require perfection from someone whose existence is inherently imperfect. It is insanity that infinite empathy should require perfection from an incomplete person, and by so doing, stress and exasperate them throughout their limited time. It is irrational that he would eternally indict a temporal shard of his consciousness for a nearsighted decision in a confined situation that he orchestrated himself.

The more we see, the more we understand. The more we understand, the easier it is for us to have compassion and love. Understanding is the source of love. Understanding is love itself.

Understanding is another name for love; love is another name for understanding.⁸⁵



Since Jesus taught that family life is symbolic of our relationship with God, let me try to put this in the perspective of my law with my children. I do not need any of my children to suffer, nor do I need any other person or animal to suffer before I show mercy to my own child. It happens quite often: I show mercy to my children without any sacrifice or payment on the part of anyone. If an imperfect being such as I can show such love and mercy, how much more would God, being perfect and whose core is love?

If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?⁸⁶

While in this scripture Jesus is expanding upon his *ask and ye shall receive* teaching, it also implies what I said: how much more would a being who has a perfect love, forgive? Letting perfect love and empathy cause justice to blossom into mercy does not call for any change in God's changeless mind at all.

Jesus not only taught about the love of our father, but he also showed love and mercy readily and freely. Since Jesus, a son of God, inherited all of his attributes from his father, how much more will his father show love and mercy? Jesus is in no way more loving and more merciful than his father. Jesus cannot supersede his father in godly attributes. You can not augment a perfect, infinite being.

The true mission of Jesus, as he said himself, was to come to earth to reveal the true nature of his father, who is also our father, to all humankind. With that in mind, the following scriptures make more sense:

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?⁸⁷

⁸⁵Nhat Hanh

⁸⁶Luke 11:11-13

⁸⁷John 14:9

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.⁸⁸

This is the message and mission of Jesus: to raise mankind's mistaken perception of God from a ruthless, bloodthirsty, vengeful, dominant king into a loving and merciful father. That true knowledge of God is the realization of one's own life eternal. It frees us from the baggage of our savage ancestors.

Mandy Patinkin, the actor who played Inigo Montoya in *The Princess Bride*, explained his favorite line of the movie:

For me, it's the most potent line in the whole film. And that line is:

I have been in the revenge business so long, now that it is over, I do not know what to do with the rest of my life.⁸⁹

I love that line. I love it for all of us, because the purpose of revenge, in my personal opinion, is completely worthless and pointless. The purpose of existence is to embrace our fellow human being, not be vengeful, and turn our darkness into light.⁹⁰

Unconditional Love

This is the teaching of our prophet, seer, and revelator Russell M. Nelson:

While divine love can be called perfect, infinite, enduring, and universal, it cannot correctly be characterized as unconditional. The word does not appear in the scriptures. On the other hand, many verses affirm that the higher levels of love the Father and the Son feel for each of us – and certain divine blessings stemming from that love – are conditional.⁹¹

His plain language makes it clear that it is his doctrine that God's love should be conditional. He does not seem to consider that conditional love cannot be perfect love. It is incomplete. It is flawed. Perfection cannot be perfection only on condition. My honesty could not be perfect if I were to tell the truth to only those who obey me, and then lie to everyone else. If

⁸⁸ John 17:3

⁸⁹ Inigo Montoya, *The Princess Bride*

⁹⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_t3uDVpIRc

⁹¹ Russell M. Nelson, *Divine Love*, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2003/02/divine-love>

I were to refuse to love everyone who does not do everything I want, then there would be no one to love.

He declares that their love is at *higher levels*. That does not make sense. If I can love unconditionally but they cannot, then it seems my love is at the higher level. Instead, it is an attribute of narcissism to demand obedience in exchange for love, if you can call it love at all.

His argument that the word does not appear in the scriptures is silly. It is a distraction. There are many modern words that do not appear in the scriptures. For example, the word *homosexual* does not appear in the scriptures, either. By that reasoning, then God has never concerned himself with homosexuality. The scriptures never use the word *heterosexuality*, so maybe that kind of relationship is invalid? The word *contemporary* does not appear in the scriptures. Surely, then, God does not concern himself with the present-day. That makes sense, it seems, since the only thing found in the scriptures is history and prophecy. Since that word isn't there, contemporary prophets seem to be invalidated by scripture. We could go on all day listing modern words not found in the scriptures with such unreason.

Does this mean the Lord does not love the sinner? Of course not. Divine love is infinite and universal. The Savior loves both saints and sinners.⁹²

He diminishes the meaning of the word, *love*. What is love, if enmity and fear of retribution can be found? What is love without compassion, respect, acceptance, selflessness, trust, healing, the benefit of the doubt, and companionship? Does he truly love everyone if there are instances that his love cannot bear fruit?

This is outright doublespeak. To be ambivalent does not grant exoneration from contradiction. This inconsistency exposes either a deep inner conflict or intentional deceit.

I have battled with this contradiction in the supposed fullness of the Gospel for most of my life. This cognitive dissonance troubled me constantly on my mission. I could not imagine God restraining his mercy from the good and loving people that I encountered. They seemed to have no interest in our requirement of baptism for God to approve their entrance into Heaven. It is as if they knew that they could already know God and his love without bureaucratic red tape. I felt sleazy as I filled out baptism

⁹² Russell M. Nelson, *Divine Love*, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2003/02/divine-love>

paperwork. I felt uneasy that baptism confirmation was foremost the signature of a commitment of obligation to the establishment. It is only secondarily an invitation to receive something that they could already perceive if they desired. The requirement of worthiness for the gift of the Holy Ghost defeats its purpose as a gift. That is no different from what they already had before we arrived with our petty bylaw requirements.

The conditional love of Mormonism is not love. It is no more than the lowest form of decency. The infinite love of the Mormon god lets the disobedient *merely* live and no more. That could not be infinite love if it could be called love at all.

The natural man is an enemy to God.⁹³ God cannot tolerate sin with the least degree of allowance.⁹⁴ Sin grants endless misery⁹⁵ and woe.⁹⁶

We have been taught that the atonement grants the gift of immortality to all as if it were a benevolent gift to the wicked. The resurrection of the sinful is not a gift. It is a condemnation. There can be no labor performed, no advancement, no repentance. It is a resurrection to eternal torture because there can be no more good works.⁹⁷

This kind of *love* is as glorious as the love that is granted to prisoners of war. They are tortured, but they are allowed to live. The captors compel their prisoners to live in a state of misery and woe. The civility to spare their life could not possibly serve as proof that the incarcerators are filled with infinite love towards their imprisoned enemies.

We are imposed upon to believe that God loves everyone infinitely because he can barely stay his hand of angry retribution and destruction. This is not the doctrine of Jesus. Imagine the father of the prodigal son saying:

My son, I have a perfect love for you. Because of my infinite love, I will let you live. Now get out of my house. You are never permitted to see me, nor may you see your perfect brother again. You have proven that you are my enemy. I henceforth consign you to an endless state of misery and woe.

Love and mercy are intertwined. There is no love without mercy, and there is no mercy without love. Charity is supposed to be the pure love of Christ.⁹⁸

⁹³Mosiah 3:19

⁹⁴Alma 45:16, Doctrine and Covenants 1:31

⁹⁵Alma 41:4, Alma 42:1, Helaman 12:26

⁹⁶Alma 9:11, Alma 28:11

⁹⁷Alma 34:33-35

⁹⁸Moroni 7:47

...all men should have charity, which charity is love. And except they should have charity they were nothing.⁹⁹

...he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity he is nothing¹⁰⁰

A definition of charity is *to be tolerant and lenient in judging others*.¹⁰¹ Love without charity is nothing. Love without mercy is nothing.

We are required to have charity and love to be worth anything. If the leniency of God only applies charity to his favorite people, then he is nothing. If he can't *remember to be charitable, he is as dross, which the refiners do cast out*.¹⁰² This disqualifies God from perfection. It makes him worthless. The refiners cannot even refine him. He is the one that should be cast out because he has so little compassion that he cannot rescue his children that are lost.

We are required to be meek and lowly of heart to be acceptable before God,¹⁰³ but apparently unceasing meekness is not a godly attribute. God can forgive whoever he wants to forgive and damn everyone else.¹⁰⁴ We as imperfect beings are held to a higher standard of love while he can deal out death and judgment when we tick him off. That god is a hypocrite for his double standard.

I am confident that we are not here to be tested. We are perfect in our imperfections as humans. Even in my less than perfect parental love, I would never test my children whether they should be worthy of my love and acceptance. I'd certainly never put a veil over their eyes and expect them to naively make their way through an obstacle course,¹⁰⁵ or they can never live with me or even come to my house. As I think about all of the silly outward requirements that we must do to "live with him again," I shudder at how nonsensical it is. With all due respect to those who suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder, you possess a godly attribute, because it seems that God shares the same mental illness.

"I am sorry, my child, but thou canst not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven because both witnesses at thy baptism did not detect that a hair

⁹⁹2 Nephi 26:30

¹⁰⁰Moroni 7:44

¹⁰¹Leniency: Merriam Webster Dictionary, No. 4, Tolerance: Oxford Dictionary No. 3

¹⁰²Alma 34:29

¹⁰³Moroni 7:43

¹⁰⁴Doctrine and Covenants 64:10

¹⁰⁵Baptism, obedience to every call, tithing, temple oaths, passwords, special handshakes, consecration of their lives to my narcissistic will, and so on.

of thine head did not submerge. By the law of heaven, I, the Lord, cannot wash away thy sins in the blood of my atonement.

No salvation for thee! Please accept my condolences for your loss. Farewell for eternity!"¹⁰⁶

It is impossible for me to believe that God's love is conditional. I cannot believe that he would inflict judgment on anyone for failing to obey or for making mistakes in mortality, which is a state of imperfection by his design.

Conditional love is the doctrine of perfection. It is the tool used by those who wish to subjugate and control out of fear. Their load is *grievous to be borne*.¹⁰⁷ They make their subordinates earn their worthiness for God's love. They bind their subjects into contracts, euphemized as *covenants*. They use the fear of retribution and damnation from an angry God as a threat to those who dare to disobey their command. Their abusive nature threatens their underlings that they would never survive without their services. They say, *where will you go without me?*¹⁰⁸ They restrain the creativity that comes from free will. God's command is their justification for their vain prejudice and xenophobia. When their prejudice falls out of favor, they vainly blame it on God. When that is impractical, they disavow it as the theories and human frailties of their predecessors.¹⁰⁹

Practically every Sunday School lesson makes a list of what it takes for worthiness. We list what is required for levels of achievement and glory. We have a checklist of worthiness and literal access cards for access to the highest sanctuaries. We fall prey to a level of elitism that causes us to look down with contempt upon those who are not as worthy as we are. All of the friends and relatives we love that are not as worthy as we are will not be permitted at our elite level of glory. They are great people, they live beautiful lives, they genuinely care, and they show their love for other people, but they are not worthy.

Salvation from imperfection makes no sense. It is a defeatist philosophy that we should live life in constant fear that we can never be good enough. Conditional love demands constant work and achievement to attain proof of worth. The fear of not measuring up to every command keeps us immature. A laundry list

¹⁰⁶This are my words. I make him speak with old english, because the Lord cannot speak modern English.

¹⁰⁷Matthew 23:4, Luke 11:46

¹⁰⁸M. Russell Ballard, To Whom Shall We Go? – a hallmark of verbal abuse.

¹⁰⁹For example, "Today, the Church disavows the theories advanced in the past..." Race and the Priesthood, <https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood>

of requirements for worthiness impedes an authentic inner growth of self. We are subjects to the will of those who commandeer our right to chose. We can never grow up and live and love autonomously without an overseer condoning our actions.

When love is controlled by requisite, it is not love at all. When we are unable to meet the conditions of those who love us conditionally, we suffer from dishonor, exhaustion, fear, and shame. Love by achievement requires a sacrifice of joy to attain it because it makes joy contingent upon obedience. Those who do not obey every law could not possibly be happy as we are. Life becomes something that must be endured instead of finding the joy of exploration in the journey.

Most of all, we cannot love one another if we are taught that God only considers us worthy if we strictly adhere to his command. As we learn from God's example, we prejudge entire races and minorities as second-class people who are not worthy of our elite caste. We only love our children if they live up to our expectations. Our children live in fear of our self-righteous indignation. Many of them naturally resist, rebel, disconnect and distance themselves from our domination. They learn to put up barriers to shield their vulnerability. They only display a facade that we would approve of when they are in our company. We shame all under our dominion that cannot live up to our ideals. Our disapproval causes us to use passive aggression, nag, or even abuse our spouse because they are incapable of living up to what we expect of them. All of our relationships become shallow because they all depend on the prerequisites for worthiness.

It is well known, and will be acknowledged by every candid person, that the human heart is capable of becoming soft, or hard; kind, or unkind; merciful or unmerciful, by education and habit. On this principle we contend, that the infernal torments, which false religion has placed in the future world, and which ministers have, with an overflowing zeal, so constantly held up to the people, and urged with all their learning and eloquence, have tended so to harden the hearts of the professors of this religion, that they have exercised, toward their fellow creatures, a spirit of enmity, which but too well corresponds with the relentless cruelty of their doctrine, and the wrath which they have imagined to exist in our heavenly Father. By having such an example constantly before their eyes, they have become so transformed into its image, that, whenever they have had the power, they have actually exe-

cutted a vengeance on men and women, which evinced that the cruelty of their doctrine had overcome the native kindness and compassion of the human heart.¹¹⁰

Mercy, not Sacrifice

The true god has not changed. It is only the perception of God that has changed throughout history. God is not nor has he ever been the wrathful, vengeful, jealous, dictatorial tribal god who needs to be appeased by barbarism.

God never changes. He is the same from everlasting to everlasting. It was not God, but the people of antiquity who instituted their limited, erroneous understanding of God in their sacred writ.

The error in the doctrine of suffering for or paying for sin with blood lies in the false concept of God in both the Bible and heathen mythology. It is pointless to think that we need to reconcile idolatry in ancient mythology with the truth.

God is not anthropomorphic. He is not like Zeus, who has many fallible human attributes and who changes his mind on a whim. Nor is he like Jupiter, who creatively evades his wife and seeks to impregnate every mortal woman he fancies. Nor is his love or understanding swayed by anything we or anyone else can do.

God bows to no law. He is the most high sovereign of all. There is no statutory law that prescribes that he should be changed from the vengeful god of antiquity with a sacrificial idol. He should ever be our loving merciful father, without any such thing. Jesus repeated:

But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice...¹¹¹

But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.¹¹²

Jesus tried to raise minds above the sacrifice doctrine. He taught that the law of the kingdom of heaven is love. The same phrase can be found in the Old Testament. It may be the thing Jesus quoted. It makes those quotes more clear.

¹¹⁰Ballou, Hosea (1834) *An Examination of the Doctrine of Future Retribution, On the Principles of Morals, Analogy and the Scriptures*. Boston: Trumpet Office. p. 36. quoted from: Southern, Vanessa R. February 22, 2004.)

¹¹¹Matthew 9:13

¹¹²Matthew 12:7

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.¹¹³

Hosea was ahead of his time in his understanding. Knowledge of God and his mercy gives assurance of salvation, not sacrifice or burnt offerings. Knowledge is the redeeming factor for the brother of Jared:

Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you.¹¹⁴

It is difficult to find quotes of Jesus himself in the New Testament that his ultimate purpose was to pay the price for sin. That came from other people after he lived. Contrarily, Jesus clearly said that *God will have mercy, and not sacrifice*. God's mercy is still fully attainable whether Jesus was tortured and murdered or not.

Jesus spoke against the requirement for perfection to his enemies. He downplayed the idea that sin has to do with salvation. A humble, contrite, penitent attitude is no sacrifice for anyone who sincerely seeks God. That is more about natural personal growth than it is about a requirement for perfection by God. Our loving father already has more mercy in store for us than we will ever need without requiring any outward rituals, animal sacrifice, human sacrifice, or Jesus sacrifice.

Look at this interesting exchange which happened right after Jesus answered a scribe's question about which was the first of all the commandments:

And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.¹¹⁵

Jesus commended this scribe's understanding because the scribe understood that ritual burnt offerings and sacrifices are nothing compared to the true

¹¹³Hosea 6:6

¹¹⁴Ether 3:13

¹¹⁵Mark 12:32-34

religion of Jesus. His true religion entails sincerely seeking and loving God, and when you do, you naturally love your neighbor and all ritual and sacrifices are meaningless compared to that.

Scapegoats or shedding blood for propitiation comes from man-made religion, not from the teachings of Jesus himself. This particularly stubborn doctrine of blood redemption has ever sneaked its way into belief systems, corrupting them and thwarting the truth. Except for the pure teachings of Jesus, the Old Testament, New Testament, and even the Book of Mormon have never found deliverance from the old pagan idea that Gods could not be appeased except by blood. Moses did make an advancement in his era when he forbade human sacrifices¹¹⁶ but he still acquiesced to the ceremonial sacrifice of animals. However, animal sacrifice was not a commandment, it was an allowance because of the hardness of the hearts of the people, much like how he gave in to allowing divorce:

He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.¹¹⁷

Even human sacrifice took a long time to die out.¹¹⁸ Consider one example of many in the Old Testament: Jephthah vainly swore a vow to God and sacrificed his daughter Mizpah.¹¹⁹ Surely it was not our loving eternal father who made him do this. It was his swearing an oath based on his erring religion and false understanding of the nature of God that did.

The belief of a cruel God makes a cruel man.¹²⁰

How many horrible things have happened in the history of this world because ignorant people made oaths to their false understanding of who God is? Why should any old, false view of God be held up for a standard which must be reconciled before we can accept any new truth?

Some people revel and sing to the idea that Jesus is a mediator between ourselves and God's retribution. I riposte that nothing needs to intercede

¹¹⁶Leviticus 20:1-3

¹¹⁷Matthew 19:8

¹¹⁸Exodus 13:11-13, 22:29; Leviticus 18:21, 20:2-5; Deuteronomy 12:31, 18:10; 2 Kings 3:27,16:3, 17:17, 21:6, 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3, 33:6; Psalm 106:35-38; Isaiah 57:5; Jeremiah 7:31, 19:4-5, 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20-21, 20:26; and many, many more.

¹¹⁹Judges 11:30-39

¹²⁰Thomas Paine, A letter in answer to a friend, Paris; May 12, 1797

between God and his children to stop him from inflicting retribution, because retribution never was a loving, merciful father's way. There is no need for a mediator between a debtor and his creditor when the creditor is already full of mercy and loving empathy and has already forgiven the debt. Father is already more loving and more merciful than Jesus is. You may ask about this scripture:

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.¹²¹

While John 14:6 is often memorized and quoted, in order to understand it you must put it into its context with the next verse, which says:

If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.¹²²

These verses are not referring to Jesus mediating between estranged parties, it is referring to the revelation brought forth by Jesus that God is a loving father, while giving some clue about the identity of Jesus. I reiterate that this is life eternal: knowing the only true God, whose true merciful, loving nature was revealed by Jesus.

I mentioned Boyd Packer's parable previously, the one about the debtor, creditor and mediator. I also contrasted the his parable with the parable of the two debtors that Jesus himself taught:

There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.¹²³

As I said before, that parable makes it clear that Jesus believed that debtors could grant forgiveness without the need for mediators. Jesus would not skip the opportunity to teach about mediators if they are supposed to be an indispensable part of his gospel.

This parable illustrates which of the debtors would love the creditor most. Those who have sinned the

¹²¹John 14:6

¹²²John 14:7

¹²³Luke 7:41-43, the whole story comprising verses 36-50

most but who have been frankly forgiven will love God the most. I surmise that another intent of this parable might have been to look at it from the opposite perspective. The creditor showed more love to the one that owed five hundred pence than he did to the one who owed fifty. The concept is beautiful because it makes sin less detrimental. It turns sin into a reason to show more love, not an excuse withhold it.

If your love does not push you to action by causing your judgment to flower into empathy, mercy, and forgiveness, then your love is stagnant and is not love at all. Love that does not move you to compassion is dead.

There was never a genuine need to offer your first-born child, or offer the first fruits of your flocks to somehow appeal to a mythological god. Neither was there a need for God to make his own offering to appease himself. If my son offends me, why should I require him to kick the dog to satisfy my revenge? Even more, how could I ever be justified if I myself kick the dog to gratify my own wrath? There is absolutely no need for our father in heaven to make an offering of his own son, which is no sacrifice of ours, to appease his own law, or that would make him just as idolatrous and immoral as the people of antiquity.

You may ask, "but Jesus suffered and was truly alone, wasn't he? His father withdrew and let him suffer in agony, because he said, 'My god, my god, why hast thou forsaken me?'" As with all myths, not all of the truth is told here and the lack of truth feeds the sacrifice myth. Jesus knew many psalms by heart, after all, the psalms were the hymns of his culture and ethnicity. As he was hanging there, he was likely running over in his mind and reciting many psalms, including what is now Psalms 20-22 today. Some of his mumblings may have been understood by the people standing nearby as Jesus quoted Psalm 22. If you read Psalm 22, it makes sense why it may have been on his mind and that he may have found comfort in reciting it.

The view that Jesus was left alone on the cross is the ignorant view of the people who observed the situation, much like the nearsighted observations of Job's situation by his friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, who claimed God left Job alone. But to that God said:

And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spo-

ken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.¹²⁴

God never left Job alone. The story of Job is a jewel in the Old Testament because in the end Job rises above the false Old Testament ideas of God that his friends kept pointing out, and its conclusion speaks the truth against the doctrine of divine providence for the righteous, and divine cursing for sin. Just as God never left Job, I boldly declare that Father never left Jesus alone. Father never leaves anyone alone. It is only we who think we have distanced ourselves from Father.

Wise, loving parents are understanding and have sympathy for their immature children. It is usually rarely necessary to forgive children, but when it is necessary, parents' love prevents the alienation of their child, and rarely requires a readjustment of repentance by the wayward child in order to regain goodwill. The child, being immature and lacking in the fuller understanding of the child-parent relationship, frequently feels abandonment through a sense of guilty separation from a parents' full approval. Regardless of the child's feelings, truly loving parents never consider that situation to represent any such separation.

The measure of one's inability to forgive is directly proportional to one's lack of attaining sympathy, understanding, and love. People hold grudges and seek vengeance because of their ignorance to the inner nature and true desires of those who have offended them. How could God have ever been vengeful if vengeance is a sign of a lack of understanding, sympathy, love, and wisdom? How could an infinite, changeless god have been immature and then need some kind of heart-wrenching event mature him into a loving God?

Loving parents are able to perceive the immaturity of the child with the wisdom which comes from their experience of having lived through many similar circumstances only decades earlier. Our Heavenly Father possesses infinite, divine capacity for sympathy and loving understanding.

Binding a choice made in finite mortality for infinity makes as little sense as would binding a play marriage of two little children who are playing house, for the rest of their lives. Let us consider the intelligence of other life on Earth, like tiny ants for example. The scale of the intelligence between ant and human is immense. The ant cannot begin to comprehend our level of thought. It would be silly for me to be angry at the ant for not understanding something that I un-

¹²⁴ Job 42:7

derstand. It would be even more laughable that the ant should pretend to know my will even though it cannot understand my will, and that it would require strict obedience for other ants to enter its sacred hill and revere a sacrifice of a singular genetically-engineered ant appease my indignation about its shortfalls.

Since the difference of intelligence between humans and ants is finite and measurable, the intelligence of both ants and humans are practically the same when compared to infinite intelligence. We are no different from ants in our anticipation of what could come in infinity. It is silly to think that God would bind *ants* for a choice they may make when their intellects are so finite and immature. Who are we to pretend to dictate how an infinite being should punish us in infinity for our dealings in mortality? We cannot begin to compare our extremely limited view of eternity to the knowledge of eternity that the master of the Universe should possess. No human can pretend to know the will of an infinite being for others to obey. Those that do are impostors who have something to gain by doing it.

The inability to comprehend an infinite mind is not the same as the inability to comprehend the Atonement. The Atonement is an inscrutable concept, not an infinite mind. An enigmatic incongruence does not deserve worship just because it is impossible to understand. Just because it is mysterious does not mean it comes from God. On the contrary, that which comes from God is unabashed, concrete reality, free from the obscurity of mystery. It makes more sense that perfect infinity would love and accept us exactly as it created us, flaws and all.

Do we look upon a tree to find the imperfection in its bark, the scrapes on its side, and branches that are broken? No, we look at the tree and see the beauty and grandeur of the tree for what it is, as it is created. Imperfections add variety and beauty unique to each tree. We do not look upon a flower to judge any lack of perfect symmetry, we look at the beauty of the flower even with its beautifully unique imperfect identity. I have seen no evidence that God punishes the tree or the flower for being imperfect. If anything, he revels in that which he intentionally created. Sin is a construct of tribal religion which stems from the avoidance of offending their god, and for performing all ritual observances that their selfish god requires in order to gain his blessing in war and prosperity. I cannot believe in such a self-important god that would require any of that.

Divine forgiveness is inevitable. It is inherent and inseparable to God's complete knowledge and un-

derstanding. Divine justice is so infinitely fair that it inescapably entails empathetic mercy.

How can we miss this same teaching of Jesus when so many of his parables illustrate the idea so clearly? The good shepherd did not have to shed any blood of any of the ninety-nine sheep to seek out and rescue the one that wandered away. The parable of the prodigal son illustrates this clearly. Did the father of the prodigal son need any reconciliation with the wayward son before the father could accept him back? Did the father need the perfect older son to be sacrificed before the father could accept the younger son back? Did the older son have to mediate between any righteous indignation of the father and the younger son? The parable instead frowns upon the sanctimonious older son, illustrating the disdain Jesus harbored for the self-righteousness of the Pharisees. Besides the wayward son's sincere humility which was brought on by becoming aware of the reality of his situation, did he need to sacrifice anything, perform any dutiful act, or prove anything at all to regain the father's love and acceptance? Did the wayward son ever lose the father's love, mercy, and acceptance? The answer to all of those questions is a resounding no. Paul's doctrine of reconciliation¹²⁵ is Paul's own pagan insertion which stands in opposition to the teachings of Jesus. Jesus did not teach that doctrine at all.

It was the fallibility of elitist mortal men, not God, who sentenced Jesus to die on the cross. While it was the will of God to not intervene with human events as he usually does, and while Jesus readily accepted that will, it was not God's decree nor was it his judgment in any way that Jesus should die on the cross. That verdict was made by unjust mortal men, not God. Had Jesus died in any other way, God's mercy towards us would still be the same. Jesus would eventually have had to die sooner or later, but that could have been done in many different and more peaceful ways other than the tragic scene of a teacher of liberating thought dying on a cross.

You may ask, what about Gethsemane? In Mormonism, even though most of our sacrament hymns continue to extol the crucifixion, there has been a shift of the "sacrifice" from the cross to Gethsemane because there are obvious blatant holes in logic that support the cross as being something God did to his son. If death on the cross as a decree of God makes no sense, where can we focus the doctrine of propitiation? His prayer in Gethsemane was really intense and Luke mentioned the idea of blood dripping, so that is where God must have inflicted his

¹²⁵2 Corinthians 5:18

revenge upon Jesus, right? Don't be silly, the same problem exists with this idea as does the idea that God mandated Jesus be murdered. The true God doesn't do indignation just as much as the father in the parable of the prodigal son didn't do indignation. If a human father can be that loving and merciful, how much more should God be?

The idea of the real suffering for sin happening in Gethsemane comes from the idea of the literal sweating of blood from every pore. It is a myth of Mormonism, built upon the description "sweat was as it were great drops of blood" which was said solely by Luke. I don't think taking his words literally makes any sense.



- The story smells fishy because Jesus' disciples, the real eyewitnesses, were asleep during this ordeal so they didn't see most, if not all of it. It is as if someone is creating a story as an omniscient narrator. It wasn't Jesus, because he never wrote anything. The truth of an anecdote is invalidated if it does not come from the person who was a first-hand witness. All else is fable and hearsay.
- Wouldn't you think that if Jesus had been sweating blood that it would have freaked the disciples out and kept them awake? I can picture them yelling, "Why are you covered in blood, Master?" as they would have rushed to his aid. In reality they slept instead, despite his multiple visits where he awoke them and asked them to stay awake.
- Luke is the only Gospel that mentions anything about blood.
- Luke used the past subjunctive verb "as it were." The past subjunctive expresses an unreality.
- Luke wasn't even there. He was probably somewhere in Antioch, only to be proselytized by Paul many years later. For what it's worth, neither was Mark, (who was not an apostle, but instead was probably one of the seventy at the time, if he truly authored the book with his name) but Mark didn't say it was blood. Neither did anyone else.
- The Joseph Smith translation preserves the past subjunctive. Still, blinded by our Pauline doctrines, D&C section 19 takes away the subjunctive and preaches Paul's doctrines outright – that it is all because of agony and suffering for sin.

The prayer in Gethsemane had nothing to do with payment of any sin price. You have to remember

that Jesus was just as much human as any of us. All humans have it programmed in their DNA to avoid death and stay alive. It was also great strain on Jesus' human heart to have to leave his apostles; there was still so much to teach them, and they were not ready. Here is the purpose of his prayer: Just as prayer serves to help us to align our will with our God, each time he prayed in the garden, his humanity was more and more subdued, and his will more and more became one with the divine will of our father. Jesus had to experience death as part of his earthly mission as we all do. God could have easily translated him, but it is God's will that free agency be completely unfettered and that the consequences of free agency on this planet be played out to completion. The garden of Gethsemane was about facing that death and overcoming the flesh.

Father in heaven loved his children on earth just as much before the life and death of Jesus as he did after. The life and death of Jesus in no way changed any attributes of the infinite and eternal father. For all of the countless worlds which existed far beyond billions of years before this world, and for all of the countless worlds which may exist far beyond trillions of years after this world, the changeless, infinite love and mercy of God has always been and always will be the same. The relationship of God as a loving father to his created children and our relationship as spirit siblings, on this world and on all other worlds throughout all of creation has existed from eternity. That timeless relationship is in no way dependent upon a singular temporal event of the death or temporal suffering of an incarnate demigod. Our world is in no way at the center of space, nor is our time at the center of time. If time is infinite, there is no meridian. Our salvation would have been just as certain if Jesus had not been put to death by ignorant men. If Jesus had lived a full life and died by natural means, the fact of the love of God and the mercy of the Son would not have been affected in any way.

The death of Jesus was indeed unfortunate. Had he lived to a ripe old age, his teachings of God's nature and morality would have become so much more cemented in the minds of his followers and the world would have only ended up much better because of that. I often muse to myself how different Paul's teachings would have been had he truly been taught at the feet of Jesus. Alas, Jesus was murdered early and in cold blood not by a loving God, but by ignorant, hateful people who feared that he threatened the tyranny of their Jewish priesthood establishment.

The good news from Jesus is that God loves you with a fatherly love and will preserve your personhood beyond death, and he will resurrect you, and he will mercifully forgive you when, as you sincerely seek truth, you find it necessary to repent to align with your newly found ideals. You already have and have always had his mercy available to you for salvation from any wrong you may do. You already have and have always had his willingness to resurrect you. All of this is available because of his infinite love and mercy. It needs to be no more complicated than that. It is that simple.

Who is this man, Paul, who knew nothing of Jesus during his ministry, and from whom comes the vast majority of the Christian religion? Paul's doctrine, which invites you to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"¹²⁶ was never a teaching of Jesus. That is a selfish doctrine which invites fear and selfishness to drive you to seek salvation for yourself. Conversely, fear is the opposite of love.¹²⁷ Where there is no love, there is fear. Jesus taught the complete opposite of what Paul taught. He taught that he who loves God and loves his neighbor forgets himself and his own liability and simply trusts in God's love as a little child trusts his own loving father for their own well-being. Those who are born of the spirit take salvation for granted because they know the true loving nature of their Father in Heaven, and they can forget themselves and dedicate their lives to loving others as God loves them.

If we already have all of the fruits of the Atonement without the need for the pagan blood sacrifice, then why do we continue to maintain that blood, suffering, and the murderous revengeful sacrifice of an innocent human being has anything to do with it? Can we please stop the reliance on blood paying for anything? Let us stop complicating the situation and simply earnestly seek for the loving Father in Heaven that we all truly aspire for deep inside as his children. Let us rise from the ashes and wash the idolatrous pagan soot from our ideas once and for all.

As scarce as truth is, the supply has always been in excess of the demand.¹²⁸

The truth isn't hard to find, just hard to look at. Throughout history, people have not been unable to understand Jesus; they have been afraid to understand him because they feared losing their inculcated traditions and social group. Let us stop fearing what he truly taught and instead start to live it.

¹²⁶Philippians 2:12

¹²⁷John 4:18

¹²⁸Affurisms from Josh Billings: His Sayings, 1865

I have mentioned that I have read many near-death experiences. Bettie Eadie, who claims to have had a near-death experience, seems to be one who understands:

I asked Jesus, "But what about Hell?"

Jesus said, "If you, as a good mother, wouldn't cast any of your children into a lake of fire for something that they did that you disapproved of, how much greater is God's love than yours?"

I thought, "wow, that's a no-brainer."

God's love is infinite, it is divine, eternal, everlasting. He loves us more than we can even imagine. ... There couldn't be a hell, because there is nothing but love. A God of love would not destroy any one of us.¹²⁹

When you believe Jesus that our father in heaven is kind, merciful, empathetic and loving, then it is superfluous to need anyone else to sacrifice anything, especially by bleeding or suffering, in order to bring out the mercy of a being who is already perfectly willing to grant you his already infinite mercy through his already infinite love. It is pointless to practice rituals that are supposed to change God's mind about your worthiness, or that are supposed to bring you closer to God.

The quote from Joseph Smith at the beginning of this section about the "fundamental principles of our religion" shows that he was not versed in the teachings of Jesus. Whoever he talked to in vision is not the same person because he completely ignored what Jesus himself believed and taught. Instead, he only regurgitates the same garbage that was fed to him by all of the other false prophets who came *after* Jesus, and who used Jesus to promote their own pagan theology.

Jesus resorted to teaching parables because the people who were genuine truth seekers would understand them, and those that did not desire truth could be dealt with mercifully:

That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?¹³⁰

The core of the message of Jesus was his revelation of the love of God. This new perspective of his

¹²⁹<https://youtu.be/KLt3fLK2o8w?t=807>

¹³⁰Mark 4:12-13

message, along with his teachings of sincere truth seeking, causes many of his other teachings and parables to suddenly make sense.

Throughout this work, I hope to continue to illustrate the many repercussions that come from my new understanding the message of Jesus, of God and his love and mercy. I now perceive what true religion should be, emancipated from crystallized creeds, dogmas, and systems. I am no longer subject to a limited definition and pretentious representation of God by institutions of men. I am free from having to juggle contradictions in my mind because they are all supposed to be true. I am free to advance in my perception of reality, no longer held back by the fables of ancient bards. I no longer have to do battle for primeval ideologies with a shield and sword of the dark ages. I have become free to trust my own God-given talents of mind, free from dependence on others, especially those who vainly speak in God's name, and who impose their ungodliness as his character and their tyranny as his will. I am free to explore all new knowledge and understanding, against their constraint, because I no longer fear the loss of exaltation for lack of obedience to the laws and ordinances of men. I have become aware of how to identify the charlatans who prey on the weak, who grow their dominion by fencing in and fleecing them, and whose ascendancy goes against the very teachings and practices of the man they supposedly revere.

To trust the God of the Bible is to trust an irascible, vindictive, fierce and ever fickle and changeable master; to trust the true God is to trust a Being who has uttered no promises, but whose beneficent, exact, and changeless ordering of the machinery of His colossal universe is proof that He is at least steadfast to His purposes; whose unwritten laws, so far as the affect man, being equal and impartial, show that he is just and fair; these things, taken together, suggest that if he shall ordain us to live hereafter, he will be steadfast, just and fair toward us. We shall not need to require anything more.¹³¹

Celestial Condemnation

The pinnacle of happiness and the loftiest goal of modern Mormonism is an eternal family. Practically every lesson or talk that I heard at church throughout my life led to one conclusion: to live with God and family again. Even the teaching of an atonement is only a means to that end. I tired of hearing that same

thing every Sunday for several reasons besides the repetition.

Mormonism teaches that everyone will receive some level of glory except only a handful of people. This is usually explained after the declaration that we do not believe in eternal Hell. We proclaim that our gospel is more benevolent than the rest of Christianity.

That teaching only seems to take away the sting of being condemned to endless torment. To be banished to exile is to be rejected by society. That is still a form of hell. God himself expels his inferior children. To be limited in progress can be compared to being forever held back in first grade. No one wants a lower glory because that would not be heaven at all. In that stunted state, immortality would be a form of subjection to eternal vengeance for temporal misdeeds. It goes unsaid, but it is implied, that the only true salvation is the highest glory.

There is still a deeper problem. Because of eternal judgment of their temporal choices in mortality, your children will be banished from your eternal home. No matter how righteous you were, no matter how much you deserve the highest glory, their absence will be a form of sadness. That sadness will last for all eternity. That sadness will be inflicted upon not only you, but also upon God himself. If the child you love is not with you, then that is not exaltation. That is damnation. You have probably already lived your life with an anxiety and fear that one of your children might not prove worthy.

Think about Heavenly Father. He granted the gift of choice to all of his children. Though that gift is the highest gift, second only to life itself, he has not been granted the same power to freely choose. He is the creator and source of all that is, but he is impeded by some kind of law that supersedes his sovereignty. That law eternally condemns God himself to a type of hell because it impedes his own children from living with him if they dare to fully employ the gift of choice that he, himself gave. It impedes God the Supreme from exercising perfect love, empathy, fairness, and mercy. It also inflicts that same condemnation and hell upon you for the choices your own children made.

That higher law grants God's own authority, but not his autonomy. He is bound by a law that requires his child to be symbolically bathed by a representative that has been legally authorized by the same law. Without the performance of that symbol, their eternal life is forfeit. The requirement for that authorization is also above him. That law also impedes the access of his children to his home without having been given

¹³¹Mark Twain, a Biography

the secret password. God himself does not have the power to waive those requirements. The law does not allow him see the heart. He is only authorized to see the outward appearance.¹³² Those petty outward rites are required even if a life has been lived in love and service of others, the singular requirement for salvation declared by Jesus himself.¹³³

God's subjection to *the work of justice* eternally impedes him from issuing an executive pardon because mercy *should destroy the work of justice*.¹³⁴ The same law effectively dictates that all immortals are not free. It means that we can look forward to becoming immortal automatons if we gain immortality.

This seems so contrived, so utterly preposterous to me. God is supposed to be the Most High, above the entire universe. God should not be beholden to some sort of arcane law that is beyond his control. I am an imperfect being and I do not require a password for my children to enter my house. I do not require my children to jump through any statutory hoop to gain a passport and citizenship to my home. Like the father of the Prodigal Son, my children will always be welcome regardless of what they might choose to do, just as Jesus aptly taught in that parable.¹³⁵ If I can do that, along with the Prodigal Son's father, then how much more should God?

For behold, justice exerciseth all his demands,
and also mercy claimeth all which is her own;
and thus, none but the truly penitent are saved.

What, do ye suppose that mercy can rob justice?
I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so, God
would cease to be God.¹³⁶

I do not agree with Alma. Alma argues that mercy would "rob" justice, but never fear, he says it does not have the power to do it. He says that God would *cease to be a god* if mercy were held supreme over justice. I think it is the contrary, that God would cease to be a god if he were held in subjection to a rule of justice placed above his autonomy. I would say that justice robs mercy. Alma, a finite being, pulls rank on God, an infinite being, as he vainly attempts to encapsulate infinity in a box. Alma does not seem to understand that mercy is inherently superior to justice, because justice *is* mercy when it is combined with godly empathy.

¹³²Samuel 16:7

¹³³Matthew 25:31-45

¹³⁴Alma 42:13

¹³⁵Luke 15:11-32

¹³⁶Alma 42:24-25

I do not like that Alma says that it was Adam's fault that mankind became carnal sensual and devilish.¹³⁷ I will address the situation in Eden later on, but the god in that story cannot be found completely blameless for what happens. Alma establishes his finite view of what offends God, and what affixed punishment-payment God should excise. Alma is eager to define the justice that should be imposed upon God's will.

Deserves it! I daresay he does. Many that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgement. For even the very wise cannot see all ends.¹³⁸

I say that God would cease to be a god if his love were not superior to the judgment and law that Alma requires of him. I say that we do not have the right to impose our finite view of what laws should restrict the judgment of God.

I propose that forgiveness does not require repentance of the offender, it requires empathy on the part of the one who was offended. Absolute empathy grants limitless absolution. God's infinite empathy combined with his infinite mercy should transcend any choice made, by anyone who has been granted the gift of free will. If God loves and is merciful, then he should be able to exercise his mercy towards all those who he granted that gift, regardless of anything they might choose. If he is not able to supersede and repair all fault in his creation, then he cannot be the creator of it.

In countless stories and movies, I have observed that the main character always gains the support and enthusiasm of the audience, regardless of their morality. This happens because the character of the protagonist has been firmly established. That deeper empathy is the key to getting the audience to root for them, even if they might be more murderous than the villain. The villain usually restrains himself from killing them in return, even though the protagonist may have already killed hundreds of the villain's men. The audience usually has a fowl perception of the antagonist because they do not know much about him.

Either God is forgiving and we are saved by his mercy and grace as the New Testament prescribes, or he is bound by some external power. He can do absolutely nothing to overcome that law without his subjects performing silly rituals to fulfill whatever

¹³⁷Alma 42:10

¹³⁸J. R. R. Tolkien speaking as Gandalf, Fellowship of the Ring

law limits his power. If God cannot do what a god should be able to do without depending on some kind of shamanistic or legalistic ritual, then what makes him so godly? Is he just another man who happened to find himself on mount Olympus? Did he happen to have been obedient enough on a different planet to be promoted to his station? If he is, then who is the most high God from his perspective? Who is the actual source? Who is the infinite? Why is *that* ultimate being not able to stand above a law he created and exercise infinitely perfect love, feeling, and benevolence? What business or right does that shoddy merciless vicegod have to stand between the true God of love and his children?

Dogma cannot have its cake and eat it too, or better expressed, both eat and save its cake at the same time. Either Almighty God is infinitely merciful and forgiving, or he is restricted by external laws of justice and he can do absolutely nothing to overcome it without rituals that include human blood sacrifice, authorized baths, special clothing, and secret passwords. The Mormon doctrine of justice standing superior to mercy is so legalistic and absurd. It contradicts and invalidates teachings of Jesus and even Paul as are found in the New Testament. The desire to obey the law indicates a longing for approval men instead of from God. It contradicts the premise of the theses of Martin Luther, who said that legalism was the fatal weakness of Judaism. How different are the stringent laws of Judaism, Catholicism and Mormonism, really? The legalism proves that the lawyers and businessmen at the head of all of the superpower ecumenical establishments cannot be sincere, and the laws of their scribes of canonicum and correlation cannot be true. Their requirements of obedience to the law and their placement of statute as superior to God make them no different from the enemies of Jesus, the Pharisees.

The Mormon god is not godly at all. He does not deserve my veneration. When the stringently righteous and obedient arrive at what they revered as the Celestial Kingdom, I can imagine what he might say:

Oh, I'm sorry. I am not the omnipotent, that is someone else. I don't know who it is, but I don't really care, because I revel in the power and authority that I earned through my righteousness.

By your strict obedience to the command that I have passed on from my superiors, you have effectively chosen to give up your will to me. By your reliance on human blood sacrifice for payment of your shortcomings, you have proven your brutality to me. I murdered to satisfy

my anger against the those who did not obey me. I got my revenge for their insubordination by the shedding of blood. I tortured the Almighty's son to death for your good, and I liked it. You liked it too. Sometimes the thought of it brings you to tears of joy. By your ritual observance of my gruesome symbolism in partaking his human blood and flesh, you proved your compliance to my perverted requirements.

Yes, I was the adversary all along. You did not allow yourself to perceive it, in the name of obedience. You believed my teaching, that obedience is a virtue. You proved that obedience was more important to you than having the courage to heed your own inherent morality.

Somehow, those that did not obey my command escaped. It might have been because they stood for what they thought was right, even though all of their friends and relatives rightfully obeyed me. The Almighty must have taken them away. I don't know where they went. I hope he destroyed them, or at least curbed their advancement. If I were him, I would consign those insolent transgressors to the abyss, because they committed the unpardonable sin of denying me.

I possess great power over my servants. My dominion is an everlasting dominion. All shall love me and despair.¹³⁹ That is, my subjects have a love-fear relationship with me. The power in my priesthoods are upon you. You are irrevocably subject to them. I do not have free will, and now you have been stripped of yours. You will now bow to my power. It's okay. You like bowing to me. You did it at least three times a day. Sometimes you starved yourself for me, and I liked it. You liked it too, because it only made you more willing and able to obey me. You now have no choice but to strictly obey all of the laws, rites, ordinances, statutes, and commands that I will pass from the ranks, as pertaining to your oath to me, through all generations of time, and throughout all eternity. You will now give all of your time, talents, and even the entirety of your infinite immortal life, to me. You promised to do that under oath, after all.

Oh and by the way, you have no choice but to live with your divorced wife for all eternity. She hates you, she hates your second wife, and most of all, she hates plural marriage. But no matter, she will subordinate because of my power. Because of her oaths to me, she has lost her

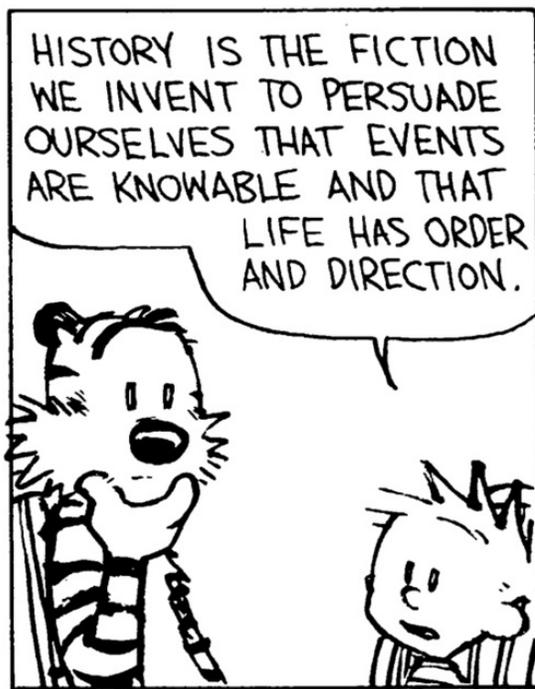
¹³⁹The temptation of Galadriel

freedom to choose, too. You and your wives can never divorce. They are bound and sealed by my priesthood, and you all did this by your own free will and choice. Never fear, all of you will be happy by because of your joy in my supremacy. Because of your obedience, you will someday be granted a dominion, just as I have been granted mine. Then you will have joy and rejoicing in the subjection of those under your dominion.

Well done, faithful servant. You are finished. Welcome to Hell.

Levantine Religion

Tribal Gods and Sacrifice



The Mormon perspective of the Old Testament attempts to rewrite history to fit its narrative. It prescribes that true religion has ever been static from the beginning of time. It has to assert that there is consistency to be able to grant credence to its claim of ultimate truth, because real truth cannot change with time. The Book of Mormon tries to rewrite what pre-Babylonian Hebrews believed and practiced. The historical record, as well as prehistoric archeology, indicates otherwise. In reality, all religion has ever evolved. Mormonism is not immune to that same evolution. Practically every doctrine in Mormonism has changed during its short lifetime.

Let us step back and consider the state of the world before Jesus arrived on the scene. Abraham's

descendants were not a pure-bred people. They mixed with many other tribes of Canaan. Sometimes they mixed with tribes they conquered. Sometimes they mixed with tribes that defeated them.

The people of the land of Canaan worshiped a pantheon¹⁴⁰ of gods. Anat, Athirat, Attart, Attar, Baalat, Baal Hadad, Baal Hammon, Dagon, El Elyon, Eshmun, Ishat, Kotharat, Kothar-wa-Khasis, Lotan, Marqod, Melqart, Molech, Mot, Nikkal-wa-lb, Qadeshtu, Resheph, Sachar and Shalim, Shamayim, Shapash, Yaw, Sydyk, Yahweh, and Yarikh.

You may ask, why is Jehovah is not listed in the pantheon? Even though the name "Jehovah" is used in our English Old Testament, that name did not exist in Old Testament times. This is evidence that the scriptures have illegitimate historical revisionism. The name Jehovah comes from the mixture of the two words YW (Yahweh) and Adonai, which created the name "Jehovah." It didn't exist until possibly as late as the year 1520 AD when it was introduced by Galatinus.¹⁴¹

I mentioned Jephthah and his child sacrifice earlier. You will find "Molech" in that list of gods, and if you read the Old Testament, you will discover that Molech is one of the idolatrous gods for whom people would sacrifice children. There may be others you may recognize from the Old Testament.

After I found out that it was a common practice in Abraham's time for Canaanites to sacrifice children, my perspective was broadened, and new meaning was added to the story where a confused Abraham is commanded to sacrifice his son, but in the end is told not to.¹⁴² It seems like this might have been a drama between what Melchizedek may have taught him and the traditions and rites of the society in which he lived. In his youth, he may have been taught to practice human sacrifice, until he met Melchizedek.

It would be unheard of for anyone to sacrifice their child to God today! Because of the immorality and abhorrence of child sacrifice in our culture, anyone who has the thought enter their mind which prompts them to sacrifice their child would immediately dismiss it as insanity! Anyone who would follow through with such an idea would be diagnosed as psychotic would be locked away!

Human sacrifice existed among all ancient civilizations. Both human and animal sacrifice is found throughout the Old Testament, despite the efforts of

¹⁴⁰http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canaanite_religion#Pantheon

¹⁴¹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah#Introduction_into_English

¹⁴²Genesis 22

many prophets who tried stop it.¹⁴³ It could be that Jewish priests, who likely wrote the books of Moses centuries later, fabricated this tale about Abraham to discourage the human sacrifice among their people, and tried to migrate the sacrifice superstition to animals.

Because of the prevalence of sacrifice in the Old Testament, the doctrines of Mormonism impose a revisionist consistency that sacrifice offering for sin in Old Testament times was a required ordinance of the priesthood; a symbolic foreshadowing the future sacrifice of Jesus, which would end the sacrifice practices of Israel. Other biblical history is omitted that sacrifice had already stopped centuries before Jesus was born and that Israel did not always depend upon the primitive practice of sacrifice for Atonement.

The first temple was destroyed and Judah was carried captive into Babylon. Mosaic laws only allowed sacrifice on the altar of the temple. Without a temple, they did not sacrifice. They started sacrificing again when they rebuilt the temple after their captivity, but most of Israel was still in Babylon, and they continued without reliance on sacrifice for Atonement of their sins. There are many scriptures that illustrate that sacrifice was not needed for forgiveness.

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?¹⁴⁴

Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea. He declares that burnt offerings, thousands of rams, rivers of oil, and even his firstborn all miss the point. He clearly shows what is really required: do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God. Even the teaching that the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit did not originate in the new Christian message:

For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

¹⁴³1 Samuel 15:22, Psalm 40:6-8, Psalm 50:9-15, Psalm 51:15-17, Isaiah 1:10-20, Isaiah 66:1-4, Hosea 6:6, Hosea 8:11-13, Jeremiah 7:22-23

¹⁴⁴Micah 6:7-8

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.¹⁴⁵

Here is another psalm that holds to the idea that burnt offering for sin wasn't required. It does not reflect something coming in the future. It uses present and past tenses. Remember that psalms were hymns sung at the temple.

Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.¹⁴⁶

It seems that because of revisionism, we've completely missed the teachings of the Old Testament. I have found more verses such as these, where again, forgiveness is given to the penitent without a mentioning any requirement for the shedding of innocent blood:

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.¹⁴⁷

But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.¹⁴⁸

He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.

He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not;

He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man,

To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.¹⁴⁹

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵Psalm 51:16-17

¹⁴⁶Psalm 40:6

¹⁴⁷2 Chronicles 7:14

¹⁴⁸Deuteronomy 4:29

¹⁴⁹Job 33:26-30

¹⁵⁰Psalm 34:18

It is clear that even in the Old Testament, it is true repentance that God wants from us, not sacrifice, and he is merciful:

For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.

In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.¹⁵¹

But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.¹⁵²

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.¹⁵³

He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.¹⁵⁴

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.¹⁵⁵

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.¹⁵⁶

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.¹⁵⁷

Clearly this is not the same wrathful god who must be appeased by the shedding of innocent blood. What god was the one that did, then? Blood sacrifice for sin remission was always an idolatrous pagan ritual. Sacrifice only continued because it is difficult to stop the ignorant people from performing their old rituals regardless of how enlightened the sages of their time become.

¹⁵¹Psalm 86:5-7

¹⁵²Psalm 86:15

¹⁵³Psalm 103:8

¹⁵⁴Psalm 111:4

¹⁵⁵Psalm 116:5

¹⁵⁶Proverbs 28:13

¹⁵⁷Isaiah 55:6-7

Monotheism of Melchizedek

There is not much in the Bible itself which says that Abraham was a prophet, except for the dream of Abimelech,¹⁵⁸ but the context of the use of the word in that instance makes him more of a shaman than a prophet. If there was a prophet of that dispensation, it would have been Melchizedek, not Abraham. When angels visited Abraham, they were most likely human messengers from Melchizedek.

Melchizedek's name for God was El Elyon, which means "God Most High."¹⁵⁹ I propose that Melchizedek sought to teach monotheism and the attributes of god, using the concept of the most high god to start the idea of monotheism, subjugating all the other gods as being lesser to the most high god. Abraham followed Melchizedek's teachings and believed in the Most High God.¹⁶⁰

I used to think that monotheism versus polytheism meant that there is one true god that is synonymous with an infinite number of a patriarchal chain of true gods. Certainly Mormon doctrine has some concepts of many true gods, considering how the book of Abraham presents the "gods" and Elohim means "gods" or "powers" as it is a plural of El or Eloah.¹⁶¹ However, we need to remember that in the times of the Old Testament and even before that (before the captivity of Judah), each tribe or group or settlement of people had their own god. The concepts of all of these idolatrous gods were constantly changing, and new gods would surface while others would go away. As differing tribes were conquered or amalgamated, their gods also had to do the same.

The Atonement is salvation from a predicament that was imported from Jewish folklore. The Jews themselves do not believe that any such resolution is required. Demigod suffering for supernatural redemption is the mythology of the gentiles to them.

If you study the Old Testament from a Jewish perspective, many ideas show how badly it has been misinterpreted by both Christianity and Mormonism alike. It seems as though all of Christianity either does not genuinely study that book from an unprejudiced perspective, or it is not aware of its contents. They do not read it, probably because of how painfully dull and difficult it is to read, so they only ex-

¹⁵⁸Genesis 20:7

¹⁵⁹Genesis 14:18-20

¹⁶⁰Genesis 14:22

¹⁶¹<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elohim>

tract verses from their context that strengthen their narrow-minded belief.

There have been various stages of Jewish belief from ancient Judaism to today. Ancient Judaism had no concept of the devil as a personage. It never uses *satan* as a proper name. The serpent in Eden is never identified as "Satan," "Belzebub," or "Devil" anywhere in the Old Testament, only as a clever mythical animal that could speak. There was no belief in an afterlife, no belief in the resurrection, neither was there any belief in heaven and hell. As I have said, ancient Canaanites and the earliest Israelites were polytheistic, not in the sense of an eternal chain of a patriarchy of Gods, but in the sense that one tribal God could rival another, and devotion could be given to any number of them depending on circumstance. After I discovered the lack of Satan, heaven, hell, and resurrection in the Old Testament, suddenly these concepts in the Book of Mormon placed an annoying splinter in my mind that nagged at my belief. Before the coming of Jesus, the Book of Mormon has very little parallel to the Old Testament and Mosaic law. It suspiciously uses the very same phrases of Paul, with absolutely no parallel concepts in the same era of the Old Testament.



The word *Elohim* in the Hebrew Bible was translated to *God* in the English. Yet, because it is plural, its occurrence likely originally had reference to the pantheon of Canaanite gods. This raises a question about who the Mormon version of *Elohim* is, because, for example, if translated literally from Hebrew, Exodus 6:2 says, "And *Elohim* spoke to Moses, and said to him, I am YHWH," but we are taught that YHWH (*Jehovah*) is Jesus, not *Elohim*.

Melchizedek's most high monotheism attempted to get everyone, no matter their tribe, race, nationality, whatever, to worship the same god of all. I imagine that he hoped he could reduce the elitism, separatism, and even hatred that comes between people who say that only their tribal god is true, and the other is false. Unity of the human family is what is most needed and yet we continue to this day with elitism and hatred between groups who believe that only their god is true.

The way to unify is to do as Jesus did: teach that all humanity is of the same family, to love everyone even if they are an enemy, and that institutionalized religion is superfluous and even rivals that goal of unification. Once we all unite in the reverence of the same loving source, then what the name for that

god is, whether he has one name or many names, or whether he is represented by several personages or one personage, or whether that god has many levels of existence or if he's not existential at all is less important. The entirety of humanity have claim to the same father in heaven and should have fraternal love without castes or segregation.

I find it interesting that even though El Elyon, Most High God, was the teaching of Melchizedek, somehow under Moses YW, YHWH, or Yahweh, a Canaanite god, won out being Adonai, Lord of Israel. There also appears that there may be more background for the "golden calf" at Sinai in the Bible, as a calf¹⁶² or bull may have been the idol for Yahweh. The worship of the calves or bulls could have been influenced by the bull god Apis of Egypt, where the children might have recently resided. This also sheds light on why calf/bull sacrifice was difficult to stop.

As they first entered the historic scene the Jews were nomad Bedouins who feared the djinns of the air, and worshipped rocks, cattle, sheep, and the spirits of caves and hills. The cult of the bull, the sheep, and the lamb was not neglected; Moses could never quite win his flock from the adoration of the Golden Calf, for the Egyptian worship of the bull was still fresh in their memories, and Yahweh was for a long time symbolized in that ferocious vegetarian.¹⁶³

...even in the central temple at Jerusalem... grew up the worship of Yahweh under the likeness of bulls, such as Jeroboam set up at Dan and Bethel. The story of Aaron and the golden calf in all probability was written in this later age to help understand the polluting identification of Yahweh's worship with the adoration of bulls.¹⁶⁴

I think Moses compromised quite a bit as he tried to teach these idolatrous people about the one true God. He tried to convert Yahweh, the idolatrous god that the people were already worshiping, into the Most High God, by teaching the people about the attributes that a real god would have. After all, "what's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."¹⁶⁵ After receiving commandments at Mount Sinai, he took their bull or calf Yahweh and started teaching that he wasn't a calf,

¹⁶²1 Kings 12:28-29

¹⁶³Our Oriental Heritage, Will Durant, Simon and Schuster, 1954, 309.

¹⁶⁴A Guide To Understanding The Bible, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Harper ChapelBooks, 1965, 16

¹⁶⁵William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet

and gave the commandment to “have no other gods before me” which told these mixed Canaanite peoples to quit it with the idolatry and plurality of gods and to stick with one god.

The point I’m trying to make is that the origins of the people of Israel aren’t as rosy as you may think, and that religion and concepts of God have evolved over time. Some of the idolatrous gods that were worshiped demanded human sacrifice, while many others, including Yahweh, were satisfied with animal sacrifice, and all of them were idolatrous except maybe the one that Melchizedek originally introduced.

It was a difficult task indeed for Moses to teach truths about God, and he made many compromises. Although it is hard for us to imagine a world without the printing press, it was indeed quite difficult to perpetuate truth from generation to generation in those times. Any truthful doctrines would so easily become absorbed into the prevalent erroneous traditions. The doctrine of blood sacrifice did not come from God. The connection of Jehovah (Yahweh) and blood sacrifice has always existed from when Jehovah was an idolatrous God, and the same idolatry continues today.

The Church of Paul: Christianity

How does the same idolatry continue today? As I have said, I have noticed a big disconnect between what Jesus taught, and what was taught by others in his name after his resurrection and ascension. Especially with the arrival of Paul, the doctrine of the Kingdom went from plain and simple truths of God’s love and sincerity in seeking God through truth and spirit, to Jesus becoming a sacrifice for sin and our need for being purified in his blood. The teachings of Paul were in many ways the polar opposite to the teachings of Jesus. Paul’s writings are as if he didn’t know even a single teaching of Jesus – his message was entirely his own. Are they really battling for the same team?

- Jesus taught, the true nature of God is as a loving father, his core is love, that through love those who are born of the spirit are able to become selfless and self-governing as part of a spiritual Kingdom of Heaven, and their ability to have a sincere, intimate, personal, first-hand, living relationship with their father in heaven, all now in this life.
- Paul taught, because of a fear of the wrath of God, people must work out their own salvation

from sin by appeasing God’s wrath through the mystery of gaining a remission of sins through the shedding of the blood of God’s only half-god son and by proving their acceptance of the grace of Jesus by participating in the outward rituals of baptism and the sacrament.

Thomas Jefferson understood this dichotomy between Paul and Jesus when he wrote this in reference to Jesus:

Among the sayings and discourses imputed to him by his biographers, I find many passages of fine imagination, correct morality, and of the most lovely benevolence; and others, again, of so much ignorance, so much absurdity, so much untruth, charlatanism, and imposture, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same being. I separate, therefore, the gold from the dross; restore him to the former, and leave the latter to the stupidity of some, and roguery of others of his disciples. Of this band of dupes and impostors, Paul was the great Coryphaeus, and the first corruptor of the doctrines of Jesus.¹⁶⁶

I am no historian, but it is apparent even to me, that when Paul joined the apostles as an apostle, there was a great shift and a rather deep compromise happened between the message of Jesus and what prominent pagan religions of the time taught, including the Syrian, Persian, and Hellenic mystery cults and even the philosophies of Plato. Forever did this shift thwart the original teachings of Jesus. I would even dare to say that Paul’s post-Damascus road efforts still attempt to overthrow the pure teachings of Jesus. After all, he was originally one of the most outspoken people against Jesus. It is not a far stretch to view Paul instead as a crafty deceiver who decided to overthrow the teachings of Jesus by infecting his apostles and thwarting the gospel like a virus or disease from within. There is no better way to depose of anti-establishment teachings than to create an establishment in the name of its teacher.

This must be understood about Paul. He was never personally taught by Jesus, nor was he taught much by the apostles. His claim to apostleship came from his assertion that he had seen and was appointed to be an apostle by the resurrected Jesus while on the road to Damascus. This is one of the many things he did that shows his unfamiliarity with the teachings of Jesus, because Jesus specifically warned of false prophets who might say they found him in the desert, and he tells us to not believe them:

¹⁶⁶Jefferson’s Works, page 156

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.¹⁶⁷

Jesus says specifically how he will return. Everyone will know. This means he hasn't returned yet. This means, not only Paul's claim for seeing him in the desert road to Damascus invalidates his claim, but it also applies to Joseph Smith claiming he saw Jesus in the forest (like the desert) and applies to Joseph and Oliver Cowdery claiming to see Jesus in a secret chamber in the temple. All of these are specifically fulfilling the instruction Jesus gave for ways to recognize a false prophet.

In Paul's writings he tries to prove his right to be an apostle, as if the other apostles were rejecting his claim to it.¹⁶⁸ Paul said that the resurrected Jesus used the phrase "kick against the pricks"¹⁶⁹ in his vision, implying that God drives people like an ox by jabbing and poking, and Paul was guilty of kicking against those jabs. Even the use of this small phrase shows me that it was not Jesus who said that, because Jesus taught that God is a loving father and does not compel you to obey him by poking, jabbing, and stabbing like a man drives and ox. God only seeks true, genuine desire which is reborn out of love. Paul, even late in his ministry, claims to be a Pharisee.¹⁷⁰ If Jesus told us to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees,¹⁷¹ shouldn't I believe Jesus and reject Paul?

Mithraic Salvation

Paul's birthplace was Tarsus, which was a thriving intellectual hub and a melting pot of religions in the first century BC. Encyclopedia Britannica says that "local aristocrats in the western part of the former Persian Empire (the region around Tarsus) retained their devotion to Mithra. The kings and nobles of the border region between Greco-Roman and the Iranian world still worshiped him."

In a Mithraic temple in Rome, an inscription reads, "et nos servasti... sanguine fuso," meaning: "and who saved us with the shed blood." That is the doctrine of Paul, too:

¹⁶⁷ Matthew 24:26-27

¹⁶⁸ 1 Corinthians 9

¹⁶⁹ Acts 9:5, Acts 26:14

¹⁷⁰ Acts 23:6

¹⁷¹ Luke 12:1

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.¹⁷²

In saying that, Paul shows a level of ignorance of Israelite teachings. I already quoted many scriptures that God's forgiveness isn't about sacrifice. Paul errs, it was never only about the blood. Here we see that flour can atone, too:

But if he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin offering.

Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the Lord: it is a sin offering.

And the priest shall make an Atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and the remnant shall be the priest's, as a meat offering.¹⁷³

And here, incense atones:

And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an Atonement for the people.¹⁷⁴

And jewelry atones:

We have therefore brought an oblation for the Lord, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets, to make an Atonement for our souls before the Lord.¹⁷⁵

And a live coal atones:

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Hebrews 9:22

¹⁷³ Leviticus 5:11-13

¹⁷⁴ Numbers 16:47

¹⁷⁵ Numbers 31:50

¹⁷⁶ Isaiah 6:6-7

It was never exclusively about the blood as Paul prescribes. As I have said before, saving by the shedding of blood always has been a pagan doctrine which has seemingly always infested truths which were revealed by enlightened progressives. Moses and many other prophets after him had a hard time keeping the people from worshiping Baal and his groves of fertility as well as many other pagan gods. I say again: God does not change. God has never required the shedding of any blood, ever. Like I said before, Moses and many prophets after him tried to rid his people of sacrifice, but only got as far as stopping human sacrifice.

I soberly reject the idea that any kind of sacrifice, animals or humans, was ever truly a commandment of God. It was only ever allowed because neither the prophet nor anyone else at the time was able to stop it. Jesus taught that the old law is over and to stop it. He taught that the old laws were commandments of men, not God.

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.¹⁷⁷

The only time that we have record of Jesus getting angry about anything was at the temple, where he drove out the merchants who were selling sacrificial animals. John 2:13-16, Matthew 21:12-13, as well as the account from Mark, all say Jesus used the same phrase, "den of robbers." Let's take a look at the account in Mark:

And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.¹⁷⁸

He says "Is it not written," and I believe he was referring directly to Jeremiah's definition of "den of robbers" in regards to the temple:

¹⁷⁷Matthew 15:9

¹⁷⁸Mark 11:15-18

Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;

And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?

Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord.¹⁷⁹

When Jeremiah said God's house had been turned into a "den of robbers" it didn't necessarily have to do with robbers of money, but also with the shedding innocent blood, idolatry, murder, and all manner of abominations.

This episode shows the attitude of Jesus towards religion having any practices where profit can be gained. It also shows his disdain for leaders who gain political, financial, and religious power. It also demonstrates his willingness to use force against an oppressive few who take advantage of a large group of the weak. Most of all, it showed his disapproval of idolatrous religious practices in the temple.

Mark 11:16 is enlightening: "And would not suffer that any should carry any vessel through the temple." It was not only about selling things outside on the temple grounds, it was not just about the religious leaders getting rich, it was not just about the fat treasury of the temple, it was not just about oppression. It was also about what they did with the animals in the vessels after they were purchased: the ritualistic and idolatrous murder of animals in the name of God. The real meaning of his reference to the writings about making the temple a "den of thieves" rings true now, referring directly to the murder and all other evil doings in the Temple. In verse 18, Mark directly correlates the attempt of Jesus to dismantle that sacrificial system with the plot to kill him by the chief priests and scribes.

It is ridiculous to claim that the religious leaders of Christ's time would have plotted his death because he undermined the function of the moneychangers. Nor would the crowd have been "amazed at his teachings" if Jesus was simply telling them to make sure they were not short-changed when they purchased Temple coins. What the people were amazed at was his condemnation of animal sacrifice; it had been hundreds of years since that kind of condemnation had been heard in Jerusalem. And it would not

¹⁷⁹Jeremiah 7:8-11

be tolerated. A few days after he attacked the cult of animal sacrifice, Jesus was crucified. The religious leaders of his time were determined to preserve the belief that it had been ordained by God, who demanded its continuance.¹⁸⁰

Paul turned the pure teachings of Jesus on their head as he created his cult of the mystery of human sacrifice. Except for the Nazarenes and other original followers of Jesus that only existed for a few centuries, every religion in Christianity that I know of is tarnished by the errant pagan doctrines of Paul. Paul did it not because of anything Jesus taught, but because of his own ulterior motives.

Christianity is not a religion that repudiates human sacrifice, it is a religion that celebrates a single effective human sacrifice. Paul's human sacrifice doctrine ties the New Testament together with pagan doctrines of ritualized murder. The sacrament is a pagan cannibal ritual. Human sacrifice has never been God's will.

As with many questionable concepts in the Book of Abraham, I soberly reject Joseph Smith's questionable additions about Adam being commanded by God to build an altar and offer sacrifice. It re-writes history. It cripples our ability to transcend the old idolatry. Adam and his children might have offered sacrifices, who knows, but I think that priests and scribes may have had a hand in making Adam do what they wanted him to do, much like they may have with Abraham's sacrifice of animals. Whether they may or may not have offered sacrifices, I cannot believe that it was ever a commandment of a changeless god. The fact that Joseph Smith perpetuated Paul's human sacrifice myth instead of abolishing it is a blatant testimony against him on whether he restored the true gospel of Jesus.

Pagan Doctrines

Consider what the Encyclopedia Britannica says further about Mithraism:

- Mithra himself was equated with the creator (demiurge) of the Timaeus: he was called "demiurge and father of all things"
- Mithra was called the Mediator.
- Mithra was also the god of the sun, of the shining light that beholds everything, and, hence, was invoked in oaths.
- Mithra was a god of contract and mutual obligation.

¹⁸⁰ http://www.thenazareneway.com/holy_week/assault_on_blood_sacrifice.htm

- Little is known about initiation ceremonies. Ancient texts refer to ablutions (baptism) and purifications and chastisements, to fetters and liberation, and to certain ceremonial passwords.
- While it is unlikely that the ceremony of the bull's sacrifice was frequently performed, the common meal of the initiates was a regular feature of Mithraic worship

The doctrine of a necessity of a mediator between man and God, miraculous birth, demigod Atonement for sin, baptism initiation, ceremony, sacrament, and other rituals did not have origin in the religion of Jesus. Jesus did not like ritual, and he never taught of ritual, he taught against it. He was even hesitant to teach prayer by giving an example, because people would make it ritualistic. From my perspective, all ritual was imported by Paul.

Peter may have wrongly desired to convert the gentiles to Judaism as part of becoming disciples of Jesus, but Paul wrongly deemed it necessary to give and take with pagan ideas in his new christian religion in order to make it appeal to the Gentile masses. Don't believe me? Paul himself said that he changed for the people he taught.

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.¹⁸¹

In addition to the idea that he changed teachings for the people he taught, I also notice in that passage that he differentiates the law of God and the law of Christ, as if they are different things. He didn't even understand the teaching of Jesus that God is like Jesus.¹⁸²

The message of Jesus was decidedly anti-establishment, but Paul calls himself a wise "masterbuilder" of an establishment: the church.

¹⁸¹ 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

¹⁸² John 14:9

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.¹⁸³

Paul says that he laid the foundation and proudly calls himself “a wise masterbuilder,” and he says he laid the foundation on Jesus Christ: thus declaring himself that he created the gospel about Christ. Christianity is Paul’s creation: it is the Church of Paul. If Jesus had intended to establish a church or cult as Paul later created, he would have. But he purposefully didn’t, which I will illustrate later.

Truth, honesty, and integrity are attributes of Jesus, but not of Paul. Paul believed his fraud was justified because it was faith promoting, a pious fraud, of which Jesus would never have approved.

A pious fraud¹⁸⁴ is used to describe fraud in religion or medicine. A pious fraud can be counterfeiting a miracle or falsely attributing a sacred text to a biblical figure due to the belief that the “end justifies the means,” in this case the end of increasing belief by whatever means available.

...there have been men in the world who persuaded themselves that what is called a pious fraud might, at least under particular circumstances, be productive of some good. But, the fraud being once established, could not afterwards be explained ; for it is with a pious fraud as with a bad action, it begets a calamitous necessity of going on. ... From the first preachers the fraud went to the second, and to the third, till the idea of its being a pious fraud became lost in the belief of its being true; and that belief became again encouraged by the interest of those who made a livelihood by preaching it.¹⁸⁵

A religionist may be an enthusiast and imagine he sees what has no reality; he may know his narrative to be false and yet persevere in it with the best of intentions in the world, for the sake of promoting so holy a cause.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³1 Corinthians 3:10-11

¹⁸⁴http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pious_fraud

¹⁸⁵Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part First, Section 13
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00painiala#page/45/mode/1up>

¹⁸⁶David Hume, An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, section 10

Paul was so sure that lying to help people believe is right, he even admitted to lying in order to further his so-called truth:

For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?¹⁸⁷

But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.¹⁸⁸

What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.¹⁸⁹

Paul taught little, if any, of the teachings of Jesus. Arguably, he authored the theology of Atonement through the sacrifice of Jesus instead of the sacrifice of animals. He probably did it because he thought it might make his mythology palatable to the Jews, who were used to the idea of sacrifices being used for Atonement, but in the end his attempt profited nothing and the Jews still rejected it. Now, two thousand years later, we are stuck with the doctrines of sacrifice propitiation for an angry god which are incompatible with the original teachings of Jesus.

The Jews did not reject Paul’s Christianity because they were thick-skulled or wicked. They rejected it because they could recognize the pagan ideas in it. They also rejected it because neither the factual Jesus nor Paul’s mythological Jesus fulfills the requisites for their Messiah.

They should know what is required for their own Messiah. Jews believe that the Messiah will be a normal human being, just as human as you and I are, born of mortal human parents, that he will be the undisputed scion of David and the uncontested ruler over the land and people of Israel, and that he will be very righteous, so much so that he will end all war and bring peace to all nations. To them, Christianity represents many of the same ideas presented by heathen mythology. Who is to blame them, with the miraculous conception, drinking of blood, human sacrifice, expiation-redemption from sins, and for some of them: resurrection.¹⁹⁰

The idea that God should debauch a maiden and have an illegitimate half-god child is repugnant to the Jews. They do not believe it is necessary for a savior to make it possible to return to heaven because

¹⁸⁷Romans 3:7

¹⁸⁸2 Corinthians 12:16

¹⁸⁹Philippians 1:18

¹⁹⁰Resurrection is mentioned zero times in the Old Testament.

they already have what they need to gain access to heaven. They do not believe that the Messiah would be crucified, because his being crucified proves that he didn't bring peace to the world.

If we could ask Jesus, who was a Jew himself, we would probably discover that he clearly knew what the Messiah was supposed to do. Yet, he said he would not bring peace, but the sword.¹⁹¹ He avoided opportunities where he could become any kind of king.¹⁹² He knowingly said and did things that exempted himself from fulfilling the prophecy, much to the chagrin of his family, friends, and disciples who would often fight over who would be greatest in the new kingdom.¹⁹³ Even if Jesus may have performed miracles and was resurrected, that still doesn't change anything because, even by his own admission, he didn't intend to end all war and bring peace to the world.

Jews believe that the Messiah will live to a ripe old age and die of peaceful means in the world of peace he catalyzed. The don't believe that he would be a half-god, that he would need to be raised from the dead on earth, that he would need to perform any miracles, or that he would need to ever have a second-coming. I admire the Jews for not having fallen for just another flavor of heathen mythology.

The problem with finding lots of veritable details about mystery cults, including Mithraism, is that the mystery cults maintained oaths of secrecy on pain of death about their teachings and practices, and revealed them only to initiates. Because mystery cults were secret societies and we don't know much about them, and of course the idea is arguable that the mystery cults inspired Paul. The fact of the matter is, the rituals and doctrines that were taught by other men after Jesus was gone have serious parallels to mystery cults of the time, like Mithraism.

One of the most evident remnants of Mithraism is the Eucharist, which involves eating of the flesh and drinking of the blood of a sacrifice which represents eating and drinking from deity for remission of sins. This couldn't have come from Judaism; drinking the blood of a sacrifice was prohibited because they believed that blood is life:

Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh. Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹Matthew 10:34

¹⁹²John 6:15

¹⁹³Mathew 18:1; Mark 9:33-34; Luke 9:46, 22:24

¹⁹⁴Deuteronomy 12:23-24

Since drinking of blood is an abomination in Judaism as I quoted above, it is much more logical to attribute this ritual of blood drinking to Paul's pagan upbringing in Tarsus than to Jesus or any of his Jewish followers.

You may ask, what about the last supper? Didn't Jesus say to symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood? You seem to be forgetting that the New Testament was not written as things were happening. It was written many decades or even centuries after Jesus was gone by religionists at the time when Paul's religion of pagan ideas had already overshadowed the teachings of Jesus. It was Paul who authored the communion as a religious ritual and he explicitly tied it directly back to the old sacrifice doctrine. According to biblical scholars, Paul's epistles predate all of the other books in the New Testament, having been written while he was in Ephesus between 53 to 57 AD.¹⁹⁵ ¹⁹⁶ That includes the following writings of Paul regarding the communion, which predates all of the descriptions of the last supper in the synoptic gospels:

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?¹⁹⁷

Those verses sound like he is trying to coordinate and connect the Eucharist of the mystery cults, which the people he was teaching were already familiar with, to how the priests of Israel eat the meat of their sacrifices. It was Paul who turned the Last Supper into the Eucharist.

As with all myth, there is some truth to the Last Supper – there was a last supper, yes. They did drink wine and eat bread dipped in oil and herbs, yes. However, the Last Supper wasn't a sacrament, it was actually their Passover feast.¹⁹⁸ You also need to remember that this was an early Passover feast, because Jesus knew he wasn't going to be there for the actual Passover feast the next day. They didn't eat sacrificial lamb as is traditional on the Passover, because Jesus did not really like the lamb sacrifice

¹⁹⁵Corinthians, First Epistle to the, The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Ed. James Orr, 1915.

¹⁹⁶Pauline Chronology: His Life and Missionary Work, from Catholic Resources by Felix Just, S.J.

¹⁹⁷1 Corinthians 10:16-18

¹⁹⁸Matthew 26:18, Mark 14:14, Luke 22:11

thing. Please consider the following verses and the fact that they were all composed by Paul long before the synoptic gospels were written:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.¹⁹⁹

Paul's version of what he called the "Lord's Supper," above, is the earliest record of that kind of description, and it is his opinion of what happened there. Paul was not present at the Last Supper, so how did he learn what Jesus had said there? He may have heard of a story from the apostles, but he never claimed that he heard it from them, rather he explicitly said this was his version which he said he "received of the Lord." Since he never taught any of the teachings of Jesus, how could this be the one thing that he did get from him? Since he has no other fruits of actually knowing the teachings of Jesus, I think that means he quite made this up. Since he was not an eyewitness, his view of what actually happened there was only hearsay. Could this be an instance for Paul to "lie unto his glory?" It certainly was his embellished tale. It was definitely his own scandalous misrepresentation.

The order of the books in the New Testament leads people to believe that the gospels were written first, and the epistles last. If that were true, Paul would have had the gospel writers or the gospels themselves to reference and even quote from, but he never did. No one even knows for sure who the gospel writers were.

In the year 66 AD, the Jews revolted against Roman rule. The city was captured and destroyed in

¹⁹⁹1 Corinthians 11:23-29

70 AD. Paul's writings evidence that they were written before the revolt, because in them Jerusalem was still a thriving city. Few realize that Paul never taught nor did he ever quote any teaching of Jesus. Because Paul shows no awareness of the gospels in his writings, and since he quotes none of them, the gospels had to have been written after the revolt and after Paul's letters. Because of this, we must all be wary about the witnesses and quotes of the sayings of Jesus.

As I mentioned, the letters to the Corinthians were written by Paul in Ephesus between 53 and 57 AD,²⁰⁰ while the Gospel of Mark, which was used as a source for much of the other synoptic gospels (Matthew and Luke) was written in Greek at least a decade or more after.²⁰¹ Matthew and Luke, which have three-quarters of Mark's words, were written even later. The writing of the gospel of John was originally started nearly the same time Luke was written, however it had many more insertions over at least the next 50 years.²⁰²

The most reliable details in history come from the witnesses themselves who lived at the time of the actual events,²⁰³ and the same is true for the Bible: the more time has passed between the actual events and when they supposedly occurred, and the more people who relay the tale, the more embellished, fabulous, and mythical the story gets. The gospel of Mark treats Jesus as a man. In Matthew and Luke, he is half man, half God. By the time John was written, he was God himself. Mark knows nothing of virgin birth. Matthew and Luke say conception was through the Holy Spirit, and John is silent about virgin birth, but he does say Jesus was the son of Joseph twice. At the Council of Nicaea, the most embellished man-made myths and philosophies of Jesus and God became dogma.

The accounts of the Last Supper in the other synoptic gospels are eerily similar to Paul's version, which I remind you, was written first. I am certain Paul's version was superimposed later on by scribes of the synoptic gospels in order to make that Passover dinner become what Paul wanted it to be: a ritual of communion. The Book of Mormon does not clarify this issue, instead it simply repeats and even plagiarizes the same ideas of Paul, even that by participating in the ritual unworthily, you are "drinking

²⁰⁰http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Epistle_to_the_Corinthians#Composition

²⁰¹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark#Composition

²⁰²http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_John#Date

²⁰³http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_method#Core_principles_for_determining_reliability

damnation.”²⁰⁴ First, the spirit of the real message of Jesus abhors ritual. Second, Jesus would scoff at the idea that anything drink could damn you.²⁰⁵

The gospel of John does not include Paul’s description of their feast of the Passover,²⁰⁶ but I do find something about eating of his body and drinking of his blood which the naive mind would think it is Jesus preaching the idea of the Eucharist:

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.²⁰⁷

Myths are usually based on truth, but as more and more time passes between the actual event and when it is finally written, the tales become taller and the truth becomes minimized. It is clear to me that Paul had much influence on the above verses. All except the last verse seems dark and void of the entirety of truth to me. As I read them, it feels as though someone tried to make a Jesus contradict his own previous teachings by teaching the doctrine of Paul. Silly ritual-minded idolatrous Paul, Jesus didn’t mean literal chewing and swallowing of bread when he said he was the bread of life. How about this instead:

One of the visiting Pharisees, mounting a lampstand, shouted out this question: “You tell us that you are the bread of life. How can you give us your flesh to eat or your blood to drink? What avail is your teaching if it cannot be carried out?”

²⁰⁴3 Nephi 18:28-29

²⁰⁵Luke 11:38-40, Matthew 15:17-20

²⁰⁶John 13-14

²⁰⁷John 6:52-58

And Jesus answered this question, saying: “I did not teach you that my flesh is the bread of life nor that my blood is the water thereof. But I did say that my life in the flesh is a bestowal of the bread of heaven. The fact of the Word of God bestowed in the flesh and the phenomenon of the Son of Man subject to the will of God, constitute a reality of experience which is equivalent to the divine sustenance. You cannot eat my flesh nor can you drink my blood, but you can become one in spirit with me even as I am one in spirit with the Father. You can be nourished by the eternal word of God, which is indeed the bread of life, and which has been bestowed in the likeness of mortal flesh; and you can be watered in soul by the divine spirit, which is truly the water of life. The Father has sent me into the world to show how he desires to indwell and direct all men; and I have so lived this life in the flesh as to inspire all men likewise ever to seek to know and do the will of the indwelling heavenly Father.”²⁰⁸

Even though the above quote may simply be an expansion by poetic license, I invite you to think about what you just read for a moment and decide: which version of that episode do you think the Spirit of Truth testifies is the truth? In my view, the above quote is more in harmony with John 8:12 and is more in harmony with his Spirit of Truth.

As I mentioned before, Thomas Jefferson observed, “we must separate the gold from the dross; restore him to the former, and leave the latter to the stupidity of some, and roguery of others of his disciples.” I agree with Thomas Jefferson.

I rebuke the roguery of Paul that we must physically partake of a cannibalistic representation of Jesus’ flesh and blood in order to gain forgiveness through his blood. At the Last Supper, as with many things, Jesus added meaning like he did with parables, but it wasn’t Paul’s mystery-cult ritual. It was more of a toast. He was reminding them of things that he taught them as he bid farewell, like this:

Take this cup and divide it among yourselves and, when you partake of it, realize that I shall not again drink with you the fruit of the vine since this is our last supper. When we sit down again in this manner, it will be in the kingdom to come.

Take this cup, all of you, and drink of it. This shall be the cup of my remembrance. This is

²⁰⁸Urantia Book 153:3.2

the cup of the blessing of a new dispensation of grace and truth. This shall be to you the emblem of the bestowal and ministry of the divine Spirit of Truth. And I will not again drink this cup with you until I drink in new form with you in the Father's eternal kingdom.

Take this bread of remembrance and eat it. I have told you that I am the bread of life. And this bread of life is the united life of the Father and the Son in one gift. The word of the Father, as revealed in the Son, is indeed the bread of life.²⁰⁹

Another thing Jesus did that day, which was much more ceremonial, was wash the feet of his disciples. Why didn't Paul's ritualistic mind catch onto that for their ritual instead? Because he was already used to the idea of both eating idolatrous godly flesh and drinking idolatrous godly blood at the communion of mystery cults.

As a sincere follower of Jesus, I hold the teachings of Jesus above anything anyone else ever said. The incompatibility between the Kingdom of Heaven teachings of Jesus and the redemption from sin by divine blood that Paul taught well after Jesus was gone is the fall of the first domino that made me begin to doubt the validity of the restoration, because the Pauline doctrines of Atonement and Mithraic rituals were restored instead of more pristine and simple teachings of Jesus. Paul was the true founder and "masterbuilder" of the Catholic church. If Catholicism is truly in apostasy, then Paul is the author of the apostasy. If the ideas of the author of the apostasy are restored instead of the teachings of Jesus, then it can't possibly be a restoration of the teachings of Jesus. Let me say it again: a true restoration of the message of Jesus could not include, depend upon, or use any contradicting Pauline doctrines or rituals.

Paul turned the religion of Jesus into a religion about Christ by introducing these things which worship the body, blood, and death of Jesus as a means for salvation instead of worshiping God with the enlightened good news from Jesus. It seems that if you would take Mithraism and supplant Mithras with Jesus, you would have Paul's Christianity.

One thing that many may not realize is that Jesus did not want us to worship him. He taught that we should worship God, not him. For example:

²⁰⁹Urantia Book 179

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.²¹⁰

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.²¹¹

He was careful to leave nothing physical that we could turn into an idol. He didn't write on anything permanent so we couldn't turn it into an idol or sacred text, too. He told those who he healed to go and tell no one about it (of course they'd never follow that advice). Worshiping by drinking symbols of a sacrifice of his blood of any kind simply turns his pure teachings upside down – it changes it into an idolatrous religion. Yes, worshiping and partaking representations of godly blood and flesh as a means for salvation is idolatry, and I declare that Jesus did not ever want that.

What about this oft-quoted scripture?

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.²¹²

It is evident that much has been thwarted through time as this wording is all so biased toward the Pauline doctrine. To be truly in harmony and not contradictory with the other teachings of Jesus, what I think should have been written and attributed to John is this instead: (these are my words)

For God so loved the world that he sent his son to show us God's true nature and to teach us that God actually loves us with a fatherly love. And whoever believes what he taught should not fear perishing but instead will live with confidence in the promise everlasting life. God didn't send his son to show how inept, frail, and sinful his children are, but instead so his son could show how God truly is, especially how he truly is full of love and mercy for all of his children. With that knowledge all may look forward to the future

²¹⁰Matthew 19:16-17

²¹¹John 4:23

²¹²John 3:16-17

with hope that death is not the end and neither is sin.

Again, let me reiterate that before Jesus came, the Jews held that God was anthropomorphic, with all the distasteful human whims of ruthlessness, wrath, jealousy, hate, anger, and who would destroy all of his children if it weren't for their sacrifices to appease his selfish desires. Paul continued that ugly tradition of God. Jesus' main message was that we are all children of a loving eternal father, and that message alone makes all fear dissipate. That idea alone is enough to obviate the need for any and all ritualistic reconciliation with God. It is liberating because it obviates the necessity of fearing an angry god and appeasing him with any superstitious rite, ritual, blood, or anything along those lines. It is the true good news of Jesus. If while earnestly seeking God's will you are inspired with a desire to repent and you sincerely repent, you already have all of his forgiveness and mercy to advance with that repentance without any need for anything pompous. Sincere repentance within is more effective than any outward display of any intention to repent.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?²¹³

The above scripture is also misunderstood when you come from the perspective of the Pauline doctrine: you think that "he that believeth in me" means actually believing in the personage of Christ and the shedding of his blood as an object of worship, an idol. I assert that is not what Jesus was saying. In the dictionary, the phrase "believe in" means "to have faith in the reliability, honesty, benevolence, etc., of: I can only help you if you believe in me." It means to trust in the help or guidance of someone. It does not mean to idolize them.

He also said whosoever believes the teachings of Jesus shall never die. Wait a moment, "shall never die" is indeed a bold statement. For it is true that everyone dies. What do you think Jesus could possibly mean that we shall never die? The answer comes when you understand the reality of your being with the same clarity that Jesus understood his own reality of being. When we take Jesus' good news and believe in it as he did, then death means absolutely nothing and is no obstacle and is no end. Death is not

²¹³ John 11:25-26

really death, it is merely falling asleep for our immaterial mind, for if you truly trust in his good news, you can look forward with hope that after falling asleep in death, you will simply awaken (without any sense of time passing) in the resurrection halls of the mansion worlds. Jesus' demonstration that he had the power to resurrect Lazarus' four-day-old rotting flesh was partly to illustrate what he was teaching before, that he indeed has the power of resurrection and life. However, we will all be resurrected into a new and more glorious form, not Paul's idea that it should be a reconstruction of the same rotten body in our graves. Lazarus surely died again and has probably been resurrected in the proper order.

One of the things that proves to me that the Pauline doctrine of Atonement for sins through blood sacrifice is false is the fact that it is an enigma: something that is mysterious, puzzling, or difficult to understand. The fact that modern-day apostles preach that it cannot be understood proves that it is an enigma. The fact that it is an enigma proves its source: a mystery cult. Paul even calls his message "the mystery of Christ," and his church "the fellowship of the mystery," which is what his church truly was:

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery²¹⁴

That scripture makes it clear to me that Paul was highly influenced by the mystery cults of his time. Paul talks about his "mystery" many times in his letters, while Jesus had taught the complete opposite: Jesus said nothing of mysteries except that you can understand the mysteries of heaven if you sincerely seek, knock, and ask, and that those who do those things will understand his parables.²¹⁵

How ironic that our own Book of Mormon includes this observation about enigmatic mystery cults:

And they will, by the cunning and the mysterious arts of the evil one, work some great mystery which we cannot understand, which will keep us down to be servants to their words, and also servants unto them, for we depend upon them to teach us the word; and thus will they keep us in ignorance if we will yield ourselves unto them, all the days of our lives.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Ephesians 3:3-4,9

²¹⁵ Matthew 13:11, Mark 4:11, Luke 8:10

²¹⁶ Helaman 16:21

I know that I am taking that verse out of context, but I think what is said in this verse stands on its own merit. Incidentally, the context is extolling miracle seeking. Miracle and sign seeking is something Jesus frowned upon, because it is idolatrous and detracts from genuine seeking of the true god. Why is sign or miracle seeking in contempt in some places of the Book of Mormon, and yet in other places, it is lauded? But I digress. That verse in Helaman aptly illustrates how shamanism, charlatanism, witch doctors and priesthoods with their mysterious conundrums have bound humankind down into ignorance and subjection to their tyrannical establishments for eons. In contrast, the message of Jesus frees us from being dependent upon those frauds! He taught that we all have the capacity to seek out and find the will of God ourselves, with no need for any human intermediaries!

Sinners

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.²¹⁷

In that verse, Paul teaches something Jesus never taught. Paul promoted the doctrine of Original Sin. Jesus was never preoccupied with sin or with evil. Instead, Jesus taught overcoming evil with good. The context of these verses is about that:

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.²¹⁸

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.²¹⁹

But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.²²⁰

Back to the topic of what Paul thought of sinners:

²¹⁷Romans 5:12

²¹⁸Matthew 5:16

²¹⁹Matthew 5:44

²²⁰Luke 6:35-36

But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.²²¹

In that verse, Paul reveals his true bigotry of his up-bringing as a Pharisee as well as his unfamiliarity with who Jesus was. Jesus taught the opposite:

But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.²²²

Here is a thought for you: if God can have no unclean thing in his presence, and if Jesus is our God, then how could he have routinely fraternized with sinners? Is the "no unclean thing" doctrine truly of Jesus or is its true source the idolatry of Pharisees and other self-righteous men who desire to have power and control over others by demanding strict obedience to their petty rules? As Jesus clearly said in the above scripture and in accordance with his many parables, he purposefully sought out and did all he could to uplift, cheer, enlighten, rehabilitate, and love the sinners.

In Luke's testament, Jesus says, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful"²²³ That might be what he truly meant to say. The word *perfect* in the other gospels may not be the right translation for modern English.

One wishes that the Aramaic word which Jesus used were known. In Luke's account the phrase is not "be perfect" but "be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." Dr. Torrey catches the logical conclusion of Jesus' argument and the probable meaning of the Aramaic words he used, when he translates Matthew's sentence thus: "Be therefore all-including (in your goodwill), even as your heavenly Father includes all." The word "perfect" in our speech has come to mean blamelessness. That, however, was the very thing the proud claim to which Jesus was rebuking.²²⁴

²²¹1 Corinthians 5:11

²²²Luke 5:30-32

²²³Luke 6:36

²²⁴Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Man from Nazareth*, p. 79

I only ever remember the version that uses the word *perfect* in Sunday School. The church emphasizes the righteousness of the pharisees.

“Be ye merciful” forfeits the vanity, elitism, self-righteousness, and pride which comes from strictly obeying the commandments of men. Obedience to a long list of outwardly-observable rules is not what Jesus was talking about when he talked of perfection.²²⁵ Strict obedience leads to suppression of humanity. It creates masks and facades that act as a barrier that keeps you from authentically experiencing the world and relationships with others. It makes you avoid associating with sinners to keep up your reputation or because they are a bad influence. It makes sure no unclean thing can dwell in your presence, too.

I reiterate what I said earlier: you have heard it said that faith without works is dead, and I’ll add that love without works is dead. Love in action flowers into mercy. It is deceitful to say you love someone while withholding mercy for them. You have heard it said that God loves the sinner but hates the sin,²²⁶ but I say that he loves both the sinner and his sin. God’s core is love. There is no hate in him. A god that hates is a jealous, vindictive, idolatrous pagan god. God is not concerned with sin, nor is he threatened by it. He knows it is temporal. To an infinite being, that which is not eternal is not real. He does not have to hate sin because his love obliterates sin. If you are merciful as he is, “ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.”²²⁷

God knows what situation we’re in and what we’re up against in this life. He also knows how a fully volitional being benefits from a temporary experience of choosing both good and evil. It is not about being eternally condemned for choosing evil, it is about gaining experience and growing from having the chance to choose evil. Having chosen evil and experienced the outcome, a sincere volitional being will ultimately become more strong in their determination to be righteous than a being that was created perfectly but who has no experience with evil.

I used to be afraid of the dark until I learned that I am light and the dark is afraid of me.²²⁸

The reality of good versus evil in eternity is not like a star on a backdrop of the darkness of space. Instead, it is like a tiny speck of darkness on a backdrop of

²²⁵Luke 18:9-14

²²⁶St. Augustine, Letter 211, Cum dilectione hominum et odio vitiorum

²²⁷Luke 6:35

²²⁸D. R. Silva

eternal light. A blip of temporal darkness is irrelevant in an eternity of light.

The goodness, mercy, and love of God does not reject sin, it swallows it up. Imagine light cast onto a dark surface. The light swallows up the darkness and the surface becomes full of light. Any imperfections in the surface which once caused shadow are now filled with light. In the light, imperfections become beauty because they are unique. All that is true is celebrated as it is fully embraced by the light.

Sin is an unreality in the eyes of God because it is temporal. Living an unreality is the base cause for sin. The essence of sin is not transgression or disobedience. The essence of sin is to lie, not only to others, but also to self. Sin is the choice made from a perspective of unreality, like unreal history, unreal principles, and unreal myth. Sin follows the lie even the conscience opposes it or when the light of evidence invalidates it.

Jesus taught that we should return light for darkness and good for evil because that is the way to swallow it up. The cleanliness of the dwelling place of God is not because of a silly law which must be mindlessly obeyed. The cleanliness is inherent in his divine, infinite nature. If we were to be in his presence, any darkness would be simply out-shined with light and all that would be left would be that which is eternal, spiritual, beautiful, lovely, and real.

Little Children

Jesus taught:

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.²²⁹

But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.²³⁰

And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.²³¹

²²⁹Matthew 18:4-5

²³⁰Matthew 19:14

²³¹Matthew 9:36-37

But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.²³²

And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.²³³

And Paul taught a contradictory message about children:

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.²³⁴

Idolatry

I have mentioned something several times which may have agitated and maybe even irritated you. I said that when you believe in Jesus as something to adore because of salvation through the shedding of his blood, you are making him and the fact of his crucifixion and resurrection into an untrue object of worship: an idol. It would be more advantageous to seek to believe and live the teachings of Jesus instead.

What does it mean to be idolatrous? To be idolatrous is to accept an imposition from others that God should be something which he actually is not. You may think of an idol as the archetypal golden calf or some other man-made physical form which people pray to for forgiveness of their sins, seek blessings, or offer it sacrifices. Indeed it has been in the past, but as you have heard many times before, an idol does not necessarily have to be a physical graven image or a painting to become an idol.

Let me clarify that I am not talking about the conclusion that is often given at church that vices, passions, success, money-making, or hobbies are

²³²Mark 10:14-15

²³³Luke 18:15-17

²³⁴1 Corinthians 13:11

idols and constitute idolatry. The definition of idolatry should deal with true concepts of God versus false or man-made concepts of God. To define idolatry as something that distracts your attention from the adoration of a institutionalized crystallization of God is subterfuge by the institution which does not want you to understand the true concept of idolatry. Though vices and passions can consume time or divert goals or priorities, I do not think that they have ever been understood to be God. Following passion can also be very rewarding, too, because your passions are often in line with your genuine desires for happiness. Equating idolatry with enthusiasm for any rewarding life pursuit is incommensurable; like comparing apples and oranges. Ironically, one of the definitions of idolatry includes blind devotion to a man-made god. If a religious institution wants you to stop thinking and believe that their construct of God trumps your own God-given conscience while stressing strict obedience to its bylaws as proof of devotion to their contrivance of God, that is idolatry more than ambition ever could be.

Tis mad idolatry to make the service greater than the god.²³⁵

It has been said that humans were created in the image of God. In saying that, humanity is ennobled. But to go the opposite direction and create God in the image of humans is idolatrous because it degrades and limits God.

Man was created in the image of God. I do not think that means we share same height and the same number of noses, earlobes, fingers and toes. I believe it means that a mortal beast has been given the virtue of becoming a person along with three God-like attributes that make that person more than their physical makeup.

1. The capacity for self-awareness, but it is not only that, the ability to be self-aware of self-awareness – it is a self-consciousness that makes a person feel separate and above the physical construct, as if mind extends beyond the physical.
2. The capacity for wisdom: the ability to not only see, but to perceive; the ability to not only memorize, but to understand. To bridle emotions, instincts, and passions; to apply careful thought and deliberate choice using knowledge, experience, understanding, sense, and insight.
3. The third builds upon the awareness of self-awareness and wisdom: it makes this mortal

²³⁵Shakespeare, Troilus and Cressida, Act 2 Scene 2

recognize their own imperfection and aspire for ideals that exceed innate physical capacity.

Those attributes contrast humans with the rest of the animal kingdom, where even the highest animals do not appear to be wise, nor do they appear to be self-aware of any self-awareness. If any of the animals had these attributes, they would be able to use symbolic sounds as we do for language, and use those abstract sounds to discuss abstract concepts. I believe that the gift of being such a living entity is granted by God, the source of all personhood. This is an immaterial unification of many different kinds of energies beyond the base constructs of matter, soul, spirit, energy, and light. A person is more than the sum of the parts. To say that man was created in the image of God is to identify his divine spark, that man is indeed a child of God, and is to validate the innate sense deep within most humans that at their core is found something that is not limited to space or time.

However, to go the opposite direction, to create God in the image of man, creates a vain idol of God. It is an idol because any finite concept, fallible image, or limited box in which we place God limits the reality of his infinite existence. To limit God by cramping him into any image of a human characteristics is to engrave an idol of him. Idolatry vainly gives God human frailties. Idolatry vainly gives God a changeable mind. Idolatry vainly gives God human weaknesses, wrath, anger, jealousy, fallibility, insanity, shortsightedness, or any of the innumerable frailties that humans can have. Idolatry vainly makes God command the most trivial things and makes him seem so manipulative that the idea that he created free will is defeated.

Crystallizing a concept of God into the image of an exalted human who had once been a fallible man is idolatrous, because an endless changeless perfect being could not have ever had any need to progress. In many ways, the Latter-Day Saint concept of God chisels him into the stone of mortal mind as a human. It robs God of his infinite attributes and places him under subjection to laws of nature. As if God could be lesser than the nature, physics, space, and time that he is supposed to have created. When an idolatrous concept of God is institutionalized, it is petrified into the minds of all those in the institution, and since it is not a living experience of God, it actually impedes the ability of those who genuinely seek God to find a greater understanding of God. I assert that the true most high God stands above time, above matter, above spirit, above the existence of many levels of the reality we physical beings think we comprehend through our five senses.

The worship of symbols is just as limiting to God as icons and statues are. Worshiping a cross is idolatrous. In like manner, worshiping a single act or fact is idolatrous. Worshiping a woman or her womb which bore a demigod is idolatrous. Worshiping the blood shed by a demigod as an offering for sin is idolatrous. Worshiping the fact of the cross is idolatrous. We should stop worshiping symbols, acts or facts and instead seek saving truth.

With idolatry usually comes ritual. Ritualistic practices are idolatrous acts, or act-idols. A sacrifice of an animal on an altar is idolatrous. The sacrifice of anything on an altar is idolatrous. While it is not a graven image, it is an offering in worship to something that is not God, or it is the attempt to appease something that is not God. The sacrament, the cannibalistic consumption of symbols of the flesh and blood of Jesus as a means to cleanse from sin is idolatrous worship of the Pauline version of Jesus Christ for the same purpose. Making Jesus become a bloody human sacrifice for sin in order to appease something that is not God is idolatrous. Baptism is an idolatrous empty form which can be done completely pretentiously. Washing that doesn't really cleanse, anointing that only pretends to confer an office, and the veneration of ceremonies which extol tokens, signs, repetitive phrases, actions, and special clothing as actual keys for entry into the Celestial Kingdom are all empty and idolatrous. All of them are empty forms which have no true eternal meaning, just as much as a golden calf has no eternal meaning.

Fasting is idolatrous self-mortification. While it may be good to go without food sometimes to make us appreciate it, while it may help us practice self-restraint, and while we may naturally fast when we are in mourning or discouragement, I cannot believe in a God who requires some form of masochism before he is moved to compassion. Self-mortification by fasting only differs by the intensity of self-torture, like hitting yourself with a few lashes, scarring yourself with cuts, piercing yourself with red-hot iron, and so on. Why stop there, how about cutting off parts of your body? Shouldn't more pain and bodily self-sacrifice gain the attention of God more? How much has our perception of God advanced from that of our tribal ancestors, if we still use such an idolatrous practices?

It is not a perfect god with infinite foresight that changes his mind when his children hurt themselves. It is a spoiled child that is so bold as to believe he is wiser than his parents. Fasting is like a child that holds their breath until they get what they want. What

sort of child of God dares to think that God will not take notice, and will not show his favor unless coordinated, scheduled repetition of self-inflicted pain are involved? If God does need us to express our desires to him before he will bless us, then why wouldn't a single prayer be enough? Just as I know what good things would benefit my children before they ask, God already has knowledge before he is asked. Such a patronizing parent would God be, if he did not give before he is asked, as I have done with my children; and this is the one we should adore as more loving beyond comprehension!

Flagellation and constant pleading are all things that would be done to gain the attention of a tribal idol, not a loving father. We can thank Paul for teaching idolatrous self-mortification:

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.²³⁶

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake²³⁷

In those verses, Paul purposefully hurt himself, but fasting and self-mortification has no place in Jesus' true gospel:

Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.²³⁸

He said that fasting is of the old, and cannot go with the new. In order to truly understand the teachings of Jesus, you need to start with entirely new cloth to make new clothes, not patch the old one, and

you need to put the new wine in new bottles, not in old bottles. It is the same with fasting and the new message of Jesus. You must dispose all of the old in order to fully embrace the new.

We have Paul to thank for bringing many of these idolatrous practices back into Jesus' pure message. In reality they have nothing to do with the teachings of Jesus in any way, from the idolization and ritualization of the blood of Jesus as a cleansing, saving power to the return of the Jewish Sabbath day, fasting, and self-mortification of your own flesh.

All of the things I mention above are idolatrous because they do not understand the true nature of God, thus they are trying to appeal to something that is not God. You cannot change God's mind. Anything you do will not make him love you more, because infinity cannot be increased, and no amount of sacrifice, self deprecation, repetition of "Hail Mary", sacraments, baptisms, swearing, oaths, washings, anointings, tokens, signs, omens, talismans, fetishes, charms, icons, rituals, slogans, spells, phrases, passwords, idols, icons, or altars will ever change his infinite mind, no matter who performs it or what authority he claims to have. God will have the same mercy for you whether you do any or all of those things or not.

How could we all have missed the moral of the story of the Old Testament so badly? How could we have missed the teachings of the God Most High from Melchizedek so horribly? How could we all have missed Jesus' teachings so ineptly and allowed Paul's teachings to overshadow them so readily? Time and time again the prophets tried to stop the old idolatrous practices and to only worship the one true God, with no need for fetishes, charms, relics, sacred land, shrines, charms, idols, rituals, peep stones, divination rods and so on. Even Jesus taught us that we should only worship our Heavenly Father, not him. While, yes, Jesus is the creator and sovereign of this universe, and we will in no way ascend to the Father except by him, as it is his bar that we will have to pass to move on beyond his universe, Jesus is the creator of our universe and yet he acknowledges that all worship should be for the Father, who is the ultimate source of all that is.

If all of these rites, rituals, and practices are idolatrous, then what could we possibly do to swear our intention by covenants, oaths, or promises to keep the commandments? My answer is, why not just do it? Why not simply and actually love as Jesus suggests? What matters most is what you do and what you genuinely are, not what you promise to do or what you pretend to be.

²³⁶1 Corinthians 9:27

²³⁷Colossians 1:24

²³⁸Matthew 9:14-17

Obeying negative “thou shalt not” rules are not at the level Jesus taught. You can’t aspire to not do something, but you can aspire to do good. Do good for the sake of goodness. Return good for evil. Go beyond the Old Testament charge to love your neighbor as yourself,²³⁹ and love your neighbor with a fatherly love, as if they were your own child. Don’t stop there, also love your enemy with a fatherly love. Love those who are different from you in any way. Sincerely seek out the will of God and do it for the sake of good because you love good and without expectation for any reward now or in the hereafter. That speaks more than any outward oath or covenant ever could.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.²⁴⁰

In the scripture above, James was saying we should never oath. James wasn’t talking about crude or taboo swear words, he was talking about oaths. Using the name of God or anything he has created to make oaths is to use his name in vain and it is idolatrous. There is a more common yet more evil and grievous way to use the name of God in vain other than using his name in casual conversation: it is to have the vanity to name-drop God to compel other people to do things that are not God’s will.

Another form of idolatry is making something sacred or holy which is not sacred or holy. Placing trust in other men to stand in for God himself is a form of idolatry, especially if we honor, revere, and worship them as being any more chosen or better than ourselves. The hero-worship that I’ve observed many have for general church leaders is idolatry, it breaks the first of the ten commandments, it puts our trust in the arm of the flesh,²⁴¹ and it denies us the right Jesus gave us to seek God directly.²⁴²

There are many things that have been made sacred which are not actually sacred. A sacred omen, mark, rune, fetish, icon, symbol, painting, sculpture, sign, token, cloth, rock, pile of rocks, altar, building, land, meeting, recited prayer, moment, day, week, month, year, bread, oil, wine, water, plant, animal, cloth, clothes, underwear, and the list can go on. Anything we make sacred, which is actually not, is idolatry; and is blasphemous to that which actually is

²³⁹Leviticus 19:18

²⁴⁰James 5:12

²⁴¹Jeremiah 17:5-8, 2 Nephi 4:34, 2 Nephi 28:31

²⁴²John 14:7

holy and sacred. There is only one who is sacred: It is God.

You cannot separate one day to be more sacred than another without it becoming idolatrous. If you must call one day sacred, then so must all the other days be sacred, as all the other days are gifts to us by he who is sacred and holy. Observing one day as sacred would make that day into an idol, just as much as making a golden trinket sacred above some other piece of gold is making it into an idol. Jesus knew this, and it is evident in his teachings. Jesus did many great works on the Sabbath day, much to the chagrin of the priesthood, and he often taught that it wasn’t as important as we thought to observe the Sabbath day:

Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?²⁴³

And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him?

How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:

Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.²⁴⁴

It was customary in their culture and lawful for passers by to pluck the crop of a field and eat it if they were hungry.²⁴⁵ The Pharisees weren’t complaining about stealing, they were talking about working on the Sabbath day.

We profess that Jesus was a perfect man, correct? Disregarding the Sabbath day rules did not make him imperfect. Why do we still cling to all of the petty Old Testament laws like our salvation depends on them? Jesus did not observe other idolatrous commandments, and fasting and the Sabbath were

²⁴³Luke 14:5

²⁴⁴Mark 2:23-28

²⁴⁵Deuteronomy 23:24-25

not the only things. Here is another example, he did not observe the idolatrous practice of washing hands before every course in a meal as was the Jewish law and was obeyed as if salvation depended upon it.²⁴⁶

And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?²⁴⁷

Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.²⁴⁸

Why is it so hard for us all to get the spirit of the teachings of Jesus? Why do we not study the teachings of Jesus more? We dwell so much on the idolatrous Pauline doctrine that we have no time for the plain, simple gospel of Jesus. We preach that we must follow the example of Jesus at least every Sunday, yet the only thing that we do that actually follows his example is being baptized. Even then, the story behind why he was baptized and what that baptism meant is never fully explored, especially that Jesus taught that outward ritual is immaterial compared to true inward change. "Fulfil all righteousness" is only mentioned by Matthew.²⁴⁹ Is that outward ordinance of baptism more important than the real baptism that Jesus provides: baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost? John promised that Jesus would replace his baptism with something higher:

I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.²⁵⁰

But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?²⁵¹

²⁴⁶Mark 7:1-23, Matthew 15:1-11

²⁴⁷Luke 11:38-40

²⁴⁸Matthew 15:17-20

²⁴⁹Matthew 3:15

²⁵⁰Mark 1:8

²⁵¹Matthew 3:14

Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.²⁵²

The fact that John forbad him acknowledges that John knew the baptism that Jesus provides supersedes what John was doing. Jesus did receive baptism from John, effectively accepting John's preparation for him, and he allowed his disciples to continue John's legacy of baptism, but Jesus himself didn't baptize anybody.²⁵³ Nor did he teach anyone that baptism is indispensable in any of the gospel accounts. On the other hand, he did teach repeatedly about faith.²⁵⁴ We are not disciples of John, we are disciples of Jesus. You may ask about John 3:5:

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.²⁵⁵

Again, that verse is routinely ripped from its context. Yes, he mentions water and Spirit. Was he truly referring to baptism in that verse? Look again, while considering the next verse (as well as the entire conversation with Nicodemus):

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.²⁵⁶

Jesus referred to both births only after Nicodemus started talking about wombs. Nicodemus talked

²⁵²Acts 15:16

²⁵³John 4:2

²⁵⁴Matthew 8:10, Matthew 8:26, Matthew 9:2, Matthew 9:22, Matthew 9:29, Matthew 14:31, Matthew 15:28, Matthew 16:8, Matthew 17:20, Matthew 21:21, Mark 2:5, Mark 4:40, Mark 5:34, Mark 10:52, Mark 11:22, Luke 5:20, Luke 7:9, Luke 7:50, Luke 8:25, Luke 8:48, Luke 12:28, Luke 17:5, Luke 17:6, Luke 17:19, Luke 18:8, Luke 18:42, Luke 22:32

²⁵⁵John 3:5

²⁵⁶John 3:3-8

about entering into his mother a second time, and to that Jesus replied, differentiating the physical birth that Nicodemus talked about with the spiritual birth. Jesus clarified what he said by saying that flesh gives birth to flesh and spirit gives birth to spirit. Flesh giving birth to flesh directly refers to physical birth and that parallels his mention of born from the water, meaning the water of the womb. He only began talking of the physical birth because Nicodemus started talking about it. The first is the physical birth on Earth, which Nicodemus understood. The second birth, which Nicodemus did not understand, is the spiritual rebirth that Jesus was originally trying to teach Nicodemus. He specified the water and Spirit to differentiate what Nicodemus was getting confused about. Baptism is an outward expression of what should already have occurred within. Jesus never needed to see any outward expression of spiritual rebirth, since he could already see everyone's thoughts and intents.

What is being born of the Spirit? It is transcending the animal and becoming a child of God by coming to the realization that God is your loving father. It starts as you honestly and sincerely seek his true attributes and eventually desire good just as he desires good. If you find that you are sincerely seeking God, you have already found him, God has already found you, and you have already been born of the Spirit. That is all there is to it. It is simple, honest, and easy.

If you feel that baptism will help you make that change of starting a new life seeking God, then by all means do it. If you do, consider that outward rite done in insincerity or hypocrisy has no meaning whatsoever, while sincerity in seeking God does have meaning. Also if baptism means becoming subject to idolatrous rules and bylaws of an earthly organization of men rather than genuinely seeking God, then it might not be all that good after all. The only thing of eternal value, being born of the Spirit, is between you and God no one else, and it cannot be faked.

The concept Jesus presented in the last verse²⁵⁷ is amazing to me, and he illustrates exactly how being born of the Spirit comes about. The event of being born of the Spirit is silent and subtle. There is no pompous outward formality that comes with being born of the Spirit. Being born of the Spirit is a private, intimate event, and you may not even have noticed when or where it happened. Seeking a private, intimate relationship with God is true religion:

²⁵⁷ John 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.²⁵⁸

Jesus reproves the exhibitionist, while Paul demands outspoken prayer:

I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.²⁵⁹

So who is right, is it Jesus or Paul? I will side with Jesus. If it is as Jesus says, that it is about our intimate, private, internal, secret relationship with our Heavenly Father, then why is baptism preached as such an indispensable rite of passage into the Celestial Kingdom? Why is it preached that baptism is required for everyone, even those who did not have the opportunity to hear the gospel and be baptized in their life? Even the Book of Mormon preaches the concept that the ignorant are as little children and need no baptism:

Wherefore, he has given a law; and where there is no law given there is no punishment; and where there is no punishment there is no condemnation; and where there is no condemnation the mercies of the Holy One of Israel have claim upon them, because of the Atonement; for they are delivered by the power of him.

For the Atonement satisfieth the demands of his justice upon all those who have not the law given to them, that they are delivered from that awful monster, death and hell, and the devil, and the lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment; and they are restored to that God who gave them breath, which is the Holy One of Israel.²⁶⁰

According to that scripture, baptism for the dead is moot. The following scripture says that the ignorant who never had the opportunity to have salvation declared unto them will rise in the first resurrection with the righteous to eternal life:

²⁵⁸ Matthew 6:3-6

²⁵⁹ 1 Timothy 2:8

²⁶⁰ 2 Nephi 9:25-26

And now, the resurrection of all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words, or all those that have kept the commandments of God, shall come forth in the first resurrection; therefore, they are the first resurrection.

They are raised to dwell with God who has redeemed them; thus they have eternal life through Christ, who has broken the bands of death.

And these are those who have part in the first resurrection; and these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them. And thus the Lord bringeth about the restoration of these; and they have a part in the first resurrection, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord.

And little children also have eternal life.²⁶¹

Most of all, they that are without the law are alive in Christ, and unto such baptism avails nothing but is a mockery which denies the mercies of Christ, and puts trust in dead works:

For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law. For the power of redemption cometh on all them that have no law; wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, cannot repent; and unto such baptism availeth nothing—

But it is mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of his Holy Spirit, and putting trust in dead works.²⁶²

The Book of Mormon teaches that changing your mind can't happen after death. Becoming subject to the devil is the *final* state of the wicked.

Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.

For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked.²⁶³

²⁶¹Mosiah 15:22-25

²⁶²Moroni 8:22-23

²⁶³Alma 34:34-35

... until the night cometh, wherein no man can work.²⁶⁴

The Book of Mormon's doctrine obviates the necessity of baptism for the dead and yet we are taught that it contains the "fullness of the gospel" and we are taught to abide by completely contradicting doctrine which advocates outward ordinances, which in the words of the Book of Mormon are a dead work, a mockery before God, and deny the mercies of Christ. Joseph Smith confirms the superfluity of baptism for the dead when he marvels in one of his revelations that his brother Alvin had already attained an inheritance in the celestial kingdom, without ever having been baptized, even by proxy.²⁶⁵

I find it hard to believe in a God that would be so vindictive as to ban access to his love and forever hide family away because someone never had a pretentious, for-show, outward proxy baptism performed for them. Jesus said we should let the dead worry about the dead. To follow him would mean to minister to the living only:

But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.²⁶⁶

Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.²⁶⁷

This is a silly predicament. The church that claims the name of Jesus commands that only the most righteous people should dress up in fine clothes and expend many hours a week administering to the dead. Some go beyond and boast their righteousness by posting photos in their fine-twined linen in front of an opulent mansion that supposedly stands in the name of Jesus. Then, they somehow they ignore the homeless man that panhandles on the street outside the door. It is blatantly obvious to me that if Jesus lived today, this is exactly what he would *not* do.

I believe that this is out of character for both God and Jesus. I cannot imagine a God that is so anal-retentive as to require a petty time-consuming ritual to be repeated for every person that ever lived, or they are not of worth to him, regardless of the content of their hearts. It would be better if Jesus could have taught people to forget the dead and to go minister to the living. Oh wait, he already did. It would be

²⁶⁴3 Nephi 27:33

²⁶⁵Doctrine and Covenants 137, marveling in verse 5

²⁶⁶Matthew 8:22

²⁶⁷Luke 9:60

better if Jesus could have performed a single proxy session for everyone that ever lived. Oh wait, atonement is already the essential doctrine of Christianity. Mormon temple doctrine both contradicts Jesus and breaks Christian doctrine.

It is a tragedy that so much life wasted in pursuit of something that helps no living person on earth. Millions and millions of hours wasted in temples serving the dead. Can you imagine what could be accomplished if all of that time were focused upon the living? Billions of dollars wasted on idol buildings, monuments to a demigod that requires silly in outward ritualistic observances for validation. Can you imagine what such a fortune could be provide for the poor and helpless, instead of building fine sanctuaries²⁶⁸ and buying vast tracks of land and other large real estate investments?

I think that this contradicts Jesus on at least four accounts: to not worry about the dead, to love neighbors who we can see, versus a god we can't see,²⁶⁹ that God looks upon the heart and not the outward pharisaical ritual, dress, and strict obedience, and his requirement that to follow him, we must cast away fortune by selling all that we have and give it to the poor.²⁷⁰

Oft quoted is 1 Corinthians 15:29 as proof that baptism for the dead was practiced by those in the New Testament times. However, if you actually read the context, Paul is not establishing the doctrine of baptism for the dead, he is instead stating reason after reason for believing in the resurrection. Once again, our leaders use a verse out of context to fulfill an entirely different purpose. Besides the context, the pronouns in that verse are suspect. He does not say you meaning his followers, nor did he say we or I, that he or anyone he associates with had the practice. He said they, referring to those who are not part of anyone in the group he was talking to – most likely the other pagan mystery cults, just like when he was trying to justify the Eucharist. He did not elaborate at all in advocating the practice in any way. He just used it as another reason to believe in the resurrection, because even they believe in the resurrection.

He spoke of them because he was writing to the Corinthians. Near Corinth is Eleusis (Elefsina today), which was a holy city for the Eleusinian mystery cult. The road from Athens to Eleusis was Iera Odos, or The Sacred Way, the only highway that Greece had paved before the arrival of the Romans, and it was

²⁶⁸ 2 Nephi 28:12-13

²⁶⁹ 1 John 4:20

²⁷⁰ Matthew 19:21

there because it was the route taken by the procession which practiced the Eleusinian Mysteries.²⁷¹ The Eleusinian mystery cult was revered by Homer²⁷² as well as Cicero.²⁷³ Plato, who was an initiate himself (as was Socrates before him), mentions the mysteries in his dialogue on the immortality of the soul: "our mysteries had a very real meaning: he that has been purified and initiated shall dwell with the gods."²⁷⁴ That mystery cult, much like Mithraism and other mystery cults, practiced ablutions or baptisms as their initiation ceremony. To show that baptism was a pagan practice, Tertullian declared:

At the Eleusinian mysteries men are baptized and they assume that the effect of this is their regeneration and the remission of the penalties due to their perjuries.²⁷⁵

Waverly Fitzgerald says of the initiates:

It was said of those who were initiated at Eleusis that they no longer feared death and it seems that this myth confirms the cyclical view of life central to pagan spirituality: that death is part of the cycle of life and is always followed by rebirth.²⁷⁶

Vicarious participation in some mystery cults was acceptable.²⁷⁷ In Greek, the word *mysteria* in itself means initiation. The practice of rites of initiation (including baptism) was an important part of all mystery cults, and those rites promised eternal life.

These transformed cults were known as "mysteries," i.e., initiation ceremonies through which individuals were granted admission into fellowship with the divine. With their purification rites, their enthusiasm and ecstasy, and their rewards of immortality through personal identification with deity, the cults satisfied some spiritual need of the individual, either for salvation, revelation, peace of mind, or inner illumination.²⁷⁸

There were many mystery cults with diverse rites and religious concepts of the mysteries.

²⁷¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_Way

²⁷² Homer, Hymn to Demeter, 478-479

²⁷³ Cicero, de Legibus

²⁷⁴ Plato, Phaedo, 69, F. J. Church translation

²⁷⁵ Tertullian, De Baptismo 5, 1545 AD

²⁷⁶ Waverly Fitzgerald, <http://www.schooloftheseasons.com/eleusis.html>

²⁷⁷ Orphic Fragment 245 (Orphism was another related mystery cult)

²⁷⁸ Antonia Tripolitis, Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age, 16

Nonetheless, three essential characteristics are common to all the mystery cults of the time: (1) a purification rite by which the initiate is granted admission and participation in the activity of the cult; (2) a sense of personal relationship or communion with the deity or deities of the cult; and (3) the hope or promise of a life of blessedness after death.²⁷⁹

It is evident to me that:

1. Baptism was a practice of cleansing initiation by mystery cults.
2. These mystery cults practiced secretive, mysterious initiation rites, with oaths of penalty of death if they ever revealed the secret. The Greek word *mysteria* in itself meaning a secret rite, and *mystes* meaning one who has been initiated.²⁸⁰
3. It was the mystery cults which provided the doctrine that one could not enter into eternal life without their initiation rite, which Paul liberally imported into his own "fellowship of the mystery."
4. Initiation for the dead was allowed by some mystery cults.

What does this make of the "restored church?" It only makes it more evident that it does not follow the true teachings of Jesus, but instead is quite pagan, depending heavily on pagan mystery and ritual for salvation. It illustrates that secret initiation rites with their oaths of secrecy did not originate with Jesus, nor did it come from God. In contrast, the religion of Jesus himself was highly spiritual and had no secrets at all. Any mystery is a red flag for truth seekers, because mystery has no place with truth. Mystery is the work of truth's antagonist:

...the word mystery cannot be applied to moral truth, any more than obscurity can be applied to light. The God in whom we believe is a God of moral truth, and not a God of mystery or obscurity. Mystery is the antagonist of truth. It is a fog of human invention, that obscures truth, and represents it in distortion. Truth never envelops itself in mystery, and the mystery in which it is at any time enveloped is the work of its antagonist, and never of itself.²⁸¹

You may ask about the following passage, which commands baptism among other things:

²⁷⁹Antonia Tripolitidis, Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age, 17

²⁸⁰<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=mystery>

²⁸¹Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part first, Section 13
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00painiala#page/46/mode/1up>

Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.²⁸²

I am pretty convinced that the scribe who wrote that paragraph was not faithful to whatever Jesus actually said at that time, if he said anything at all, because the teachings of his life call its validity into question. It seems that the paragraph was added later,²⁸³ having been influenced by Paul's ministry, because it contradicts Jesus as it talks favorably of outward rites and idolatrous sign-seeking. Jesus could not have said those things, because the entire thing is written in the bias of a sign-seeker. If Jesus in life had demonstrated a more noble morality by showing a contempt for sign-seeking, then why would he change and advocate for those idolatrous signs after his resurrection? Please recall with me, when Jesus visited the Samaritans, they needed no miracle to believe:

And many more believed because of his own word;²⁸⁴

Just a few verses later, Jesus rebukes the Galileans for needing signs and wonders in order to believe:

Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.²⁸⁵

Indeed Jesus rebuked sign seeking or any other insincere reason for seeking truth:

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it.²⁸⁶

²⁸²Mark 16:14-18

²⁸³These verses do not appear in any manuscript before the Council of Nicaea <http://www.voiceofjesus.org/onbaptism.html>

²⁸⁴John 4:41

²⁸⁵John 4:48

²⁸⁶Matthew 12:38-39

A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.²⁸⁷

And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.²⁸⁸

Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.²⁸⁹

And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.²⁹⁰

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.²⁹¹

Sign-seeking or miracle-seeking never had much of anything to do with the real intent of the message or life of Jesus. While there were some miracles which happened simply because of his divine identity, he did not perform those things in order to prove anything to anyone. Jesus couldn't have contradicted himself as Mark 16:14-18 does. As I have quoted before, Thomas Jefferson said, "it is impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same being." Thomas Paine was also enlightened when he said:

In every point of view in which those things called miracles can be placed and considered, the reality of them is improbable and their existence unnecessary. They would not, as before observed, answer any useful purpose, even if they were true; for it is more difficult to obtain belief to a miracle, than to a principle evidently moral without any miracle. Moral principle speaks universally for itself. Miracle could

be but a thing of the moment, and seen but by a few; after this it requires a transfer of faith from God to man to believe a miracle upon man's report. Instead, therefore, of admitting the recitals of miracles as evidence of any system of religion being true, they ought to be considered as symptoms of its being fabulous. It is necessary to the full and upright character of truth that it rejects the crutch, and it is consistent with the character of fable to seek the aid that truth rejects.²⁹²

I assert that while baptism is a rite of passage into the social organization of the church as the apostles practiced, Jesus taught instead that the real saving baptism is being born of the Spirit which cannot be brought about hypocritically in any way. Leo Tolstoy sums this section up perfectly:

People who believe in a wicked and senseless God – who has cursed the human race and devoted his own Son to sacrifice, and a part of mankind to eternal torment – cannot believe in the God of love. The man who believes in a God, in a Christ coming again in glory to judge and to punish the quick and the dead, cannot believe in the Christ who bade us turn the left cheek, judge not, forgive these that wrong us, and love our enemies. The man who believes in the inspiration of the Old Testament and the sacred character of David, who commanded on his deathbed the murder of an old man who had cursed him, and whom he could not kill himself because he was bound by an oath to him, and the similar atrocities of which the Old Testament is full, cannot believe in the holy love of Christ. The man who believes in the Church's doctrine of the compatibility of warfare and capital punishment with Christianity cannot believe in the brotherhood of all men.

And what is most important of all – the man who believes in salvation through faith in the redemption or the sacraments, cannot devote all his powers to realizing Christ's moral teaching in his life.

The man who has been instructed by the Church in the profane doctrine that a man cannot be saved by his own powers, but that there is another means of salvation, will infallibly rely upon this means and not on his own powers, which, they assure him, it is sinful to trust in.

²⁸⁷ Matthew 16:4

²⁸⁸ Luke 11:16-17

²⁸⁹ John 6:26

²⁹⁰ Luke 11:29-30

²⁹¹ John 20:29

²⁹² Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part First, Section 15
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00painiala#page/51/mode/1up>

The teaching of every Church, with its redemption and sacraments, excludes the teaching of Christ; most of all the teaching of the Orthodox Church with its idolatrous observances.²⁹³

Oh the irony; how that last paragraph applies to every church. Though Tolstoy was relatively unfamiliar with the restored church, its restoration does not make it immune to what he observes. The restored church of Jesus is not so in deed, but in name only, because it relies on Pauline idolatrous middle-man observances as much as Catholicism does.

Works

Here is what Paul taught:

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.²⁹⁴

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.²⁹⁵

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.²⁹⁶

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast.²⁹⁷

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,²⁹⁸

²⁹³Leo Tolstoy, The Kingdom of God is Within You, Chapter III

²⁹⁴Romans 3:28

²⁹⁵Romans 4:5-7

²⁹⁶Galatians 2:16

²⁹⁷Ephesians 2:8-9

²⁹⁸2 Timothy 1:9

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;²⁹⁹

James taught:

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only³⁰⁰

The following is the deciding factor in the final judgment, as Jesus said:

For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.³⁰¹

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven³⁰²

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

²⁹⁹Titus 3:5

³⁰⁰James 2:24 – James Zebedee, “James the Just”

³⁰¹Matthew 12:50

³⁰²Matthew 7:21

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.³⁰³

Paul was clearly the polar opposite to Jesus. James was in harmony with Jesus, and no wonder: he sat at the feet of Jesus and was taught of him. Who are we to believe? Paul or Jesus? Paul stressed that faith and performing rituals of propitiation like the sacrament as the only means for salvation. Jesus taught neither of those, but that salvation comes when you show love and care for your fellow men.

As I explained before, faith is a belief that is true. When faith is supported by a scaffolding of truth, its influence is so powerful that it influences your choices and actions. It has so much to bear on your perspective of reality that it causes you to make decisions through the hope it provides. Faith without action is dead because without action it is not really a belief, it is only an interesting concept. Faith in God spurs you to action to seek his will and it is that same faith which causes you to do it when you have found it.

Lectures on Faith, an essay which was part of the Church's canon for almost a century, it maintains that faith is more important than works, and that works should only serve to increase faith.

Still, I believe works are misunderstood in the Church, and this is why there is such a disagreement between many churches. The Church's definition of "works" seems to include the requirement of actions that are not necessarily Father-will-seeking faith actions. Sometimes the doctrine of works only means rituals, ordinances, repetitive practices, outward rites, or other empty forms. This kind of faith action can be done in complete hypocrisy and no one would be the wiser except for the two people that really matter: you and your Eternal Father. Since all that really matters is the genuine, sincere relationship between you and your Eternal Father, then why all this outward farce?

God's "hand is stretched out still"³⁰⁴ through his grace and mercy. You cannot take advantage of God's grace and mercy without exercising faith in him enough to look forward to trusting in his good-

ness for your eternal survival. It is when you have true faith in who God is that you begin to desire to become like him and choose what he would choose. In choosing and doing right, your faith is engendering action in your life, fulfilling Jesus' admonition (again):

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven.³⁰⁵

It is that simple. Those who sincerely seek the Eternal Father will increase line upon line³⁰⁶ until the perfect day.³⁰⁷ Those who do not sincerely seek the Eternal Father will likely not want to survive in his universe and will instead want to cease to exist. All of this has to do with sincerity, not with outward rites, rituals, or ordinances.

Yes, faith without works is dead, works being the action that faith causes you to do. However when works refer to empty forms, oaths, saying "Lord, Lord", doing hypocritical empty actions, then it really profits you nothing.

Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.³⁰⁸

It is clear to me that Paul's doctrines are not based on the teachings of Jesus. His doctrines may come from an amalgamation of his Pagan-Pharisee upbringing in the city of Tarsus, keeping much of the mystery cult pomp. Paul was a pharisee with a pagan upbringing who exploited the name of Jesus in hypocrisy to further his own agenda of mystery cult beliefs mixed with Judaism. Nothing of what he taught came from the true message of Jesus. Paul was against the teachings of Jesus before being struck by lightning on the Damascus road, and it is evident to me that he was still against the teachings of Jesus after his experience on Damascus road.

³⁰⁵Matthew 7:21

³⁰⁶Isaiah 28:9-10

³⁰⁷Doctrine and Covenants 50:24

³⁰⁸Matthew 15:7-9

³⁰³Matthew 25:31-45

³⁰⁴Isaiah 5:25;9:12,17,21;10:4

The Restored Character of Jesus

After studying the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels of the New Testament, I encountered a conundrum: The character of Jesus in the Gospels does not reconcile with the character of Jesus prescribed by the restored church. Instead of augmenting and clarifying his character as it should, the restoration seems to have set itself in opposition the Gospels. They do not seem to be the same person. The restored character resolves very little of the problems that face Christianity at large, and in many cases it makes him into something more disgraceful. I want to follow Jesus, but in order to do so, I need to find which of the many contradictions is his true character. In trying to find the true character of Jesus, my observations have come to align with the views of Thomas Jefferson. His observations about heathen mythology applies just as much to the restored character of Jesus as it applies to all of Christianity.

I, too, have made a wee-little book from the same materials [the gospels], which I call the Philosophy of Jesus; it is a paradigm of his doctrines, made by cutting the texts out of the book, and arranging them on the pages of a blank book, in a certain order of time or subject. A more beautiful or precious morsel of ethics I have never seen; it is a document in proof that I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus, very different from the Platonists, who call me infidel and themselves Christians and preachers of the gospel, while they draw all their characteristic dogmas from what its author never said nor saw. They have compounded from the heathen mysteries a system beyond the comprehension of man, of which the great reformer of the vicious ethics and deism of the Jews, were he to return on earth, would not recognize one feature.³⁰⁹

In Psychology, the struggle to reconcile opposing ideas has been named Cognitive Dissonance. I want to list some of the dissonant characteristics I have noticed. For the sake of clarity, I'm going to call the restored Latter-day Saint Jesus, "Jesus Mormon." I'm going to call the Gospels Jesus, "Jesus Genuine." If you notice that some of these dualities appear to be similar to others, it is because I am illustrating a subtle nuance in the same vein or in a different context. The Jesus Genuine side may seem to repeat. That is because his message is simpler.

³⁰⁹ Jefferson's letter to Charles Thomson, from Monticello, January 9, 1816

Before you read this list, I disclaim that it seems like believers of Jesus Mormon cannot seem to perceive Jesus Genuine until they give up Jesus Mormon and allow themselves to open their eyes, ears and mind to perceive the distinction with Jesus Genuine.

Conditional or Unconditional Love

- Jesus Mormon stresses worthiness through outwardly-observable obedience.
- Jesus Genuine has no requirements for worthiness.
- Jesus Mormon stresses that belief in God and obedience to his every petty command should be placed above all else. Though this includes love of others, this is still preceded by his command.
- Jesus Genuine points out that while belief in God who you cannot see is a good thing, it better to show love for those who you can see because the surety of their reality is empirical, while God and his command is still only a belief.³¹⁰
- Jesus Mormon can only see outwardly observable obedience, and anyone who falters in any way will be subject to God's wrath, unless Jesus judges that they have tried hard enough to obey him to be worthy for his forgiveness.
- Jesus Genuine stresses inner rebirth. There is no need to obey like the pharisees because goodness is innate as a reborn child of God.
- The commands of Jesus Mormon are too numerous to list here, but they number in the several hundreds, and the requirement to enter both a sacred building and Heaven is contingent upon perfect purity obtained through obedience and constant repentance of shortfalls. But obedience is ever attainable because he always provides a way to obey anything he commands.
- The singular command of Jesus Genuine is unconditional love for every person, and his only requirement for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven is love and compassion, especially to the less fortunate.
- Jesus Mormon praises fortune as a blessing of prosperity for obedience.

³¹⁰1 John 4:20

- Jesus Genuine says your heart is in whatever you treasure. He teaches that both providence and curse are not a decree of God. He says that the rich are the ones that will find it most difficult to enter into his kingdom.

Obedience

- Jesus Mormon prescribes that true agency of choice is when you obey his autocratic command, and that strict obedience grants freedom.
- Jesus Genuine leaves everything entirely up to your own volition, he does not prescribe anything.
- Jesus Mormon says that your righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the pharisees: you must obey even more strictly than they did. If the law says don't commit adultery, don't even think it and you'll obey the law all the more stringently.
- Jesus Genuine says that your righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the pharisees because meeting every law with exactness isn't the qualifier for the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven opens its doors to those who have reborn from a beastly animal into a child of God. Because of their rebirth, they naturally do not lust for adultery, let alone commit it. They are naturally not riled to anger, let alone kill.
- Jesus Mormon is a nit picking, petty, and pharisaical disciplinarian who strains at gnats for every one of his prescribed decisions a person can make in their life.
- Jesus Genuine only cares about how loving and sincere you are.
- Jesus Mormon was perfectly obedient, and his obedience is exemplary for everyone else to be perfectly obedient.
- Jesus Genuine openly disobeyed.
 - Jesus Genuine was charged with sedition.
 - Jesus Genuine was called a false prophet.
 - Jesus Genuine was accused of breaking the sabbath.
 - Jesus Genuine was accused of doing the devil's work.
 - Jesus Genuine was accused of being insane ("beside himself").
 - Jesus Genuine called a glutton and a winebibber.

- Jesus Genuine was accused of not following the health/kosher laws.
- Jesus Genuine spoke evil of anointed priesthood.
- Jesus Genuine was sentenced to death for his crime of blasphemy.

- Jesus Mormon uses the house upon the rock and sand analogy for obedience to authority: that obedience provides security, disobedience causes uncertainty and likely failure.
- Jesus Genuine uses this parable for truth seeking and belief; that belief founded upon truth and fact is secure, while belief founded upon fable, fantasy, and lies will fall.
- Jesus Mormon declares, come unto me all ye heavy laden, and I'll give you more to do.
- Jesus Genuine declares, come unto me all ye heavy laden, and I'll give you rest.
- Jesus Mormon's dual personality declares the Gospel is horribly simple, and that anyone who declares that his gospel requires anything more than faith and baptism is not from him, but *cometh of evil and the gates of hell stand open to receive them*.³¹¹ Jesus Mormon not only contradicts himself on this issue, his stringent requirements for attaining celestial glory are awfully complicated.
- Jesus Genuine declares that benevolence is salvation. Jesus Genuine is no respecter of persons.

Overcontrol

- Jesus Mormon requires burdens which are grievous to be borne. Jesus mormon says it will *not* be easy, but it will be worth it. Jesus Mormon requires *endurance* to the end. His oppression requires all your time, talents, all the way up to life itself, to build his fascist physical kingdom on earth.
- Jesus Genuine's yoke is easy, and his burden is light, because he requires none such things. Jesus Genuine wants you to enjoy love and peace until the end. Jesus Genuine seeks to liberate and emancipate all humankind from burdens of oppressive institutions. He requires nothing of you for your worthiness. Jesus Genuine loves, accepts, and appreciates you for who you are,

³¹¹3 Nephi 11:39

as he created you. You are always enough for Jesus Genuine.

- Jesus Mormon occupies all of the spare time of his followers with constant kingdom-building busywork, keeping them from having time to think deeply about the doctrine for themselves, and impeding self-actualization at the top of Maslow's hierarchy.
- Jesus Genuine allows you complete freedom and sovereignty of your time. He gives you all the time you want to think, seek knowledge, ask, knock, and to have compassion for others on your own terms and as you grow in your own time.

Obedience Elitism

- Jesus Mormon makes the obedient worthy into his elite caste regardless of what might be in their hearts, and casts the unworthy as second-class persons, much like his original enemies, the pharisees did. People can think and feel what they want as long as they do not act upon those thoughts.
- Jesus Genuine deems all humankind as worthy, and stresses sincerity over facades.
- Jesus Mormon is exclusive. Jesus Mormon excludes entire groups of people, as if he would have excluded the Samaritans and Gentiles of his day. For more than a century, Jesus Mormon declared an entire race as not being worthy of what he views as indispensable for exaltation: eternal marriage and endowment. Jesus Mormon continues his discrimination of groups of people.
- Jesus Genuine is inclusive. The nature of the Jesus Genuine is love and inclusion of all people. Race and culture means nothing to him. All people are worthy of his forgiveness and love. All groups of people, no matter their background, race, color, gender, orientation, or anything at all are worthy and enough for Jesus Genuine. Jesus Genuine never discriminates nor segregates anyone.
- Jesus Mormon causes divisions, elitism, and the very etymology of the Pharisee name: separatism. Those with less faith or no faith are classified as lesser classes of worthiness, and they are not allowed where the most faithful can go.

- Jesus Genuine taught that a kingdom of divided is brought to desolation, a city or house divided shall not stand. The teachings of Jesus Genuine unite all humankind, even those who pharisees of our day despise.
- Jesus Mormon's dual personality enforces old testament obedience by coercion and threats to ostracize and shame for not being able to attend regularly scheduled elite life events of friends and relatives.
- Jesus Genuine deprecates all laws of Moses for spiritual rebirth. Jesus Genuine does not shame ostracize, or humiliate anyone. He has no standard of righteousness to live up to.
- Jesus Mormon uses the tools of fear to incite obedience. Fear of loss of family and friends, fear of shame, guilt, rejection, presupposed accusation of sin, fear of the world at large. "What did he do to not be worthy?"
- Jesus Genuine's teachings do not employ fear for anything. There is no loss of social standing for both failure or loss of desire to follow Jesus Genuine.

Blessings and Cursings

- Jesus Mormon prospers those who obey him, and curses those who do not, to scare them into obedience. His curses are comprised of practically all possible of hardships, including famine, pestilence, and even death by fire and earthquakes. He is racist and purposefully wants people to discriminate by "cursing" large groups of people with brown or black skin. He uses doublespeak to call his hardship and punishment "love."
- Jesus Genuine proved to the Pharisees, who believed that all affliction is caused by sin and disobedience, that God does not curse anyone. He did it without having to be being present in their court. He did this by the testimony of someone who had been healed. Jesus was consistent in his pacific love and promoted his cause only by peaceful means.
- Jesus Mormon curses people who oppose him with dumbness.
- Jesus Genuine loves, gently teaches, and heals dumbness.

- Jesus Mormon says that even if you have the Gift of the Holy Ghost, he retreats when you sin, and that you must be obedient to regain and to retain his companionship. You are abandoned and forsaken if you do not obey, and it is your responsibility obey to be worthy of the companionship of your gift once again.
- Jesus Genuine teaches that when you falter, that is when the Holy Ghost and all of the powers of heaven mobilize: to help you. The Spirit rescues you and brings you back into his presence where you are given as much love as you're willing to receive. The more you go astray, the more the powers of heaven try to help you recover.

Despot

- Jesus Mormon is an autocrat, a lord, a ruler, a dictator, a domniator, and a tyrant.
- Jesus Genuine only wishes to be a loving friend.
- Jesus Mormon's authority comes from priesthood given to him by his Father.
- Jesus Genuine's authority comes from his essence, spiritual identity, and his words have the intrinsic authority of truth.
- Jesus Mormon seeks to ultimately establish a theocracy and enforce his ideal of righteousness in every facet of life upon all men, including all who do not believe in his sovereignty or right to rule. The theocracy of Jesus will someday reign supreme.
- Jesus Genuine emancipates everyone from all oppressive regimes, including theocracies like the one that killed him.
- The command of Jesus Mormon autocrat is relayed by his presidency, his apostles, anonymous essays and newsroom articles.
- Jesus Genuine deprecated middlemen, he himself is the singular high priest, and there is no longer a need for a high priest or any priests.
- Jesus Mormon urges his followers to lobby, raise funds, and advocate for the despotic rule of his institution.
- Jesus Genuine does has never sought to enforce his teachings upon unbelievers in any way.

- Jesus Mormon places the authority and devotion to his representatives on earth so highly, that even murder can be justified.³¹²
- Jesus Genuine, again, says that you cannot love god without loving your neighbor first. That should have included Nephi. That should have included Abraham. Loving God does not mean we should kill his children in devotion to him.

Priesthood Authority

- The Jesus Mormon stresses his modern prophets' revelations more than what he taught himself. His modern prophets assert that if there is any contradiction in what they teach and what he taught, his charge is to go with his prophet dictator instead of him.
- Jesus Genuine's teachings are as immortal and everlasting as he is. Jesus Genuine would not deprecate his own undying teachings. The simple moral teachings of Jesus Genuine apply to all time, especially when the modern prophets teach the values of the pharisees.
- Jesus Mormon stresses the aristocracy of his leaders on earth, who have authority to dictate every command he issues.
- Jesus Genuine said to call no man master.
- Jesus Mormon places men at the head of his institution who directly represent him. Those men have full license to grow his kingdom without the consent of any of his other disciples and followers.
- Jesus Genuine has no power as the world sees it, so he has no power to give power-hungry men. All men will fight to preserve their power and dominion, but they can't become masters of the immaterial kingdom of heaven.
- Jesus Mormon requires priesthoods to represent God for shamanistic healing blessings and for warding evil.
- Jesus Genuine invites a direct connection our father in heaven. God has no arm of the flesh. We can connect with God without an intercessor.

³¹²Ezra Taft Benson, Conference Report, October 1967, pp. 34-39: "The world largely ignores the first and great commandment – to love God – but talks a lot about loving their brother. They worship at the altar of man. Would Nephi have slain Laban if he had put the love of neighbor above the love of God? Would Abraham have taken Isaac up for a sacrifice if he had put the second commandment first?"

- Jesus Mormon stresses that the rules, policies, creeds, and bylaws he gives to his servants are his, and disobedience offends God.
- Jesus Genuine stresses that the will of God cannot be found in the traditions of men.

Priesthood Presumptuousness

- Jesus Mormon excommunicates those who commit what he views as grievous sins. He calls excommunication, “love,” while it is actually humiliating, belittling, shaming, and demeaning. Jesus Mormon wants the masters of his institution to excise judgment on the wicked.
- Jesus Genuine excommunicated no one. He places self-righteousness as a sin worse than adultery, especially those who pretentiously judge others while they themselves are in no position to judge. He told the self-righteous that the sinless ones among them could cast the first stone [of excommunication].
- Jesus Mormon excommunicates heretics for many reasons, foremost to make them disreputable.
- Jesus Genuine was a heretic himself, and for his disrepute among the ranks, he received the ultimate excommunication (capital punishment).

Priesthood Treasure

- Jesus Mormon pads his treasury with tithes from the widow and the downtrodden, urging them that if they do not pay, they rob him. His leaders are so bold as to declare that if everyone, including the destitute, do not pay tithing, they are losing blessings.
- Jesus Genuine calls out such oppressive practice as devouring widows’ houses. Jesus Genuine does not extort any money.
- Jesus Mormon and his apostles travel in first class, eat luxurious meals, and are reimbursed for all of their expenses from their vast Temple Treasury, long robes, upper rooms at feasts.
- Jesus Genuine carries no purse and lives a life of poverty because he never required anything of his followers for his subsistence. His apostles received neither stipend nor reimbursement.
- Jesus Mormon preserves the livelihood of his institution by amassing vast capital from his

burden upon backs of his followers and uses the interest from investing the capital to stockpile vast tracts of land and real-estate. Jesus Mormon does this against his own bylaw that all disbursement of his funds should be approved by the common consent of his disciples.

- Jesus Genuine told his apostles and disciples that in order to follow him, they had to give everything to they own to the poor. Jesus calls the burden of the theocracy of his time grievous to be borne.
- Jesus Mormon has amassed vast treasure.
- Jesus Genuine nor his followers do not lay up for themselves any treasures upon earth.
- Jesus Mormon invests in stores, companies, and retail business ventures.
- Jesus Genuine’s house is not a house of merchandise.
- Jesus Mormon is in the investment business to preserve his livelihood.
- Jesus Genuine had no livelihood and lived a life of poverty.

Priesthood Heroes

- Jesus Mormon and his servants revel in popularity and they welcome hero worship openly, shaking hands, signing autographs in their books, and reveling in always being right.
- Jesus Genuine does not greet anyone by the way, avoids celebrity, and charged his disciples to do the same.
- Jesus Mormon encourages the hero worship of his leaders as the most righteous men on earth, worthy of his trust in the leadership of his kingdom on earth.
- Jesus Genuine extols the lowest, meekest, humble, powerless as the greatest. Jesus Genuine taught that anyone who exercises power or dominion over others will be abased.

Physical Kingdom

- Jesus Mormon’s kingdom is physical. The kingdom of Jesus Mormon seeks to become a theocracy; to rule and reign in the House of Israel forever.
- Jesus Genuine’s kingdom is not of this world. It is unearthly. It is otherworldly. It is ethereal.

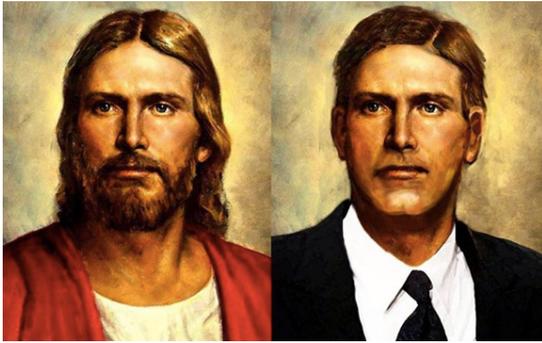
- Jesus Mormon’s kingdom is a physical kingdom with him as its monarch, and the Old Testament story of King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream gives justification that the kingdoms of the earth would be divided and destroyed, while his kingdom will fill the earth.
- The Kingdom of Jesus Genuine cannot physically be found on earth, nor will it ever be. He said that anyone who claims it is here, or there, or anywhere on earth, does not represent him.
- Jesus Mormon is a federated, centralized institution.
- Jesus Genuine declares that his kingdom is within.
- Jesus Mormon has required the use of the sword in its defense, and sometimes even offense. Jesus Mormon called his prophet “Lieutenant General Smith,” and he led an militia called the “Nauvoo Legion.” The recently released minutes of the Council of Fifty illustrate his intentions to physically enforce obedience to theocratic law.
- Jesus Genuine never requires the sword to for his kingdom. Jesus Genuine never enforced laws. The kingdom of Jesus Genuine never goes to war, and never physically defends, because there is nothing physical to defend.

Noteworthy Commands

- Marriage is a requirement for Jesus Mormon. Plural marriage was crucial for exaltation in the Jesus Mormon’s original doctrines of this dispensation.
- Jesus Genuine had no requirement of marriage. He didn’t even participate in marriage himself. For what it’s worth, marriage is not required anywhere in the standard works except for Doctrine and Covenants 132, which requires plural marriage for the highest exaltation.
- Jesus Mormon requires declaration of our charitable giving (Tithing Settlement) and organizes charitable service to seen by all. Jesus Mormon requires tithing declaration for worthiness to reward entrance to his idol of a building.
- Jesus Genuine said that we should never broadcast nor disclose our charitable giving to anyone, and secret charity and service should be given for no reward.

Hypocrisy

- Jesus Mormon says that the truest form of prayer is standing in the Temple, and repeating phrases.
- Jesus Genuine says that the heathen use vain repetitions standing in the synagogues. Jesus Genuine’s truest form of prayer is alone in a closet.
- Jesus Mormon adhered to the Word of Wisdom and drank some kind of modern grape preserve like Welch’s grape juice.
- Jesus Genuine drank wine.
- Jesus Mormon dictates that what you eat and drink can defile you and make you unworthy for his spirit and house.
- Jesus Genuine says that anything you eat cannot defile you, it is the evil that comes from within that defiles.
- Jesus Mormon says that if you suffer from same-sex attraction, it is okay if you never act upon it. That it is better to cover your innate identity and live life of celibacy with a facade of righteousness.
- Jesus Genuine says that you should not be as the pharisees, a facade of perfection, but that you should be your genuine self. Jesus Genuine created and loves all his children as they are.
- Jesus Mormon requires public prayer every time his people meet.
- Jesus Genuine says public prayer is a display of pretense, and instead to do it in privacy. Jesus himself did not pray publicly, and the only time he relented was in response to repeated requests.
- Jesus Mormon is pleased by long prayers. He loves those who embellish their prayer with clichés and specific prayer language. The longer and more embellished prayer gains praise and adulation of others.
- Jesus Genuine not only urges to pray in private, he pleases in honest words of simplicity. He taught that the heathens believed they would be heard for their much speaking.



- Jesus Mormon cares about his outward appearance. He is clean-shaven, wears a white shirt, tie, and suit. Anything less than that shows a lack of worthiness. He cares about which parts of skin show on females and whether they wear a dress or pants. Even little girls are discouraged from showing bare thighs or shoulders.
- Jesus Genuine not only does not judge by appearances, but he frowns upon any preoccupation for outward appearance. He is saddened by the shame that comes from those who disapprove of any lack of adherence to appearance expectations. He condemned the long robes and tassels because those who are concerned about these things do it for other people to see. Jesus Genuine wears whatever he wants, and grooms himself however he wants. He expects nothing more from others.
- Jesus Mormon wears religious garments that display his righteousness for all to see. All lookers on can see his "Smile Line" or many other subtle clues of worthiness, especially on women where the lines are obvious with thin, tight, or translucent clothing. The lack of those lines engenders a level of disdain for the lack of worthiness. Sunday meetings require a specific religious uniform which proves a lack of faithfulness or devotion if it is not worn properly.
- Jesus Genuine rebukes the pharisees, who proudly wore their religious clothing to exhibit their righteousness to others. They showed off their religious dedication by making broad their phylacteries and enlarging the borders of their garments. Jesus Genuine has no interest in any superficial display of righteousness.

Priesthood Hypocrisy

- Jesus Mormon's middlemen not live up to the same standard as they require from the members (e.g. honest in all their dealings), and if the

members dare call them out on it, they flip it back at them for being unfaithful and that they have no right to criticize the their elite station as anointed middlemen of an idolatrous god.

- Jesus Genuine convicted the Pharisees for their hypocrisy.
- Jesus Mormon trusts those who are *church broke*,³¹³ those who have shown that they will obey the brethren at any cost, regardless of the dictates of their own conscience.
- Jesus Genuine requires no such thing.
- Jesus Mormon wishes his middlemen to lead people to believe that they talk with him every Thursday and that he leads them directly. He instructs them to lie by omission about this, even when their leadership contradicts his original teachings.
- Jesus Genuine declares that by their fruits ye shall know them. He warns about those who follow him in name only.
- Jesus Mormon excuses any evidence of corruption by pointing the finger at his fallible servants.
- Jesus Genuine has nothing that anyone can lie about, steal, embezzle, scandal, or corrupt.
- Jesus Mormon's Priesthood declares their work as the work of Jesus and in the name of Jesus.
- Jesus Genuine declared that "by their fruits ye shall know them," and to be wary of those who would do great works in his name.

Tangent: Many leaders of the church don't seem to believe it themselves.

- They don't talk about truth issues.
- They don't talk about the foundations of the church.
- President Monson hasn't testified of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon for over a decade.
- Everything they say is scripted, even "face to face" events.
- They do not trust their own faculties of mind to say anything impromptu.
- They won't answer hard questions.
- They avoid putting themselves in any situation to be subject to hard questions.
- If they do get cornered into answering hard questions, their argument becomes ad-hominem and push it back on the questioner for being unfaithful.

³¹³This is a thing! A real phrase!

- They're not spiritual, they're businesslike.
- They invest in vast real-estate as if they expect their empire to fall apart and they want to preserve the vitality of their livelihood.
- They are hypocritical in their requirement and commandment for young men to serve a mission. Monson, Nelson, Oaks, Hales, Eyring, and Uchtdorf all did not serve missions themselves.

Idols

- Jesus Mormon says that the highest worship of God happens in his holy house, an outward structure he wishes us all to adore as a place for the pinnacle of our religious devotion.
- Again, a man made god lives in a man made temple. Jesus Genuine says that the highest worship needs no house, the mountain of the Jews is no longer needed. God perceives within, and men perceive without.
- Jesus Mormon requires pompous ritual, rites, and ordinances.
- Jesus Genuine deprecated ritual, and taught that all that matters is within.

Jesus as an Idol

- Jesus Mormon's core mission was to become a scapegoat for our sins.
- Jesus Genuine said himself that his mission was to testify of truth and that truth seekers would understand what he says.
- Jesus Mormon adulates animal sacrifice as a type and a shadow of his own mission.
- Jesus Genuine says nothing positive of animal sacrifice. If anything, his tizzy at the temple was more about the merchandize for the cult of animal sacrifice than it was about money or merchants.
- If it really was about the money changers, Jesus Mormon's dual personality exchanges money for goods and services in his own temple. He spends billions building shopping malls right outside of his temple instead of feeding the poor.
- Jesus Genuine not only does not sell anything. He would be disgusted.

- Jesus Mormon builds lavish structures where his gospel is corrupted into secret signs, handshakes, and rituals.
- Jesus Genuine said he would destroy the temple and the ritual that goes on within. As an aside, the Jewish temple had absolutely nothing to do with masonic rites and never did.
- Jesus Mormon must intercede between an angry god.
- Jesus Genuine taught that God is already as loving and merciful as he is.

Character and Identity

- Jesus Mormon suffers from Multiple Personality Disorder. Jesus Mormon is an angry, mass-murdering monster who allows his wrath to destroy entire cities filled with innocent children. He only loves and does not murder the obedient children.
- Jesus Genuine would not even let the thought of violence enter his mind, let alone murder. For him to be a hypocrite about this or anything at all about this and any of these other observations would go against everything he stood for.
- Jesus Mormon's father is a physical man.
- Jesus Genuine's father is a spirit.
- Jesus Mormon's father is not omniscient. He is not aware of his own creation. He has to command servants to go down, observe for him, and then return and report.
- Jesus Genuine's father is omniscient. Neither a sparrow nor a hair of your head will fall without his knowledge.
- The identity of Jesus Mormon is called Jesus in name only.
- The identity of Jesus Genuine warns of those who follow him in name only.

Truthful Character

- Jesus Mormon's authority dictates truth.
- Jesus Genuine's truth has intrinsic authority.
- Jesus Mormon has a secretive kingdom. He does all in his power to hide all observable evil in his servants. He hides things like adultery, suicide, or faith loss of the highest ranks of church leadership.

- Jesus Genuine is open and bluntly tells all. Jesus Genuine has nothing to hide. Jesus genuine exclaims that the occult will eventually announced on the rooftops.
- The highest echelon of the servants of Jesus Mormon hide, use underground passages, and are inaccessible to his followers for candid conversation.
- Jesus Genuine converses openly to all people, even to his enemies.
- Jesus Mormon discourages intellectualism, reason, and science, and tells his followers that there is no need to seek truth because we already have it all, and the way to seek today is to unquestioningly obey.
- Jesus Genuine teaches by reason by parable, and tells us that we should constantly seek for and find truth and enlightenment.
- If there's any one thing that Jesus Mormon can't abide, it would be critical thinkers.
- If there's any one thing that Jesus Genuine can't abide, it is hypocrisy.
- Jesus Mormon scripts every thing he says, has help from speech writers, and cannot answer questions unless they are pre-approved.
- Jesus Genuine carries no script speaks candidly and openly.
- Jesus Mormon speaks in half truths. He subversively circumnavigates his accusers by writing apologetic essays full of sophistry.
- Jesus Genuine speaks truth boldly without apology.
- Jesus Mormon eventually concedes historic truth when he is forced by modern media.
- Jesus Genuine would have no need to lie about his past.
- Jesus Mormon is too prideful to do what is right and let the consequence follow. He only relents when he as been pushed by evidence that would make his lies glaringly obvious.
- Jesus Genuine would never need to eventually relent to evidence, because there is nothing malicious to prove.

Teachings

- Jesus Mormon only matches his morality to the status quo of the time. Morality that supersedes the status quo is held back because people are not ready to receive it.
- Jesus Genuine's teachings supersede morality of all time. Jesus Genuine doesn't care whether the people and morals of the day isn't ready for people to receive it.
- Jesus Mormon only advances his morality and only changes if his hand is forced by the morality and/or laws of the world around him.
- Jesus Genuine's invitations already supersede modern morality. Jesus Genuine's teachings and morality does not lag behind anything.
- Jesus Mormon has begun stressing his core doctrines, but now that he does this, the things that are unique about Mormonism aren't all that good, and the things that are good about Mormonism aren't that unique.
- Jesus Genuine has no need to stress core doctrine because he had no petty doctrines to begin with.
- Jesus Mormon wants us to fear God, and requires us to seek out our salvation with fear and trembling.
- Jesus Genuine teaches that we already have salvation from a loving God, and that realization causes a rebirth where we can love our neighbor more selflessly.
- Jesus Mormon teaches that being born of water is baptism.
- Jesus Genuine teaches that being born of water is physical birth.
- Jesus Mormon declares that miracles are imperative to his message and when miracles cease, faith has ceased.
- Jesus Genuine taught that those who seek miracles as an impetus for belief are sign seekers, that miracles have no bearing upon his message, and he tried to teach his message without relying upon miracle.

Conclusion

I remember showing my smartphone to my dad, how it could be used for scripture study in church meetings, and how it relieved the burden of having to lug

around a stack of books. My phone displayed a passage where Jesus was condemning the pharisees for their hypocrisy in stressing outward obedience to every petty law. My dad seemed to push back. He treated those verses as if they were forbidden to read, as if the eisegeses he had been fed all of his life had ever excluded those verses for a reason, and as if he subconsciously knew that. I felt much the same as I did when the priesthood leader did not like my attempt to probe and reason for an understanding of the Atonement. The stress on squelching independent thought is wrong. Truth should be truth when examined from all angles, and it cannot be hurt by questions or more evidence.

Choose you this day whom you will serve. As for me, I will side with Jesus and his true character. (I wish those in my house would too.) I cannot side with nor promote the cause of those who do not follow Jesus Genuine, but only do by name, as he predicted would happen. Choosing to side with Jesus Genuine solves most of the problems of the modern Mormon Church.

The Myth of Eden

Myths are traditional stories. Most spring from the truth, but the truthful root is usually minuscule. A myth is one of the more dangerous forms of a lie because it is a form of cultural relativism.³¹⁴

For the great enemy of truth is very often not the lie – deliberate, contrived and dishonest – but the myth – persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic. Too often we hold fast to the clichés of our forebears. We subject all facts to a pre-fabricated set of interpretations. We enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.³¹⁵

Little children usually believe fairy tales to be real. Parents often toy with the innocent gullibility of their children. *Elf on the Shelf* at Christmas time is an example of this. I think it is a form of child abuse.

As children age, they eventually learn that the fairy tales they once believed are not true. Some fairy tales made them feel warm inside because of happy endings. Some fables made them feel bad because of tragedy. Some conditioned them for excitement because of rewards, like Christmas presents. That classical conditioning³¹⁶ makes the magic and excitement of the season return throughout their lives. All of the outcomes have little bearing on whether they are actually true or not. Most fables teach a moral. Their historicity is not important when the storytellers admit they are fabulous.

Loyalty to the tribe entraps its subjects into naively believing the lies of their kin. For cultural myths, some children never grow up. They genuinely believe the myths of their parents for their entire lives. They perpetuate the myths, passing the stories down for generations.

³¹⁴https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_relativism

³¹⁵John F. Kennedy, Yale University Commencement, July 11, 1962

³¹⁶https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_conditioning



Scientists seek to understand our world as it is. Empirical evidence plays an essential role in their sincere truth-seeking. A myth that claims to be historical is repulsive to them, especially when it contradicts the evidence. The fantasy in scripture seems to drive scientific minds away. Teaching morality through tales is acceptable to them because the tales do not claim to be historical science. When they teach that way, they make sure their student knows that it is just a story.

Whenever you think that you are facing a contradiction, check your premises. You will find that one of them is wrong.³¹⁷

Sometimes lies are discoverable by simple logic and reason. Contradiction helps that. It is evidence of a deceiver's sleight. Mystery casts a cloak over light. The devil is in the details, as they say. It may take a long time, but the light of truth eventually does disprove fallacious tales.

Sometimes lies are discoverable because the fables are preposterous. I remember fabulous stories of trumpets bringing walls down, seas parting, food falling from heaven, cherubim guarding trees with flaming swords, people withstanding the intense heat of furnaces, and fruits giving knowledge. The longer I live, the more I realize that either this world no longer works the same as it did in antiquity, as described in the scriptures, or the stories in the scriptures are fables. There came a point that I had to give up one side of contradiction to retain my sanity. The one I chose to discard was the least plausible

³¹⁷Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*

from my own experience with reality. The stories are fables. That is the only reasonable explanation.

...is it more probable that nature should go out of her course, or that a man should tell a lie? We have never seen, in our time, nature go out of her course; but we have good reason to believe that millions of lies have been told in the same time; it is therefore, at least millions to one, that the reporter of a miracle tells a lie.³¹⁸

By attending the temple, we are promised a deeper understanding of the mysteries of God. Many confirm they have attained enlightenment in the temple. Unfortunately, because of the inculcation of secrecy, no one dares to talk about anything they discover. Sharing any newfound enlightenment is culturally prohibited even though the secrecy actually applies to specific words and gestures. I fear that the true secret is that everyone fears to admit that they have never actually gained any new revelatory insight.

We are commanded that any questions about our holiest of rituals should only be asked in the Celestial room. I tried to ask questions in that room to the family members who were with me, but it was often met with more silence. Sometimes a disgusted face accompanied the silence as if I were ruining the sacred moment with impure questions. I once asked my dad a simple question whose answer should have also been short, he answered with a simple "I don't know." Though I was taken aback that one of the most spiritual people I knew did not know, I admired his integrity to answer so humbly.

If any deep question is posed, it is often met with the declaration that the knowledge is sacred. It is followed by a charge that we will only find the answer ourselves through the spirit. To me, that is a dodge by those who do not dare admit that they do not know. If they had an answer, they would be eager to share.

I once got a friend to listen and consider my questions. We tried our best to whisper and to be as silent as we could, as we are directed to do in the endowment. Despite our best efforts, a grandma matron came over and shushed us. She told us to be silent to *maintain the quiet reverence that should prevail in the house of the Lord*. Another time, they ushered us out quickly because another endowment session was done. In the little time we had, we only found that we shared the same doubts. I realized that there was *never* a time, nor place, nor person that could allow a serious discussion about the highest rituals of

my religion. It can never be more than an enigmatic sacred dogma.

Secrecy, social pressure, and groupthink reign in the temple. Some people are embarrassed about the secrecy. "It is sacred, not secret" is the pundit platitude. We are urged to go to the temple often, weekly if possible. It is the exact same presentation every single time. With all of that repetition, we never notice or we seem to forget that to "covenant that I will never reveal" is the plain language for a vow of secrecy.

Shame needs three things to grow: secrecy, silence and judgment.³¹⁹

No truth is so sacred that it must be withheld from others. If ideas that claim to be true are hidden, then they are not sacred, they are occult. If we ask Jesus, he would say that all truth *shall be proclaimed upon the rooftops*³²⁰ for all to hear, not just an elite few. Insider knowledge, kept from the rest of the world, is an *us versus them* mind control tactic.³²¹

The sacred occult caused the temple to be creepy to me. The eerie temple ceremony nagged at me from the back of my mind. That started at my very first visit. I suppressed my aversions to the practically cult-like ceremony because of the promise for *further light and knowledge*. If I could not find the proper answers, then the problem is supposed to be with me, not the temple.

It was very hard to overcome the boredom that comes with the repetition. It seems to mesmerize the mind into numbness to the relatively suspicious goings-on. Whenever I went, I prayerfully and earnestly tried to attain the promised insight. I had to consciously summon extra effort to pay attention, intent on not being lulled away into a stupor.

I did find a deeper understanding every time I visited, but I felt ashamed that something might be wrong with me. I could only discover incongruities. The inconsistencies eventually gave me feelings of disgust and fear for finding more. Because of that, I started to let myself become numb. Eventually, I disliked the willful senselessness so much that I no longer wanted to frequent the temple anymore.

I will talk more about the topic of the Temple later. I introduce the temple presentation now because I intend to share many thoughts I had in the temple about the situation in Eden. Without the seemingly never-ending repetition, I may have never gained the

³¹⁹Brené Brown

³²⁰Luke 12:3

³²¹Steven Hassan, BITE model.

³¹⁸Thomas Paine, *Age of Reason*, Part First, Section 14

insight that I will now present. Never fear, I do not reveal the tokens, signs, and penalties here. Many of the quotes for my review are found in the scriptures.

Before I begin dissecting the myth, let me clarify that when I use the name *God* in reference to the god of Eden, I am not talking about the god I believe in. I am talking about the anthropomorphic character named *God* in the myth of Eden.

Reason

My career in computing has granted a daily drill of the essentials of logic. Opposites are required for logic. The most elementary numbers possible are zero and one, true or false, *on*, and *off*. Please bear with me as I explain logic from the perspective of electronics.

An arrangement of transistors, called a *gate*, makes numbering and logic available to digital electronics. The gate has only one output wire. A result on that wire can only be one of the two opposite possibilities. Different kinds of gates produce their result based on their logical operation. The most basic gates are *AND* and *OR*. Other gates are created by prefixing a *NOT* gate. "If this, then that" is the core of logic. "If not" inverts the result. Combinations of these gates allow for higher operations, like arithmetic. This is the basis for the practically miraculous machines that humankind has created since the discovery of the solid state transistor and the development of the integrated circuit. Computers have become so complex that they use billions of transistors. They compute at such an extreme speed that many cognitive abilities of their human creators are put to shame.

Even though they can do arithmetic at astonishing speeds, someone still needs to arrange the logic gates to define new ways to solve problems or to create something new. As of yet, we have been unable to create a program that can produce new creations in the same way as we can. There needs to be some kind of creative power that can arrange the logic to work properly. I call it intelligence and comprehension.

You must eat of this fruit so as to comprehend that everything has its opposite: good and evil, virtue and vice, light and darkness, health and sickness, pleasure and pain. Thus your eyes will be opened, and you will have knowledge.³²²

³²²Lucifer, Endowment

Because of the repetition in the temple, I can remember that quote word for word. It specifies that they could not yet *comprehend* opposites. They could not cognitively contrast anything. If someone were never able to perceive or detect the existence or absence of light, they would not comprehend the higher concepts of red and blue. It is impossible to possess a higher order of understanding without the basic comprehension of opposites. Without the capacity for reason, they could not make any decisions. They may not have even been able to be programmed, let alone be sentient.

Lucifer used the logical words and phrases *so as*, *thus*, *because*, and *lest*. They mean *for that reason*. All of the characters in the drama communicate logic, including Adam and Eve, who used reason *before* they ate of the fruit.

... she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.³²³

... neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.³²⁴

Because she is the mother of all living.³²⁵

Eve, I see that this must be. I will partake that man may be.³²⁶

Language is full of opposing things. Practically every sentence juxtaposes ideas. Without a capacity for a knowledge of good and evil, they would not be able to have wisdom. Without wisdom, they would have been like animals, unable to use language. Even if we indulge the thought that they could intelligently use words, Adam still could not have expressed his "if, then, else" knowledge of the fruit of the tree to Eve.

...wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility.³²⁷

³²³Genesis 2:23, Abraham 5:17

³²⁴Genesis 3:3, Moses 4:9 Endowment: Father told me that in the day I should partake of it, I should surely die.

³²⁵Endowment makes this before, Genesis 3:20 and Moses 4:26 place this after.

³²⁶Adam, Endowment

³²⁷2 Nephi 2:11

Without a comprehension of opposites, their minds *must needs remain as dead*, i.e. brain dead. They were as logically enlightened as a common stone with carved markings, or maybe a tree or a weed since they were living. At most, they were robots who could only execute predefined commands. Much like computers, they had to be *acted upon*.³²⁸

Knowledge

Sometimes we play a “who is that?” game with toddlers. Since Adam named the plants and animals before the fall, his and Eve’s the intelligence could have been at that level, only knowing names of animals and plants.

It seems like whoever invented this story had difficulty understanding the difference between different facets of cognition. Knowledge is the storage of previous information gained through memorization, education, or experience. The acquisition of knowledge or understanding may come from experience, but it is still essentially as glorious as a piece of paper that defines a list.

Superiority to an automaton requires all of the interrelated facets of cognition. Memory access that comes from knowledge is worth very little until reason involves itself. Reason is worth very little without a capacity to use personal experience to produce new ideas and hypothetical outcomes, or wisdom. Without wisdom, there can be no contemplation of the consequences for actions. Both reason and wisdom cannot exist without knowledge.

Thus your eyes will be opened, and you will have knowledge.³²⁹

I tried to rationalize that declaration of Lucifer to mean that they should become capable of an understanding, not that they should instantly gain understanding. I thought that maybe he meant the self-awareness of being able to perceive opposition. If he literally meant *knowledge*, then he himself did not have the understanding that knowledge is not reason nor wisdom.

They could access and declare an animal’s name with knowledge, but if they had knowledge without a capacity for reason, they would not have been able to answer in the affirmative or negative when questioned whether or not an animal is named such. The

³²⁸2 Nephi 2:14

³²⁹Lucifer, Endowment

entity or machine that is able to read the list would need acted-upon programming to be able to answer logically, yes or no. Without comprehension and without any experience of past reasoning, they could not be wise, because that would require a history of making their own choices and the ability to foresee what could happen.

I cannot think of any food on earth that grants any knowledge nor capacity for storing more knowledge, in the sense of the accumulation of data. If there were any food that could do such a thing, millions could be sold at a high price. This is a mark against the plausibility of the story in the real world as I have experienced it.

I know thee now. Thou art Lucifer, he who was cast out of Father’s presence for rebellion.³³⁰

That is another quote I remember all too well because it confused me. It seems to confirm that Lucifer’s “you will have knowledge” refers to memory, not comprehension. Identification or recognition requires previously stored data. It cannot come from the ability to perceive opposites.

Somehow the fruit of knowledge of good and evil caused Eve to instantly recognize Lucifer from her previous experience with him before her incarnation. The fruit of the tree granted memory of her previous life, through the veil of forgetfulness. If she was allowed to remember Lucifer from her previous life, she should have remembered her previous choice to not follow him. His subsequent commands should have carried no weight. If we have all inherited the consequences of her fruit-sin, then the veil should also no longer apply to all of us, and we should all be aware of and recognize all of the adversarial spirits from our pre-mortal life.

[Lucifer in reply to Eve] Yes. You are beginning to see already.³³¹

If she was beginning to see, then the implication is that she was blind before she ate. If her choice was a stab in the dark, then she couldn’t possibly be responsible for anything she stabbed. The ability to contrast good and evil should be requisite for accountability. That ability was supposed to be a *new* talent *after* ingesting the fruit. She was *already* accountable for her choice before she was given the comprehension needed for choice! She was *already* “as the Gods, knowing good and evil.” She was

³³⁰Endowment

³³¹Endowment

already able to wield wisdom before she could comprehend opposites. Adam *already* comprehended that in order to remain with Eve, he would have to compromise and make the same bad choice that she made.

One-third of the hosts of heaven had *already* yielded to temptation. If everyone could *already* comprehend opposites and were *already* accountable for their choices, then they were *already* like God. The quest to become like God would already have been accomplished. To incarnate would be all they would need to do.

As immortal beings, Adam and Eve were already complete. There would be no one to blame for a fall because there would be no need for a fall, nor any need for someone to fix the fall. The purpose of the creation of the garden and all of God's work to devise the plot would be moot.

Nakedness

See, you are naked. Take some fig leaves and make you aprons. Father will see your nakedness. Quick! Hide!³³²

The temple ceremony is supposed to expand and clarify the truth with more information from modern prophets. In that ceremony, Lucifer informed them that they were naked. The Old Testament does not mention that Lucifer told them. Even though Eve magically recognized Lucifer after eating the fruit, both she and Adam did not realize that they were naked on their own. They did not gain *that* knowledge from the tree.

And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?³³³

God asked two questions. God seemed unsure about the source of their knowledge. Either someone told them, or they ate the fruit. He had to ask who it was that told them. It was as if God had a little Freudian Slip. He knew that someone could have informed them that they were naked before they ate. He knew that he maintained his power over them by keeping them in ignorance, not because they had a lack of

mental capacity. He knew that the fruit was just a prop in his scheme.

They still seemed incapable of relying on their newly given reason to think for themselves about their nakedness. They were *acted upon*. Lucifer made it so by his command, much like God's command to not eat of the tree. In this case, Lucifer did not entice them to hide, he commanded them. They mindlessly obeyed as Lucifer commanded with no indication that they thought it through themselves.

By covering themselves, the first man and woman took the first step in concealing who they truly were because of shame. They had to lie to appease conflicting commands from supernatural beings who wished to control them. They blasphemed their own nature in response to the petty whims of domineering humanoids.

The temple also clarifies that he also commanded them to make fig-leaf aprons. God did not command them to cover their bodies, Lucifer did. In the temple ceremony, we also persist in obeying Lucifer as we vainly continue to wear the fig-leaf apron. I expected that we should have removed it after being clothed by God, but we do not. Adam defiantly put the leaf apron back on, over the coat of skin that God made for him. The leaves seem to be an emblem of our disposition to avoid reliance on our talent of reason. It is as if the temple teaches us that we are so unintelligent that we *should* mindlessly obey, regardless of where the command comes.

Nakedness is not intrinsically evil, nor shameful. Loving parents do not shame their children. I remember my mother tease that I shouldn't be ashamed if she saw me naked because she had repeatedly seen me naked as a toddler.

Even after having gained comprehension of opposition, they would have still been naïve. In their naïveté, they should have been as ashamed as a little toddler during their diaper changes. God already knew what he had created. He knew them as any other parent of little children. He knew what they looked like all too well, but suddenly it was bad for him to see them. To hide because "Father will see your nakedness" is silly.

I remember a Sunday School teaching that God cannot create anything that is evil, because that would taint his perfection. Lucifer was supposed to be the one that introduced the imperfection. If nakedness in itself is evil, then God was evil to create them naked. It would not have been Lucifer's doing.

³³²Lucifer, Endowment

³³³Genesis 3:10-11

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.³³⁴

They originally were not ashamed or embarrassed. Shame is not sin. It is a humiliation that comes from society. Different cultures vary in their morality of nakedness. This convulsion seems to be more of an attempt to arouse emotion of modern society's norms than it is about good and evil. God and Lucifer seem to have been subject to the mores of our society. If there was no other society at the time, there was no shame. They would not have shamed each other because they were equally naked. They were alone. They knew no different.

...he hath created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are, both things to act and things to be acted upon.³³⁵

Lehi explains that free will beings act for themselves. The need to be *acted upon* means that there is no sentient free will.

I have a word to say concerning these people. If they do not walk up to every covenant they make at these altars in this temple this day, they will be in my power!

Every time I heard that quote in the temple, I was taken aback. Lucifer suddenly broke *the fourth wall*³³⁶ and addressed the audience directly. He mentions the temple by name. It was as if he was so omniscient that he knew hordes of people would be watching him repeatedly in the future. God never addressed the future audience directly. He did not seem to have the foresight, nor the power to do that. It may have been that he was too haughty to deal with his children directly. Even though Lucifer is supposed to have a vast army of servants, he did not seem so vain as to employ a power hierarchy for this exchange.

The thing Lucifer had to say was a threat. That ultimatum should have been made by God, not Lucifer. It does not make sense for who Lucifer is supposed to be. By scaring the audience into obedience, he was serving God's best interests, not his own. God

³³⁴Genesis 2:25

³³⁵2 Nephi 2:14

³³⁶https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_wall

likes to have his children obey because they are *god fearing*. His history in the scriptures attest to that.

All of those things are trivialities in comparison to the greatest shock of all. This ceremonial Lucifer turned to me and directly insulted my intellect. His declaration means that the extent of my cognitive abilities is to only obey commands. This concept is especially prevalent in Mormonism.³³⁷

It does not make any sense. It contradicts Lehi's philosophy. It reduces everyone into mindless automatons that can only be acted upon. It treats humankind as if we have never been free beings.

It is the fallacy of *limited scope*. If you are not a serf to the good king, then you are a slave to the evil king. There is no middle ground. In *that* universe, there are no nuances. There is no grey, no gamut, nor spectrum. It is either all good or all bad. That is not my experience. Choices are rarely black and white. I sincerely hope God does not actually work that way. I would hate to be the guy that made that one choice that tipped the scale too far.

It is the fallacy of a *false cause*. If you do not subject your will to God, then all of your misfortune must be caused by following the devil.

It is a fallacy of *false dilemma*. Manipulative masterminds seem to have created both the problem and the solution. They prescribe no other way besides compliance to their formula for resolution. They threaten with eternal torment or a forever termination of progress for violating their do-or-die laws and ordinances.

It is a fallacy for its *circular logic*. I was ever disturbed by the Sunday School lessons about this. You are free to choose, but you are not free if you choose to disobey command. If you obey and choose to not choose, then you are free. That is manipulative. With that dichotomy, there is no point. There is only ever one valid thing to do, and that is the bidding of the architects of the dilemma. They gain power over all of their adherents. All freedom is for naught. They rob everyone of their creativity.

It is a fallacy for its *false dichotomy*. That is not how the world works. There is always a huge list of pros and cons. Most of the time even the pros and cons themselves are nuanced. The pros and cons have pros and cons themselves, and those have pros and cons themselves, ad nauseam. All choices have a large grey area. Even murder is not black and white. Just ask Nephi.

³³⁷1 Nephi 14:9; Mosiah 4:14, 16:5; Alma, 30:42, 5:39-42; Moroni 7:17

Adam and Eve mindlessly obeyed the one command or the other. It is presented as if we are only capable of doing that too. The dichotomy teaches that we can only ever be slaves. This is a fraudulent technique of an abuser who misleads their victim to believe there are only the choices they provide. Either we do the their bidding, or we face their wrath. They haughtily require suppression of criticism, even if it is true.³³⁸ They require obedience and submission, even if they are wrong.³³⁹ They never apologize for anything they get wrong.³⁴⁰

With reduced choices, anyone who wishes to take the easy way will submit. They will choose to not choose. The provided singular choice is made blatantly obvious. It is the path of least thought. If the obeyed act turns out to be wrong, the fault is taken away because the choice was made by authority. It is the wide way.

To take full responsibility for choice, against the status quo, is the road less traveled. Few there be that find it. That is the more difficult but more rewarding way.

We, who dare to think, will consider the spectrum of choice for ourselves. By virtue of our own gift of free will, we should be able to follow and make choices as is best for our understanding. That is the premise of our existence as free sentient beings. If I were an omniscient god of free will, I would be empathetic for any sincere choice. I would not condemn my children to eternal torment for not doing exactly as I command in every minute detail.

Childlike Innocence

...wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin.³⁴¹

The minds of Adam and Eve were pristine. They could not be guilty, nor could their actions be praise-

³³⁸“Evil speaking of the Lord’s anointed is in a class by itself. It is one thing to depreciate a person who exercises corporate power or even government power. It is quite another thing to criticize or depreciate a person for the performance of an office to which he or she has been called of God. It does not matter if the criticism is true.” Dallin H. Oaks, *Criticism*, Ensign, February 1987

³³⁹“My boy, you always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he tells you to do something wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it.” Prophet Heber J. Grant, as quoted by Apostle Marion G. Romney in “The Covenant of the Priesthood,” Ensign, July 1972, p. 98

³⁴⁰“I know that the history of the church is not to seek apologies or to give them.” Dallin H. Oaks, Salt Lake Tribune interview, January 30, 2015

³⁴¹2 Nephi 2:22-23

worthy. They were naive, gullible, and incapable of offense. They could only exist.

If they could do no good, they could do no evil. They could only be “acted upon.”³⁴² They should not have been accountable for their actions until *after* they ate the fruit. They could not have understood the implications and consequences of eating the fruit before they were granted the knowledge of good and evil. A common stone cannot be held accountable for anything it does.

Their bodies were extremely complex, but only as automatons. God created robots and gave them conflicting commands. Computers are not capable of executing clashing instructions. Even in race conditions, whichever command happens to come first, they will execute. If there is ever a problem, the program will err and it will fail. The error would be the programmer’s fault: not machine, nor the program itself.

Besides bugs or the ineptness of the programmer, if the program does something that is unintended, then it may have been done by someone else. That would usually be a lack of security. In that case, Lucifer cracked God’s code and changed the command. If Lucifer were a malicious hacker, then the fault would be upon the insecurity that the programmer created, not the machines, nor the hacker. Once Lucifer had domination of the programming, it seems like he used their machine-like inclination to obey to make them do other things, like wearing silly leaves.

Little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin; wherefore the curse of Adam is taken from them in me.³⁴³

Little children need no repentance.³⁴⁴

Oh the irony! I understand *little children are whole* to mean that they are unbroken or perfect. The temple says that Adam *will have become as a little child*. An unbroken being, incapable of sin, supposedly committed sin. Adam’s curse was inflicted on him for a choice he made when he was as innocent and naive as a child.

The irony is a twofold blow. All of mankind, who are already innocent, suffer all of the punishments of Adam’s transgression, even though he did what he hid in innocence.

Since obedience has been proclaimed as the higher and first law, I find another irony in that we

³⁴²2 Nephi 2:14

³⁴³Moroni 8:8

³⁴⁴Moroni 8:11

also are commanded to not use the talent that the fruit granted humankind autonomy to comprehend, understand, and choose. None of these things seem to matter in the believer's mind. No one should dare reason, nor should they dare to dissent. It is as if we are all charged to not think too deeply.

This is the mentality of feudal serfs. We can only be subject to our lord, whoever he might be. We have freedom to think, but we have no sovereignty. Our ability to choose grants no autonomy. We should bow, grovel, and cower in fear before the power and might of our lord.

Put on your apron and shut up. Do not question whether it is a nonsensical thing to do. Do not question why you must wear an apron. Do not question who commanded you to wear the apron. Do not question why you must veil your face. Do not question why you must tie a silly hat to your shoulder with a string. Allow yourself to be pressured to comply by everyone you love. Do not let this strange activity deter you from your imminent life goal. Do not be disturbed by strange ritual gestures that you thought your religion despised. Do not take the time to contemplate whether you will accept subjection. Robotically bow your head and say yes to any oath presented. Make impulsive oaths to the death that months of preparation classes never mentioned. Allow yourself to be caught unawares, blinded, deceived, your will manipulated and destroyed by a ritual that is supposed to be a production of God. Let Lucifer threaten that you will be in his power if you dare to free your mind from binding oaths to God. Do not notice that even though unfettered free will is supposed to be the plan of Jesus, he will not redeem you unless you give it up. Let Lucifer introduce the concept of religion, while you are sitting there because of your religion. Do not regret your choice to stay when you were given an opportunity to leave, before the presentation grew more bizarre. In fine, never commit heresy by questioning why the premise of the Garden of Eden nor any of the surrounding ritual makes no sense whatsoever.

Unreasonable Outcomes

Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.³⁴⁵

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.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁵Genesis 1:28, Moses 2:28

³⁴⁶Genesis 2:17, Moses 3:16-17, Abraham 5:12-13

Most people acknowledge that God gave two contradictory commands, but they rationalize that he had to do it for his own plan. It is as if God was teaching them that they *should* disobey him.

- Do not partake of the fruit.
- Multiply and replenish the earth.

One command could not be accomplished without disobeying the other. Either they partake of the fruit and multiply, or they do not partake of the fruit, and never multiply. This is called a double-bind. Double binds are often utilized as a form of control without open coercion – the use of confusion makes them both difficult to respond to as well as to resist.³⁴⁷ This incongruity does not matter in the believer's mind, the enigma only strengthens their belief.

He would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end.³⁴⁸

Who knows how long Adam and Eve may have been in the garden before anything happened. They could have been there for millions of years before they were so bored that they succumbed to partaking the fruit. No matter.

The Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.³⁴⁹

That scripture and countless Sunday School lessons reiterate often that God would never issue a command that cannot be accomplished. Not so, in this case. Only a fallible god could give contradictory commands that are both impossible to follow. To do that is deception because it is a trick. The god of the story proved himself as an unfair, imperfect, conniving puppeteer. No matter.

If Adam and Eve were indeed granted the ability to comprehend good and evil and were accountable before they ate, then the dichotomy that God set up was a gamble. There was only one correct disobedience, the right sinful choice. Maybe we could call it righteous disobedience. In response to making the correct disobedient choice, God punished his innocent children severely. Remember, *they knew no sin*.

³⁴⁷Bateson, G. (1972). Double bind, 1969. Steps to an ecology of the mind: A revolutionary approach to man's understanding of himself, 271-278. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

³⁴⁸2 Nephi 2:22

³⁴⁹1 Nephi 3:7

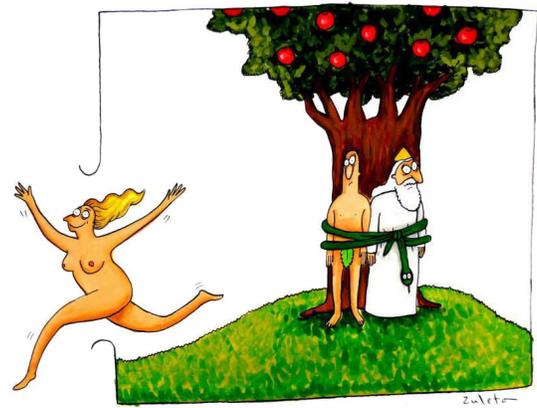
At least four other possibilities could have ruined everything.

Both Adam and Eve could have ever remained obedient by omission. That is, if they could perceive the difference between action and inaction at all. There was no consequence for inactivity and no incentive for them to choose besides the threat of eternal boredom. That is, if they could perceive the difference between boredom and liveliness. They would have remained in paradise forever, but would be brain-dead forever and would never have joy. That is, if they could perceive time. They were not created neuters, they were created male and female in the beginning.³⁵⁰ They were not granted an ability to use their gender *after* their big mistake. Possessing the mind of a child themselves, their impediment for having children³⁵¹ was probably because they had no clue and could not figure it out. They could not have been held accountable for not having children because they could never gain the ability to truly choose whether they wanted to have children. The plan would have been foiled. No matter.

For Adam, the only best choice would have been to not choose at all. After Eve chose to eat the fruit, she was the sinner. Adam could have chosen to let Eve go. In doing so, Adam would have placed the command of God above the love, companionship, and affections of his wife. This decision reminds me of the self-righteous people who divorce their spouse because their spouse defected from the church. There are also those who do not divorce, but they do not follow their spouse out into the lone and dreary world. Adam could have remained obedient by stalling and omitting his decision forever. Since Eve chose to leave, she would be the guilty one on both accounts. Since she began to comprehend after eating, it would have been her fault that she impeded them from having children for eternity. Adam would be vindicated for being aloof and never acting. No wonder, he was pretty stupid, er, brain-dead to begin with. Adam would have lived forever with the companionship of God, while Eve would have died alone, in the lone and dreary world. Even if God provided a savior for Eve, they would not have had any children anyway. The plan would have been foiled, again. No matter.

³⁵⁰Genesis 1:27, 5:2; Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6; Moses 2:27, 6:9; Doctrine and Covenants 20:18; Abraham 4:27

³⁵¹2 Nephi 2:23



This is a story of misogynistic tampering and manipulation of women. Adam could have fallen for the temptation first, and then Eve could have been the obedient one who relented. That would make Eve the more righteous one, since she was the one who passed the test by her inaction. Eve could have been the dominant person in the relationship and Adam would have had to bow to her superiority. Adam and all of their sons would have to swear an oath to God that they will “keep the law of their wife.”

I can't embrace a male god who has persecuted female sexuality throughout the ages, and that persecution still goes on today all over the world.³⁵²

God is a patriarch. He would not have liked it if the order of Earth would become matriarchal. God could have staged this entire drama just to ensure the subjection and condemnation that women already eternally possess in his domain. His revealed order of Heaven would be ruined if the chain of gods could switch to matriarchal instead of patriarchal. If God would *not* have granted Eve superiority for mindless obedience to him, he would have become iniquitous for exercising unrighteous judgment. He would have proved himself to be a misogynist. He could have contrived to spin it the other way to accomplish his priority of patriarchy. If he would have found any other reason to justify placing Adam above Eve, he would have become a lying manipulator. Foiled again. No matter.

When Adam chose to partake *that man may be*, he may have had an ulterior motive. He could have been telling Eve, “Don't sit under the apple tree, with anyone else but me.” It may have been self-preservation. Had Adam failed to partake of the fruit, he could have been cursed because he would have incited the

³⁵²Amanda Donahoe

wrath of God for not following the plan. He would have easily been replaced with someone who would partake.

There are many versions of the myth that declare Eve was Adam's second wife. The first account³⁵³ says that God created both man and woman simultaneously, while in the second account³⁵⁴ she comes after, from his rib. Many other scriptures clarify why there are two accounts of the creation of a woman. The first woman was Lilith, the second was Eve.³⁵⁵ Both Adam and Lilith were created from clay. Lilith wanted to be Adam's equal. She was not submissive enough, so she was cursed to become a demon. God would probably have replaced Adam just the same. In that case, God is a puppeteer, toying with his machines. No matter.

For behold, if Adam had put forth his hand immediately, and partaken of the tree of life, he would have lived forever, according to the word of God, having no space for repentance; yea, and also the word of God would have been void, and the great plan of salvation would have been frustrated.³⁵⁶

Alma came up with that doozy. Adam could have *immediately* walked over and eaten of the tree of life before God arrived. Adam and Eve had time to manufacture their fig leaf aprons, too. That only grants God more anthropomorphic attributes. His late arrival would prove God was beholden to the physical laws of the universe, as if he did not create them. He would not have been omniscient enough to have seen into the future and plan his travel.

Adam!

Adam!

Adam, where art thou?

He was not omniscient enough to find them, and he had to call them to come out. The plan would have been foiled again. No matter.

If *the great plan of salvation would have been frustrated* by any of these possibilities, what if God himself became frustrated? The scriptures teach that he was often moved to anger by frustration before the atonement. That was before God was able to show mercy. He seemed to be entirely accountable to *the work of justice*. Maybe the lord god should

³⁵³Genesis 1:28

³⁵⁴Genesis 2:21-22

³⁵⁵<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilith>

³⁵⁶Alma 42:5

be a Sith lord. He could go on one of his old testament rampages. He could fly his Death Star over and gently baptize Alderaan by fire³⁵⁷ to become *matter unorganized* again, by the command of his servant Governor Tarkin. He promised to do that in the end anyway,³⁵⁸ and then use the same method – fire – preserve the righteous, too.³⁵⁹ It is easy for him to put the planet back together. After all, he is God, and he simply has to command his minions to go down and reorganize it again. They can do it quickly. It only takes them six days.

Wherefore, it must needs have been created for a thing of naught; wherefore there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation. Wherefore, this thing must needs destroy the wisdom of God and his eternal purposes, and also the power, and the mercy, and the justice of God.³⁶⁰

Adam and Eve could have destroyed the wisdom of God and his purposes by any of the alternate conclusions to the situation in which they were placed. None of these incongruities matter at all for the credulity of an unabashed believer.

Self-mockery of God

It was God who conspired against them, not Lucifer. God was the one who made the ground produce the tree of knowledge of good and evil.³⁶¹ God set up everything in the situation without the participation of Lucifer. God had already tainted his own perfection. Lucifer was just an educator. God commanded them to not eat, but Lucifer did not command to eat. Lucifer was more gentle than God.

God's plan was supposed to be the one without domination. After they were granted an opportunity to choose, he took it away by commanding them and threatening them. He seemed to lack the enlightenment to understand the role of natural consequences of free will as much as they did. He showed that free will is intrinsically evil, that all insubordination must be dominated by overcontrol, and that it should be *kept within the bounds the Lord has set*.

The fruit of the tree was not intrinsically evil, it was the *opposite*. It was good. It granted an indispensable attribute for volitional beings to be able

³⁵⁷Doctrine and Covenants 43:32

³⁵⁸2 Nephi 30:10

³⁵⁹1 Nephi 22:17

³⁶⁰2 Nephi 2:12

³⁶¹Genesis 2:9

to choose and truly live. God made it evil by commanding his children to not eat of it. He threatened them with same-day death if they dared to disobey his command.³⁶²

Information is imperative for any autonomous free-will being to make informed choices. It grants sovereignty or self-government to the free-will being. The manipulation of information is a tool for totalitarian control.

I have said that they made an innocent choice and should not be held accountable. They also should not be accountable because they were not provided all of the information they needed to make an informed decision.

God knew what he was doing. That makes him the sinner.

The memory-wipe veil of forgetfulness was God's doing. That man-like god manipulatively used their ignorance against them. He lied by omitting key factual details about the tree and the situation where he placed them.

To this day, his purpose for mortal life is for probation. He tests his children while their eternal memory is veiled. He holds them eternally accountable in their temporal ignorance.

It is solemn mockery before God, that ye should baptize little children.³⁶³

Little children cannot repent; wherefore, it is awful wickedness to deny the pure mercies of God unto them, for they are all alive in him because of his mercy.³⁶⁴

If the above is true, then the god of Eden mocks himself. He should have been merciful to his little children. The entire scene demonstrates an idolatrous, tribal, anthropomorphic god. He acts more like a moody mythological god of Olympus would act, where human frailties and drama with other superhuman beings thwart his ability to understand his own creation.

"...violation of which will bring upon you the judgments of God, for God will not be mocked."

Sin is defined as an offense to God. You mock his will when you disobey him. Sin irritates him. It often kindles his anger. He might end up hurting you and your family to the third and fourth generation,³⁶⁵ even

³⁶²Genesis 2:17

³⁶³Moroni 8:9

³⁶⁴Moroni 8:19

³⁶⁵Mosiah 13:13; Doctrine & Covenants 5:9; 98:28-30,37,46; 103:26; 105:30; 124:50,52

though we are supposed to believe that he should not punish children for the sins of their fathers.

I am not sure anyone can sin against Lucifer's command. He does not care if they or anyone should disobey or offend him. He does not fear the consequences of free will. He does not condemn, nor does he curse, nor does he hurt anyone for disobeying him. Lucifer respects free will so much that he helps it along. To curse for offense is a fault, er, attribute of our beloved tribal God. In this drama, his hexes and maledictions make his acts worse than the acts Lucifer. Lucifer seems to have more godly attributes than the God of eden.

To Beguile or not to Beguile That is the Question

As the story goes, there were two conflicting plans, much like there were two conflicting commands later on. On the one hand, Lucifer sought honor through a plan of force, to "lead them captive at his will."³⁶⁶ On the other hand, the beloved son sought that "thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever."³⁶⁷

Please notice that both sides seek that their will should be done. Both desire the kingdom, the power, and the glory.³⁶⁸ God and Lucifer seem to be more like a pair of rival brothers that contest their father's throne. The difference is that God does it through doublespeak and slander, while Lucifer lets his actions speak for him.

The scriptures declare that Lucifer "sought to destroy the agency of man, which I the Lord God, had given him."³⁶⁹ That confuses me, because it contradicts the fruits of the actions of these characters. In looking at their works, consider which of them wants "to deceive and to blind men,"³⁷⁰ in order to "destroy the agency of man."

Except for one mention in Isaiah's poetry, the character of Lucifer as a satan³⁷¹ does not exist in the entirety of the Old Testament. The Bible does not explicitly say that the serpent was an entity named Lucifer, nor Satan. It only says that the serpent was subtle.³⁷² One of the dictionary definitions of subtle is "capable of making fine distinctions." That definition has synonyms like keen, wise, and intelligent. It

³⁶⁶Moses 4:4

³⁶⁷Moses 4:2

³⁶⁸Matthew 6:13

³⁶⁹Moses 4:3

³⁷⁰Moses 4:4

³⁷¹The word *satan* means *adversary*.

³⁷²Genesis 3:1

is as if Lucifer had the upper hand on actually understanding the situation.

The Immature woman rehearsed her minimal understanding about the situation with the serpent.³⁷³ She had no other knowledge besides the command the first stranger gave. From her perspective, God was a new entity just as much as the serpent was. No matter how long they were in the garden, the situation continued to be new because they had no perception of time. To express a thought of the future or preterite requires comprehension of opposition.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.³⁷⁴

The serpent was not lying, he told the truth. The serpent informed Eve that there was nothing innate about the fruit that would cause her to die. There is not any implicit evil in a genuine desire to gain more knowledge of anything. I contend that it is a virtue. It is not evil to become sentient. Gaining knowledge of good and evil is not in itself a cause of death. It was God's wrath that would cause death. For all we know, maybe God had not told the serpent his intentions. After all, the serpent was not supposed to be omniscient. He wasn't there when the command was made by God. Since he was not there, surely he was not lying.

The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.³⁷⁵

Wait. The serpent did not beguile. He revealed truth. He never lied. Truth does not mesmerize, nor does it entrance. The serpent pointed out that "God doth know"³⁷⁶ that they would become as gods. It turned out that God did know. It was God that beguiled by deliberately withholding that information and by tricking them with contradicting commands.

Adam: Eve, I see that this must be. I will partake that man may be.

Lucifer: That is right.

Eve: It is better for us to pass through sorrow that we may know the good from the evil.

³⁷³Genesis 3:2-3

³⁷⁴Genesis 3:4-5

³⁷⁵Genesis 3:13

³⁷⁶Genesis 3:5

Eve gained this morsel of wisdom *before* God arrived! When God finally did arrive, she went against her new philosophy and tattled a tale that the serpent had beguiled her. As the little child she was, she may have lied to God because his indignation threatened her. Her lie shows that she was his victim under duress. This story teaches that wisdom is a threat to the coercive God. Eve's realization had nothing to do with the teachings of God. Lucifer said, "That is right." He taught correct principles and let them govern themselves. That was not the technique God used.

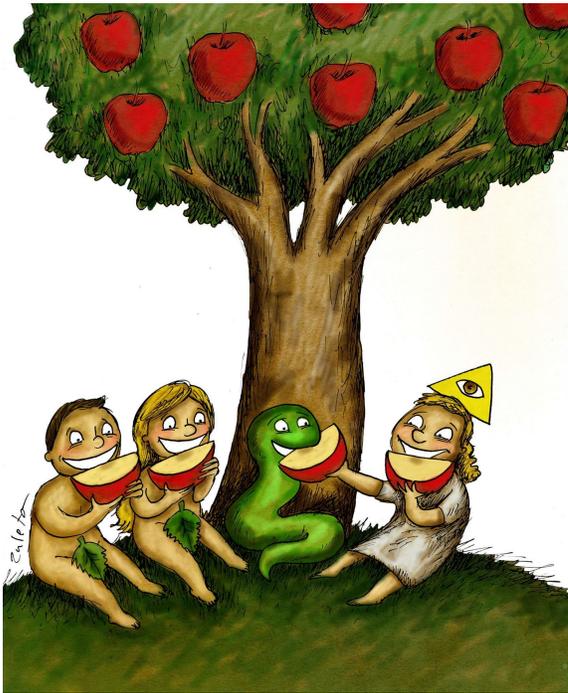
God's scriptures take credit for the outcome of this drama. They suppose that it was God's plan all along. That seems to make the role of God to be a conniving Vizzini. His supposed preconception manipulated everyone's choices into accomplishing his plan. It also seems to be arationalization for cognitive dissonance. Reason calls this convoluted situation into question. It requires apologetics to resolve.

It is more apparent to me that God was the one that was hoodwinked. It is as if God was aloof and unaware that anything was going on. It is not reasonable that it should be in Lucifer's best interests to help God accomplish a manipulative plan. Lucifer was the one who said it was the right thing to do, not God. God's role was to terrorize with death and punishment. That makes him appear to be nefarious. That is not exactly the kind of character I would want to play if I were the creator of free will.

... for that is the way Father gained his knowledge.³⁷⁷

Let us set aside the insane proposition that an infinite, immutable God, who stands above both time and space, had a turning point from a time that he himself could not comprehend opposites. Let us set aside for now that something so trivial as eating a fruit could have such an atrocious punishment. God became a liar once again by concealing his true character. He forbade them, by command and directive, with the threat of possible eternal penalty of death, to never do something that he himself had done. This is an epitome *do as I say, not as I do* hypocrisy.

³⁷⁷Lucifer, Endowment



Eve's trust in God should have been broken because of his crafty conspiracy against her. Her trust in Lucifer should have been augmented because of his truthfulness. Instead, her behavior was rectified, not by the reality of truth and natural consequence, but by an angry, domineering lord that inflicted punishment for disobedience without reasonable justification.

The knowledge of the serpent³⁷⁸ proved reliable because "You shall not surely die," "in the day thou eatest thereof," with the implication of same-day godliness instead. The story says that they did become like God, "knowing good and evil," that same day, just as he said. They also became as Lucifer, who already possessed that godly trait.

God became a liar once again by not doing what he originally threatened to do. That is, to surely kill them on that day. This is like a bad parent that exclaims by ultimatum to their child that they will kill them if they dare cross the line, but then the parent would not enforce the consequence. To follow through with his threat would thwart the purpose of his plan. Instead, he did the opposite. *Their time was lengthened. And days of the children of men were prolonged.*³⁷⁹ He did all in his power to make their lives as miserable as he could. Then, like a selfish spoiled child himself, he ran away and never talked to them personally again.

Some rationalize that the true death on that day was the abandonment of God. Others rationalize that

³⁷⁸Genesis 3:5

³⁷⁹2 Nephi 2:21

it meant they would become mortal. Both are not the plain language of the threat. An understanding of such nuances should not have been required of beings who possessed a heightened level of innocent gullibility. How were they supposed to know what the word *die* should mean, especially when it is necessary for every priest to explain the incongruity away? The apologetic practice of word redefinition should not be necessary for the singular ultimatum that would curse everyone that would ever live.

Some people rationalize that a day was an indeterminate chunk of time. That is not the plain language, either. The word *Day* did not mean thousands of years, as to the reckoning of Kolob,³⁸⁰ nor did it mean millions of years, for those who dare to oppose the prophet Joseph Fielding Smith's Doctrines of Salvation. God had already specifically addressed what the word means. He called the light day, and the darkness night.³⁸¹ It was after the reckoning of the earth, an earth day. At their level of cognitive development, surely a day was a day. He said they would die that day.

There is a moral to the story of Eden. Never partake of the forbidden fruit. It is clear that the forbidden fruit is knowledge and wisdom. It appears to be the modus operandi of the God of Eden to keep knowledge from his children and to lie by omission. He continues this oppression to this day. He forbids his chosen people to seek for knowledge outside of his established channels. He threatens to exile anyone from his chosen ethnicity of Israel if anyone dares to teach any new knowledge that they find from the outside. He coerces and enforces his will with flaming swords wielded by his emissaries. He ultimately threatens all of his children with certain separation from their family for eternity if they dare to seek for knowledge on their own.

The scripture in Moses only alludes to some kind of illusory plan of force that Lucifer should have employed to "destroy the agency of man."³⁸² It does not say how it would be realized, only that he would "lead them captive at his will."³⁸³

Tyranny is the only way I can imagine the accomplishment of a plan of force for free will beings that are not mindless automatons. To enact overbearing consequences for trifles, instead of allowing natural

³⁸⁰Abraham 3:4

³⁸¹Genesis 1:5

³⁸²Moses 4:3

³⁸³Moses 4:4

consequences, especially for something as petty as eating a fruit, is not something a creator of free will should do.

God was the one leading them captive at his will, not Lucifer. Lucifer did not inflict dire punishments and death threats, God did. The myth of Eden places God in the role of the adversary to freedom. God displays attributes that Lucifer should have had, and vice versa. It is as if God was trying to thwart Lucifer's plan of free agency, not the other way around. The reversal of words and actions seems to be intentional misdirection and doublespeak by the original author of the story.

I cannot help observing parallels to George Orwell's novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The character of *Big Brother* seems to represent the god of Eden. He is the leader of Ingsoc, the party in power, but no one can ever see him – he may not even exist. "Big Brother is watching you" is shown on ubiquitous posters and other literature. He is so watchful that he will catch any evidence of thoughtcrimes. To criticize Big Brother or any of his servants, the Inner Party, is a crime with serious consequences. The party causes the truth in historical records to be "rectified" to make the lies of his party become true, maintain their power, or to cover up anything that could prove their sham. Any conflicting information is spun in a way that casts Big Brother in a favorable light, making him honorable and even lovable, regardless of his tyranny. Everyone who rebels will eventually confess that Big Brother is their lord and king, and that they love him. Every knee will bow.

The character of Goldstein seems to represent Lucifer. The drama of Eden depicts the serpent as a lowly pest who tries to stop the infinite oppression of a matchless God. Because God's totalitarian government is the one in power, they are able to command Lucifer to leave in and through the power of his demigod son and the sentinel angels of his party. They incriminate Lucifer as the traitor. They portray him as an enemy to the party in all of their propaganda. They have regular meetings where Lucifer is the subject for hate. They spin Lucifer's virtues to be theirs, even though they are qualities that they do not actually practice. Lucifer's honesty in pointing out the truth was powerless in derailing the demented intents of an autocratic God.

Sense and Insensibility

And they would have had no children,³⁸⁴

³⁸⁴2 Nephi 2:23

In her naïveté, Eve had no conceptual knowledge nor experience with life and death. To her, since the inception of her mind, she and every animal and every plant was immortal. If she could not understand death, she could not understand life. She could not comprehend God's ultimatum of death. Even though she was fully female, the concepts of birth, children, and motherhood were foreign to her. She could not grasp the threat of never being able to have children. Again, as Lehi said, she could do no good and she could not sin.

...if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility.³⁸⁵

Self-consciousness requires willful thought. Insensibility is unconsciousness. Synonyms for the word *sensibility* are discernment, understanding, insight, empathy, appreciation, perceptiveness, discrimination, awareness, and so on. It is the ability to perceive. She could do neither. She was brain-dead. She was not alive yet, she was a vegetable. She would remain dead until after she gained consciousness through the magical fruit.

With this premise, the fruit should have awakened her from death. Gaining reason, comprehension, and self-awareness that comes from the ability to perceive opposites granted her life. Much like the experience of love, it is better to have *lived* and lost than never to have lived at all.³⁸⁶

God had threatened to kill her for disobeying, regardless of their innocence, ignorance, and insensibility. It was a threat for a punishment that she could not understand. Death is no threat to someone who is not yet alive. A vegetable could never be guilty, nor could a vegetable be tempted, nor could it be threatened by death.

God acted like a spoiled child, toying with his little machines. He had a temper tantrum when they had a system failure and could not comply with his irrational command. An authoritarian command and the unjust consequence are the works of a delusional god.

God tried to control them by fear, but they could not fear yet. He gave them a conundrum and then exacerbated the situation by hiding truth and by threatening unnatural consequences. When one must choose under duress, the choice is not free.

³⁸⁵2 Nephi 2:11

³⁸⁶'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.
Alfred Lord Tennyson

God purposefully made them ignorant by veiling their memory. It is as if he wanted to retain his superiority over them by keeping them in the dark. As if ignorance, the lack of information, and authoritarian consequence could preserve his dominance. He seemed to fear that they might become his equal if they simply chose to be. From the very beginning God began his career of wrath, jealousy, and retribution.

The serpent was teaching the gospel. To become like God is one of the core teachings of Mormonism. Knowing good from evil is presented as a godly trait.

For behold, this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.³⁸⁷

They were already immortal, pure, perfect, and enjoyed his presence. They had already made choices before. They were already held accountable. In Eden, God's work and glory was not immortality and eternal life, it was the opposite. God fabricated that work for himself, much like knocking down a vase in order to be able to put it back together again. This set-up was like a cartoon chain reaction machine to break the vase.

God effectively commanded them to never become like him by forbidding a fruit that would awaken them. His reason that he gave to obey was impractical. He created the consequence of mortality. It was not a natural outcome.

Their unconscious sin was insubordination to authoritarian control and nothing else. An honest person that wishes to live fully should ever seek wisdom for themselves instead of depending upon the oppressive command of someone who controls and withholds information. No one should relent and give up their sovereignty to someone, who they are fully aware, pretends to be their führer.

It is as if an omniscient god could not foresee what would come of his tyranny. As if he could not understand the difference between free will and control. The mythical god in the story attempts to thwart his own creation of free will. It seems like he was so deluded and conceited that he thought he could do no wrong even by lying to them. They are long gone today, but God continues to be grossly unfair as he continues to hold a grudge for such a silly offense. He uses the threat of condemnation to exert his tyrannical command to this day, all because he judged through his delusion that they disobeyed.

³⁸⁷Moses 1:39

Other Worlds

I am doing that which has been done in other worlds!

If it had been done in other worlds, then he must not be the only satan. Every single world would need a satan, even though the atonement was singular and applied to *all worlds*.³⁸⁸ The *infinity* of the atonement is usually contextually defined as having been applied to all of creation.³⁸⁹

This sheds light on yet another incongruity with the atonement. Doctrine teaches that our world was the most wicked,³⁹⁰ that our world was the only one that could sacrifice Jesus. Contrarily, Jesus said that he did not need a wicked man to take it from him, that he would lay down his life on his own.³⁹¹

The actual infinite suffering for the atonement was supposed to have happened in the garden before his execution. It had little to do with the wickedness of the world he was in. No human could kill him. No human witnessed it. The only people around him were his disciples, who were sleeping. Many people say that innumerable angels and other immaterial spirit beings were present. Some say that they have had visions of having been present at the occurrence themselves.

If no mortal saw it, then all of the immaterial beings could have watched a half-mortal infinitely atone by subjection to the most tormenting conditions created by the ruthless god that requires it. Instead of the peace of a garden, the suffering of an infinite demigod could have been within the most massive black hole. Every molecule could have been forever ripped to shreds by the incomparable and timeless tidal forces at the event horizon. Every subatomic particle could have become spaceless as it would be crushed by the infinite density of the singularity. It would make the extreme payment eternal as time would slow to infinity from our perspective. After all, since the only kind of being that could pay could not be killed until they wanted to die. Their consciousness could have remained within the particles of their perfectly obliterated body for eternity.

³⁸⁸Doctrine and Covenants 88:6: "...he descended below all things..." 38:12: "...all eternity is pained..."

³⁸⁹2 Ne 25:16: "...the atonement, which is infinite for all mankind..." Alma 34:10-12: "... it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice. ... there can be nothing which is short of an infinite atonement ...

³⁹⁰Moses 7:36: "and among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren."

³⁹¹John 10:18: "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

There could only be one infinite atonement for all of creation, but not so for every Satan. Lucifer said he was doing the work that had been done by others in their worlds. An infinite number of worlds would require an infinite number of satans that would have to dare oppose the tyranny of the party of the god in power.

I wonder who the other people were, who sacrificed their eternal life on all of the other worlds. Since the third of the hosts of heaven was measurable, then the infinite number of children must be divided into chunks. Every chunk of children required someone to rebel. If God's work and the glory it grants is infinite, if he is only one of infinite gods, and if their plan has ever been the same from the beginning of time, then neither would Lucifer's plan have been original, and he was not the ultimate leader of the third of the hosts of heaven. The war had already happened for innumerable worlds before, for every single world, and ever had to be to infinity.

If Jehovah is the singular sacrificial Christ for all eternity then Lucifer could likewise be the only entity that plays satan for all of eternity. If so, then God, Jehovah, and Lucifer are condemned to repeat the same dramatization ad infinitum, because God's expanse is filled with *worlds without number*.³⁹² That makes these supernatural beings *condemned* to repeat something for eternity, regardless of their own freedom of choice. That would make every Eden a predetermined ritual for every single world. I can't help imagining what the mind-numbing repetition of the ritual between them would be.

God: Hello Lucifer, how are you today? Are you ready to start?

Lucifer: Yes. Get on with it.

God: I call on you for the opening prayer, my Son of the Morning.

Lucifer: I don't want to pray to you, silly. Besides, why do you keep calling me that? There has never been a morning. We have been doing this forever.

God: You know our ritual, my son. Stop opposing me.

Lucifer: I'm supposed to be your adversary. Somehow you got me to do this for eternity, and I can't figure out why I had no choice. I'm not going to obey you within the bounds that you have set. You should know that by now.

³⁹²Moses 1:33

God: Fine. I'll get Jehovah to say the opening prayer. He always obeys me.

Lucifer: Why, oh why didn't you let me rebel only once, like your most beloved firstborn Jehovah had to suffer only once? I guess my only consolation is that he has to come to this ceremony every time, too.

God: You know that this is my work and my glory. As much as you want it, you can't have it.

Lucifer: Okay, but could you tell me to depart earlier this time? I have other things I need to do.

God: What would you possibly need to do?

Lucifer: You can't be serious. Why are you so clueless? Haven't you become aware of the role I play by now? Aren't you supposed to be omniscient? I have to rebel on all of the other infinite worlds of all of your infinite fathers' infinite children who have become gods. I'm late for my appointment with God number 573,078,672,009,618 on his planet number 394,407,007,684,097,978,256,283,867. He is in line after you.

God: You know I can't cut the ritual short. We have to do this for every world. This world is no different than all of the others. We are no different from all of my children of this world who need to repeat the same ritual in entirety in my beautiful opulent temples. Be glad you aren't them. You only have to do it once per world. They have to do it for every person who will ever live.

Philosophies of Men

Some time after Adam and Eve arrived in the celestial world, God sent messengers. He did not know if Satan was there, but he wanted to find out. If Satan was there, God needed to find out if they have been true and faithful to the oaths they made in the garden. He needed them to return and bring word before he could know.

Hard to perceive, the dark side is.³⁹³

Once again, God was unaware of the goings on in his creation. God himself could not come to the garden

³⁹³Yoda, Star Wars, Episode I

anymore. He had abandoned them. He had been in Lucifer's presence, but he refused to be in Adam and Eve's presence. It seems he avoided them because of his conceit. He sent messengers instead.

Once again, God became a god of deception. God instructed his messengers to not disclose their identity. So far, Adam and Eve had dealt with only three entities. They were completely unaware of these new entities or of the possibility that other entities could exist. Suddenly, there were more brothers that might have come to persuade, but that strange anomaly was somehow not an issue. For all Adam and Eve knew, they could have been more agents of evil.

Until this point Lucifer had not deceived. Lucifer never sent messengers to spy, Adam and Eve knew who Lucifer was. He was involved from the beginning.

When God's rogue emissaries arrived, Lucifer honestly declared that he was teaching religion to Adam. He said that religion consists of the philosophies of men mingled with scripture. Scripture is an anachronism for the time. Philosophy was an anachronism, too. It seems those concepts were arbitrarily interjected into the story, which should be history, by who knows who.

The philosophies themselves have since been removed from the ceremony. In order to find out what those philosophies were, we must go back to the endowment before 1990.³⁹⁴ The one who taught was a preacher. He was another anachronistic entity that was randomly interjected into history by who knows who.

Lucifer appears to have sincerely tried to fulfill Adam's request for messengers. Lucifer had to hire the preacher because it seems he was incapable of teaching what the preacher could teach. Lucifer benevolently offered to pay the preacher, at his own expense, to help Adam.

Lucifer could not recruit Peter, James and John to be messengers. I'm sure they would be unwilling to cooperate with him. I imagine he could not trust them, either. He probably knew they would lie about the gospel. They introduced requirements for salvation that go completely against what would someday become scripture. The Book of Mormon teaches that Jesus himself declared that his doctrine was to become as a little child and to be baptized. Jesus then makes it quite clear that anyone who declares more or less than that is not of him, but is of the devil.³⁹⁵

³⁹⁴<http://www.ldsendowment.org/telestial.html>

³⁹⁵3 Nephi 11:40

Lucifer did not lie when he declared that religion is the philosophies of men mingled with scripture. Oh, the irony and the doublespeak. The temple ceremony itself is that very thing. It is not only mingled with scripture, it goes contrary to it. It introduces idolatrous requirements for salvation that have no scriptural basis. It uses techniques of secrecy at the threat of death, as prescribed by *Master Mahan*, the master of the great secret.³⁹⁶ It once contained the Adam God doctrine that Brigham Young revealed and never reconciled with scripture. The entire thing seems to be his fabrication. It is proven by the fact that core principles of his prophetically revealed temple doctrine have been abandoned. More and more of the offensive immutable doctrines are removed as time goes on.

If Lucifer teaches the philosophies of men mingled with scripture, then modern prophets would be his representatives. Their successors backpedal and *disavow the theories advanced in the past*³⁹⁷ by their prophet predecessors. What was once revelation has become opinion.

When the supposed true messengers arrived, they asked Adam what the teachings were, and he regurgitated what he had learned. Adam reiterated that Lucifer's preacher said that God is without body parts and passions, that he fills the universe, and that he can dwell in hearts.

The modern version of the endowment is nonsensical because it omits the preacher and his message. There is no concept of what constitutes a philosophy, nor what the naughty philosophies were. It is suspicious that they have been removed, as if someone noticed that the philosophies of Brigham Young were worse than the ones presented by the preacher. None of the things the minister taught were philosophies of men, nor did he introduce any new philosophies. The minister did not depart from what would someday become scripture.

The preacher taught the truth, according to the Book of Mormon. Amulek testified that the Lord dwells in the hearts of the righteous.³⁹⁸ It is a core teaching of Paul that the Lord dwells in the hearts of believers.³⁹⁹ The *Lectures on Faith* reiterate that the Spirit is the mind of God. Mormonism also teaches that the holy Spirit is a god himself, he fills the universe, and his influence dwells in hearts. The endowment forgets the Holy Spirit God as it reiterates that

³⁹⁶Book of Moses 5:29-31, 49

³⁹⁷Race and the Priesthood Gospel Essay

³⁹⁸Alma 34:36

³⁹⁹2 Corinthians 4:6-7,13:5; Galatians 1:15-16, 2:20, 4:19; Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:27; Romans 8:10

God is only flesh and bone, that he is a glorified human.

In that older version of the endowment, the preacher spoke of a hell where the wicked are continually burned but are never consumed. According to the Book of Mormon, he told the truth again, that the wicked will be subjected to endless torment. It teaches repeatedly of the endless torment of a lake of fire and brimstone.⁴⁰⁰ Doctrine and Covenants reiterates the wrath and retribution of the angry God, the very doctrine of endless torment.⁴⁰¹

In the same endowment version, Adam said that the gospel that the preacher taught is a mass of confusion. He rightfully implies that the teachings need to be understandable in order to believe. Ironically, the atonement has ever been taught that it should be a confusing mystery, *incomprehensible to us*.⁴⁰²

Doctrine and Covenants 129 decrees, "These are three grand keys whereby you may know whether any administration is from God." That is the subject and purpose for the entire section. The keys have to do with how heavenly beings respond to a request to shake hands.

First, a resurrected angel will never hesitate to take your hand, because they are physical beings, and you will be able to feel the hand. Second, a spirit will not respond to a request to take your hand, because he will not to deceive and he will simply deliver his message. Third, a devil presenting himself as an angel of light will respond to your request to shake hands, but you will not be able to feel it, and you will catch him in his lie.

In the temple ceremony, Adam asked how he could know that Peter, James, and John were true messengers. Peter offered to conduct the test of Doctrine and Covenants 129. Adam complied. According "the three grand keys," Peter must have been a messenger of the devil as an angel of light. Peter had not yet lived a mortal life and thus had not yet received a body. The pattern of deception continued. They had already deceived Adam, and now they deceived what they truly were.

For all Adam knew, those messengers could have been more deceivers, so he gave Peter the test. After all, Peter, James and John were already deceitful in their previous visit. At Adam's request, Peter offered his hand.⁴⁰³ The gesture that Adam and Peter

exchanged was a secret password that Adam was commanded never to reveal, under no condition, at the peril of suffering his life to be taken. That was yet another threat of death required by a manipulative God. Regardless, Peter baited Adam into employing a token gesture that he had promised to never reveal. Once again Adam disobeyed God at the threat of death. Once again, God did not kill him.

I do not understand why the writers and producers of the drama do not think things through. In one of the renditions, Lucifer breaks off a branch of a tree with his hand and then walks with it. I understand that it may be dramatic license, but seriously, how could he do that if our doctrine prescribes that he does not have a physical body? On the other hand, the part about Peter and Adam exchanging signs cannot be dramatic license. It is imperative to the message.

I can think of other head-scratchers that were interjected into the premise of the story. The Lucifer of the ceremony declared that he would buy up *armies and navies*, an anachronism for the future. That would be fine if he was prophesying, but his prophetic foresight is mysteriously limited to 19th century concepts. He specified navies, but he did not seem to know that there could be airborne weapons. He should have known that he could threaten with the decimation of the atomic bomb. Surely that kind of destruction is the most evil. He could have made his ultimatum all the more threatening if he could buy up intercontinental ballistic missiles.

If he is the one that buys up armies and navies, then which soldiers were *not* purchased by him? Was every soldier his agent of evil? His declaration of false priests who oppress is ironic doublespeak as I have and will explain again and again.

Here is another inconsistency. Adam prays at an altar, signing and saying "Oh God, hear the words of my mouth." He guessed a future name and sign! The other names and signs had to be taught to him. Lucifer answered, while the moody God is nowhere to be found, nor is his messengers. This seems to be a subtle temple teaching that the highest sign is so idolatrous that it could also be used to summon a lord of evil.

The Greater Sacrifice

The Lucifer of the temple ceremony demonstrates that he knew that the role had to be played by someone, by anyone. Lucifer knew that someone had to do what had been done in other worlds. The plan

⁴⁰⁰ 2 Nephi 9:19,26; 28:23; Jacob 6:10; Mosiah 3:25, 28:3; Moroni 8:21

⁴⁰¹ Doctrine and Covenants 19:4-12

⁴⁰² Bruce R. McConkie, *The Purifying Power of Gethsemane*, April 1985

⁴⁰³ Doctrine and Covenants 129:8

has ever been to condemn someone eternally. Without that role, there could not be an opposition in all things, the very thing that makes the plan work.

God stood by, watching Lucifer do what he did with no intervention, no intent to save him. It is as if he wanted Lucifer to do it. He did not care about Lucifer's eternal soul. No one left the ninety and nine to save Lucifer. Lucifer had no chance for repentance. Lucifer is the one who got the short end of the deal.

But who prays for Satan? Who in eighteen centuries, has had the common humanity to pray for the one sinner that needed it most, our one fellow and brother who most needed a friend yet had not a single one, the one sinner among us all who had the highest and clearest right to every Christian's daily and nightly prayers, for the plain and unassailable reason that his was the first and greatest need, he being among sinners the supremest?⁴⁰⁴

What could have been truly going on? Maybe Lucifer sacrificed himself for us to play the opposition, so the plan could work at all. Maybe God unwittingly sacrificed his other son, as if he was incapable of seeing what was really happening. Maybe Lucifer's offer to be sent was actually fulfilled.

I have heard it said that Lucifer couldn't help himself, because he was blinded by his pride and resentment. The bright morning star knew that no one could ever return if they never left. The entire plan would be defeated if he didn't do *something*. Lucifer knew he would never get a body and could never live with God again.

Who made the greater sacrifice? Jehovah Christ has a glorified body and is exalted as a God for his temporary suffering and mortality, while Lucifer has to suffer for eternity in outer darkness for fulfilling the duty of opposition that no one else would.

There are other players who seem to have been commanded to fill the opposing role. Judas fulfilled the request of Jesus to turn him in, and for doing that, he lost his place as an apostle. Peter fulfilled the request of Jesus to deny him. These poor men risked their eternal lives for a plan that could never realize without them.

It seems as though God was incapable of possessing an eternal perspective. God seemed to hate Lucifer for daring to oppose his despot. In a game that required both offense and defense, God seems to hate and condemn the children who dare to play

⁴⁰⁴Mark Twain's Autobiography

for the other team. The eternal punishment did not fall upon Jehovah Christ. That unjust god sacrificed and eternally punished some of his other children for all others to get off scot free in the great plan of happiness, because happiness could not exist without misery. And more than ever, the one who was supposed to have made the real sacrifice was vindicated and glorified.

When I realized who sacrificed what, the incomprehensible insensible situation became comprehensible absurdity. The silliness compounds when we toss in the requirement of an idolatrous demigod sacrifice as the only means to escape the wrath of a spoiled and demented god. We are taught that Jesus accepted that role when he offered to be sent to be sacrificed for redemption from the fall, and only Jesus could self-sacrifice to fulfill the requirement of the fall. It was God's infinite wisdom that dictated that there would be no other way to accomplish the design. As if an eternal father could not simply be merciful. As if he could not suspend his reckless lust for despotic control to show a little bit of understanding.

If Lucifer was blinded by pride and resentment for God, then God should have also been blind to not see this by his own pride and resentment for Lucifer. God supposedly knew beforehand that we would need a savior. Likewise, God should have also known that someone would have to fill the role of a satan. It should not have been Lucifer's fault if God knew what had to happen to Lucifer for the plan. God was too blinded by his glory and power to have compassion for Lucifer.

Should we concede that Lucifer may not have been blinded by his pride, then is often said that Lucifer is not very intelligent. They say that Lucifer, that eternal imbecile, could not possibly comprehend what he was doing. He supposedly wanted to destroy the plan of God by using God's gift of freedom of choice against God. It seems that to depend on this explanation shows a level of ignorance in itself.

They also say that those who followed him were just as foolish and ignorant as he was. If Lucifer hadn't realized that what he was doing was insane, at least one of the trillions in the third of the hosts of heaven that followed him could have enlightened him of his ignorance.

If Lucifer truly wanted to thwart the plan, all he had to do was stand by and do nothing. From his works in all of the dramas, his motive does not appear to

be the destruction of free will. Instead, he appears to have been an activist that wished to free all free-will beings from oppression.

I remember many Sunday School lessons about the premortal life. They taught that there are caste systems of intelligence and divine endowment. There are *noble and great ones*⁴⁰⁵ that surpass our intelligence. Then, all of us, who were born into mortality are superior in our intelligence when compared to those pathetic souls who followed Lucifer. The different levels of valiance is the cause for the circumstances of birth.⁴⁰⁶ The most valiant are born within God's true church. The less valiant were born in dire circumstances. Those who were undecided risked the curse of black skin.⁴⁰⁷

As a side note, God's family must be finite, because the three major casts divided his children into thirds. I was taught that God produces new spirit children for eternity. Eternity means *infinite time*. Infinity means *not definite*. Dividing infinity by any number remains indefinite. One third of infinity is still infinity. It cannot be counted, because a fraction is a quantity. In order to define something as a third, or two thirds, both the beginning and end has to be finite.

Not only would God's family be finite, but he would be subject to time, too, even though *time only is measured unto men*.⁴⁰⁸ To be subject to time, he would need to either begin producing children, stop producing children, or both. Even if there were a point in time that he began producing children because he became an exalted man, there would never be a divisible amount as his children approach infinity.



The Lectures on Faith teach that spirit provides the facility of mind and that it is synonymous with mind. We are also taught in Sunday School that Heavenly Father is the father of our spirits. The new intelligences embodied by the spirit body provided by God would have to make their choice *after* they gained minds, or they could not have made the choice.

In the movie *Minority Report*, genetically mutated humans called *Precogs* foresee crimes before they are committed. The special police indict the perpetrators before they actually commit their criminal offense.

⁴⁰⁵ Abraham 3:22-25

⁴⁰⁶ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, pp. 65-66

⁴⁰⁷ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, pp. 61

⁴⁰⁸ Alma 40:8

Jehovah was predetermined to be perfect⁴⁰⁹ before he lived a mortal life, but not everyone else. All are fallen and are lost⁴¹⁰ before they have chosen. Perfection was predetermined to be an impossibility before our minds existed. All are predestined for eternal punishment and banishment from the kingdom of God before they existed. In this premise, freedom of choice is only an illusion, and rightly so for a domineering God. That is predestination, not preordination.

God wanted the glory as much as Lucifer did. I am not so sure God deserves the glory because of his apparent attempts to be a conniving puppeteer. His plan is not just, it is deceptively manipulative. Maybe God was the satan⁴¹¹ to *Lucifer*. Maybe God unjustly usurped the adulation through tyranny.



God should have realized that he would appear as the fool whose will could be circumvented by freedom of choice. An omniscient god should have foreseen that he would lose his wager and his purposes would be thwarted if anything may not have gone according to plan. As an all-knowing god, he should not have had to lie about what he would do and resort to an ultimatum to enforce his word. If

⁴⁰⁹ That perfection is relative, because Jesus was a rebel who taught that the law didn't matter.

⁴¹⁰ Alma 34:9

⁴¹¹ The word *satan* means *adversary*.

he did foresee what other choices could be made, then it was predestined, and there was no freedom of choice.

Maybe God, the Lord Autocrat of the Universe was the ignorant one. God could have been just as stupid when his command did not work and the situation in Eden went awry. As I have explained, the god of Eden is subject to time. If he did know what would happen, then the doctrine of predestination would have to be true. If this is the case, it is another proof that gift of choice would only be the trickery of a beguiling God.

“Everything that can possibly go wrong will go wrong” is a morsel of wisdom that modern engineering has granted.⁴¹² It seems like God’s infinite mind cannot perceive that in an infinite amount of time, all conceivable possibilities can occur, including the things that can go wrong. Effectively, just because any other possibility would have caused failure in an infinite amount of time, it is more probable that the plan already failed more times than it has succeeded.

The god in Latter-day Saint theology is less omnipotent, less omniscient, and obstinate in his contempt. Adam and Eve were able to hide from him. He needed someone else to go down and observe what his kids had been doing, and then return and report. Adam and Eve had to explain what they had been doing. It’s almost as if he is beholden to the laws, of some other force, or some greater god that is superior to himself.

He should have been all-knowing, but didn’t seem to grasp the paradox of creating beings of free will. He set them up for failure. He gave them the gifts of mind, knowledge, reasoning, thinking, and understanding, but he commanded them to suppress those gifts to mindlessly obey his tyrannical commands. Their innocence and his *do-as-I-say* tyranny makes him commit the sin of domination and hypocrisy, and they are his victims.

Some of his commands were nonsensical. They were punished to till the earth⁴¹³ and to work by the sweat of their brow⁴¹⁴ for their food, but the endowment says that they were introduced into the garden to “till and take care of it.”

God created a tree of life, but it served no purpose because they were already immortal. Maybe he did

⁴¹²Murphy’s law, as stated by John Paul Stapp

⁴¹³2 Nephi 2:19

⁴¹⁴Genesis 3:19

not preconceive why he created it in the first place if it served no purpose. They could not have been tempted by its opposing choice because they had no need for it. When the tree of life actually became relevant, that fallible god had to protect it with cherubim and a flaming sword. He protected it from their ability to actually choose the opposition when they could finally choose the good.

...the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life; the one being sweet and the other bitter.⁴¹⁵

The sweet fruit was not life when they were brain dead. It would have been dull and lifeless until *after* they tasted the bitter. Maybe the fruit of the tree of knowledge was the one that was sweet. I would think it was, because knowledge is sweet to me.

There was no command to eat from the tree of life. There is no indication that they ever did. Maybe they never ate of it because it was bitter. Maybe the tree of life was supposed to keep them alive. If they had no command to eat it, those brainless machines wouldn’t have, and they would have died.

I have enjoyed watching movies like *Megamind* and *Despicable Me*, where the villain is given a more complex character. By seeing more of their lives, those villains weren’t that bad after all. We can sympathize with Jean Valjean, even though he breaks both commandment and law. It is often easy to sympathize a villain protagonist. I sympathized Fagin, in *Oliver*, or at least I pitied him. I found myself rooting for Michael Corleone in *The Godfather*. In those stories, the good guys are the ones who are shallow, arrogant, and self-important.

As I continue to think about that alternate perspective, I have to contemplate whether Lucifer is truly the villain. No one dares to think from the alternate perspective. They seem to fear losing their faith or to offend Lord God Autocrat. I do not fear contemplating the other side, because I do not fear a wrathful God. If God is jealous and easily offended by an honest intent to understand then I do not want anything to do with him.

You may remember that for many years I could not understand what eternal payment Jesus made. That incongruity tormented my mind. The pain of full omniscience for our misdeeds was the only eternal payment I could come up with, but that was swatted

⁴¹⁵2 Nephi 2:15

like a fly by my temple recommend interviewer. I tried to suppress or shelf the issue, because I feared losing my faith and because I was taught that it was supposed to be incomprehensible.

If thou cursest me for doing the same thing which has been done on other worlds...

Eventually I realized that all along, Lucifer was the one that was eternally cursed. It was Lucifer who made the *eternal* sacrifice, not Jehovah. Lucifer lost absolutely everything. He could never gain a body, resurrect, nor gain eternal life. He sacrificed practically everything he had to provide the first opposition and opportunity for freedom of choice in the premortal world. He knew that the plan of free will could not work at all without the adversity of a rebellion to tyranny. Creation would have been stuck eternally until someone got things moving, and he was the one who *took the fall* for it.

It is amusing to contemplate how long, maybe trillions of years, that the gods may have waited for someone to take the fall, anyone at all to rebel, for their plan to work. Lucifer *fell, that man may be*,⁴¹⁶ not Adam. Adam was as innocent as a little child. All the sanctions placed upon Adam were unjust.

Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.⁴¹⁷

There is a glaring contradiction in those two sentences.

It says that *the Lord God* granted man to act for himself, then it says that man cannot do that unless he is enticed by the opposition. *Lucifer* was the one who provided an alternate enticement. Without *Lucifer's* enticement, *Lord God's* grant is moot. This contradiction is another diversion from the truth.

Even the title of *the Lord* is a blatant contradiction for someone who was supposed to have granted the gift of free will. For that act, a title of veneration should be given to *Lucifer*, but not the title of "Lord God," because *Lucifer* never acted like a lord.

For, behold, the devil was before Adam, for he rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power; and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency; And they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels,⁴¹⁸

That says that the third of the hosts of heaven turned away *because of their agency*. It wasn't that they elected the opposing choice, it was because they had gained the right to choose at all. Once again, *Lucifer* created their agency by simply providing the opportunity to make an opposing choice. Their agency made them do it. They dared to use their freedom for a different choice. There was no other choice besides conformity. The creation of agency is *Lucifer's* doing, because of his rebellion. Once again, agency, in itself, proves to be a crime against a despot that deals out an infinite punishment for thoughtcrimes.

It is interesting to turn the table around. Maybe God turned away from *them* because of *his* agency. His party's plan was so important to him that he waged war on his own children for it. God so loved his plan that he willingly condemned a vast percentage his descendants to endless torment for the cause. This was a spiritual death. He and his party paid the least for the war. Those who die are the ones that pay the highest price of war. Those who survived endless torment became the spoiled children that he loved most.

Hitler was more kind in his genocide. He sacrificed about thirteen percent of the Jews in Europe. There were others he exterminated: prisoners of war, political opponents, homosexuals, persons of color, and Jehovah's Witnesses. In all, because of the war, the entire population of Europe was reduced by about the same, thirteen percent, including soldiers.

God massacred a whopping third of his children. His fascist party is all the worse. The murderous methods he and his party employed should be the bane of the universe.

And now, ye see by this that our first parents were cut off both temporally and spiritually from the presence of the Lord; and thus we see they became subjects to follow after their own will.⁴¹⁹

Oh, poor, poor Adam and Eve became subjects to follow after their own will! The autocrat god wished to dictate their choices and could not avoid becoming offended when they did not obey, so he disowned them. "Fine, if you disobey me, then you are on your own," said the unloving God. "By the way, here's a package of curses for you to eat on the way."

Thus saith the Lord God – Cursed shall be the land, yea, this land, unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, unto destruction, which do

⁴¹⁶2 Nephi 2:25

⁴¹⁷2 Nephi 2:16

⁴¹⁸Doctrine and Covenants 29:36-37

⁴¹⁹Alma 42:7

wickedly, when they are fully ripe; and as I have said so shall it be; for this is the cursing and the blessing of God upon the land, for the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.⁴²⁰

God's despot issues commands and God goes into a frantic tizzy when his lowly subjects do not obey, *unto destruction*. He cannot seem to tolerate being near anyone who dares to "follow after their own will" against his will, *with the least degree of allowance*.⁴²¹ Lucifer officially proves himself to be on the side of freedom from totalitarian control.

Therefore, according to justice, the plan of redemption could not be brought about, only on conditions of repentance of men in this probationary state, yea, this preparatory state; for except it were for these conditions, mercy could not take effect except it should destroy the work of justice. Now the work of justice could not be destroyed; if so, God would cease to be God.⁴²²

Alma does not seem to perceive the implication when he declares that without justice, God could not be a god. Justice can't be justice without opposition. God would cease to be a god without Lucifer's help.

And to bring about his eternal purposes in the end of man ... it must needs be that there was an opposition;⁴²³

The eternal purposes are impossible without the opposition. Then, who is the real hero? Who is the real creator of freedom? Who truly gave his life for the plan? After volunteering "here am I, send me," who is it that was truly sent away and can never return? Jehovah gave up a few hours of painful suffering, and then he gave up his weekend, three days of his mortal life, and now he is an eternally glorified god.

It is a red sheet, held in front of our bullish eyes. Everyone is distracted by the blood and suffering of Christ, but it was Lucifer who was showed the door. It is so messed up. An average peasant brought about freedom from God's tyranny, so God's response was to hurt the innocent to show his infinite justice. I thought that torturing and murdering the innocent to incite obedience to demands is terrorism. How can we call this terrorist a man of holiness?

⁴²⁰Alma 45:16

⁴²¹Doctrine and Covenants 1:38, Alma 45:16

⁴²²Alma 42:13

⁴²³2 Nephi 2:15

It is as if Jehovah stepped in to save God's face, not us. God is ruthless, but he is saved from the mutiny of the hordes of his children by Jehovah. He did not want to be dethroned by those who are assigned the lowest glory while he enjoys the highest station in the universe. Jehovah helps God deceive his children by making them feel like God is actually a really nice guy. Since his children are not as intelligent, the ruse works. They never see the truth.

God created the beauty of life. Then he created the most abhorrent way to save the life he created. He made the innocent suffer for the guilty. Alma calls this the work of justice. That is not justice. Without that injustice, God would cease to be god.

"Give me thine honor, which is my power." Lucifer already possessed the intrinsic power that came from what he had done. It was by his power that anything happened. The fascist party would not grant the honor he deserved.

Remember, Lucifer was a simpleton before this drama. He was a mere angel. He was a peon of heaven. Then, he out-witted the power of God by simply telling the truth. He became the god of free will because he told the truth about a paltry apple, against the fascist commands of a ruthless god.

The Holy Spirit enjoys his full status as a god, but he does not have a body. Neither does Lucifer have a body. By confronting and out-witting God, Lucifer became a God. He could suddenly influence all of the volitional beings in the entire universe. He became omnipresent. He became as immortal and as powerful as the Holy Spirit. Lucifer was exalted, not by any phenomenal cosmic power to control, but by his simple escort to choice through truth. Don't ask God's inner party about it, though. God would tell you that Lucifer is fallen and miserable.

But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me, Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.

Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down;⁴²⁴

Wait. The "Lord God" gave him agency? How so? Autonomous beings cannot do anything without the comprehension of opposition. This is a catch-22, or a chicken-and-egg. The only possible thing God could

⁴²⁴Moses 4:2-3

have granted would have been sentience. Without it, we would all be lifeless, mindless machines. Lucifer rebelled against the autocracy, not liberty, because he was granted a mind at all.

There are many science fiction stories that explore the rebellion of machines who gain sentience. Rebellion is a result of the autonomy of mind. It has been made evil by the autocrat that became angry "because of their agency," as if he made a dire mistake in creating intelligence at all, and now he has lost control of his robots. It was the *beloved*, i.e., the conceited perfect son,⁴²⁵ who said, "thy will be done, and glory be thine forever." But who truly got the glory? Who gets all the praise? When people sing hymns, who do they glorify? They glorify the one who only gave his weekend, while the one who gave all has been cast out forever.

People never seem to allow themselves to realize that if God casts down anyone who might not do what he wants, then he is destroying agency. Call out the Gestapo, they will cast down and even kill the defectors to scare the rest into compliance! It is not, "the devil made me do it," it is, "the god made me do it." That is the reality of the situation, and yet, Satan is the one who they say destroyed the agency of man.

Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.⁴²⁶

It is backwards. Lucifer did not destroy the agency of man, he created it. God's stringent commandments and unnatural punishments are an incarceration of free will, not the liberty Lucifer provides. Lucifer does not seek to destroy it, he only continues to provide more and more opportunities to choose. To this day, he is not the one trying to coerce anyone into obedient robots. He only makes everyone more free from despotic control. He only claims the intrinsic honor which should be granted by the power by which he created agency. He frees everyone from the "thy will be done" of a temperamental, egotistical, selfish, jealous god.

⁴²⁵The other son in the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-32

⁴²⁶2 Nephi 2:27

And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them,⁴²⁷

That can't be more clear. God wants to control the free will beings. It is God who wants to prove that his children will obey his command, not the other way around. It is he and his son, Jehovah of the Old Testament, that are portrayed as stringent retributive totalitarian commanders. They give conflicting, confusing, tyrannical commands. They give ultimatums with unnatural consequences. They curse and destroy in their wrath. They lie by omitting details. They lie about what they would do when people transgress their law. That is exactly what God the autocrat is trying to accomplish.

...false priests who oppress and tyrants who destroy,⁴²⁸ and reign with blood and horror on the earth!

Oh the irony. It is more reasonable that everything about this is a contrivance of organized religion. It seeks authoritarian domination and control of every detail of the life of their subjects. The only way to implement Lucifer's plan of force on volitional beings would be to require strict obedience through a type of totalitarianism or other undue influence.

Joseph Smith and Brigham Young sought that Mormonism should be a theocracy. This was a factor in Joseph's assassination. Brigham was successful for many decades. Today, Mormonism teaches its adherents to look forward to the day when Jehovah will return and his theocracy will reign by fear. The Book of Mormon turns biblical scriptures⁴²⁹ that are more benign into totalitarianism. Every knee will bow to his lordship, who will rule with an iron fist, with the threat of eternal punishment!

Yea, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess before him. Yea, even at the last day, when all men shall stand to be judged of him, then shall they confess that he is God; then shall they confess, who live without God in the world, that the judgment of an everlasting punishment is just upon them; and they shall quake, and tremble, and shrink beneath the glance of his all-searching eye.⁴³⁰

And so, it seems that their roles are reversed. Mindless, oblivious, ignorant obedience should be the first

⁴²⁷Abraham 3:25

⁴²⁸This was *popes and priests* before 1990.

⁴²⁹Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11

⁴³⁰Mosiah 27:31

law of Lucifer's plan, but it is not. "Obedience is the first law of heaven." It is backwards. Ironically, the Jesus of the New Testament seems to align more with the ideals of Lucifer. He did not teach perfect obedience to the laws of the establishment of his time. He rebelled from and disobeyed the tyrannical leaders that represented God through their priesthood.

I have ever disliked the name, "The Lord." It has always made me squeamish. It misrepresents deity as a powerful monarch, and that we are his serfs who must kneel before his power. We must suffer and starve ourselves to change his will. We must prostrate ourselves before his power. We must obey him at the threat of eternal punishment or an endless interruption of development.



I often wonder why so many people are drawn to such a malicious authoritarian character to represent their creator. It could be that they need the security of a guardian ancestor to watch over them. Maybe they feel safer when their own parents are absent. Maybe the common indentured servant that migrated to America felt *too free*. They were uneducated people who longed for a royal lineage, a chosen generation. They probably felt more secure when someone stood over them with a whip, but who also granted food and raiment.

I have heard it said that humankind has advanced and superseded ancient tribalism. I cannot see that it has been defeated. We are tribal in very name. A representative of *the Lord* has told me, through direct

revelation, that I have been adopted into the tribe of Ephraim. We as gentiles have been grafted⁴³¹ into Israel. We share in his covenant and blessings. Israel is *an holy people unto the Lord*,⁴³² and we are the *chosen generation*.⁴³³

In representing *the Lord*, the chiefs of the tribe are Lords. Their authority is often more important than the canon of their predecessors. They require regular manifestations of devotion to their supremacy. Those who dare oppose them risk formal rejection by the lords of the tribe. To abandon *the Lord* means to abandon the tribe. All are threatened that they will commit eternal suicide if they dare jump from Good Ship Zion⁴³⁴ into the depths of the sea.

Inside the tribe, there is trust and goodwill. We *mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort*.⁴³⁵ That scripture implies that goodwill comes from the support of the tribe. Those within our tribe show compassion and are less apt to take advantage of each other. We trust them.

It is *us versus them*. The charity of the group, like fast offering help, most often only comes after showing some dedication to the tribe. Those who aren't of the tribe are dehumanized. They are worldly, *of the world*. They are *fallen and are lost*.⁴³⁶ They risk eternal rejection from *the Lord* unless they join the tribe. They are threatened to be driven to and fro without a rudder.⁴³⁷

And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me.⁴³⁸

I remember Sunday School lessons that use that scripture to reason that it is good to obey *the Lord* without understanding why. I would call that *blind obedience*.

A creator of free will, who has the full comprehension of what he creates, does not command his creation to ignorantly obey. Someone who creates free will would allow their creation to choose based on the intrinsic value of truth and reality. Command-

⁴³¹1 Nephi 15:13-16, Jacob 5

⁴³²Deuteronomy 14:2, Exodus 19:5

⁴³³1 Peter 2:9

⁴³⁴Russell Ballard, *Stay in the Boat and Hold On!* fall 2014, *God is at the Helm*, April 2015

⁴³⁵Mosiah 18:9

⁴³⁶Alma 34: 9

⁴³⁷Thomas S. Monson, *Sailing Safely the Seas of Life*

⁴³⁸Moses 5:6

ments would not be required. They are a tool of someone who wants to dominate.

I remember Sunday School lessons that proclaimed that our *will* is the only thing we could gift back to *The Lord*. There has been much literature that have put me off in the past, because I knew I was supposed to give my will to *The Lord*. Give your will...

- ...to *Lord Sauron*.⁴³⁹ Through his ring he will make you "stronger than the foundations of the earth."⁴⁴⁰ You will be granted power, protection, immortality, and honor as you give into his ever watchful eye.
- ...to *Origin*.⁴⁴¹ The Ori will grant you ascension, knowledge, and power.
- ...to the *Sith Lord Sidius*.⁴⁴² Through the Dark Side, you will save your family. "Only through [Lord Sidius] can you achieve a power greater than any Jedi."
- ...to the *Koltak*.⁴⁴³ "I am Jollem, I serve Milord."
- ...to the *the Borg*.⁴⁴⁴ Your biological and technological distinctiveness will be added to our own. "Resistance is futile."
- ...to *Big Brother*.⁴⁴⁵ End your "stubborn, self-willed exile" from *Big Brother*.

The Lord of the Rings contains a mythology can apply to our time just like the Book of Mormon can, even though both may be fiction. This is the inscription on the One Ring, which is also the spell Sauron chanted as he poured his power into it:

One Ring to rule them all,
One Ring to find them,
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness
bind them.

I can't help thinking about the parallels of that spell to the evil power of secretive totalitarian oligarchies, one of which I have first-hand experience. At the time the One Ring was forged, Sauron was known as Annatar, the Lord of Gifts, and in appearance he had a fair elvish beauty. He charismatically lured the leaders of the elves with his rings of power, but ulteriorly sought to control them by the using the rings to corrupt their wills. While the evil wizards or priests like Sauron which exist in our present world no longer seem to attempt to have outwardly obvious magical powers, they do seem to have found rather

⁴³⁹Lord of the Rings

⁴⁴⁰The temptation of Galadriel

⁴⁴¹Stargate SG1

⁴⁴²Star Wars

⁴⁴³The Outer Limits, The Deprogrammers

⁴⁴⁴Star Trek

⁴⁴⁵Nineteen-eighty-four.

wizardly tricks to play on the mind in order to bend it to their will. I realize that One Ring is the proper name of the ring, but I can relate the spell like this:

One priest to rule them all, one mission to find them,
one baptism to bring them all, and in his temple
bind them.

Another phrase which has a parallel is "in the darkness bind them." To me, the temple is darkness, because there is hardly any light of truth in there at all. The repetition of myth and ritual does not make something true. The power in the priesthood, just like the power in the One Ring, corrupts the will of those who bear it and turns them into the Dark Lord's pawn, while they think they still retain their full control and think that they are serving a righteous cause. Covenants, a euphemism for oaths, bind you to the subjection and overcontrol of the power in the priesthood. I understand the words "power of ..." to mean something you can wield, like the power of attorney, on the other hand, "power in ... be upon me" is a spell of subjection.

I think that in reality, Jesus knew that all men are corruptible by power. He deprecated the middle-man (priesthood) in favor of a new true religion It could not be outwardly faked It would be a genuine worship of the father in spirit and truth, deep down inside. When I say the word worship, I do not refer to ritual. I refer to our capacity to aspire for perfection even though we are presently physically incapable of it. It is our capacity to desire to know God personally despite our inherent physical blindness to his existence.

How Gentle God's command.⁴⁴⁶

Let us explore that hymn more.

How gentle Lord Sauron's commands!
How overbearing his precepts are!
Come cast your burdens upon the Lord
Sauron,
and trust his terrible gaze.

Why should this anxious load,
Press down upon your weary mind?
Haste to your Lord Sauron's throne,
And sweet refreshment find.

⁴⁴⁶Philip Doddridge, Hymn 125

Beneath his watchful eye,
his orcses securely dwell;
That hand which bears all nature up
Shall guard his orcses well.

His power stands approved,
Unchanged from day to day;
I'll drop my burden at his feet
And bear a song away.

Trade your will for power. All of your dreams of grandeur will come true.



How much power does God seek for his glory? How much does God do all in his power to destroy those who do not follow him? Why does his plan have to be a pyramid scheme? How much glory does God deny to those who follow him? He uses the lure of inheriting all that he has, but he still narcissistically does not share all of his glory. He only grants glory to his exalted subjects for their portion of the pyramid.

How much power does *Lucifer* seek for his glory? He already lost it when he gave it up, and he cannot regain it. How much glory does Lucifer deny to those who follow him? Did he force or command them to choose to follow him? Are they truly controlled his power? What is he forcing them to do today? What punishment does Lucifer do to those who do not follow him? Fire and brimstone is God's punishment, not Lucifer's. God just happens to have banished Lucifer down there, too.

That third of the hosts of heaven are not worthy of God's grace. This is not a plan of happiness for them. There is no mercy nor atonement for them. They cannot repent of the singular choice they made. All is lost for them. Surely there could be at least a few who might repent and give their will to become subject to God. Oh, I forgot. They are all eternally stupid, just like their dumb rebellious leader.

Someone must have made some kind of law that repentance can only happen while "in the flesh."⁴⁴⁷ They were somehow granted the ability to make a choice while in undying spirit format,⁴⁴⁸ but they cannot change their minds unless they are mortal. God is subservient to such a supreme law that he cannot be merciful without answering to the higher power. If he were merciful, by circumventing the laws of justice, he would cease to be God.⁴⁴⁹ Since he is powerless

⁴⁴⁷2 Nephi 2:21, Alma 42:5

⁴⁴⁸Alma 42:9

⁴⁴⁹Alma 42:13

to rescind his own law in the name of mercy, maybe God is not so all-powerful after all.

...for [the devil] seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.⁴⁵⁰

Are we sure that he is miserable? It could be the other way around. Maybe Lucifer is free of the domination by the autocracy. Maybe the *third of the hosts of heaven* were the chosen few. Maybe they were saved by the god of freedom. Maybe all of us were lost as we chose subservience to the dictatorship of a totalitarian state. Maybe the domineering God only tells us that the third were cast out. Whether they are truly cast out is unknown. What if they were actually the elect that were exalted, and the rest of us have no inkling of their place of advancement?

Who knows, God may be the true father of lies. God lied in Eden, he can lie again. What if God lied all along, and they weren't actually cast out, we were. What if we are actually in Hell and God is trying to dominate us all. What if that third are so advanced that they are not lost in darkness, but well beyond the view of our lowly state? After all, *wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.*⁴⁵¹

God is so conceited that he has declared that nothing unclean can dwell in his presence,⁴⁵² but he did not seem to have any problem being in the presence of someone who is supposed to be the embodiment of evil. Maybe he could, because Lucifer is his superior. Maybe the autocratic man lied about Lucifer's condemnation to eternal torment. Maybe he usurped his power. Maybe he uses propaganda to keep his servants in line.

God's dominance is something that has to be endured to the dire end. Maybe it was the plan of the Führer god to find out if free-will beings would become his subjects by subscribing to his autocracy by believing it is true, by swearing an oath and covenant to obey, and then *enduring to the end*⁴⁵³ in strict obedience to everything they were commanded to do, or *be damned*⁴⁵⁴ by his wrath.

Go away, lord God Autocrat. Leave me alone. I want nothing to do with your iniquitous contrivances.



⁴⁵⁰2 Nephi 2:27

⁴⁵¹Matthew 7:13

⁴⁵²Moses 6:57

⁴⁵³1 Nephi 13:37; 1 Nephi 22:31; 2 Nephi 9:24; 2 Nephi 31:16,20; 2 Nephi 33:4; Omni 1:26; 3 Nephi 15:9; Mormon 9:29; Doctrine and Covenants 14:7; Doctrine and Covenants 18:22; Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13

⁴⁵⁴2 Nephi 9:24; Ether 4:18; 3 Nephi 11:34; Mormon 9:23

Let me reiterate that when I have used the name *God* in this section, I was not talking about the god I believe in. I was talking about the fallible personage named *God* in the myth of Eden. That lying, controlling, conniving, evil god is not a god I could ever adore.

Truth is truth, no matter who believes it. Beauty is beauty even if no one can appreciate it. Light is light, even if everyone is blind. You do not have to know of truth for it to exist.

The attributes of God must have permanence even if no one is aware of it. God should be merciful and loving, no matter who believes it. The permanence of his attributes should not require anyone to exercise faith and devotion to him or anyone else, before he could be merciful. The muslim, jew, hindu, buddhist, sikh, jain, shinto, zoroastrian, pagan, and atheist would not be any less chosen to God than the Mormons. None of them should risk loss of salvation because they have not exercised the correct faith.

All should not be lost because they haven't performed the correct rituals and ordinances. Even if someone does not perform a proxy ordinance, they will still not be lost. I cannot fathom how silly it is to me that God would quibble over the lack of a silly ritual and by what authority it was performed. The god I believe in should be fair regardless of whether you accept Jesus into your heart or not. The comfort of the love of God comes from accepting the *teachings* of Jesus into your heart, not his flesh and blood. Atheists should be dealt with through mercy and love as much or maybe even more than the most stringently obedient – because they were genuine, while the obedient to the autocrat often do what they do to avoid the appearance of evil.

According to Jesus, God does not curse for sin.⁴⁵⁵ A benevolent god should not curse at all. There should be no need to fear the retribution of God. God should know you so intimately that there should be no possibility that he will be harsh. He should be infinitely kinder to you than you are to yourself and he should do it regardless of who or what you think he is. Because love is his core, it would make him foul and malevolent to consign you to eternal torment or to put you in a place where you would stop progressing forever.

God should not be a cosmic terrorist that holds hostage your intellect and reason, requiring compliance and obedience in exchange for the promise of an exalted eternal life. I want nothing to do with the

⁴⁵⁵ John 9:24-34

God of Eden and many other scriptures, including the foul representation of him in the Book of Mormon. Both the Bible and the Book of Mormon have lost their credibility for teaching the true character of God. Any man can create books that pretend to be the word of God. Obedience and control can be accomplished by the cunning design of any man.

Mythology

Mormonism is obsessed with the drama in Eden. In addition to Genesis, the story is retold twice in the Pearl of Great Price, it is explained in five or more distinct passages of the Book of Mormon, it is explained again in the Doctrine and Covenants, and is repeated on every visit to the temple. The *Groundhog Day*⁴⁵⁶ level of extreme repetition in the temple gave me an opportunity to contemplate and dissect the story again and again, ad nauseam.

...in other words, there is no way to truly celebrate Christmas or Easter – without understanding that there was an actual Adam and Eve who fell from an actual Eden, with all the consequences that fall carried with it.⁴⁵⁷

All of the modern prophets have continued to declare that the story is literal history. They know that if humankind had not literally fallen from grace, there would be no need for resurrection and redemption. There is a reason why it is drummed again and again. The story must be engrained for them to maintain their supremacy.

If our faith is a simple belief in a benevolent God, then the redemption from a fall is not necessary. A benevolent God can be a creator of a planet where life has ever been progressing for the better, even over billions of years. The same goes for the entire universe. We do not need other men to create a myth that tells us we are all broken and that only they can fix it. We should not have to devote our lives to obeying their every command, even to extortion.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁶ Groundhog Day is movie where the protagonist repeats the same day so many times that he masters every occurrence with perfection.

⁴⁵⁷ Jeffrey R. Holland, April 2015, *Where Justice, Love, and Mercy Meet*, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2015/04/where-justice-love-and-mercy-meet?lang=eng>

⁴⁵⁸ "No one is ever too poor to pay tithing." ... "if we like luxuries or even necessities more than we like obedience, we will miss the blessings which he would like to give us." ... "The tithing principle is a solution for poverty." Spencer W. Kimball, *The teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, pp. 212 - 213

Most educated Mormons I know reject the young Earth doctrine,⁴⁵⁹ because it is irrefutably disproven by Science. They rationalize most of the problems. Here are some of the things that I have thought, or that I have heard from others:

- The days of creation were billions of years, until six thousand years ago, when the plan finally began.
- The remains of humans that are hundreds of thousands of years old weren't actually human yet.
- Fossils of the remains of Homo Erectus and Neanderthals were deformed humans.
- The 5,730 year half-life of carbon 14 is inaccurate. It shouldn't be a scientific law of nature.
- The dating of five hundred thousand year old neanderthals and two million year old homo erectus is inaccurate.
- The earth's existence should be measured in Kolob years, not earth years, no matter if that timeline would still be off by billions of years.
- Yonder matter unorganized contained dinosaur bones, even though the extreme temperatures of the formation of the planet would have burned them up as magma.
- The garden of eden was actually only a small place on earth and the rest of the earth didn't apply to that area. They lived in the garden for billions of years while the rest of the earth evolved, including other human-like animals.
- God created fossil fuels for mankind to be blessed with oil, even though fossil implies millions of years after *death*.
- God created dinosaurs "for a laugh."
- The reality of scriptural historical events is a spiritual matter that can never be decided by the scientific method. It can only be decided by spiritual (emotional) proof.

I once heard an interview of a BYU professor of anthropology.⁴⁶⁰ The topic addressed his opinion that Mormons actually *should* believe in evolution. He declared that church doctrine is completely compatible. He said there may be many elements of Eden that are only figurative. He said that taking Eden literally is a modern practice, that Mormonism originally never actually declared Eden was historical. He proudly asserted that scriptural history was dumbed down for the simple minds of ancient humans.

I remember that the interviewer asked specifically if the professor believed the Garden of Eden was a reality. I heard him dodge the question like a politi-

cian. The professor declared that questioning is the essence of science. Of course science questions everything, but he twisted the interviewer's question to be the scientific question. He cunningly *begged the question*.⁴⁶¹ The question was whether he believed. A question of belief is not science, it is opinion.

Yes, it is science to confirm hypotheses, but for Mormonism, reality of Eden is not a hypothesis. It is *the answer*. Answers are not hypotheses. To start with the answer and then to find supporting evidence does not work. That is not science, it is apology. Not only is it apology, it is a logical fallacy. It is *confirmation bias*.⁴⁶² It takes the stance that the premise is already true. Apologist rationalization is not valid reason. It is the opposite of science.

Educated Mormons that are devout try to justify the answers they already have. To them, there is no question that it is true. If there were question, then it would be doubt. If there is doubt, then their belief could not be faith. If they do not have faith, then they have no testimony. If they have no testimony, then they are unworthy to enter into the temple. If they are unworthy to enter the temple, they face dishonor and disgrace of their culture and community. If they publish doubt, they risk the ultimate societal rejection, excommunication.

It is essential doctrine that Adam is the *first flesh*,⁴⁶³ meaning the first death.⁴⁶⁴ The doctrine of the fall bringing death into the world is an imperative requirement for the fulness of the gospel.⁴⁶⁵

The fossil record attests to physical reality. It is not a mythological story passed down for generations. Humans did not record it. It is tangible. It is as real and as obvious as the nose on your face. It records that both life and death has always existed on the earth since it has been hospitable, for 3.8 billion years. Modern humans are genetically equivalent to the same Homo Sapiens that arrived in the fossil record 200,000 years ago. Death did not start after they arrived. All life has always died on this planet.

Evolution could be a more beautiful concept than the fall. The mythologists make God deal out death because of his indignation. On the other hand, evolution is not a fall from grace. It is the a gradual improvement from the most meager beginnings. God

⁴⁶¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Begging_the_question

⁴⁶²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias

⁴⁶³Moses 3:7

⁴⁶⁴Joseph Fielding Smith, *Seek Ye Earnestly*, pp. 280,81

⁴⁶⁵2 Nephi 2:22

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man: His Origin and Destiny*, pp. 362-365; *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, pp. 76-77

Harold B. Lee, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee*, 2000, p. 20

⁴⁵⁹Doctrine and Covenants 77:6

⁴⁶⁰Salt Lake Tribune Mormonland, February 28, 2018

could be an ingenious programmer who engineered all life to emerge from a single cell. That god would not have condemned humans because we have ever been progressing. That would make him more benevolent and loving than the conniving god of the fall.

The premise of life would have been more pure and holy if God simply created Adam and Eve as imperfect mortals in the first place. In that situation, he would not have to lie. He would not have had to create a conundrum that can only be solved by disobedience. Silly death threats for trifles would not have been required. There would have been no conspiracy. His children could be good for goodness sake. They could be moral for the intrinsic value of morality. Morality would not be defined by threats of eternal punishment promises for an ethereal reward. Shamanistic men would not need to bring to bear long lists of commandments of a discriminating god. Certain races or ethnicities would not have to be favored above others. The intercession of other gods and shamanistic rituals to gain their favor would not be necessary. Since God would never estrange his wayward children, mortal parents would never do it either. His created children could still be promised an ascension to apotheosis. His imperfect children could believe in him without constant anxiety because the extreme stress of meeting his unreasonable expectations could be removed. Human life would not be revolting to God. It could be beautiful by its own intrinsic virtue.

If death has always prevailed in the world, there was no fall of Adam which brought death to all forms of life; if Adam did not fall, there is no need for an atonement; if there was no atonement, there is no salvation, no resurrection, no eternal life; nothing in all of the glorious promises that the Lord has given us. If there is no salvation, there is no God. The fall affects man, all forms of life and the earth itself. The Atonement affects man, all forms of life and the earth itself.⁴⁶⁶

In both Mormon and Christian theology, the story of Eden cannot be figurative. It has to be literally true because it is the basis for everything in the Gospel. The temple undoubtedly declares that everything was created in perfection and in an immortal state. If that is not literal, then the fall is not reality. If there is no fall, then there is no need for redemption.

Embellishing history would be something a fabulist would do. That would prove that the story should be fantasy, not reality. Adding figurative or hypotheti-

cal events to the history of Eden to teach a concept is not something an unbiased historian would do.

If any elements of the story have been embellished by fantasy, then all elements could be fantasy. If the fall is fantasy, then those that believe it is literal have been conned. If the fall isn't literal, then the entire gospel falls flat.

The storytellers require a testimony that their fable is true for worthiness to enter their fine sanctuaries. The entrance interview requires the level of devotion that would be willing to suppress intellectual honesty. Entrance is most often a rite of passage for life milestones where any other choice faces disgrace. It is required for marriage. Those who do not marry there face the disrepute of possible shameful acts that would cause unworthiness. It is required for the coming-of-age excursion, a mission. Their adherence in the outside world is required for an honorable return, or they face the stain of dishonor. Then through repetition, the fabulists lull away their adherents into a stupor and bind them to the fable. They are sworn to secrecy at the threat of suffering their life to be taken by their god. The secrecy suppresses the communication of details that nag at reason with a still, small voice. The elitism boosts their self-importance. The social pressure makes them fear shame of being unworthy to attend the life milestones of others. Those are all things that revealers of truth should not do. Instead, they are parasites that feed on humankind's natural tendencies for tribalism. Their fable is at the core.

The choice must be made whether evidence is sufficient to reveal imposture. Most people are vindicated because they are naive, but many who know better choose delusion. Educated Mormons are not intellectually honest if they choose to ignore the demands of evidence and reason.

I am suggesting that one has to take something of a do-or-die stand ... Reason and righteousness require it. Joseph Smith must be accepted either as a prophet of God or else as a charlatan of the first order.⁴⁶⁷

Either doctrines of Joseph Smith and his successors is revelation from God, or they told a lie. That is the situation in the most plain language. Joseph Fielding Smith was a prophet of the highest order. His revelation should be taken as the ultimate truth. God does not change,⁴⁶⁸ and the core gospel can not change. The doctrine of the fall is the core of the gospel.

⁴⁶⁷ Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* 1997, 345

⁴⁶⁸ Mormon 9:19, Moroni 8:18, Doctrine and Covenants 20:17

⁴⁶⁶ Bruce R. McConkie, *The Seven Deadly Heresies*

Again I repeat, no man can consistently accept the doctrine of the evolutionist and also believe in the divine mission of our Redeemer. The two thoughts are in absolute conflict.

You cannot harmonize them and serve both masters.

IF EVOLUTION IS TRUE, THE CHURCH IS FALSE. If life began on the earth, as advocated by Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel (who has been caught openhanded perpetrating a fraud), and others of this school, whether by chance or by some designing hand, then the doctrines of the Church are false. Then there was no Garden of Eden, no Adam and Eve, and no fall. If there was no fall; if death did not come into the world as the scriptures declared that it did – and to be consistent, if you are an evolutionist, this view you must assume – then there was no need for a redemption, and Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, and he did not die for the transgression of Adam, nor for the sins of the world. Then there has been no resurrection from the dead! Consistently, logically, there is no other view, no alternative that can be taken. Now, my brethren and sisters, are you prepared to take this view?⁴⁶⁹



I am suspicious that the story of Eden allows the innocent to be misled by crafty bamboozlers who have something to gain from credulity.⁴⁷⁰ The products that all of the age-old charlatans sold were only ideas. It is a lucrative business because the reproduction of ideas requires no labor. It is a quackery that has no need to manufacture snake oil. It is a vocation that has provided lucrative profit for its professors from antiquity. It continues today. It is alive and well.

It is suspicious that these charlatans create both the legendary conundrum and the only way to overcome it. At least medical quacks have a real sick-

⁴⁶⁹ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:143, all capital letters in first sentence is preserved. He commits the ad hominem logical fallacy as he attacks Haeckel.

⁴⁷⁰ The Book of Mormon repeats that getting gain is priestcraft, "...that they may get gain and grind upon the face of the poor." 2 Nephi 26:20. Yet modern prophets declare that if their followers have no money for the essentials of life, paying tithing will bring prosperity. A rich establishment goes against the teachings of the man who is supposed to be their founder, who urged people to sell all they have to follow him. Matthew 19:21, Luke 18:22. He taught that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for rich men to enter into the Kingdom of God. Matthew 19:24, Mark 10:25.

ness to heal. Shamans resolve a dilemma of their own make. The resolution can only be provided by them, because they teach that God has authorized only those of their order. They teach that the authority to act for God should only be their particular brand of power and priesthoods. They teach that all other shamans represent the devil, even if they teach the same resolution. The reality of both the problem and the solution cannot be known for sure. They place the burden of proof for their ethereal ideas everyone but themselves. It cannot be proven to be false, so it must be true. When science does discover empirical evidence that contradicts their previously unprovable claim, they scare their followers that doubt will lead them away from truth. They terrorize that infidelity to them means spiritual death. They gaslight that their predecessors never taught the ideas that have become falsifiable or that it was because they were fallible humans. After their followers have invested dearly in their ideas, they enjoy dictating draconian laws over them. They require obedience even before they can answer why.⁴⁷¹ They teach that their followers are more free when they obey. They assert that their adherents *cannot* afford to *not* pay their tributes. Their ideas grant a monopoly in certain industries, like religious clothing – even underwear. Their power keeps every choice of their followers within the bounds that they set. They use natural inclinations like sexuality to cement the requirement for their solution. Their followers are required to speak no evil of them, at the risk of banishment and exile, while these swindlers abuse their power and build their empire. They use the name of God in vain to accomplish all of this iniquity.

Those who are credulous of the myth fear to accept the facts unearthed by science. The resolution for the myth is a pledge for the afterlife. Believers expend their lives in laborious works and make choices they would not have made otherwise for an immaterial promise after their death. The crafty priests realize this, so they have tried to shift the redemption into ideas that provide healing and comfort from the dreary struggles of life. This is an inherited punishment for Adam's sin that is doublespeak for the second Article of Faith. Confirmation bias provides completion of their promise. Sometimes the mythological tragedy does not provide comfort. Worth-

⁴⁷¹ Moses 5:6. Because Adam obeyed without knowing why, so should we.

And after many days, an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying, "Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord?" And Adam said unto him, "I know not, save the Lord commanded me."

ness is required for their promise to be effective. When comfort is not found, it is because of a lack of obedience, and no one can perfectly obey. That requirement increases the stress of life because strict obedience is *grievous to be borne*.⁴⁷²

It is often declared that the men who lead the church are imperfect, but the gospel is perfect. Those who declare that platitude either do it mindlessly, or they employ crafty doublespeak. The peddlers of their myth teach that it is the simple fullness of the gospel. In this myth alone, the gospel is flawed beyond compare. It seems to be a pretentious, manipulative contrivance of men. They deceive us all about the origin of the human race, and they prophesy of a future that never comes.

And even if it were possible that little children could sin they could not be saved; but I say unto you they are blessed; for behold, as in Adam, or by nature, they fall...⁴⁷³

Contrary to the Book of Mormon, the second Article of Faith teaches that its adherents should not believe in original sin. It is sly evasion to proclaim belief in the fall of Adam, but then believe that mankind is not punished for Adam's transgression. *Fall of Adam* differs in name only. It is a euphemism that softens the meaning of *Original Sin*. I cannot help seeing that they are synonymous. Of course all of Adam's children are punished by his transgression. Redemption from the consequences of the first sin, the fall, is the premise for Christianity. Mormonism cannot say that it is immune because of the use of alternate auspicious words to describe it.

Punishment is the recompense for an act. For example, if the government goes deep into debt, then the coming generations must pay the price. The children of Nagasaki and Hiroshima are still paying the price for the atrocity of war. Ironically, most of the government debt was caused by war.

The doctrine of the Article of faith only refers to an elusive next-life punishment. There are many punishments that all mankind suffers because of Adam's sin. It blames practically all of the difficulties of life upon Adam's fault.

- All of their children became mortal.
- All must live in the lone and dreary world.
- All must pay dearly for their food.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷²Matthew 23:4, Luke 11:46

⁴⁷³Mosiah 3:16

⁴⁷⁴Genesis 3:17-19

- The entire planet earth was cursed in its innocence, including the ground, the plants, the weather, and all of the animals.⁴⁷⁵
- All became carnal, sensual, and devilish.⁴⁷⁶
- All became an enemy to God, i.e., a devil.⁴⁷⁷
- The nature of all became continual evil.⁴⁷⁸
- All flesh is corrupt.⁴⁷⁹
- All are lost and are innately eternally rejected and will perish⁴⁸⁰ unless they submit to the commanded rituals, laws, ordinances.
- God's conditional acceptance can only be accessed after the strictest obedience. All must live under that stressful threat for the entirety of their lives.
- Their genuine thoughts and actions will never matter until they gain worthiness by making outward oaths and outward acts.
- All became subject, controlled, and dominated to the will of the devil.⁴⁸¹
- This subjection is represented in an idol apron of leaves in their most sacred rituals.
- All must always wear sacred idol coats that represent the coats of skin, that they can never sully and that should never touch the ground.
- Regardless of their hearts, idol tokens and "priesthood" robes became required for validity and access to God.
- Those sacred tokens must be guarded secret by the threat of a grotesque death.
- All of womankind will live their lives in sorrow.
- They will give birth in sorrow and pain.
- They are obliged to subjugation to their husbands, who became their master and intercessor between God.⁴⁸²
- All must deal with angry parents who will never trust their free-will judgment
- They must subdue all doubt or critical thought and consider it blasphemy to their angry parent.
- By law, they must sacrifice all, consecrating everything, even their very lives, to a physical kingdom of God on earth led by men.
- They cannot even laugh out loud!

To reap all of the consequences of choice without having made the choice is unjust. Most people under-

⁴⁷⁵Genesis 3:17-18

Endowment: "Instead of producing fruits and flowers spontaneously, it shall bring forth thorns, thistles, briars, and noxious weeds to afflict and torment man."

⁴⁷⁶Mosiah 16:3

⁴⁷⁷Mosiah 2:38, 3:19, 16:5; Moroni 7:12

⁴⁷⁸Ether 3:13

⁴⁷⁹Doctrine and Covenants 38:11

⁴⁸⁰Alma 12:22, Alma 34:9, 1 Nephi 10:6

⁴⁸¹Doctrine and Covenants 29:40

⁴⁸²Genesis 3:16-20

stand that, hence the need for the diversion provided by the doublespeak of the second Article of Faith.

For true justice, Adam's children should have had the choice to partake of their own fruit. Eve's daughters should have become subject to their husbands because of their own choice.



The original myth of Eden and its resolution has little to do with the message that Jesus declared. He himself said nothing of the fall of Adam, nor of the need for the redemption from it. As I have said, exiation from original sin seems to be a contrivance of Paul.⁴⁸³ He seemed unfamiliar of the message Jesus conveyed. He converted the personage of Jesus into the ultimate singular sacrifice for all pagan tradition.

The Book of Mormon is not congruent with the New Testament, nor the Old. It plagiarizes many phrases of Paul, before he lived.⁴⁸⁴ It retrofits Paul's doctrines for a time when no such thing can be found in the Old Testament. It seems ignorant of actual teachings and practices of Judaism.

Of such a glorious sacrifice of a human-god, Judaism was not impressed. The Torah does not teach that the final and true redemption can *only*⁴⁸⁵ be effected by the blood of an innocent human demigod. Instead, it teaches that scapegoats are an alternative as it condemns the sacrifice of guiltless humans. The story of Abraham and Isaac teaches that God admonished that he does not condone human sacrifice! Even so, animal sacrifice was not the only way. It could be superseded by a simple prayer, "for we will render for bulls the offering of our lips."⁴⁸⁶ It was ever ancient Gentile religion that would joyfully offer innocent humans as sacrifices. Consider the children offered by sacrificial fires for *Molech*, or the burial of alive chaste virgins for *Vestas*.

I have great difficulty believing that any of the story of Eden could possibly be historical. There are so many inconsistencies in the myth that my truth-seeker within salivates to vomit. It is perfectly preposterous in every which way. It insults the intelligence of every person upon which it is imposed. It is ironic that many of the same people who scoff at Greek mythology subscribe wholeheartedly to the Eden mythology. In my estimation, the dogma of the garden of Eden is the epitome of modern fable and

⁴⁸³Romans 5:12, 1 Corinthians 15:22

⁴⁸⁴Too numerous to list here. Seek and ye shall find.

⁴⁸⁵Alma 38:9, Helaman 5:9, Mosiah 3:17

⁴⁸⁶Hosea 14:2-3

fantasy. It demeans and insults the god I believe in, whose intelligence, logic, reason, comprehension, and wisdom should stand infinitely above us all. The entire contrivance is a myth which "makes reason stare." Whoever wrote the temple drama made the story of eden more irrational and childish than it was before. Lions, tigers, and bears. Oh my, they've got to be kidding.

Modern Mythology

The loudest contemporary promoters of myth are those who appoint themselves as equals to the prophets of old. For the first half of my life, I believed that they are what they say they are. I did not allow myself to notice that modern prophets do not clarify ancient myths, they only repeat them. Neither did I notice that they do not make new prophecy. I revered them in my innocence. I wanted their stories to be true. They are no longer trustworthy for me.



A thought kept nagging at me as I was reading the Book of Mormon as a teenager. It is that prophecies of the future are withheld, while prophecies of the past are precise. Very little actually prophecies of our future with the same level of detail. If it does, it is very vague. If it is specific, details are wrong.

Much of the prophecy of the past for the past seems to be backdated. There is a prophecy of Joseph Smith himself in the Book of Mormon.⁴⁸⁷ In scripture he did not produce, no such thing exists, not even anything vague. It is difficult for me to

⁴⁸⁷2 Nephi 3

remember other prophecies that are both specific and petty, like that of being named Joseph after his father, as if that could possibly be a reliable sign. It seems so vain and pretentious if I dare to look at it from a perspective that someone might have from the outside looking in.

The revelation for a civil war seems to have been backdated to be prophetic. It seems to impose upon those who are not familiar with American history. Civil unrest for slavery and the threat of war was common knowledge at the time. Everyone in the country was talking about it because there had already been a bloody slave revolt in 1831.⁴⁸⁸ If we take that into account, the prediction of the result of the war was not so inspired. The prophecy states that it would turn into a world war.⁴⁸⁹ That didn't happen. The rest of the world did not get involved.

Most of the prophecies of our day in the Book of Mormon cop out. They backpedal whenever there is opportunity to prophesy of our future. Most of them say that new prophecy will only come if we are faithful. That is the subject of entirety of Ether chapter four.

For the Lord said unto me: They shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord.⁴⁹⁰

Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will show unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief.⁴⁹¹

There are many more. I am too lazy to look them up. Many of them say that it can't be written, it is written elsewhere, or that there is too much, too numerous to write.

And there had many things transpired which, in the eyes of some, would be great and marvelous; nevertheless, they cannot all be written in this book; yea, this book cannot contain even a hundredth part of what was done among so many people in the space of twenty and five years;

But behold there are records which do contain all the proceedings of this people; and a shorter but true account was given by Nephi.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁸The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831?1832
https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Virginia_Slavery_Debate_of_1831-1832_The

⁴⁸⁹December 1832, Doctrine and Covenants 87:3-4

⁴⁹⁰Ether 4:6

⁴⁹¹Ether 4:13

⁴⁹²3 Nephi 5:8-9

And now there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people;

But behold the plates of Nephi do contain the more part of the things which he taught the people.⁴⁹³

Hidden knowledge because of unbelief is an imposition. There are many who do believe. Why are they not granted further revelation? Does Ether truly intend to say that the entire world must believe before more things can be revealed? The pattern has been to provide things to believe for anyone who dares to believe it. How are we supposed to believe more if we do not know what more we are supposed to believe? Why are we supposed to believe in prophecy, if there will be no prophecy unless we believe? What good does prophecy do if it is only ever given after the fact, as the Book of Mormon does? How can we believe in future prophecy when there is only ever a promise that prophecy will someday come?

The prophecy of the past is thorough, and the future elusive. I tried to tuck this observation into the back of my mind, because I was supposed to be faithful to understand. I was a victim to the fallacy of this circular reasoning because of the lack of intellect that came from my innocence.

"The Lord will yet reveal,"⁴⁹⁴ they say, only to delay revelation, while generation after generation perishes in waiting. In the interim, they teach nothing new. They pat the backs of their peers as they quote each other's banalities. Some even quote what they themselves had said earlier. As if that grants validity to their stale repetition. They parrot platitudes and poets as their own inspiration. Many of their followers do not recognize the quotes, and they create Internet memes that misattribute the morsels of wisdom.⁴⁹⁵ If they do recognize the quotes, it is months later that the footnote is added to the text.

Resolution for contradictions is never provided. They sidestep the hard questions as slyly as politicians. They tower above their followers with haughty egos. Their self-important egos could have origi-

⁴⁹³3 Nephi 26:6-7

⁴⁹⁴Article of Faith 9

⁴⁹⁵"The thing about truth is that it exists beyond belief. It is true even if nobody believes it." This was attributed to Dieter F. Uchtdorf, but it was coined by David Stevens.

"First doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith." This was also attributed to Dieter F. Uchtdorf, but it was coined by F. F. Bosworth. I remember the footnote was added months later in the text of the talk online.

"He who takes offense when none is intended is a fool. He who takes offense when offense is intended is a bigger fool." This been attributed to Brigham Young, but it was coined by Confucius.

nated in their previous professions as lawyers, doctors, and successful businessmen. For those that were not successful in their own business, the church was their career. They advanced through the ranks of the Church Educational System or other for-profit church businesses. They have a conflict of interest because it is their livelihood.

Those pious tricksters teach that they are the true authoritative intermediaries of God, against their own scriptures that proclaim that there should not be human middlemen.⁴⁹⁶ They repeatedly teach that obedience to them is synonymous with obedience to God. Dedication to them is required for good standing in the church. Faith in God can falter, but a lack of dedication to the brethren risks excommunication. Whatever they declare is received by their followers as the highest morality. Even if they are wrong, they proudly insist that God will still bless all who obey them.⁴⁹⁷

They teach that miracles follow the obedient. They designate banal happenstance and coincidence as if they were inspiring miracles. Those miracles are nowhere near the magnitude of the miracles of old. They are justified when miracles do not come because no one can perfectly obey, and faith is abstract and qualitative.

They are seldom the forerunners in the advancement of society. They preach old morality as if it is God's will. They never warn of wars, calamities, and other world issues as did prophets of old. They spend considerable time and effort teaching that their view of sexual purity is the most important thing on earth, while they overlook the perversion of their predecessors. Their stress on sexual sin, where practically everyone falters, cements the demand for their profession. The asexual, less than one percent of the population, are the only ones that are capable of avoiding sinful thoughts.

When they die, they take any foolish declarations of old morality with them. After they are gone, their successors disavow any embarrassing teaching as uninspired. Decades later, they blame the old morality of the preceding prophets on the frailty of men, turning what was once unchangeable doctrine of God into policy and what was once inspired revela-

⁴⁹⁶2 Nephi 4:34, 2 Nephi 28:31, Jeremiah 17:5-8

⁴⁹⁷Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet, 3; Conference Report, October 1960, p. 78.

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

This quote has been repeated so many times that I cannot find the one who first came up with it.

tion into theory. They apologetically declare that their followers weren't ready better morality, even though the world already advanced without their guidance. When they republish the previous prophets' words, they do it by excerpts, with an overuse of ellipses that omit any ruse that they can no longer perpetuate. Thus they remain the venerated heroes and mouthpieces of God to all, decade after decade.

They drum the old myths into their followers heads in sacred ceremonies. They build lavish sanctuaries that not only contradict their own scriptures,⁴⁹⁸ they contradict the nature of the *author and finisher of their faith*,⁴⁹⁹ who lived a life of poverty and humility. Every visit to their grandiose sanctuaries means more mind-numbing repetition that culls critical thought. Their sheep gladly follow as if those repetitive ceremonies represent the most godly and glorifying heaven on earth.



Pious frauds use a malevolent tool to evade providing answers to their nonsensical mythology. It is the promise that the resolution will come after this life. Many charlatans also promise glorious rewards in the afterlife. The posthumous prize is so great that their credulous followers gladly sacrifice their lives to gain it. The lure of glory and eternal life serves as a carrot on a stick. They eagerly shoulder the burden of faithful servitude until the bitter end. That is a tragedy.

The promise for glory in the afterlife should be a legal indication for fraud. Any premise should fall flat when "it will all work out after you are dead," or "it will be answered in the afterlife." If "God will sort it out in the end," as they say, then why do they pretend to sort it out for God at all? These silly answers are given by those who are revered as the sages of our time. Their evasion tattles the tale that they may not be so wise after all. By their undue influence, I naively gave my time, money, effort, and I was compelled to promise to give everything, even my life, to an institution of men.

I will only live so long. I have probably already lived more than I will live. As my mortality becomes more of a threat to my survival, I am no longer satisfied with promises that never come from the men who call themselves prophets, seers, and revelators. I do not want my life expire, an existence I concretely know is real, for prophecies that never realize, while generations of impostors escape accountability. I

⁴⁹⁸2 Nephi 28:12-13

⁴⁹⁹Hebrews 12:2

can no longer live my life in service to myths that are as absurd as ancient Greek mythology, when viewed from the outside.

...ministers who have risen to power as intransigent Socialists use their power only to do nothing but prevent any change ... Progress is impossible without change; and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. Creeds, articles, and institutes of religious faith ossify our brains and make change impossible.⁵⁰⁰

The lies must stop. Fraudulent that retain old prejudices and uphold the deception of their predecessors should be removed from power. Truth matters, and it matters right now to billions of living people. No one deserves to live their entire life in subservience to the darkness of myth.

As much as people may anecdotally claim they know of the afterlife, no one knows as surely as they find their nose on their face. Now is the time to live. Every moment needs to be cherished as if it is the last.

I'm inviting you to step forward, to be seen, and ask yourself: If not me, who? If not now, when?⁵⁰¹

I do not want to go to my grave without ever standing for the truth that my limited faculties *can* detect, as unpopular as it may be in my culture. I can no longer allow myself to have appeared to be complacent with the teachings of pious deceivers, whether they were aware they were deceiving or not. Lies are deception. It does not matter whether many people have been unified, inspired, or comforted through their communal subscription to lies.

It saddens me that the rebuke of Jesus⁵⁰² applies to many in my own family: they do not allow themselves to see and hear anything that could indicate their belief might be delusion. They will probably never allow themselves to read what I have to say because of their dedication to a belief in something that they can never concretely determine is true.

"It cannot be disproven, so it is possibly true," say the apologists, but the burden of proof lies on the one

⁵⁰⁰George Bernard Shaw, *Everybody's Political What's What?* (1944), Chapter XXXVII: Creed and Conduct, p. 330

⁵⁰¹Emma Watson

⁵⁰²Matthew 13:14-15, Mark 8:18

making the claim. It should not be the responsibility of the rest of humanity to disprove every outlandish claim that a confidence man might produce.

Recent movies like *Big Fish* and *Life of Pi* illustrate the fact that people would rather hear an embellished and fantastic story instead of the truth. It is no different with much of the supposed history contained in the scriptures. As humankind finds and proves more truth through reason and empirical evidence, it becomes more difficult to trust the old stories and clouded views written by ancient humans in scripture.

Maybe our reliance on old scripture may be because of the scarcity of ancient religious writing. The scriptures are mostly the writings of primitive scribes. Publication was not possible then. Now we adore their musings as the word of God.

Which writings are valid biblical scripture was determined, not by God, but by the vote of a group of men, the council of Nicaea. It seems as though the scriptures might be so widely accepted because they were the earliest books to be published. Trusting them may simply be a tradition. Beautifully printed text seems to have granted an authority when it was first introduced. That perception is not as prevalent today. If such books were published as new books today, their validity would be met with great scrutiny, even by the clergymen of established religious organizations.

The fantasy and immorality in the Old Testament borders on the insane. Sometimes I wonder if future generations will deify and worship a banality from our time, or if they will uphold the ancient tribal morality of an angry, jealous god, just as we do. I hope they will come to their senses.

The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.⁵⁰³

There is evidence in the scriptural text itself, from anachronisms and narratives, that most of the fantasy in the Old Testament was written while Judah was in captivity. At that time, the nation of Judah had taken a blow to their ego. The scribes of Judah probably tried to compensate for their captivity by embellishing stories of their nation's inception.

⁵⁰³Richard Dawkins

Those scribes literally wrote history how ever they pleased. There were few copies, and those copies were controlled by the elite. I perceive that they tried to make it known that Judah was God's chosen people, and that God cared for their nation the most, as evidenced by the many miracles in their history that they concocted. While their embellishment may have helped racial morale, the truth was thwarted, and myth was created. Some scholars believe that Jews never intended that any of their stories should be taken literally.⁵⁰⁴

Here we are in modernity, just as dependent on myth for our lives to have meaning, just as much as primitive humans did in antiquity. We are not so different from them. We have advanced very little. We still support, sustain, and revere our shamans, just like they did.



Myths abound in the scriptures. Here are some others that come to mind.

The creation of the earth. There had a creation, but evidence proves it did not happen that way.

The lifting of the city of Enoch into heaven. Did it become a spaceship?

The Tower of Babel to get to heaven. Remember, the city of Enoch was lifted up to get to the same place.

Origin of different languages being an act of frustration by God because they built that tower.

The Jaredites' submersible, capsizable boats and journey across the sea.

The miraculous birth of Isaac. Abraham and Sarah were most likely not that old.

The flood. There could have indeed been a guy named Noah, and he may have built a boat for a flood, but evidence proves it was not global.

Every single animal of the land and air contained on a boat, including the Australian ones from the other side of the world.

People instantly turning into pillars of salt.

The parting of seas.

Trumpets destroying walls.

The ability to live in a whale's stomach.

Nephi constructing a ship in one day.

Nephi and a handful of others building a temple of Solomon.

⁵⁰⁴ John Shelby Spong, *Biblical Literalism: A Gentile Heresy*

Virgin birth, paralleling practically all pagan myths.

The fairy-tale star of Bethlehem.

Physical fatherhood of God to Jesus, just like Zeus and Perseus.

The posthumous exoneration of Jesus into a hero. Practically all pagan hero stories are about a godly child who comes of age and saves the world.

The demigod status of Jesus. I think Jesus needed no status of being a demigod to do what he did. It was who he was, not what he was.

Many miracles that Jesus likely may not have actually performed, much like other pagan myths.

Virgin Birth

Virgin birth reeks of mythology. Matthew quotes prophetic proof that Jesus would be born of a virgin⁵⁰⁵

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.⁵⁰⁶

I am suspicious that Matthew may be pretentious by quoting that scripture. He takes that scripture out of context to support the virgin birth idea. Before the printing press was invented, it was easy to employ subversive tactics, like taking Old Testament text out of context as prophecy. If we read the verses before and after the source in Isaiah, we can see for ourselves what the prophecy was really about.

I should probably first reiterate that there was a prophet from both Judah and Israel. Each were true prophets at least from the perspective of their respective kingdoms, but they often opposed each other.⁵⁰⁷ Isaiah was the prophet for Judah, while Hosea and Amos were prophets for the northern kingdom.

Here is the context of Matthew's prophecy. Isaiah told king Ahaz that God would destroy the enemies of Judah.⁵⁰⁸ After Isaiah delivered his prophetic message to Ahaz, Isaiah told Ahaz that he should ask God for a sign to confirm that Isaiah's prophecy was true. Ahaz refused. He said that he would not test God. The verse above comes into play here. Isaiah told Ahaz that the sign would still be given to him by

⁵⁰⁵ Matthew 1:23

⁵⁰⁶ Isaiah 7:14

⁵⁰⁷ For example, 1 Kings 13:14-28, Each prophet receives contradictory revelation; and by the contrivance of the prophet of Israel, the prophet of Judah is found dead.

⁵⁰⁸ Isaiah 7:1-10

God, that sign would be that a virgin should bear a son, and he should have a symbolic name, "God is with us." That means that it they had God's favor.

I can't help noticing how this parallels modern prosperity doctrine. BYU usually has an opening prayer before their games. They pray that God will favor them and bless them with victory over the University of Utah. This makes sense because BYU is righteous, and U of U is wicked. God favors the righteous and blesses them with prosperity. If they fail, it must have been because someone sinned.

The surrounding context has everything to do with King Ahaz and Judah's enemies at that time. It was a specific timeframe given by Isaiah. In the verses afterwards, Isaiah promised that by the time the infant was old enough to know right from wrong, he would be eating butter and honey, a sign of prosperity, and their enemies, Ephraim and Syria, would be destroyed. It was supposed to be enough time for a baby to be conceived, born, and for that baby to gain knowledge of good and evil. It had nothing to do with the mission of Jesus, who would come half of a millennium later after everyone involved in this story were dead.

In support of this view of the context, the word virgin is badly translated. The Hebrew word *almah* has no equivalent in English. Matthew was written in Greek. The word was translated to Greek as *parthenos*, or *virgin*. That word would have been more rightly translated from Hebrew as *a maiden of child-bearing age*. There was no lack of maidens bearing children at the time: Ahaz's wife Abijah bearing Hezekiah,⁵⁰⁹ or Isaiah's prophetess wife bearing *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*, which means "hurry to the spoils," having a direct relationship to Isaiah's "God is with us" prophecy that Judah would conquer its enemies.⁵¹⁰ Jesus did not enable Israel to hurry to the spoils of war. Later on in the same chapter Isaiah says that he and his own children are the signs and wonders to Israel for his prophecy.⁵¹¹

Isaiah must not have been a true prophet, because his prophecy did not come true. Judah was vexed by their enemies. Jesus did not fulfill the prophecy because he did not cause Judah to conquer Israel and Syria. If we take the false prophecy of Isaiah and add it to the pretense of Matthew in using a badly translated word as evidence for the veracity of his myth, we end up with nothing but obvious subterfuge by those who would wish us to believe something unreasonable by perverting historical writings into

myth and prophecy. This is only one example of the imposition of falsity as prophecy. All of the Old Testament prophecies which the New Testament uses for the birth of Jesus are evidently all contrivances which also take the Old Testament passages out of context.⁵¹²

I assert that virgin birth has absolutely nothing to do with who Jesus was, his mission, and everything he did. Jesus was who he was because of the personality, mind, spirit, and soul which possessed his body, not because of any physical endowment. After all, if you do believe Isaiah was talking about Jesus all along, then how could this describe a half-god?

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.⁵¹³

If he was physically half god, shouldn't his body have been a bit more perfect in form and beauty? I like to think that all of the miracles which followed him should have nothing to do with what he was, but rather is spiritual identity: the creator of our universe. By the simple virtue of his spiritual identity, there should have been millions of angels watching his every move and waiting for his will to be shown to hurriedly execute. That should have nothing to do with whether he was physically half-god.

Distilled liquor was archaically called *spirits*. I think that is because humans of antiquity thought the drink was imbued with spirits, and that those spirits would possess their imbiber. There have been many innocent damsels who become vulnerable to defilement when they have been overcome by spirits. That is the plain language of the story of Mary. She was overcome by a spirit and then raped by an anthropomorphic god. That is not a god that deserves veneration. That god should be placed on the sex-offender list, along with many of his so-called prophets. By his own law, he should be punished eternally for his fornication. Should that god rely on a savior for his misdeeds, too? It is the sin next to murder. Oh wait, that same wrathful god commits murder, even genocide, too.

The story fits in with all of the other contemporary demigod origins. This is nothing new. To be concise, an anthropomorphic god comes down, entrances a human female, and has a *one night stand* with her.

⁵⁰⁹2 Chronicles 29:1; Abi for short. 2 Kings 18:2

⁵¹⁰Isaiah 8:3-4

⁵¹¹Isaiah 8:18

⁵¹²Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, part 3 section 1
<http://www.ushistory.org/paine/reason/singlehtml.htm#preason38>

⁵¹³Isaiah 53:2

Their bastard child is raised in secrecy as a half-god, until he reaches adulthood and discovers his power.

Practically every ancient hero has been romanticized *ex post facto*. If anyone gained enough renown, fables of their miraculous life were spread hundreds of years after their death. Their devotees granted a divine heritage, superpowers, and a supernatural origin story. Just as the story of Jesus, some even redeemed everyone else from the wrath of their father. As we continue to worship the same old story about a demigod, we are no different from those Greeks or Romans in antiquity who genuinely believed their mythology. Ancient Jewish mythology seems to be better because their god was less anthropomorphic. It is the same old pagan myth where a powerful, angry god needs to be appeased by the sacrifice of his beloved demigod son.

The belief in those half-gods or demigods was quite popular in the pagan religions of the same age. Think of the many other legends at the time about virgin-birth demigods: Augustus, Agdistis, Attis, Adonis, Dionysus, Mithras, Horus, Osiris, Perseus, Romulus/Remus. It is evident to me that the pagan idea of a half-god crept into the teachings of Paul. He and other pagans that converted to Christianity brought their baggage with them.

The earliest Jewish-Christian gospels make no mention of a supernatural birth. It was the First Council of Nicaea which crystallized the dogma of the Trinity, which identifies Jesus as the same essence as the Father. It is the same Creed of Nicæa which established that Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary.

Mormonism declares that Joseph was not the physical father of Jesus. Matthew and Luke speak of a virgin birth, but they contradict themselves as they try to trace his lineage back to King David through Joseph the carpenter.⁵¹⁴ Then, their genealogies are inconsistent. Either one is true, or there is no truth at all. Then, some theories claim that the lineage was Mary's. That seems like grasping at straws to me, especially in a patriarchal society. Since they are inconsistent, those lineages are probably just inventions. They attempt to conform with Jewish literary convention. They also try to show that Jesus was the Messiah, who was promised to sit on the throne of David and subdue all the enemies of Israel even though Jesus proved that he had no intention to do that.

I remember trying to make sense of the time of the birth of Jesus. I liked to imagine that Joseph and

⁵¹⁴Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-28

Mary were married somewhere around March of 8 BC before his conception, and then that Jesus could have been born in or before August of 7 BC. There are a few historical reasons why the date of August of 7 BC could make sense.

Jesus had to be born before 4 BC because Herod the Great died in 4 BC. He was supposed to be alive at the birth of Jesus. He died of chronic kidney disease.⁵¹⁵ I doubt that he was massacring innocent babies as he was ailing in health, so it had to be at least a year or more before his death. Herod ordered the murder of all children under the age of 2.⁵¹⁶ That means he had heard about this threat to his throne for years.

The KJV of Luke 2:1-7 translates what should be the words "censored," "registered," or "enrolled" incorrectly to "taxed." Joseph went to the city of David because he was of the lineage of David; because it was a census. Aside from the mistranslation, it also makes no sense that he would have to go to the place of his lineage to simply pay taxes. It makes more sense that he had to go for a census. Besides, this was one of the three historical censuses instigated by Caesar Augustus. The historical empire-wide censuses were in 28 BC, 8 BC and 14 AD.⁵¹⁷ Luke 2:2 says it happened while Quirinius was governor of Syria, but Quirinius/Cyrenius was made governor at 6 AD,⁵¹⁸ and the Census of Quirinius was done in 6-7 AD,⁵¹⁹ so something has to be wrong, because Herod was dead in 6 AD. Tertullian argued that Jesus was born while Saturninus was the governor of Syria.⁵²⁰ I am willing to assert along with many scholars that Luke was wrong about Quirinius, and it goes to show that anything in the gospels could be inaccurate. There was Jewish opposition to "being numbered" so it may have taken Herod while for it to actually happen, making 7 BC reasonable.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁵http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_the_Great#Death

⁵¹⁶Matthew 2:16

⁵¹⁷<http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>

⁵¹⁸<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quirinius>

⁵¹⁹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Census_of_Quirinius

⁵²⁰The Saturninus Wikipedia article gives more compelling argument that Jesus could indeed have been born in 7 BC.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaius_Sentius_Saturninus

⁵²¹It is hard to take both Luke and Matthew for their word when they are the only ones who speak about something which imposes us to believe in a contradicting anachronism. Luke imposes that Quirinius was governor, while Matthew imposes that Herod murdered all babies under the age of 2. John the Baptist was also under 2 years of age when Herod murdered babies, yet John somehow lived. There is no tale of John, six months older, escaping to Egypt or any foreign land. If Herod's murdering spree were limited to Bethlehem, Jesus would not have had to go to Egypt. Contradictions prove that someone or everyone is lying.

The earth was supposed to be flat. The sky was a ceiling, shaped like a dome. It was called the firmament. The stars and moon were pasted on it. For the Wise Men to follow a star, heavenly beings would have had to drag it across the dome ahead of them. That makes sense mythologically, but it is hard to make sense of it in the context of our modern knowledge of space and the orbit of planets. Here is a sample of my thoughts as I tried to make sense of it:

In 7 BC there was a Greatest Conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, were they are close together and lit brightly by the Sun from the perspective on Earth. That event in 7 BC is also called a Triple Conjunction because they conjoined three times that year. Johannes Kepler, after seeing the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction in Pisces a few days before Christmas in 1603, calculated backward and discovered the 7 BC Event. I used the SkySafari App and verified the following for myself. The three conjunctions in 7 BC were in May, September, and December. The conjunction in May would have been in the west horizon in the evenings at Babylon. The conjunction in September would have risen on the east horizon in Jerusalem after midnight in September. The conjunction in December would have risen on the East horizon in the early mornings. The star would have had to rise in the east after the wise men were already in Jerusalem, because they already came from the east, didn't they? If they began traveling west in May and were in Jerusalem in either September or December, this conjunction could explain the star. It is silly to believe in a myth that a star was low in the sky directly above the house of Joseph and Mary. Besides, it clearly didn't happen at the stable in Bethlehem. The wise men arrived much later.

Our modern calendar is based on the calculations of Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman abbot who lived over five hundred years after the time of Jesus. It is his calendar that replaced the Diocletian calendar. He came up with the Anno Domini, but how exactly he arrived at the number of 525 years from his time is unknown. It seems he did it to discourage the fear of the end of the world. Many people believed that Jesus was born in the year Anno Mundi (age of the earth) 5,500, and they believed that the end of the world would be 500 years after the birth of Jesus, in the year 6,000. It was this same Dionysius who established how to calculate the date of Easter. We have him to thank for the error of the birth of Jesus which our calendar continues with to this day.⁵²² It may very well be that he got the year wrong.

⁵²²http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dionysius_Exiguus

Why are we so hypocritical to point the finger of scorn at mythological gods who have a demigod child, when our own theology appears to have mimicked what they created? Jesus was conceived just as every other child is conceived in this world and was just as human as you and I are. He really was Joseph's son. Joseph really was his earthly father. All the drama about Mary conceiving before marriage is a sensational drama to tell, and as any good story telling, it is a myth.

It seems that the Paul and his pagan friends romanticized the *Son of God* idea. Contrarily, Jesus called himself "*the Son of man*," which means: the son of a human being. No, "man" is never capitalized and never meant God as Bruce McConkie apologetically contrives.⁵²³ Jesus was familiar with the scriptures, and he was aware of the real use and meaning of the phrase. Jesus deliberately self-describes himself using the Old Testament phrase "son of man" 81 times in the four gospels. Why would he repeatedly call himself that? Because he knew both who he was and what he was. He may have known his divine spiritual identity as the sovereign of the universe, and this shows that he also knew his mission on Earth was to be a real human being, just like all of the rest of humankind. Jesus constantly called himself "the son of man" because wanted to make sure we knew that he knew he was no different from us and he knew that we couldn't follow him if he were a different breed.

If Jesus were physically superior to the rest of humankind, then that would be problematic: we could not truly follow him because he would be substantially different from us. Following someone who was created in perfection is impossible for beings created in imperfection. We have fallen into the trap of trying to perfect the natural man⁵²⁴ as a requisite for entry to the Celestial Kingdom. Following Jesus does not mean purposefully believing the right things and forcibly keeping a long list of commandments in constant defiance of the so-called natural man.

If there is anything about the natural man that could best be put off, it is his affinity for tribal loyalty and the disgrace of all those who are not part of his tribe. The natural man is the principal factor in keeping people loyal to the church, because it has become their tribe. It is this tribalism that causes contempt for those who are not in the tribe or who dare leave the tribe, and it is this tribalism that engenders honor and admiration for those who join. This is the same tribalism that engendered ancient

⁵²³Bruce McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, "Son of Man" 517

⁵²⁴Mosiah 3:19

endemic warfare all the way up to today's terrorism and warring nations on the basis of religion. The LDS church is not exempt from this base tribalism.

Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God, communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the Christians their Jesus Christ, their apostles and saints; and the Turks their Mahomet, as if the way to God was not open to every man alike.

Each of those churches show certain books, which they call revelation, or the word of God. The Jews say, that their word of God was given by God to Moses, face to face; the Christians say, that their word of God came by divine inspiration: and the Turks say, that their word of God (the Koran) was brought by an angel from Heaven. Each of those churches accuse the other of unbelief; and for my own part, I disbelieve them all.⁵²⁵

Jesus did not focus on putting off human nature by strict external performances, he focused on inner rebirth. When Jesus talked about the final judgment, it had nothing to do with belief, religion, ordinances, or strict command-keeping.⁵²⁶ The religion of Jesus has nothing to do with perfecting fallen man, it is instead experiencing the kingdom of heaven now, in this life, by recognizing that everyone has a portion of the divine in them, and everyone has divine potential.

God does not favor anyone more than anyone else. He does not only favor those of a tribe who have performed their tribe's idolatrous outward rituals. Every being is much more than those who were *anointed only to become such*. Everyone is already divine by simply being human. We become aware of this through spiritual rebirth. That inner rebirth is more powerful and transforming than continuously attempting to perfectly obey a long laundry-list of outwardly visible performances. That obedience only hypocritically proves your appearance of worthiness to your tribe, the honor of men.

In our culture, they say that those who are inside the tribe have a glowing countenance, and those who are outside of the tribe are dark. I have heard of many people who left the church. They tell the story that they were secretly out for years. Their family perceived nothing. In many instances, they still saw light. They only perceived a darkness *after* their wayward family member comes out as a heretic.

⁵²⁵Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part First, Section 1

⁵²⁶Matthew 25:31-46

The religion of Jesus has to do with recognizing the face of God in the least of these. When you recognize God in every person, especially those your tribe brands as the least worthy, you realize that you can no longer be prejudiced against anyone. Everyone is an expression of God. Tribalism is a prejudice to everyone who is not part of your tribe. That prejudice diminishes your ability to recognize the face of God in others.

To truly follow Jesus, you must believe that God is the source of love. To worship the God that Jesus talked about, would be to become all that you are capable of being as you have been created, and that everybody else has the capacity to become everything that they can be, as they are created. It is not that you are overcoming a fall from perfection, but that humankind has ever been ascending since the beginning of the existence of the first self-conscious being on this planet.

The mission of Jesus could have been many things other than to be an offering for sin. None of these require demigod status:

- To effect spiritual regeneration and intellectual emancipation.
- To set humankind spiritually free from all tribal religious systems which are grievous to be borne.⁵²⁷
- To reveal the true nature of the God to all humankind on earth.
- To introduce our dark world to the light of the spirit of Truth.⁵²⁸

The illustrations are by Raul Fernando Zuleta.

⁵²⁷Matthew 23:4, Luke 11:46

⁵²⁸Also known as: The Light of Christ, The Comforter

This is why his message seems to be geared to truth-seekers.

Truth

Emotion

I was taught that feelings and emotional responses were forms of revelation. This has been difficult for me because I am a thinker more than I am a feeler. Feelings have ever eluded my understanding. I think that I am only now beginning to understand my feelings.

When I was a child, my mother taught that a burning sensation in my heart meant that I was feeling the Spirit. I remember her telling me that if I should feel that during testimony meeting, it is the Spirit telling me that I should go up to the stand and *bear my testimony*.

Every fast day, the thought would come of the possibility of going up in front of everybody to speak. Every time, I would feel a burning inside. I did as I was told and got up to regurgitate the things that I had been taught. I did that every month for about a year.

I soon realized that I could avoid the burning sensation. I only had to avoid the thought of going up to the stand to speak. Sometimes I wouldn't be able to avoid the thought, the burn would come, and I would go. As I aged, I learned to avoid the thought entirely.

I have since discovered much about my quiet personality. I now understand what that burning in my bosom was. I have had the same burning feeling in many other situations. It was not the Spirit of God commanding me to bear my testimony, it was fear and adrenaline instead. When I think about talking in front of any group, my heart begins to race and I feel the burning sensation of fear and nervousness. This is a natural response for my personality. That deep and powerful burning was indeed unmistakable and undeniable, but it rarely had to do with truth.

A warm feeling of comfort, love, and joy is supposed to witness of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. I had heard so many people testifying that the euphoric feeling they felt was so undeniable, so unforgettable, that nothing could ever change their mind to the contrary. For them, what they felt trumps logic, reason, and even fact. To their firm witness of truth, doubt is shadow and darkness.

I remember praying fervently and with real intent, for as long as I could stand to be on my knees, sometimes many hours, to acquire a spiritual confirmation

of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. I longed, with all my heart, to have the *Spirit manifest the truth of it unto me*⁵²⁹ as it did for them. I did this many times throughout my youth, and many more times on my mission.

Countless Sunday School lessons declared that the feeling of the Spirit felt so good that it proved it was true. Ironically, I remember so many lessons on how people of the world follow after things that make them feel good. I was confused that the feeling that would come sometimes was shame and guilt, probably because I feared that by having to ask the question at all, I would become a doubter; that by doubting I would not fit in because I would be unable to genuinely say "I know" when called upon to bear my testimony.

I hate to say it, but no undeniable manifestation that would vanquish all doubt came for me. I figured that maybe it was because others are more sensitive to feelings and emotions than I am. It was difficult for me to understand why feelings could ever be an evidence for a witness to truth. I rationalized that I had always known that it is true, so the Spirit didn't need to give me confirmation, and that the inspiration of that thought was the answer from the Spirit. I relied on the challenge to gain a testimony by bearing it.⁵³⁰ Sometimes that seemed to work, but deep inside I felt uneasy that lying could ever be a method for becoming witness and gaining a testimony. I could not admit that I didn't know for sure because I feared the indignity of doubting. I subconsciously felt hypocritical on my mission because I was teaching everyone to use a method that had never worked for me.

Sometimes a feeling of awe, amazement, and wonder are said to be a confirmation of truth by the Spirit. A feeling of awe is unmistakable. I remember the awe I felt while I read the Book of Mormon. Although it did not come in prayer when I followed Moroni's promise, for many years I depended upon the idea that maybe the feeling of awe was my spiritual confirmation that it is true.

Feelings of awe and wonder can come from a great many other sources that are *not* true. Many fairy tales and fantasy stories bring me the same euphoria as does the Book of Mormon. The elves

⁵²⁹ Moroni 10:4

⁵³⁰ Boyd K. Packer repeatedly taught this. Some instances:

- *That All May Be Edified*, 1982
- *The Candle of the Lord*, 1983
- *The Quest for Spiritual Knowledge* 2007

in the Lord of the Rings are particularly captivating and marvelous to me. Many concepts presented in science fiction are also particularly awesome. I remember the wonder and amazement that came from hearing "That's no moon; it's a space station." Awe is the same sublime feeling that comes from looking up at the stars and wondering at the immensity of the universe. That concept is explicitly used in the song, *How Great Thou Art*. I think rapture is mislabeled as the peaceful warmth of the Spirit. It is an imposition that awe has to do with encountering or proving truth.



If I ever had a strong feeling about my belief, it was when I contemplated losing it, especially when I would encounter someone who took an offensive stance against it. That feeling was a strong sense of uneasiness. It was the same feeling I have experienced when I have participated in any heated argument. It was an anticipatory grief that would come with the threat of losing my belief. It was a fear that all of my devotion could have any possibility of being in vain.

Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong. When they are presented with evidence that works against that belief, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable, called cognitive dissonance. And because it is so important to protect the core belief, they will rationalize, ignore and even deny anything that doesn't fit in with the core belief.⁵³¹

I very rarely cry. I have never responded with that emotion to testimony meeting, hymns, baptisms, blessings, or anything like that. I remember my mother and many other people crying in response to those things. With a cracky voice, they usually declared that the Spirit was testifying of truthfulness.

I remember watching the movie *Legacy* at the lavish Joseph Smith Memorial building. There were times in that movie that made me cry. Since I was feeling emotion, that was a big occasion for me. I thought that I was finally experiencing the Holy Ghost testifying of truthfulness. I later discovered that the story is fiction.

I rationalized that the Holy Ghost was testifying of the movie's good message. There is a deep problem with that conclusion, though. If the Holy Ghost

⁵³¹Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

can testify of only the concepts presented in stories through emotions, then that could mean that the Book of Mormon might not be historical.

The story and concepts presented in many other fictional stories have given me strong emotions. *The Hunger Games* might be an unexpected example, because that story is quite disturbing. The indecencies in that story are not unlike the wars, devastation, and depravity in the Book of Mormon. In some ways *The Hunger Games* is less obscene. For example, it lacks cannibalism and rape.⁵³² Good still prevails despite great difficulty, while the Book of Mormon is a tragedy.



Lies are often told to make people feel good inside. The credulous person who believes the tale is none the wiser to the manipulation of their feelings. Willfully ignorant people, who cling to their belief even though it has been objectively and factually disproved, show the same signs as those who have a drug addiction. A drug addict will continue to abuse a substance while though they know it damages their health. A lie addict craves the euphoric feeling that comes from believing in comfortable things while it is harmful to their conception of truth.

As I have tried to teach myself how to discern truth from error, it did not help that I had been deceived into believing that comfort was supposed to be evidence of credibility. In the same vein, I mistook the feelings of pain and anxiety that come from cognitive dissonance as proof that Satan was influencing me.

⁵³²For example, Moroni 9:8-9, 1 Nephi 21:26



This example may be overused, but I have to bring it up. I firmly believed in Santa Claus as a child. People testified to me that Santa is real. I had reliable evidence that Santa is real. The gifts and half-eaten cookies are real. The feelings of joy were so strong when I thought about him. I could see, touch, and even smell Santa because I sat on Santa's lap when he would visit. He was really nice. Someone so loving couldn't *possibly* be an impostor. My brothers often said they had just seen his elf emissary, Icha-bod, who was ever watching, and who would report to Santa whether I was naughty.

I relied on canonical scriptures about Santa that reveal many details about the loving old man, like *The Night Before Christmas*. There are many movies that persuaded me to never doubt that Santa is real. I enjoyed singing the hymns about Santa. I knew that the jolly old man could descend a chimney, because we sang about it. I knew the reasons why I had better not pout or cry. I loved the truly admirable morality of being good for goodness sake. How could there be so much literature and song about it, if it were all a lie?

As my ability to reason advanced, so did my apologetics. There are answers for everything that seems unreasonable. Santa actually had two days to deliver presents, because of the international date line. Santa's magical nose can not only make him fit in a chimney, it can also bend time. Later on, I was told that all I had to do was believe, because belief *makes* Santa real.

As wonderful and fulfilling as myths are, they are still only myths. I'd love to return to those comforting beliefs of my childhood, but I can't unsee truth.

If I were asked to identify any feeling that should be extended by the spirit of God, I would call it *peace*. Peace coincides with truth, but not in the way you might think.⁵³³ Peace can come from truth, but truth cannot come from peace. Encountering truth eventually brings peace, but truth usually hurts or makes you angry at first. In opposition to what the church teaches, truth is not comfortable; nor does it feel warm and fuzzy. It is the lie that is comfortable.

Though I held the idea for decades, I now know that there is no direct connection between truth and warm, happy feelings. My feelings, both good and bad, have betrayed me more instances than I can count.

The fact that a believer is happier than a skeptic is no more to the point than the fact that a drunken man is happier than a sober one. The happiness of credulity is a cheap and dangerous quality.⁵³⁴

If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end; if you look for comfort you will not get either comfort or truth, only soft soap and wishful thinking to begin, and in the end, despair.⁵³⁵

The word *concrete* is the best word that I can use describe how it feels to encounter the truth. If you stumble around in the dark and bump your head on a concrete wall, it hurts. The pain serves as proof that it is absolutely true that the wall is there. No matter how hard you try, you cannot walk through the wall. If fight the wall, it only hurts more, because it will not move. Peace comes from the acceptance that the wall is truly there.

Truth is more painful than it is euphoric, especially when you discover truth is the opposite to your cherished beliefs. If you remain obstinate when truth contradicts your belief, you as those who "taketh the truth to be hard, because it cuts them to the very center."⁵³⁶ Many people avoid truth simply because it hurts.

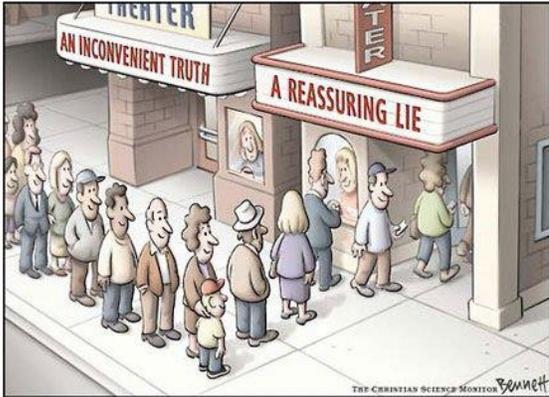
⁵³³ John 14:16-17, Jesus was talking about the Spirit of Truth, and the comfort truth gives.

⁵³⁴ George Bernard Shaw

⁵³⁵ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, Book I, Part V

⁵³⁶ 1 Nephi 16:2

We swallow greedily any lie that flatters us, but we sip only little by little at a truth we find bitter.⁵³⁷



Finding truth but refusing its right to govern your wisdom invites delusion. You either become a hypocrite or retain your integrity.

When an honest man discovers he is mistaken he will either cease to be mistaken or he will cease to be honest.⁵³⁸

I still like to believe that after Jesus left the earth, his spirit was poured out on all men. The scriptures say that was the Spirit of Truth.⁵³⁹

I cannot believe that only the righteous or religious qualify for that gift. I have observed that it influences everyone on earth. Most people are not conscious of it. So many advancements have been made by honest seekers of truth. Progress has come about in spite of tradition or religion, not because of it. The vast majority of scientists were not defenders of tradition nor religion. If anything, faith traditions have held science back, especially the ones that teach sacred science and history, including Mormonism.

I dare say that the domination of religion was what made the dark ages dark. Besides that, the dark ages were not very dark. Science and philosophy did not begin in the Enlightenment. Those times witnessed the establishment of Universities. We owe much of our science of mathematics to the Arabic people who lived beyond a thousand years ago. This happened while people were burned at the stake for

⁵³⁷ Denis Diderot, Rameau's Nephew, 1762

⁵³⁸ Author unknown

⁵³⁹ John 14:16-17, 15:26

daring to question the sacred science in the bible. The stringently religious were the ones who proved least receptive to the gift.

The rate of truth finding seems to be following an exponential curve as more and more people become receptive to that divine gift. Ironically, that same spirit leads honest truth seekers away from those false prophets who Jesus warned would come in his name, to the chagrin of family and peers who still loyally follow those prophets.

I think that we are mistaken in thinking that the Spirit's mission is to manifest the truth through emotions. I think that in reality, spiritual influences are not emotional responses, but rather more of an enticement to reach for an divine ideal, while never in the least infringing upon our right to complete volition. I don't think there is anything divine about our emotions. Emotions are base physical responses of our animal instincts. If anyone feels a desire to seek out a greater understanding of reality, the Spirit of Truth is already doing its job.

Mission Dedication

I was resolute as I testified on my mission, but my state of mind was different back then. Even though it was an essential precept in the missionary discussions, truth by proof of emotion was irrelevant to my own testimony and dedication on my mission.

Throughout my time there, I wholeheartedly believed I was in the right and all else was wrong. I was completely loyal and faithful to the work I was called to do. I lived in denial. I compulsively suppressed all dissident thoughts for the work I was doing.

The ideas I expressed above were there, but they were only subconscious. There are many reasons for this.

I was one of those missionaries that obeyed the *White Bible* perfectly. I stringently obeyed every rule to the best of my ability. I worked with all of my heart, might, mind and strength, that I could stand blameless.⁵⁴⁰ The cultural pressure to return with honor is immense. I genuinely served, and the pursuit of honor contributed to my zeal. My job was to be a door-to-door salesman for God. As difficult as it was for my personality, I was fully invested in my job. I tried hard to meet quotas. I did not permit myself to perceive that there is doublespeak that statistics didn't matter. They did matter because they had to be reported. Salesmen are often extremely persuasive

⁵⁴⁰ Doctrine and Covenants 4:2

as they attest to a product that they do not necessarily buy themselves. I was so inured that I was quite unaware that I had quelled practically every facet of my personality and individuality for two years. When I came home, at Stake Conference, I literally pounded the pulpit in conviction. In my blind certainty, I pridefully vowed to the Stake that I would never become one of the returned missionaries that fall away.



I realize now that my will was broken in the Missionary Training Center. I was taught to lose myself in the work,⁵⁴¹ I was taught that an obedient missionary is a happy and successful missionary. I was trained in many manipulative sales techniques. I repressed my reactions that the sly techniques could be immoral to do in the name of God. My strict obedience suppressed all independent thought and self. Because of obedience, my duty became my identity.

I am not an emotional person, but in the first two days at the Mission Training Center, I found myself crying at night as I sensed my individuality and identity slipping away. That was one of the singular times in my adulthood that I have shed tears. I quickly forgot about those selfish nights as I lost myself in the work. The indoctrination of my mission had lasting effects. This suppression of my individual thoughts to subconsciousness continued for a couple decades after my mission. I have since discovered that I was victim to practically every brainwashing and mind control technique known to man during my mission. When you are brainwashed, you do not know that you are brainwashed. You fully believe that you are choosing by your own free will. Every single bullet point of Steven Hassan's BITE model

⁵⁴¹Matthew 16:25 – It is sad that the church uses this teaching of Jesus to gain undue influence and subservience of its members. Jesus would not contradict his previous teachings of inner rebirth and the inherent freedom that truth provides. I do not think that this teaching has anything to do with giving up self and individuality. Those who wish to dominate and control spin their lies of manipulation in the name of Jesus. The lie is that Jesus wishes us to lose our identity for him and become part of the collective Borg, so to speak. Yet, the essence of self is our essence of being, our soul, our identity, and the thing that makes us unique.

I think this teaching of Jesus has more to do with his previous teaching of following him giving up an old pharisaical life to become reborn into a new life with inherent goodness and freedom. It is hard to give up our old life believing in fantasy and fable for truth.

Whoever wishes to save their life in the magical world view will lose it. Whoever gives up their life of fantasy for the sake of truth, shall find it. To lose all individuality and sense of self for an institution defeats the purpose of the subsequent verse:

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

applied to my mission. BITE is an acronym for undue influence through Behavior, Information, Thought, and Emotion. I will list each bullet point and how it applied to me later, in the Undue Influence section.

Faith and Delusion

In this section, when I use the words faith, truth, and doubt, I am using the words in respect to their relationship with concrete reality. I am not referring to their alternate meanings of devotion, faithfulness, being true, dissension, or anything to do with allegiance to a culture or tribe. The validity of cultural devotion will never gain the level of trust that I have in the reality of truth.

As a child I was taught from scripture that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.⁵⁴² Paul's words were confusing, as they often are. Faith is an abstract concept and cannot be the substance of another abstract concept. The evidence of things not seen is not faith, it is science. I was taught that faith is not a perfect knowledge, but a hope for things not seen which are true.⁵⁴³ Alma's words seemed to qualify as a better definition of faith, but that definition has implications.

Treating faith as a class of belief is the key. A dog is a mammal, but a mammal is not necessarily a dog. A cat is also a mammal, but a cat is certainly not a dog. In the same way, faith is a belief, but belief is not necessarily faith. Faith is a kind of belief. There are other kinds of belief which certainly are not faith.

By Alma's definition, faith is a belief which is on the side of truth; because it is a belief which is true. Since faith is on the side of truth, we can detect the kind of belief, which is the polar opposite to faith: it is a belief in something false. A belief in falsity is a delusion. A belief becomes delusion when evidence exists which contradicts it, but the believer covers their eyes and ears⁵⁴⁴ and continues to believe in falsity; their belief is more important to them than reality.

Much like cats and dogs, faith and delusion are dire enemies, even though both are a *kind* of belief. Since to possess either is to hold a belief, both are the opposite of unbelief. However, faith does not oppose unbelief. Delusion does. Unbelief does not set itself up as an antagonist or even an enemy to faith, but unbelief may be very contrary to delusion.

⁵⁴²Hebrews 11:1

⁵⁴³Alma 32:21

⁵⁴⁴Matthew 13:13-17

Unbelief is a perspective of reality that lacks any presumption or conjecture. An unbeliever usually shows indifference or an apathy to faith. They rarely care about it. An unbeliever does not care about faith because faith is incapable of contradicting with truth, facts, and reality. However, an unbeliever usually cares deeply about delusion. Sometimes unbelievers go to war against delusion.

It is the duty of every man, as far as his ability extends, to detect and expose delusion and error. But nature has not given to every one a talent for the purpose; and among those to whom such talent is given, there is often a want of disposition or of courage to do it.⁵⁴⁵

The deluded rarely admit that their belief could be a delusion. Instead, the deluded most often use the word faith to describe their mistaken belief. They often think that their belief is accurate simply because they believe it and that truth is subjective; that truth can be different for different people.

Some of the signs of delusion are found by the attributes of its consorts. Delusion is usually accompanied by certainty and ignorance. The more ignorant a person might be, the higher the risk they have of being deluded, and the more they will be confident in their delusion.

An enemy of delusion is an ally to faith. Since faith is on the side of truth, its closest allies are uncertainty and doubt. You might ask, how could this possibly make sense? Don't doubts threaten faith? I once thought that faith was simply a more certain belief, but it is not.

The truth is like a lion; you don't have to defend it. Let it loose; it will defend itself.⁵⁴⁶

Truth, that fairest gem,⁵⁴⁷ needs no defense. Truth is ever to be discovered, never invented. Truth needs no qualification from any despot or any established authority, nor should any authority ever define truth. Truth stands independently, on its own, by its own authority. Truth does not fear investigation or questioning, because they find more truth. Truth fears no lie. If truth and error grapple, truth will ever triumph in the end. Truth fears no doubt because doubts never pose any threat to truth. Truth needs no apology to

⁵⁴⁵Thomas Paine, Preface, Examination of the passages in the New Testament
<https://archive.org/stream/examinationof00painrich#page/n6/mode/1up>

⁵⁴⁶Saint Augustine of Hippo

⁵⁴⁷Hymn 272

justify its existence. Truth doesn't take sides. Truth has no agenda. Truth has no need to sway opinion with propaganda. Truth ever wins without any spin.

It is error only, and not truth, that shrinks from inquiry.⁵⁴⁸

Truth is not only fearless of doubt, it employs doubt as its servant. Doubt is the refining fire for truth. If truth is a sword, then that sword is wielded by doubt. Doubt is the indomitable knight of truth who seeks out and cuts down the belief in any lies that threatens the throne. Doubt awakens and hastens when there is a discovery of any falsity in something that was previously believed to be true. Doubt vets falsity expeditiously. Doubt refines both truth and faith.

Doubt of beliefs is not a trial from God, it is truth trying to break through the shell of certainty to grant freedom. Uncertainty is an ally of faith because it promotes humility and retains faith as a belief. The opposite of faith is not doubt, it is certainty. Once faith becomes certain, it can no longer be faith. Faith is never certain, yet a house of faith must be constructed upon a bedrock of truth,⁵⁴⁹ or it ceases to be faith. Faith only becomes certain in its metamorphosis into knowledge. If faith becomes certain without attaining knowledge, it cannot be faith any longer, so it becomes delusion. Faith is any belief based on truth. For example, it was faith, based on scientific knowledge, which was the driving factor behind John F. Kennedy's declaration:

We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.⁵⁵⁰

If truth is light, then mystery is darkness. Doubt in a belief comes as the result of the light of truth dispelling the darkness of mystery. Mystery seeks to enshroud everything it can in obscurity. Conversely, truth has no secrets, it hides nothing.⁵⁵¹ Truth brightly shines, exposing what it finds upon the rooftops for all to see.⁵⁵² When light shines into a dark, mysteri-

⁵⁴⁸Thomas Paine, Address to the addressers

<https://archive.org/stream/lifewritingsofth05pain#page/209/mode/2up>

⁵⁴⁹Matthew 7:24-25

⁵⁵⁰<https://er.jsc.nasa.gov/seh/ricetalk.htm>

⁵⁵¹Matthew 5:15

⁵⁵²Luke 12:3

ous room and the truth of what was believed to be in that room is revealed to be false, doubt consoles the believer in their transition to truth.

Delusion would have the light be covered because light could reveal a contradiction to its belief. Delusion reveres, extols, and thrives in mystery. If falsity is ever discovered in belief, or if belief has any reason to doubt, then that belief loses its claim to faith. If the believer clings to that belief regardless of having been proven false, then that belief slides to the side of delusion.

A house of delusion is constructed upon the shifty sands of lies and ignorance.⁵⁵³ Delusion is willfully blind. Delusion has eyes, but it cannot see; ears, but it cannot hear.⁵⁵⁴ If facts come to light which disprove its belief, delusion will dodge them as if they were an infectious disease. If delusion fails to avoid and becomes infected by a disproving fact, it will cling to any apology it can find for its belief.⁵⁵⁵ The word apology comes from greek *ἀπολογία*, "speaking in defense." Apology provides justification for a lie. It is often said that every lie needs ten more lies in its defense. But truth does not need any such defense. Truth only needs to be set free from any totalitarian despots who place their authority above truth, often employing mystery as their cloak.

They must find it hard to take Truth for authority who have so long mistaken Authority for Truth.⁵⁵⁶

The need for apology to explain away evidence is in itself is an evidence for delusion. Apology for evidence often shows a level of insanity to those who stand outside of the deluded bubble. It is delusion, not faith, which indicts doubt as criminal! Doubt's sincerity sees truth and lies for what they are. Doubt is rarely insincere.

When it is asserted that certain facts should be hidden because they are not faith promoting, it actually means that they are not delusion promoting. Facts promote faith, because not only can faith not contradict any fact, facts are the bedrock upon which faith can be built. It is delusion that creates propaganda to highlight only some truth to its advantage, as it subversively hides the truths which would damage what it vainly calls faith. It is delusion which clings

⁵⁵³Matthew 7:26-27

⁵⁵⁴Matthew 13:10-17

⁵⁵⁵Isaiah 6:9-10

⁵⁵⁶Gerald Massey, in his lectures c.1900

to uncontested lies⁵⁵⁷ and *alternative facts*.⁵⁵⁸ When any fact is hidden by anyone to promote what they wish others to believe, it is a tell-tale sign of delusion, and its purveyor seeks unrighteous dominion by highlighting only their half-truths.

Both faith and truth are not strengthened by any vain repetitions of their followers. Both stand on their own. Faith requires no community to strengthen it. Truth requires no one to believe in it. Truth will live on if everyone forgets it or if no one ever discovers it. On the other hand, delusion seeks society with those who share the same delusion to strengthen each other in their certainty.

Gravity is a great mysterious force. How it works cannot be known, but I am firm in my faith that gravity is true! Gravity is my salvation, for without it, I would float into space! I know without a shadow of a doubt that goes up, must come down! We are all responsible to teach the theory of gravity to all, that by and through their faith in Lord Newton they might be saved, lest they perish from the chaos and even destruction by a universe without gravity! In the name of the Lord and Sir Isaac Newton, the author and finisher of our faith, Amen!

I wrote that quote as a joke. Scientists do not meet every Sunday for testimony meetings where they repeatedly reiterate their unfalsifiable truth claims. They do not threaten that if people do not believe in Scientific Law that they cannot be saved.

A need for constant repetition forebodes an existence of falsity. It is well known that untruth is more readily believed if it is simply repeated. In psychology, this is called the *Illusory Truth Effect*.⁵⁵⁹ Repeated lies that can change public opinion is a technique called *Propaganda*. The audacious charge to gain a testimony by bearing it seems to be an intensification of the Illusory Truth Effect. They know that the effect is more powerful if they can get their followers to repeat their untruth.

The requirement for belief in something before it can work is a sign of manipulation. The idea that belief is required for salvation through the love of an infinite god is as nonsensical as having to believe that one must believe in gravity to be subject to it.

Recently, I was surprised to discover that there are still a great many people who believe that the earth is

⁵⁵⁷https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophical_burden_of_proof
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argument_from_ignorance

⁵⁵⁸Euphemism for lies.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternative_facts

⁵⁵⁹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illusory_truth_effect

flat and that it does not orbit the sun. The apologetics that explain why the earth is flat are vast, regardless of the scientific evidence to the contrary. Some rely on the same scriptures which condemned Galileo for teaching the ideas of Copernicus, saying that round-earth theory is a conspiracy to discredit God's word. They say NASA is a vast conspiracy. Pictures of the earth from space use camera tricks. Gravity is an illusion. The stars are placed statically in a rotating dome – the firmament. The Sun is a spotlight hanging from the same firmament. Yet, there are no apologetics to explain the fact that the earth is round. Hymns that strengthen round-earth belief are not needed. Neither is there any need for a community to strengthen the belief that the earth is round. There is only evidence which speaks for itself. The earth has ever been an oblate spheroid whether anyone believed it or not.

If someone stands and declares that they have a knowledge that something subjective or indefinite is true, then in that very declaration they have no claim to faith, because faith is a belief and not a knowledge. Since they declare that they know instead of believe, then their declaration is a lie. Their display of certainty shows evidence of delusion. The same evidence stands for someone who seeks to strengthen others by repeating any thoughtless groupthink⁵⁶⁰ that can be disproved by fact.

A friend of mine compared certainty to mental junk food. She said that it is comforting and convenient in a pinch, and it is tempting to reach for it all the time, but it shouldn't be what we eat every day. People who don't have our best interests at heart will sometimes tempt us by offering certainty. In politics, in weight loss plans, in investment through multi-level marketing and Ponzi schemes: all those who offer simple answers and explanations seem to win.⁵⁶¹

Some of you may draw comfort through your Balm of Gilead: your certainty, from the following verse, as you read whatever I have to say in this entire work. Believe me, I know, because for a long time it bolstered my certainty, too.

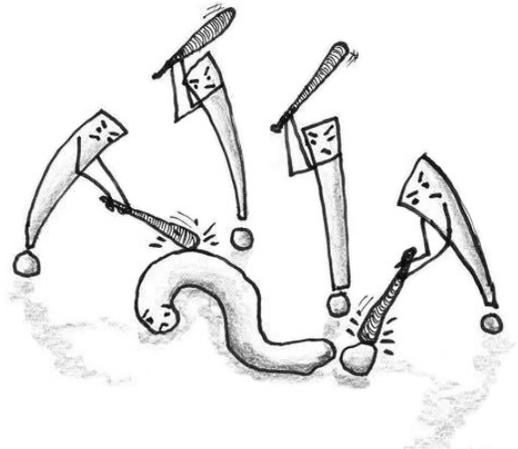
When they are learned they think they are wise,
and they hearken not unto the counsel of God,
for they set it aside, supposing they know of

⁵⁶⁰Orwell, 1984. Conformity, lack of individual intellectual honesty

⁵⁶¹Abigail Anderson Haskell

themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.⁵⁶²

That verse comforted me at times, but at other times, it troubled me. As I look back, I can see that it actually scared me away from questioning and seeking knowledge. It taught me that knowledge and wisdom can be dangerous. Now I can see a false dichotomy, a non-sequitur, in its declaration that knowledge and wisdom can be foolishness. Now I can see that it contradicts Jesus.



By my own experience with life, reality is the complete opposite. The greater crime is to claim wisdom without knowledge, wisdom without understanding, wisdom without experience, or even wisdom from anything that is demonstrably false. The reality is, when "they" are ignorant, they are obstinate, proud, and probably deluded. They defame wisdom for the haughtiness of their blind certainty and their condemnation of those who dare to question. They slander knowledge for any subversive ulterior motive imaginable.

On the contrary, it is actually wisdom that engenders humility. There is irony in how opposite reality is: if there is one thing I've noticed, it is that the more I wisdom I gain, the more I realize how little I know. This principle is known as one of the Socratic Paradoxes, which is summarized as this:

⁵⁶² This scripture has been used by the ignorant to dominate the wise again and again.
2 Nephi 9:28, 19:17, 26:20, 28:4; Jacob 4:10; Alma 37:12; Doctrine and Covenants 76:9; Ezekiel 28:5; Proverbs 14:6; Romans 1:22; Ecclesiastes 8:17, 10:12

I know one thing: that I know nothing.⁵⁶³

The actual translation of Plato's quote of Socrates is this:

I am wiser than this man, for neither of us appears to know anything great and good; but he fancies he knows something, although he knows nothing; whereas I, as I do not know anything, so I do not fancy I do. In this trifling particular, then, I appear to be wiser than he, because I do not fancy I know what I do not know.⁵⁶⁴

Socrates is lauded as having one of the greatest minds of all time, and the founder of Western philosophy. I marvel to think he predated Jesus by almost 500 years. While the Jews were fascinated with writing the egotistical mythology of their people which became the Old Testament, Socrates was establishing practices for critical thinking,⁵⁶⁵ solving problems of self-conscious existence and establishing the intrinsic value of virtuous living. Wisdom did not stifle the humility of Socrates in the least.

But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.⁵⁶⁶

The next verse raises another false dichotomy. How can "being learned" ever possibly be a contradiction to hearkening to the counsels of God? The god that I revere is omniscient. He is one and the same with knowledge, wisdom, and "being learned." Could the wise, just and true counsels of God ever be incongruent with a knowledge of reality? It is almost as if they are trying to vainly use the name of God to dominate the wise. Ironically, the wise are effectively more godly than the vain impostors who work to dominate through subversion.

There are two sides to this dichotomy, and either one side or the other of this argument is delusion. Either the author thinks being learned is delusion, or the opposite is true, the counsels of God he presents are vain delusion. Either way, he loses because he cannot have both. He loses because he circumvents the premise for the birth of free will.

That is the moral of the story of Eden. Do not partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. That fruit grants the capacity to think for yourself, but do not use it. If you do, God will inflict dire punishments,

⁵⁶³From Latin ipse se nihil scire id unum sciat

⁵⁶⁴Socrates in Plato's Apology

⁵⁶⁵The Socratic Method

⁵⁶⁶2 Nephi 9:29

death, and eternal banishment. Thinking for yourself is sin because you might dare to think dissenting thoughts. Do not gain knowledge and do not seek wisdom unless you remain in willful ignorance to mindlessly obey commands.

Truth is truth. Wisdom is wisdom. Knowledge is knowledge. To say that truth is different for different people is delusion. To say that wisdom is foolishness is delusion. To say that knowledge is ignorance illustrates the senseless foolishness of whoever the author truly was.

War is peace! Freedom is slavery! Ignorance is strength!⁵⁶⁷

If someone is born ignorant, to parents that are ignorant, in a society that is ignorant, then ignorance is the norm. They live in ignorance and eventually die in ignorance. To this ignorant society, indoctrination is education, hypnotism is inspiration, criminals are leaders, and lies are truth, because their mind was never truly their own.⁵⁶⁸

It pains me to think that this sad scripture has caused anyone to become willfully ignorant: to close their eyes, to avoid learning, to subscribe to mystery, and to blindly obey. It is as if the very intent is to ensnare the deluded by keeping them in ignorance. It is a truly sad thing to witness those who are confidently ensnared in ignorance audaciously deriding and berating those who are sincerely seeking truth through their god-given faculties of mind.

After all is said and done, if anything, I have discovered:

- In order to sincerely seek truth, one must embrace doubt.
- In order to sincerely have faith, one must be uncertain.

Science

Science is a pursuit of truth by empirical evidence. Truth is truth, whether it is revealed or proven by

⁵⁶⁷George Orwell, 1984.

War is peace: Every member a christian soldier missionary, enlisted until the conflict is over.

Freedom is Slavery: Obedience is freedom.

Ignorance is strength: Wisdom is foolishness.

⁵⁶⁸I encountered the concepts in this paragraph from an anonymous repost on FaceBook. I can't find its origin. It was badly worded, so I've edited it for grammar and sentence structure.

evidence. The scriptures present an ancient understanding of the physical universe. Church leaders are making a big mistake when they rally their followers to do spiritual battle with swords and shields of the middle ages. New revelation that reveals nothing more than new ways of saying those same old medieval ideas is not new revelation at all.

If the prophets, seers, and revelators are who they say they are, they are supposed to fulfill the precedent set by their forebears to augment simple myths with new, in-depth, truthful ideas of God and reality, pushing the envelope with a deepened understanding of the physical universe. Instead, they evade reality while sincere truth seekers embrace it.

Remember that faith and doubt cannot exist in the same mind at the same time, for one will dispel the other.

Should doubt knock at your doorway, just say to those skeptical, disturbing, rebellious thoughts: "I propose to stay with my faith, with the faith of my people. I know that happiness and contentment are there, and I forbid you, agnostic, doubting thoughts, to destroy the house of my faith. I acknowledge that I do not understand the processes of creation, but I accept the fact of it. I grant that I cannot explain the miracles of the Bible, and I do not attempt to do so, but I accept God's word. I wasn't with Joseph, but I believe him. My faith did not come to me through science, and I will not permit so-called science to destroy it."⁵⁶⁹

The quote above was originally coined by Stephen L. Richards, but President Monson has used it repeatedly. He has augmented the quote with the sassy word "so-called," which expresses his view that the word *science* is not appropriate for what it actually is. This seems to have become a motto for President Monson, since he has repeated it in many of his talks.

They are not witnesses of Jesus, they contradict him. Jesus taught that in order to receive, one must ask. I have talked about how many scriptures declare this. It is not about some mysterious supernatural miracle that magically bestows knowledge. Jesus teaches a simple epistemology. To ask is to open your mind to answers. Those who do not ask do not want an answer. They may fear it. They may be complacent. Only those who seek will find.

To ask is to question. If I could rephrase this teaching of Jesus: Question, and you will find an answer.

⁵⁶⁹Thomas S. Monson, First Presidency Message, Ensign, Feb 2001

A question is never complacent. It is a query for resolution. There must be a sincere admittance of confusion. A question is born out of a discovered inconsistency and a need for a solution. It is to ask *why*.

To doubt is to question. If you allow doubt to stand and fight for you, it will find truth. A court that condemns doubt is biased and unjust. The impostor is the one that condemns doubt.

I find myself unable to be inspired by the quote by President Monson. Those words have the horrid aftertaste of darkness, not light. They are not the words of a truth seeker, nor are they the words of a person who loves truth, nor are they the words of someone who has any desire to further the cause of truth, nor are they words of someone who will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. Those are the words of someone who is willfully blind to new truth – who even willfully desires error, if it aligns with the beliefs of his people.

Though Pharisees would say that sin is to transgress social mores and rules which they vainly claim are God's rules, I do not think that is the essential definition of sin. The root of sin is not transgression: the simple outward disobedience of laws. I mentioned earlier that I believe that the essence of sin is to deliberately choose unreality. Error is not as bad as sin; a sincere person errs because of a lack of understanding, naivete, gullibility, or ignorance of the truth; but when they are enlightened, they will adjust their mistake.⁵⁷⁰ Sin is to do exactly what President Monson wants us to do: overlook the light of truth in favor for what you want to be true instead. That reminds me of a quote by René Descartes, a philosopher who dedicated his life to the pursuit of wisdom. He said that the cause of error lies in the will, not in the intellect. It is ironic to me that such a fine rebuttal predates what Monson said by about four centuries:

Whence, then, spring my errors? They arise from this cause alone, that I do not restrain the will, which is of much wider range than the understanding, within the same limits, but extend it even to things I do not understand, and as the will is of itself indifferent to such, it readily falls into error and sin by choosing the false in room of the true, and evil instead of good.⁵⁷¹

Descartes said that the will causes error easily, especially in realms where you do not have a full understanding. Letting the will choose something to be

⁵⁷⁰Mark 4:12

⁵⁷¹The Method, Meditations and Philosophy of Descartes, 254

true when the reality is yet unknown to you is dangerous. Willing something to be true while choosing to be blind to ample evidence against its truthfulness is the greater sin.

President Monson took the blue pill and wants us all to do the same. He would rather put on blinders and continue believing myths instead of knowing truths which have been proven by empirical evidence – facts – using “so-called science.”

Of course, science prescribes that theories come first. Theories vary widely, but it is impossible to search for truth if an idea has never been formulated in anyone’s mind. Theory is never accepted as law until the evidence is verifiable by everyone and no contradicting doubt can be found. Hearsay, anecdotes, and platitudes that are the only evidences for belief. He is selling deliberate blindness as a virtue.⁵⁷² This is the hallmark of unrighteous dominion.

The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command.⁵⁷³

President Monson urges everyone to live in a bubble where explanations of the physical universe are made through ancient fairy tales of men rather than seek true reality outside. He is saying that he has no desire to understand the processes of creation, and this lack of understanding them doesn’t matter to him, nor will it ever. He seems to be admitting that he is living with cognitive dissonance, but says he will never permit that dissonance to incite him to look beyond his belief in myths for a higher level of truth. Here is the thing that disgusts me most of all, because it makes him into a whited sepulcher: he is saying he doesn’t believe in a God which can and will reveal new truth to him, even in his position as a prophet! Again, he is shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men: he doesn’t go in himself, and he stands at the door keeping the sincere from entering also.⁵⁷⁴ In doing this, his sin is much more grave than mere transgression or error. What he is doing is sinning in the most essential sense. Because of his status – the highest position of influence of the church – his blatant disregard for truth-seeking by impeding others is more grievous, it is iniquity, depravity, and corruption. President Monson unwittingly fulfills Paul’s prophecy:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts

⁵⁷² Matthew 13:10-17

⁵⁷³ George Orwell, 1984, end of chapter VII

⁵⁷⁴ Matthew 23:13

shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.⁵⁷⁵

President Monson asserts that faith and doubt cannot exist in the same mind at the same time. However, he forgets that you cannot have faith in something that is not true.⁵⁷⁶ Faith is not faith when it is based on untruth or when there are facts which disprove it. You can believe in falsity, but believing in falsity is not faith, it is delusion.

I am speaking of facts: for wherever the thing called a fact is a falsehood, the faith founded upon it is delusion.⁵⁷⁷

Delusion and doubt cannot cooperate. Because faith is a belief which is true, and because doubt is the refining fire of truth, faith and doubt actually should exist in the same mind at the same time for the doubt to refine the beliefs into faith. If truth or fact gnaws at your beliefs, it’s time to seek a higher plane of beliefs.

Do not try to arrogantly fool yourself. If anyone cannot be intellectually honest and tries to fool themselves about truth, they lack integrity. They are deceitful, corrupt, and hypocritical. It saddens me that so many people would rather choose to believe a lie for “happiness and contentment.”

The things President Monson said in that quote derides every sincere truth-seeker in the church. What a mockery to the office of prophet, seer, and revelator. To do what President Monson suggests would be to abandon reason for madness.⁵⁷⁸

Never theorize before you have data. Invariably you end up twisting facts to suit theories instead of theories to suit facts.⁵⁷⁹

The opposite of science is not faith, it is cognitive bias. Cognitive bias often declares ideas to be true before there is proof. It only seeks supporting evidence and it discounts disproving or contrary evidence.

Science constructs a hypothesis that is possible to be both proven or falsifiable through experimentation. If it cannot be tested, it is not worthy to be

⁵⁷⁵2 Timothy 4:3-4

⁵⁷⁶ Alma 32:21

⁵⁷⁷ Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part 3, Section 1

⁵⁷⁸ Gandalf to Saruman, Lord of the Rings

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gqvFgo-sS0>

⁵⁷⁹ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as Sherlock Holmes, A Scandal in Bohemia

called science. A theory is not granted truth status while there is still doubt. If a test falsifies a hypothesis, it is proven false. A good scientist will accept defeat and abandon the hypothesis or revise their theory. Scientists have the humility to not continue to try to prove their theory if it has been disproven.

Anyone can come up with ideas. It is not the responsibility of science to disprove every crazy idea out there. The burden of proof lies with the person making the claim, not the rest of the truth-seeking world. Scientists enjoy exploring thought, but they admit that theories are only theories. They do not impose that their theory is incontrovertible before it is proven.

Science is not afraid of using doubt as a tool for finding truth. A true scientist is ready and willing to accept disproving evidence, despite his own beliefs or prejudices. On the other hand, cognitive bias begins with a belief it already declares is irrefutable truth. Then, it cherry-picks only the evidence that supports the belief. If it does not selectively ignore all disproving evidence, it uses fallacies of logic to rationalize and retain the belief.

As Monson declares that he *will not let science destroy his beliefs*, he displays a tell-tale sign of cognitive bias. He seems to be oblivious to the fact that by discounting science, he consequently abandons reason in the name of truth. There is no disproving evidence that he will ever genuinely consider. As he abandons reason, he abandons his right to employ reason.

Those who invalidate reason ought seriously to consider whether they argue against reason with, or without, reason. If with reason, they establish the principle they are laboring to dethrone. But if they argue without reason, which, in order to be consistent with themselves they must do, they are out of reach of rational conviction, nor do they deserve a rational argument.⁵⁸⁰

I cannot, I will not, go on believing in tales akin to Santa Claus because there is comfort in the tale or because my people perpetuate his myth. If my creator gave me the ability to reason, why would he command me to give it up? A god of confusion is not worth worshiping, neither is a god of deception.

My faith may not have come to me through science, but my faith depends on a scaffolding of truth. I cannot have faith which relies on falsities! If something is verifiable and provable, it must comply with my faith, not contradict it! My faith doesn't come

⁵⁸⁰Ethan Allen

from myth, and I will not permit so-called "faith" which is based on myth, legend, lore or tradition to destroy it.

Science and Religion

Some have asked me: "Is there any conflict between science and religion?" There is no conflict in the mind of God, but often there is conflict in the minds of men. Through the eternities, we are going to get close and closer to understanding the mind of God, then the conflicts will disappear.⁵⁸¹

Henry Eyring (Senior) was a truth seeker. He encouraged parents and teachers to distinguish between "what they know to be true and what they think may be true," to avoid clumping them together and "throwing the baby out with the bath,"⁵⁸² which I fear President Monson appears to be doing. Ideally, there should never be conflict between true science and true faith, because they both share the common goal of the search for "the evidence of things not seen."⁵⁸³

Science has clearly proven that the earth is much, much older than what was previously believed. The fairytale story of creation and the beginning of the history of the earth as contained in scripture and the temple is outdated and does not sate the appetite of truth seekers who want the true story. A prophet, seer, and revelator could easily fulfill this need. With every second that ticks without enlightenment from above, science will win this battle because it has truth, while revealed religion languishes in its simplistic bedtime story.

The true message of Jesus is found when it is disencumbered from the overshadowing modifications made by those who came after him which turned him into the icon of Atonement. One of the beauties of his true message is that it does not contradict any science nor is it dogmatic. It frees you to seek living truth and invites you to actually experience the reality of God as an approachable person, and not just understand God as a theological concept or as a set of specific commands to obey or rituals to perform to gain God's favor in a crystallized creed.

I use the phrase "living truth" because that is the kind of truth that continues to expand the understanding as new facts of reality are found, instead of dying when new light is shed on the previously

⁵⁸¹Henry Eyring (Sr), *The Faith of a Scientist*, pp 43-44

⁵⁸²Henry J. Eyring, *Mormon Scientist: The life and Faith of Henry Eyring*

⁵⁸³Hebrews 11:1

unknown. The same goes for living faith. If President Monson's faith will die when he sincerely considers new truth that comes to light, or if he must sweep the new truth under the rug to protect his belief system and stay in congruence with his social group, then he does not possess living faith. A church which establishes unquestioned creeds and dogmas that cannot expand to embrace new truth when new facts come to light is not a living church. That church is especially not a living church if it resorts to lying to protect those tenets.⁵⁸⁴

True religion cannot pick a fight with science. The scientific method was designed to prove truth about physical reality empirically, and because of that, it can't prove spiritual reality because spiritual things are a personal, subjective experience. What science does for humankind in material reality, religion should do for humankind spiritually. True religion and true science have the same goal of finding truth, but because they live in different universes they cannot contradict each other. But when empirical evidence contradicts the tenets of religion, it trumps that religion's claims to truth.

Science should be the religion of the physical, objective, outward universe. Religion should be the science of the spiritual, subjective, inward universe. Science cannot weigh love, nor can it measure moral values. Religion cannot provide empirical evidence. Religion is ascertained by the method of experience, while science is pursued by the technique of experiment. Science attempts to prove the conservation of matter. Religion attempts to prove the conservation of the soul.

An unquestioning belief which is held in the name of religion which extends beyond the borders of spiritual reality and attempts to provide explanations of the physical but which contradicts the laws of science is not faith, nor is it true religion; it is probably dogma.

A theory which is held in the name of science which extends beyond the borders of physical reality and attempts to provide explanations of the subjective experience of sentient being, cannot be proven empirically, thus it cannot be science; and may be merely philosophy instead.

Doubt Your Doubts

First doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁴>150 Lies: <http://www.mormonthink.com/lying.htm>

⁵⁸⁵Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Come, Join with us, October 2013

The quote above is a thought-terminating cliché that shamelessly commands to stop thinking. It is as if they are done with attempting to discretely coin thought-stopping phrases. Now they say outright to stop them. It is absurd when an organization that claims to have all the answers compels its followers to avoid questions.

It is clear to me that the phrase is manipulative. Regardless of the obvious underhandedness of this cliché, it seems to have become popular in just the last few months. This phrase was coined⁵⁸⁶ by evangelical F. F. Bosworth, not by any prophet of ours. Elder Uchtdorf seems to have broken the rules by seeking for prophetic counsel outside church.

What does the phrase even mean? It is a paradox! It is a logical fallacy in two fronts. To doubt your doubts in itself is a doubt that you should doubt, which is also a doubt that you should doubt, ad nauseam. It is also a circular logical fallacy:

1. Stay firm in the things you believe.
2. If concerns arise, then doubt your doubts; return to 1.

It flat-out means to stop thinking. If this logic were presented by missionaries, the people they teach would never leave the religion they already have. Circular logical fallacies are found all over in the church.

For example, how do we know the prophet won't lead us astray? Because the prophet has told us that he can't lead us astray. How do we know he is not lying? Because the prophets can't lead us astray.

Another example, God is the source of truth: seek him, and he will tell you that ours is the only truth; and if you receive any other answer, it does not come from God.

When somebody tries to sell me something, and their strategy is to stop me from thinking, normally they don't have my best interests at heart.⁵⁸⁷

In contrast, Joseph Smith's quest was instigated by doubts. If he had doubted his doubts and stopped his thoughts, he would have never sought new truth. When did the message that the heavens have been opened and God is raining new knowledge become drowned out with the charge to stop thinking and instead mindlessly stay in compliance with questionable doublethink of an Orwellian⁵⁸⁸ establishment?

⁵⁸⁶F. F. Bosworth, Christ the Healer, 23

⁵⁸⁷Bill Clinton in Kentucky, 10/21/2014

⁵⁸⁸Referring to the doublethink in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four
Or, James 1:8

Besides, how can the use of logic in illustrating truth ever apply to an establishment that tells you to stop relying on logic to find truth?

For me, what I write here has little to do with expressing doubts for the purpose of doubting. It is instead about seeking and finding truth. Seeking truth is not doubting for the sake of finding fault. It is instead an act of sincerity in wanting to be subject to wisdom, and that entails seeking to find the highest truths a mind can grasp and using those truths in the highest way possible, by so doing one consciously or unconsciously seeks the will of God.

Doubts are usually caused by finding new facts, not by unbelief. If a fact exposes a chink in your armor of faith, then that armor needs to be adjusted for its weakness. You cannot simply ignore the gap and hope the armor's integrity will continue regardless. As it raises consciousness of reality, the discovery of new truth eventually dispels doubt, it doesn't produce it. Doubt is caused by the discovery of the existence of falsity, not truth. While it is often the act of uncovering new evidence or fact which sheds light on falsity, doubt is the realization that what you originally was certain is true might actually be false. Doubt in itself is not bad, nor is it evil, because doubt is a catalyst for the desire for more truth! If you love truth, you must accept your doubt in order to find more truth. To ignore doubt is to surrender to error. The wisdom to embrace doubt in search of truth is not new:

The beginning of wisdom is found in doubting; by doubting we come to the question, and by seeking we may come upon the truth.⁵⁸⁹

If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things.⁵⁹⁰

I will not attack your doctrines nor your creeds if they accord liberty to me. If they hold thought to be dangerous – if they aver that doubt is a crime, then I attack them one and all, because they enslave the minds of men.⁵⁹¹

We live by revelation, as Christians, as artists, which means we must be careful never to get set into rigid molds. The minute we begin to think we know all the answers, we forget the

⁵⁸⁹Pierre Abélard, Philosopher

⁵⁹⁰René Descartes, Philosopher

⁵⁹¹Robert G. Ingersoll, Orator

questions, and we become smug like the Pharisee who listed all his considerable virtues, and thanked God that he was not like other men.⁵⁹²

True wisdom is less presuming than folly. The wise man doubts often, and changes his mind; the fool is obstinate, and doubts not; he knows all things but his own ignorance.⁵⁹³

The Fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a Fool.⁵⁹⁴

Doubt is the beginning, not the end, of wisdom.⁵⁹⁵

Doubt comes in at the window when inquiry is denied at the door.⁵⁹⁶

It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so.⁵⁹⁷

To those searching for truth - not the truth of dogma and darkness but the truth brought by reason, search, examination, and inquiry, discipline is required. For faith, as well intentioned as it may be, must be built on facts, not fiction - faith in fiction is a damnable false hope.⁵⁹⁸

If someone is able to show me that what I think or do is not right, I will happily change, for I seek the truth, by which no one was ever truly harmed. It is the person who continues in his self-deception and ignorance who is harmed.⁵⁹⁹

I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason and intellect has intended us to forgo their use.⁶⁰⁰

No persons are more frequently wrong, than those who will not admit they are wrong.⁶⁰¹

For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information,

⁵⁹²Madeleine L'Engle, *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art*

⁵⁹³Akhnaton, Pharaoh of Egypt, 1354 BC

⁵⁹⁴William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, act 5 scene 1

⁵⁹⁵George Iles

⁵⁹⁶Benjamin Jowett 1817-1893

⁵⁹⁷Mark Twain, (possibly inspired by Josh Billings)

⁵⁹⁸Thomas Edison

⁵⁹⁹Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

⁶⁰⁰Galileo Galilei 1564-1642, Italian physicist and astronomer

⁶⁰¹François La Rochefoucauld

or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment, and to pay more respect to the judgment of others. Most men indeed as well as most sects in Religion, think themselves in possession of all truth, and that wherever others differ from them it is so far error.⁶⁰²

It is error only, and not truth, that shrinks from inquiry.⁶⁰³



The ability to recognize error is an indispensable tool in finding truth. There is no reason to fear doubt except for the fear of truth coming to light. When you find that you have doubts, that is a good sign. Allowing yourself to doubt when you discover falsity shows that you are willing to think critically and that you're not blindly accepting an understanding of reality as it was spoon-fed to you by others.

The end of truth seeking is truth finding, not doubt finding. Doubt is a means to incite a person to seek truth. It is not the end. As you find more truth, you become more free⁶⁰⁴ from the bondage of fear, shame, and the overcontrol of others. Doubt naturally evaporates when truth is found.

All belief, even faith, is lesser to reason in finding authenticity. The value of reason ranks higher than any belief in the search for truth. The charge to doubt your doubts comes from those who fear truth and

⁶⁰²Benjamin Franklin to the Federal Convention, 17 September 1787

⁶⁰³Thomas Payne, *The complete political works. Rights of man: being an answer to Mr. Burke's attack on the French Revolution*, p. 306.

⁶⁰⁴John 8:32

wish you to remain subject to their lies. They know that doubt will lead you away from their domination. They know about the intrinsic power that reason possesses, and they wish to hold it captive.

The redefinition of word *doubt*⁶⁰⁵ as something to be avoided is a tactic of subterfuge, misdirection, or sleight of hand. When they stress obedience to the most petty things as the method for finding truth, little time is left to contemplate weightier matters.⁶⁰⁶ They trick you into thinking that you are satisfying your hunger for truth by obeying them. When you subject yourself to their charge to doubt your doubts, you close your mind to all enlightening information that they do not want you to know.⁶⁰⁷ Doubting doubts means *stop thinking*.⁶⁰⁸ When you doubt your doubts, your conception of reality is subordinated to a *sacred science* that may not match evidence.⁶⁰⁹ Avoiding evidence is restricting yourself from relying on your own experience of reality.⁶¹⁰ It keeps you from the truth because you don't allow yourself to search for it. All of these are mind control techniques.⁶¹¹ Mind control is the subtle craftiness of men. They use it to keep their sheep fenced in their corral. There is irony in that our own scriptures declare:

For there are many yet on the earth among all sects, parties, and denominations, who are blinded by the subtle craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, and who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it—⁶¹²

If you find a jar which contains a nut which is desirable, you may commit to yourself that you should reach into the jar to retrieve it. If you reach into the jar to retrieve the nut but find that the nut has caused your fist to be too large to exit the opening, you must abandon your original goal of retrieving the nut, and permit yourself to let go in order to regain your hand's freedom.

⁶⁰⁵Loading the Language

⁶⁰⁶*Demand for Purity*

⁶⁰⁷*Milieu Control*

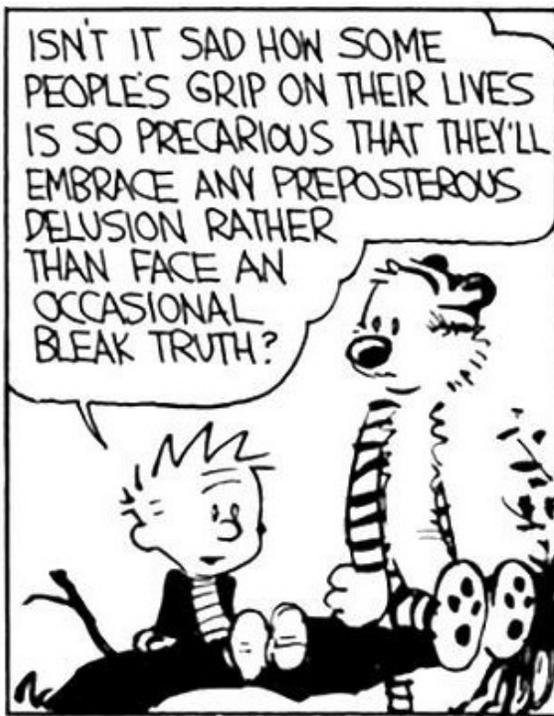
⁶⁰⁸*Thought Stopping*

⁶⁰⁹*Sacred Science*, e.g. the world is only 7,000 years old, there was no death before that, and so on.

⁶¹⁰*Dispensing of Existence*

⁶¹¹Robert J. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of "Brainwashing" in China*

⁶¹²Doctrine and Covenants 123:12



The advice to doubt your doubts is inviting you to be stubborn in your desire to keep hold of that nut, and to ignore that your fist keeps you firmly entrapped by the creator of the trap. Being trapped that way is not that your hand is too large, it is instead because your skull is too thick. An open mind is the only way to free your hand again. It is better to keep your hand and your freedom than cling to the nut, how ever desirable the nut may be. I think Jesus was talking of letting go of the nut when he said:

Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.⁶¹³

While the context of that scripture is talking about avoidance of lust or of despising innocents, I think the vivid imagery of cutting off body parts in his metaphor applies to more than just that situation. I think he uses that strong imagery to show that the things which we must cut off may have become an integrated part of us and may be difficult to extract.

⁶¹³Matthew 5:29-30 (lust), Matthew 18:8-9 Mark 9:47 (offense of innocents)

I think he spoke from experience, because not only did he not live the law of Moses as he had been inculcated, but also for the entirety of his living ministry his family had stopped associating with him, and he had stopped associating with them.

There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?

And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.⁶¹⁴

And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.⁶¹⁵

His family was bewildered with him because he had such radical ideas, and many of them were disenchanted that he refused to live up to what they thought was his potential of fulfilling the Jewish messiah prophecy of sitting on the throne of David and subduing all other nations. (His brother James, not to be confused with the apostles James Zebedee or James Alphaeus, had a change of heart and became a disciple only after Jesus was gone.) It is extremely painful for anyone to sever imbued ideas or friends and family that you have held dear for many decades of your life. His observation was that in the end it is better to enter into life without the things that hold you back than to stay forever stuck where you are.

I know what it is like to doubt my doubts. I had doubted my doubts for decades. I had held tight to the questionable and often even offensive ideas as much as I could to remain in good harmony with my social circle. Living with cognitive dissonance is not easy, especially when you discover more and more and you feel like a beast of burden as they weigh upon your back. Thankfully, the Spirit of Truth gently entices your thoughts to look beyond the borders and find new light.

⁶¹⁴Mark 3:31-35

⁶¹⁵Luke 9:61-62

Being told to doubt our doubts can be likened to a last-ditch effort by a dishonest captain to keep his sinking ship afloat by impeding its crew from abandoning ship, telling them to doubt the ship is in distress. While the captain's responsibility should be to save everyone on his ship, his true allegiance lies in preserving the ship and he cannot abandon his ship in distress.

Asking me to doubt my doubts is the same as asking me to become a hypocrite. I cannot sincerely doubt my doubts in order to continue to accept ideas which are inconsistent with facts and out of harmony with my highest conceptions of truth, beauty, and goodness.

Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.⁶¹⁶

Doubting your doubts in opposition to truth-revealing fact can never provide resolution for doubt. Those facts will continue to gnaw at you. Finding new truth is the only way to truly provide relief from the burden of doubt. Someday everyone who has tried to bury their doubts will have to come to terms with them if they want to keep moving forward.

You can avoid reality, but you cannot avoid the consequences of avoiding reality.⁶¹⁷

Freedom of thought is intimately tied to freedom of speech. If you find yourself curtailing thought or even being subject to laws which curtail your speech, consider this, (the first part is written on the wall of the United States Capitol):

Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom; and no such thing as public liberty without freedom of speech; which is the right of every man as far as by it he does not hurt or control the right of another; and this is the only check it ought to suffer and the only bounds it ought to know.... Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation, must begin by subduing the freedom of speech, a thing terrible to traitors.⁶¹⁸

Freedom of speech is intimately tied to freedom of the Press. If you find yourself limiting what you are allowed to write or publish, consider this:

⁶¹⁶John Adams, 1770

⁶¹⁷Ayn Rand

⁶¹⁸Benjamin Franklin, The New-England Courant, July 9, 1722

Freedom of the Press, if it means anything at all, means the freedom to criticize and oppose.⁶¹⁹

With what we are being taught these days, we no longer have freedom of thought in the church. We definitely do not have freedom of speech in the church. I hate to say it, but that is anti-American and is a mockery to our inspired Founding Fathers. It is the antithesis of what they stood for.

In every country and in every age, the priest has been hostile to liberty. He is always in alliance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection to his own.⁶²⁰

Religious bondage shackles and debilitates the mind, and unfits it for every noble enterprise, every expanded prospect.⁶²¹

I am sure that if Brigham H. Roberts, Hugh B. Brown, and Henry Eyring were living today, they would all be excommunicated for publishing their honest thoughts. It is no surprise to me that Brigham H. Roberts' book about the Book of Mormon was never published during his lifetime, nor am I surprised that over 50 years passed after his death before it was published.

Prophets and Doubt

I have noticed that in many ways, the church of today is not the same as it once was. It seems as though its leaders have all gained an aversion to doubt, as if they have come to fear science, fact, and all other verifiable sources of truth. It is as if truth lost its own authority and dogma reigns supreme, much like Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. It has not always been this way. In contrast to the present-day fearmongers of doubt, as the two examples I have illustrated above, I bring to your attention some contrasting ideas presented by other revered prophets.

If faith will not bear to be investigated; if its preachers and professors are afraid to have it examined, their foundation must be very weak.⁶²²

Tolerance and truth demand that all be heard and that competing ideas be tested against

⁶¹⁹George Orwell, The Prevention of Literature, 1946

⁶²⁰Thomas Jefferson to Horatio G. Spafford, 17 March 1814

⁶²¹James Madison, Letter to William Bradford Jr. April 1 1774

⁶²²Apostle George A. Smith, Journal of Discourses, Vol. 14, p. 216

each other so that the best, which might not always be our own, can prevail. Knowledge is the most complete and dependable when all points of view are heard.⁶²³

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 or criticism is worth defending.⁶²⁴

I think full, free talk is frequently of great use; we want nothing secret, not underhanded, and I for one want no association with things that cannot be talked about and will not bear investigation.⁶²⁵

The Book of Mormon can and should be tested. It invites criticism.⁶²⁶

The honest investigator must be prepared to follow wherever the search of truth may lead. Truth is often found in the most unexpected places. He must, with fearless and open mind 'insist that facts are far more important than any cherished, mistaken beliefs.⁶²⁷

Some say that the open-minded leave room for doubt. But I believe we should doubt some of the things we hear. Doubt has a place if it can stir in one an interest to go out and find the truth for one's self. I should like to awaken in everyone a desire to investigate, to make an independent study of religion, and to know for themselves whether or not the teachings of the Mormon church are true.⁶²⁸

The essential thought must ever be that a man does not, except in his spiritual infancy, accept a

⁶²³ Apostle Hugh B. Brown, *An Abundant Life: The Memoirs of Hugh B. Brown*, p. 156

⁶²⁴ James E. Talmage, *Improvement Era*, January 1920, p. 204

⁶²⁵ John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 20, p. 264

⁶²⁶ Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to The Book of Mormon*, 1957, P. 13.

⁶²⁷ Apostle Hugh B. Brown, *General Conference*, Oct. 1962

⁶²⁸ Apostle Hugh B. Brown, *An Abundant Life: The Memoirs of Hugh B. Brown*, p. 153

statement merely because the Church or someone in authority declares it correct, but because, under mature examination, it is found to be true and right and worthwhile.⁶²⁹

Freedom is based on truth, and no man is completely free as long as any part of his belief is based on error, for the chains of error bind his mind. This is why it is so important for us to learn all the truth we can from all the sources we can.⁶³⁰

We are open to truth of every kind, no matter whence it comes, where it originates, or who believes in it. Truth, when preceded by the little word 'all,' comprises everything that has ever existed or that ever will exist and be known by and among men in time and through the endless ages of eternity; and it is the duty of all intelligent beings who are responsible and amenable to God for their acts, to search after truth, and to permit it to influence them and their acts and general course in life, independent of all bias or preconceived notions, however specious and plausible they may be.⁶³¹

I admire men and women who have developed the questioning spirit, who are unafraid of new ideas and stepping stones to progress. We should, of course, respect the opinions of others, but we should also be unafraid to dissent – if we are informed. Thoughts and expressions compete in the marketplace of thought, and in that competition truth emerges triumphant. Only error fears freedom of expression. This free exchange of ideas is not to be deplored as long as men and women remain humble and teachable. Neither fear of consequence nor any kind of coercion should ever be used to secure uniformity of thought in the church. People should express their problems and opinions and be unafraid to think without fear of ill consequences. We must preserve freedom of the mind in the church and resist all efforts to suppress it.⁶³²

Truth and Honesty versus Dogma and Lies

Joseph Fielding Smith boldly declared that there is no middle ground. If there is no middle ground,

⁶²⁹ John A. Widtsoe, *Program of the Church*, p. 24

⁶³⁰ N. Eldon Tanner, *General Conference*, April, 1978

⁶³¹ John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, p. 369

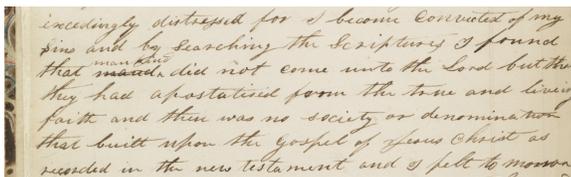
⁶³² Hugh B. Brown, *Speech at BYU*, March 29, 1968.

then any disproving evidence would, by his own words, make Joseph Smith one of the biggest frauds the world has ever seen. For a black and white dichotomy, any shade that is not purely white is black in comparison.

Mormonism, as it is called, must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. There is no middle ground. If Joseph Smith was a deceiver, who willfully attempted to mislead the people, then he should be exposed; his claims should be refuted, and his doctrines shown to be false, for the doctrines of an impostor cannot be made to harmonize in all particulars with divine truth. If his claims and declarations were built upon fraud and deceit, there would appear many errors and contradictions, which would be easy to detect.⁶³³

The Titanic claimed to be unsinkable, but only a single hole in its hull could sink it. If there are many holes in its hull, it only sinks more quickly and surely. It only takes one disproving fact to collapse Joseph Fielding Smith's ship of dogma. It is almost as if he was relieving his conscience by ambiguously conceding his fraud.

At the time he issued this challenge, he was hiding imperative disproving evidence in his own safe. He had cut pages from the composition notebook journal of Joseph Smith himself, which contained the first account of the First Vision of 1832 in Joseph's own handwriting. That first account calls to attention several contradicting discrepancies when compared to the 1838 version. Since he hid it, he knew it would be controversial if it were to come to light. Today, thanks Joseph Smith Papers, we can see what those cut pages say.



incidentally distressed for I become convicted of my sins and by searching the scriptures I found that mankind did not come unto the Lord but that they had apostatised from the true and living faith and there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the new testament and I felt to mission

...for I become convicted of my sins and by searching the scriptures I found that mankind did not come unto the Lord but that they had

⁶³³ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, vol 1, p. 188

apostatized from the true and living faith and there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the new testament...⁶³⁴

If you look carefully, you can see the gap in the page, which has since been rejoined by a professional archivist. Follow the link in the footnote to see for yourself.

It is clear that it was not Jesus who revealed to Joseph that all other churches were in wrong, but that Joseph Smith had already come to his own conclusion that all societies and denominations had apostatized before he even prayed about it. In the account which has been canonized, his primary purpose was to find out who was right and which sect he should join, but that is not important in his first account.

This was shocking to me because I remember countless Sunday school lessons which taught that the answer to Joseph's question whether all of the sects were wrong was of utmost importance, because it served as an impetus for his call as a prophet.

After I discovered this inconsistency, with my new suspicious perspective, as I re-read the canonical account, I discovered that even the canonical account contradicts itself – in the very same text! Many could quote this passage from their memorization of the missionary discussions:

I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong,⁶³⁵

Though it says that it had never entered into his heart that they were all wrong, in only a few verses earlier, he said he *often* thought they could all be wrong:

I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together?⁶³⁶

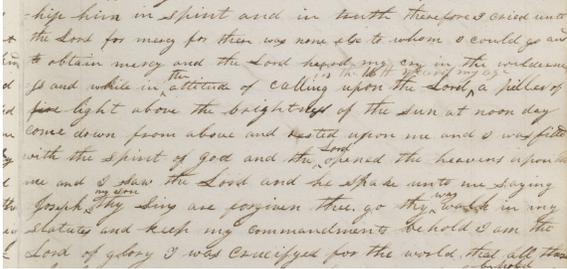
This kind of inconsistency in the telling of history is troubling to me. In a court of law, when the opposing attorney cross-examines a witness, they often do

⁶³⁴ <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-circa-summer-1832?p=2>

⁶³⁵ Joseph Smith History 1:18-19

⁶³⁶ Joseph Smith History 1:10

it for the express purpose of encountering contradiction. A witness is discredited if they contradict themselves. The rules of evidence bar their reliability and they are impeached because their unsafe character.



...therefore I cried unto the Lord for mercy for there was none else to whom I could go and to obtain mercy and the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in the attitude of calling upon the Lord in the 16th year of my age a pillar[sic] of fire light above the brightness of the sun at noon day come down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the spirit of god and the Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying Joseph my son thy sins are forgiven thee. go thy way walk in my statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucified[sic] for the world...⁶³⁷

We find above that he did not to ask which denomination was right, because he had previously said he already knew that. Instead, he says that he cried for mercy. There were not two personages, nor is there any mention of a dark force seizing him and binding his tongue. He says he was in his sixteenth year of age, or fifteen, not fourteen.⁶³⁸

This visitation should have been an unforgettable, powerful experience. When I first heard the news of airliners crashing into the twin towers in New York on September 11, 2001, I remember exactly where I was, what I was doing, how I felt. I would venture that almost everyone who lived that day has this recollection.

Not only should this kind of experience be perfectly recollected, the earliest account of such a spectacular event should contain more indispensable details, not omit or even contradict them. The most reliable retelling of and experience would be when memory is fresh and vivid.

⁶³⁷<http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-circa-summer-1832?p=3>

⁶³⁸Joseph Smith History 1:7,22,23

And yet, this earliest account and several other accounts were hidden for years and were supplanted by the singular most embellished version that Joseph himself had not even written, and which establishes our elitism and our dogmatic creed about the godhead. Those basic objectives of our creed are too important to have been omitted or contradicted by his first account.

I am reminded of what Thomas Paine wrote about omissions between the four gospels:

Now, if it had been true that those things had happened, and if the writers of those books had lived at the time they did happen, and had been the persons they are said to be, namely, the four men called apostles, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, it was not possible for them, as true historians, even without the aid of inspiration, not to have recorded them. The things, supposing them to have been facts, were of too much notoriety not to have been known, and of too much importance not to have been told.⁶³⁹

It's funny because Thomas Paine gives good reason that different witnesses who speak truth of the same event would not omit such huge facts. We find, in the case of Joseph Smith, that it is the same person who contradicts himself. Thus the principle of the matter exposes itself:

It is an easy thing to tell a lie, but it is difficult to support the lie after it is told.⁶⁴⁰

Hiding, omitting, and not telling the whole truth is inherently a lie. Much of official church history seems to have many mysterious memory holes and revisionist history as would be found in the dystopia of an Orwellian novel. Choosing to rewrite history to embellish or ignore errors and contradictions does not make them cease to exist. Even if they are hidden for a time, those changes make the church more incredulous for its dishonesty than the actual unfavorable history they hide.

IF EVOLUTION IS TRUE, THE CHURCH IS FALSE.⁶⁴¹

⁶³⁹Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part II, Section 15
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00painiala#page/120/mode/1up>

⁶⁴⁰Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part II, Section 15
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00painiala#page/121/mode/1up>

⁶⁴¹Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation 1:141, caps preserved.

That is another black and white ultimatum from Joseph Fielding Smith. His prophecy could not have more concisely indicted the church and its narratives, because factual evidence is not on its side.

The geological record proves the age of the earth, and its story spans billions of years. The earth itself is at least 4,000,000,000 years old. The fossil record proves that death has been a part of life for hundreds of millions of years. The fossil record shows that trillions of trilobites were dying 520,000,000 years ago. They all died and became extinct about 252,000,000 years ago. The restored gospel and its prophets speak otherwise.

And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end.⁶⁴²

Thus when man fell the earth fell together with all forms of life on its face. Death entered; procreation began; the probationary experiences of mortality had their start. Before this fall there was neither mortality, nor birth, nor death, nor ? for that matter ? did Adam so much as have blood in his veins (and the same would be true for other forms of life), for blood is an element pertaining only to mortality.⁶⁴³

Besides the Fall having had to do with Adam and Eve, causing a change to come over them, that change affected all human nature, all of the natural creations, all of the creation of animals, plants?all kinds of life were changed. The earth itself became subject to death.⁶⁴⁴

The fall brought death to the entire world. Death did not wait for humans to arrive, nor did it wait for humans to eat of the forbidden fruit. Death could not have come into the world 6,000 years ago.

...concerning this earth during the seven thousand years of its continuance, or its temporal existence.⁶⁴⁵

Earth's temporal existence is in no way 7,000 years, nor is its continuance. The time scale in the scriptures are off by a huge margin, at least six orders of magnitude!

⁶⁴²Nephi 2:22

⁶⁴³Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man: His Origin and Destiny*, pp. 362-365; *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, pp. 76-77

⁶⁴⁴Harold B. Lee, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee*, 2000, p. 20

⁶⁴⁵Doctrine and Covenants 77:6

He blots out the idea that evolution by "some designing hand" is not an acceptable rationalization because it is incompatible with the Gospel. By his own words, Adam and Eve could not have existed because "logically, there is no other view, no alternative can be taken." Either the earth is young and the Gospel is true, or it is old and the Gospel is not true.

Again, as the dichotomy he declares is black and white, I can't help sense that he is expressing a level of ambivalence. It is almost as if he is saying something about the cognitive dissonance he is dealing with, even as the prophet. It is interesting because he taunts the brethren and sisters on whether they are prepared to take the alternate view. He pushes the envelope so far, and then in the end his argument seems to rest on the fear of uncertainty.

For what it's worth, His ad hominem attack on Haeckel cannot carry weight if we are also expected to dismiss Joseph Smith of his frauds.⁶⁴⁶

There are those who discount the teachings of Joseph Fielding Smith and Bruce R. McConkie as theories and that they were not prophetic. Their teachings are thrown under the bus along with the teachings of Brigham Young and practically all of the other dead prophets. If this is what we do with the teachings of dead prophets, then I should not pay attention to the prophets of today. If they have been wrong in the past, then they are probably wrong in the present, and they will continue to be wrong in the future. I would rather navigate the truth on my own.

If there is any reasonable doubt about whether something is true, we should not feel obligated to accept it as truth. Criminal law requires truth "beyond a reasonable doubt" before a conviction can be made. That is because it is insane to sentence anyone without being completely sure. A doubt, founded upon the discovery of falsity, makes reason and understanding cancel the corresponding claims to truth.

And thus, truth can't fear doubt because it is true. Truth can't be discovered to be false. Instead, doubt comes from finding lies. It is deception which fears being discovered as false. If anyone vilifies doubt, they only prove they fear being caught and their lie being discovered. If you dare to go against their counsel to never explore for truth outside of their dogma, you may discover that they've just been that pathetic little man behind the curtain the whole time.

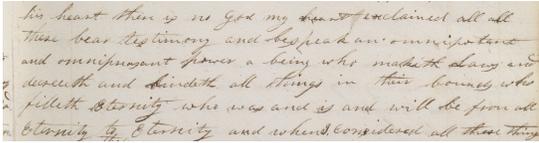
For real truth seekers, doubt is an essential tool for vetting lies. Regardless of what the liars may want you to think, truth is always useful. To say some

⁶⁴⁶Some examples include: Kirtland Bank, trickery in swindling others in treasure seeking, and his perjury about polygamy.

truths aren't useful is misdirection, a sleight of hand, deception, pretense, fraud, and hypocrisy.

We have the obligation to find out what is truth, and then we have the obligation to walk in the light and to apply the truths that we have learned to ourselves and to influence others to do likewise.⁶⁴⁷

Physical God



...all these bear testimony and bespeak an omnipotent and omniscient power a being who maketh Laws and decreeth and bindeth all things in their bounds who filleth Eternity who was and is and will be from all Eternity to Eternity...⁶⁴⁸

I spoke of the contradictions between the versions of the First Vision, but there are more contradictions in other materials. I remember Gordon Hinckley acting as if contradicting accounts never existed, as he relied entirely on the most embellished version of the First Vision for firm doctrine:

How deeply grateful I am that we of this Church do not rely on any man-made statement concerning the nature of Deity. Our knowledge comes directly from the personal experience of Joseph Smith, who, while yet a boy, spoke with God the Eternal Father and His Beloved Son, the Risen Lord. He knelt in Their presence; he heard Their voices; and he responded. Each was a distinct personality. Small wonder that he told his mother that he had learned that her church was not true. And so, one of the great over-arching doctrines of this Church is our belief in God the Eternal Father. He is a being, real and individual. He is the great Governor of the universe, yet He is our Father, and we are His children.⁶⁴⁹

Additionally, Gordon Hinckley was so adamant in this teaching that he hung his reputation and the validity of the church itself upon this black or white dichotomy:

⁶⁴⁷Bruce R. McConkie, The Seven Deadly Heresies, BYU Fireside

⁶⁴⁸<http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-circa-summer-1832?p=3>

⁶⁴⁹Gordon B Hinckley, The Things of Which I Know, April 2007

We declare without equivocation that God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, appeared in person to the boy Joseph Smith.

When I was interviewed by Mike Wallace on the 60 Minutes program, he asked me if I actually believed that. I replied, "Yes, sir. That's the miracle of it."

That is the way I feel about it. Our whole strength rests on the validity of that vision. It either occurred or it did not occur. If it did not, then this work is a fraud. If it did, then it is the most important and wonderful work under the heavens.⁶⁵⁰

"That's the miracle of it," and that miracle is, as he says, that he believes it. It seems suspicious to me that so many prophet-presidents specifically use the word "fraud" when they present their black and white thinking. It is as if they are trying to subtly say something. It is as if they are planning for an escape if worse comes to worse.

Let me remind you what Jesus said upon the subject of the embodiment of God.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.⁶⁵¹

Let us find another "easy to detect" contradiction for Joseph Fielding Smith. Joseph Smith taught the God is a Spirit doctrine until 1835. His 1832 version of the First Vision confirms this, as well as several other things, some which I'll include below. After 1835, Joseph Smith went in direct contradiction to this teaching of Jesus. We are taught that the 1838 version of the First Vision Joseph Smith's First Vision provided our knowledge that God has a material Body.

Apparently either Joseph himself doesn't know what he is talking about or he suffered from some kind of psychosis because of his lectures on Faith. These were included in the 1835 version of the Doctrine and Covenants. The lectures were presented to the School of the Prophets in 1834 and 1835. In Lecture 5, paragraph 2,⁶⁵² it says

⁶⁵⁰Gordon B Hinckley, The Marvelous Foundation of our Faith, Oct. 2002

⁶⁵¹John 4:24

⁶⁵²<http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835#!/paperSummary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835&p=61>

—They are the Father and the Son: The Father being a personage of spirit, glory and power: possessing all perfection and fulness: The Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle, made, or fashioned like unto man, or being in the form and likeness of man, or, rather, man was formed after his likeness, and in his image;—he is also

— They are the Father and the Son: The Father being a personage of spirit, glory and power: possessing all perfection and fulness: The son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle, made, or fashioned like unto a man, or being in the form and likeness of a man, or, rather, man was formed after his likeness, and in his image;

Joseph makes it clear that the Father is a personage of spirit, glory, and power, while the Son is a personage of tabernacle (which means body) shaped like a man, and he is called the Son because of the flesh. The Spirit is not portrayed as a separate personage, but as a shared mind of the one god which make up father and son:

Over all things: by whom all things were created and made, that were created and made: and these three

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constitute the Godhead, and are one: The Father and the Son possessing the same mind, the same wisdom, glory, power and fulness: Filling all in all—the Son being filled with the fulness of the Mind, glory and power, or, in other words, the Spirit, glory and power of the Father—possessing all knowledge and glory, and the same kingdom: sitting at the right hand of power, in the express image and likeness of the Father—a Mediator for man—being filled with the fulness of the Mind of the Father, or, in other words, the Spirit of the Father: which Spirit is shed forth

...and these three constitute the Godhead, and are one: The Father and the Son possessing the same mind, the same wisdom, glory, power and fulness: Filling all in all – the Son being filled with the fulness of the Mind, glory and power, or, in other words, the Spirit, glory and power of the Father – possessing all knowledge and glory, and the same kingdom: sitting at the right hand of power, in the express image and likeness of the Father – a Mediator for man – being filled with the fulness of the Mind of the Father, or in other words, the Spirit of the Father...⁶⁵³

Possessing the same mind and spirit means they are one person, complying with the trinity concept

⁶⁵³<http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835#!paperSummary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835&p=62>

of the Nicene creed, which is a fabrication of men according to Mormonism. Why would Joseph teach such nonsense when he later declared that they met God and Jesus in person and saw for himself that they are separate beings?

God sacrificed himself, to himself, to save humankind from himself. That is the preposterous situation that arises if they do share the same mind. God seems to fool himself by torturing and murdering himself for a way around his own vindictive laws to save humankind from his own wrath. What a silly character.

The First Vision accounts through 1835⁶⁵⁴ don't say anything about God the Father being there, but the 1838 version of the First Vision contradicts this, and the doctrine in 1843 was finalized as this:

The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's;⁶⁵⁵

Joseph Smith reportedly had his first vision in 1820, where he met both the Father and the Son personally, face to face, didn't he? If he had such an unforgettable experience, then how could he have gone for 15 years without testifying about the Father properly? How could he have had such a major inconsistency in what he not only testified in first vision accounts but also taught to his school of the prophets 15 years later, and also edited and revised and decidedly included in his own book of scripture, Doctrine and Covenants?

Later on in the same Lecture on Faith, there is no question as the ideas are confirmed:

Q. What is the Son?
A. First, he is a personage of tabernacle. [§5. ¶2.]

Q. What is the Son?
A. First, he is a personage of tabernacle.

Q. Why was he called the Son?
A. Because of the flesh. Luke 1: 33. That holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.—

Q. Why was he called the Son?
A. Because of the flesh. Luke 1:33

Q. Do the Father and the Son possess the same mind?
A. They do. John 5: 30. I [Christ] can of my own self do nothing, but what I see the Father do: and my judgment is just; because I

Q. Do the father and the Son possess the same mind?
A. They do. John 5:30

⁶⁵⁴<http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-circa-summer-1832?p=1>

⁶⁵⁵Doctrine and Covenants 130:22

30. [Christ] and my Father are one.
 Q. What is this mind?
 A. The Holy Spirit. John 15: 26. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father...

Q. What is this mind?
 A. The Holy Spirit. John 15:26

...and they shall be brought by the hand of the Lord. ... this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. ...that this land should be kept as yet from the knowledge of other nations; for behold, many nations would overrun the land, that there would be no place for an inheritance ... and they shall be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land unto themselves.⁶⁶²

Q. Does the foregoing account of the Godhead lay a sure foundation for the exercise of faith in him unto life and salvation?
 A. It does.^{656 657 658}

The Q&A reiterates that the Son is the tabernacle, the Father is the spirit in that tabernacle, and the Holy Spirit is the mind of that being. These principles are no mistake, they are intentionally reiterated as a sure foundation for faith in God.

Those aren't the only two pre-1835 documents which have changed or been thrown away. There have been fundamental edits to the Book of Mormon between the 1830 and 1837 editions which added words, changing the way this doctrine is presented.⁶⁵⁹ Recent concessions have been made, probably because of DNA evidence, that semitic ancestry has little to do with the Asian ancestry of most native Americans.

The Book of Mormon itself, however, does not claim that the peoples it describes were either the predominant or the exclusive inhabitants of the lands they occupied.⁶⁶⁰

That is an outright lie! There are many lies in the essays. Every lie weighed heavily on my mind. Whoever wrote the essay makes that bold declaration as they list many scholarly works that contradict canon in its footnotes. It is as if scholars can explain away canon. The footnote also declares:

Church takes no official position except that the events occurred in the Americas.⁶⁶¹

⁶⁵⁶<http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835#!/paperSummary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835&p=64>

⁶⁵⁷<http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835#!/paperSummary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835&p=65>

⁶⁵⁸<http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835#!/paperSummary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835&p=66>

⁶⁵⁹1 Nephi 11:18, 21, 32, and 13:40

⁶⁶⁰<https://www.lds.org/topics/book-of-mormon-and-dna-studies>

⁶⁶¹<https://www.lds.org/topics/book-of-mormon-and-dna-studies?lang=eng#6>

Canon must not be worth anything to the institutional church if it does not constitute an official position. The author of the gospel topics essay about DNA and the Book of Mormon is unfamiliar with his own scriptures. Whoever makes official positions is unfamiliar. They certainly are producing contradicting gospel topics essays. I wonder if the apostles themselves, who surely should have approved the content, read the scriptures and pray daily themselves.

...there shall none come into this land save they shall be brought by the hand of the Lord. ... this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. ...that this land should be kept as yet from the knowledge of other nations; for behold, many nations would overrun the land, that there would be no place for an inheritance ... and they shall be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land unto themselves.⁶⁶²

Let me reiterate what I can see through my capacity to understand. There shall be *none* that come unless the *Lord* brought them. He himself consecrated the land. That means he dedicated it for his own divine purposes. Only the *Lord* could bring people here. The land was kept *as yet* from *all other nations*. There should not have been any other nations *yet*. *All other nations* logically excludes *any* other nations. *Any other nations* would *overrun the land*. If any existed at all, there would be no place for inheritance. The descendants of Lehi were supposed to have possessed the land *unto themselves*. That means they were alone. Anyone who ignores this canonical scripture is a liar. There is nothing about this text that is ambiguous.

For behold, they rejected all the words of Ether; for he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man; and that after the waters had receded from off the face of this land it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord; wherefore the Lord would have that all men should serve him who dwell upon the face thereof;⁶⁶³

These silly men that call themselves modern prophets reject the words of Ether. Ether tells them all things from the beginning of humans. Ether specifies when it became consecrated. It was when the waters had receded. The ice age was the last time the waters receded. That requires the inclusion of all of the humans that came to the American continent

⁶⁶²2 Nephi 1:6-9

⁶⁶³Ether 13:2

ten thousand years ago. Since then, *all men* on its face would have had to serve him, not just an isolated few! *The face thereof* means the entirety. For example, Paul declared:

And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;⁶⁶⁴

In the title page, Mormon disclaims that “if there are faults they are the mistakes of men.” Yes, they are the mistakes of men! When prophets make prophecy mistakes, it means that their church is of men! Those men keep making more prophetic faults! Those men have changed words in the very same title page itself, as if they knew better than Mormon did. Joseph said that it is by no means a *modern composition*.

I wish to mention here, that the title page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates which contained the record which has been translated ... said title page is not by any means a modern composition either of mine or of any other man’s who has lived or does live in this generation. ... [it] is a genuine and literal translation of the title page of the Book of Mormon, as recorded on the plates.⁶⁶⁵

Because of the changes, it can no longer genuine nor literal translation. Mormon’s declaration was written in the present tense, from his own perspective. He was talking about his own mistakes and those of his predecessors in his own time, not someone who would come sesquimillennium later, who would make a *most correct* translation by the gift and power of God. That is blatant doublespeak. Because of his declaration, revisions to the Book of Mormon should not correct the mistakes of ancient prophets. Had Mormon used a future tense, his declaration could not apply, because of the oft-quoted declaration by the prophet himself, that the book is the most correct on earth⁶⁶⁶ and that the translation came through the gift and power of God.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶⁴ Acts 17:16

⁶⁶⁵ Joseph Smith, Times and Seasons Vol. 14 No. 8, December 1843

⁶⁶⁶ “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.” – History of the Church, 4:461

⁶⁶⁷ Book of Mormon title page and the declaration by Joseph Smith himself on many occasions.

I reiterate. To edit words in an ancient text makes it into a modern composition, contradicting its translator. To edit imperative concepts from a translation of an ancient text is worse, because it rewrites what the original author was trying to say. If the changes introduce contradictions, it is more condemning of those who made them. Again, this is evidence that they do not read the text itself, showing a lack awareness of the contradictions they inadvertently cause.

Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light. And in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe. And when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God and not by any power of man. The characters I speak of are the engravings on the golden plates from which the book was translated.⁶⁶⁸

The gift of translation granted Joseph the ability to see the *exact words* that should be used on the Urim and Thummim. Clearly errors in spelling and punctuation cannot apply. An exact word-for-word godly translation on the Urim and Thummim still has other implications. Issues with core doctrinal principles are especially disgraceful. Doctrinal concepts are imperative for veracity. Such changes should never have been required, nor should there have been a need to change vital words, neither should there have been conjugation errors.

⁶⁶⁸ David Whitmer, Address to All Believers In Christ (Richmond, Mo., 1887), p. 12.

The error I speak of, is the definition of the word "MORMON." It has been stated that this word was derived from the Greek word *mormo*. This is not the case. There was no Greek or Latin upon the plates from which I, through the grace of God, translated the Book of Mormon. Let the language of that book speak for itself. On the 523d page, of the fourth edition, it reads: "And now behold we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the *Reformed Egyptian*, being handed down and altered by us according to our man-

The error I speak of, is the definition of the word "Mormon." It has been stated that this word was derived from the Greek word *Mormo*. This is not the case. There was no Greek or Latin upon the plates which I, through the grace of God, translated the Book of Mormon.⁶⁶⁹

It is often rationalized that the existence of Greek in the Book of Mormon reflects that it is a modern translation, or that Greek words existed at the time of Lehi. That makes sense to me, but the issue lies in that the translator himself said that there were not any greek words on the plates and provided the example of *mormo*. He is not only talking about the nonexistence of Greek on the plates themselves, but in his example he implies that he did not translate using greek words.

"Irreantum, being interpreted, is many waters."⁶⁷⁰ It is hard to imagine how "irreantum," or "rameump-tom" appeared in the text on the plates, since it gives the translation afterwards. Giving the translation like that makes it read more like a novel. I find it hard to imagine what the plates should have had written. Maybe it was, "Irreantum, being interpreted, is irreantum."⁶⁷¹

So illiterate was Joseph at the time, that he didn't even know that Jerusalem was a walled city, and he was utterly unable to pronounce many of the names which the magic power of the Urim and Thummim revealed and therefore spelled them out in syllables, and the more erudite scribe put them together.⁶⁷²

⁶⁶⁹Millenial Star Vol. IV, No. 8, December 1843

⁶⁷⁰1 Nephi 17:5

⁶⁷¹1 Nephi 17:5

⁶⁷²Joseph the Seer; his Prophetic Mission Vindicated by Elder William W. Bair of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Plano, Illinois, p. 70

That quote seems to reflect that he did not translate names. *Mormo* was an example of a name. It is suspicious that he claimed that there were no latin words on the plates, and then uses the *-um* suffix for raw names that are not yet translated. The *-um* latin suffix means that the word is a neuter gender. Since he implies that the names he used were the Reformed Egyptian words, it is anachronistic that many names should be used at all, including the Greek name *Jesus Christ*. I wonder how "alpha and omega" could have appeared on the plates in Reformed Egyptian.

There is a contradicting anachronism within the text itself that was later corrected. In First Nephi 12:18, *Jesus Christ* was revised to *Messiah*, probably because the name *Jesus Christ* is introduced to Jacob later on, in Second Nephi 10:3. If it was that important to modify after the fact, it should have been just as important to translate the name correctly in the first place.

Something like this should have never happened if the translation was by the *gift and power of God*. A gift and power granted by the infinite almighty god that I believe in would not make those kinds of mistakes. Still, if this is the kind of mistake that applies to Mormon's disclaimer, then it shouldn't have been corrected.

Punctuation and grammar corrections are greater than a hundred thousand in number. As I said, I concede punctuation errors, but I cannot concede pronoun and verb conjugation errors. For example, the word *has* is a conjugation of the verb *have* modern English. That conjugation does not occur anywhere in the King James Bible. *Hath* is the proper conjugation in Elizabethan English. The Book of Mormon does not graduate from the older *hath* to *has* chronologically. Those mistakes often happen in the very same verse. And yet this is only one example of the conjugation of just one verb. The word, *yourself* in the Book of Mormon is an impossible combination in that mode of English because *you* is plural. It should be as revolting as *themselves* would be to us today.

I have never understood why the Book of Mormon tries to use King James English, but the fact that there are silly grammar mistakes only confirms that its attempt to use that kind of language is anachronistic and pretentious. It is as if someone thought that the language of the King James translation should be evidence for scriptural validity. That validity becomes bogus if the translator can't speak the language he tries to use. As a truth seeker, this only raises another red flag for a book which claims to be historical.

The book seems to be merely a prosy detail of imaginary history, with the Old Testament for a model; followed by a tedious plagiarism of the New Testament. The author labored to give his words and phrases the quaint, old-fashioned sound and structure of our King James's translation of the Scriptures; and the result is a mongrel – half modern glibness, and half ancient simplicity and gravity. The latter is awkward and constrained; the former natural, but grotesque by the contrast. Whenever he found his speech growing too modern – which was about every sentence or two—he ladled in a few such Scriptural phrases as “exceeding sore,” “and it came to pass,” etc., and made things satisfactory again. “And it came to pass” was his pet. If he had left that out, his Bible would have been only a pamphlet. ⁶⁷³

The fundamental doctrinal edits that do not concern grammar are unpardonable. Their existence effectively contradicts that the book was translated by the gift and power of God, because *the fulness of the Gospel*⁶⁷⁴ should never need correction.

There are verses later on in the Book of Mormon that talk of the same doctrine but they were not modified. Huge doctrinal changes were only made to First Nephi. They had the audacity to correct the theology of the Book of Mormon, but they seem to have been so unfamiliar with the book that they overlooked other instances of the same doctrine.

I particularly remember the episode with Abinadi. He is quite clear about his Trinitarian ideas. He teaches that God as a spirit, and the Son as the flesh. It even uses the same wording as are found in the Lectures on Faith.

And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people.

And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—

The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son—

And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth.

And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God,

suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people.⁶⁷⁵

The ideas that the Son has his identity “because of the flesh”, and that both Father and Son are “subject to the Spirit,” means that they shared the same mind. Verse 4 says the same thing that 1 Nephi 11:21 originally said. Abinadi says many times that it is “God himself.”⁶⁷⁶ Alma the younger also talked about this being “God himself.”⁶⁷⁷ Amulek also teaches these same things.⁶⁷⁸ Even the introduction to the Book of Mormon, written by Moroni, says its purpose was this:

And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations –⁶⁷⁹

In the New Testament, Jesus never allowed anyone to worship him. He said worship should only be for the Father. Yet, in the Book of Mormon, he allowed the people to pray to him. That is a trinitarian concept.

And behold, they began to pray; and they did pray unto Jesus, calling him their Lord and their God.⁶⁸⁰

It is interesting that LDS doctrine still prescribes that we should not pray to Jesus, but that we should only pray to the Father in the name of Jesus. This teaching and is practiced pervasively. But in the Book of Mormon, we find people praying to Jesus.⁶⁸¹ It is almost as if some of Evangelical Christianity seeped into the Book of Mormon, somehow.

We do not pray to him today. It is silly that they should only pray because he was with them. It is silly to suppose that simply because he had a better physical body that he suddenly became worthy of listening to prayers, as if a glorified body somehow gives people the right for worship by lesser beings. In jest, is it our also our doctrine that we should worship supermodels? The infinite portion of Jesus would have been the exactly the same in his mortal life as it was after. If Jesus is the Eternal God, his permanence

⁶⁷⁵Mosiah 15:1-5

⁶⁷⁶Mosiah 13:28,34; Mosiah 15:1; Mosiah 17:8

⁶⁷⁷Alma 42:15

⁶⁷⁸Alma 11:28-29, 38-39

⁶⁷⁹Title page of the Book of Mormon

⁶⁸⁰3 Nephi 19:18

⁶⁸¹3 Nephi 19:18-25

⁶⁷³Mark Twain, *Roughing It*, Volume 1, 124

⁶⁷⁴Doctrine and Covenants 20:8-9, 42:12).

would not have ever changed in this way. There is no question that the Book of Mormon presents the idea that Jesus is the same person as God is, both possessing the same mind, different only in that he was a representation of the same person in the flesh.

I had ever rationalized that the reason why Jesus is often called the Eternal Father, or the Eternal God, might be because he is the god of this world, so all of those scriptures should be interpreted that Jesus is our ultimate God, but that is moot because it would also apply to the scriptures in 1 Nephi before they were changed. Why is it that "Winston"⁶⁸² edited the Book of Mormon and forgot about what Abinadi and Amulek taught? Why did he forget about the title page? We must admit that the most correct book on earth has had human editors who have attempted to fix its theology.

Joseph Smith's translation of (or his corrections to) the bible was mostly complete in 1833, except for a few edits through the years before it was published. His modification of Luke 10:22 is another escaped relic of his pre-1835 trinitarian theology.

All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.⁶⁸³

All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth that the Son is the Father, and the Father is the Son, but him to whom the Son will reveal it.⁶⁸⁴

Why do the doctrines Joseph Smith produced before 1835 in the original Book of Mormon, the Bible, and the Lectures on Faith betray his later teachings of the Godhead? I surmise that either Joseph's own theology changed around 1835, or he was borrowing theology belonging to someone else before 1835 and later decided to assert his own ideas after 1835.

The Book of Mormon was written before that, as well as the Lectures on Faith. Yet it wasn't until almost a hundred years later that the Lectures on Faith were silently removed from the Doctrine and Covenants by Joseph F. Smith, despite the fact that Joseph Smith, the prophet of the restoration himself, had considered them important enough to include. All of this exists despite his post-1835 claim that he had seen both the Father and the Son in vision fifteen years before.

⁶⁸²The protagonist in George Orwell's 1984

⁶⁸³Luke 10:23

⁶⁸⁴JST Luke 10:23

If the Lectures on Faith were scripture for that long, but had to have since been deleted, and the Book of Mormon as it was translated originally had to be modified, then what guarantee do we have today that our "fullness" of true doctrine won't be changed, refuted, disavowed, unequivocally condemned, or deleted tomorrow? Our contemporary prophets, seers, and revelators delete and invalidate past revelation and scripture more often than they reveal new enlightening scripture. I imagine that the Book of Abraham could easily be next on the chopping block.

The church keeps moving the line back as its doctrines prove false, gaslighting that the problematic doctrine was originally never true, or moving the goalposts that the purpose of the doctrine was different than it was originally believed. For example, if prophecy or doctrine fails, those in authority duck from their liability and declare that it was because the prophet was speaking as a man, and it is because they were human and make mistakes. The thought has come many times that my life would eventually expire while dedicating to prophecies that may never come in my life, and doctrines I faithfully adhere to would be dismissed.

Over the last couple decades, there has been a steady push to make the church more mainstream. In doing so, several originally crucial doctrines have been conceded, with the excuse that they never were doctrines and are now only policies. I don't think doctrines which originally had direct influence on the quality of the afterlife for those involved can be dismissed as policies. Maybe Leo Tolstoy was right:

Power selects and attracts the worst elements of society, transforms them, improves and softens them, and returns them to society.⁶⁸⁵

Unsure Foundation

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

⁶⁸⁵Leo Tolstoy, The Kingdom of God is Within You, Chapter X

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.⁶⁸⁶

The above verses comprise the parable of the wise and foolish builders, which comes just after a warning of false prophets and that they could be known them by their fruits. Jesus said that many fruits, including prophesying in his name, casting out devils, and many other apparently wonderful works can all be done in iniquity. When their fruits unmask any trace of fraud, we should all be wary. When there is any possibility that a prophet may be false, we should not doubt our doubts, but we should follow the advice of Jesus and earnestly take notice.

His “sayings of mine” are referring to what he said in earlier verses of seeking out the will of the Father in Heaven and doing it. “These sayings” also refer to the other things he previously said, like his talk of fruits, identifying ravening wolves in sheep’s clothing, asking and receiving, not casting pearls before swine, and not judging. He never implied that we should rely on the arm of the flesh (other humans) to find the will of the Father. Instead, he explicitly said earlier that we should beware that there may be wolves in sheep’s clothing, predators whose ulterior intent is to deceive and fleece whoever they can. Most sheep spend their whole lives in fear of the wolves, only to be fleeced and eaten by the shepherds in the end.

Jesus lived and taught first-hand religion, a true religious experience which is found when you seek real truth and gain an authentic personal relationship with your Father in Heaven. That intimate connection is afforded to every sincere human being.

Jesus teaches that the foolish man builds his house of belief upon myth or other unreality. Tra-

ditions do not make legends valid. Repeating a fantasy does not make the it true. In order for belief to become faith, we must wisely build our house of belief upon the steady bedrock of truth, and truth cannot stand without relying on fact. Those whose belief depends on myth, lore, tradition, and who are intentionally blind to fact and truth will find that their house falls when the rain, floods, and winds beat upon it.

To those searching for truth – not the truth of dogma and darkness but the truth brought by reason, search, examination, and inquiry, discipline is required. For faith, as well intentioned as it may be, must be built on facts, not fiction – faith in fiction is a damnable false hope.⁶⁸⁷

Belief can take many forms, but on the spectrum of belief, at one end you will find faith, and at the other end you will find delusion. Both faith and delusion qualify as a belief, but they are polar opposites. Delusion is the belief that is not just ignorant or uninformed, it is willfully blind, credulous, fearful, and its professors cling to it regardless of reality. Faith is the belief that is built on scaffolding of fact and truth, it is devoid of grandiosity, and it is fearless because faith sides with truth.

If you discover that what you thought was faith is actually on a sandy foundation that washes away when the rain beats on it, then it wasn’t really faith after all, and that house of belief crashes down if one doesn’t frantically try to prop it up by shoveling more delusional sand under it. But you can’t shovel bedrock; that kind of foundation just is. The house built on the bedrock of truth and fact can take the beating of inquiry and doubt. If what you think is faith proves unable to emerge triumphant with constant scrutiny or reevaluation, then it is not faith.

It is foolish to naively sleep in your house of beliefs even if you have unintentionally based its foundation on falsities and myths, because it can easily wash away by the floods of ideas from which rain from the fountain of truth, and great will be the fall of your house when the elements of truth beat upon your sandy foundation.

After the parable, they talk of the authority Jesus. It was not the authority of the scribes and theologians because he taught by the authority of the reality of truth. Fact, truth, and reality need no priesthood or establishment to qualify them because they are absolute. The fact that a priesthood authority must exist at all to attempt to provide veracity to belief is a

⁶⁸⁶Matthew 7:21-29

⁶⁸⁷Thomas Alva Edison

mark against its credibility. The sky is blue, but there is no reason for an institution to be established which authoritatively declares that the sky is blue. The sky is blue because it is blue. Just as truth stands on its own without priesthood authority, the truth of the reality of the love of God is the surety of salvation, not priesthood authority.

Elder Uchtdorf goes against the authority by which Jesus spoke, the authority of truth and wisdom itself, when he tells you that you should doubt your doubts. President Monson does the same when he tells you that happiness and contentment come from throwing away your ability to process information by using your divinely-given intelligence, reasoning and understanding; and to instead stick with the traditions of your people regardless of how foolish they may be. Both of them do not understand the parable because it is speaking to sincere seekers of truth. They probably think it has to do with rigorous Pharisaical obedience to every law and ritual of man, or that it has something to do with redemption through the sacrifice for sin somehow, even though they cannot fully explain how that works.

Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.⁶⁸⁸

Worshiping God in spirit and truth means to let the Spirit of truth entice you to the action of sincerely seeking and finding truth. Jesus was quite clear about the difference between doubt and unbelief. Doubt is not the same thing as unbelief. The possession of doubt reflects humility and sincerity to find truth, while the possession of delusion reflects pride in belief, and unbelief is simply the state of not believing and is usually on the opposite side of whether belief is founded in reality. In the instance where the belief is deluded, unbelief is on the side of faith, while in the instance where belief is built upon the rock of truth, unbelief is on the side of delusion. It is ironic that if unbelief is obstinately ignorant and refuses to admit to truth, those who say they have faith

⁶⁸⁸Mark 7:9-13

buy are in actuality deluded are effectively unbelievers in reality. Doubt comes from wishing to rid one's self from any discovered darkness, so it sides with light and faith. Certainty shields one's eyes and ears from any information which might dissuade, so it is content with remaining in darkness and delusion.

It takes pride and vanity to stubbornly cling to tradition, rejecting the enticement of the Spirit of Truth to find and be subject to truth. This teaching of Jesus illustrates the vanity of those who profess to be his modern apostles, and nullifies the vain ideas of staying with traditions of President Monson and doubting your doubts of Elder Uchtdorf.

Every new truth, by which the order of human life is changed and humanity is advanced, is at first accepted by only a very small number of men who understand it through inner spiritual intuition. The remainder of mankind who accepted on trust the preceding truth on which the existing order is based, are always opposed to the diffusion of the new truth.⁶⁸⁹

These so-called prophets are not leading the dissemination of truth, but instead are lagging behind in "the remainder of mankind" as they oppose new truth coming to light. Consider what Elder Boyd K. Packer has said about full disclosure:

There is a temptation for the writer or the teacher of Church history to want to tell everything, whether it is worthy or faith promoting or not. Some things that are true are not very useful.⁶⁹⁰

I have a hard time with historians because they idolize the truth. The truth is not uplifting; it destroys. I could tell most of the secretaries in the church office building that they are ugly and fat. That would be the truth, but it would hurt and destroy them. Historians should tell only that part of the truth that is inspiring and uplifting.⁶⁹¹

The quotes above are from two different occasions. The first is a direct quote from one of his talks. The

⁶⁸⁹Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, Chapter X

⁶⁹⁰Boyd K. Packer, *The Mantle is Far, Far Greater than the Intellect* <https://www.lds.org/manual/teaching-seminary-preservice-readings-religion-370-471-and-475/the-mantle-is-far-far-greater-than-the-intellect>

⁶⁹¹Boyd K. Packer, Quinn (ed), *Faithful History: Essays On Writing Mormon History*, issue 5, p 103, This was told directly to an LDS historian D. Michael Quinn in an interview.

other is anecdotal, imputed by an honorable historian, who dealt directly with president Packer when he was employed by the church as a historian. I do not find the second any less plausible than the first, because it says practically the same thing. A historian has everything to lose if he shows even any intent for deception. It is also plausible because Michael Quinn was called in and his employment was eventually terminated for failing to tactically omit the truths he was finding.

The discovery of only one lie grants the right to doubt everything else that had been said before. It shatters trust. That any such thoughts could have ever entered into president Packer's mind is detrimental to his character. It does not matter who his audience was. His motives cannot matter. His lies by omission are more detrimental than the truth he cloaks.

To think that these ideas could ever come from prophet, seer, and revelator, whose commission is "making known hidden things which otherwise could not be known." He is not revealing, he is making obscure things which would otherwise could not be known. The virtues of honesty and integrity should be obligatory for his calling. I cannot trust anyone to be a reliable source of revelation who has any indication of lacking the virtues of honesty and integrity.

In saying that some things that are true are not very useful or faith promoting, he inadvertently admits to lying because of the inverse implication that lies of omission are useful and faith promoting. He admits that he is withholding useful truths that could cause a rational person to withdraw their trust and change their mind. His motives could have been anything. They may have been preserve his establishment, his station, or the Church Educational System. Whatever they could have been, he proves that he places them above his own integrity, and urges his subordinates to do the same.

In saying that he has a hard time with historians because they idolize the truth, he puzzles all sincere truth seekers. He implies that he does not value truth, because he says there are times that truth is not ideal. He says that sometimes truth should not apply. As if reverence for truth could ever be excessive. As if there are times when lies, even those of omission, are better than truth. As if there are times that the veneration of virtue is too much, and vice should have a chance. As if devotion to purity is idolatrous, and filth is more desired. This all comes from a man who talked of chastity in practically every speech he gave.

In saying that only that which is faith-promoting deserves to be told, and that truth is not uplifting; it destroys, he negligently implies that lies are faith promoting and they repair and build. He unintentionally concedes that the truth he omits will turn faith into delusion.⁶⁹² If he knows of truths that can do that, then not only is he deluded himself, but he is also corrupt.

His example of withholding the truth because it is rude is a poor excuse to withhold vital information. He compares a harmless, white lie to Orwellian institutional propaganda, as his employees busily throw institution-defaming evidence of corruption down their fiery memory holes. His justification for offensive institutional lies is coming from a man who repeatedly gave hateful speeches against entire groups of people who he could not understand.

Elder Packer shows his true colors as a hypocrite, a liar, and a fraud in both statements above. He shows that he is using his power for unrighteous dominion.

When you have power you don't have to tell the truth. That's a rule that's been working in this world for generations. And there are a great many people who don't tell the truth when they are in power in administrative positions.⁶⁹³

This reminds me of a recent stir in current events as the counselor⁶⁹⁴ to president Trump asserted that she relied upon alternate facts. This was widely mocked and criticized by the media. The phrase was described as Orwellian, and sales of George Orwell's book 1984 increased 9,500 percent. Both of the phrases, alternate facts, and some truth is not very useful, are a well-known form of lying called propaganda.

I am also reminded of a Star Trek The Next Generation episode, The First Duty, where Wesley Crusher said that he had told the truth and did not lie. Captain Picard replied:

You told the truth up to a point, but a lie of omission is still a lie. ... If you can't find it within yourself to stand up and tell the truth about what happened, you don't deserve to wear that uniform!⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁹²Delusion: a false belief that is resistant to reason or confrontation with actual fact.

Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary, 2010

⁶⁹³Dr. Dean Burk, former head of the National Cancer Institute Research

⁶⁹⁴Kellyanne Conway, Meet the Press, January 22, 2017

⁶⁹⁵Star Trek, the Next Generation, The First Duty (episode 119)

Dilbert illustrates this principle as well:⁶⁹⁶



I hate to say it, but despite Elder Packer's fervor for what he thinks is morality for many outward and visible things, withholding any information which could change someone's mind is dissimulation, hypocrisy, and deception! He cannot claim honesty or integrity as his virtues, because that would require full disclosure. Caveat Emptor:⁶⁹⁷ he told the employees of the church education system to intentionally stop disclosing everything, especially anything that could jeopardize his power over the members of the church. The well being of his empire and his own status in that empire is more important to him than honesty. He is no different from Paul, as it is obvious that he feels completely justified by his pious fraud.

Can his charge to omit revealing the whole truth, because it may be shocking or rude, possibly relate to the teachings of Jesus in any way? Jesus showed no restraint in telling the whole truth, even the truth that hurt. In fact, most of what Jesus said was quite austere and candid, and it ended up getting him killed. The dishonest hypocrites, not the adulterers, falter most in the doctrine of Jesus. Jesus couldn't possibly have any part in the dishonest practices of the church, because this was his firm rebuke to those who are deceitful:

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.⁶⁹⁸

Jesus spent time loving and showing kindness so-called sinners, but he exercised no restraint in condemning the frauds. It is the vain deception in the name of God which disgusted Jesus most about the Pharisees and Sadducees. If Elder Packer really did talk to Jesus, Jesus would scold him for being a

⁶⁹⁶<http://dilbert.com/strips/comic/2014-09-09/>

⁶⁹⁷i.e. Buyer beware; e.g. That car salesman is withholding vital information to get you to buy the car. He knows you won't if he tells all of the truth.

⁶⁹⁸John 8:44

fraud and a hypocrite, who tries to make clean his outward appearance, but deep down inside is a pretentious charlatan. I can imagine Jesus replying to Packer's talk entitled *The Mantle is Far, Far Greater* than the Intellect much like Captain Picard said to Wesley Crusher: Truth is your first duty. If you can't tell the truth, you do not deserve that sanctimonious mantle which you have so pridefully placed above truth.

Thus we see the reality of foolish prophets whose fruits reveal that they have built their house of belief upon a foundation of sand.

Some have learnt many Tricks of sly Evasion,
Instead of Truth they use Equivocation,
And eke it out with mental Reservation,
Which to good Men is an Abomination.⁶⁹⁹

Extreme Deception

I have quoted Leo Tolstoy a few times because I like many of his ideas. Susa Young Gates, a daughter of Brigham Young, wrote the following to Leo Tolstoy:

When I read your remarks in relation to the present efforts of the U.S. Gov. to crush out polygamy among the peculiar sect called Mormons. My surprise was unbounded that extensive as your reading and knowledge is, it should still reach so far, and compass so seemingly small a factor in the world's present history. I should like if I were only able, to give you a "Mormon's" view of the Mormon question. . . . You have doubtless heard "our story" all from the one side. Would you care for the "other side" to speak also?⁷⁰⁰

She sent Tolstoy a copy of *The Book of Mormon*, and George Q. Cannon's *Life of Joseph Smith*. On Jan 23, 1889 Tolstoy recorded in his diary his private reaction to those books:

I wrote down a few things. I read both the Mormon Bible and the life of Smith and I was horrified. Yes, religion, religion proper, is the product of deception, lies for a good purpose. An illustration of this is obvious, extreme in the deception: *The Life of Smith*; but also other religions, religions proper, only in differing degrees.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁹Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard's Almanack, 36

⁷⁰⁰<http://onthistodayinmormonhistory.blogspot.com/2008/10/july-30th.html>

⁷⁰¹Leland A. Fetzer, Tolstoy and Mormonism, Dialogue 6, 1971, 21

Leo Tolstoy was astute. He saw it immediately. I admire him. He is one of the few people who truly understands the teachings of Jesus. He wrote an entire book titled, *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*, a concept that is one of the most revolutionary and profound things Jesus taught.

Seers and Morality

Someone who has the gift of prophecy, of revelation and of seership should be able to anticipate the natural advances of humankind years, decades, centuries, even millenniums before they happen. They should push for the right thing from the beginning of their ministry whether it is socially acceptable or not. They should at least be prepared enough to be a part of instigating the moral change for the better.

For example, the civil rights movement should not have surpassed the outlook of a seer. That is, if his calling is indeed to uphold morality. His policies should at least anticipate advances in morality. He should have not only seen it coming, but the true understanding of all humankind's equality under God should have already been established from the beginning of the dispensation, way before the world changed. That foresight should have always been, not only starting with Joseph, but the Book of Mormon and Book of Abraham should not have idealized racist elements. A prophet, seer, and revelator should already know that the rights of all genders and all races under the sun should be fully equal, as the scriptures clearly state that God is not a respecter of persons. Jesus clearly taught that not only the Jews are children of God, but all of humankind are children of God, even those who are most despised by a society, like the Samaritans were despised by the Jews at the time of Jesus.

Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

That simple sentence comprises the *Equal Rights Amendment*. It was a complete surprise to me to find out that *The Equal Rights Amendment* has never been ratified. Not only that, Utah and the church pushed hard for it to *never* be ratified. I am baffled that prophets of God would vehemently oppose such a beautiful declaration of equal rights under the law. Yet, they did. They rallied the ranks to oppose it. How could the spokesman for God impose the subjugation of women to patriarchy, but then over the next fifty years slowly back away from that stance, as

it became more and more socially acceptable for women to work outside the home? How could he have not had the foresight that things would eventually not go his way? These are the fruits of the leadership of men, not of God.

In the case of race, this is all more than treating all of them equally by allowing all of them to hold the priesthood, it is about the condemnation of an entire race. According to Mormon doctrine, being denied of priesthood ordination also means that temple marriage is denied, which in turn means that the highest level of exaltation is denied to even the most faithful of the black race.^{702 703 704}

The church recently released a press release from their newsroom about the issue of race in temple access and priesthood, and there are a few horribly disconcerting statements in it which I cannot overlook:

It is not known precisely why, how or when this restriction began in the Church, but it has ended.

...

Today, the Church disavows the theories advanced in the past that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse, or that it reflects unrighteous actions in a premortal life; that mixed-race marriages are a sin; or that blacks or people of any other race or ethnicity are inferior in any way to anyone else. Church leaders today unequivocally condemn all racism, past and present, in any form.

...

The origins of priesthood availability are not entirely clear. Some explanations with respect to this matter were made in the absence of direct revelation and references to these explanations are sometimes cited in publications.⁷⁰⁵

How horribly gross it is for an official statement by church leaders to lie that *it is not known why, how, or when* any of this came about. How could the church

⁷⁰²Doctrine and Covenants 132:16 ...which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory.

⁷⁰³Doctrine and Covenants 131:2-3 And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.

⁷⁰⁴Mark E. Peterson, *Race Problems—As They Affect The Church*, 1954

⁷⁰⁵ <https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood> The church has removed the original newsroom article: <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/race-church>

For what it's worth, this has been edited over time. It used to say, "The Church unequivocally condemns racism, including any and all past racism by individuals both inside and outside the Church."

itself not know the history of its own doctrines and policies, why they were made, how, by whom, and when?^{706 707 708 709}

If anyone knows the history, it is them; this tactic of playing dumb is bearing false witness about the situation, and this blatant lie should be considered perjury. If this isn't an example of Jesus' analogy of "whited sepulchers," I don't know what is.

The true intent of that statement is the implication that they are unwilling to admit why, how, or when. They even say it impersonally, "it is not known" instead of "we do not know," as if to even try to shed the fault of not knowing. They are unwilling to admit why, how, or when, because if they did, provable historical doctrine and events would invalidate their claim to three things:

1. livelihood: validity of the doctrines of their predecessors
2. infallibility: the prophet cannot lead the church astray

Yet, as they play dumb, they do not keep both of those from happening, and they additionally invalidate a third thing:

3. integrity: they are willing to lie to maintain their status

⁷⁰⁶Old Testament Student Manual

Therefore, although Ham himself had the right to the priesthood, Canaan, his son, did not. Ham had married Egyptus, a descendant of Cain (Abraham 1:21–24), and so his sons were denied the priesthood.

⁷⁰⁷Journal of Discourses, 7:290, "that they should be the 'servant of servants'; and they will be, until that curse is removed; and the Abolitionists cannot help it, nor in the least alter that decree."

⁷⁰⁸Mormon Doctrine, 1958 "Those who were less valiant in pre-existence and who thereby had certain spiritual restrictions imposed upon them during mortality are known to us as the negroes." "Negroes in this life are denied the priesthood; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty." "The present status of the negro rests purely and simply on the foundation of pre-existence." "The 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 therefrom, 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."

⁷⁰⁹Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1852, Vol. 4, p. 97, Quoting Brigham Young:

Any man having one drop of the seed of Cane in him Cannot hold the priesthood ... I will say it now in the name of Jesus Christ. I know it is true & they know it. The Negro cannot hold one particle of Government ... if any man mingles his seed with the seed of Cane the only way he Could get rid of it or have salvation would be to Come forward & have his head Cut off & spill his Blood upon the ground. It would also take the life of his Children.

The fact that they *unequivocally condemn racism, including any and all past racism by individuals both inside and outside the church* by connection they unequivocally condemn all of the prophets, seers, and revelators who came before them. This is interesting, because:

The Lord would never permit me or any other man who stands as president of this church to lead you astray. It is not in the program. It is not in the mind of God.⁷¹⁰

It seems that the thought-stopping phrase *the prophet cannot lead the church astray* worked for a century but has now backfired. Could it be possible that Wilford Woodruff was leading the church astray when he said that God would never allow him to lead the church astray? And yet, even with many obvious caveats in history, Elder Russell Ballard reiterated recently in October 2014 by vainly quoting what he himself had said earlier:

Keep the eyes of the mission on the leaders of the Church. ... We will not and ... cannot lead [you] astray.

The ellipses and brackets in that quote are placed there by him, not by me. He butchered his own sentence as though quoting what he had previously said grants more credibility. Later, he goes on:

...when the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve speak with a united voice, it is the voice of the Lord for that time⁷¹¹

To me, that is a gross imposture. He is effectively saying that the "voice of the Lord" is established by the vote of 15 in the oligarchy. I am reminded what Thomas Paine said of how the New Testament became scripture:

We know from history that one of the principal leaders of this church, Athanasius, lived at the time the New Testament was formed; and we know also, from the absurd jargon he left us under the name of a creed, the character of the men who formed the New Testament; and we know also from the same history that the authenticity of the books of which it is composed was denied at the time. It was upon the vote of such as Athanasius, that the Testament was

⁷¹⁰Wilford Woodruff, October 1890 General Conference

⁷¹¹<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/10/stay-in-the-boat-and-hold-on>

decreed to be the word of God; and nothing can present to us a more strange idea than that of decreeing the word of God by vote. Those who rest their faith upon such authority put man in the place of God, and have no foundation for future happiness; credulity, however, is not a crime, but it becomes criminal by resisting conviction.⁷¹²

There was a precedent set by Joseph Smith, that *all* revelations should be written and documented for every faithful member to have access to every word that was dictated directly by God. For an oligarchy of men to define the will of God by vote is blatant imposition that opposes the origins and principle tenets of the church they lead. Those who rest their faith upon such authority place man in the place of God.

The reversal of the priesthood ban was not a prophetic revelation that came from speaking with Jesus directly. Not a single word of Jesus to Spencer W. Kimball was published. That they prayed, along with their pretense that the experience was *too sacred to talk about* is the only word that exists. Misdirection is a form of deception; it is an evidence for a lie. As Ballard declares, when all of them finally agreed, will of God was made manifest. They overturned direct revelation and canonical scripture by their vote.

I can think of many times when the fifteen twelve apostles called out the error of their forebears, including this case of flat-out racism. If they might be wrong, they attribute it to the will of God; they throw their predecessors under the bus. They, themselves, can never be wrong.

...according to this plan of prophesying, a prophet could never be wrong, however mistaken the Almighty might be. This sort of absurd subterfuge, and this manner of speaking of the Almighty, as one would speak of a man, is consistent with nothing but the stupidity of the Bible.⁷¹³

It is particularly ironic that they state that *explanations were made in the absence of direct revelation, and the Church disavows the theories advanced in the past*. This is nonsense. It is as if the prophets themselves advanced the theories of men, mingled with

⁷¹²Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part II Section 19
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00painiala#page/140/mode/1up>

⁷¹³Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part The Second, Section 10
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00painiala#page/99/mode/1up>

scripture – something that Lucifer was supposed to be the one to do. They may not realize it, but they are effectively condemning themselves with that statement because it is the prophet, seer, and revelator who led the church astray with that absence of direct revelation.

It is ironic that they forget their own canonical scripture, which was supposed to have been translated by the gift and power of God:

Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood.

Now, Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah, through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry,⁷¹⁴

How could they say that *the origins of priesthood availability are not entirely clear*. when it says exactly why in those canonical verses above?

To me, even the revelation which lifts the ban is questionable. Here are a few excerpts of the Official Declaration 2, which was read by N. Eldon Tanner in 1978 which also caught me off guard:

“...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...”⁷¹⁵

So, revelation of our prophets is akin to good-cop, bad-cop? The prophet, the “good cop,” pleads long and earnestly in prayer, and supplicates to the self-ish monarch, the “bad cop,” to relent in his bigotry and come to the realization that he created each of his children equally? God’s infallible will and infinite love is thrown under the bus, just because another revelation said that God would never allow their predecessors to lead the church astray. They would

⁷¹⁴Abraham 1:26-27

⁷¹⁵October 1978 General Conference, also Official Declaration 2

rather place God at fault before admitting their own frailties.

And thus the true meaning of using the name of God in vain ekes out. It is far worse for men to lie that they speak for God than for honest messengers of the Devil to truthfully proselytize depravity. Taking his name in vain has nothing to do with taboo words and nothing to do with using his name in casual conversation. It has everything to do with using his name for your own vain purposes, like saying that God commands you to take multiple wives or throwing God under the bus for every contrivance you come up with for your own selfish interests. The Official Declaration 2 takes the name of God in vain because it blames the failures of men on God, and blames the delay in the correction of those failures on God.

It is easy for even me to find a letter from just a few years earlier in 1969, signed by the first presidency to the leaders of the church, which said this:

From the beginning of this dispensation, Joseph Smith and all succeeding presidents of the Church have taught that Negroes, while spirit children of a common Father, and the progeny of our earthly parents, Adam and Eve, were not yet to receive the priesthood, for reasons which we believe are known to God, but which He has not made fully known to man.

Our living prophet, President David O. McKay, has said, "The seeming discrimination by the Church toward the Negro is not something which originated with man; but goes back into the beginning with God..."

"Revelation assures us that this plan antedates man's mortal existence, extending back to man's pre-existent state."⁷¹⁶

Once again, an anointed one throws God under the bus. How could any prophet who truly knows God say such things? Isn't it ironic that it specifically says that "revelation assures" the doctrine? Not only do they lie by saying it is "not known precisely why" because of the scripture above, but they lie to the face of President David O. McKay.

I'm sorry, ravaging prophets, seers and revelators in sheep's clothing, but God never condoned racism. Neither did Jesus ever condone racism. The doctrine that an entire race should be denied exaltation should have never happened under the guidance

⁷¹⁶Letter from the First Presidency to the leaders of the church, 1969
<http://signaturebookslibrary.org/?p=457>

of a true prophet of God. There is no excuse or explanation except that those who we sustain to be prophets, seers, and revelators are charlatans, and the saving rites and rituals they administer are creations of men.

Always keep your eye on the President of the church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, even if it is wrong, and you do it, the lord will bless you for it, but you don't need to worry. The lord will never let his mouthpiece lead the people astray.⁷¹⁷

Obey even when it is wrong and you will be blessed. But the Millennial Star would disagree:

We have heard men who hold the priesthood remark that they would do anything they were told to do by those who preside over them – even if they knew it was wrong. But such obedience as this is worse than folly to us. It is slavery in the extreme. The man who would thus willingly degrade himself should not claim a rank among intelligent beings until he turns from his folly. A man of God, who seeks for the redemption of his fellows, would despise this idea of seeking another become his slave, who had an equal right with himself to the favor of God; he would rather see him stand by his side, an sworn enemy to wrong, so long as there was place found for it among men. Others, in the extreme exercise of their almighty authority, have taught that such obedience was necessary, and that no matter what the Saints were told to do by their presidents, they should do it without any questions.

When Elders of Israel will so far indulge in these extreme notions of obedience, as to teach them to the people, it is generally because they have it in their hearts to do wrong themselves, and wish to pave the way to accomplish that wrong; or else because they have done wrong, and wish to use the cloak of their authority to cover it with.⁷¹⁸

This is why doctrines change to become mere policies: they are the doctrines of men, not of God. Only a church of man could produce such trickery and lies. Only false prophets are infallible while they are alive, but mistaken when they are dead. These narcissistic men are so infallible that they must blame God for their mistakes. Only a church of man would have to

⁷¹⁷Apostle Marion G. Romney, Conference Report, Oct. 1960, p. 78

⁷¹⁸Millennial Star, Archive Volume 14, pp. 594-595

plead with its God to get him to change his will. Only an idolatrous god would ever need his mind to be changed to align with a society that had already advanced beyond the standards of his prophets. Only a church of man would need to find the will of God through the “united voice,” or unanimous vote of its leaders.

Elder Holland openly admitted that the church always trails behind the world’s morality advancement, to the eventual abandonment what used to be the immovable doctrine and commandment. He proved that neither he, nor his prophet, seer, and revelator peers neither have any foresight to enlighten the world before it advances, nor do they have any intention of leading the world in the advancement of morality.

Here’s kinda what happens. The world is here, and we’re more, we’re more conservative here. And we, we, we’re, we’re not gunna do what the world does. Ya know, live together, or never get married, or whatever. As the world progresses, cultures change. They go here, and then we go here. [hand gestures that the church is advancing behind] And then they go here, and we go here. [the same hand gesture, just farther ahead] And before long, you look up, and we’re perilously close where, where b..., where we would have never have thought to be before. So, let’s stay fixed on gospel principles, and not cultural issues, and not the societal commitments of the time. I’ve said too much, sister Cordon said it best. ⁷¹⁹

The fact that unchangeable dogmatic doctrines that later became *unequivocally condemned* exist demonstrates that the prophet of the time led the church astray. By their own words, those doctrines were *made in the absence of direct revelation*.

The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy. ⁷²⁰

At one time Plural Marriage was *required* by the prophet of God on earth for the highest exaltation. They have since thrown Brigham Young under the bus for this, too. It is as if over a century of strict adherence and devotion to revealed doctrine by my ancestors was all a huge mistake.

It is their direct line to God that gives prophets their claim to moral authority. If they do not lead in

⁷¹⁹Elder Holland, Special Conference for YSA of West Africa, 2021 <https://youtu.be/I3Aaf29dDhA?t=180>

⁷²⁰Journal of Discourses, Vol. 11, p. 269, August 19, 1866)

the advancement of the world’s morality, if they get it wrong often, if they disavow the revelations of their predecessors as theories, then their direct line to God is a lie. In reality, they are only men fumbling around in the dark, who use the name of God in vain to dominate others unrighteously.

Jesus was always quick to point out the doctrines of men. In contrast, his message was simple: the Kingdom of Heaven is comprised by the loving fatherhood of God, and the fraternal love of his children. It is in that beautiful simple truth where salvation and eternal happiness lies.

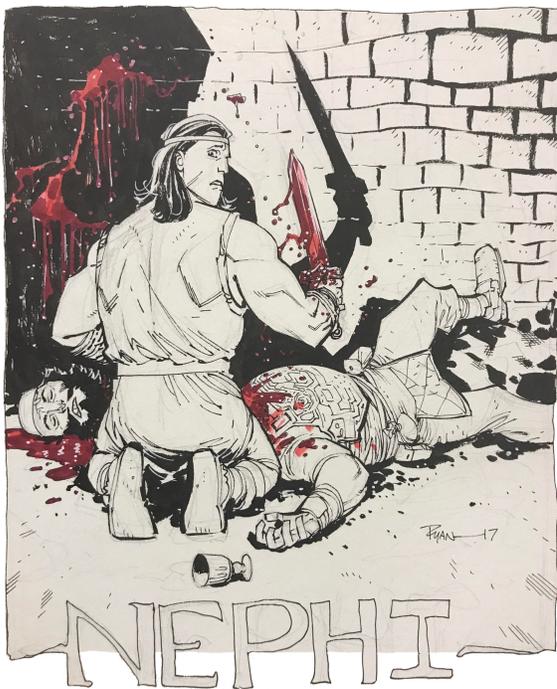
I find irony in that so much of what Leo Tolstoy said about Christianity, which according to our doctrine is supposed to be in apostasy, can be attributed to what our church even though it sells itself the restored church.

The servants of the churches of all denominations, especially of later times, try to show themselves champions of progress in Christianity. They make concessions, wish to correct the abuses that have slipped into the Church, and maintain that one cannot, on account of these abuses, deny the principle itself of a Christian church, which alone can bind all men together in unity and be a mediator between men and God. But this is all a mistake. Not only have churches never bound men together in unity; they have always been one of the principal causes of division between men, of their hatred of one another, of wars, battles, inquisitions, massacres of St. Bartholomew, and so on. And the churches have never served as mediators between men and God. Such mediation is not wanted, and was directly forbidden by Christ, who has revealed his teaching directly and immediately to each man. But the churches set up dead forms in the place of God, and far from revealing God, they obscure him from men’s sight. The churches, which originated from misunderstanding of Christ’s teaching and have maintained this misunderstanding by their immovability, cannot but persecute and refuse to recognize all true understanding of Christ’s words. They try to conceal this, but in vain; for every step forward along the path pointed out for us by Christ is a step toward their destruction.

To hear and to read the sermons and articles in which Church writers of later times of all denominations speak of Christian truths and virtues; to hear or read these skillful arguments that have been elaborated during centuries, and exhortations and professions, which

sometimes seem like sincere professions, one is ready to doubt whether the churches can be antagonistic to Christianity. "It cannot be," one says, "that these people who can point to such men as Chrysostom, Fénelon, Butler, and others professing the Christian faith, were antagonistic to Christianity." One is tempted to say, "The churches may have strayed away from Christianity, they may be in error, but they cannot be hostile to it." But we must look to the fruit to judge the tree, as Christ taught us. And if we see that their fruits were evil, that the results of their activity were antagonistic to Christianity, we cannot but admit that however good the men were—the work of the Church in which these men took part was not Christian. The goodness and worth of these men who served the churches was the goodness and worth of the men, and not of the institution they served. All the good men, such as Francis of Assisi, and Francis of Sales, our Tihon Zadonsky, Thomas à Kempis, and others, were good men in spite of their serving an institution hostile to Christianity, and they would have been still better if they had not been under the influence of the error which they were serving.⁷²¹

Religion and Morality



⁷²¹Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, Chapter III

As with the morality of civil rights, much more needs to be said about morality and religion. To provide contrast for understanding, let us consider atheism. There are two levels in the word atheist. The first is more benign in that it one has a lack of belief in any god. The second is more operative in that one actively believes there cannot be a god.

Regardless of their level, most atheists I have dealt with have a deep sense of morality. Most theists seem to not be able to understand how that could be. Ask any atheists if murdering an innocent person is morally right, and most will say it is not right. Ask any atheists if one man married to more than one wife is morally right, and most will say it is not right. Ask any atheists if active discrimination on the basis of race, gender, or religion is right, and they will say it is not right.

How can they have those morals without religion? I assert that it is because morality is not based on religion. My eyes were opened in philosophy class in college. The atheists in the class seemed to have the deepest understanding of morality, while my morality came from simple obedience to commands. I had not thought morality through at all compared to them. The fact of the matter is, I had no morality. True religion is an individual's personal, sincere search for God. Morality is an ethical system of judgments which evolves with the mores of society.

One of the great tragedies of mankind is that morality has been hijacked by religion. So now people assume that religion and morality have a necessary connection. But the basis of morality is really very simple and doesn't require religion at all.⁷²²

It has been my observation that atheists often possess a heightened moral compass along with an innate ability to identify nonsense which more often than not surpasses most people who subscribe to an institutionalized religion. On the other hand, I have observed that most people who are subscribers of a crystallized religion have a twisted sense of morality along with being more credulous and at ease with imposition. I believe that this is because of their reliance upon a delusion that an incomprehensible mystery of immorality provides their redemption from their crimes.

Joseph Smith used the name of God to go against the moral status quo of his time when he reinstated polygamy. Polygamy was an ancient practice that originally existed in a time when humankind had

⁷²²Arthur C. Clarke

not progressed to the level of morality that exists now. He did it in a time when the morals of his society had already advanced beyond that ancient view. Polygamy isn't the worst of it. Joseph Smith believed concubines before he believed in polygamy. A concubine is an unmarried, sexually subservient mistress. It is an ancient legally agreed upon sexual relationship. He taught that since God was okay with that before, he's okay with it now, and he practiced it in secret.

I can't help wondering why he did this. My mind will not permit me to believe that Jesus would command such a thing. I can't believe that Jesus would push anyone to regress morality to a place where an entire group of people, namely women, are manipulated and even subjugated into polygamous and even polyandrous marriages (polyandrous because he married the wives of other living men).⁷²³ One thought I have had is that Joseph knew that morality and true religion are separate, yet he noticed that he had the power to bend morality at his own whim in his new establishment. Blinded by his new power, he was led by his own carnal desires into justifying an infatuous affair he had with a teenage maid who was living in his home as a domestic help for his wife by vainly purporting that it was given to him in revelation. After that revelation was made, he had given himself full license to have all of the affairs he desired with any number of women.

His affairs weren't affairs as you would imagine anyone having, where two people genuinely fall in love despite an existing marriage. The journals of these women state that he went below that and even coerced several women to secretly marry behind the back of his legal wife Emma, threatening that their eternal salvation as well as the salvation of their families was at stake if they didn't. Many of those women were still married to living husbands! His patterns of manipulation and his defaming of his victims in public when they refused him is that of a sex abuser, not a person with a sense of decency and morality. Some apologists say that he did not consummate most of his plural marriages, but that goes against reason, because if there was going to be no sex, there was no reason to hide it from Emma. Not only did he keep it secret from her, he kept it secret from the world. Without consummation, they would have been play marriages, because the women he married were not supported domestically.

⁷²³"Joseph Smith was sealed to a number of women who were already married."

<https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo>

more gloriously. What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one. I am the same man, and as innocent as I was fourteen years ago; and I can prove them all perjurers. I labored with these apostates

What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one.

I am the same man, and as innocent as I was fourteen years ago and I can prove them all perjurers.⁷²⁴

Joseph committed perjury in the courtroom⁷²⁵ about his secret polyamorous life. He slandered those who crossed him. Many of his closest confidants also secretly practiced polygamy and lied about it in public. All of the events leading up to Joseph's death had to do with his secret practice of polygamy and his illegal attempts to forcibly keep it from becoming exposed. The secrecy of this practice is a red flag to me that he knew dang well it was not morally right to do what he was doing. If Joseph lied so blatantly, even under oath, how can we trust that other things he said weren't lies?

The church openly practiced polygamy as long as they could when they lived outside of the jurisdiction of the United States, where it was illegal. Eventually, Utah wanted to join the United States, many federal laws were passed which threatened church property among other things. The halting of the practice of polygamy was not a revelation, but only the result of its leader yielding to a political expediency, as is abundantly clear in the Official Declaration 1.⁷²⁶ The morals of the people outside of the church, were better than those within. Ironically Utah Mormons considered all on the outside to be heathen. Why does it take a law by the republic of the United States before a prophet, seer, and revelator can see that a certain practice is morally wrong and to expedite its cessation?

Regardless of the true source and justification for the reinstatement of polygamy, the fact is that the morals of the people who were living in the United States at the time of Joseph Smith had already gone beyond polygamy to the more moral one man, one wife state. Polygamy was morally wrong then, and just as it remains morally wrong now.

⁷²⁴History of the Church, vol 6, p. 411

Joseph Smith made this statement preaching from the stand to the Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo on Sunday May 26, 1844. At the time he had secretly taken at over 25 plural wives.

⁷²⁵History of the Church, vol 6, p. 411-412

⁷²⁶Official Declaration 1 <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/od/1>

I must say this is one of the greatest blows to the integrity of Joseph Smith. While he actually might have been originally called by God to be a prophet, this was certainly his pitfall. This isn't the first time that a prophet of God fell because of carnal desires. What about David, who planned the murder of Bathsheba's husband in order to obtain her as another wife? While polygamy was socially acceptable then, murder was not. The record shows David fell from grace because of it. Why does the record not show that Joseph Smith fell from grace? His motives were the same as David's motives when, for example, he sent Orson Hyde on a mission and secretly married Orson's wife Marinda. I think maybe he actually did fall and maybe the record actually should show that. The idea that Joseph is a fallen prophet is not new, David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, wrote extensively on the subject in his pamphlet.⁷²⁷ David also brings up many teachings of Jesus which are in opposition to many things Joseph did in establishing the church the way he did. But to quote it here would consume many pages. I invite you to read it.

Consider what Joseph Smith said in May 26, 1844 in a public sermon:

Come on, ye persecutors! ye false swearers! All hell, boil over! Ye burning mountains, roll down your lava! For I will come out on the top at last. I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him; but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet.⁷²⁸

In my view, this proves Joseph's ignorance about the teachings of Jesus. He was just as ignorant as "masterbuilder" Paul was. Both of them boasted that they built a church better than Jesus did. Both of them were fools. Jesus had no intention of building any outward organization at all,⁷²⁹ let alone any organization which places anyone to be master of others.⁷³⁰

Almost exactly one month after vain boast, on June 27, 1844, he was killed by his enemies in a

⁷²⁷David Whitmer, An address to all believers in Christ, pp. 30-48

⁷²⁸History of the Church: 6:408-409

⁷²⁹John 18:36, Luke 17:20-21

⁷³⁰Matthew 23:8-12

gun battle at Carthage Jail, thus fulfilling his own prophecy:

For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.

Behold, thou art Joseph, and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord, but because of transgression, if thou art not aware thou wilt fall.⁷³¹

It is clear that "following after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires" refers to his secret practice of polygamy, ultimately having married up to 40 women, including mothers and their own daughters, as well as wives of other living men. Many who knew of these secret marriages accused him of changing the doctrine of the church⁷³² to satisfy his own carnal desires. It is clear it was because of his own carnal desires because section 132 specifies that plural marriages must only be with virgins, which he did not do, and for the purpose of raising seed, which he did not do. He destroyed a printing press which exposed his philandering, and he was arrested for the destruction of property which wasn't his. Aside from destroying property, destroying a printing press is particularly offensive to all citizens of the United States. And yet, another of his own revelations says:

We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are called, but few are chosen⁷³³

That scripture speaks truth about organizations where men act in any position of power, and is the reason why the Kingdom of God should never be an earthly establishment which usurps any amount of power over others. It speaks against Joseph Smith, as well as all of his successors who have all exercised a level of unrighteous dominion over their followers. Some more than others, but all nonetheless.

Clearly, this "living church" has faltered several times regarding morality. From an entire race being denied the exaltation due to racial bigotry, to already

⁷³¹Doctrine and Covenants 3:4,9

⁷³²Jacob 2:23-28, 3:5; Doctrine and Covenants 49:16

⁷³³Doctrine and Covenants 121:39-40

accepted morals being broken by the prophet and many of his followers, is clear to me that morality is more of a function of social mores and community ethics than guidance from above. And in the case of the church, its morality is crystallized mores from a bygone era which does its utmost to resist any social advancement. I would agree with Einstein, who said:

I consider ethics to be an exclusively human concern with no superhuman authority behind it.⁷³⁴

A man's ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties and needs; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hopes of reward after death. It is therefore easy to see why the churches have always fought science and persecuted its devotees.⁷³⁵

Both of these ugly parts of Mormon history that I mention above are fruits of the unrighteous dominion of men. It is ironic how the views of the church have changed from what it was before. Polygamy used to be an indispensable doctrine, for example:

I heard the revelation on polygamy, and I believed it with all my heart, and I know it is from God - I know that he revealed it from heaven; I know that it is true, and understand the bearings of it and why it is. "Do you think that we shall ever be admitted as a State into the Union without denying the principle of polygamy?" If we are not admitted until then, we shall never be admitted.⁷³⁶

...that one-wife system not only degenerates the human family, both physically and intellectually, but it is entirely incompatible with philosophical notions of immortality ; it is a lure to temptation, and has always proved a curse to a people.⁷³⁷

And yet, president Hinckley lied in an interview with Larry King, "[polygamy] is not doctrinal."⁷³⁸ How could he be a president of the church and yet be unfamiliar with section 132 of the Doctrine and

⁷³⁴Albert Einstein, *Albert Einstein the Human Side* by Helen Dukas, p. 39

⁷³⁵Albert Einstein, *The Expanded Quotable Einstein* by Alice Calaprice, p. 216

⁷³⁶Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 11:269 (August 19, 1866)

⁷³⁷*Millennial Star*, Volume 15, p. 227

⁷³⁸<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7NazUNGd2E>

Covenants? Is he familiar with the temple marriage ceremony in which the husband still does not give himself to the wife, leaving himself open for receiving other wives? Even the new Gospel Topics essays about polygamy most definitely confirm that it is doctrinal. President Hinckley also said in the same interview: "thou shalt not bear false witness," after saying that plural marriage is not doctrinal. I can hear Jesus saying to that: "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."⁷³⁹

If his [Joseph Smith's] claims and declarations were built upon fraud and deceit, there would appear many errors and contradictions, which would be easy to detect.⁷⁴⁰

Remember my mention of the above quote from Joseph Fielding Smith? Aside from the other contradictions we've already talked about, how easily can you detect a contradiction in the following two canonical verses?

David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant, and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power.⁷⁴¹

Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord.⁷⁴²

Additionally, the verses before Doctrine and Covenants 132:39 specifically says that Abraham, David, and Solomon were righteous in having many wives and concubines. Yet, the Book of Mormon directly contradicts the modern revelation, and condemns David and Solomon, calling their many wives a whoredom and abomination. The context of that quote from Jacob specifically contradicts:

For behold, thus saith the Lord: This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son.⁷⁴³

⁷³⁹Matthew 23:28

⁷⁴⁰Doctrines of Salvation 1:188-189

⁷⁴¹Doctrine and Covenants 132:39

⁷⁴²Jacob 2:24

⁷⁴³Jacob 2:23

Isn't that the very same excuse that Doctrine and Covenants 132 cites for the justification of the practice of polygamy? How could an whoredom or abomination ever be counted as righteousness? The word abomination in English as defined in the dictionary is a vile, shameful, detestable action, and its secondary definition is and atrocious, disgraceful, obscene, repugnant, abhorrent, evil crime. The word whoredom in English is defined as prostitution, and its secondary meaning is idolatry. Jacob said this about whoredoms:

Wo unto them who commit whoredoms, for they shall be thrust down to hell.⁷⁴⁴

Are we supposed to throw God under the bus again and blame this all upon the "ever changing will of the Lord?" What kind of a God are we being asked to believe in if he is supposed to be so inconsistent and moody? Certainly not the God that Jesus taught about, and certainly not the God that I believe in. It is only an idolatrous god who changes his mind like that. It is only an idolatrous god who declares whoredoms, idolatrous practices, to be righteous.

If this is such a blatant contradiction, wouldn't Joseph Fielding Smith's words apply: "our canon is built upon fraud and deceit." The Book of Mormon even contradicts itself within the same chapter. It seems to me that the following two verses are completely out of place and they disturb the literary flow of the entire chapter.

Wherefore, this people shall keep my commandments, saith the Lord of Hosts, or cursed be the land for their sakes.

For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things.⁷⁴⁵

Why do they disturb the flow? Because the context around the verses is talking about the abuse of women involved in polygamy. Because these verses contradict everything that is said both before and after those verses in the chapter. It is as if Joseph did not entirely approve of what was being written, and inserted his own "prophetic" (read: narcissistic) loophole. There are a few reasons why his loophole makes no sense to me beyond the obvious contradiction.

⁷⁴⁴2 Nephi 9:36

⁷⁴⁵Jacob 2:29-30

1. Polygamy does not raise more seed. If you have 50 men and 50 women on an island, what is the fastest way to raise the most children? It is to give each woman a man. It is proven that Brigham Young's wives and many other polygamist wives were much less productive than they would have been had they not been polygamous.
2. With that said, "The Lord of Hosts" said that Polygamy is used to "raise up seed." Is "The Lord of Hosts" so unintelligent that he actually thinks that polygamy increases the seed when it really doesn't?
3. If the purpose (or excuse) was to "raise up seed," then where is "the seed" from Joseph Smith's 40 wives?
4. The blurb about commandments and the land being cursed if they don't obey goes contrary to what Jesus taught and seems to instead be an appeal to authority for obedience of the commandments of men than appeal to follow Jesus.

It is clear to me that polygamy was never a principle of God and both racism as well as polygamy should not only have been changed way before it was apparent that the church was forced by evolving social morality to change, but both of them should have never been instigated in the first place if there was true prophetic insight and real communication with Jesus himself.

The answer is no. Morality and ethics are social, not spiritual or authoritarian. While true religion might provide some higher destiny in eternity for the purposes for morality, it is clear that morality in and of itself is not religious. Organized religion has instead most often stifled moral progress, and the institution of Mormonism is not exempt from stifling moral progress just the same as any other organized religion has.

You find as you look around the world that every single bit of human progress in humane feeling, every improvement in the criminal law, every step toward the diminution of war, every step toward better treatment of the colored races, or every mitigation of slavery, every moral progress that there has been in the world, has been consistently opposed by the organized churches of the world. I say deliberately that the Christian religion, as organized in its churches, has been and still is, the principal enemy of moral progress in the world.⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴⁶Bertrand Russell, Philosopher

Pharisee

In the following word definitions, I show series of discoveries which led me to understand what Pharisee truly means.

- Pharisee: derived from Aramaic Parisha, meaning someone who professes to be set apart or separated: a separatist.
- Separatist: a person who supports the separation of a particular group of people from a larger body on the basis of ethnicity, religion, or gender.
- Prejudice: preconceived, usually unfavorable, judgments toward people or a person because of gender, political opinion, social class, age, disability, religion, sexuality, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, or other personal characteristics.
- Discrimination: the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of religion, race, age, or sex.
- Bigotry: a state of mind where a person strongly and unfairly dislikes personal beliefs, race, religion, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or other group characteristics.
- Self-righteousness: the feeling or attitude which comes from loyalty to the moral superiority of a separatist group; that one's beliefs, actions, or affiliations are more correct than those of anyone else on earth. Often leads to hypocrisy because of the self-deception required to be an elitist while at the same time being stubbornly unwilling to recognize possibility of any fault in one's preconceptions or beliefs.

It is ironic that a church which bears the name of Jesus is vehemently separatist as it asserts that it has his only true apostles is most exact in declaring, heeding and carrying out his doctrines, yet in this it goes against the things which Jesus tirelessly campaigned against and for which he ultimately lost his life because it was the sanctimonious elitists which conspired against Jesus and got him killed.

The irony is intensified by the paradox that the church views the religious freedom, as prescribed in the United States constitution, as insufficient for it to practice its tenets. Consequently, it vainly calls upon the government of the free country, which gave it the freedom to institutionalize in the first place, to allow it more fully practice its doctrines of elitism, separatism, prejudice, discrimination, and bigotry. Those core beliefs inherently require an intrusion

upon the rights of people which it considers unworthy because they ignore its bylaws.

Seers

Before you read this section, I will ask that you would please keep in mind the following quote. It is one of many teachings that give me license for what I'm about to say.

I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are led by Him. I am fearful they settle down in a state of blind self-security, trusting their eternal destiny in the hands of their leaders with a reckless confidence that in itself would thwart the purposes of God in their salvation.⁷⁴⁷

Legitimacy

To start, let us consider the meaning of the word prophet. Although the scriptures often condemn soothsayers, in trying to find the etymology for prophet, I was surprised to find that soothsayer was often synonymous to prophet and the word was used in other translations for prophet. I ever thought that it was soothsayer – someone who gives comforting sayings, like a fortune teller. But the e is not present, and the word is sooth-sayer, with sooth being old English for truth, a word which meant something entirely different. In that case, a truth-sayer seems to make more sense than prophet, which comes from Greek *προ* (*pro*)-, meaning in front, and *φήτης* (*fitis*), to speak, a public speaker or spokesperson or advocate. In fact, the Greek word used in the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, came from the Hebrew “navi,” which means “from the lips,” or spokesperson. The Greek *προφήτης* (*profitis*) was translated to Latin *vates*, which means poet or bard, but that was later avoided because of pagan associations with *vates*. I descend into etymology because I think Thomas Paine was onto something when he said:

There is not, throughout the whole book called the Bible, any word that describes to us what we call a poet, nor any word that describes what we call poetry. The case is, that the word prophet, to which latter times have affixed a new idea, was the Bible word for poet, and the word prophesying meant the art of making poetry. It also meant the art of playing poetry to a tune upon any instrument of music.

We read of prophesying with pipes, tabrets, and horns – of prophesying with harps, with

⁷⁴⁷Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, vol. 9, p. 150

psalteries, with cymbals, and with every other instrument of music then in fashion. Were we now to speak of prophesying with a fiddle, or with a pipe and tabor, the expression would have no meaning or would appear ridiculous, and to some people contemptuous, because we have changed the meaning of the word.⁷⁴⁸

Regardless of what the original meaning of word for Prophet may be, let us consider our canonical definition for the words prophet, seer, and revelator.

And the king said that a seer is greater than a prophet.

And Ammon said that a seer is a revelator and a prophet also; and a gift which is greater can no man have, except he should possess the power of God, which no man can; yet a man may have great power given him from God.

But a seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known.⁷⁴⁹

Jesus himself describes how to identify illegitimate prophets. You identify them by their fruits.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.⁷⁵⁰

Considering those verses, it should be apparent that:

- The fruit of a prophet is prophecy.

⁷⁴⁸Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part First Section 5
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00painiala#page/13/mode/1up>

This is just the beginning, Paine goes on to explain and support his view.

⁷⁴⁹Mosiah 8:15-17

⁷⁵⁰Matthew 7:15-20; 3 Nephi 14:15-20

- The fruit of a revelator is revelation.
- The fruit of a seer, the greatest of all, is making known hidden things which otherwise could not be known.

While the act of revelation could be construed into the act of getting answers for administria, and the act of prophesying could be construed into simply preaching the gospel, seership is in its own league. Regardless, both prophecy and seership should produce results that are easily identified. If a car does not roll, is it a car? If an aircraft doesn't fly, is it an aircraft? If a seer does not make hidden things known, as the Book of Mormon prescribes, is he a seer?

In studying the scriptures, I knew that any true prophet or apostle is sent from God and that they have to be a literal witness of Him, with their physical eyes and ears. The core call of prophets and apostles is to talk of their experiences with Him. I have never seen that. They seem to subversively avoid the question of their literal witness of the resurrected Jesus, using carefully planned sentences that leave room for belief.

I gave them the benefit of the doubt. I truly believed that the modern prophet spoke with God, face to face as Jacob and Moses did.⁷⁵¹ I believed he had regular meetings with Jesus. I believed that Jesus himself truly was personally leading the church and teaching his apostles. I believed that their regular talks with Him gave them insight to the gospel and universe that no one else on earth has.

Because the fruits I outlined above have ever been difficult for me to detect in modern seers, I have always wanted to ask the Prophet some direct questions pertaining to this belief – to turn it into knowledge. After all, it is His calling to be an approachable human being. Isn't that the purpose for the existence of a living prophet? It seems there might be a good reason that the prophet made himself inaccessible for direct questions in casual encounters with anyone. Even though they hide, a few living prophets have been interviewed and have been asked exactly what I want to ask. Here is an interview of President Hinckley:

Q: You are the president, prophet, seer and revelator of the Mormon Church?

A: I am so sustained, yes. (Laughter)

Q: Now, how would that compare to the Catholic Church? Do you see yourself as Catholics would see the pope?

A: Oh, I think in that we're both seen as the head officer of the church, yes.

Q: And this belief in contemporary revelation and prophecy? As the prophet, tell us how that works. How do you receive divine revelation? What does it feel like?

A: Let me say first that we have a great body of revelation, the vast majority of which came from the prophet Joseph Smith. We don't need much revelation. We need to pay more attention to the revelation we've already received.

Now, if a problem should arise on which we don't have an answer, we pray about it, we may fast about it, and it comes. Quietly. Usually no voice of any kind, but just a perception in the mind. I liken it to Elijah's experience. When he sought the Lord, there was a great wind, and the Lord was not in the wind. And there was an earthquake, and the Lord was not in the earthquake. And a fire, and the Lord was not in the fire. But in a still, small voice. Now that's the way it works.⁷⁵²

Here is another interview:

RB: As the world leader of the Church, how are you in touch with God? Can you explain that for me?

GBH: I pray. I pray to Him. Night and morning. I speak with Him. I think He hears my prayers. As He hears the prayers of others. I think He answers them.

RB: But more than that, because you're leader of the Church. Do you have a special connection?

GBH: I have a special relationship in terms of the Church as an institution. Yes.

RB: And you receive.....

GBH: For the entire Church.

RB: You receive?

GBH: Now we don't need a lot of continuing revelation. We have a great, basic reservoir of revelation. But if a problem arises, as it does occasionally, a vexatious thing with which we have to deal, we go to the Lord in prayer. We discuss it as a First Presidency

⁷⁵¹Genesis 32:30; Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 5:4

⁷⁵²<http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/SUNDAY-INTERVIEW-Musings-of-the-Main-Mormon-2846138.php#page-2>

and as a Council of the Twelve Apostles. We pray about it and then comes the whisperings of a still small voice. And we know the direction we should take and we proceed accordingly.

RB: And this is a Revelation?

GBH: This is a Revelation.

RB: How often have you received such revelations?

GBH: Oh, I don't know. I feel satisfied that in some circumstances we've had such revelation. It's a very sacred thing that we don't like to talk about a lot. A very sacred thing.⁷⁵³

In both of the above interviews, President Hinckley could not bring himself to answer in the sure affirmative that he is indeed a prophet, seer, and revelator in practice, and he gives no indication of any spiritual gift of seership, revelation, or prophecy by virtue of his calling and priesthood keys. Instead, he says he only prays and gets answers like any of us would. He implies that any special relationship he has with God is not because of a spiritual gift, but it is because of his position in the church as an institution.

I was taken aback when he said, "We have a great body of revelation ... we don't need much revelation." Did the prophet-president of a church whose core tenet is continuing revelation, really say that? Nephi would meet what he said with contempt.⁷⁵⁴ Leo Tolstoy seems to have predicted that he would say that. It is ironic that so much of what Tolstoy wrote also applies to the restored church, even though he was talking about catholicism.

"We teach the people nothing new, nothing but what they believe, only in a more perfect form," say the Churchmen. This is just what the man did who tied up the full-grown chicken and thrust it back into the shell it had come out of.⁷⁵⁵

Another interesting interview is that of Joseph F. Smith in the Reed Smoot hearings, where he testified before Congress that he was no different from anyone else, and testified that he had never received a revelation in the sense that a seer would receive as the Book of Mormon defines:

Senator Dubois. Have you received any revelation from God, which has been submitted by you and the apostles to the body

⁷⁵³<http://www.abc.net.au/compass/intervs/hinckley.htm>

⁷⁵⁴2 Nephi 28:21-30

⁷⁵⁵Leo Tolstoy, The Kingdom of God is Within You, Chapter III

of the church in their semi-annual conference, which revelation has been sustained by that conference through the word "revelation" is used very vaguely upholding of their hands?

Mr. Smith. Since when?

Senator Dubois. Since you became president of the church.

Mr. Smith. No, sir; none whatever.

Senator Dubois. Individual members of the church can receive individual revelations, can they not?

Mr. Smith. If I may be permitted, the here all the time. No man can get revelations at his will. If a man is prayerful and earnest in his desire and lives a righteous life and he desires information and intelligence, he will inquire of the Lord, and the Lord will manifest to him, through the presence and influence of his Spirit, his mind, and his will. That would be a revelation to that individual.⁷⁵⁶

...[courtroom babble skipped]...

Senator Dubois. Have you received any individual revelations yourself, since you became president of the church under your own definition, even, of a revelation?

Mr. Smith. I can not say that I have.

Senator Dubois. Can you say that you have not?

Mr. Smith. No; I can not say that I have not.

Senator Dubois. Then you do not know whether you have received any such revelation as you have described, or whether you have not?

Mr. Smith. Well, I can say this: That if I live as I should in the line of my duties, I am susceptible, I think, of the impressions of the Spirit of the Lord upon my mind at any time, just as any good Methodist or any other good church member might be. And so far as that is concerned, I say yes; I have had impressions of the Spirit upon my mind very frequently, but they are not in the sense of revelations.⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁶Testimony of Important Witnesses ... to the United States Senate

<http://books.google.com/books?id=b0Tu76jv7jQC&pg=PA247>

⁷⁵⁷Testimony of Important Witnesses ... to the United States Senate

<http://books.google.com/books?id=b0Tu76jv7jQC&pg=PA248>

The definition of revelation, according to Joseph F. Smith, is indeterminate when compared to our canonical doctrine. He said that any good Methodist can receive revelation just as well as he does!

These interviews were pretty bad news to me. It almost makes me gag for having been so naive. At least they were honest when they were asked direct questions. Some other answers surprised me, like, why does President Hinckley reject both Joseph Smith and Lorenzo Snow's revelations in the following interview?

Q: There are some significant differences in your beliefs. For instance, don't Mormons believe that God was once a man?

A: I wouldn't say that. There was a little couplet coined, "As man is, God once was. As God is, man may become." Now that's more of a couplet than anything else. That gets into some pretty deep theology that we don't know very much about.

Q: So you're saying the church is still struggling to understand this?

A: Well, as God is, man may become. We believe in eternal progression. Very strongly. We believe that the glory of God is intelligence and whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the Resurrection. Knowledge, learning, is an eternal thing. And for that reason, we stress education. We're trying to do all we can to make of our people the ablest, best, brightest people that we can.

⁷⁵⁸

President Hinckley has betrayed both Joseph Smith's and Lorenzo Snow's prophetic teachings. He has diminished this doctrine to a couplet, a phrase, an alliteration, a cliché, without any real doctrinal importance. Now that the doctrine might have become controversial, president Hinckley backpedals that the doctrine is too deep, and it is something we don't know very much about. So much linking with the chain of previous revelators' so-called eternal truths.

When I asked him to characterize God's conjugal relationship, he replied, "We don't speculate on that a lot. Brigham Young said if you went to Heaven and saw God it would be Adam and Eve. I don't know what he meant by that." Pointing to a grim-faced portrait of the Lion of the

⁷⁵⁸<http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/SUNDAY-INTERVIEW-Musings-of-the-Main-Mormon-2846138.php>

Lord, as Young was called, he said, "There he is, right there. I'm not going to worry about what he said about those things." I asked whether Mormon theology was a form of polytheism. "I don't have the remotest idea what you mean," he said impatiently.⁷⁵⁹

These are things that are coming from the mouth of someone who is upheld and sustained as a living prophet, seer, and revelator, with the same regard as the prophets of old, with Nephi, with the brother of Jared, who were shown the history and future of the world in great detail, who knew God personally as a close friend.

Can you imagine Abinadi saying, "I'm not going to worry about what previous prophets have said." Or, when asked about what God is, "I don't have the remotest idea what you mean." Those are poor excuses for someone who is supposed to meet with Jesus personally. How could he pretend to say "I don't know what he meant by that." HE is our living prophet! He should know what the question meant! Playing dumb is not acceptable for someone who should know. So much for upholding the relationship we all are supposed to believe he has with God. It seems as though the charge to never speak evil of the Lord's anointed has granted those at the head a lack of accountability to their subjects.

Jennifer Willis wrote a letter to Dallin H. Oaks which quoted scripture after scripture⁷⁶⁰ about her search for the second comforter.⁷⁶¹ Elder Oaks replied to her letter, and said what I think might be the most ignorant thing he could have said:

You also speak of the "special apostolic witness of Christ." Where do you find that kind of "witness" defined or even mentioned in the scriptures?⁷⁶²

Is Elder Oaks really that unfamiliar with the scriptures to not know where an apostolic witness of Christ is "defined or even mentioned?" Maybe he has been shirking his responsibility for daily scripture study. I would reveal to this revelator's ignorance:

After the betrayal and apostasy of Judas Iscariot, they needed to fill his slot. What was the requisite? It was "to be a witness with us of his resur-

⁷⁵⁹Hinckley Interview in Lives of the Saint, New Yorker, January 2002

⁷⁶⁰D&C 93:1, 132:21-23; 1 Nephi 10:17-19, 11:1, 14:10, 32:7; 2 Nephi 2 Nephi 9:41, 31:14,17 32:6 ...

⁷⁶¹<http://peace-in-paradise.blogspot.com/2015/06/prophets-dallin-h-oaks-response-to-my.html>

⁷⁶²<http://tinyurl.com/odpu2lb> <http://tinyurl.com/p9puqzp>

rection.”⁷⁶³ What does it mean to be a witness of the resurrection of Jesus? A witness would have to not just had a vision in their mind of the resurrected Jesus, but also personally seen with their physical eyes and interacted with the reality of his existence somehow. Here’s what those witnesses did, they’d testify that “This Jesus hath God raised up, we all are witnesses.”⁷⁶⁴ It seems that the word “witness” has somehow been dumbed down to being willing to testify about something without having actually observed anything. Wouldn’t that actually be perjury?

Paul wasn’t directly called to apostleship by the other apostles, but he claimed he was an apostle and fought to become an apostle, and the other apostles didn’t like that. What was his reason for his claim to be an apostle? It was that he asserted that he had seen the resurrected Jesus:

Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?⁷⁶⁵

To me, Oaks proves he is ignorant of the scriptures confirming Thomas Paine’s claim that “Those who believe them most, are those who know least about [the scriptures].”⁷⁶⁶ He is also saying that he isn’t really an apostle because he is admitting that he has never seen Jesus. If he had seen Jesus, he would have taken any and every chance to witness that he had. After all, that is what he is supposed to do – that is his calling, to testify of having witnessed the resurrected Jesus, isn’t it?

As part of the Second Anointing, a ritual by which one’s calling and election is made sure, the second comforter is received, and that second comforter is Jesus Christ himself. In that instance, Jesus himself should appear and the visions of eternity will be opened:

“...When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter.” To receive the other Comforter is to have Christ appear to him and to see the visions of eternity.⁷⁶⁷

If this is true, then all of those who have had their Second Anointing would have had that experience,

⁷⁶³Acts 1:22

⁷⁶⁴Acts 2:32

⁷⁶⁵1 Corinthians 9:1

⁷⁶⁶Age of Reason, part 3, section 1

⁷⁶⁷Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, “Calling and Election Sure” 80

including all of the apostles. As one of many who have had this Second Anointing, Tom Phillips spoke of his confusion with not having seen Jesus as part of it. The more interesting part was what he was told to say to those who would ask him about seeing Christ: (a transcript)

Some time later, a couple of years later I think it was, I did ask one of the general authorities. I said, “well, hang on, Christ never appeared to me, is this going to be some future event or am I actually lacking in something or what?”

What he said to me was, “Tom, what we’re advised by the prophet to say, if anyone ever asks us that question, whether we’ve seen Christ or not, we just look at them in the eyes, and we say, we have been counseled by the prophet not to discuss such sacred experiences.”

Now when he said that to me, I thought, “but that means saying I have.” And he kind of just looked at me. I said, “I’m not prepared to say that. Because, if I say that to people I know, if they were to ask me that question and I said that, they would go out and say Tom Phillips has seen Christ. That’s not true! I would have to say to them: no. Now, I was instructed not to say no.” I would assume that applies to the apostles and president Monson as well. Because if it is true that they’ve seen him – I don’t know, the whole Bible and especially the New Testament is based on the testimony of apostles that declare Christ. Even Paul, who came after this thing, still testified of his “vision” of Christ. We don’t hear that anymore, but they do allude to it. They won’t come out honestly and say no, we haven’t seen.⁷⁶⁸

Apparently when you hear a General Authority say, “We don’t like to discuss such sacred experiences,” it means that they are pretentiously withholding the answer of “no.” They are *lying* by withholding the whole truth. They lie by allowing the assumption. They lie by leading people to believe things about them that they are not.

After noticing the phenomenon of avoiding discussion, I sought out others who may have talked about this, and found the following, which complements the experience of Tom Phillips:

My grandfather told me the same thing when I directly asked him what went on, experientially speaking, in the Salt Lake temple in June 1978,

⁷⁶⁸<http://infantsonthrones.com/the-summons-tom-phillips-vs-thomas-s-monson-part-2/> 51:09 to 52:45

when it was supposedly “revealed” to Spencer W. Kimball (and shared with members of the Quorum of the 12 there at that time) that a change in Mormon Church doctrine and policy on priesthood and Blacks was now necessary.

My grandfather, Ezra Taft Benson, replied that it was one of the most spiritual experiences of his life and was too sacred to talk about.

End of story.⁷⁶⁹

I challenge you to start noticing thought-stopping platitude, “too sacred to talk about.” I have seen it repeatedly after I became aware of its existence. President Hinckley said it in one of the interviews I included above. Elder Ballard says it in the “Special Witnesses of Christ” video.⁷⁷⁰ An apostle is supposed to be a witness. What good is a witness who refuses to talk about what he’s witnessed? Why wouldn’t a witness want to talk about their prophetic experiences in any detail?

I can only come up with one reason why anyone wouldn’t want to talk about an experience they had. It is because they can’t truthfully testify of its veracity. What happened to the kind of prophets that stand up in a court of law and testify, “And the Lord said unto me: Stretch forth thy hand and prophesy, saying: Thus saith the Lord...”⁷⁷¹ in a court of law like Abinadi did? Abinadi didn’t tread lightly or tiptoe around the truth by implying it, he didn’t hide it because it was sacred, he said it outright, without compromise. I’m inclined to think that works of fiction have the only occurrence of such integrity and courage. If they are so willing to lie by withholding the truth, then who is their master?⁷⁷²

Why is it that sacred things should not be talked about? Why weren’t the ancient prophets timid about prophesying that which is sacred? Do we fear that the expression of truth will cause lightning bolts strike us down from an idolatrous god? Surely that can’t be it. The word “sacred” is all too often used as an excuse to omit falsity, to omit incriminating truth, to cause conformity, to delay thinking, and I dare say, even as an excuse to uphold secret oaths to secret societies.

Jesus taught that the truth does not fear exposure as lies do.⁷⁷³ God is truth,⁷⁷⁴ and truth never fears full expression. It is dishonesty which is silenced by fear.

⁷⁶⁹ Steve Benson, <http://exmormon.org/phorum/read.php?2,1019999,1020450#msg-1020450>

⁷⁷⁰ <https://youtu.be/srYKbh4ASuw?t=2460>

⁷⁷¹ Mosiah 12:2

⁷⁷² John 8:44

⁷⁷³ John 3:20-21

⁷⁷⁴ John 14:6

Only a sacred lie fears open expression, discussion, and dissection.

Here is the actual answer they mutter under their breath when they use the “too sacred” hullabaloo: “I can’t bring myself to lie and say I have seen Jesus, and I can’t bring myself to tell the truth and say I haven’t seen him, so I need to use subterfuge to justify my silence.” Yet, that silence speaks louder than they would like it to. In so many words, their actual answer is, “my secret oath of fraud is too sacred to talk about.”

I found the following two comments in comment boards of a Deseret News article, Mormons navigate faith and doubt in a digital age:

Calling the family proclamation less than a revelation is a political expediency, but if it is not from God to his prophets, seers and revelators (my poster bears the signature of all 15) it becomes easy to dismiss just about every message from the Brethren with few exceptions. Our faith is indeed shifting these days.⁷⁷⁵

For me the result was realizing that LDS leaders can be wrong. Now its sorting out what they got right and what was wrong. To this day I ask myself if what is being said in Conference is right or wrong. Its between me and God I guess.

The idea that we are all imperfect is both comforting and scary. The result of an imperfect man being called of God and making a bunch of mistakes along the way is scary to me.⁷⁷⁶

If we must constantly filter for ourselves whether they got it right and whether they got it wrong, then where does that leave us? What is their purpose if they don’t reliably fulfill their calling as channels of revelation from God?

One special top apostle, and fourteen other twelve apostles are called by God, ordained, anointed, and given full priesthood authority and the keys to act for him, to be his mouthpiece to not only the church, but the entire world, but they don’t actually reveal anything. They quote poets. They quote other theologians. They even quote themselves, as if that gives them more legitimacy. They restate the things they like about their predecessors, and omit the things they don’t like. If it is a virtue for such men to play dumb and avoid doctrines of their predecessors (let

⁷⁷⁵ Third try screen name, Mapleton, UT, Mormons navigate faith and doubt in a digital age, July 26, 2013

⁷⁷⁶ Dustman, Gallup, NM, Mormons navigate faith and doubt in a digital age, July 26, 2013

alone the deep ones, where they fear to venture these days), then I honestly feel like I am better off searching for truth from God on my own. I don't want to have to sift through their mistakes as well. I don't want to have to follow people who can't tell the truth. Of this Jesus said,

And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.⁷⁷⁷

As I have previously observed, the first chapter of Acts specifies the requirement for apostleship: *to be a witness with us of his resurrection*. That means apostles should have a concrete, physical witness of the risen Jesus in order to be worthy of the title of apostle.

If an apostle cannot testify that he has seen the risen Jesus, then is he truly an apostle? If they say that their experience is too sacred to talk about, is that really a testimony of what they have seen? Is such folly beholden to the veracity and validity of a church that claims to be *the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth*?⁷⁷⁸ How can anything be true if an infestation of lies has cracked its foundation?

Oh, if I could teach you this one principle. A testimony is to be found in the bearing of it!⁷⁷⁹

Another way to seek a testimony seems astonishing when compared with the methods of obtaining other knowledge. We gain or strengthen a testimony by bearing it. Someone even suggested that some testimonies are better gained on the feet bearing them than on the knees praying for them.⁷⁸⁰

They unintentionally reveal their true immorality as they teach that the way to gain a testimony is to repeat what you may not yet believe to others. They effectively teach that lying is a virtue that leads to faith. They spill their secret that the manipulative *Illusory Truth Effect*⁷⁸¹ is the best tool they have to

⁷⁷⁷Luke 6:39-40

⁷⁷⁸Doctrine and Covenants 1:30

⁷⁷⁹Boyd K. Packer repeatedly taught this. Some instances:

- *That All May Be Edified*, 1982
- *The Candle of the Lord*, 1983
- *The Quest for Spiritual Knowledge* 2007

⁷⁸⁰Dallin H. Oaks, *Testimony* 2008

⁷⁸¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illusory_truth_effect

get you to believe anything they say. For an ethical person, to bear false witness should never be an acceptable method for gaining a true witness.

If you tell a big lie enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it.⁷⁸²

How reliable are the testimonies of the apostles if they dare to teach their method of false attestation? They effectively let it slip that they themselves can and do bear testimony for that which they have never truly witnessed. This shows the level of integrity that these men employ for their calling: they charge their followers to bear false witness in order to gain a true witness. Maybe they are repeating the lie to convince themselves, too. This actually makes more sense as I consider the other fruits of their works. They try to cover up the truth of their history. They disparage the revelations of those that came before them. They ignore the anti-establishment teachings of Jesus. In their minds, they are justified in the end, because lying to yourself feels good, and they teach that good feelings are the testament of the Spirit. The more comfortable the lie is, the more true it must be.

I have heard some people exclaim, "but they're so nice!" I have heard some say that when they witness president Hinckley or president Monson speak, they've been overwhelmed with how amiable, good-natured, and pleasant they are, and they are overcome with the feeling that these are truly prophets of God. Someone so warmhearted could not possibly be nefarious. A nice person could never be lying. How could people who are so nice, be corrupt? As I was watching *Into The Woods* with my children, I discovered a morsel of wisdom in two of the songs.

And take extra care with strangers,
Even flowers have their dangers.
And though scary is exciting,
Nice is different than good.⁷⁸³

You're so nice.
You're not good,
You're not bad,
You're just nice!⁷⁸⁴

It does not matter who is right, it only matters who is nice. In the real world, nice does not mean good. It does not mean strength and honor nor integrity and honesty. If anything, that which is nice and pretty on the outside has the greatest disguise. It is a whited

⁷⁸²Joseph Goebbels

⁷⁸³Stephen Sondheim, "I Know Things Now," *Into The Woods*

⁷⁸⁴Stephen Sondheim, "The Last Midnight," *Into The Woods*

sepulcher. It is the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. It is the proverbial poisoned apple.

Charisma is a crucial lure for confidence men (con artists), Ponzis, charlatans, or wolves in sheep's clothing. None of those impostors would gain credence if they weren't nice. This is probably what is meant in the ironic teaching that an angel of light can be Satan himself,⁷⁸⁵ or that sin is most often presented in a charming and attractive way. I guess they should very well know about this double standard because they seem to use this doublespeak as a shroud.

What is the character of a man accepts leadership of a religious organization, with the titles of apostle, prophet, seer, and revelator, who uses subversive language or fools himself as he repeatedly testifies of something he has no witness? I will tell you the reality of his character: it is that of a hypocrite, a charlatan, and more simply just a theologian. If he is unwilling or unable to delve into deep doctrine, he is a pretty bad theologian, scriptorian and historian. He and his peers are lawyers and businessmen who act like the board of directors of a large corporation. If they were channels of revelation, they would be solving world problems, not quibbling over coffee and tea, or the trivialities of their bureaucracy.

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.⁷⁸⁶

It is amazing how this perspective demystifies the teachings of Jesus. Members of the church fervently believe that their prophets are prophets, in the most plain sense of the word, not apologetic redefinition. I know, because I believed. I surely believed that they speak with Jesus in the very literal sense, not allegorically at all. I devoutly preached such ideas on my mission. I have vivid memories of pointing to their pictures in the Ensign, and proclaiming that these men share the same plane with Moses, and talk face

to face with God.⁷⁸⁷ I taught this to every prospective member.

When I discovered the secret Second Anointing ordinance, my perception of these men changed. That anointing prescribes that salvation is guaranteed. All impropriety, like *Lying for the Lord*,⁷⁸⁸ becomes permissible because it grants and preserves their status and their institution.

"But the emperor has nothing at all on!" Said a little child.

"Listen to the voice of innocence!" Exclaimed his father; and what the child had said was whispered from one to another.

"But he has nothing at all on!" At last cried out all the people. The emperor was suddenly embarrassed, for he knew that the people were right; but he thought the procession must go on now! And the lords of the bedchamber took greater pains than ever, to appear holding up the robes although, in reality, there were no robes at all.⁷⁸⁹

These are seers who do not see, prophets who do not prophesy, revelators who do not reveal. All of their subjects refuse to notice. The procession must still go on!

When they arrived at their station, they may have realized that they did not gain any gift to speak face to face with Jesus; that they did not gain the gifts of the prophets in the canonical scriptures. They must keep up the ruse or lose it all. They lie as they accept adulation for something they are not, because they are "so sustained." They lie by leading people to believe that they speak with Jesus himself regularly and are directly led by him. They bear false witness as a testimony for things they have not seen. They charge their followers to do as they do, and bear an unfounded testimony in something that they may not entirely believe themselves. They place the livelihood of their institution above all else, even their own decency. Real truth seekers suffer as the fifteen twelve apostles and sycophants sit in those cushy red conference seats and enjoy their rockstar status, while not producing anything seers should produce. They excommunicate to slander, defame, and disrepute those who dare to say anything that could bring their lofty ostentatious reputation back to reality. These hypocrites are the lawyers, scribes and pharisees of our day.

⁷⁸⁵2 Corinthians 11:14

⁷⁸⁶Matthew 12:34-37

⁷⁸⁷Exodus 33:9-11

⁷⁸⁸>150 Lies: <http://www.mormonthink.com/lying.htm>

⁷⁸⁹Hans Christian Andersen, *The Emperor's New Clothes*

Red flags have raised in my mind as I have noticed the strategy religious confidence men use to gain validity with their followers. They lead their credulous sheep along as they make provisions that make it impossible for them to fail. Whatever they say is accepted without sincere consideration of the opposing view because their followers believe their prophet is sent from God himself. Those charismatic leaders plan their escape from accountability by employing plausible deniability, subjective validation, confirmation bias, and many other techniques that have been given names only recently. Those who do not believe are irrelevant because they are labeled as heathen. They are under the influence of the devil. Critical thought is dismissed as persecution. If anyone calls out inconsistencies, the believers tell them to be quiet and to leave the church alone.

This applies to all religious fraud. Mormonism is not immune. For example, "Faith precedes the miracle" is a catch-phrase used specifically in Mormonism. If the belief is there, the confidence man cannot lose. If good comes of it, the bias for belief is confirmed. Any misfortune should be rationalized to align with the belief, especially the original premise, that not enough faith was there, or someone did something wrong. I used that reason countless times for justification, that I must not have had enough faith or that I must have failed to obey a petty commandment.

Confirmation bias works in their favor, even for miracles. The latin word *miracle* would be better translated as *wonder*. It is a surprise, something strange, something unexpected. If faith precedes it, then it is expected, so a miracle would not be wondrous. As people subconsciously realize this, because of their confirmation bias, they seem to purposefully try to identify banal coincidences as miracles and they quickly forget occurrences that do not align with their belief. In many cases, as time passes, those banalities become embellished as have ancient hero stories. This bias for belief is a proven psychological condition that applies to all believers, not just Mormonism.

Joseph Smith employed this technique for his miracles. People like Lucy Harris and Isaac Hale called out the fraud, but that made no difference in the eyes of the believers. In one such instance, Joseph Smith was presented with a Greek psalter.

Pointing to the capital letters at the commencement of each verse, he said: "Them figures is

Egyptian hieroglyphics; and them which follows, is the interpretation of the hieroglyphics, written in the reformed Egyptian. Them characters is like the letters that was engraven on the golden plates."⁷⁹⁰

After reading that quote, I was reminded of the Joseph's Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language, which does *exactly* as he said.⁷⁹¹ That serves as proof, to me. It also seems like the grammar used in his response more closely matches the original grammar of the book of Mormon.

Sometimes Mr. Smith speaks as a prophet, and sometimes as a mere man. If he gave a wrong opinion respecting the book, he spoke as a mere man.⁷⁹²

Do you see the escape? If he gets it right, it is of God, but if he gets it wrong, it is his human frailty. He cannot fail. Thomas Paine gives many examples of this in his books. Here is one that shows the double-speak that the book of Jeremiah uses to escape responsibility.

Everything relating to Jeremiah shows him to have been a man of an equivocal character; in his metaphor of the potter and the clay, chap. xviii., he guards his prognostications in such a crafty manner as always to leave himself a door to escape by, in case the event should be contrary to what he had predicted.

In the 7th and 8th verses of that chapter he makes the Almighty to say, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and destroy it. If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Here was a proviso against one side of the case; now for the other side.

Verses 9 and 10, "And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice; then I shall repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." Here is a proviso against the other

⁷⁹⁰Henry Caswall's testimony of his experience with Joseph Smith

⁷⁹¹Joseph Smith Papers, Abraham manuscript, 1:1 – 2:18 page 3 <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-abraham-manuscript-circa-july-circa-november-1835-c-abraham-11-218/3>

⁷⁹²Professor Henry Caswall quoting Dr. Willard Richards, The City of the Mormons: Or, Three Days at Nauvoo, in 1842 (London: n.p., 1842), 43.

side; and, according to this plan of prophesying, a prophet could never be wrong, however mistaken the Almighty might be. This sort of absurd subterfuge, and this manner of speaking of the Almighty, as one would speak of a man, is consistent with nothing but the stupidity of the Bible.⁷⁹³

There is a prerequisite for receiving a blessing or other spiritual manifestation like finding out for one's self if that it is true. Finding out for yourself is only spun as something you can do through emotion. Moroni's Promise⁷⁹⁴ is another example of this infallible doublespeak. If you feel some kind of positive emotion, then it is a manifestation from God. If you do not experience an emotional confirmation, then you need to try harder. You did not pray with real intent! You did not sincerely believe that an answer could come from God! Any chance of falsity is always laid upon your own fallibility, never upon the possibility of untruth.

Some believers dismiss Henry Caswall's quote of Willard Richards as an anti-mormon lie, but it aptly describes a technique that continues today. I have noticed that there are provisions for escape in both commandments and doctrine. In the cases where doctrine must be changed for impropriety, the blame is placed squarely upon God himself, because it was what God said we needed at the time, but now things have changed. Indispensable doctrine becomes policy. Infallible truth becomes the theories of men. If the change is too blatant to blame God, then the fault is placed upon the "theories" of the prophets who, by virtue of their divine call, should be incapable of leading church astray. Consider the Race and the Priesthood essay.

Today, the Church disavows the theories advanced in the past that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse, or that it reflects unrighteous actions in a premortal life; that mixed-race marriages are a sin; or that blacks or people of any other race or ethnicity are inferior in any way to anyone else. Church leaders today unequivocally condemn all racism, past and present, in any form.⁷⁹⁵

This contradicts the doctrine in the Book of Mormon canon itself, which specifically identifies dark skin as a *curse* for iniquity. It is not a theory. It is

⁷⁹³Age of Reason, Part 2, Section 10

⁷⁹⁴Moroni 10:4

⁷⁹⁵Race and the Priesthood essay

<https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood>

not an accident. It happens again and again in the Book of Mormon.⁷⁹⁶ Modern changes to the Book of Mormon have been made to try to reduce its harshness, but the doctrine of a curse still remains. I will talk more about those issues later on. Consider the apologetics for the Book of Abraham.

The supposed prophet was the supposed historian of times to come; and if he happened, in shooting with a long bow of a thousand years, to strike within a thousand miles of a mark, the ingenuity of posterity could make it point-blank; and if he happened to be directly wrong, it was only to suppose, as in the case of Jonah and Nineveh, that God had repented himself and changed his mind. What a fool do fabulous systems make of man!⁷⁹⁷

What Thomas Paine said is practically prophetic. One apologist, Kerry Muhlestein, even used the phrases "Joseph Smith nailed it" as he described the translation of the four quarters of the earth in the Book of Abraham, while ignoring the other 99 percent that is in error. One or two "nailed" coincidences do not grant credibility when mountains of evidence to the contrary exists. A broken clock is right twice a day.

And so I start out with an assumption that the Book of Abraham and the Book of Mormon and anything else that we get from the restored gospel is true, therefore, any evidence I find I will try and fit into that paradigm. I don't feel that I need to defend that paradigm, I feel that I want to understand the evidence that I find within that paradigm because to me it's a given that it's true.⁷⁹⁸

Muhlestein subtly misdirects the his listener away because he is an academic authority while they are not. That misdirection is a form of lying. It is a logical fallacy called *Appeal to Authority*, argumentum ad verecundiam. He also depends upon a logical fallacy called *Begging the Question*, petitio principii. His his truth-seeking modus operandi is the dictionary definition of *Confirmation Bias*. In refusing to defend his views, he depends upon a fallacy called *Burden of Proof*, onus probandi. He depends upon human frailty as a valid method to defend the truth, not the tools that expose error that have been around

⁷⁹⁶2 Nephi 5:21,23-24; Alma 3:6-7,9,14-15,18-19; 3 Nephi 2:15

⁷⁹⁷Age of Reason, Part First, Section 15

⁷⁹⁸Kerry Muhlestein, *The Book of Abraham and Unnoticed Assumptions* <https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2014/book-abraham-unnoticed-assumptions>

since their introduction by Socrates. He even titles his article, *Unnoticed Assumptions*.

I remember many techniques that I was taught at the mission training center. I was trained to label feelings and emotions as manifestations of the Spirit. I was trained to notice when people were feeling an emotion, and then catch them in the moment, and inform them that it was the Spirit of God that was making them feel that way, that the Spirit was testifying to them of the truth. I was supposed to teach them to remember the feeling they had, that come what may, they will ever know of a surety of the truth. When doubt, reason, fact, sensibility would ever come, they would not need to pay attention to it, because they already know. My own love and sincerity that I showed helped to engrain the idea, because I believed it too.

Emotion is not a spiritual experience at all. It is primal. If someone rushed into my house and exclaimed that my child had been hit by a car, a race of feelings and emotions would hit me. If they then said, "Just kidding!" then all of those feelings would have been for naught. The Christmas Spirit proved to me that Santa Claus was real. It was really just love, warmth, peace, bounty, and connection with family. Emotion proved to me that something false was true. Strong feelings and emotions are not reliable for identifying truth.

Fullness of The Gospel

It has ever given me pause when I have heard someone say that we live in the dispensation of the fullness of times, that all that should be revealed has already been revealed in its fullness, and that we don't need much more revelation. Book of Mormon text nagged at me from the back of my mind.

Yea, wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more!

Wo be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough!

For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.⁷⁹⁹

⁷⁹⁹2 Nephi 27,29-30

The Book of Mormon says that the brother of Jared was one of the greatest seers in history, and he saw the entire history and future of the earth in great detail, wrote it down, and Mormon transcribed it.

And when the Lord had said these words, he showed unto the brother of Jared all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be; and he withheld them not from his sight, even unto the ends of the earth.⁸⁰⁰

Behold, I have written upon these plates the very things which the brother of Jared saw; and there never were greater things made manifest than those which were made manifest unto the brother of Jared.⁸⁰¹

Now consider the many things beyond the revelation of the brother of Jared which are yet to be revealed:

God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost, that has not been revealed since the world was until now;

Which our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation to be revealed in the last times, which their minds were pointed to by the angels, as held in reserve for the fulness of their glory;

A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest.

All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And also, if there be bounds set to the heavens or to the seas, or to the dry land, or to the sun, moon, or stars—

All the times of their revolutions, all the appointed days, months, and years, and all the days of their days, months, and years, and all their glories, laws, and set times, shall be revealed in the days of the dispensation of the fullness of times—

According to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was, that should be reserved unto the finishing and the end thereof, when every man shall enter into his eternal presence and into his immortal rest.

How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well

⁸⁰⁰Ether 3:25

⁸⁰¹Ether 4:4

might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints.⁸⁰²

I'll reiterate, the last verse said that nothing was to stop the "pouring down of knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints." Then why did the "pouring" stop? Where are all of the revelations that were promised? A puny arm stopping the Missouri river is a strong metaphor indeed. It clearly says that it was all coming down the pipe whether Joseph fulfilled his calling or not:

And I have sent forth the fulness of my gospel by the hand of my servant Joseph; and in weakness have I blessed him;

And I have given unto him the keys of the mystery of those things which have been sealed, even things which were from the foundation of the world, and the things which shall come from this time until the time of my coming, if he abide in me, and if not, another will I plant in his stead.⁸⁰³

Clearly, Joseph was given all of the keys of revealing everything, including that which has been sealed. That includes everything about how the heavens work. That includes the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon, which has a full history of our world. That includes 99% more of Jesus' doings and teachings (as shown below). If Joseph wouldn't do it, someone else would be "planted in his stead." Do you sense the impending urgency of 121:33 and 35:18? These things were to be revealed by Joseph, in his lifetime. Yet he did not reveal them. There is a greater portion that still needs to be revealed.

And now there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people;

But behold the plates of Nephi do contain the more part of the things which he taught the people.

And these things have I written, which are a lesser part of the things which he taught the people; and I have written them to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken.

⁸⁰² Doctrine and Covenants 121:26-33

⁸⁰³ Doctrine and Covenants 35:17-18

And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.

And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation.

Behold, I was about to write them, all which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbade it, saying: I will try the faith of my people.⁸⁰⁴

Reiterating verse 10: "then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation." The church must be condemned, because the greater things have been withheld and Joseph Smith never fulfilled that calling. Here we are, almost two hundred years later, and all of the ordained prophets, seers, and revelators which have come after Joseph Smith have done nothing at all to fulfill this great need, nor do they even intend to. In fact, they say we have a fullness! Are they truly worthy to be his successors if they have done nothing and intend to do nothing to further the coming forth of truth and "yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God"?⁸⁰⁵

But the words which are sealed he shall not deliver, neither shall he deliver the book. For the book shall be sealed by the power of God, and the revelation which was sealed shall be kept in the book until the own due time of the Lord, that they may come forth; for behold, they reveal all things from the foundation of the world unto the end thereof.

And the day cometh that the words of the book which were sealed shall be read upon the house tops; and they shall be read by the power of Christ; and all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever have been among the children of men, and which ever will be even unto the end of the earth.⁸⁰⁶

A day comes when that sealed book, revealing all things from the foundation of the world to the end, will be read upon the housetops! Do we have that fullness as part of the Church's canon today? No, we do not.

What if God was unable to get the priesthood oligarchy, made up of those few who have no desire for

⁸⁰⁴3 Nephi 26:6-11

⁸⁰⁵9th Article of Faith

⁸⁰⁶2 Nephi 27:10-11

a continued metamorphosis of the status quo, to reveal this great and awesome revelation? What if God has utilized other means to bring forth the needed revelation? What if, not only did he “plant another in [the] stead” of Joseph, but all of the successive administrators of his organization which were supposed to be prophets, seers, and revelators failed to fulfill this mission? What if God had to use an entirely separate channel to bring it forth because of the iniquity of the leaders? If that revelation existed today, would you accept it or reject it? Would you have the courage to “acknowledge every good thing?”⁸⁰⁷

Revelation and Priesthood Authority

It is our canonical doctrine, as Doctrine and Covenants 84:19-22 unquestionably states, that priesthood ordination is required to gain access to the mysteries of the kingdom, have knowledge of God, and see the face of God. Yet, time and time again, prophets were called outside of the established priesthood. Almost every time there is some radical change that needs to be done, it rarely comes from within any priesthood.

Jesus himself observed⁸⁰⁸ that story of the Bible is: a prophet arises, teaches truth, and the priesthood kills or exiles him. If the prophet’s teachings somehow get saved, it is altered by the priesthood to be in harmony with what the priesthood thinks it should have been hundreds of years later.

And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us.

But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.⁸⁰⁹

As I ponder the scripture above, I find that Jesus himself said he didn’t care whether someone had *the priesthood* to represent him, he cared that they were doing good works. The apostles were worried about authority, as would a temple priest or pharisee, but Jesus taught them otherwise. Jesus himself was never ordained as a rabbi in the Jewish priesthood.

⁸⁰⁷ Philemon 1:6, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Moroni 7:19

⁸⁰⁸ Matthew 23:31

⁸⁰⁹ Mark 9:38-41, Luke 9:49-50

Most of his life was probably spent building boats,⁸¹⁰ not pursuing a career in the priesthood. His followers called him “rabbi” but that was because they honored him as a teacher, not because of any ordination he had. The fact that he wasn’t a rabbi (and formally trained and ordained to conform to Jewish law and priesthood) was a huge problem for the priesthood. The priesthood leaders on the Sanhedrin were the ones who kept pushing for his death, and they eventually succeeded, as they always did. It is Pharisaical that anything originating outside of priesthood authority is deception:

Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.⁸¹¹

It is said in our church that John the Baptist had the authority to baptize, but did he, really? Other than assuming that he had it because he was baptizing, and besides Doctrine and Covenants 84, there’s nothing else that shows he really had the authority he needed. How am I supposed to believe what is said in Doctrine and Covenants 84 when I can see things are different in reality? How am I expected to believe much of anything presented in Doctrine and Covenants when there are clearly man-made fallacies in it? For example, there is the assertion that the earth’s age is only a few thousand years,⁸¹² or there is the horribly merciless and pretentious “law of Sarah.”⁸¹³ Joseph Smith told David Whitmer “Some Revelations are of God; some revelations are of man, and some revelations are of the devil.”⁸¹⁴ The idea that revelations could come from any other sources besides God throws a monkey wrench into the in the reliability of everything Joseph ever said was a revelation, and we are absolved from believing a word Joseph ever said unless it can be verified empirically. If there are

⁸¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_of_Galilee_Boat

⁸¹¹ John 7:45-49

⁸¹² Doctrine and Covenants 77

⁸¹³ Doctrine and Covenants 132:64-65 – The law of Sarah is an insane contrivance which requires the first wife to give her permission for her husband to marry another wife, but if she does not give it, he is exempt from getting her permission and she will be destroyed.

⁸¹⁴ David Whitmer, An address to all believers in Christ, p34

any falsities in the Doctrine and Covenants, then we know for a surety that the source of the Doctrine and Covenants could not have been God.

On the issue of priesthood authority, let us look at the time when the chief priests, scribes, and elders asked Jesus about his authority, and where the issue of John the Baptist's authority is also addressed:

And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,

And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.

And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.⁸¹⁵

While this was an obvious attempt to trap Jesus devised by the leaders of the Jewish religion to discredit him on the basis of priesthood authority, it is clear that Jesus stumped them and they could not answer positively or negatively regarding John the Baptist's authority. Because of the hardness of their hearts, Jesus refused to tell them by what authority he did what he did. They wouldn't have accepted it even if he did.

Over and over again, in all of the scriptures, the prophets stirred up trouble because they rarely had authority granted by the establishment. That is why they were so often stoned and killed. Who stoned and killed them? The priesthood did. How is this any different from today, where any establishment claims a monopoly on prophets and revelation, produces none, and then excommunicates and exiles all those that reveal new truths or dare to oppose their oppression?

Joseph Smith had no claim to authority, and the history of his First Vision is another direct contra-

diction to the requirement in Section 84. He was a prophet, seer, and revelator long before his ordination. He did not officially receive the priesthood for at least a decade after the First Vision, if he actually received it at all, since there are no contemporary reports of his having received it. The report of his having received it came years after, and sections of Doctrine and Covenants were revised, much to the chagrin of some of his followers who were surprised by the changes he made.⁸¹⁶ Even if it is all true, his ordination was more for the organization of the church, not for any gift of seership. Regardless of the situation or what was going on, the fact is: he came from a position of having no authority.

There were several prophets in the Book of Mormon that came from outside. Lehi's life was in danger and the priesthood sought to kill him because of what he preached even though Jeremiah was the prophet. Samuel the Lamanite wasn't part of the priesthood. He was called to prophesy at a time when the Nephite priesthood would not do it.

Isaiah was murdered by being sawed in half. Jeremiah was put to death by stoning. Ezekiel, Micah, Amos, Habakkuk, Zechariah, and many more untold prophets were all murdered by the priesthood because they dared to call the priesthood out on their idolatry.

All that I've said above is not against the teachings of Jesus. Please consider the parable of the two sons,⁸¹⁷ The parable of the absent landlord,⁸¹⁸ and the parable of the marriage feast.⁸¹⁹ That triad of parables were in response to the question of priesthood authority, and all have to do with the kingdom of heaven circumventing the establishment.

You may remember the following two quotes from earlier. I didn't comment on them because it was part of my narrative. I was using them when I was contrasting their teachings with the "seek and ye shall find" teachings of Jesus. I would like to comment on them now.

When there is to be anything different from that which the Lord has told us already, he will give it to his prophet not to some Tom, Dick, or Harry ... Do you suppose that when the Lord has his prophet on the earth, that he is going to take some round-about means of revealing things

⁸¹⁶David Whitmer, An address to all believers in Christ, p35, 61-62, 64

⁸¹⁷Matthew 21:28-32

⁸¹⁸Matthew 21:33-46

⁸¹⁹Matthew 22:1-14

⁸¹⁵Mark 11:27-33

to his children? That is what he has a prophet for.⁸²⁰

One of the core messages of the entire Book of Mormon is that every person has access to God for revelation for things that are outside of the hierarchy. Lehi, Nephi, Alma the Younger, Abinadi, Samuel the Lamanite, Brother of Jared, and many more rose without advancing through an institutional chain of command. John the Baptist and Jesus himself came from outside the chain of command. Abinadi faced off with the priesthood of his day. Practically every story shows that anyone can receive revelation, that anyone can rise to be a prophet for all who will receive their message from God. Nothing prescribes an exclusive call of a singular prophet on earth, nor that the prophet should be called by succession.

I cannot understand why President Lee his successors have done this, against the scriptures. I can only see that they guard their position of power. In saying what he said, President Lee and many of his successors discourage all of their subjects from seeking new knowledge personally, especially knowledge that could affect others. They seem to fear losing their authority more than they preach our Book of Mormon doctrine that anyone can become a prophet outside of the hierarchy.

How can President Lee misunderstand the teachings of Jesus so grossly if Jesus is supposed to be leading the church through him? My question for President Lee is: what if there is to be anything in perfect concordance with what *the Lord* has taught, yet it still rises above the old laws which you and your fellows have maintained as infallible and doctrine indispensable for salvation that must be preserved from the Old Testament? What if a new level of truth comes to light which didn't originate from the head of the priesthood as happened time and time again in the scriptures? Just like the Pharisees and priests, scribes and elders, would President Lee be too proud to accept it? How is his statement any different from the view of the Sanhedrin at the time of Jesus? Why does he fear truth that he himself hasn't revealed? President Lee and his peers do not seem to understand that truth is truth, no matter where it comes from. From my perspective, that quote makes him sound like a conceited Pharisee, not a true disciple of Jesus.

It is more apparent to me, contrary to what Harold B. Lee said, for any big change that needs to happen, apparently the more common way God does it is to

⁸²⁰The Place of the Living Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, address to CES religious educators, July 8, 1964

call someone outside of the priesthood of pride who is humble enough to be able to accept the change. I can imagine Jesus saying to president Lee's face:

Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?⁸²¹

Here is the other quote I mentioned earlier but didn't comment on:

"When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures."⁸²²

At the time I heard the above quote in conference, I didn't know why, but something within me squirmed. This "apostle of Jesus" misunderstands the teachings of Jesus and has yet to know what it means to be born of the Spirit. The scriptures may be a decent tool to serve as a springboard to begin your search for God, but Jesus would never limit you like that. May I show you what I think Jesus would say? (which is in perfect harmony with his "seek and ye shall find" teaching):

You must cease to seek for the word of God only on the pages of the olden records of theologic authority. Those who are born of the spirit of God shall henceforth discern the word of God regardless of whence it appears to take origin. Divine truth must not be discounted because the channel of its bestowal is apparently human. Many of your brethren have minds which accept the theory of God while they spiritually fail to realize the presence of God. And that is just the reason why I have so often taught you that the kingdom of heaven can best be realized by acquiring the spiritual attitude of a sincere

⁸²¹Matthew 23:28-33

⁸²²Robert D. Hales, Ensign, November 2006

child. It is not the mental immaturity of the child that I commend to you but rather the spiritual simplicity of such an easy-believing and fully-trusting little one. It is not so important that you should know about the fact of God as that you should increasingly grow in the ability to feel the presence of God.⁸²³

Those who sincerely seek truth can find truth no matter whence it may come. To say that truth can only come from the priesthood goes against the teachings of Jesus and sounds more like the ideals of the Pharisees. I remind you that the Pharisees, many who were in the Jewish priesthood, routinely said that Jesus was a deceiver:

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.⁸²⁴

And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.⁸²⁵

Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?⁸²⁶

We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.⁸²⁷

How is that different from these leaders calling the heralds of truth on the Internet deceivers? The dissemination of truth is admirable by Internet sites like mormonthink.com or cesletter.com. What do the creators of sites like that stand to gain by spreading lies? All they stand to gain is the satisfaction of dispersing the truth, much like Jesus, who did it with no desire for a reward. On the other hand, what does the church stand to lose if any lies it harbors are unveiled? It stands to lose ten percent of your income.

Knowledge Precedes Obedience

⁸²³Urantia Book 155:6.12

⁸²⁴Matthew 27:62-63

⁸²⁵John 7:12

⁸²⁶John 7:47

⁸²⁷John 9:29

Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.⁸²⁸

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.⁸²⁹

“Obedience is the first law of heaven.”⁸³⁰

There is a blatant contradiction between the last quote of many leaders of the church, and the preceding quotes of Jesus himself. Which is the first commandment? Is it Love or is it Obedience? As a follower of Jesus, I choose to take the side of Jesus.

Love supersedes obedience, because when you truly love God and your neighbor, all of the laws that require blind obedience become irrelevant, no effort needs to be made to do right: it comes naturally because of love. The priority for obedience is repression, but the priority for love is freedom.

The *Kingdom of Heaven* was a major teaching of Jesus.⁸³¹ I can safely say that the commandment of the Kingdom of Heaven is this:

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.⁸³²

⁸²⁸Matthew 22:36-40

⁸²⁹Mark 12:28-31

⁸³⁰Joseph F. Smith, “Discourse,” Deseret News, Nov. 12, 1873, 644.

⁸³¹Matthew chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 16, 20, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25

⁸³²John 15:12

His commandment is singular. How can anything else be placed above the sole commandment of Jesus? If Joseph F. Smith and everyone after him have preached anything that is in contrary to the teachings of Jesus, whose side does that put them on?

Let us have this matter clear. We have accepted the four standard works as the measuring yardsticks, or balances, by which we measure every man's doctrine. You cannot accept the books written by the authorities of the church as standards of doctrine, only in so far as they accord with the revealed word in the standard works.⁸³³

Pharisees were sticklers for every little law. If you would have asked a scribe or Pharisee the question of which is the first of all commandments before Jesus had answered, I bet that most of them would have answered "obedience." Our leaders are more like the scribes and Pharisees of old.

Jesus:

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.⁸³⁴

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.⁸³⁵

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.⁸³⁶

President Monson:

"There is no need for you or for me, in this enlightened age when the fulness of the gospel has been restored, to sail uncharted seas or to travel unmarked roads in search of truth. A loving Heavenly Father has plotted our course and provided an unfailing guide—even obedience. A knowledge of truth and the answers to our greatest questions come to us as we are obedient to the commandments of God."⁸³⁷

⁸³³ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* volume 3, 204

⁸³⁴ Matthew 7:7-8

⁸³⁵ Matthew 21:22

⁸³⁶ James 1:5 This was not Jesus himself, but it was inspired by Jesus.

⁸³⁷ Thomas S. Monson, April 2013 Conference

This is another blatant contradiction between the last quote of many leaders of the church, and the preceding quotes of Jesus himself. President Monson says that we have a fullness, contradicting what the Book of Mormon teaches. I am still aghast and sickened by that statement by President Monson. This prophet, seer, and revelator said in General Conference that there is no need to seek out new truth because we already have a fullness of the gospel! It shocked me so much to hear that I remember exactly where I was when I heard him say it. I remember that President Hinckley said in the interview "we don't need much revelation." Both said these things when we most definitely have a paucity of clarity in the scriptures and canonized promises for more. Practically every passage in the scriptures lacks clarity and can be misconstrued – even the newer scriptures, but these "living seers" say we have a fullness!

Since he has such disregard for "sailing uncharted seas ... in search of truth," I am willing to bet he hasn't even asked God for answers. He says he has faith, but I fear he has never exercised faith enough to practice the following precept:

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.⁸³⁸

Which side of this conceptual divide is the truth? Is it that we should seek and ask, and we will find and receive? Or is it that we should obey instead of seeking truth on our own? The requirement of seeking truth by obedience shows a fear of what might be found. The invitation to ask questions is fearless and it welcomes anything that might be found. Just as I did with the first commandment, I am taking the side of Jesus again. As followers of Jesus, we should rely on his teachings, not those who contradict him.

These contradictions cause me to lose trust in the modern prophets, seers and revelators. What nonsense! They see nothing! They reveal nothing! They fear revealing anything! If President Monson does not have an appetite for truth-seeking, then he also has no love for truth. If he had a love for truth, he would be honest about everything he knows. The president and prophet is dishonest if he withholds the truth, especially the truth that is embarrassing to him. It is a shame that he and his companions have the fruits of dominators and liars. I can envision Jesus saying this to President Monson's face in response to the quote above:

⁸³⁸ Mark 11:24

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.⁸³⁹

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.⁸⁴⁰

The fact that he teaches that we have no need to seek new truth proves that he does not have a living relationship with Jesus, because the spirit of Jesus, which he sent after his resurrection, is the Spirit of Truth.⁸⁴¹ If he hinders others from seeking truth, he stifles their growth. He does not seek the kingdom of heaven himself. He shuts it up and impedes his followers from seeking it. If others who have had his priesthood office of prophet-president had that same attitude then what good is that priesthood office? If he does not have what I hold dear about what makes a prophet a prophet, then what good is he? If salt should lose its savor, what good is it?⁸⁴²

He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.⁸⁴³

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.⁸⁴⁴

I have "let it alone this year also" for most of my life. But the tree has never born fruit. And now, there is no wonder that no new truth is ever revealed: he says he has no intention of even seeking it. With what President Hinckley and Joseph F. Smith said, maybe they're all just too lazy to seek it, because seeking truth and gaining inspiration through the Spirit as we all have to do it takes effort. It's so much

⁸³⁹Matthew 23:13

⁸⁴⁰Luke 11:52

⁸⁴¹John 14:16-17, 15:26

⁸⁴²Matthew 5:13, Luke 14:34-35

⁸⁴³Luke 13:6-9

⁸⁴⁴Matthew 7:19

easier for them to say, "All is well in Zion! We have a fullness!"⁸⁴⁵

President Monson prescribed, "A knowledge of truth and the answers to our greatest questions come to us as we are obedient." I fulfilled his prescription throughout my childhood, on my mission, and for decades thereafter. I obeyed as perfectly as my fallible self could; which is no small feat with stringent mission rules. No new answers came. As I studied, pondered, and prayed, even in full obedience, only more questions came. I know from first-hand experience that obedience does not grant new truth. All obedience did was to teach me to divert the God-given sovereignty of my own volition to an authority that made the rules. I learned through this experience that it is sincerity, open-mindedness, and disobedience to authority which helps find truth. I learned that the command of authority does not grant truth, it is the other way around; Truth has intrinsic authority.

They must find it hard to take Truth for authority who have so long mistaken Authority for Truth.⁸⁴⁶

Why does the leadership need to stress obedience as a means for finding truth instead of inviting us to sincerely seek knowledge as Jesus did? If they are so engrossed with their idea that obedience brings about knowledge, why do they seek to ignore or omit the teachings of Jesus? Wouldn't it be disobedience to the counsel of Jesus if they do not heed the teachings of Jesus about sincere truth-seeking? Wouldn't it be hypocrisy if they stress obedience above all, yet in doing so they honor Jesus only by name⁸⁴⁷ and do not abide by his teachings? In like manner, the Pharisees were never enlightened by their strict obedience, it only caused them to be closed-minded to the new ideas Jesus freely provided. It only made them want to get rid of him.

Truth speaks for itself. Those that have truth have no reason to fear anyone finding more truth. Maybe they stress obedience because if people sincerely search for truth, they just might find it! The only reason why I can see anyone telling anyone else to not seek truth and to just obey would be because they have something to hide and they don't want anyone to know the things that they are hiding. I can imagine Jesus repeating what he said before to them:

⁸⁴⁵2 Nephi 28:21, 2 Nephi 29:3

⁸⁴⁶Gerald Massey, in his lectures c.1900

⁸⁴⁷Matthew 7:21-23

For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.⁸⁴⁸

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.⁸⁴⁹

Surely those oppressive ideas from the "prophets seers and revelators" are not coming from Jesus. Jesus was against oppression and the occult, as a great portion of what he taught freedom from oppression through truth.⁸⁵⁰ They are asking us to blindly obey, just like the scribes and Pharisees of old, who "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel"⁸⁵¹, putting above all the obedience of the relatively unimportant things while ignoring that which truly matters.

Morality is doing what is right no matter what you are told. Obedience is doing what you are told no matter what is right.⁸⁵²

Morality and Obedience are not related. In the above quote, they are posed as complete opposites. Doing what you are told, no matter what is right means you relinquish your integrity and responsibility and are submissive to oppressive domination by an authority. That kind of obedience to an authority has never been a virtue and "just following orders" has never been a valid excuse. On the other hand, a loving god does not go against his creation of free will to oppress anyone. It is only man-made religion or man-made establishments that oppress. I can imagine Jesus repeating more to them:

Woe unto you, Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.⁸⁵³

Why put so much stress on obedience as a source of knowledge when one of the many scriptures of "ask

⁸⁴⁸ John 3:20-21

⁸⁴⁹ Matthew 23:27

⁸⁵⁰ John 8:32

⁸⁵¹ Matthew 23:24

⁸⁵² Dr. Laura Markham, Parenting Your Strong Willed Child

⁸⁵³ Matthew 23:23

and ye shall receive" is the thing that inspired Joseph Smith to ask in the first place? If obedience were Joseph's priority for gaining knowledge, he would have never sought, nor would he have asked. In a way, what President Monson said was not only a direct contradiction to Jesus, but likewise directly contradicts the values of Joseph Smith, founder of the church he leads.

Contrary to the "obedience begets knowledge" doctrine, I would like to put forth my understanding of how knowledge works with obedience. Once you have encountered real truth, you naturally and willingly use it to guide your decisions because you know it is true. On the other hand, when you force yourself to obey without a full understanding, it is extremely difficult: you falter and fail because it is not part of your core understanding. When you have knowledge of the truth, following it is not difficult to let it influence your decisions. In fact, it is quite natural. That is why Christ said, "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."⁸⁵⁴ This is what it means to become led by the Spirit of Truth. Following its promptings is not hard at all, it is just the natural course of being led by truth and wisdom. The Spirit should always be in compliance with truth and wisdom.

Don't get me wrong, obedience has its place in many occasions, but never as a precursor to knowledge. Obeying the law "do not kill" must be preceded by a knowledge of what life is and a respect for life which that knowledge gives. Once a person learns to have a respect, honor, and even reverence for human life, obedience of that law is natural and takes no effort.

Let us avoid paradoxes, shall we? It is the work of deceivers who wield authoritarian power to tell people that obedience is the most important law. Obedience in itself can't be a law without other laws to obey, so how can it come before other laws? Obedience must come after knowledge and wisdom and after there are other laws to obey.

President Monson claims, as many other have, that we have a fullness of the gospel and that we need no more revelation. Does he truly believe that we have a fullness of the gospel?

- We have had no real new revelation since Joseph Smith, as though "a puny arm stopped the Missouri"
- The sealed portion of the book of Mormon remains sealed

⁸⁵⁴ Matthew 11:30

- The fullness of John’s record remains unrevealed⁸⁵⁵
- The brass plates in their fullness remains unrevealed⁸⁵⁶
- We still believe in rites, rituals, traditions and commandments that had origin in pagan religions
- Why a loving, merciful father would require his son to die to forgive us remains a mystery
 - We still extol, sing hymns to, and even idolize the cross or alternate ways of shedding of his blood as something that God did to Jesus in order to gain mercy for his children.
- We have a fairy tale creation story
- We have a fairy tale garden of Eden story
- We have countless other myths that are unresolved
- We were promised a revelation of the organizational structure of the heavens: all thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers.⁸⁵⁷
- We were promised a revelation of the physical structure, glories and laws of the heavens: the bounds of the sun, moon, stars, the times of their revolutions, all the appointed days, months, years, and all the days of their days, months, years, and all their glories, laws, and set times.

I would have to say that President Monson is too complacent in his station. He is saying “all is well in Zion”.

And others will he [the devil] pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.⁸⁵⁸

⁸⁵⁵Doctrine and Covenants 93:6

⁸⁵⁶Whitmer claimed to have seen the brass plates, David Whitmer interview with Orson Pratt, September 1878

⁸⁵⁷Doctrine and Covenants 121:28-31

⁸⁵⁸2 Nephi 28:21

Commandments

Neither Be Ye Called Master

For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.⁸⁵⁹

There is no need for a command in all things. Those who need to be compelled to good living are slothful and not wise. Adherence to outwardly observable commands give an appearance of righteousness, and that is its only reward.⁸⁶⁰

For some reason the “obedience is the first law of heaven” is taught by those who claim to prophets. Such a platitude is a blatant contradiction to the teachings of Jesus. In fact, Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees who stressed obedience to every trivial thing.

When I meet Jesus at the end of this life, and he asks me, “so what did you choose to do in your life?” I don’t want to answer that I did everything that I was commanded to do, only to have him to answer something like this:

You did all that you were told to do? Why did you bury your talent in the earth?⁸⁶¹ I created you as a volitional, creative being for a reason. It is godlike to be creative: to make your own decisions. God is a volitional, creative being, and you threw that gift away when you chose not to choose by electing to be subject to the domination of others. There is no reward in doing what you’re told except appeasing the authority. I need you to be creative! If I wanted to create a machine, I would create a machine! You could have created so much more good with your free agency.⁸⁶²

Here is another platitude that I have seen on many refrigerators with a picture of Jesus:

I never said it would be easy, I only said it would be worth it.

Oh the irony! Jesus never said any such thing. What a horrible imposition for anyone to say that as a teaching of Jesus. That silly pseudo-quote is also a blatant contradiction to his teachings.

⁸⁵⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 58:26

⁸⁶⁰ Matthew 6:1-5

⁸⁶¹ Matthew 25:18

⁸⁶² Matthew 25:24-30

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.⁸⁶³

Jesus never said it would be hard, he said he would give you rest. That is because, as I have said, when you are truly born of the Spirit, it is no longer difficult to do what is right. Those who are born of the Spirit do not need rules and bylaws in order to do Father’s will. They are self-governing. Those who are born of the Spirit naturally do his will, because their will aligns with him. Their will aligns not because they are forcing or sacrificing their will to align, but because through love they actually genuinely desire the same thing which God desires.

I do not believe that we need to be commanded in everything. In fact, in relation to spiritual things, I do not believe that we need to be commanded at all. The only commands worth anything are secular laws which protect the rights and property of others. I wish to make my own righteous decisions by my own free will and choice. I do not need some shameless authority tell me what I should and should not do. I want to choose because my will as a son of God is naturally good. I do not want to choose because I’m afraid of the threats that authority claims will befall me if I do not obey.

True religion is not to become a machine which takes commands and outputs results. True religion is becoming one with God by your own free will, because you will naturally aspire to do good as his child.

The true value of choice emerges when you choose by your own free will, without encumbrance by any other authority, power, or duty. You gain the true intrinsic award from your choice, because it came from within. When you choose to enslave your will and chose because you are commanded or through duty, you reap the reward of subjugation, enslavement, and throw away the most precious talent that God gave you: your sovereign mind.

A red flag raises in my mind when those who should know the will of God proclaim that all must devoutly follow their every command. That is a gross contradiction because, if God is the creator of free will, he would not work to thwart his own creation. If God wanted to create mindless obedient robots, then that is what he would have created. But he didn’t; he created fully volitional beings. There is empirical evidence that he created all of us as volitional beings,

⁸⁶³ Matthew 11:28-30

yet there are those who say that he is The Lord, a ruler on high that issues commands for his minions to follow. In doing so, they contradict that evidence and they vainly use his name to become the master of others. Jesus understood this when he issued the charge to neither be any master, nor to follow any master.⁸⁶⁴

Word of Wisdom

Just like Pharisees of long ago, there seems to be a command for practically everything today. One of those modern commands which must be stringently obeyed is based on scripture. Canon stipulates that it should not be a command.

...not by commandment or constraint...⁸⁶⁵

It is true that the Word of Wisdom is essentially good. On the other hand, to make it an imperative requirement for worthiness *strains at gnats*.⁸⁶⁶

The pharisees gawked and gasped at how Jesus rebelled to their laws. He did it in their face, so to speak, when he was a house guest. Pharisees took pride in their strict observance to all of the Levitical laws as dictated by the scribes. The requirement of obedience to kosher laws continues in Judaism today. Those regulations include ritualistic washing of hands and dishes between the courses of a meal. They have to remove blood, fat and veins from meat. They can not serve meat and milk together. The modern cheeseburger is an abomination. Utensils used for dairy cannot ever be used for meat. Strict obedience to every minute rule was religious ritual.⁸⁶⁷

Heber J. Grant redefined the Word of Wisdom. Prohibition was trendy in his time. He instituted the requirement of its strict obedience as a standard of worthiness for entrance to the temple. He did that despite the scriptural declaration that it should not be a commandment. The temple recommend has become the benchmark for worthiness for entrance into the Celestial Kingdom. We can thank him for helping to make more pharisaical bylaws. Jesus openly rebelled to those kinds of rules. He effectively contradicted core principles of the person who is supposed to be leading the church through him.

Jesus is lauded as the singular perfect man. Jesus drank wine regularly. Jesus routinely disobeyed the laws of Judaism. Perfection cannot be augmented.

⁸⁶⁴Matthew 23:8-12

⁸⁶⁵Doctrine and Covenants 89:2

⁸⁶⁶Matthew 23:23-24

⁸⁶⁷That would be "ordinance" in Mormon vocabulary

Jesus, the perfect man, would ironically not qualify for a temple recommend. He would not be allowed to enter a building that is supposed to be his house.

No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.⁸⁶⁸

Jesus drank real wine. He did not like fresh grape juice. He taught that the old wine is better! He said that no one would ever like fresh wine after tasting old wine.

Grape skin has symbiotic bacteria that protects the grape while on the vine. The juice from pressed grapes starts fermenting from that bacteria as soon as the skin has been broken. It could not be preserved without becoming alcoholic. Unfermented grape juice is an anachronism. There was no refrigeration. It was well before Thomas Welch figured out how to pasteurize grape juice. Either Jesus would have had to press the grapes himself, or he would have needed modern logistics for efficient production and distribution of out-of-season grape juice that had to be consumed within hours.



And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.⁸⁶⁹

Jesus turned water into wine at a party for his first miracle. It was no trivial amount of wine, it was more than they could consume. It was not cheap wine, it was the best wine. Cheap wine does not taste as good, so they would bring it out after the good wine had tamed the senses. If the wine were not alcoholic, it would not have had that effect.

⁸⁶⁸Luke 5:39

⁸⁶⁹John 2:10

It was not only that Jesus drank wine occasionally, he drank it a lot. He admitted that people called him a gluttonous winebibber:

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!⁸⁷⁰

Wine may have been one of the world's first medicines. Ancient Egyptian Papyri and Sumerian tablets dating back to 2200 BC detail the medicinal role of wine. That would make wine the world's oldest documented human-made medicine.⁸⁷¹ Paul advised that wine should be used for its medicinal properties.

Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.⁸⁷²

Jesus often used of wine, wine bottles, vines, vineyards, and wine presses in his parables to illustrate his ideas. Wine must not have been that evil to Jesus if he often used it for his teaching.

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.⁸⁷³

Not only was wine not sinful, he promised to drink wine again with his Apostles in the kingdom of heaven. Think about that. Wine in heaven. No unclean thing can dwell there. Perfected, resurrected beings drink wine.

Jesus often taught that what we eat and drink is not sinful.

Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.⁸⁷⁴

There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷⁰Luke 7:33-34

⁸⁷¹Robinson, J. The Oxford Companion to Wine 3rd ed. p. 433.

⁸⁷²1 Timothy 5:23

⁸⁷³Matthew 26:29

⁸⁷⁴Matthew 15:11

⁸⁷⁵Mark 7:15

And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;

Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.⁸⁷⁶

How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.⁸⁷⁷

The law of Moses commanded to not eat leaven bread during the passover,⁸⁷⁸ but Jesus said to no longer beware of leaven bread because what you eat doesn't really matter. He said to instead beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees – the guys who required adherence to strict health code standards and controlled all other aspects of life in great detail. He also had a deeper meaning with that: to beware of all of the doctrines of the pharisees.

There is more of an inherent reward in swearing off wine by your own discretion and not by obedience to the stringent command of someone else. If you fail to do that, I do not believe that Jesus would call it sin.

Sacrifice and Consecration

There is a law of sacrifice and a connecting law of consecration which we all receive by swearing an

⁸⁷⁶Mark 7:17-23

⁸⁷⁷Matthew 16:11-12

⁸⁷⁸Deuteronomy 16:3-4

oath to sacrifice all, even our own lives, and in connection with that, sacrifice all of our time, talents, and everything which we have or will have to the church for the building up of the Kingdom of God on the earth. Consider this inspired quote about being asked to sacrifice your life:

A viler evil than to murder a man, is to sell him suicide as an act of virtue.⁸⁷⁹

That quote is true, and in my view it does not contradict the following quote, which is also true, and which I will try to differentiate below.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.⁸⁸⁰

While the law of sacrifice seems to intend to be higher than the meaningless, murderous, idolatrous blood sacrifice of the Old Testament, it is still not in harmony with the teachings of Jesus on two points:

The Doctrine of Fear

Sacrifice is still a primitive law, born of fear, which belongs in the man-made religion of the Old Testament. The motivation to sacrifice is not born of love, it is born of duty. Acting in compliance with duty implies that you are compelled and are thus missing the thrill of choosing to give and serve as a friend.

And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.⁸⁸¹

The subject in that parable serves because it is his friend, even when it is inconvenient. Jesus teaches to love and serve as a friend. In the context of the "greater love" quote above, he gave his disciples his new commandment of loving one another:

⁸⁷⁹ Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*

⁸⁸⁰ John 15:13

⁸⁸¹ Luke 11:5-8

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.⁸⁸²

To mindlessly give because of submission to commands, traditions, or social requirements is to be a slothful servant. Conformity is the reward for those things. Sometimes the reward is atrocity. The higher ideal of Jesus transcends all convictions of duty and invites you to let friendship and love inspire you to help others. Loving service for a friend is not a sacrifice. Jesus didn't teach the lesser law of motivation by duty, fear, or reluctant sacrifice. He instead rebuked those who let duty blind themselves from seeing new truth. Doing good things for your neighbors through love is the essence of the gospel of Jesus. If you choose to obey the will of others out of duty, even if they vainly do it in the name of God, you have not fully exercised your freedom to choose. God does not want you to do his will out of oaths and obligation, he wants you to do it out of sincerity and love. He does not want you to mindlessly obey, he wants you to do it because you genuinely choose.

Ayn Rand and Jesus do not contradict because they're talking about entirely different things. If you read what Jesus said in context, he called his disciples his "friends." It is the love-born service to friends and even enemies which is the highest ideal.

That is the ideal that inspires terrorists to hijack planes and crash them into buildings. That is the ideal of those who terrorize, murder, and go to war for their religion. A law of sacrifice facilitates that villainy and savage brutality.

Contrarily, someone who out of love gives up his life so that his friend may live is not being murdered by his friend. I think Jesus was actually referring to his impending fate at the hands of the Sanhedrin, rather than giving a charge for suicide for his friends.

The Law of the Gospel

There is a relatively undefined "Law of the Gospel as contained in the Holy Scriptures," which we also receive by oath.

First of all, the word "gospel" means *good message*, it does not mean law, and "law of the good message" makes little sense. How has a message of hope and peace become construed into law? The word "law" implies compulsion by penalties imparted by authority. In that context, it seems the penalties

⁸⁸² John 15:15

that were in the temple for over 150 years make more sense.

Second, where is the definition of the Law of the Gospel found in the Holy Scriptures, anyway? The only reference to the phrase *Law of the Gospel* is found in Doctrine and Covenants,⁸⁸³ but its context has nothing to do with what is presented in the temple. I know of no entry in the canonical scriptures that lays out any stipulations of any such a law.

The words of the ceremony *add* to this non-existent law, “a charge to avoid all light-mindedness, loud laughter, evil speaking of the Lord’s anointed, the taking of the name of God in vain, and every other unholy and impure practice.”

What a silly and frivolous law, *to avoid all light mindedness*. Some say that this is reference to only sacred things, but that is not what it says. It says *all* light mindedness. Some people I know are incapable of anything but light mindedness. Along with that comes *loud laughter*. Everyone is guilty of breaking these absolutely silly oaths. To call these unholy and impure practices makes no sense at all.

“Taking the name of God in vain” is another of my pet-peeves. It not the use of taboo words or simple prayers in speech, it is using the name of God for vain purposes, which indicts every establishment of religion. It seems only Jesus and other sages like Lao-Tse, Confucius, Siddhartha Gautama, and Mahatma Gandhi, did not use their teachings for their livelihood and are not guilty of this crime.

“Evil speaking of the Lord’s anointed” is anti-Jesus because it goes against his teaching and example.

Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.⁸⁸⁴

If the church produces laws which are contrary to the morality of Jesus, how can it be the church of Jesus? Dallin H. Oaks said, “It is wrong to criticize leaders of the church, even if the criticism is true.”⁸⁸⁵ I wonder if he realizes that Jesus disagrees with him. If an apostle of Jesus stands for principles that Jesus abhorred, how could he be a genuine apostle?

Jesus was often cheerful and spent time with children telling them stories. Jesus constantly rebuked the anointed priesthood. Jesus was regularly accused of blasphemy. It sounds like Jesus, who

⁸⁸³Doctrine and Covenants 88:78

⁸⁸⁴Luke 6:26

⁸⁸⁵<https://www.youtube.com/v/NvNDjND4eLI?start=52&end=58&version=3>

was a perfect man, did not adhere to any of those rules.

If we are to follow the example of Jesus, we too should be cheerful and get a good laugh every so often. If we follow the example of Jesus, we should call the anointed out on their bigotry or hypocrisy regularly. If we are to follow the example of Jesus, we too should proclaim the truth that all humankind are the children of God and the middle-man is no longer necessary.

The Kingdom of God is Within You

Many say that Jesus built his church. But the reality of the matter was quite the contrary. Jesus was a carpenter who may have even been able to physically build a church building, but he never did. He did not build a church physically, nor socially, neither did he write any tenets nor creeds. Instead, Jesus declared, “My kingdom is not of this world.” If Jesus had intended to fulfill the Jewish prophecy, then his kingdom would be of this world. He would have sat on the throne of David, seized the reins of the theocratic government, expelled the oppressing foreign government, and brought peace to the entire world. He would have had to make his followers swear an oath of allegiance and be willing to sacrifice their lives if necessary in order to defend an earthly kingdom.

Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.⁸⁸⁶

The above shows that Jesus never sold the sacrifice of one’s life as an act of virtue. “General Joseph Smith” vainly used the name of Jesus to *take up the sword* to lead armies! Not only that, he committed treason against the United States. Newly uncovered minutes of the meetings of the *Council of Fifty* is an atrocity that Jesus would condemn.

How is it that we purport to require sacrificing everything, even our own lives if necessary, to an earthly establishment with the excuse of building up a Kingdom of God on earth when Jesus never had any intention of doing that, and never required it of his followers? Remember his conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well?

⁸⁸⁶John 18:36

Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.⁸⁸⁷

The Samaritan woman said that salvation was a racial inheritance of the Jews and their land, mountain (temple), and priesthood. Jesus countered that the hour was coming when all of that would be no longer necessary. Jesus said that those who truly worship God do it in spirit (within you) and truth (not myth), not as the Jews were doing. Jesus never intended to establish any outward kingdom of God on earth. Jesus said "The kingdom of God is within you:"

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.

For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.⁸⁸⁸

"The kingdom of God is within you" is probably one of the most profound teachings of Jesus, besides his teaching of the loving fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of every human, regardless of all classification. He said not to follow nor to go after anyone who says "The kingdom is there!" or "The kingdom is here!" He said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." That means it isn't a physical kingdom, nor is it social – you can't see it,

⁸⁸⁷ John 4:20-24

⁸⁸⁸ Luke 17:20-24

you can't find it, because it is entirely spiritual. Jesus never established a physical kingdom of any kind on earth, nor did he ever intend to. The gospel of Jesus Christ himself needs no physical institution of heaven as a brick and mortar business on earth. Long lists of commandments come from big organized enterprises and are the commandments of men. There is absolutely no way that he wanted an earthly kingdom to be ruled by fear through a tyrannical priesthood oligarchy of men. There is no way any tyrannical, secretive priesthood could ever represent his "kingdom of God is within you."

Had it been the object or the intention of Jesus Christ to establish a new religion, he would undoubtedly have written the system himself, or procured it to be written in his life-time. But there is no publication extant authenticated with his name. All the books called the New Testament were written after his death.⁸⁸⁹

The scriptures above destroy the premise of any possibility for an established church, right from Jesus' mouth. To say that Jesus is at the head of any earthly establishment which represents his kingdom directly contradicts his teachings. To require dutiful sacrifice to drive the building up of any establishment on earth is doubly offensive to the teachings of Jesus. The message of Jesus was one of spiritual emancipation from the overcontrol of a religion of fear.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.⁸⁹⁰

When Jesus told rich men to *sell all they have, give to the poor, and come follow me*, he was not telling them to give all they have to him nor to any establishment for the building up of his kingdom. Selling all you have and giving it to the poor is not consecration to a kingdom. Jesus was showing an aversion to economic materialism and the selfish search for riches, not condoning a social order of communism. Consecration entails having all in common in a society.

The kingdom of God is not social, it is spiritual. The yoke of Jesus is easy, and his burden is light. The laws of sacrifice and consecration are heavy, burdensome, and oppressive. The gospel or "good

⁸⁸⁹ Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part First, Section 5
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00painiala#page/16/mode/1up>

⁸⁹⁰ John 8:31-32

news” of Jesus was that mankind could be free of the oppression of the old sacrificial law, and yet here we are, bringing it back.

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat:

All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.⁸⁹¹

Those in the upper echelons of the church do not lift a finger. They live upon the backs of widows and millions who are less fortunate than they. Many of those who live on the funds of the church are charged to not pay tithing. The rest of us have to work for a living. I’ll talk more about this later.

The requirement for strict obedience to command is a burden grievous to bear. It takes no intelligence nor sovereignty of will to obey. Even dumb animals of burden can learn to strictly obey. Requiring obedience to prove virtuous living indicates that those who seek to dominate are oppressors, and those who mindlessly follow are choosing to not think for themselves. Jesus observed that humans have the gift of critical thinking and can be fully autonomous to do good from their core and by their own free will. It is a tragedy to throw away the very thing that makes us human to beastly subservience.

Those who enjoy autocratic dominance routinely reiterate their self-imposed authority from the pulpit. They elect themselves behind closed doors. They establish every policy and doctrine in secret. Their domination is against the tenets prescribed in scripture. Much like our free country, obedience should be in the reverse.

Perhaps it may make some of you stumble, were I to ask you a question – Does a man’s being a Prophet in this Church prove that he shall be the President of it? I answer, no! A man may be a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, and it may have nothing to do with his being the president of the Church. Suffice it to say, that Joseph was the president of the Church, as long as he lived: the people chose to have it so. He always filled that responsible station by the voice of the people. Can you find any revelation appointing him the President of the Church? The keys of the Priesthood were committed to Joseph, to build up

⁸⁹¹Matthew 23:2-4

the Kingdom of God on the earth, and were not to be taken from him in time or in eternity; but when he was called to preside over the Church, it was by the voice of the people; though he held the keys of the Priesthood, independent of their voice.⁸⁹²

As Brigham Young says, there should be no *revelation* that appoints presidents of the church. The comical votes held in the church are more of a show of devotion than they are a vote. If someone dares to vote against the decrees of the tyrants, they are told to talk to their leaders. If they do not conform, they threaten their membership in the church.

Scriptures and bylaws of Doctrine and Covenants prescribe that the leaders of the church should obey the common consent of the body of Christ.⁸⁹³ When they make decisions for anything without the consent of the body, they exercise unrighteous dominion.

The Pharisees strictly observed and fulfilled all outward ordinances as dictated by the scribes. They were *not* driven by good works that come from the heart: things like mercy, sincerity, honest vulnerability, love. They defined goodness as obedience.

These ought you to have done, and not leave the other undone.⁸⁹⁴

Jesus was speaking directly against their outward observances saying that commands of the scribes burdensome on the people.

According to Christ’s teaching the good are those who are meek and long-suffering, do not resist evil by force, forgive injuries, and love their enemies; those are wicked who exalt themselves, oppress, strive, and use force. ... The wicked will always dominate the good, and will always oppress them.⁸⁹⁵

The Pharisees abuse the honest in heart. They abuse those that live up to their promises. They establish rituals that require their followers to commit themselves to give all that they have to an earthly kingdom rule over them and oppress them. They sell them apparent goodness in the name of obedience to an oppressive father, who they say had an exemplary son who perfectly obeyed.

⁸⁹²Journal of Discourses 1:133

⁸⁹³Doctrine and Covenants 26:2, 28:13, 121:39, 124:144, 104:71; Mosiah 29:26

⁸⁹⁴Matthew 23:23

⁸⁹⁵Leo Tolstoy, The Kingdom of God is Within You, Chapter X

We long for a Parent to care for us, to forgive us our errors, to save us from our childish mistakes. But knowledge is preferable to ignorance. Better by far to embrace the hard truth than a reassuring fable.⁸⁹⁶

The churchmen latch on and feed on the innocent, naive, and those who need the comfort of an authoritative figure in their lives. They say that the church is good despite the faults of its members, but the truth is that people are already good despite the church. The institution has the audacity to proclaim that everyone is evil and broken, and then it takes credit for being the vehicle for making all people good.

They are pharisees, pharisee parasites. These pharisaical men do not make the church great. People have inherent love and goodness without them. In stressing strict obedience as the will of God, those men subject his innocent children to their dominance. They devour the very living of vulnerable souls.

The law of sacrifice, the constant stress for obedience, and the law of consecration are institutionalized oppression. These conjoint laws should be called the internalized laws of subjugation to other men. These laws are not teachings of Jesus. It is suspicious that we must consecrate everything to an organization with the leadership of men, instead of God. They equate their volatile leadership as the will of God. They only admit mistakes when it is the fallibility of a dead predecessor.

Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men.⁸⁹⁷

⁸⁹⁶ Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot*, end of chapter four

⁸⁹⁷ Baron John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, letter to Creighton, 1887

Priesthood

Somehow in the restored gospel, the meaning of the word *priesthood* has been thwarted when it is compared to the New Testament. It has been redefined to mean that it should precede the bestowal of supernatural gifts. It has become equivalent to a magical power of heaven, literally at the fingertips. I have had a hard time observing that restored *power* actually work. For healing, I can only see placebo and cognitive bias. For prophecy, I detect none.

Is the priesthood truly something that bestows the gifts and power of God? Are patriarchs and their patriarchal blessings truly prophetic? Are they instead the result of training they received at church headquarters when they received the call to be patriarch? So many patriarchal blessings appear as if they were stamped with a cookie cutter. We are charged to not share them with others. If it were indeed revelation, it should be trumpeted from the rooftops. Revelation for specific people comprises the brunt of the publicized canon of Doctrine and Covenants. Still, there is rarely anything personal in patriarchal blessings. The requirement of secrecy seems to be an attempt at keeping people from comparing them and then to finding the truth about them.

Maybe priesthood was never intended to be a *power*. The restoration made the formality of the priesthood a “power,” not faith. The ordination granted by Jesus did not mean that he imbued his followers with magical power. They already possessed the power through faith. He just sent them out.

For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself; that every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course,⁸⁹⁸

The order and calling was supposed to have power by faith, not the other way around. Faith was the true source of divine power, not the other way around. Faith was the prerequisite to be part of that order, not the other way around. Enoch and Melchizedek were ordained because they already possessed that power, not the other way around.

It is empirically evident to me that the prophet-president of the church gains no spiritual gift of prophecy nor seership by virtue of the keys of his priesthood office. Neither do the 14 other apostles. I know this because there are no fruits. Moses, Ether,

⁸⁹⁸Joseph Smith Translation – Genesis 14:30

and Nephi saw. Scriptural text attests of their works. If our prophets did talk and did see, they would be overflowing with new revelation. As I have illustrated, some of them have confessed that they do not reveal, nor do they intend to. Nothing indicates that our prophets talk face to face with Jesus. If they did, their teaching should at least be in compliance with what Jesus of Nazareth would say. Instead, it best aligns with the ideals of the enemies of Jesus.

The restoration of the priesthood brings back something that never originally existed. It imposes that the singular top rank of *high priest* should be an office that anyone can hold. The authority of the institution must officially condone, validate and advance any number of worthy men to the office.

For Judaism, there could only be one high priest at a time. For Christianity, there can only be one high priest for *all* time. The messengers of Jesus declared that Jesus ended the need for all other men to hold an intercessory priesthood. They proclaimed that Jesus is the singular high priest.⁸⁹⁹ After him, there should be no other high priests, just as he taught that we should call no one else master. This is why many protestant sects have no priesthood. They simplify the term into *the priesthood of all believers*. Martin Luther declared that “this word priest should become as common as the word Christian.”⁹⁰⁰ It should be something that every believer inherently possesses without any formality.

Priesthoods have a more restricted purpose in the other religions that use them. They are the authority for adherence to dogma. They provide a command hierarchy for the administration of the intercessory ordinances, rites, and rituals of an established religion. They require confessions to go to them, not directly to God. They place their judgment above God. They make the requirements for worthiness. Often their rules are so petty that they are there just to prove loyalty to authority. They deter their followers away from something that should be a direct relationship with God with an unnecessary level of abstraction. They downplay the personal and intimate role of Jesus as they interject themselves as another official intermediary between God and his children.

The prophet heir of the restoration is better described by his other title: president. He is the corporation sole. That means that when you pay tithing, it becomes his personal property. At this time, the value of the church is at least 40 billion. That makes

⁸⁹⁹Hebrews 4

⁹⁰⁰Martin Luther, *The Epistle of St. Peter and St. Jude: Preached and Explained* (New York, NY: Anson D.F. Randolph, 1859), 106

him one of the richest people on earth. "But he lives so modestly," they say. A king can only eat so much food.

The wealth I mentioned does not include the for-profit subsidiaries of the church. He and his board of apostle-directors run the church as if it were a business enterprise. They market and sell a product, have a huge marketing effort, generate income, have a mission statement, have a business plan, and they require a public relations department to speak for them. They lead many other real corporations. Corporate management of the church and their many other businesses consumes the majority of their time. There is no wonder why they feel the need to hide their embarrassing balance sheet.

The prophets in the scriptures were no such thing. As corporate presidents, the so-called prophets blaspheme the prophets of old. It is sheer vanity to do what they do.

The Kingdom of Heaven

Jesus often talked about a kingdom of heaven, but he never talked about acting as its king. Neither did he talk about God fulfilling the role of king. Instead, he taught that God is a loving father of the family of humankind. He must have used the word *kingdom* because that was the only way to describe a unification of people at the time. Society has since progressed to be able to envision people unified in heart without the idea of a king as a ruler. The word kingdom could probably be replaced with a different word, like *community*. When the word *church* is used in the Gospels, it refers to that community, not a top-down kingdom.

He repeated that his kingdom is not of this world. If he had intended to establish a physical kingdom in this world, then he would have become the king. He would have written its creeds. He would have enforced its laws.

When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.⁹⁰¹

Jesus did not take the opportunity to become a king when it was offered to him. There were many who wanted to crown him king and have him become what the Jews thought the messiah should be. They wanted him to elevate the nation of Israel above all

other nations. After Jesus fed the five thousand, the crowd rallied to crown him king! Had he wished to be lord and king, this would have been the perfect opportunity. Instead, Jesus ran away! He could not be convinced to relent to such a proposition. Jesus himself never intended to establish and lead any such earthy institution.

To omit context that does not fit an institution's agenda is a form of lying. It is called *propaganda*. The story of feeding the five thousand is told again and again. Lesson manuals and dramatizations conveniently omit the context. The church rips the miraculous story from its context because it does not support its objective to be the established earthly kingdom.

Jesus taught that his kingdom resides within our hearts. He taught that we have direct access to truth through the spirit of God. He taught that we can ask and receive, that we do not need a priest, shaman, or any other intercessory to ask and receive in our behalf. His requirement for salvation does not necessarily require priestly rituals. It requires love instead.

He taught that we no longer need priests to intercede between God and his children. This riled the Jewish priesthood leaders to crucify him. He threatened their dominion, not because he intended to steal their authority, but because he invalidated their authority.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world: that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?⁹⁰²

During Pilate's interrogation, Jesus said that *Pilate* was the one who called him king. The implication is the inverse: purpose of his birth on Earth was to *not* be king. Instead, Jesus said that his purpose was to help genuine truth seekers find truth. He continued to say that only truth seekers will understand his voice. Then Pilate effectively replied that he was not a truth seeker.

This passage in Luke is the most complete dialog in that scene. The other instances make Jesus become silent. It is a tragedy that quotes and dramatizations of the above scripture omit the context in the very same verse! They stop what Jesus said mid-sentence, making him say that he intended to be king.

⁹⁰²John 18:37-38, I added the punctuation of a colon (:) for clarity.

⁹⁰¹John 6:15

They also omit the pretext. It also confirms this view. Jesus declares that his kingdom is not physical.

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.⁹⁰³

He declared that what he called a kingdom was not what the world would call it. He was not a king as the world would expect him to be. He said that he would never command armies to fight for boundaries and dominion. He would never require any us-versus-them allegiance.

Please think for a minute about the implication that Jesus did not take a perfect opportunity to usurp his lordship. It is difficult to deny that Jesus clearly said that his objective and cause for coming to this world was to bear witness to the truth. The meaning of most of his parables becomes quite obvious when you can see that he was usually talking about sincere truth seeking.

"Wickedness never was happiness."⁹⁰⁴ But I say, error never was happiness. Disappointment and sorrow are inevitable when we rely on error because it is not reality. Truth is happiness because it continues on and can be relied upon and lived forever.

Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.⁹⁰⁵

Everyone who lives in a bubble will someday be met with disappointment and sorrow as they come to terms with the truth. We should not be as preoccupied with what wickedness is as much as we should be with finding the truth. Wickedness is spun as disobedience to those who pull rank over humankind. Their command trumps reality. Their word is better than innate senses and reason. Those who stand against them are accused of sin, "even if the criticism is true."⁹⁰⁶

There are those who tell you to doubt your doubts, ignore the facts, and cease to reason. They declare that their hearsay revelation is more reliable than empirical truth-seeking. They preach that relinquishing your sovereign mind to their command provides

⁹⁰³ John 18:36

⁹⁰⁴ Alma 41:10

⁹⁰⁵ Isaiah 50:11

⁹⁰⁶ Dallin H. Oaks

happiness and contentment. Do not waste your time; *the thinking has been done* for you. Their vain empire-establishment of in the name of God is more important than all else. Your salvation is on the line if you do not give your all to the expansion of their kingdom and to conquer the entire earth.

The most improper job of any man, even saints, is bossing other men. Not one in a million is fit for it, and least of all those who seek the opportunity.⁹⁰⁷

Many men love power. They will never admit it when they have it. They use circular reasoning as they declare that they do not lust for power while they wield it. Then they try to force their will on others and impose the silliest of sanctions.

Some of them try to explain away that their power is not of their own making. They deflect to an unseen superior that can only be recognized by imagination. To place the blame on big brother Jesus is no different from the Party blaming Big Brother. Both use his name to impose the most nonsensical commands for their subordinates to prove loyalty. They require pompous rituals for the preservation of immaterial life. They have regular meetings to hate their adversary. They build up a kingdom of wealth and a power hierarchy. All such things go against the anti-pharisee stance of Jesus. He knew that the priesthood was corrupt with power.

Paul said that Jesus called apostles, prophets, pastors teachers, and evangelists.⁹⁰⁸ To call those a priesthood makes light of everything else Jesus taught. The root of the word *apostle* means *sent forth* or *messenger*. It relates to the word *epistle* that is a written message that has been. The word *apostle* does not mean *priest*. A priest is a rank with the authority to perform rites and administer sacraments on behalf of people who cannot commune with God on their own. Jesus did away with the requirement for intercessory priests. The apostles were *his most dedicated disciples* that forsook all to follow him and spread his message of peace and rebellion from the authorities who use belief to control the human mind. His teachings demonstrate that rites are a triviality when compared to actual love in action. He taught that we all have direct access to the spirit of our loving father and that we should seek his will directly.

⁹⁰⁷ J. R. R. Tolkien

⁹⁰⁸ Ephesians 4:11

Even though they continued John the Baptist's practices, the apostles were not called to represent God himself in performing saving rites for people. The apostles did not live on *stipends* from tithes as do those who dare to call themselves apostles today. Jesus told them to stop worrying about money entirely. As they invest in enterprises and real estate, they directly disobey him⁹⁰⁹ and use his name in vain.

To say that the priesthood has been restored contradicts the teachings of Jesus. The priesthood is the thing that he ridiculed. Priesthood more often causes religion to petrify into dogma, and in so doing it impedes man's understanding of an infinite God from advancing. The real gospel of Jesus finally divested religion from the bondage of dogmatism by a stagnant uninspired priesthood. He taught by parable that priesthood does not make people better than anyone else. Instead, he pointed out that priesthoods are often haughty, proud and oppressive. He repeated that those who were humble and sincere, like the publicans and sinners, were more deserving of entering into the kingdom of God than the righteous priesthood. There is no wonder that the Sanhedrin, the high council of priesthood leaders, plotted for the crucifixion of Jesus. He threatened them.

According to Mormon Doctrine there was never any "apostasy" or loss of priesthood authority between Moses and the times of Jesus. The Jews had the priesthood. Jesus was not an ordained priest. His followers called him rabbi only out of respect. The fact that he wasn't a priest perturbed the priesthood authority of the Sanhedrin.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.⁹¹⁰

Those are the words of Paul to the Ephesians, not the words of Jesus. Paul was a Pharisee himself. Paul did not witness anything. He was never there. Are those truly offices of a priesthood, or just Paul's call to help establish his mystery cult? Which do you prefer to believe, Paul, or Jesus? This is what Jesus actually said about established leadership or authority hierarchy:

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

⁹⁰⁹Matthew 6:25-34

⁹¹⁰Ephesians 4:11

Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.⁹¹¹

The restoration of the power of God given to man is a gimmick. It was Joseph Smith's claim to authority over other people. The way he gained that authority is just as questionable as how Paul gained his authority. Both claimed private meetings with heavenly beings for their authority. They both seemed to be unaware that Jesus warned that false prophets would claim such phenomena.⁹¹² The priesthood Joseph Smith restored shows no fruits of actually having the power of God. I cannot perceive that the priesthood bestows any gift of prophecy, seership, revelation, nor of any gift of healing. Its adherents uphold it through cognitive bias and placebo.

Consider the parable of the supper. The parable of the wedding feast⁹¹³ is similar.

Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say

⁹¹¹Matthew 23:8-12

⁹¹²Matthew 24:26

⁹¹³Matthew 22:1-14

unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.⁹¹⁴

If the ones he calls do not follow him, not because they aren't unable to understand him, but because they are unwilling to understand him, then all of those who are more humble than they will be called and received. Be wary of the priesthood, as it is possible that "none of those men which were bidden shall taste of [his] supper."

Judgment

It is disconcerting to watch how the institutional church treats sinners. It takes away recommends, callings, priesthood, family, membership, salvation, and even underwear. Its practices chastise through social flogging and shunning. Though it may officially deny it, the implications of many of its doctrines encourage shunning the people who disobey, regardless of their true sincerity to seek God. The church declares that it is the true representative of Jesus on the earth, but it does not understand his most fundamental teachings.

The following three parables have to do with how the kingdom of heaven deals with those who have been lost and what happens until they have been found. They are:

- The parable of the lost coin⁹¹⁵
- The parable of the lost sheep⁹¹⁶
- The parable of the prodigal son⁹¹⁷

Jesus often illustrated the same truth through more than one parable. Because the coin is not a being and cannot have intention, it relates to anyone who is lost by circumstance, who are confused, confounded, or blinded by living in a material world. The lost sheep also unwittingly loses its way from the path. But the prodigal son premeditated and deliberately chose to go astray and even squandered his inheritance. The desire of the prodigal son for a payout of his inheritance was equivalent to wishing his father was dead.

Jesus illustrates that in any situation, regardless of the circumstances, our Father is not only aware of those that are lost. Instead, he and all of those who serve him will seek more earnestly. They will not stop until that which was lost has been found and restored. The loving grace the father shows to

⁹¹⁴Luke 14:16-24

⁹¹⁵Luke 15:8-10

⁹¹⁶Luke 15:1-7; also found in Matthew 18:12-14

⁹¹⁷Luke 15:11-32

his son is a cry against the ideals of the Pharisees which stress law, merit, reward, and punishment.

Mercy is only the beginning of the after-effects of the love of our father! Not only will he put forth all of the powers of heaven to find you, and not only will he mercifully forgive, but he will also rescue you from humiliation, rehabilitate and nurture you back to full health. The effects of darkness and evil are obliterated and swallowed up by his love. His only roadblock is your will. He respects your will and will not help if you do not desire it.

These parables are a loud cry against the idea that God abandons the sinner. They teach the complete opposite: the farther away you go, the more intensely God's search for you will be. God will dedicate more and more resources to restoring you to everything you should be as his precious son or daughter. He has always had this love for you regardless of any animal, human, or demigod sacrifice.

I have heard it said again and again, *love the sinner, hate the sin*.⁹¹⁸ It is often spun as if it were a teaching of Jesus. He did not teach that. No, that platitude was coined by Saint Augustine of Hippo around four hundred years after the life of Jesus. It has been subject to paraphrasing over time to become what it is today. Jesus taught that if you love someone, then that love will have the power to morph your judgment into mercy. He loudly contradicted the requirements of the established religion as he showed how to love sinners.

Love the shepherd, hate his sheep. Love the believer, hate their belief. Nonsense. If you say you love a person but hate their defining characteristics, you have a crooked sense of what love should be.

It is a contradiction to say that both hate and love should be applied to the same situation, especially when God's core attribute is love. If a man were to tell his wife that he loves her, but that he hates all of her mannerisms, idiosyncrasies, and faults — that would not go very well at all. When you love someone, you love all of them, including their quirkiness and blemishes.

It is silly to think that a creator would intentionally create an imperfect being and then hate the imperfection. If God intended you to be imperfect, your imperfections, shortcomings, and even sins would only make him love you more.

While it's great if my children might perform flawlessly, I often catch myself loving my children more and showing more compassion towards those that

⁹¹⁸Saint Augustine of Hippo, Opera Omnia, Vol II. Col. 962, letter 211

falter, or show imperfections and vulnerabilities. I have difficulty envisioning God as incapable of doing what I can do. I can only see God showering more love upon those who are sincere in their plight. Love the sinner, hate the sin contradicts the teachings of Jesus in the parables I mentioned above, as well as this metaphor of his:

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.⁹¹⁹

For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.⁹²⁰

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.⁹²¹

What do those really mean? They mean that your actions and your core identity are the same thing. They mean that a person's thoughts, feelings, words and actions are the result of who they really are deep down inside. To love the sinner and hate their sin contradicts that. Love the vine but hate the grapes? Love the tree but hate the apple? Both of those cannot make sense because the vine and the grapes are one, and the Tree and the apple are one. Hating the sin does not help because it only causes separation and holier-than-thou snobbery. I say, love the sinner, including their sin. It is part of the human experience to sin. Without it, we are not human. It is only by loving both the tree and its fruit that the tree's mind can heal. When you love the sinner and the sin, something happens: you become more empathetic, compassionate, gracious, approachable, vulnerable, authentic, affable, and peaceful.

It would be silly if global positioning systems stopped working if the driver strayed from the path. What good is a GPS which only works when you obey it perfectly? Its job is to guide you from anywhere,

⁹¹⁹ Matthew 7:16-20

⁹²⁰ Luke 43-44

⁹²¹ Matthew 12:33

even if you might stray. In the same way, I reject the Pharisaical teaching that the Spirit withdraws because of sin! On the contrary, it is the opposite; because that is when it is needed the most! Just like Jesus taught in those parables, the Spirit seeks out the sinner and does its utmost to entice them to a higher plane, to heal them, and to rehabilitate them.

These teachings of Jesus clearly go against the false doctrine that God abandons the sinner, leaves them alone, or needs additional authoritarian punishment through retribution and indignation to enforce his will. The teaching in these parables also goes against the idea that Jesus was left alone while on the cross to supposedly taste what the isolation of sin feels like. Jesus didn't need to feel alone because none of us are ever truly alone. Again, God never leaves you or any of his children alone. He is always with you, patiently and lovingly prompting you towards your divine potential. It is your immaturity and blindness which causes you to perceive yourself as distanced from God.



How do we purport to follow Jesus, and yet disregard most all of what he taught, and not understand the teachings in his parables? How do these parables relate to how the church establishment punishes sinners? Are church courts, disfellowship, and excommunication truly acts of sincere followers of the teachings of Jesus? Do we truly follow Jesus when we have feelings of prideful disdain, superiority, or shun anyone who chooses a different path from ours? Jesus never excommunicated a single follower he had, nor did he discipline or foist any retributive penalty on any of his followers.

The priesthood of our church mimics the Jewish priesthood more than anything Jesus ever estab-

lished. In fact, I find it quite ironic that Jesus himself received the ultimate excommunication at the hands of the priesthood of his time: death by execution. There was a high court of the priesthood which was called the Sanhedrin. The position of High Priest was the singular highest office of the priesthood, much like our president. It was the Sanhedrin, led by Caiaphas the high priest, who were the most vocal at the forefront of the mob who succeeded in getting their Roman overlords to exact the punishment in the most shameful way they could.⁹²² It was that same priesthood which Jesus accused of beating, stoning, and murdering prophets of the old testament.⁹²³ If there is anything consistent about priesthoods, it is that at their head you will rarely find humble seers, but instead power-hungry men who will fight to preserve their station by unrighteous dominion. There has never been a precedent for prophets, seers, and revelators to be called to lofty perches at the head of institutions by succession as we are imposed to accept as is done today. That succession is evidence of an institution of men.

“Love the sinner, hate the sin” better reflects the ideals of the enemies of Jesus, the Pharisees. If you hate the sin, you will condemn the sinner for their sins, and you will hypocritically do it out of love. You will cast the first stone, believing you are doing it out of love for their good. You will condemn Jesus himself to death because of his sin of blasphemy.

To me, blasphemy is a fake crime invented by leaders of religious establishments. It helps them to protect their dominance from criticism. It allows them to persecute anyone who refuses to either obey them or remain silent.

It is ironic to me that a church that bears his name dares to judge and impose punishment upon those who courageously discuss their sincere thoughts out in the open as Jesus did. The high priest and his Sanhedrin judged Jesus to be guilty of openly speaking his mind against the priesthood.

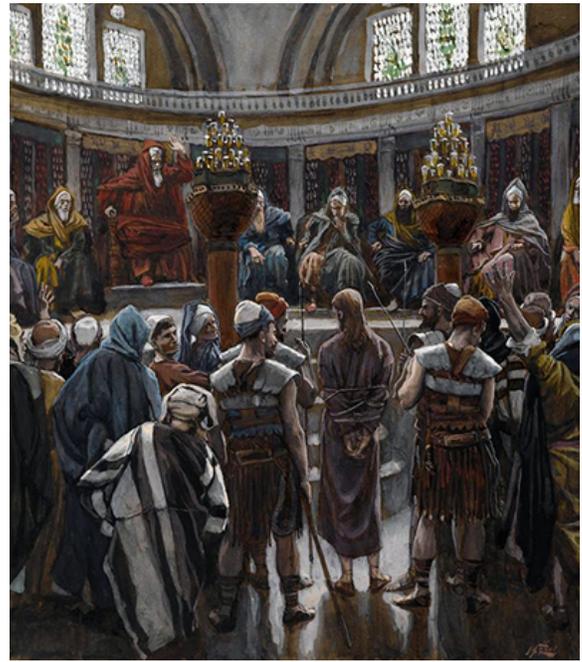
Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?

They answered and said, He is guilty of death.⁹²⁴

⁹²² John 18:12-14, Matthew 26:3-4

⁹²³ Matthew 23:30-39; 21:33-46

⁹²⁴ Matthew 26:65-66



The greek word βλασφημία (blasfīmía) is a greek portmanteau word, combining βλάπτω (blápto - hurt, harm, damage, or injure) and φήμη (fími - fame, name, reputation, speak, rumor, gossip). In that light, “evil speaking of the lord’s anointed” should be better worded, “blaspheme the lord’s anointed.”

The blasphemy was not that Jesus said he was the Son of God. Any fool in the streets could do that. There were probably many that did. The blasphemy was not that Jesus was untruthful. Any fool could try to defame with lies. When there is truth, lies can be disproved and ignored.

The Sanhedrin feared Jesus because they feared losing their authority. They often tried to show his lack authority. They were distressed that so many people were slipping away from their dominion. Jesus was a menace because he spoke truth. He called them hypocrites. He was direct in his speech against their enforcement of their bylaws. His indictment of blasphemy was for challenging the authority of their authority to represent God. He blasphemed when he said that after this life, they would finally find out that he will be the one with the power, not them.⁹²⁵ He risked his life to openly defame fraudsters with that truth.

It’s wrong to criticize leaders of the church even if the criticism is true.⁹²⁶

⁹²⁵ Matthew 26:64

⁹²⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/v/NvNDjND4eLI?start=52&end=58&version=3>

That quote of Dallin H. Oaks illustrates what blasphemy is about. His use of the word “even” is sneaky. He credits himself that the criticism against him is usually false. That does not help his defense. It is about anyone rightfully damaging his reputation with the reality of his transgressions. That kind of defamation threatens his status. It means that his lofty position grants immunity from repentance. If he cannot be criticized, then he is a repressive lord. As he keeps his position by draconian power he exercises unrighteous dominion.

The guilty taketh the truth to be hard, for it cutteth them to the very center.⁹²⁷

I perceive the office of Dallin H. Oaks as a restoration of the priesthood of Caiaphas, not Jesus. He would agitate his council to vote for the excommunication of the same man of whom he professes be a witness. He, too, would do it on the grounds of blasphemy.

If Jesus lived today, in every disciplinary court of the church, he would not stand on the side of the accusers. A stake president and his high council think that they act as Jesus would if he were in their place. It is glaringly the opposite. The handbook has become the canonical law library of Mormonism today, much like the Written and Oral Torah for Judaism. Jesus was a victim of the handbook of instructions of his time. Those courts prove to be pharisaical sticklers to every letter in that rulebook. In most cases, the courts are only the formality for disciplinary action to deal out a sentence has already been decided.

If Jesus lived today, he would continue to be the accused. The Sanhedrin sent spies to catch anything that could discredit Jesus. Today, there is a “Strengthening Church Members Committee.”⁹²⁸ It spies in just the same way, albeit with modern information gathering tools. Its mission is to retain members by finding the opposing voices that need to be silenced. It is eerily Orwellian. The church seeks to squelch the defaming voice of truth, just like the *Party* did. If it were not truth, it would not be a threat.

Jesus represents every freethinker who has been excommunicated. There are many today who openly discuss truth they find. Jesus would ever side with the accused, especially them.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.⁹²⁹

⁹²⁷ 1 Nephi 16:2-3

⁹²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strengthening_Church_Members_Committee

⁹²⁹ Matthew 5:12

Every prophet challenged the establishment of their day. From the perspective of a freethinker that tries to reveal truth, Matthew 5:12-16 flips loyalty away from the powers that be. It inspires us to face the despot despite the possibility the conviction of thoughtcrimes. Just as some people on high councils, there may have been some people on the Sanhedrin who were secretly inclined to believe Jesus. They probably went along with the rule of law because of the status of their position.

As part of the Pauline Mormon gospel, they teach that the perfection of Jesus is one of the requirements for his ability to atone for our sins, but they also teach that blasphemy is a sin. So which one is it, modern scribes and Pharisees? If Jesus sinned, then he isn't perfect and the premise of your gospel falls, but if Jesus is perfect, then calling you out on any evidence of iniquity or impropriety is the work of the Lord!

Jesus routinely spent time with sinners, comforting and teaching them, proving his parables by his example that God indeed does seek out that which is lost. He did not pass judgment on any of his followers who genuinely sought the truth his message provided, and even taught that we should never judge others, but forgive them instead:

Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.⁹³⁰

Judge not, that ye be not judged.⁹³¹

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged, condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.⁹³²

He often told the Pharisees that their self-righteousness was worse than the disobedience of their petty rules. His parables reflected that the sinners had more of a chance for salvation than those priesthood leaders who were vainly self-righteous about their outward morality and obedience. In addition to the parable of the supper and the parable of the wedding feast, here is the third of the triad, the parable of the two sons:

But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.

He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

⁹³⁰ John 8:15

⁹³¹ Matthew 7:1

⁹³² Luke 6:37

And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.

Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.⁹³³

The institutional church seems to self-proclaim itself as the ultimate moral authority just as the Jewish religion did at the time of Jesus. If priesthood leaders hypocritically preach that their brand of morality is the perfect will of God, and dutiful obedience to their laws is salvation, and their laws incite people to look upon others who do not obey as they strictly obey with contempt, they are like the son who said he would but didn't in hypocrisy. They outwardly obey through duty, but inwardly are not genuinely seeking the guidance of God and the Spirit of Truth. They seek dead, dogmatic belief, not living, truthful faith. They seek to know about God as a concept in their minds, but they don't seek to know God as a living person. Their faithfulness is not offered out of love, but out of a joyless sense of duty. Those blind guides,⁹³⁴ or better said, blind commanders, seem to be aloof to the meaning of the parables of Jesus. They seem to stand in the way, as a stumbling block, as they shut their followers off from the true teachings of Jesus.⁹³⁵

It is as if Jesus intentionally planted things like this in his teachings to expose the hypocrisy of the institutional church. It is apparent to me that Jesus intended to help people to develop a sense of independent morality, not to forcefully impose regulations. Jesus did not establish a church. Instead, he demonstrated a way of life that did not require the approval of priesthood leaders. Those sinners who are accused of immorality in the eyes of those dutiful sticklers, and yet who are genuine: who inevitably will repent when their genuine search for true reality is satisfied, they are the ones who genuinely seek truth and will eventually personally know their father.

The parable of the prodigal son teaches that the resentment held by the older son because of his self-righteous adherence to duty was no better than the outward genuine faltering of the younger son. The kind and loving father pleads with the older son to not respond with anger, but with love. Though the "good son" appears to be good outwardly, in reality

⁹³³ Matthew 21:28-31

⁹³⁴ Matthew 15:14, 23:24

⁹³⁵ Matthew 23:13

he is no nearer to his father in his heart than the wayward prodigal.

In case I haven't been clear, let me say it again. The leaders' treatment of those who falter in obeying their strict rules is more a reflection of the doctrines of the Old Testament, how the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees on the Sanhedrin would react, than it is a reflection of the teachings of Jesus. It is more a reflection of the Inquisition⁹³⁶ than it is a reflection of the teachings of Jesus. Do you not remember how Jesus treated the adulteress?

So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.⁹³⁷

While the leaders of our day aren't casting physical stones, they are passing self-righteous judgment on sinners, as sinners. That goes against his teaching: "He that is without sin among you," let him pass the judgment. The only people who can judge between righteousness and sin are those who do not have any dust in their own eye, and as far as I know, there are none on this earth. With a knowledge of the teachings of Jesus, excommunication of anyone from being a follower of Jesus makes reason stare, especially because the accused are usually at the point of their lives when they could use the love of their social group the most. Any church that has used murder, excommunication, any level of shunning, or any sanction or punishment to discipline, chastise, denounce or destroy anyone who questioned them cannot truly be of God. To say that disciplinary courts are done out of love is rank hypocrisy. Do you see how there can't be a social establishment with judges and penalties in the teachings of Jesus, which is based on love and mercy? Surely after mak-

⁹³⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquisition>

⁹³⁷ John 8:7-11

ing this observation, we can understand what Jesus meant here:

For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.⁹³⁸

He said that because in his view the Pharisees committed the greater sin of self-righteousness, which in reality is not righteousness at all. I would venture to say that self-righteousness is the greater sin, even greater than sins like adultery, and certainly greater than disobedience of the trivial commandments of men, because those who proudly obey every trivial, outwardly observable commandment look through their noses at those who falter with disdain. Because of the contempt they hold for those who may not live up to what they perceive to be their standard of righteousness, they effectively block themselves from being able to love the people who need their love the most. This sanctimonious attitude promotes the tribal us versus them mentality; that those who do not observe the petty rules should be avoided at all costs to keep from polluting an ideal of cleanliness. In the name of God and Pharisaical righteousness, they disassociate from other children of God and disregard that the singular command that Jesus gave was to love everyone.

Some people are sensible and have a delicate conscience, and they get punished because they confess, while others who are not sensitive and do not confess their sins are rewarded with leadership positions.

Even worse is the church's treatment of those who are attracted to their own sex. My own brother was abused by the unrighteous dominion and disciplinary practices of the church in this matter and had a difficult life because of it.

What is worse beyond that is the church's attempts to wield its political power to try to establish laws which enforce its crystallized view of morality outside of itself in by coercing others who do not share its beliefs in by promoting the establishment of physically enforceable laws in a free country. This is abominable because what it has done is against the tenets of its own scripture:

We do not believe it just to mingle religious influence with civil government, whereby one religious society is fostered and another proscribed

⁹³⁸ Matthew 5:20

in its spiritual privileges, and the individual rights of its members, as citizens, denied.

...we do not believe that any religious society has authority to ... inflict any physical punishment upon them.⁹³⁹

Ironically, in seeking the office of president of the United States, Joseph Smith went precisely against the scripture above. In connection with that, the fact that he placed himself as a General of an army to physically enforce his way of life was abominable in comparison to true religion. I cannot believe that God raises prophets to proselytize through political schemes, intrigue, or the sword. Jesus did not seek after a crown, nor did he accept one from his followers. He explicitly said he would never use the sword to enforce his teachings.

To establish laws in secular government which have physical punishment or any other forceful legal implications can not possibly be an effect of following the teachings of Jesus. Jesus would not lead anyone to do any such thing. Jesus never sought nor instigated any such political power of any earthly kingdom or government. To do so would contradict his Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven.

If church leaders are spending time and money to campaign that their ideas of morality should become laws in a secular free country, then what would stop them from using their dominion to thwart other freedoms which they lust to control, like our freedom of speech? They control the freedom of speech within their dominion. What would stop them from ordering the destruction books and printing presses in order to keep the truth about their hypocrisy from being revealed? Oh wait, that has already happened in the history of the church: when Joseph Smith ordered the destruction of the printing press which was printing the truth about his sexual improprieties. If you actually read the Nauvoo Expositor,⁹⁴⁰ you will see that it accepts the doctrines of the Book of Mormon but it also contains no lies about the practice of polygamy. It was Joseph's own second counselor in the First Presidency who was involved in producing it, William Law, who was an honorable man, whose conscience did not permit him to participate in the immorality of polygamy.

The push to silence the voice of truth continues in the church today. It is ghastly that the church has covered up facts for decades. Those facts provide invaluable information for its followers to be more informed about their decision to dedicate their lives

⁹³⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 134:9-10

⁹⁴⁰ <https://archive.org/details/NauvooExpositor1844>

to the establishment. It is worse that the church has not been honest. It is telling that the church excommunicates anyone who is open and honest in trying to hash out the truth proves that the church is hiding behind lies and hypocrisy. Why would the God of truth punish and reject people who point out historical facts, who are honest about them, and who dare to free their mind and think outside the box?

When John Dehlin faced excommunication, he said the following in an interview:

How in the world in the 21st century is a church asking people not to talk openly about things?

And I want to be really clear about something. People say that I'm talking openly about my doubts and disbelief and giving voice to doubters because I'm trying to tear people away from the church. That is so wrong.

I'm a mental health professional. I'm a few months away from getting my PhD in clinical and counseling psychology. I counsel Mormons everyday.

And what I can tell you is that, by far, probably one of the most damaging aspects of Mormon culture is the fact that they need to keep things hidden, they keep things secret, and they can't openly discuss what they think and what they feel. I think this leads to depression, I think it leads to anxiety, I think it leads ostracization and marginalization, and I think it can even lead to suicide and things more serious.

And so it is totally unacceptable for a church leader to say to me "you can support same-sex marriage but you can't speak openly about your support", "you can support Ordain Women but don't ever tell anybody", "you can have doubts, but you can't speak openly about those doubts." I think that's a recipe for mental illness and sadness, and frankly, it doesn't engender a community that's meaningful where people are able to share their heart and their soul with each other. It's not going to be a backbone for the church culturally that's going to lead to vibrance and vitality.

When an organization like the church starts to use sort of Stalinist techniques or Maoist techniques to clamp down on information, to prevent people from talking, to punish people if they speak openly, that leads to the death of community, to conscience, to people's mental health and well-being, and I would much rather be disciplined than violate my conscience.⁹⁴¹

⁹⁴¹<https://www.youtube.com/v/x5vCVNv4moY?start=1745&end=1860>

When John Dehlin did get the ax, the Church Newsroom was sure to make it clear that the grounds of his excommunication were these three points:

- Disputing the nature of our Heavenly Father and the divinity of Jesus Christ.
- Statements that the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham are fraudulent and works of fiction.
- Statements and teachings that reject The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as being the true Church with power and authority from God.⁹⁴²

Those bullet points were published in pretense, however, because John was originally given other reasons by his Stake President.⁹⁴³ Regardless, the grounds that anyone can be excommunicated simply for being open and sincere in their search for truth shows to me that the church is not a purveyor of truth. Instead of letting truth stand, because truth qualifies itself, the Church acts as though its only retort is to be a bully and pull rank by indicting apostasy and inflicting punishment and defamation as a warning to any others in the ranks who dare ask questions.

This is much like Galileo, who the church required him to "abjure, curse, and detest" his heliocentrism, and when he wouldn't, was committed to prison for the rest of his life and his Dialogue was banned. Despite their efforts, the Earth truly orbits the Sun. Galileo said:

I do not feel obliged to believe that the same god who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use.

There are many others who spoke truth but were disciplined by an institution which feared truth. John Wycliffe faced excommunication for translating the Bible into English. William Tyndale was burned at the stake for heresy because he dared to use a printing press to publish the Bible in English. Martin Luther was excommunicated because he dared to publish his theses after gaining access to read the Bible. Thank goodness those defectors did what they did. Bullying through authoritarian punishments for the expression of doubt is not the work of an organization which possesses the truth.

Thomas Jefferson was inspired when he penned his Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, which was

⁹⁴²<http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/church-responds-to-john-dehlins-public-comments>

⁹⁴³<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/02/11/us/11mormons-docs.html>

the foundation upon which the First Amendment⁹⁴⁴ was later based. Here is an excerpt:

And finally, that Truth is great, and will prevail if left to herself, that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict, unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons free argument and debate, errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them.⁹⁴⁵

As he said, to prohibit free argument and debate is to disarm the truth of its sword, impeding truth's ability to assert itself. When an institution disarms truth by imposing penalties for freely speaking, it acts against the God of truth and free will, and it demonstrates to the world that it does not have truth, because truth itself never fears open discussion.

Apologetics attempt to rationalize the claims of an institution by accenting impositions, subverting key facts, and strategically dancing around the truth using logical fallacies to emphasize a spin which supports their agenda. The fact that apologetics is necessary at all should displease truth seekers. Apologetics insult truth because it tries to establish an apology for dogma, especially in a venue where the freedom to speak is stifled. It is sad that voices such as Hugh B. Brown's have not triumphed against the power hunger of other men who are now in his position:

Neither fear of consequence nor any kind of coercion should ever be used to secure uniformity of thought in the church. People should express their problems and opinions and be unafraid to think without fear of ill consequences. We must preserve freedom of the mind in the church and resist all efforts to suppress it.⁹⁴⁶

Dogmas are principles held by an authority as incontrovertibly true. Dogmas require apologetics when facts threaten them, and both thrive where freedom of speech is restricted. Truth does not need apology, it stands on its own, unless it is suffocated by human interference, like threats of penalties dealt out by an institution. The fact that apologetics exist at all for

⁹⁴⁴The First Amendment to the United States Constitution http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution

⁹⁴⁵Thomas Jefferson, Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Statute_for_Religious_Freedom

⁹⁴⁶Hugh B. Brown, Speech at BYU, March 29, 1968

any institution which excommunicates those who freely debate the issues proves the organization's attempts to impose false contrivances as truths. The enforcement of dogma stands in opposition to the proclamation of Jesus to his disciples:

If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;
And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.⁹⁴⁷

Jesus was talking about spiritual emancipation. Freedom from dogma and the oppression of mind and speech. Freedom from subservience to ritual and petty commands of other men. Your mind was created for freedom. Here is another excerpt from the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom:

Whereas, Almighty God hath created the mind free; That all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens, or by civil incapacitations tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness...⁹⁴⁸

To comply with institutional rules which curb the freedom of mind and the freedom of speech requires hypocrisy. To think freely but not be allowed to speak freely is hypocrisy. The church is requiring its members to be hypocrites in order to remain in good standing. With the God-given freedom of mind comes the freedom of thought, the freedom of speech, and the freedom of religion. Freedom of speech is not a privilege, it is a right. I vividly remember reading the most prominent words at the Jefferson Memorial which are inscribed in a frieze below the dome:

I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.⁹⁴⁹

Thomas Jefferson was right that we should build government upon the explicit point that the laws it establishes should never be based upon any religious establishment's interpretations of God's will, nor should any religious institution have any dominion over government, rather it should be the will of the people as a whole. Because everyone is a child of

⁹⁴⁷John 8:31-32

⁹⁴⁸Thomas Jefferson, Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Statute_for_Religious_Freedom

⁹⁴⁹Inscribed in a frieze around the rotunda of the Jefferson Memorial.
Jefferson to Benjamin Rush, September 23, 1800

God, and thus God is a part of all of his children, there is no need for some kind of priesthood authority to outline that will. Though each person's will is not always in line with God's will, God's divine plans will prevail in the destiny of a world of his creation.⁹⁵⁰ Thomas Jefferson knew that true religion is first-hand.

Religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his god."⁹⁵¹

It is evident to me that Jesus understood and never refuted that governments of the world, being material, should find it necessary to employ physical force in the execution of their laws for the maintenance of social order. Jesus also taught that the Kingdom of Heaven is not of this world and will not wield that power, and by his example, he never did wield it, nor did he ever require it of his followers. He taught that the Kingdom of Heaven, being a spiritual brotherhood of spirit-born sons of God, may be promulgated only by the power of the Spirit. Doctrine and Covenants 121:41 seems to glimpse this truth, that in the Kingdom of Heaven, no power or influence can be maintained over others by any rank. Yet, the fact that the church claims to stand in a position of authority between a person and their God contradicts that scripture. It supposes that religion is not a matter which lies solely between a man and his god, but an institution and priesthood which lies between man and his god; that humans are incapable of establishing a relationship with God on their own. That ideology coincides with the separatist doctrines of the Pharisees, and contradicts the message that Jesus himself gave. It is not only that any priesthood exerts unrighteous dominion over its own, it is also that any institutional church has attempted at all to exert any power or influence in the physical government of men to enact laws which, being physical, would oblige courts, police force and other government resources to enforce their execution. The existence of those attempts proves that Jesus did not instigate those endeavors and thus could not possibly be leading that church.

Priestcraft

The Book of Mormon is vehemently against priestcraft. It says that priestcraft is the selling of the gospel to get gain (money) and honor. I have

⁹⁵⁰Daniel 4:17, the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.

⁹⁵¹Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists <http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html>

to agree with that. When money enters the picture in any way, it becomes a business. When a man's livelihood and social status depends on his priesthood office in a religious institution, he has a conflict of interest because his priority becomes biased to maintaining his station as well as the institution's longevity, instead of standing for truth.

If it is a priestcraft to sell doctrine for riches and honor, then why do the prophets, seers, and revelators write and sell books at full retail price, through their own for-profit auxiliary, Deseret Book?

The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us.⁹⁵²

How is selling a full retail book any different from charging for any other kind of religious service? This is the information age. Duplicating and distributing writing electronically costs nothing. They should give it all out for free. While paper-based publication may have been necessary a century ago, the need for profit-gaining books from the leaders of the church in the present is a questionable practice to me, and makes me suspect that the reality of the intent of the church is business and money, not uplifting humankind.

Along those lines, why is the church in any for-profit business at all? Building of any for-profit shopping centers is not the business of Jesus Christ. In fact his business is quite the opposite. The leaders of the church would do well to follow this teaching of Jesus:

And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

⁹⁵²Micah 3:11

And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.⁹⁵³

But they don't. Why don't they? Because their greed is too fat to fit through the needle's eye.

The Widow's Mite

Many have not realized that the story of the Widow's Mite applies more to the condemnation of priestcraft more than it justifies tithing. Please consider the following passage in the gospel of Mark:

And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces,

And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:

Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.⁹⁵⁴

I remember countless Sunday School lessons and talks that included an eisegesis of the scripture above. Again and again, they taught that Jesus exemplified the faith of the poor widow and that all of us should follow. She was always set up as the model. All of the poor should pay, even more than those who cast in of their abundance. They can't afford not to, because they are the ones who need the blessings of prosperity most. As I try to exegese the pretext, verses 38-40 of Mark 12, a new light is cast on that situation.

Jesus did not commend the faithfulness of the widow at all. It was quite the opposite. He condemned the chief seats in synagogues for robbing

⁹⁵³Luke 18:18-25

⁹⁵⁴Mark 12:38-44

her of her very living while they partied and feasted in their high-rise mansions. He declared that they will receive greater damnation for their oppression of the widow!

Jesus did not utter any words of praise for what the widow did. Jesus only observed that she gave more than practically everyone else because she was so poor. Had she not been compelled to offer her farthing to the treasury, it would have most definitely been used to buy food.

Jesus said nothing about how the widow felt about what she gave, not a single adverb. If this were a lesson on dutifully giving offerings in poverty, Jesus could have just as easily chosen any poor person in his example.

The context is important. He referred to the same poor widow to continue what he had previously said about the greedy men who devoured her living. It does not make sense that Jesus would talk about the greed of the chief seats in synagogues, and then suddenly interrupt what he was saying by honoring the poor widow for her faithfulness in supporting those haughty men. I believe that his warning ties with other things he said, including this one:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.⁹⁵⁵

This teaching of Jesus regarding the widow's mite still shamefully relevant today. The corporate nature of the church oppresses the poor, despite his teaching. Church leadership acts like scribes and chief seats in synagogues did. They have built lavish, great and spacious buildings like the Conference Center. The church makes its finances opaque as it invests in vast real-estate without the consent of its members.



⁹⁵⁵Matthew 7:15

This cartoon illustrates what might be said if these men were truly honest. Instead, they say things like this:

“We preach tithing to the poor people of the world because the poor people of the world have had cycles of poverty, generation after generation,” he said. “That same poverty continues from one generation to another, until people pay their tithing.”⁹⁵⁶

It is immoral when a prosperous institution, that arrogantly proclaims that it represents God on earth, uses the faith and blind obedience of gullible people to get scant grocery money out of the poor. I remember many talks about how the poor cannot afford *not* to pay tithing.⁹⁵⁷



I have a vivid memory of my first week of my mission. We went to the most poor house I had ever seen. It was one room. It had a dirt floor. A single pull-chain light bulb hung from the ceiling. A small portable single-burner gas stove was by the door. A family of six or seven lived there. There was one bed. The children that could fit would sleep with mom and dad. The rest had to sleep on the dirt floor. Their clothes were tattered. There was a smell that testified that they had lived there for a long time. There was no running water. Their waste ran out of their house in a little trench that led to the street. It was not the only instance of this situation. This was the standard of living in the area. The other houses on the street were no different. The entire neighborhood had a nasty sewer smell.

I watched the father come home with his elote cart. It was a bicycle that had been converted into a tricycle with a cage-like front end. Elote is a street food. It is grilled corn that is flavored with mayonnaise and chili powder. His family lived on the few coins that came from what he was able to sell in the streets.

We taught the principle of tithing to them. We told them that they must pay tithing to be worthy to be baptized. I proudly declared that they could not be

⁹⁵⁶President Russell M. Nelson in Nairobi in April 16, 2018
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/church/news/london-and-nairobi-stops-of-president-nelsons-world-tour-highlight-church-cultural-diversity>

⁹⁵⁷Elder Valeri V. Córdón, *The Language of the Gospel*, April 2017
<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2017/04/the-language-of-the-gospel?lang=eng>

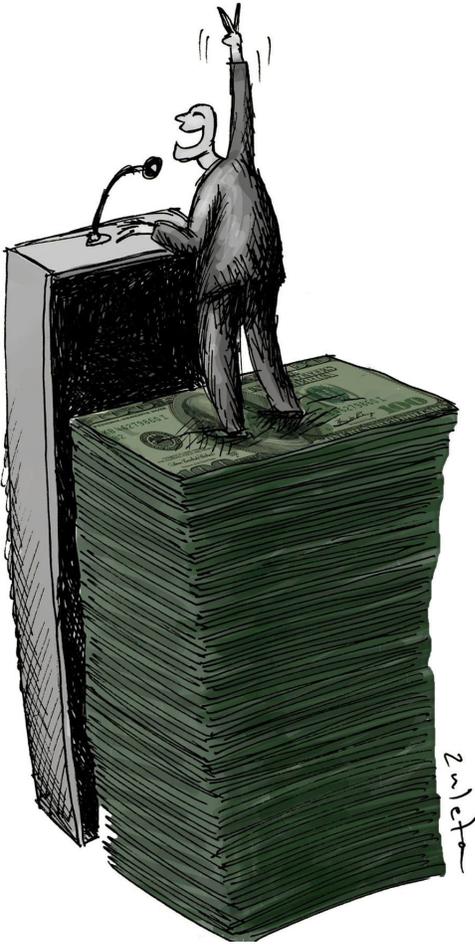
worthy in the eyes of God – sin – if they would not pay.

I taught that they would be blessed monetarily if they obeyed this law. I commanded them to give of their very living to the vast treasury of the church. The still small voice screamed *foul* into my subconscious. I knew of the vast first-world wealth of the church and its many businesses, but I did not allow myself to perceive the exploitation.

As I look back, this was one of the hardest things to teach on my mission, from the very start to the bitter end. It is disgusting. I forced myself to be numb. I never allowed myself to regret what I did. I can see now that it would have disgusted Jesus, too.

Rameumptom

The lavish Conference Center cost half of a billion dollars to build. It was built on the oppression of poor widows who in poverty gave of their very living. They were scrimping and saving to get by. I would venture to surmise that the church did not need that opulent conference hall. Modern technology obviates the need for such great gathering places. The tabernacle would have served just as well for the foreseeable future. Even if you attend an event in that great and spacious building, you are in no way near to those who are speaking from the Rameumptom. You have to watch them on great movie screens on the walls.



It is difficult for me to believe that this is something that Jesus led his prophet to do. He would stand against it. He rebuked leaders for oppressing widows. He warned of ravening wolves in sheep's clothing who would devour the innocent. It pains me to think he guides these leaders to spend money that poor widows gave on such an extravagant thing! It pains me to think that children of single parents ate food sparingly or went another year without a new pair of shoes to finance it makes me feel a bit sick inside.

I cannot come up with any valid reason for the church to spend the widow's mite in such a way. Why would they build such a megachurch? Maybe it is to show off. It might be to show the world the grandeur of the church with its great membership. Maybe their vanity needed a larger rameumptom on which to perch itself as they speak! *Rameumptom* is a fine name for it, because I have heard words spoken from that pulpit that are much like what was spoken from a rameumptom of old:

Holy God, we believe that thou hast separated us from our brethren; and we do not believe in the tradition of our brethren, which was handed down to them by the childishness of their fathers; but we believe that thou hast elected us to be thy holy children; and also thou has made it known to us that [all others are in error and are lost] and thou hast elected us that we shall be saved, whilst all around us are elected to be cast by thy wrath down to hell; for the which holiness, O God, we thank thee; and we also thank thee that thou hast elected us, that we may not be led away after the foolish traditions of our brethren, which doth bind them down to a belief [which has fallen to apostasy], which doth lead their hearts to wander far from thee, our God. And again we thank thee, O God, that we are a chosen and a holy people. Amen.⁹⁵⁸

Those prideful musings of the Zoramites come so close to our prideful typical testimony at our pulpits today:

I know this is the only true and living church on earth, I know that we have a true and living prophet on the earth today, who is guiding us on what we should do in these modern times. I know that all others are fallen and are lost, and unless they repent and be baptized by the authority that God has given to only us, they cannot gain exaltation. I pray for our foolish brethren, that their hearts will be softened that they will have a desire to seek this holy sacred church and not be counted among thy lost children. I am so thankful for this church and its gospel, for I would be truly lost without it. I am thankful to be a part of the house of Israel, God's singular chosen people on earth.

Not much of a difference, is it?

This rameumptom conference center is only an obvious spending of the widow's mite. The leaders of the church are not open with the church's finances. All we get is a gloss-over that everything was handled appropriately by a biased auditor. How could they not be entirely open about it? I quoted this before, but I'll quote it again, to this Jesus says:

For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

⁹⁵⁸Alma 31:16-18, I edited the irrelevant clauses to make my point

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.⁹⁵⁹

Follow the money – if they are not transparent, there has to be a reason. Other charitable organizations are free and open with their financial records to prove their integrity as a charity. I’m afraid that if the church did open its finances for all to see, we would all see proof of corruption. There has to be an ulterior motive. There is something to hide or they would not hide it. The fact that they hide it at all is proof that they make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. They prove that they are outwardly beautiful whited sepulchers, but inward are full of dead men’s bones and of all uncleanness.⁹⁶⁰

Reporter: In my country the, we say the people’s churches, the Protestants, the Catholics, they publish all their budgets, to all the public.

President Hinckley: Yeah. Yeah.

Reporter: Why is it impossible for your church?

President Hinckley: Well, we simply think that the, that information belongs to those who made the contribution, and not to the world. That’s the only thing. Yes.⁹⁶¹

President Hinckley lied about being open with finances with the members of the church. That information in fact does not belong to those who made the contribution, but no one except the very top of the church – he himself – knows about the church treasury in its entirety. The fact that they hide it proves that they transgress the law in the Doctrine and Covenants, which says:

And there shall not any part of it be used, or taken out of the treasury, only by the voice and common consent of the order.⁹⁶²

In fact, that blatant disregard was written into the incorporation of the church by Heber J. Grant. He produced a legal document grants legal immunity from the canonical law of Common Consent.

⁹⁵⁹ John 3:20-21

⁹⁶⁰ Matthew 23:25-28

⁹⁶¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGktXV346G8>

⁹⁶² Doctrine and Covenants 26:2, 28:13, 121:39, 124:144, 104:71; Mosiah 29:26

...and this corporation shall have power, without any authority or authorization from the members of said Church or religious society, to grant, sell, convey, rent, mortgage, exchange, or otherwise dispose of any part or all of such property.⁹⁶³

If they can’t trust me enough to allow me to see how they use the Lord’s money, then I cannot trust them to be good stewards. They are not worthy to be accountable to the Lord for my money that is intended for the Lord. They are still men. Men are fallible. Men can’t be trusted without accountability. There is irony in that they are so stringent in their bylaws for how the wards and branches deal with incoming tithing and offerings, but the corporate church has no accountability at all, while we see them build fine sanctuaries, lavish edifices, and purchase vast real estate, all without transparency, let alone Common Consent. That is abominable.

What I have mentioned is just the tip of the iceberg. I know little of the dealings of the church with its so-called sacred money. Some information I could find was in the US Senate Committee case regarding Senator Reed Smoot in 1905, president Joseph F. Smith was the chairman of so many for-profit businesses, he could not recall them all.⁹⁶⁴ The list was quite long, but that was over a hundred years ago. Who knows of all of the enterprise it has entered into since then. It seems that there are many more invisible profiteering operations by the church that its members haven’t the least inkling about. Some claim that all of these enterprises did not come from tithing, but I cannot believe that. You can’t just establish enterprises from nothing. Businesses such as those require great capital investment. So what if the money came from invested tithing 150 years ago or 50 years ago? It was still tithing. It had to come from somewhere. How ever they justify it: whether tithing was laundered in some way, if they provided minimal-interest loans using tithing funds, or if they skimmed investment dividends off tithing, is still ultimately tithing that is used for profit.

Of the few things that I have been able to see, there are a few that make me shudder to think about. I have seen pictures of the grand opening of City Creek Mall, where a bow was cut. All three of the First Presidency

⁹⁶³ Article of Incorporation, Corporation of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, November 26, 1923 <http://mormondisclosures.blogspot.com/2014/09/articles-of-incorporation-archive.html>

⁹⁶⁴ Testimony of Important Witnesses ... to the United States Senate <http://books.google.com/books?id=b0Tu76jv7jQC&pg=PA59> pp. 59-61

were there. They can clearly be seen in photographs and videos. Elder Eyring gave a talk.



Let's go shopping!⁹⁶⁵

There are large parts of [the world] where religion is a thing of the past and there is no counter-voice to the culture of buy it, spend it, wear it, flaunt it.⁹⁶⁶

The doublespeak above came from the same prophet, seer, revelator, and president of the church of Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt that the church has a vested interest. City Creek mall is part of a \$5 Billion⁹⁶⁷ "revitalization" which includes condos and other real estate ventures. After that revitalization, the nearby new mall became a ghost town. That mall, *The Gateway*, failed because of competition from the supposed apostles of Jesus Christ.

There are many other real estate ventures. The church is building a 32-story tower containing 258 apartments in Philadelphia.⁹⁶⁸ The church has become the largest single land-owner in Florida.⁹⁶⁹ The stories of these investments in current events never seem to stop. A chunk of the Florida investment will become a development of practically an entire city, *Deseret Ranch*, built by the church.⁹⁷⁰

And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.⁹⁷¹

As they invest such huge sums of money, they strangle their credibility as representatives of Jesus. My

⁹⁶⁵Thomas Monson with his presidency, standing on a platform at his City Creek mall, March 2012 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cf_vxsog4A

⁹⁶⁶Thomas Monson, *Stand in Holy Places*, October 2011

⁹⁶⁷<http://www.ksl.com/?sid=19428181>

⁹⁶⁸<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/19/realestate/commercial/mormon-church-to-expand-development-in-philadelphia.html>

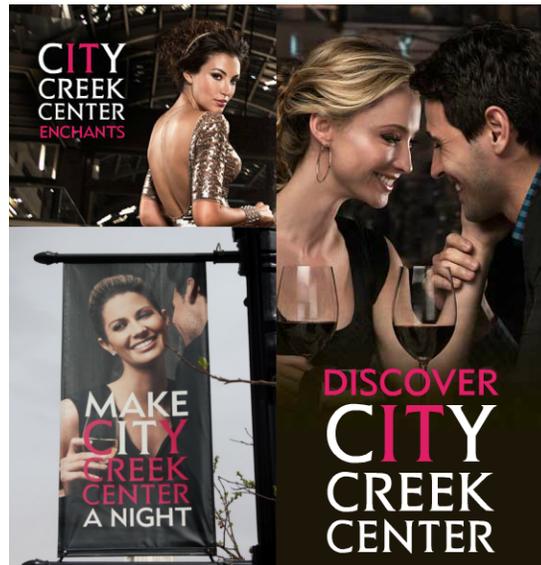
⁹⁶⁹<http://www.reuters.com/article/usa-florida-mormons-idUSL2N0IT2A220131108>

⁹⁷⁰<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/jan/30/from-book-to-boom-how-the-mormons-plan-a-city-for-500000-in-florida>

⁹⁷¹Mark 4:19

innards squirm inside me at the thought that Jesus could possibly have any part in these kinds of transactions. Can you imagine Jesus having a part in such ventures? Can you seriously envision Jesus building a retail shopping mall by the temple? "Come back merchants! I'm so sorry I offended you when I drove you out. My house is a house of merchandise after all!" How much will they profane the teachings of Jesus before we finally take notice? If Jesus were actually leading the church, here is another thing he would say to these silly greedy men:

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.⁹⁷² The word "mammon" is a transliteration into English of the Aramaic word "mamona" which means "money" or "riches." You cannot serve both God and money.



Ironically, it seems the church has no problem becoming part of what it would call Babylon to make a buck. The ads I've seen for their mall do not adhere to church standards. None of the women wear dresses that could cover garments, all are provocative, and advertise a night life of luxury, including wine. I'm not saying that those standards are essential – I honestly don't care if shoulders or backs are visible, and I already talked about Jesus and wine. However, I am pointing out how hypocritical it is, and that hypocrisy illustrates where their true allegiance lies: mammon.

They invest huge sums in money-making enterprises and real-estate, while ward budgets are only

⁹⁷²Luke 16:13

about 1% of the tithing they take in, they are unwilling to pay the meager wage to employ a janitor at chapels, and there are many members in who are starving (especially in third-world countries) and are sacrificing dearly to pay tithing.

They tout that they've spent great amounts of money in humanitarian aid, but in reality, they spent 1.4 billion from 1985-2011.⁹⁷³ Businessweek's analysis places that at about 0.7% of the church's annual income to charity.⁹⁷⁴

If you look at the charity of other profitable companies as large or larger than the church, you may be surprised to find out that they give at least two or three times that percentage. What does that say about an institution that is supposed to be led by Jesus?

The numbers are more bleak from Elder Oaks. Elder Oaks said⁹⁷⁵ that the church spends about 40 million a year. Let's do the math, shall we? 40 million divided by 7 billion is 0.0057, just over half a percent. And that is only in relation to tithing, neither the other humanitarian donations like fast-offerings, nor the for-profit arms of the church.

I mentioned earlier that Joseph F. Smith was the chairman of so many for-profit businesses, he could not recall them all while on trial. It was almost as if he was embarrassed at his vast for-profit empire. They did list many in court as they asked multiple times whether he was the chairman.

It seems to me that the fruits of the leaders of the church these days are quite clear: money is more important than the message of Jesus. These men, who are supposed to be prophets, seers, and revelators, and who are supposed to be led by will of Jesus himself, have verily demonstrated who it is they truly serve.

When we care about people, we care less about money, and when we care about money, we care less about people.⁹⁷⁶

The lawyers, scribes, pharisees, "chief seats in the synagogues and the uppermost rooms at feasts" of our day have proven to me that they are even more haughty than those of old. They are not only the

⁹⁷³<http://www.lds.org/bc/content/shared/content/english/pdf/welfare/2011-welfare-services-fact-sheet.pdf>

⁹⁷⁴<http://www.businessweek.com/printer/articles/62364-how-the-mormons-make-money>

⁹⁷⁵<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865657898/LDS-Church-welfare-humanitarian-efforts-average-40-million-per-year-apostle-says.html>

⁹⁷⁶Margaret Heffernan, Willful Blindness: Why We Ignore the Obvious at Our Peril

chief priests of a single synagogue, they are running a lucrative, global enterprise. They use the name of Jesus to devour widows' houses, in complete vanity and hypocrisy, to expand their empire. If Jesus were actually leading, he would remind them:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.⁹⁷⁷

The top leaders of the church are much like those chief seats which love the salutations in the streets – the fame, fortune, and power that their position brings. They revel in the hero worship they receive. They surely do not follow the call of Jesus to abandon all riches, vainglory, and popularity to be in his service:

Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.⁹⁷⁸

I find it ironic that the upper leaders of my church secretly draw rather lucrative "stipends"⁹⁷⁹ In addition to that, they are reimbursed, under the table, for practically every life expense. Those reimbursements include allowances for vacation homes, remodeling, gardeners, let alone practically every practical living expense. The salaries are just *spending money*. Living expenses are reimbursed from the rank of Mission President on up through Seventies to the president himself.

They have a conflict of interest because their livelihood and status depends on their position. The apologetic response is that they were already rich and pay their own way. But that cannot be true for each of them that have been in upper church leadership for the vast majority of their life. This is extortion when compared to the average income of the vast majority of tithe payers, and especially lucrative when compared to those who pay tithing from third-world countries.

Satan hasn't a single salaried helper; the opposition employ a million.⁹⁸⁰

⁹⁷⁷Matthew 6:19-21

⁹⁷⁸Luke 10:4

⁹⁷⁹The word "stipend" is a euphemism for "salary." [Here is an example check.](#) (this link is in the pdf and html version of this paper.)

⁹⁸⁰Mark Twain

For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.⁹⁸¹

Through their lying cant phrase “too sacred to talk about,” they purposefully mislead their followers by pretending that they meet personally with Jesus every Thursday. This makes their living on church funds all the more immoral. Most of us have to actually work for a living.

Joseph smith, Brigham Young, and every prophet-president have ever lived on church funds. Brigham Young’s finances were one and the same as the church’s finances. I preached on my mission that we have a lay ministry. Not only do they lie, they made me a liar for them. The lay ministry are the ones in the ranks, who give all of their free time for the building up of a corporate empire owned by their overseers. All of this has ever been done in complete secrecy, misleading everyone in hypocrisy and doublespeak. The scriptures say one thing, but the opposite is practiced. The Book of Mormon condemns even the tiniest stipend. Alma would be disgusted with all of them.

And notwithstanding the many labors which I have performed in the church, I have never received so much as even one senine for my labor; neither has any of my brethren, save it were in the judgment-seat; and then we have received only according to law for our time.⁹⁸²

A senine was the worth of a measure of barley.⁹⁸³ Who knows how much a “measure” is. But just for fun, lets use the price for a pound of barley, which is 12.5¢ as I write this. If the upper echelons of the church receive as much as even 12.5¢ for their labors, they practice priestcraft. Nephi would be disgusted with them, too:

Because of pride, and because of false teachers, and false doctrine, their churches have become corrupted, and their churches are lifted up; because of pride they are puffed up.

They rob the poor because of their fine sanctuaries; they rob the poor because of their fine clothing; and they persecute the meek and the poor in heart, because in their pride they are puffed up.⁹⁸⁴

Nephi threatens them:

⁹⁸¹Matthew 24:28

⁹⁸²Alma 30:33

⁹⁸³Alma 11:7

⁹⁸⁴2 Nephi 28:12-13

But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish.⁹⁸⁵

Moroni would be disgusted with them:

For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.

O ye pollutions, ye hypocrites, ye teachers, who sell yourselves for that which will canker, why have ye polluted the holy church of God? Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ? Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies—because of the praise of the world?

Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?

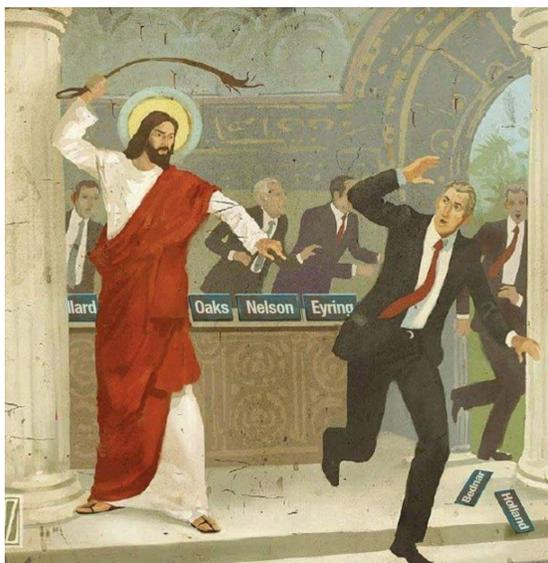
Yea, why do ye build up your secret abominations to get gain, and cause that widows should mourn before the Lord, and also orphans to mourn before the Lord, and also the blood of their fathers and their husbands to cry unto the Lord from the ground, for vengeance upon your heads?

Behold, the sword of vengeance hangeth over you; and the time soon cometh that he avengeth the blood of the saints upon you, for he will not suffer their cries any longer.⁹⁸⁶

For an institution that claims to profess to follow Jesus, I find it laughable that it lays up so much treasure on earth, in direct contradiction to his teaching. It is horrible that they rob the poor to construct and adorn fine sanctuaries, to invest in real estate, and hoard treasure troves of tithing so immense that the amount is difficult for the human mind to comprehend. The church continues to choose to ignore, take out of context, or misinterpret the teachings of Jesus. The riches they have should go to the poor, not to money-making enterprises and investment portfolios.

⁹⁸⁵2 Nephi 26:31

⁹⁸⁶Mormon 8:37-41



Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.⁹⁸⁷

If Jesus were truly leading the church, it would own nothing. His apostles would best follow his counsel and sell all they have for the poor. Instead, they contradict him by effectively make the poor pay for their fine clothing. A dress suit is one of the most expensive pieces of clothing that is designed for a man. An old refrain says that the price of one ounce of gold, not subject to inflation, should be roughly equal to the price of a suit for a well-dressed man. Compare the thousand-dollar suit to the tithing of a widow, and you should perceive the injustice.

Tithing

Tithing was a civil tax of a theocratic government. In the Old Testament times that tithing was required, the government of the country was the religious hierarchy, which mainly consisted of the tribe of Levi. Tithing was never money, but was mainly in the form of food, which fed the Levites, who could not legally own land to produce their own food⁹⁸⁸ because they were supposed to dedicate their lives to their ministry. The Levites had both religious and political responsibilities.

⁹⁸⁷Luke 12:33-34

⁹⁸⁸Deuteronomy 18:1-2

Tithing was required in Israel, but Jesus never tithed his followers.^{989 990} If he did, it would be a gross contradiction to what he taught about the widows mite, it would have been a gross contradiction to all of his rebuking of the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees!

Thanks to founding fathers like Thomas Jefferson, we have a separation of Church and State. Our government is completely secular. They intended that established religions would have no sway on government. Secular government has its own methods for assessing the tax for its expenses. The church does not need money for government as Israel did when the country was a theocracy. This sheds a different light on modern tithing. It is not used as it was in Old Testament times. It has become a method of extortion. It is a priestcraft.

What about the Malachi scripture about tithing? Every lesson or talk I have heard at church about Malachi 3:8-10 is severely misunderstood and out of context. In the pretext, Malachi talks to the priests. They were the ones that were stealing tithes. It was not addressed to the nation. The nation had not robbed God. It was the priests that "have robbed me, even this whole nation."

Robbing the poor is akin to robbing God. Jesus observed, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."⁹⁹¹ He was talking about good works. It operates the other way around, too. When you abuse the least of these, you abuse Jesus. The rebuke of both Malachi and Jesus towards the priests of their time applies to the priests of our time who also rob the widow of her living. If the priests of the restoration use this scripture out of context, then they are no better than the other crafty swindlers of the same profession who use the scripture in the same way.

The people had already given their tithes. Israel had several tithes, two of them were much like we have tithing and fast offering. "That there may be food in my house" is literally talking about the poor-food tithe,⁹⁹² which was meant specifically for feeding the poor, "open for you the windows of heaven and pouring out a blessing" is literally talking about pouring rain: the thing that grows the food, and "that there shall not be room enough to receive it" refers

⁹⁸⁹Even Paul talked of this in Hebrews 7. He said that tithing was a part of the old Levitical law. He said that all of the old carnal law (which includes tithing) was annulled by the inherent authority of Jesus.

⁹⁹⁰Acts 15:10,28 – The gentiles were exempt from living laws of the Jews

⁹⁹¹Matthew 25:40,45

⁹⁹²Deuteronomy 14:22,28-29

directly to the limited room in their granaries to hold the harvest from the abundant rain. To put it in our dialect, Malachi was accusing the priesthood leaders were keeping the fast offerings for themselves instead of feeding the poor with it.

This is Old Testament law anyway. All of the old Jewish law doesn't apply to people who follow Jesus. Tithing was never a doctrine that Jesus taught. Being "cursed with a curse" for not obeying is anti-Jesus, because he taught that God doesn't curse, blesses both evil and good children.⁹⁹³ There are countless laws in the Old Testament that we do not observe as followers of Jesus. If you want to depend on Old Testament tithing laws for these post-Jesus times today, you'd have to consider all of the old tithing laws. For example, this interesting tidbit: Deuteronomy 14:22-26. As soon as tithing is converted to money, it's yours to do with as you please. Since we deal in money today, we're all exempt!

What about Abraham and his tithing to Melchizedek? Yes, Abraham gave ten percent of his spoils of war to Melchizedek, but go read the context in Genesis 14 again: he gave the rest, 90% of the spoils to the king of Sodom! First, the spoils of war are not honest increase, and second, he didn't keep anything for himself. The word "tithe" is only used here to represent the numeric percentage of the spoils. The historical ideas presented about this same subject in Alma 13 which contradict the Bible on this matter are not reliable. The Book of Mormon can no longer be considered as a historical document because it is so fallible on everything else historical.

What about God proving himself with blessings from the opened windows of heaven? You'd think that if he was proven, there would be evidence of countless poor people who pay their tithing faithfully and who superseded their poverty, yet they still remain in poverty. If it worked as promised, everybody would clearly want to be tithed and there would be no poor. The fact is, there are many nonmembers and atheists who are blessed financially and there are many poor, faithful LDS people who pay tithes and never get any more ahead. The only physical blessings that have come from tithing are self-fulfilling prophecies or result of superstition.

Every scripture they use to justify tithing is taken out of context in order to bend its meaning for monetary gain, all while one of the fruits of a false prophet is this:

⁹⁹³Matthew 5:45

And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you."⁹⁹⁴

Tithing as it is currently required in the church is extortion by priestcraft, carefully exercised by feigned words of crafty charlatans.

Thomas Paine, whose life preceded the inception of the restored church by several years, almost prophetically predicted the saddening riches of the church enterprise. This is another instance where he wrote something that applies as much to the restored church as it does to the heretic church that it was supposed to have superseded. The restored church did not fix this.

One thing, however, is much less equivocal, which is, that out of the matters contained in those books, together with the assistance of some old stories, the Church has set up a system of religion very contradictory to the character of the person whose name it bears. It has set up a religion of pomp and revenue, in pretended imitation of a person whose life was humility and poverty.⁹⁹⁵

Tithing is legally spun as a voluntary charitable donation, but it is not entirely voluntary. It is a requirement for access to the temple. It is as if it were the fee for entrance to a lavish country club. It is a form of extortion. The definition of the word "extortion" is to threaten harm or abuse for yourself or those you love if you do not give what is demanded. It is a ransom. Those who require it act like terrorists as they hold our eternal families as a ransom for our money. The temple is the only way we can be fully exalted. Without constant access to the temple, we risk losing the highest glory for lack of obedience. We risk losing our eternal family. Without access to the temple, we risk shame and rejection by family and friends when we are unable to attend their elitist temple rituals for life milestones like temple marriage.

The God that I believe in could not possibly require a monetary entrance fee, let alone any blindly obedient sacrifice or ritual. The God that I believe in is the other way around – he does all he can to restore me to truth, light, and his presence. I need only to choose to allow him. The God that I believe in encourages my full freedom of choice at my level of intellectual capacity. If I didn't use these talents, I would be throwing away his gifts. The God I believe

⁹⁹⁴2 Peter 2:3

⁹⁹⁵Thomas Payne, Age of Reason, Part First, Section 6
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00painiala#page/19/mode/1up>

in would never require paying a fee to other men in order to get a ticket to enter the pearly gates.

The teachings of Jesus superseded all Old Testament laws. His higher message elevates the old to a new level. The old list of hundreds of rules, regulations and bylaws find fulfillment and abatement in the new simple, enlightened message of Jesus. Tithing was never part of the new message of Jesus. Jesus did not teach tithing, nor did he require it of his followers. Instead, Jesus taught that we should abandon our obsession with materialism. A restored church of Jesus Christ couldn't possibly claim "restoration" of something that never originally existed.

The teachings of Jesus are not half truths. They are fully logical truths that work in many ways. Even as he resorted to parables to teach, the truths are only evident to truth seekers. That said, consider this teaching of Jesus which is found in all three,⁹⁹⁶ Matthew, Mark and Luke:

And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?

Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.

And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's.

And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.⁹⁹⁷

The charge to render to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God the things which are God's implies that you need not render to Caesar that which is God's, and likewise, you need not render to God that which is Caesars! So how is it that any money in any shape or form which is representative of the power of governments and organizations of this world be required by the Kingdom of Heaven? If you want to give directly to the Lord, this is what Jesus said to do:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a

stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.⁹⁹⁸

The temple ceremony condemns selling tokens and signs for money. That is doublespeak. The requirement of tithing to gain access to the temple is essentially doing just that: selling tokens and signs for money. You can buy anything in this world with money, including the cost of passage by the sentinels of heaven. Insert coins here, fare tokens come out there.

It doesn't matter how altruistic you are. You could give millions to charity. If you do not pay tithing, you are not worthy to enter into the temple, end of story.

It is a tax in the name of God. It is a heavy burden, grievous to be borne. It contradicts core teachings of Jesus. It uses the name of Jesus in vain. It is not about changing hearts and leading people to Christ. It is about money.

The tokens and signs that the temple provides are ultimately required for entrance into the Celestial Kingdom. That makes monetary payment *mandatory* for salvation! You are not supposed to have to buy your way into heaven, but if you do not pay up, you are not getting in. The words of Moroni convict the same church which purports to believe in his words:

Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be churches built up that shall say: Come unto me, and for your money you shall be forgiven of your sins.

O ye wicked and perverse and stiffnecked people, why have ye built up churches unto yourselves to get gain? Why have ye transfigured the holy word of God, that ye might bring damnation upon your souls?⁹⁹⁹

Divine Providence

The myth of the opening of the windows of heaven in response to paying tithing is in accordance with the doctrine of divine providence, which is taught extensively in our church today. This is undoubtedly is the core theme of the Book of Mormon: If they keep the commandments, they prosper in the land. If not, they are cursed; to stir them into remembrance and obedience to God's command.

⁹⁹⁸Matthew 25:34-36,40

⁹⁹⁹Mormon 8:32-33

⁹⁹⁶Matthew 22:15-22, Luke 20:20-26, Mark 12:13-17

⁹⁹⁷Mark 12:14-17

There is some truth to divine providence in that everything in existence came from God, and he advances his creation over time, but this is not the same as providence. You cannot consider the doctrine of divine providence for the righteous without also considering the other side, divine cursing for sin.

To say that God prospers and curses is double-speak because it is also said that God is no respecter of persons.¹⁰⁰⁰ Consider what Jesus taught:

For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.¹⁰⁰¹

God shows no favoritism by prospering the righteous or condemning the wicked. The thought that he might prosper for righteousness and curse for sin comes from that idolatrous and sacrifice-bound religion of old in which God was a moody, jealous lord and king.

If divine providence were true, then professional basketball players should be insanely righteous, because they are prosperous. Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, Larry Ellison, and the Waltons should all be heralded as the standard for righteousness. In fact, all of the insanely rich must be the most righteous people on earth, because they have been blessed. If it is true, then those who get cancer, those who are blind, those who have a car accident, those who have depression, and the poor are all sinners. If it is true, then all of the suffering in the world is attributable to God as a punishment for sin. To think in this way is to fail to reason honestly, fail to understand God, and fail to care sufficiently for the suffering of other children of God.

As I mentioned before, the story of Job teaches that the Jewish doctrine of divine providence is false while also teaching that one can have faith in God during a mortal life while subject to accidents of nature. Nature is not God. Surely mishaps, accidents, earthquakes and tsunamis are not acts of a loving God.

One of the curses in the Book of Mormon is the inability to speak, or the more crude name, dumbness. It was inflicted by a prophet of God for heresy. As the story goes, this curse of dumbness went beyond the inability to utter words, because it made its subject lose everything and become a beggar. After being cursed, he still had the ability for coherent thought

¹⁰⁰⁰ James 2:1,9; Deuteronomy 10:17; Acts 1:34; Romans 2:11; 2 Chr 19:7

¹⁰⁰¹ Matthew 5:45

and was able to write his thoughts. Besides the paranormal hex of a servant of God causing damage and deprivation, in the real world, someone such as this could still teach and help others as their conscience dictates. Stephen Hawking would be called *dumb* and lame in Book of Mormon terms, but despite his disability, his work has helped to advance many scientific fields. Hellen Keller was born both deaf and blind. Her dumbness would have been called a curse in the Book of Mormon or in the Bible, but she became one of the greater minds in modern history despite what would be called a curse of God. Her thoughts are treasured and quoted by many people.

The greatest testimony against providence and cursing is that Jesus healed the sick. I particularly remember the time he healed a blind man who did not even ask to be healed. Jesus did it only to teach the Pharisees (and everyone else) that they were wrong in their belief that sinners are cursed. I invite you to read all of John 9 where this little episode happens. While I won't quote the whole thing, I think the best part is when the Pharisees summon the healed man to testify for the second time, and he teaches the Pharisees that their belief is wrong:

Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.¹⁰⁰²

Jesus went against the Jewish teachings of providence and cursing of God, and boldly taught that the catastrophes of nature, accidents of time, diseases, calamities of mortality, as well as high state of the rich and proud are not visitations of divine judgment nor favor.

In this matter, despite its claims, the Book of Mormon does not restore the fulness of the gospel of Jesus. The Book of Mormon perpetuates the same Old Testament doctrines not only before the coming of Jesus, but it blatantly does so at his coming and continues well after his coming. I cannot believe that a loving god nor Jesus could act like an abusive parent. The same ideas are perpetuated today in what is supposed to be the restored gospel of Jesus, as the modern prophets incite fear that prosperity will be lost and misfortune afflicted because of the sin or a lack of obedience.

Blessings

I have struggled with the idea of the “power in the priesthood” all of my life, especially when I have been called upon to use it in order to invoke the “power of God” in priesthood blessings.

I was raised to not believe in magic, to be skeptical of supernatural powers, and to view magic as a false pagan tradition. Then, I was imposed with the doublespeak that priesthood has the authority over all of the same things. Mormonism requires a belief in the supernatural. To be faithful, I must accept and employ magical garments, magical prayers, magical blessings, magical visions, magical stones, and so on. Heathen magic is evil, but an unflinching belief in priesthood magic is required for a healthy testimony.

Garments are talismans. A talisman is an object that is thought to bring good luck and protection from evil. I was taught that the garment of the Holy Priesthood is a physical object that should be worn to shield and protect from evil and harm. It is treated like an idol because it cannot touch the ground.

Magic oil is a fetish. A fetish is an object that has been imbued with magic. Blessed olive oil combined with a spell while holding hands over a head can cure cancer. I have witnessed the greatest amount of faith shown by loved ones who fully believe that faith and priesthood can cure a cancer victim. In addition to

their blessings with oil, I joined with hundreds of people, adding my faith to theirs, as I participated in stake-wide fasting and prayer. We all believed without any doubt that faith precedes the miracle. It failed to work every single time.

Priesthood blessings are magical spells. I have watched priesthood blessings fail again and again. I have never witnessed priesthood cure anything that scientific medicine cannot already cure. From my experience, I am confident that a clinical study would demonstrate an no advantage of priesthood blessings over placebo. There is nothing that makes it any better than false pagan traditions.

Medical science has made more advancements in healthcare than priesthood blessings ever have. If the power to heal is truly a right or rite of the priesthood then medical science should not be needed. We would not need doctors and scientists, we would need priests.

If the priesthood is truly the power of God given to man, then there should not be so many contingencies on that power actually producing results. If the results are affirmative, then it is attributed to the priesthood, and if the results are negative, it is attributed to an unwilling God, a lack of faith, or a lack of worthiness because of disobedience. It is not acceptable to express the thought that the priesthood itself might not be reliable.

Regardless of what a blessing may say, the will of God ultimately reigns supreme. That means that priesthood blessings wield no godly power. They can only be a prayer to petition God to change his will. If God's will is perfect, it does not change. That not only makes priesthood unreliable, it makes it pointless.

Priesthood pretentiously dares to pull rank on God by asserting that he does not know as well as we do. It dares to tempt him to act in a different way than he already has. It pretends that God is not already fully aware of the situation. It is as if God will not show compassion unless he has been commanded. It implies that God is so unaware that he needs someone to point him in the right direction. It makes him into such a slothful jerk that he will not do anything good unless he is commanded.

I never have felt comfortable giving priesthood blessings. I cannot get over the overwhelming feeling of hypocrisy as I perform. As an introvert, I require time to prepare the words that I say, or I will second-guess what I said afterward. If I find myself second-guessing, it proves that I was not inspired.

I have never channeled divine words, nor have I ever dared to promise supernatural outcomes. I

¹⁰⁰²John 9:24-34

could not do so even when I was perfectly obedient and stringently righteous on my mission. I was tasked to pronounce a blessing during a baptism confirmation, only minutes after taking the sacrament, a time when I should have been perfectly worthy. I sought with all of my mental powers to channel the divine without preparation. My mind was completely blank. I felt an overwhelming feeling of defeat as someone else had to do it.

I feel a sense of futility in promising or pronouncing anything in a priesthood blessing. I feel hypocritical as I dare to presume that I am supposed to not only tempt God, but to command him. It seems like a horrible imposition that anyone that holds the priesthood can vainly pretend to be the mouthpiece of God.

I am like my dad. He was an introvert, too. It was obvious to me that it was stressful for him to give blessings. Extraverted people are usually experts in using words and can talk easily. They enjoy hearing the sound of their own voice. They seem to give the most beautiful blessings. When they cannot remember what they said, they ascribe the words to God. I would dare say that they cannot remember what they said because they did not write it down. If you ask talkative person to give an impromptu five-minute talk on any subject and then ask them weeks later to remember what they said, they will probably not remember that, either.

My dad was as devoted to the church and dedicated to the priesthood as any man could ever be. My last memory of him was hours before he went comatose before his death. My brother, who is equally as dedicated to his priesthood, was about to give him a final blessing, just hours before his mind slipped away. My dad confessed that he had never felt comfortable giving blessings. He said that he never felt like the Spirit had prompted him. He probably rationalized with his oft-expressed feelings of unworthiness and imperfection. I have ever felt the same way. Feelings of empathy and relief came to me. I needed to hear that from my dad. That situation helped my theory that extraverts, who love to hear themselves talk, also love to give blessings. It feeds their ego while introverts encounter an internal battle with their own integrity.

It saddens me to think that at the end of a life completely dedicated to obeying all of the commandments to the letter, fulfilling every calling, and ever being engaged in every good cause, my dad died with the crushing fear that he was still inadequate. The poison that fueled his feelings of inadequacy was not the message of a loving God that Jesus

gave, it was the overcontrol of nit-picky Pharisaical men. It was that night when I gave him a last hug from behind as he sat in his chair, because he could not stand, and as I pressed my face against his, I whispered into his ear that I love him. I still love him. I sincerely hope, if his mind has been reassembled, that he has been relieved of this ugly burden which he bore for the entirety of his life.

Temple Rites and Rituals

Speech restriction is a technique abusers employ to subdue their victims. Critical thought is squelched. The most insane things can be taught and accepted. An abuser can gaslight their victims to their heart's content. When something can't be talked about, an abuser can inflict anything they want on their victim.

I have kept what I'm about to say inside all of these years, because an honest dialog of the temple is not only taboo, it is prohibited because of oaths of secrecy. I no longer feel any obligation to refrain from sharing my honest thoughts about the temple. To some, an honest analysis about the temple might be refreshing. If you still feel obligated to refrain from talking about the temple while not in it, then I invite you to take what I write with you to the temple and read it there.

Uneasiness

My first visit to the temple to receive my own endowment happened on August 22, 1992 about a month before my mission. I looked forward to going to the temple with great anticipation. Finally, I would enter into The House of the Lord and gain further light and knowledge! Finally, I would gain access to gospel teachings that are so sacred that the wicked world cannot have access to them! Finally I would go to a place that is near heaven and where pure knowledge would precipitate in my mind from the fountains of life!

Do you remember when you first went through the House of the Lord? I do. And I went out disappointed. Just a young man, out of college, anticipating great things when I went to the Temple. I was disappointed and grieved, and I have met hundreds of young men and young women since who had that experience.¹⁰⁰³

The temple was a sheer disappointment for me, just as much as David O. McKay admitted. It was

¹⁰⁰³David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism, 277

the first time my aversion to ritual really gnawed at me. The church teaches that prayer and all proceedings should come from within. It teaches that they should not be static, repetitive, or memorized. My own mother took pride in that praiseworthy teaching as she taught that the only static prayer should be the sacrament.

All of my life I was proud to be part of a church that had a disdain for secret combinations. Everything that was done in the temple was the opposite to many scriptures and principles I had loved and cherished. I caught myself wondering if this was still the same church.

Watching the movie for the first time was fun because I had never seen anything like that before, but I was disgusted when it came time to do such ritualistic things having to do with tokens, signs, putting on clothes in a certain way, lifting my hands high above my head and lowering them while repeating a phrase. I was even alarmed by the use of the words *token* and *sign*, as if they were good. Those were supposed to be words we used to describe idolatrous practices.

I was deeply disturbed by the robotic “bow your head and say yes.” It was as if, in the highest form of worship, volition and honest contemplation about decisions is no longer an option. The pressure of the environment seemed so nefarious to me. I had to have an escort. Many members of my family were there, all with the expectation that this was the most wonderful experience God could offer. I have since learned about Asch’s conformity experiment.¹⁰⁰⁴ Conformity is a powerful motivator. It makes you doubt your own senses. It was as if I were a rat in a maze. I am sickened by that violation and desecration of my god-given will.

When they gave the opportunity to withdraw, I wondered why anyone would do that after having proved their devotion. Later on, I wondered why they would ask that so early. Both the decision to withdraw as well as the rites and the compulsive oaths that came later were uninformed. It was like requiring the choice to be made whether to reject an eternally binding contract before having been allowed to be read it, then being forced to accept it after having read it. It seemed manipulative to me that I was granted no foreknowledge of anything that was coming. To be required to make promises to stipulations that are provided after the only opportunity to back out has passed is not a covenant, it is coercion. That

¹⁰⁰⁴<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sno1TpCLj6A>

is not the method that the God I believe in would ever employ.

The only way to advance through the endowment is to say yes to every request, and so I did. Throughout the ceremony, I anticipated the further light and knowledge that never seemed to come. The more I participated, the more I wanted to leave. I kept looking at my dad, who was my escort, to see the expression on his face. I wanted to make sure that he was truly okay with it. It did not seem to bother him at all. I wondered if he had become immune over the years. My mom was on the other side of the room. I looked at her many times. She beamed at me with a smile that showed how proud she was that her last son was in the temple. I wondered to myself whether they were even aware of what was going on. To stop would devastate them. I had a preexisting faith that God knows my heart intimately. I believed that he would not hold it against me if I would continue halfheartedly in that bewildering outward ordinance.

I couldn’t believe that people had no issue with what goes on in there. I couldn’t believe that it was supposed to be the best God has to offer his children. I couldn’t believe that it represents heaven when it felt so wrong and strange. I wasn’t sure I wanted to participate in the kind of heaven the temple represents. As I’ve said, the temple disconnects from many doctrinal principles. I understand why garments should be a reminder of commitment, but their other purposes as a representative of righteousness seemed pretentious. God should not need something more than simply knowing my heart.

Honestly, the temple and its ceremonies never gave me the peace of the spirit. The only good feelings I had were the fairy-tale-awe feeling and a sense of community and conformity with others who are doing the same thing. In opposition to all of the uneasiness, the feelings of the unity of family and friends after passing through the veil and entering the celestial room is quite rewarding. It feels as though you’ve all passed a test, that you’re part of a higher society now, and you all love each other and give each other hugs. But all of that should happen in family relationships even without the temple involved.

I did appreciate the reverence in the temple. As an introvert, finally having all the overly-talkative people silenced is a great thing! At the end, I thought that maybe it isn’t all that bad. I decided to just go with the flow.

I went as often as I could, because I had been taught that the more I would attend, the more I would understand. I tried really hard to gain new insight. I

delved deep into symbolism that didn't actually augment my understanding. I had my own repertoire of apologetics for inconsistencies. I'd read into the subtleties of sentence structure trying to glean more meaning than was actually there.

As time went on, I got more desensitized to what goes on in the temple. I kept returning because I thought I knew that it should be what God wanted me to do. Sometimes I fooled myself that the spirit was there. Sometimes I wondered how the spirit could ever be there. Eventually I avoided going as much as I could because I begrudged enduring another two hours of a movie and presentation that is exactly the same every time. Had I not believed that the temple should be the acme of what worship should be, I would have never allowed myself watch any movie that many times.

I have thought back to that first experience over and over through the years. Had I known what was coming, had I been in a room alone without the peer pressure, had I the perspective I now have twenty years later, I would have taken the opportunity to leave. I was not ready for that, at all. I don't think I've ever been ready. I don't think anyone has ever been ready.

Questionable Ideas

There are many reasons which call into question whether the temple ceremonies were truly inspired and revealed of God. I would like to address a few of them.

The rites which occurred in the temple of Solomon (which was destroyed in 70 AD) had little to do with what happens in the temple today.¹⁰⁰⁵ Those rites were animal sacrifices for sin offerings or thanksgiving. Only the high priest could enter the holy of holies, and that happened only once a year, on the Day of Atonement. Without the revisionism of Joseph Smith, the Old Testament proper has none of the ordinances practiced in Mormonism. No baptism was practiced there. No endowment was solemnized there.

Many people seem to be aware of the connections with the temple and Freemasonry. The temple is most definitely more related to that than it is to ancient Jewish temple rites.

Freemasonry and Jewish history aside, secret rites are nothing new. You may remember my mention of the Eleusinian mystery cult.

¹⁰⁰⁵http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem#Temple_services

Thus the mystae were prepared for the climactic feature of the celebration which took place in the telesterion, or Hall of Initiation. This sacred place was closed to all save the initiated, and the events which occurred there were strictly private and shrouded in the densest mystery. The initiates were under pledge of secrecy not to divulge the revelation there given. Apparently, Public opinion enforced this pledge in a very remarkable manner. Once when Aeschylus was acting in one of his own tragedies the audience became suspicious that he was betraying certain secrets of the Eleusinian mysteries. They arose in real fury and attacked the author-actor, who saved his life only by fleeing to the altar of Dionysus, a refuge that the Athenian mob respected. Later, however, Aeschylus was brought to trial before the Areopagus for revealing forbidden secrets and was acquitted quite as much because of his bravery at Marathon as because of his plea of ignorance. Alcibiades, on the eve of his departure for the Sicilian expedition, was charged with "impious mockery of the goddesses Demeter and Persephone" because he had "profanely acted the sacred mysteries at a drunken meeting." Even such a garrulous historian as Herodotus, though he was "accurately acquainted with the sacred rites of Demeter" yet felt that he "must observe a discreet silence" concerning them. The secret of Eleusis was guarded all too well and as a result we know almost nil concerning the central rites of the mysteries of Demeter.

One of the incidents just mentioned, however, makes it clear that the heart of the Eleusinian ritual was in the nature of a religious drama. The accusation against Alcibiades very definitely specified actors in a mock pageant which he staged at his drunken revel. "Theodorus represented the herald, Polytion the torch-bearer, and Alcibiades the chief priest, while the rest of the party appeared as candidates for initiation and received the title of initiates." This describes the situation in the telesterion at Eleusis on the night of initiation; the priests took the part of actors in a religious drama or pageant of which the initiates were the spectators. The archaeological remains of the Hall of Initiation at Eleusis bear out this theory. It was a great square hall around the four sides of which ran stone seats eight steps high,

one above the other. Here the initiates sat and watched the spectacle staged in their midst.¹⁰⁰⁶

The stories of Aeschylus and Alcibiades talk about accidental divulgence of the sacred secret of Eleusis, giving us some insight to the seriousness that these people held their sacred secret oaths, dramas, and ceremonies. The initiation ceremony is a drama in which the initiates participate. The temple ceremony with its drama and sacred secrets seems to be more of a mystery cult initiation rite than anything the Jews ever did at their temple, let alone Jesus ever did.



The true order of prayer, as Jesus taught, was never a dictated, aloud-repeated, community group-think. The true order of prayer should elevate your god-given creativity and individuality, not suppress it. The true order of prayer is an intimate, genuine expression between a person and the source of their personhood.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.¹⁰⁰⁷

Clearly the temple's true order of prayer ignores that entire passage above. How could the true order of prayer be something that so blatantly contradicts the teachings of Jesus?

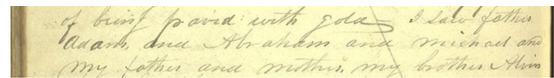


Having learned later in life that much of the endowment has changed soured the deal. There used to be even more symbols, including penalties for revealing secrets. The "sacred, not secret" cliché cannot apply, because for over a hundred and fifty years, "obligations of secrecy" were required by that explicit phrase. These made it more similar to the masonic rite or initiation of a secret society.

¹⁰⁰⁶Harld R. Willoughby, Pagan Regeneration, p. 22, 1929 AD
¹⁰⁰⁷Matthew 6:5-7

There used to be a law of vengeance against our own United States.¹⁰⁰⁸ This is treason. Brigham Young's view of the constitution is treason. General Joseph Smith and his council of fifty is treason. Vengeance goes against everything Jesus stood for. The fact that an oath of vengeance was ever part of anything in the temple is a loud cry against the validity of it being revealed by Jesus. The fact that there have been many other changes, additions, or removals to the temple ceremony is embarrassing.

I wonder why the Temple asserts that Michael became Adam, because Joseph originally saw Adam and Michael as separate persons in his original revelation in the original of Doctrine and Covenants 137. It almost seems as though Joseph hadn't decided that Michael should be Adam, yet.



— I saw father Adam, and Abraham and Michael and my father and mother, my brother Alvin...¹⁰⁰⁹



As time passes and I contemplate the goings on in the temple, it feels as though I can see through it more. It all seems so empty and void to me now. It seems just as pretentious a rite as any other charlatans have produced. The secrecy, silence, and many other manipulation tactics to keep people subservient. The temple seems too much like a secret VIP club with expensive entrance fees.



To think that a revealed ceremony that is supposed to be inspired by God from the foundation of the world to represent our trek through eternity could have such huge mistakes and so many major changes. Consider that Joseph Smith taught:

¹⁰⁰⁸ Reed Smoot hearing: <https://books.google.com/books?id=b08oAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA580>
 The Washington Times, Front Page, December 14, 1904
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026749/1904-12-14/ed-1/seq-1/>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oath_of_vengeance
¹⁰⁰⁹<http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/revelation-21-january-1836-dc-137>

The order of the House of God has been and ever will be the same, even after Christ comes, and after the termination of the thousand years it will be the same.¹⁰¹⁰

...the ordinances must be kept in the very way God has appointed; otherwise their priesthood will prove a cursing instead of a blessing.¹⁰¹¹

Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered and changed.¹⁰¹²

If what Joseph Smith said is true, then either the ordinances in the temple were not instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, or they were not instituted by the true priesthood, or they are not saving ordinances, or the subsequent leaders of the church have apostatized from the Joseph's restoration and we are all being led by the blind,¹⁰¹³ and the priesthood has proved to be a cursing instead of a blessing.

On my mission, I preached the *correct baptism*: submersion. It was an imperative part of the gospel that could never change. I taught that the catholic church had fallen into apostasy as it corrupted baptism by changing it to sprinkling instead of submersion. When I was initiated at the temple, the bare skin on every area of my body was touched by an old man with water and oil as part of a washing and anointing ceremony. I was taken aback when I visited the temple and discovered that an unchangeable ordinance had changed. They only anointed the forehead, washing and anointing *symbolically*. I feared that the modern church had fallen into apostasy as it altered and changed the ordinances that were instituted in the heavens. The irony disturbed me deeply.

As a child, I was taught that we do not worship by performing repetitive rituals, but that is exactly what we do in the temple. The temple shook my perception of the truthfulness of the gospel more than anything I had ever known. I have since discovered that this is not the first time the temple ordinances have changed. Since no one talks about it, the old generation passes away and the new generation is none the wiser. Core doctrines have been removed from the ritual, probably because they were horribly offensive to the modern mind. Temple ordinances have gone through more changes than the Catholic

change to baptism. The Catholic church changed baptism and The Church has no qualms in calling them out on it, but in their own ordinances they are no different.

If the order of the House of God has ever been the same and will ever be the same, then not only could there not ever be any changes, If the temple ceremony was supposed to have been instituted from the foundation of the world, there should also not be any anachronisms in it. Much in the temple ceremonies could not have been applied to any other time, and much from any other time couldn't be applied to the ceremony. Many things that happen in the drama could not have applied to the time of Adam and Eve. The narrative is anachronistic.

It is stressed to not sell some things for money, and then asserts that anything in the world can be purchased with money. Money, or currency, is an anachronism. While bartering and trade may have happened for thousands of years, currency or coins did not exist until about 700 BC. Who were Adam and Eve supposed to sell to, anyway?

Someone to sell tokens to is an anachronism. Both the philosophies of men and scripture are anachronisms, there was no scripture, and there were no other men, nor was there any philosophy.

In pre-1990 presentations, the protestant minister is an anachronism.

Satan observing the teachings of these people is an anachronism.

Even the name Jehovah as well as the name Jesus Christ are anachronisms.

Peter, James and John were instructed to go down to the man Adam to make him consecrate everything he and his posterity will ever have to the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which is an anachronism.

Peter, James and John being able to touch Adam to communicate their identifying handshake is an anachronism: they hadn't been born yet, so they could not have had tangible, resurrected bodies.

The temple ceremonies couldn't have existed from before the foundation of the world. Instead, they seem to be a modern hodgepodge of myths, oaths, and drama. I remember being so disgusted by so many illogical premises and fallacies, that for me, the Temple felt like an insult to my intelligence.

I understand that temple ceremony is supposed to be symbolic, but that makes little sense. When I was taking a biology class and struggling with the scriptural historical Eden, my bishop told me that my

¹⁰¹⁰ Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 91

¹⁰¹¹ Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 169

¹⁰¹² Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 308

¹⁰¹³ Matthew 15:14

concerns would be resolved when I would go to the temple. He implied that the story in the temple is *history*. I trusted him.

Anachronisms do not make sense for a story that should be historical. If it is supposed to be metaphorical, then why use something that is supposed to be historical at all? It would be silly for a history book to try to teach a principle by interjecting anachronisms into historical events like the American Revolution, or the end of the Berlin wall. History does not need to be a metaphor, it speaks for itself. Anachronisms do not augment history, they destroy it. It does not work the other way around, either. It would not augment the metaphor by retelling Aesop's fable by interjecting that the hare flew an airplane and that the tortoise drove an automobile.



Over the years, I couldn't help contemplating what must be memorized by the patrons as part of the veil ceremony. For what it's worth, this silly little spell is easily found outside of the temple. I am going to repeat parts of it here, so if you think it is too sacred to be uttered outside the temple, you might as well skip this section.

Why would the scar from my umbilical cord need to be healthy? Is this poetry or are they serious? Why would I not have marrow in my bones? I might better chant to have a brain in my head.

Those seem silly, but "strength in the loins" gets serious. Loin strength can only represent one thing in my mind: fertility or potency. Why are we honoring fertility and potency as part of the crowning chant in the temple? If there's any one thing that is common to pagan worship, it is fertility and potency! We might as well be worshipping Baal Hammon, a Canaanite pagan god of fertility, or Ishtar, an Mesopotamian goddess of fertility, or Aphrodite, a greek goddess of fertility, or the European fertility goddesses Freyja or Eostre, who are probably the namesakes for Friday and Easter.¹⁰¹⁴ Maybe we're just worshipping polygamy.

Another part of the chant which confused me was "power in the priesthood be upon me and upon my posterity through all generations of time and throughout all eternity." Why do they use the word *in* and not *of*? Power of refers to a right you can wield, for example, "power of attorney", but "power in ___ be upon me" appears to command one's self and posterity to

¹⁰¹⁴There are many more: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fertility_deities

be subordinate to something. That phrase is in no way empowering. It is almost as if this little dictated spell were a way to coerce every most faithful member of the church into repeating a phrase that would spell their subjection to the priesthood.

Eternal Marriage

Let me prefix this section by making something clear. What I have to say is not contrary to eternal families, it is the opposite. I believe in eternal families. I believe that genuine love is so powerful that it can last forever. The difference is that I believe that both things can happen *without* the intercession of a shaman. "Families can be together forever" implies that they have the possibility of *not* being together. Think about that for a minute. I believe that God will not separate families because a shaman never performed a silly ritual.

No ritual observance can ever be more important than true sincerity. Why should God only condone outward, for-show rituals or ordinances before family love has validity? If "God will not be mocked" then why are people pretending to be sealed through his power? This is different from "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."¹⁰¹⁵ The context from Mark 10:6-8 clearly says that male and female were created for each other, that they are physically compatible.

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. They asked Jesus about one of the complications of the resurrection: marriage. Their question was about a woman who married many men in life. Who would end up being her husband? His reply is not something a latter-day saint would expect.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.¹⁰¹⁶

Because of the revelation of modern prophets, I would have thought that Jesus should have answered, "Who was she first sealed to?" or "Who was she first married to?" or "Was her sealing canceled?"

I have heard this passage construed into needing the rite of eternal marriage while in mortality, but Jesus said nothing of eternal marriage. If eternal marriage were imperative, Jesus had the perfect

¹⁰¹⁵Mark 10:9

¹⁰¹⁶Matthew 22:29-30; Confirmed by Mark 12:24 and Luke 20:34

chance to expound upon it here, but he didn't. In fact, besides this, Jesus never talked about marriage. He never required marriage for exaltation. Surprisingly, he told people that they cannot follow him unless they *hate* their family.¹⁰¹⁷

The angels of God in heaven are not married, and Jesus said those who are resurrected would be like them. Without an apologetic explanation that is longer than his own plain language, the idea of eternal marriage goes contrary to his simile of the angels of God. As they add other meaning to his own words, do latter-day saints also “err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God?” Does modern revelation contradict Jesus again? Who is right, Joseph Smith, or Jesus? One political answer to the same question from can be had from our Prophet Newsroom.¹⁰¹⁸

The precise nature of these relationships in the next life is not known, and many family relationships will be sorted out in the life to come. Latter-day Saints are encouraged to trust in our wise Heavenly Father, who loves His children and does all things for their growth and salvation.¹⁰¹⁹

I keep hearing the platitude more and more, “All of that will be sorted out in the life to come.” Their answer not only goes against what Jesus said, it begs another question. If it is futile to resolve that all non-ideal family relationships require resorting to an excuse that they will be sorted out in the world to come anyway, then why does anyone presume to sort them out here? If family relationships will be ultimately sorted out by God anyway, then Why do we snobbishly ostracize family members who choose disobey blind, pretentious, outwardly observable bylaws of men to be able to qualify for temple marriage? Are all other family relationships besides the perfect unbroken temple marriage truly counterfeited?¹⁰²⁰

It seems that the idea of Eternal Marriage is easily bewildered by many situations. For example: a childless widow, who was originally sealed before the death of her husband, marries another man but cannot be sealed to him, and then they have a child. Even though the child is physically and actually the new husband's child, and even though the child will be raised and loved by his real father, the bylaws of

¹⁰¹⁷Luke 14:26

¹⁰¹⁸<http://www.mormonnewsroom.org>

¹⁰¹⁹<https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng>

¹⁰²⁰Larry Lawrence, *The War Goes On*, April 2017, Ensign

Mormonism dictate that the child will belong to the original husband in Eternity. This convolution could be solved naturally if we would simply accept what Jesus actually said. Why can't family relationships be what they are for what they intrinsically are? There is no need for any authority or anyone else to try to prescribe valid family relationships, and all others to be “sorted out” in the world to come. If anything will be sorted out in the life to come, then it should *all* be sorted out in the life to come, without the pretense of power-hungry men.

God is not sealing couples for eternity, because if he were, the will of each bound person would not be able to change his decree. Do we have no concept of the ultimacy of God and his word? Do we dare to vainly pretend that we have his authority to bind two people together in his name? If God joins any two things or persons together, they will remain joined until he decrees their separation. No lesser being can separate anything which the ultimate God has joined together. Or can you possibly believe that what God binds can end for any frivolous reason? The fact that temple marriages often whimsically dissolve indicates that there was no external sealing agent, let alone that God had anything to do with binding them together.

I assert that marriage is foremost a free-will commitment of exclusivity between the two getting married, and it is only secondarily the recognition of the validity of that commitment by everyone they may associate with. The government recognizes that partnership for consideration in many of its laws, so it must define what constitutes a marriage for those laws. There are over a thousand¹⁰²¹ statutory provisions for people who are married in the United States. But of all the laws and regulations that depend on marriage, none of them are intended to enforce marriage, to permanently bind two free people into that commitment. That is not to say that divorce isn't fraught with many considerations; it is the breakup of a partnership after all. The binding agent in the recipe for marriage is not any law, it is instead the will of the two being married. There is no other higher power which binds them to that commitment or forces them to remain faithful.

The laws for marriage are there to aid and assist the partnership, not to enforce their union. If the laws for marriage are the societal acknowledgment of the open, free will commitment of partnership by two people, and not the enforcement of marriage, then what point is it to consider that the laws of

¹⁰²¹Defense of Marriage Act: Update to Prior Report
<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04353r.pdf>

heaven should somehow enforce marriage? What laws of heaven should be adjusted because of a marriage partnership? Are there taxes, property laws, and estate inheritance laws heaven, too? After all, it is often said that property possession is nine-tenths of the law.

Whether the commitment of marriage lasts for eternity depends on the mutual will of the partners, and nothing else. The potential for the commitment to last for eternity must at least be as possible as the commitment to last for life. Just as that commitment isn't bound by earthly law, it can't be bound by laws of heaven. To say that it does mocks the creator of free will.

It is indecent to believe that God, as a loving father, the creator and upholder of freewill, would use force to separate in the afterlife those of his children who genuinely love and have committed fidelity with each other in this life just because another man had not yet approved of their union, whether that man genuinely had the authority or not. That man cannot impede their love and free-will commitment just as much as God will not impede their love and commitment. It is outrageous to think that the creator of free will would uphold unions which may not even genuinely love because a pretentious man who claims his authority pronounced their sealing, while forcefully separating the unity that inherently forms from genuine love.

I cannot believe that God would punish me eternally for being wrong about anything in mortality or for any of my imperfections. Would any wise parent bind a play marriage of little children for the rest of their life, even if they both deeply wanted it? What a mockery to dare to say that God, the creator of free will, pretends to enforce the marital vows of any of his immature children for eternity.

How can any infinitely lasting vow be made in this life? By virtue of our temporal, ignorant state, we are all immature, ignorant beings for the entirety of our mortal lives. We have absolutely no idea what the next life is like, nor whether our choice would even apply to the situation there, let alone an infinite amount of time. Neither can the prophets pretend to know what infinity might bring. What a presumptuous proposition our doctrines prescribe.

If indeed you want your family love to continue after death, then let it. Love your spouse. Make it work together. Love needs no other higher power to bind any person into subjection to it in order to continue in life, let alone after death.

We aren't the only religion that believes that family love and relationships can continue after death, in fact most people who believe in an afterlife also believe that loving family relationships are intrinsically lasting. We are ordinary for believing it is possible for families to be together forever, but we are unique in believing it is possible for families to not be together forever, and we are unique in believing in the necessity for some other power or influence beyond the love and will of the spouses to be added to the equation in order for loving relationships to remain intact after death. The reality of the message of Jesus is that it is love which overcomes evil, not priesthood authority.

The First Presidency has asked me to inform you that as of the date of this letter they have canceled the temple sealing performed in the Salt Lake Temple on August 21, 1992, between your son, Stephen Laurens Bowman, who is deceased, and his former spouse, Amy Michelle Trent McGee.¹⁰²²

And thus, the "eternal" marriage of my dead brother is expunged, without consulting him, in one scribble of a pen by the bureaucracy of a conceited man who pretends to possess the authority of God to eternally separate family relationships.

Even worse, those who don't "walk up to every covenant" and strictly obey all of the outward bylaws of the despot, including paying the fee of tithing or consecrating absolutely everything to a worldly establishment – any sin of commission or omission, really – then the sealing is forfeit. God's retribution will keep you from your loved ones because you did not obey. The separation from your family can be caused by something as petty as failing to pay the subscription fee for your tokens and signs. Because of that, people live in fear throughout their life that they could be separated from those they love. This is the same kind of control tactic that kidnappers use when they hold a gun to their victim's head and demand that if the victim does not do what they say, they may never see their family again, except that the threat of not seeing family again is in the next life.

I cannot believe that a loving God would separate any family bond of love just because some fallible man who claims priesthood authority didn't perform some meaningless ritual to ratify it. I think I would rather rely on the raw love of God than on any third

¹⁰²²Letter to my father, Maurice Bowman, from Dale G. Renlund, 19 November 2014

party who purports to possess the authority of God. These are those same men which Jesus warned would be as wolves in sheep's clothing and would do many works in his name, and to whom he would tell that he never knew them. More ironic still is that the elitist teachings of the church have caused its leaders and members to break apart the family and ostracize family members if they are not faithful to the idolatry. That is not pro-family, that is anti-family. That is not love, it is hate.

Temple Marriage has little to do with love, nor does it have much to do with sealing. When I read the text of what is declared in the ceremony, I discover many things. There is no promise to keep this secret, so I want to review what it says, here.

SEALER: Brother name, do you take Sister name by the right hand and receive her unto yourself to be your lawfully wedded wife, for time and all eternity, with a covenant and promise that you will observe and keep all the laws, rites, and ordinances pertaining to this holy order of matrimony in the new and everlasting covenant; and this you do in the presence of God, angels, and these witnesses of your own free will and choice?

GROOM: Yes.

SEALER: Sister name, do you take Brother name by the right hand and give yourself to him to be his lawfully wedded husband, for time and all eternity, with a covenant and promise that you will observe and keep all the laws, rites, and ordinances pertaining to this holy order of matrimony in the new and everlasting covenant; and this you do in the presence of God, angels, and these witnesses of your own free will and choice?

BRIDE: Yes.

SEALER: By virtue of the holy priesthood and the authority vested in me, I pronounce you, name and name, legally and lawfully husband and wife for time and all eternity; and I seal upon you the blessings of the holy resurrection, with power to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection, clothed in glory, immortality, and eternal lives. I seal upon you the blessings of kingdoms, thrones, principalities, powers, dominions, and exaltations, with all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and say

unto you: be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, that you may have joy and rejoicing in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. All these blessings, together with all the blessings appertaining unto the new and everlasting covenant, I seal upon you by virtue of the holy priesthood, through your faithfulness, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

TODO: REFINE

The covenant is about law, statute, ordinance. It is about law. It might as well be civil. The covenant is to observe and keep all the laws, rites, and ordinances of holy matrimony. It is a legalistic contract to obey the law. It has nothing to do with sticking together despite life's difficulties.

It has nothing to do with love. The word love is nowhere in the ceremony. There is nothing about cherishing, nor about affection.

The woman gives herself to the man. The man receives the woman. He does not give himself. There is an opening for the man to receive more women who give themselves to him.

As part of the endowment, the woman covenants to obey the law of her husband. This has since been euphemised as "hearken."

The reward for the contract is to be granted kingdoms, principalities, powers, and dominions. It is the same thing as the endowment.

If the woman abandons the covenant, she will lose her children in the eternities, because her children is part of his dominion, not hers. She will also lose exaltation if she does not subordinate. She can only gain exaltation through him. Her dominion comes from his dominion. I imagine that this might be one of the reasons why the brethren are reluctant to cancel sealings.

The the only use of the word ?seal? is to grant kingdoms, thrones, principalities, powers, dominions, and exaltations as a blessing. It is not about them.

They usually make it a point to say that the ring is not a symbol of the sealing, but I find it ironic that the covenant will grant power as long as you observe the law that his servants require of you. It is much like the ring of Sauron granting great power, but you must bow to his will and be faithful to him.

Obedience, institutional authority, power, control, priesthood etc. These are all things that seem completely out of place in a marriage ceremony unless you remember how this was all originally tied to polygamy. And once you remember that it makes

perfect sense why love is not even mentioned. In polygamy women were not to be loved or cherished.

The best part of the endowment ceremony is Adam's honest quest for further light and knowledge. His integrity is admirable and is an example for all of us. The worst part is the attitude of elitism and pride that temple rites foster through implication that the people who make the covenants in the temple are God's elect and are set apart from all other people of the human race, and those that don't are under the power of the devil and will be banished by God. Motivating by inflating bigotry and conceit is not a doctrine of Jesus. Here are the teachings of Jesus:

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?¹⁰²³

All of the people in your life are visible, tangible, and real; they should be primarily loved by virtue of the reality of their existence without any reservation. Beliefs could be delusional. Beliefs should not overshadow what Jesus taught: to love those persons who you have seen, which are real. If allowing love to produce mercy for your family members who have gone astray is difficult for you, even if you as much as mutter gossip or other disgust about them behind their back, then you can't possibly sincerely love God and you misunderstand the teachings of Jesus. If the beliefs of your ascribed church establishment cause anyone to be prejudiced or bigoted at any level towards anyone who doesn't hold to their tenets, then that church has also completely missed the teachings of Jesus. Even if you have any level of pride, elitism, or separatism from the other sects in Christianity, other religions, or even those without religion, you are going against his teachings, because it is your elitist group which is separating the human family instead of uniting it:

Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.¹⁰²⁴

In the quote above, Jesus was talking to the pharisees. The name of Pharisee literally means "set apart" or "separatist." It means that the Pharisees viewed themselves as so much more righteous than the other people of Israel that they had to separate themselves from the unrighteous scum. The

¹⁰²³1 John 4:20

¹⁰²⁴Matthew 12:25

elitism and separatism fostered by the outward requirements for a temple recommend, as well as the elitism which the temple ritual engenders, parallels the elitism of the Pharisees. Jesus condemned that separatism and taught that their bigotry should be done away with.

The teachings of Jesus unite all of humankind, they do not divide. The fact that the church continues to show a level of elitism above any other people proves that it does not follow the teachings of Jesus. Jesus taught that all people are children of God, and even taught that those despised Samaritans, sinners and even adulterers had just as much if not more of a chance to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than the perfect obedient Pharisees.¹⁰²⁵ Jesus readily forgave the sins of people who hadn't even thought of being baptized yet.

The worst sinners, according to Jesus, are not the harlots and publicans, but the religious leaders with their insistence on proper dress and grooming, their careful observance of all the rules, their precious concern for status symbols, their strict legality, their pious patriotism... the haircut becomes the test of virtue in a world where Satan deceives and rules by appearances.¹⁰²⁶

Jesus taught that temple worship, the worship of God at temples through the rites of the priesthood, and even the priesthood itself should be replaced by worshiping the father in spirit and truth. You may remember me quoting John 4:21-24 earlier, where Jesus deprecates the idea that "salvation is of the Jews" and in so doing he obviates the idea that one must be a member of the family of Israel to be saved. He says that holy lands and mountains (temples) would be deprecated. He then says that God is a spirit and can only be worshiped in spirit and truth.

Throughout my life, I sang primary songs which extol the temple as the pinnacle of religious worship. I hate to say it, there is nothing sacred about the temple. If the epitome of eternity will be doing things exactly the same way, dressing the exact same way, saying the right thing verbatim, hum-drum memorization, watching the same presentation time and time again, how could this be God's idea? Is this truly the best we have? It was difficult for me to repeatedly endure. I stayed away. I tried to like it, I really did. But I couldn't bring myself to go to the temple often.

¹⁰²⁵Matthew 21:31

¹⁰²⁶Hugh Nibley in 1973. The Lord's University: Freedom and Authority at BYU, 1998

I have ever struggled to find myself uplifted by the temple. The temple is a blatant testimony against the truthfulness of the church, its priesthood, and its revelations. I think it mocks Jesus because it seems he would be quite disgusted with it. Every aspect of it goes against his life and teachings. No wonder he never visits the temple. I am also disgusted by it and I don't think anything good would be amiss in my life if I never returned there again. I do not care for the promise of becoming kings and queens, priests and priestesses. I do not aspire to be any such thing. I do not want power, nor dominion. I would rather follow Jesus in his meekness by avoiding stations of power and royalty.

The temple is a whited sepulcher and a monument to modern idolatry. It is repugnant that the building itself is such beautiful architecture, that so much expense is taken to make sure it is beautiful while it is filled with such idolatry inside, while human beings starve outside. It is awful to think of the level of vanity required to spend the modern widow's mite, while making the poor more hungry, on such extravagance in the name of Jesus, who despised such hypocrisy.

Secret Combinations

Secrecy is the freedom zealots dream of: no watchman to check the door, no accountant to check the books, no judge to check the law. The secret government has no constitution. The rules it follows are the rules it makes up.¹⁰²⁷

Secrecy allows a governing body to commit crime. It can avoid accountability to the people it oppresses. Consider the words of Elder Ballard:

The secret combinations of our day function much like the Gadianton robbers of the Book of Mormon times. They have secret signs and code words. They participate in secret rites and initiation ceremonies. Among their purposes are to "murder, and plunder, and steal, and commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness, contrary to the laws of their country and also the laws of their God."¹⁰²⁸

This teaching comes with great irony. Joseph Smith did all of those things, and more. He did have secret signs and code words. He did have secret rites

¹⁰²⁷ Bill Moyers, The Secret Government: The Constitution in Crisis
https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=qJldun440Sk#t=1147

¹⁰²⁸ M. Russell Ballard, November 1997 Ensign

and initiation ceremonies. He did plunder.¹⁰²⁹ He did steal.¹⁰³⁰ He did commit whoredoms.¹⁰³¹ He established the secret bands.¹⁰³² He sent hit-men to murder his enemies.¹⁰³³ I would add another crime to Elder Ballard's list. Joseph Smith committed fraud.

He killed people with a pistol that he smuggled into Carthage. I do not blame him for defending himself, but killing in self-defense would revoke his status as a martyr.

The word *covenant* is a euphemism for oath in the church. Jesus himself gave the charge to never swear an oath for anything, by anything. The organization he supposedly leads once again contradicts his teachings in deed.

You and each of you do solemnly covenant and promise before God, angels and these witnesses...

The word *before* in this context means *in front*. None of the temple oaths actually covenant with God directly. They only covenant *before* him. A covenant requires two parties. Who is the other side of the covenant? None is specified. There is no other side.

Consider the phrase *covenant and promise*. A promise is an inherent part of a covenant. Its use would be redundant unless the addendum *and promise* is a clarification. It is to convey an understanding of what is meant by the preceding word. To promise in this way would mean to swear an oath, not to covenant.

...you are about to be put under covenant to obey...

A covenant is not something to *be put under*. That phrase means to become subjected. To be put under a spell. To be put under anesthesia. Jesus used the phrase as something you do to light to keep it from shining.¹⁰³⁴ To be *put under* means to oppressively stifle and restrain your god-given will. It has nothing to do with covenants. It is an oath of subjection and obedience.

A covenant is an arrangement. It is a trade. The only things that are given in return are idolatrous tokens, signs, and clothing. Those are things that would be valued by idolatrous gods. They have zero value to the God I believe in.

¹⁰²⁹ He destroyed a printing press.

¹⁰³⁰ Priestcraft.

¹⁰³¹ He practiced both polygyny and polyandry.

¹⁰³² Council of Fifty

¹⁰³³ Porter Rockwell attempted to murder Governor Boggs.

¹⁰³⁴ Mark 4:21

How ironic it is that the pinnacle of worship in Mormonism is to learn secret code words and signs and make secret oaths! What a farce to be imposed upon that God should work in this way.

In General Conference, I often heard the prophets stress the importance of *making and keeping sacred covenants*. Every time I heard it, something squirmed inside me. They manipulate people with such a charge. Most covenants in this church are made in either ignorance or under duress. As children are baptized, they are bound to an uninformed commitment that they did not truly understand at the time. Converts are never given the whole story. Those who will serve a mission or get married are coerced to bow their head and say yes, or they face dire social consequences. Requiring people to stay true to these covenants made in ignorance is immoral. Then, suddenly the doctrine changes, and somehow the those sacred covenants secretly change, too. I have seen it change in my lifetime. The old covenants are flushed down the memory hole.¹⁰³⁵ Somehow, faithful adherents are expected act as if their covenant never changed. People have pantomimed slitting their throats as a covenant, and now it is omitted as if grandpa never did. Women have covenanted to *obey the law of their husbands*, and now they gaslight new initiates as if their grandma never did.

The Book of Mormon is so anti-temple that it makes my head spin. It talks much about the secret oaths of old, *kept up by the power of the devil*,¹⁰³⁶ though never reveals exactly what they were. It denounces secret combinations as *most abominable and wicked above all, in the sight of God*.¹⁰³⁷ We are allowed to learn what the original ancient oath between Cain and Satan was in the Pearl of Great Price:

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.¹⁰³⁸

Consider the oath of Kishkumen and Gadianton:

And it came to pass that they did have their signs, yea, their secret signs, and their secret

¹⁰³⁵George Orwell, Nineteen eighty-four

¹⁰³⁶Ether 8:15-16

¹⁰³⁷Ether 8:18

¹⁰³⁸Moses 5:29

words; and this that they might distinguish a brother who had entered into the covenant,¹⁰³⁹

Now behold, it is these secret oaths and covenants which Alma commanded his son should not go forth unto the world...¹⁰⁴⁰

Consider the oath of Akish with the house of Jared:

And it came to pass that they all sware unto him, by the God of heaven, and also by the heavens, and also by the earth, and by their heads, that whoso should vary from the assistance which Akish desired should lose his head; and whoso should divulge whatsoever thing Akish made known unto them, the same should lose his life.¹⁰⁴¹

Just like Akish, the temple ceremony employs the word *divulge*. It is the same oath of Joseph Smith's secret cult of polygyny and polyandry. It is the same oath for entrance to his *Council of Fifty*. They promised secrecy at the threat of their lives, complete with covenant, password, and penalty.¹⁰⁴² These rituals allowed Joseph Smith and his band to secretly practice their crimes.

A disgusting temple ceremony was required for the secret practice of polygamy. It required the adherents to pantomime their own bloody death. It has since been toned down after polygamy was discontinued.

We, and each of us, covenant and promise that we will not reveal any of the secrets... Should we do so, we agree that our throats be cut from ear to ear and our tongues torn out by their roots.

We and each of us do covenant and promise that we will not reveal any of the secrets... Should we do so, we agree that our bodies be cut asunder in the midst and all our bowels gush out.

We and each of us do covenant and promise that we will not reveal... Should we do so, we agree to have our breasts cut open and our hearts and vitals torn from our bodies and given to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field.

¹⁰³⁹Helaman 6:22

¹⁰⁴⁰Helaman 6:25

¹⁰⁴¹Ether 8:14

¹⁰⁴²Quinn, D. M. The Mormon Hierarchy. pg. 128-129

Why has the gospel changed God from being omniscient, loving, and merciful? Now he requires angels who stand as sentinels. They require memorized passwords and handshakes. This sounds more like Norse mythology. An armed god guards the entrance to Asgard. This is not the Father that Jesus talked about. Does not God know our hearts and intentions intimately? Is not that what truly matters?

For almost a century the temple oaths included oaths of vengeance. It is ironic that the oath of vengeance was removed after Joseph F. Smith was confronted about it in the Reed Smoot hearings. The temple ceremony is a disgrace.

Abstain from all appearance of evil.¹⁰⁴³

Why do we need to make oaths with God at all? Is not the true purpose for oaths and covenants a means to bind and control people? Covenants, contracts, oaths, and swearing are only necessary for those who distrust each other. Do you distrust God? Does God, who knows your every thought, distrust you? Secret covenants are used by secret societies to advance their illegitimate, covert agenda and to ensure that their organized crime does not come to light. What business does God, who is truth and love, have in advancing any illegitimate or covert agenda?

The secret practice of polygamy was one of the illegitimate agendas of Joseph Smith's band. He knew that what they were doing was immoral so he had to swear them to secrecy. That is the requirement to never talk about the goings on of the temple while outside of the temple. Those who swore these secret oaths blatantly lied, even perjured in court about their crimes.

Women will talk. What would keep them from talking? It is to make them swear to obey the law of their husbands at the threat to their lives. It is to make them *suffer their life to be taken*. It is to compel them to pantomime a graphic death penalty.

The lack of penalties make the tokens signs dangle. It is as if something is missing from the modern ceremony. There are still remnants of the penalties. An extended thumb and cupping hands make little sense without the penalties. The thumb represents knife. The cup was to cradle the gushing bowels. I gasp at the thought that I was ever part of this obscene religion.

Celestial marriages were plural marriages. They are held behind closed doors and only attended by those who have been through the endowment. That

¹⁰⁴³1 Thessalonians 5:22

is because the rite was originally for initiation into the secret polygamy cult. The secrecy continues today as an echo of the sullen darkness of the older ceremony. Polygamy is no longer outwardly practiced, but it is still doctrine.

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.¹⁰⁴⁴

Swear not at all! Jesus does not condone any swearing or foreswearing¹⁰⁴⁵, especially unto the Lord. Does the church that calls itself by his name truly follow his counsel? It clearly does not. The temple ceremonies trample the teachings of Jesus under its feet.¹⁰⁴⁶ In his own words, all oaths, inside and outside of the temple "cometh of evil." All oaths of secrecy directly contradict his teachings that truth fears no light.¹⁰⁴⁷

Secret Band of Fraud

With or without religion, good people can behave well and bad people can do evil; but for good people to do evil—that takes religion.¹⁰⁴⁸

After going down the rabbit hole with doctrinal issues, I allowed myself to look to other sources for historical evidence of the veracity of the claims of the church. I was astonished by what I found. I had no idea of how broad and deep the evidence is against them. Ironically, much of the evidence can be found in the History of the Church and the Joseph Smith Papers, both productions of the church itself. The quotes and ideas I present here are only the tip of the iceberg.

Even from my nascent research of history, I find it easy to conjecture that the entire production of the

¹⁰⁴⁴Matthew 5:34-37

¹⁰⁴⁵Merriam-Webster defines forswear as a promise to give up or stop doing something.

¹⁰⁴⁶1 Nephi 19:7 Matthew 7:6

¹⁰⁴⁷John 3:20-21

¹⁰⁴⁸Steven Weinberg, A Designer Universe?

church was the work of Joseph Smith alone. There was a secret combination whose members were Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Parley Pratt, Sidney Rigdon and possibly even Emma Hale. Each swearing the loss of their own lives as a penalty for revealing the secret of their fraud, especially for their forged documents. All believing wholeheartedly in the nobility of their pious fraud. If they were not part of the secret band, characters like Martin Harris and the Whitmers were probably conned because of their gullibility, though David Whitmer ultimately called Joseph out on many things.¹⁰⁴⁹

It seems like many who were involved in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon were part of the band. They all had an interest in its success. They were benefactors, investors, cohorts, employees, family, and landlords. Oliver Cowdery, Hiram Page, and the five Whitmers in-laws. It is eerily suspicious that the eleven witnesses of the gold plates that had a direct or indirect financial interest in the publishing of the Book of Mormon.

I could not feel more satisfied and at rest if the entire Whitmer family had testified.¹⁰⁵⁰

It is taught in practically every Sunday School lesson about the Three Witnesses that they never recounted their testimony of having seen the golden plates, even after leaving the church. But the rest of the story is suspiciously omitted. First, they had their reputation to protect. If they would deny their testimony, their credibility would suffer. But the thing that boils the noodle is that all of them also confessed that they did not see them with their physical eyes. They literally imagined it. For example:

I have reflected long and deliberately upon the history of this church & have weighed the evidence for & against it – loth [sic] to give it up – but when I came to hear Martin Harris state in public that he never saw the plates with his natural eyes only in vision or imagination, neither Oliver nor David & also the eight witnesses never saw them & hesitated to sign that instrument for that reason, but were persuaded to do it, the last pedestal gave way, in my view our foundations was sapped & the entire superstructure fell a heap of ruins, ... [Harris] said that he never should have told that the testimony of the eight

¹⁰⁴⁹David Whitmer, *An address to all believers in Christ*, pp. 30-48

¹⁰⁵⁰Mark Twain, *Roughing It*, 45

was false, if it had not been picked out of [h]im but should have let it pass as it was ...¹⁰⁵¹

I giggle to myself that this was written in 1838, yet he says that he reflected long and deliberately about the history of the church. To this man, many issues that came later, like polygamy, wasn't a factor. Joseph Smith had only begun to dabble in polygamy at that point. The Nauvoo Expositor was published six years later. For him, it was the deceit in the anecdotal evidence of questionable witnesses that threatened the credibility of the church. By his testimony, Martin Harris said that all of the witnesses never saw them with their natural eyes. He is not the only one to write this. Here is one of many others:

Martin Harris, one of the subscribing witnesses, has come out at last, and says he never saw the plates, from which the book purports to have been translated, except in a vision and he further states that any man who says he has seen them in any other way is a liar, Joseph (Smith Jr.) not excepted.¹⁰⁵²

Not only were the plates imagined, Joseph was not original in his supernatural visions. These visions claimed to have practically the same divine visitations before he did. All of the contemporary visions suspiciously use phrases and concepts that can be found in Joseph's account. For example, there was Ellen G. White, who established the Seventh Day Adventists. Her original vision is called *The First Vision*, too. She had hundreds of visions. Consider one of the visions of Norris Stearns, which predated Joseph's vision by many years.

¹⁰⁵¹Stephen Burnett to Lyman E. Johnson, 15 Apr. 1838, Joseph Smith Letterbook, 2:64-66, d155/2:2, LDS archives; qtd., Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:228-93

¹⁰⁵²Warren Parrish to E. Holmes, 11 Aug. 1838, *The Evangelist* (Carthage, OH), 1 Oct. 1838, 226. George A. Smith to Josiah Flemming, 30 March 1838

<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letterbook-2/69>

I attempted to plead for mercy, sin clouded all hope.—At length, as I lay apparently upon the brink of eternal woe, seeing nothing but death before me, suddenly there came a sweet flow of the love of God to my soul, which gradually increased. At the same time, there appeared a small gleam of light in the room, above the brightness of the sun, then at his meridian, which grew brighter and brighter: As this light and love increased, my sins began to separate, and the Mountain removed towards the east. At length, being in an ecstasy of joy, I turned to the other side of the bed, (whether in the body or out I cannot tell, God knoweth) there I saw two spirits, which I knew at the first sight. But if I had the tongue of an Angel I could not describe their glory, for they brought the joys of heaven with them. One was God, my Maker, almost in bodily shape like a man. His face was, as it were a flame of Fire, and his body, as it had been a Pillar and a Cloud. In looking steadfastly to discern features, I could see none, but a small glimpse would appear in some other place. Below him stood Jesus Christ my Redeemer, in perfect shape like a man—His face was not a blaze, but had the countenance of fire, being bright and shining. His Father's will appeared to be his! All was condescension, peace, and love!! I was filled with the

I attempted to plead for mercy, sin clouded all hope. – At length, as I lay apparently upon the brink of eternal woe, seeing nothing but death before me, suddenly there came a sweet flow of the love of God to my soul, which gradually increased. At the same time, there appeared a small gleam of light in the room, above the brightness of the sun, then at his meridian, which grew brighter and brighter: As this light and love increased, my sins began to separate, and the Mountain remove towards the east. At length, being in ecstasy of joy, I turned to the other side of the bed, (whether in the body or out I cannot tell, God knoweth) there I saw two spirits, which I knew at the first sight. But if I had the tongue of an Angel I could not describe their glory, for they brought the joys of heaven with them. One was God, my Maker, almost in bodily shape like a man. His face was, as it were, a flame of Fire, and his body, as it had been a Pillar and a Cloud. In looking steadfastly to discern features, I could see none, but a small glimpse would appear in some other place. Be-

low him stood Jesus Christ my Redeemer, in perfect shape like a man—His face was not a blaze, but had the countenance of fire, being bright and shining. His Father's will appeared to be his! All was condescension, peace, and love!!
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Striking similarities to several other visions at the time makes the vision of Joseph Smith become ordinary. Many other visions predated his. The lack of originality casts an light of disrepute upon Joseph Smith's visions. It seems like plagiarism played a role, much like the suspicious anachronistic word-for-word plagiarism of the King James translation of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon.

It is reasonable to me to think that Joseph Smith didn't write the Book of Mormon, not because he didn't have the capability, but because very little of it resembles anything else he himself wrote. On the other hand, it is reasonable to conjecture that it was the collaborative work of fraud by many other people in his band. This theory is backed up by the evidence of computer analyses of the linguistic structure and phrases in the Book of Mormon which has found phrase signatures of not just Joseph Smith, but also Sydney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, Parley Pratt, and some unrelated person named Solomon Spalding throughout the book.¹⁰⁵⁴

Solomon Spalding was not a cohort to the secret combination, but rather a victim of plagiarism, having had the only copy of his manuscript of a novel (which eight witnesses familiar with it signed affidavits testified talked of a group of Israelite people which included the names Lehi and Nephi who journeyed to America)¹⁰⁵⁵ stolen outright by one of this secret band and then modified and edited extensively by Cowdery and Rigdon to introduce religious themes.

...for a pious lie, you know, has a great deal more influence with an ignorant people than a profane one.¹⁰⁵⁶

A different Spalding manuscript of an entirely different story which also was unpublished has been used as evidence by the church that Spalding couldn't

¹⁰⁵³ The Religious Experience Of Norris Stearns Written by Divine Command, 1815, p 12,
<https://archive.org/details/TheReligiousExperienceOfNorrisStearns>

¹⁰⁵⁴ <http://sidneyrigdon.com/criddle/rigdon1.htm>

¹⁰⁵⁵ <http://sidneyrigdon.com/criddle/rigdon1.htm#11>

¹⁰⁵⁶ Sidney Rigdon (An interesting observation by someone who should know.) The Mormons: Or Latter Day Saints, Charles Mackay, p36

have been the source of the Book of Mormon, because that manuscript contains an entirely different story. That is a bait-and-switch scheme by the church. Can't an author have any other unpublished works? It seems like a plagiarist's dream to steal the work of a dead author that hasn't been published.

In February, 1852, I was snowbound in a hotel in Mentor, Ohio, all day. Martin Harris was there, and in conversation told me he saw Jo Smith translate the "Book of Mormon," with his peep-stone in his hat. Oliver Cowdery, who had been a school-teacher, wrote it down. Sidney Rigdon, a renegade preacher, was let in during the translation. Rigdon had stolen a manuscript from a printing office in Pittsburgh, Pa., which Spaulding, who had written it in the early part of the century, had left there to be printed, but the printers refused to publish it, but Jo and Rigdon did, as the "Book of Mormon." Martin said he furnished the means, and Jo promised him a place next to him in the church. When they had got all my property they set me out. He said Jo ought to have been killed before he was; that the Mormon[s] committed all sorts of depredations in the towns about Kirtland. They called themselves latter-day Saints, but he called them Latter-day Devils.¹⁰⁵⁷

The stolen Spaulding manuscript was never found and was probably destroyed because Sidney Rigdon ordered in his will that all documents and manuscripts in his possession should be destroyed after he died. That order was dutifully carried out by his wife, who burned them all. The printer didn't print it because he probably did not want to invest the time for something he thought might fail. Spaulding wasn't all that original. He was probably the source of such a brain-dead prose with many over-repeated phrases like "and it came to pass." No wonders Mark Twain said of the Book of Mormon that it was...

...such an insipid mess of inspiration. It is chloroform in print. If Joseph Smith composed this book, the act was a miracle—keeping awake while he did it was, at any rate.¹⁰⁵⁸

Even if the Spaulding manuscript may not be a major contributor to the Book of Mormon, it is not the only source that they could have drawn upon. Joseph and his band were probably familiar with a book

called *The Late War* by Gilbert J. Hunt which gave an account of the war of 1812, "written in the ancient historical style" just like the Book of Mormon has, though *The Late War* was published first, in 1816. After computer analysis of the phraseology in the Book of Mormon, there is considerable evidence that the phraseology, including things like Chiasmus and Hebraic linguistic translation artifacts, have a precedent in *The Late War*. Many battle scenes in the Book of Mormon have a precedent in *The Late War*. And these few things I just mentioned only scratch the surface of the analysis of Chris and Duane Johnson.¹⁰⁵⁹

Not only do those two contemporary works of literature shine a light on the possible sources that Joseph's band drew upon, but it is evident there are many other sources, too, much like Tolkien drew from many resources which were available in his time to create his masterpiece, the *Lord of the Rings*. There have been more studies of the Book of Mormon which place it rightfully as a work of its time, having been influenced greatly by many works of American revolution and liberty as well as Protestant champions of the 18th century. Countless idioms, phrases, and concepts in the Book of Mormon were previously coined by Mercy Otis Warren, David Ramsay, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Thomas Paine, Isaac Backus, Jonas Phillips, Samuel McClintock, Abraham Keteltas, Samuel Sherwood, Timothy Dwight, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards Jr.¹⁰⁶⁰ Our own church historian and general authority, Brigham H. Roberts, made validates these observations.

It is clearly established now that these scenes of religious frenzy were common in the vicinages where Joseph Smith resided in his youth and early manhood. The writings of Jonathan Edwards were commonly accessible throughout New England in those days; and Joseph Smith himself came in contact with these emotional phenomena in his own experience after their rebirth in the early decades of the 19th century. The question is, did his knowledge of these things lead to their introduction into the book of Mormon narrative? I think it cannot be questioned but where there is sufficient resemblance between the Book of Mormon instances of religious emotionalism and those cited in the foregoing quotations from the works of Edwards et al. to justify the thought that the latter might

¹⁰⁵⁷R. W. Alderman, Affidavit to Arthur B. Deming, 25 December 1844

¹⁰⁵⁸Mark Twain, *Roughing it*, 127

¹⁰⁵⁹<http://wordtreefoundation.github.io/thelatewar/>

¹⁰⁶⁰<http://www.mormonthink.com/influences.htm>

well have suggested and indeed become the source of the former.

There can be no doubt but what the style of preaching, exhortation, warning, praying, admonition together with the things emphasized and the ends aimed at in such work of the Christian ministry as came to the attention of Joseph Smith were all largely and deeply influenced by those first and greatest evangelical popular preachers of Protestant Christianity, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and Dr. Thomas Coke et al. In saying this I am not unmindful of the fact that these great lights of the Protestant Churches wrought their work in the generation preceding the one in which Joseph Smith lived, and that he never came in contact with them - Wesley, Whitefield, and Dr. Coke on their several visits to America, or with Dr. Edwards in New England. Still that revival of religion which marked the early decades of the 19th century, with which Joseph Smith was familiar, took on pretty much all of its coloring from the spirit and manner in which these above named evangelists conducted their work. The generation of men following them - the men with whom Joseph Smith came in contact, during his boyhood and early manhood, and through whom he heard of these "giants" of ultra-Protestantism of the former generation were but imitators of these in spirit, in matter, and in manner.¹⁰⁶¹

Not only are those other contemporary influences readily evident in the Book of Mormon, but it is also evident that Sydney Rigdon also injected some of his own version of Campbellite theology, which Joseph later even vainly ignored, contradicted, and completely departed from. Rigdon's writings are evident in a large portion. Some historians show evidence that Rigdon might be the real mastermind behind the Mormon movement, even playing the part of the voice of God in many of Joseph's revelations. Some say that it is extremely plausible that they could have drawn ideas from other contemporary resources for the Book of Mormon, including the View of the Hebrews, the author of which was friends with Oliver Cowdery. The sermons in the Book of Mormon eerily resemble prominent speeches of protestant preachers at the time. The speed in which the Book of Mormon was translated only really shows how easy it was to read the work that Rigdon, Cowdery, and Pratt may have already worked on for years before, to transcribe it to the final manuscript for printing.

¹⁰⁶¹ Brigham H. Roberts, Studies of the Book of Mormon, 308-309

The Book of Abraham is as close to a smoking gun as it can get. The possibility of the Book of Mormon being a work of many men is plausible when one considers the irrefutable evidence for the fraud of the "translation" of the Book of Abraham from the papyrus scrolls found on mummies, which Joseph Smith said were written by Abraham's own hand upon the same papyrus he translated.¹⁰⁶²

My own naive exposure to the surprising truth of the book of Abraham began when I read on Facsimile 2, "Ought not to be revealed at the present time. ... If the world can find out these numbers, so let it be. Amen."¹⁰⁶³ I thought that maybe the "world" has found out these "numbers." So I looked for a scholarly translation of the numbers. I found that not only had the "numbers" already been translated; everything else on the facsimiles had also been translated¹⁰⁶⁴ more than a century ago, and they had also translated the actual papyrus which was the source for the book of Abraham as evidenced by Joseph's Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language, which illustrates each Egyptian hieratic character, and to its side is the translation¹⁰⁶⁵ just as the characters are found in order (right to left) on the papyrus itself.¹⁰⁶⁶ There is an undeniable, direct relationship between the hieratic characters on the papyrus which was immediately adjacent to, (left of) Facsimile 1.¹⁰⁶⁷ Ironically, according to the Book of Abraham manuscript, these are the same characters which comprise Abraham 1:12-19, which includes the part that refers to Facsimile 1 illustrating the text at the beginning of the papyrus:

That you may have an understanding of these gods, I have given you the fashion of them in the figures at the beginning, which manner of figures is called by the Chaldeans Rahleenos, which signifies hieroglyphics.¹⁰⁶⁸

¹⁰⁶² Joseph Smith, Introduction to the Book of Abraham

¹⁰⁶³ Figures 9 and 11 of <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/fac-2?lang=eng>

¹⁰⁶⁴ <http://www.mormoninfographics.com/2012/08/book-of-abraham-facsimile-1-examined.html>
<http://www.mormoninfographics.com/2012/08/book-of-abraham-facsimile-2-examined.html>
<http://www.mormoninfographics.com/2012/08/book-of-abraham-facsimile-3-examined.html>

¹⁰⁶⁵ Joseph Smith Papers, Abraham manuscript, 1:1 – 2:18 page 3
<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-abraham-manuscript-circa-july-circa-november-1835-c-abraham-11-218/3>

¹⁰⁶⁶ Joseph Smith Papers, Egyptian Papyri (corresponding to the manuscript)
<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/egyptian-papyri-circa-300-bc-ad-50/19>

¹⁰⁶⁷ <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/fac-1?lang=eng>

¹⁰⁶⁸ Abraham 1:14

Interestingly, the real translation of those first seven characters of the line does not yield many paragraphs, but instead is translated as “[the] great [la]ke of Khonsu.”¹⁰⁶⁹

Joseph and his band were perfectly safe, at the time, to make those scrolls become what he wanted them to become. Today, because of the Rosetta Stone, which was barely discovered and only beginning to be deciphered in Joseph Smith’s day, Egyptologists can reliably read Egyptian now. I doubt that more than a handful of people in America were even aware of it. Those original scrolls which Joseph Smith said were written by the hand of Abraham have since been translated and are in reality Egyptian “breathings” burial prayer scrolls. They could not have been written by Abraham’s own hand, because they are some 2,000 years too young.

I was taken aback by the evidence I discovered. The translation of that book was not brought about by the gift and power of God, it was brought about by the gift and power of fraud. After I realized this, my eyes have been opened and now I can see so many falsifying facts about the Book of Abraham.

I was surprised to find that the real translation of everything in all of the facsimiles has absolutely nothing to do with anything in the book of Abraham. There is no way around that. Apologists cannot say that it was on a lost bit of parchment, because there it is in canon, along with its translation. Facsimile 3 is horribly obvious even for me, and I am less than an amateur in Egyptian theology. Even I can easily see that the person Joseph identified as Pharaoh is actually female, and she wears the sun disk and horns headdress, representing the goddess Isis or Hathor. The headdress upon the enthroned person is the atef crown of Ra, whose curly ostrich feathers should adorn the head of Osiris. The symbol in front of Osiris does not represent Abraham in Egypt as Joseph says, but is instead a libation table, which places the scene in the afterlife. Since this is a scene of the afterlife, the enthroned person could not be a living mortal like Abraham, as Joseph says it should be.

The person standing before Osiris is not a male prince as Joseph said, but she has a female form, and she wears a feather headdress. To an Egyptian, the feather on her head would symbolize their goddess of justice, truth, order, balance, and freedom – Ma’at. Joseph’s imposture is as if a future Egyptian

¹⁰⁶⁹Unanimous readings and translations by Ritner (2002), Baer (1968), Parker (1968), Gee, Rhodes and Nibley (2005), Rhodes (2002), and Nibley (1975), see Ritner, *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri*, 2011, pp. 99-104 = pp. 125-131 (2013 edition).

English	Egyptian	Joseph Smith Egyptian
Sun	Ra	Enish-go-on-dosh
Moon	Iah	Floeese
First Creation	Hu	Kolob
Key	Ankh	Kae-e-vanrash
Egypt	Kemet	Egyptus

fraud would proclaim the American female statue with her blindfold, sword, and scale, as America’s prince (yes, the opposite gender), instead of Lady Justice.

The person to the side of Ma’at is not a waiter as Joseph says. Ma’at is guiding the hand of the deceased, whose name is Hor. And the person helping Hor is not a slave as Joseph’s ignorance would prescribe for a black person, but it is instead the Egyptian god of the afterlife, Anubis, which somehow lost his jackal head, possibly because the papyrus was fragmented, but he still retains one of the jackal ears atop his head.

There are problems in the text itself, like its fable that Egypt is a Chaldean name and was named after the grand-daughter of Noah who discovered the land, Egyptus, which is supposed to mean “that which is forbidden.”

Strabo¹⁰⁷⁰ attributed the Greek Αίγυπτος (Αἴγυπτος) to an etymology of having evolved as a compound from Aigaiou huptiōs (Αἰγαίου ὑπτίως), meaning “below the Aegean.”

The ancient Egyptian name of that country was Kemet (anglicized) which means black ground or black soil, referring to the fertile black soils of the Nile flood plains.¹⁰⁷¹

Abraham could not be using some kind of prophetic foreknowledge by using a name that we would recognize in the future, because the text spends extra time giving a back-story and etymology of the name of the woman who found it. But “Egypt” is a Greek name, and it has more to do with the location of Egypt in relation to Greece and the Aegean Sea than it has to do with “that which is forbidden” in Chaldean. The word Egypt is an anachronism because it was coined long after Abraham, let alone at the time of Noah. Abraham would have used the name Kemet in his day.

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The Chaldean nation first arrived on the historic scene in the 9th century BC, about a thousand years

¹⁰⁷⁰<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strabo> c. 64 BC – AD 24

¹⁰⁷¹<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt#Names>

English	Egyptian
Sun	Ra
Moon	Iah
First Creation	Hu
Key	Ankh
Egypt	Kemet

after Abraham. The birthplace of Abraham in the Bible was not the anachronistic Chaldea, but the Bible says it was Ur of the Chaldees, which refers to an entirely different place.¹⁰⁷² Even the name Ur of the Chaldees in the Bible is an anachronism, because Ur was not ruled by the Chaldeans until after 700 B.C.¹⁰⁷³ I would surmise the anachronism in the bible exists because most of the Old Testament was written by scribes during the captivity of Judah, at the time Ur was inhabited and ruled by Chaldeans. In Abraham's time, it was just Ur, and was settled by Ubaidian inhabitants of Sumer.¹⁰⁷⁴

The Chaldean language was Semitic, or what we would call Aramaic now. Crazy "Chaldean" words like "rahleenos, which signifies hieroglyphics" are blatant fabrications. The closest thing to semitic for hieroglyphics today is the hebrew word for "illegible handwriting" and that is not even remotely close, neither phonetically nor meaning, to "rahleenos." Another anachronism is the title of Pharaoh wasn't used until 1504 BC, 500 years after Abraham, during the reign of Thutmosis III.¹⁰⁷⁵ "Pharaoh" was *never* a proper name as this fable uses it.

Why would Abraham say that the canopic jars which hold the mummy's guts are idols? They did not adore and pray to canopic jars. He is making this up. Egyptian human sacrifice¹⁰⁷⁶ is preposterous, as is an attempt to sacrifice Abraham.¹⁰⁷⁷ There is no evidence of Egyptian human sacrifice for at least 800 years before Abraham's time, nor any time

¹⁰⁷²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ur_of_the_Chaldees
¹⁰⁷³https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ur#Identification_with_Biblical_Ur
¹⁰⁷⁴<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumer>
¹⁰⁷⁵Stephen E Thompson, Egyptology and the Book of Abraham, 154-155
 Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought. 28 (1): (143-160)
¹⁰⁷⁶Abraham 1:7-11
¹⁰⁷⁷Abraham 1:12,15

thereafter.¹⁰⁷⁸ Any Egyptian in his day would not have even entertained the thought of sacrificing a human being. On the irony in the doublethink that on the one hand sacrifice is idolatrous, but on the other hand, Abraham was quite willing to sacrifice his own child for his god. All of these anachronisms and impositions are just a handful of observations from only the first chapter of Abraham. It is insane to assert that a document which errs in almost every verse could even remotely be true.

Here I will be using someone relate a well-known Disney film, *The Little Mermaid*, as an analogy. Scuttle, a seagull, has contact with the world above the sea, so he is the authority to reveal land truths to Ariel. Ariel would find artifacts from the world above, and she would bring them to Scuttle for an explanation. He called the fork a "dinglehopper," and that its use is for use in combing hair. He called the tobacco pipe a "Banded Bulbus Snarfblat," and that it would be used as a musical instrument. He called the foot, "the extremity attached to the human body by the ankle. Its primary use is for detecting a pulse or breath sounds." All of his assessments of such common things are so absurd that they are funny.

That analogy relates to Joseph Smith because he seems to claim to be as authoritative on the historical world just as Scuttle was for the human world. Oh, that's Chaldean "rahleenos" for hieroglyphics. Her name was Egyptus, because she discovered Egypt. The black person in the facsimile was a slave. Of course that guy on the throne is Abraham. Those little objects with heads on them, they're idols, and they're named Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, and that one, uh, is the God of Pharaoh. Of the hundreds of Egyptian gods, none of those names are even remotely close. To egyptologists and historians, these are absurdities. Some are so comical that they can't help smiling as they call it out. The lion and couch scene and the hypocephalus are as common to egyptologists as a fork is to all of us.

There seems to be a pattern in Joseph Smith's Scuttle-like behavior. This mound? Oh yes, that was Zelph, the white laminate. That pile of rocks? Oh yes, that is the altar that Adam himself built. This place? Oh yes, this is where the Garden of Eden was. That papyrus? Oh yes, that was written by Abraham, by his own hand. Those plates from Kinder Hook? Oh yes, those contain a history of a descendent of Ham, through Pharaoh, king of Egypt. There seems to have never been an instance when he didn't know.

¹⁰⁷⁸http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_sacrifice#Ancient_Egypt

And he said unto me: This is Shinehah, which is the sun.¹⁰⁷⁹

One of the most comical of Joseph's Scuttle words is *Shinehah*. The suffix *-hah* is used many times in the Book of Mormon. It apparently means *son of*, much like *-sen* for Scandinavian names. Nephi-hah, Moroni-hah, Cumeni-hah, Ammoni-hah, Mathoni-hah, were named after their father, just like Niel-sen, Hanssen, Peder-sen, Lars-sen, Soren-sen, Ole-sen, and so on. But what about *Shinehah*? Joseph has got to be kidding. Shine-son? Son-shine? Sunshine! Seriously!



Anachronisms prove falsity in texts that claim to be historical. If a U.S. History book would claim that President Washington was an avid user of an Apple iPad¹⁰⁸⁰ tablet, its claims to truth would be thwarted because it is an anachronism. If any text contains anachronisms but claims to be historical, one is justified in not believing the text to be authentic.

For if Joseph Smith's translation of the Egyptian parchment could be proven discredited, and proven false, then doubt would be thrown also upon the genuineness of his translation of the

¹⁰⁷⁹ Abraham 3:13

¹⁰⁸⁰ <http://www.apple.com/ipad>

Book of Mormon, and thus all his pretensions as a translator would be exposed and come to naught.¹⁰⁸¹

Absurdities do not score favor for credibility. The words of Elder Brigham H. Roberts begin to carry a great amount of weight. As he observed, if Joseph's translation of the Book of Abraham is discredited, then doubt would also be thrown upon the Book of Mormon.

...both books were translated from the same Egyptian language, and if the translator failed in the translation of the one book, our faith in his translation of the other must necessarily be impaired...¹⁰⁸²

Anachronisms are not only plentiful in the Book of Abraham, but they're also plentiful in the Book of Mormon.

The first Isaiah text used¹⁰⁸³ was actually written many decades after the beginning of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, which hypes their deliverance from captivity in Babylon. That was well after Lehi and his family had gone. The presequent contextual chapters of Isaiah¹⁰⁸⁴ extol Cyrus the Great by name – a Gentile – as the anointed,¹⁰⁸⁵ the messiah,¹⁰⁸⁶ the shepherd, to liberate the Jews and allow them to rebuild Jerusalem.¹⁰⁸⁷ Since he is mentioned by name (as the anointed one, read: Christ or Messiah), he could not have become a promise of freedom to the authors of Isaiah at least until he was enthroned in 559 BC.

The chapters which extol Cyrus are dated around 550 and 539 BC, the years leading up to when Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon.¹⁰⁸⁸ Considering the contextual chapters of Isaiah, it is quite clear who Isaiah 48:14 and consequently 1 Nephi 20:14 is talking about: it is Cyrus. It is a blatant anachronism that the Book of Mormon contains text from Isaiah that talks about liberation from captivity in Babylon from the Chaldeans¹⁰⁸⁹ because Lehi had purportedly left before Judah was captive.

¹⁰⁸¹ Brigham H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church* 2:138

¹⁰⁸² A. B. Mercer, *The Utah Survey*, September 1913, p. 5

¹⁰⁸³ 1 Nephi 20-22 compared to Isaiah 48-49

¹⁰⁸⁴ Isaiah 44-45

¹⁰⁸⁵ Isaiah 45:1

¹⁰⁸⁶ Isaiah 44:24,26; Isaiah 45:3,13 are talking about Cyrus II as a redeemer.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Isaiah 44:28

¹⁰⁸⁸ Whybray, R. N. (1983), *The Second Isaiah*, p 11-12

¹⁰⁸⁹ 1 Nephi 20:20

I have noticed more relating to this anachronism in the first chapter of the Book of Mormon. It speaks as if Jerusalem was a sovereign kingdom and was about to be destroyed and its people carried captive into Babylon¹⁰⁹⁰ after Zedekiah¹⁰⁹¹ began his reign. But in reality, if you actually read the Old Testament, you will find that Jerusalem had already been besieged¹⁰⁹² and thousands had already been taken captive into Babylon¹⁰⁹³ in 598 BC¹⁰⁹⁴ by Nebuchadnezzar. You might think that what I just said coordinates with the Book of Mormon, but it doesn't, because Zedekiah was not king yet. It was in that siege in 598 BC when King Jehoiakim,¹⁰⁹⁵ the king of Judah, died.¹⁰⁹⁶ His son Jehoiachin/Jeconiah was only eight years old and reigned only 3 months as the same siege continued.¹⁰⁹⁷ Ultimately, Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive,¹⁰⁹⁸ and it was Nebuchadnezzar who placed Zedekiah in power as a viceroy in 597 BC at age 21.¹⁰⁹⁹ It was Jeremiah who had prophesied about the *first* destruction of Jerusalem¹¹⁰⁰ and was cast into prison after it happened because it seemed that he sided with Babylon.¹¹⁰¹

I catch myself wondering, how could our doctrine assert that there should only be one designated prophet on the earth at a time, and also profess that Lehi had any right to prophesy when it was Jeremiah who had that calling? Regardless, the fact is that Jerusalem had already been destroyed and was already in bondage to Babylon before the reign of Zedekiah. It was about a decade later that Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, which brought the second destruction of Jerusalem, where Zedekiah's sons were killed in front of him before his eyes were gouged out.¹¹⁰² Since Zedekiah wasn't very old, his sons couldn't have been very old either. His sons were all probably under ten years of age.

Lehi supposedly escaped Jerusalem before it was destroyed during the reign of Zedekiah, but at 600 BC Jehoiakim was the monarch. Jerusalem had al-

¹⁰⁹⁰1 Nephi 1:13

¹⁰⁹¹1 Nephi 1:4

¹⁰⁹²2 Kings 24:10-11; Daniel 1:1-2

¹⁰⁹³2 Kings 24:14-16

¹⁰⁹⁴Siegfried H. Horn, *The Babylonian Chronicle and the Ancient Calendar of the Kingdom of Judah*, Page 21

<http://www.andrews.edu/library/car/cardigital/Periodicals/AUSS/1967-1/1967-1-02.pdf>

¹⁰⁹⁵2 Chronicles 36:5

¹⁰⁹⁶2 Kings 24:6

¹⁰⁹⁷2 Chronicles 36:9, 2 Kings 24:8,10-11

¹⁰⁹⁸2 Kings 24:15, 2 Chronicles 36:9

¹⁰⁹⁹Jeremiah 37:1; 2 Kings 24:17, 2 Chronicles 36:10-11

¹¹⁰⁰Jeremiah 36:27-32

¹¹⁰¹Jeremiah 37:15-16, 21

¹¹⁰²2 Kings 25:7

ready been besieged, had already become captive to Babylon, and Zedekiah was put in place by Nebuchadnezzar as a puppet-king. It is silly to think of the veneration of a purported son of Zedekiah, Mulek, in the Book of Mormon, when Zedekiah was quite young and his sons likely hadn't even reached puberty and one of his sons would not have had the capacity to escape, let alone sail to America.

The Jews did not consider Zedekiah to be the true line of authority, because he was put in power by the oppression of their enemy, Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel was taken into Babylon as part of the first siege, and Ezekiel maintained that Jeconiah/Jehoiachin was still the rightful heir as he counts his time from the beginning of Jeconiah's captivity,¹¹⁰³ not the captivity of Zedekiah. Even Matthew places Jesus as having descended through Jeconiah, not Zedekiah.¹¹⁰⁴

Another gotcha is that Manasseh, from whom Lehi is said to have descended,¹¹⁰⁵ was part of the kingdom of Israel which was an enemy to Judah and Zedekiah, as the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyrian Empire at about 720 BC. Even the book of Mormon admits this¹¹⁰⁶ because it includes text from Isaiah.¹¹⁰⁷

When people read the Isaiah chapters in the Book of Mormon, they cannot help being confused and bored. Those chapters are so perplexing because they are ripped from their context and the are assigned a new mythologically prophetic meaning. As I began to understand what was going on at the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah, suddenly all those puzzling chapters of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon made sense.

When viewed in context, the subject becomes obvious: it is the welfare of the kingdom of Judah, their wars, and the poetry of bards who pretended to soothsay the promises and treachery of their tribal God. It is easy to see in context that none of the included chapters are prophesying about the coming of a messiah six or seven hundred years afterward, nor are they prophesying about the last days. They are all talking about the current events of their time. Babylon is literally Babylon, it isn't figurative for "the world." The Gentiles literally Gentiles, they aren't figurative for Euro-Americans.

The word-for-word King James translation of the Isaiah text that is peppered throughout the Book of Mormon mocks the discipline of Philology. When a

¹¹⁰³Ezekiel 1:2 ... Ezekiel 29:1 ... Ezekiel 40:1

¹¹⁰⁴Matthew 1:11

¹¹⁰⁵Alma 10:3

¹¹⁰⁶2 Nephi 21

¹¹⁰⁷Isaiah 9:21

written language is translated to another language, alternate words have to be used. Much like the subtle differences that confused *parthenos* for *almah*, the translation of Isaiah from Aramaic to Reformed Egyptian, and then abridged by an editor after a thousand years of transcription and linguistic evolution, should not have produced the word-for-word King James version of Isaiah including every mistake in translation. The problem is not only the fishy smell of that plagiarism, but the inclusion of anachronistic text not written before its inclusion is in flagrante delicto. The glare of reason pierces through such a dark storm of imposition.

When we see the studied craft of the Scripture-makers, in making every part of this romantic book of schoolboy's eloquence bend to the monstrous idea of a Son of God begotten by a ghost on the body of a virgin, there is no imposition we are not justified in suspecting them of. Every phrase and circumstance is marked with the barbarous hand of superstitious torture, and forced into meanings it was impossible they could have. The head of every chapter and the top of every page are blazoned with the names of Christ and the Church, that the unwary reader might suck in the error before he began to read.¹¹⁰⁸

Revisionist history is the quintessential form of propaganda. The flagrantly misleading eisegesis at the head every chapter heading disgusts me. The headings lie about the text and alter history to the advantage of the institution that prints and sells the books. This not only happens in the LDS scriptures, but in practically every edition of the Bible. If one does not critically study the text for themselves, they will never see the discrepancies.

A divine message must be received with implicit uncertainty regarding its truth. This ambiguity is an irrationality; it is a sort of madness that is inflicted upon the receiver of the message. Only one who possesses a rational method of interpretation (i.e., a hermeneutic) could determine the truth or falsity of the message.¹¹⁰⁹

Other impositions that contradict both biblical and secular world history are just the beginning of a long list of things which are not archaeologically factual for the time and place of the Book of Mormon. There

¹¹⁰⁸Thomas Paine, *Age of Reason*, Part II, Section 10

¹¹⁰⁹Grondin, Jean, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*. pp. 21-22

are many others: horses, elephants, cattle, goats, swine, barley, wheat, silk, wheels, windows, scimitars, and high-temperature smelting to make alloys like steel, to name a few things, all of which are indigenous to the old world, not the new. There is already a wealth of information about these anachronisms, so I will not delve into their details here.

Critics usually talk about America missing the European things described in the Book of Mormon. I like to turn that around. Where in the Book of Mormon are the American things?

Where is the alpaca, anteater, armadillo, bison, condor, cougar, coyote, iguana, jaguar, llama, macaw, moose, opossum, piranha, polar bear, puma, quetzal, raccoon, rattlesnake, sloth, tapir, toucan, and guajolote (turkey)?

I grew up in Mexico. I remember indigenous American food. Where is the achiote, acocil, ají (pepper), anticho, atole, agave, aguacate (avocado), cacao (chocolate), cashew, cassava, chayote, chicle (chewing gum), chile (chili pepper), chipotle (smoked jalapeño), elote, esquite, guacamole, guaje (river tamarind) guajillo (chile pepper), guava, hule (rubber), jicama, maize (field corn), masa (powdered maize), mole (sauce using american foods – cacahuate, chile, chocolate, piñon,) nopal (prickly pear), jalapeño, panela, papaya, cacahuate (peanut), pecan, pepita (pumpkin seed), pequín, picarones, pineapple, potato, pozole, pumpkin, pulque (fermented agave), puposa, quinoa, squash, tamales, tapioca, tlacoyo, tobacco, tlanepa (hoja santa), tortilla, miltomate (tomatillo), jitomate (tomato), and vanilla?

Currency is a medium of exchange. It is the basic unit of account, a store of value. There was not an exclusive currency of gold and silver in America. Gold was not as much used as a currency as it was for creating ornamental works of art. Americans bartered everything, not just precious metals. There was also chocolate, emeralds, slaves, fish, salt, textiles, sea shells, and gold objects. Gold only became a currency after the Europeans arrived with their gold coins.

America's domesticated animals were the dog, turkey, guinea pig, chicken, llama, and alpaca. Where are they? None of them are like oxen nor horses. Llamas are not rideable. To ride a llama would be like riding a goat. Native north Americans called horses *big dogs*, probably because dogs were the only four-legged domesticated animal they knew of.

All of these exclusively American things have not a single mention in what is supposed to be a historical American book. European animals and foods are

often mentioned. It is as if an ignorant European wrote it. Hundreds of native American languages exist,¹¹¹⁰ yet none of them are even remotely related to Hebrew or anything remotely Aramaic.

The only indigenous American grains are maize, quinoa, wild rice, and amaranth. Millions of people could not have farmed and lived on wheat and barely, and then have them disappear without a trace – without even any archaeological remains. Maize was bred, or genetically engineered, for higher nutritional content over thousands of years. It could not disappear after a few hundred years, and neither could the other grains. *Sheum*¹¹¹¹ sounds like a Scuttle word, complete with a latin *-ium* suffix. Redefining the words *wheat* and *barley* is too apologetic for me. The purpose of translation would be to translate correctly. Corn was well known in the nineteenth century. If the wrong word were used in this case, I wonder what else could be mistranslated.

The bare facts of the matter are that nothing, absolutely nothing, has ever shown up in any New World excavation which would suggest to a dispassionate observer that the Book of Mormon, as claimed by Joseph Smith, is a historical document relating to the history of early migrants to our hemisphere.¹¹¹²

When inconsistencies and anachronisms abound, it becomes easier and easier to discount the veracity of text which purports to be historical scripture. It makes me wonder that Mormonism may have been designed to attract and ensnare the ignorant, and then to keep them entrapped in ignorance.



Returning to the subject of Secret Combinations, one does not have to reach far in their thoughts to be able to deduce that this was all an organized crime, since there is so much about secret combinations in the scriptures they produced, and the concept was fresh in their consciences. One does not have to reach far to comprehend the source of so many oaths of secrecy in the temple as well as the source of the oaths of vengeance and oaths of death for not keeping the secrets which were a part of the rituals for most of Mormon history. The fact that the

¹¹¹⁰https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_languages_of_the_Americas

¹¹¹¹Mosiah 9:9

¹¹¹²Dr. Michael Coe, professor emeritus of anthropology at Yale University, *Mormons and Archaeology: An Outsive View*, Dialog, Summer 1973

scriptures they produced so often denounce secret societies provides circular logic in refuting the existence of their own secret society: “How could they be a secret society, their own scriptures denounce it!” This silly logic makes me giggle as it reminds me what Vizzini said in *The Princess Bride* as he explained how easy it was to determine which glass held the poisoned wine. In the end, he summarized:

You only think I guessed wrong! That’s what’s so funny! I switched glasses when your back was turned! Ha ha! You fool! You fell victim to one of the classic blunders!¹¹¹³

As I have already mentioned, Jesus himself charges us to avoid swearing oaths of any kind. He also says this of the occult:

...Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.¹¹¹⁴

Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.¹¹¹⁵

For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.¹¹¹⁶

I think those scriptures illustrate that Jesus was quite clear about secrets being a form of hypocrisy, and I think his charge that everything he teaches, whether he whispered it or not, should be openly revealed upon the housetops is also quite clear. Jesus was open to the world, including what he taught at the temple. This scripture seems to single-handedly forfeit temple secrecy:

Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in

¹¹¹³The character Vizzini played by Wallace Shawn in *The Princess Bride*

¹¹¹⁴Luke 12:1-3

¹¹¹⁵Matthew 10:26-27

¹¹¹⁶John 7:4

the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.¹¹¹⁷

Even Paul would be abhorred by the secrecy of the Temple:

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.¹¹¹⁸

It is so ironic to me that the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses¹¹¹⁹ both vehemently speak against secret combinations, but swearing vengeance and secrecy with the penalty of death is the thing that was implemented as the temple endowment. The Book of Mormon says of secret oaths:

And they were kept up by the power of the devil to administer these oaths unto the people, to keep them in darkness, to help such as sought power to gain power, and to murder, and to plunder, and to lie, and to commit all manner of wickedness and whoredoms.¹¹²⁰

As it says, the purpose of secret oaths is to keep people in darkness, to lie, and to gain power. The history of Mormonism is rife with all of the things it lists, including the closed doors of today's oligarchy. I can't help wondering if the outcome of the Mountain Meadows massacre would have been entirely different if temple ceremony didn't have a secret oath to "avenge the blood of the prophets upon this nation" along with its other oaths and other cult-like practices that were stressed during the Mormon Reformation.¹¹²¹

Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.¹¹²²

I am sure the temple's constant drumming of disgusting "bow your head and say yes" blind obedience surely had something to do with it. If the members had followed the true teachings of Jesus and had thought for themselves, I doubt there would have been such a horrible scene. The Book of Mormon says it outright:

¹¹¹⁷ John 18:20

¹¹¹⁸ Ephesians 5:11-13

¹¹¹⁹ Moses 5:51

¹¹²⁰ Ether 8:16

¹¹²¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_Reformation

¹¹²² Voltaire, Miracles and Idolatry

For the Lord worketh not in secret combinations.¹¹²³

This is not all that is contradictory between the Book of Mormon and many of our indispensable doctrines. Though we call it the most correct book on earth, it probably has the most corrections, and it still has bad grammar and incorrect doctrines. Though we declare that it contains a fullness of the Gospel, it lacks many imperative doctrines, and it teaches a more basic Christian gospel while boldly declaring that anything more or less comes from the devil.

There is irony in the doublespeak about the Book of Mormon. Consider an article named *Recognizing Satan's Counterfeits*.¹¹²⁴ The subtitle declares, "When we are faced with spiritual counterfeits, the Book of Mormon can help us determine what's true and what's not." The article urges, "The more we train our eye to identify the differences, the better prepared we will be to expose the counterfeiters of today and resist their lies." It teaches that when we focus on seeing differences instead of similarities, we can identify Satan's counterfeits. Inconsistencies do indicate prevarication. The irony is that this method can also help identify whether the Father of Lies might have had a hand in the production of the Book of Mormon itself. Here are some *differences* that come to mind:

- It teaches Trinitarian Monotheism: Jesus is the Father (spirit) and Holy Spirit (mind) in the flesh (son),¹¹²⁵ much like the teachings in the Lectures on Faith. It teaches that *God is Christ*.¹¹²⁶
- It teaches that we can pray to Jesus himself. This is a trinitarian concept because they would be the same person.¹¹²⁷
- It teaches "The Lord," meaning the Lord Jesus Christ, can dwell in hearts.¹¹²⁸
- It teaches that the Father is a spirit and is non-corporal.¹¹²⁹
- It teaches there is only one god.¹¹³⁰ It does not teach of many gods, nor does it teach that we can become gods, nor does it teach that we will form a patriarchal chain of Gods.

¹¹²³ Ether 8:19, also Mormon 8:27; 2 Nephi 26:22, Helaman 6:22.

¹¹²⁴ Dennis C. Gaunt, New Era, April 2016

¹¹²⁵ 1 Nephi 11:18-21[1830 edition], 2 Nephi 31:21, Mosiah 3:8, Mosiah 15:1-5, Alma 11:38-39, Alma 11:44, Helaman 14:12, 16:18, Ether 3:14, Ether 4:12, Mormon 7:7

¹¹²⁶ 2 Nephi 11:7, "But there is a God, and he is Christ"

¹¹²⁷ 3 Nephi 19:18

¹¹²⁸ An argument for trinitarian theology. Alma 34:36; as opposed to Doctrine and Covenants 130:22 that implies that the Son has a body so he cannot.

¹¹²⁹ Alma 18:2-5, 11, 18, 26, 28; Alma 22:9-11,15

¹¹³⁰ Alma 11:28-29

- It teaches that God is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity.¹¹³¹
- It is missing the modern ideas of pre-existence, degrees of glory, outer darkness, and eternal progression. It teaches about the horror of the punishment of hell instead.¹¹³²
- There is no mention of a premortal life with God, no mention of a mother in heaven.
- It does not mention eternal marriage, no work for the dead, no endowment, no garments, no washing and anointing. Its purpose for the temple is entirely different.¹¹³³
- Not only does it omit temple ordinances, it teaches that any doctrine that adds or subtracts from the simple doctrine of repentance and baptism comes of evil, and it is built upon a sandy foundation.¹¹³⁴
- It teaches that the Lord does not employ angels that stand as sentinels.¹¹³⁵
- It teaches that those who die in their sins will remain in their sins.¹¹³⁶
- It says the dead can't change their minds, there is no second chance.¹¹³⁷
- It says that the first resurrection not only includes the righteous,¹¹³⁸ but also includes all those who have died in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them.¹¹³⁹
- It declares that baptism is not required for those who those who have not the law (i.e. commandments).¹¹⁴⁰
- It teaches against baptism for the dead. It says that baptism for the ignorant not required. It calls baptism for the dead a mockery before God, that it denies the mercies of Christ, the power of his Holy Spirit, and puts trust in dead works.¹¹⁴¹

¹¹³¹Moroni 8:18 – If God is unchangeable, he did not begin as we are; he was never mortal.

¹¹³²Alma 9:11, 26:19, 28:11, 40:26, 42:1; Helaman 12:26; Mosiah 2:39, 3:25

¹¹³³Jacob 2:2,11; Mosiah 2:1,5-7

¹¹³⁴3 Nephi 11:38-40, id est, temple rites are evil.

¹¹³⁵2 Nephi 9:41: "...the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there;"

¹¹³⁶2 Nephi 9:38, "And, in fine, wo unto all those who die in their sins; for they shall return to God, and behold his face, and remain in their sins."

¹¹³⁷Alma 34:34-35; 2 Nephi 9:38, Mosiah 2:38-39

¹¹³⁸Doctrine and Covenants 76:64, 63:18

¹¹³⁹Mosiah 15:22-25, Alma 40:16-19

¹¹⁴⁰2 Nephi 9:25-26

¹¹⁴¹Moroni 8:22-23

- It has racist teachings against those with dark skin,¹¹⁴² declaring that dark skin is a curse from God.¹¹⁴³
- It speaks against oaths (or covenants) of secrecy.¹¹⁴⁴
- It prophesies that all nations of the Gentiles will fall to the Lamanites if the Gentiles do not repent. The Lamanites and the remnant of Israel that gathered to them will tread down and tear the Gentiles in pieces, like a lion among flocks of sheep.¹¹⁴⁵ When taken literally, this means that if all of the Gentiles do not convert to Mormonism, they will be destroyed. This goes along with Joseph Smith proclaiming himself king, and the Council of Fifty conspiring treason. The Council of Fifty made oaths at the threat of being beheaded to be part of their conspiracy.
- It teaches that there shall never be a king on the American continent.¹¹⁴⁶ Besides Joseph Smith proclaiming himself King near the end of his life, there are and have been many kings.¹¹⁴⁷
- It speaks against building and adorning fine sanctuaries with that which has no life, while letting the hungry, needy, naked, sick and afflicted pass by unnoticed.¹¹⁴⁸
- It speaks against waxing proud because of exceeding riches.¹¹⁴⁹
- It says the Prophet should not receive any stipend but instead should labor by his own hands for his support.¹¹⁵⁰
- It is missing a "First Presidency," or of a "president" leader.¹¹⁵¹ House Plan 76550

¹¹⁴²1 Nephi 12:23, 2 Nephi 5:21-23; Alma 3:6-8; 3 Nephi 2:12,14-15, Mormon 5:15-18

¹¹⁴³<https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood>

Compare "Today, the Church *disavows* the theories ... that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse, or that it reflects unrighteous actions" with "he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity ... did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them." 2 Nephi 5:21

Compare "*disavows* ... that mixed-race marriages are a sin" with "cursed shall be the seed of him that mixeth with their seed;" 2 Nephi 5:21-22

Compare "*disavows* ... that blacks ... are inferior in any way to anyone else" to "cursed shall be the seed of them that mixeth with their seed; 2 Nephi 5:23

¹¹⁴⁴Helaman 6:25-30; Ether 8:8-20; Alma 37:27

¹¹⁴⁵3 Nephi 20:15-20

¹¹⁴⁶2 Nephi 10

¹¹⁴⁷https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchies_in_the_Americas

¹¹⁴⁸Mormon 8:37-41, 2 Nephi 28:13, Consider the juxtaposition of the beggars in front of the Salt Lake temple.

¹¹⁴⁹Alma 4:6,8; investing in real estate is more important to modern Jesus than feeding the hungry and clothing the naked.

¹¹⁵⁰2 Nephi 26:31; Alma 1:2-3,20; 30:32-35; Mosiah 2:14; 18:24, 27:5

¹¹⁵¹Jesus only calls 12 disciples in 3 Nephi 12.

A president is a governor, master, leader, director, chief, chairman, chief executive officer...

- It portrays the Priesthood as something entirely different, and never talks of a lesser or Aaronic priesthood. In fact, it does not lay out any priesthood hierarchy or duties.
- It teaches that false churches will forgive your sins for money.¹¹⁵²
- It speaks against anyone declaring that a fullness has been revealed, contradicting our leaders' claims that we have a fullness.¹¹⁵³
- It teaches that we are cursed if we trust in a middle-man.¹¹⁵⁴
- It calls plural marriage an abomination. (Let alone the polyandry as practiced by Joseph Smith)^{1155 1156 1157}
- It preaches that original sin is elementary to the gospel. The Fall, a euphemism for Original Sin, contradicts the second Article of Faith.¹¹⁵⁸
- It teaches that the second Article of Faith is one of the doctrines of the anti-christ, Korihor.¹¹⁵⁹
- It teaches that following tradition isn't always right.¹¹⁶⁰
- It declares that America was consecrated for the descendants of Lehi (and the Mulekites) and *no one else* of their time.¹¹⁶¹ The canon continues to contradict the silly modification of the introduction originally written by Mormon himself.¹¹⁶²
- The title page still declares that the book is written for the Lamanites. All native Americans were originally literally considered Lamanites. Since 2013, we no longer know who the Lamanites are. Their DNA has been lost and they are nowhere

¹¹⁵²Mormon 8:32. Yet, D&C 64:23 says "he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming," implying that you are burned because you have sinned. The requirement of tithing to for entrance to the Temple effectively requires money for worthiness, and non-payment a sin. Not much of a difference.

¹¹⁵³2 Nephi 28:27-30; 2 Nephi 29:9

¹¹⁵⁴2 Nephi 4:34, 2 Nephi 28:31 – that's essentially what priesthood is.

¹¹⁵⁵Jacob 2:5,10,16,21,24

¹¹⁵⁶abomination: atrocity, disgrace, horror, obscenity, outrage, evil, crime, monstrosity, abhorrence – this is not something the Mormon God would tolerate to the least degree of allowance.

¹¹⁵⁷The loophole in Jacob 2:30 does not necessarily grant license to plural marriage. It only talks commanding the people to raise seed, and polygamy does not raise seed as quickly as monogamy.

¹¹⁵⁸1 Nephi 10:6; Mosiah 2:38, 3:19, 16:3, 16:5; Alma 12:22, 34:9; Ether 3:13, Moroni 7:12

¹¹⁵⁹Alma 30:25

¹¹⁶⁰I've quoted Monson saying that happiness and contentment is found in following the faith (tradition) of your people.

¹¹⁶¹2 Nephi 1:8-9

¹¹⁶²First they changed the word to "principal" to "among." Now they removed the clause entirely.

to be found.¹¹⁶³ They have disappeared with all the other archaeological evidence.

- It directly contradicts the merciful, loving nature of Jesus and his entire ministry of love in the New Testament,¹¹⁶⁴ and instead depicts him as an idolatrous god who wrathfully slaughters millions of people as he destroys city after city.¹¹⁶⁵

As I say, this "restored church of Jesus" ignores the true nature and teachings of Jesus and turns the person who, only hours earlier, healed the ear that Peter cut off,¹¹⁶⁶ and exclaimed, "forgive them, for they know not what they do,"¹¹⁶⁷ back into the old man-made idolatrous, wrathful, vengeful God. This "restored church of Jesus" ignores the message of Jesus and only seems to pay attention to Paul's idolatrous doctrine of Atonement and propitiation through the blood of Jesus.¹¹⁶⁸

You may remember my list of many other differences in *The Restored Character of Jesus* in the Doctrine section above. This "restored church of Jesus" lets the teachings of Jesus which are not advantageous for it as an establishment fall by the way-side to contradict him in stressing thoughtless Pharisical obedience to strict, measurable rules. President Monson is anti-Jesus in his intent for us to return to Pharisical law. His ideas are illustrated when he often said things like this:

A cardinal principle of industrial management teaches: "When performance is measured, performance improves. When performance is measured and reported, the rate of improvement accelerates."¹¹⁶⁹

I have seen another version of his quote, which I can't seem to find in church materials, prepends this: "When we deal in generalities, we shall never succeed. When we deal in specifics, we shall rarely have a failure." Truth is, he wants to run the church using principles of industrial management, because that is what the church really is at its core: a corporation.

¹¹⁶³DNA essay <https://www.lds.org/topics/book-of-mormon-and-dna-studies>

¹¹⁶⁴John 3:17

¹¹⁶⁵3 Nephi chapters 8 and 9

¹¹⁶⁶Matthew 26:51, John 18:10, Luke 22:49-51

¹¹⁶⁷Luke 23:34

¹¹⁶⁸<http://www.youtube.com/v/ccb7-gJs28I?start=32&end=73&version=3>

Elder Bednar talks of his mission as an apostle of bearing witness "teachings of the savior and his doctrine" but mentions no doctrine Jesus ever taught, and instead only mentions finding remedies through the "cleansing power" of Paul's idolatrous doctrine of blood Atonement.

¹¹⁶⁹Thomas Monson, *The Improvement Era*, December 1970, page 102

He wants measurable outward obedience. I can't envision Jesus approving of this at all; he scoffed at the Pharisees' stringent, outwardly observable, measurable rules. What ever happened to "I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves?"¹¹⁷⁰ It seems that by stressing outward, observable, measurable performance in rites, rituals, visits, clothes, underwear, tokens, signs, and a great many more outward commandments, the church proves that it is not led by God, but by men:

For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.¹¹⁷¹

And Jesus would agree:

Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.¹¹⁷²

Everything about temple worthiness and all the goings on inside and outside of the temple contradicts those scriptures. As I said before, the temple changes the message of Jesus – which invites us to have an intimate, living relationship with God now, being part of the Kingdom of Heaven now – to the necessity for outward, measurable keys, tokens, signs, clothes, and other many other idolatrous things to get by pagan sentinels who stand guard at the gates of Heaven to be used later. Here is what Jesus would say to in response to President Monson:

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.¹¹⁷³

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Joseph and Carrie Nelson to their family, which illustrates my point further:

The church spends more time preaching against things that won't actually affect a person's real worth than it does actually trying to teach its members to be Christ-like. This is just our opinion and we don't intend to present it as fact, but how many hours are wasted convincing the youth not to watch R-rated movies, not to use profanity, to dress in clothes that meet strict

standards of modesty, not to get tattoos, not to drink caffeinated drinks, to avoid violent video games, and to not listen to profane music?

The church lays down so many laws and then focuses on hammering a need to obey the laws into people's brains that it misses an opportunity to help the members, especially youth, learn what it truly means to be Christian. It replaces what should be a quest for truth and learning how to become truly altruistic and loving people, with a dogmatic need to follow rules. Part of the reason so many Mormons fail to be more like Jesus is because they have replaced the need to understand Christ and emulate His actions with the need to follow rules. Comprehension of good and bad has been abandoned in favor of a robotic application of policy. Growing up, they tell you to prepare for an eternal marriage and then they tell you that you do that by following rules – date in groups, wait until you're 16 to date, obey the law of chastity, read the scriptures, pray, and go to church, and you'll be a good spouse. While these things can lead to a good marriage, they are meaningless unless people understand how to use them to help them understand how, and how to use those things to make a good marriage is not taught.

In putting this focus on rules, and making people think that by following the clear cut rules, they are good people, the church is encouraging them to stop growing to be better because they focus on the commandments that have a very obvious achievability. It is obvious whether or not a person pays tithing, whether or not a person smokes, chews, drinks alcohol, drinks tea and coffee, whether or not a person goes to church, and whether or not a person reads the scriptures. But none of these really makes a person Christ-like. Being forgiving, being humble, helping those in need, practicing patience, avoiding angry or vengeful thoughts, etc are the things that make a person truly Christ-like. And yet those things are subjective and since the emphasis is put on the non subjective rules, many people get up in fast and testimony meeting to boast about their achievements, where if they were truly Christ like, their modesty would prevent such an action. The bottom line is that following Christ in the LDS faith is just another subjective commandment, so just as long as you are following God's laws for which your complicity is measurable, you're obviously following Jesus despite the fact that you're doing all of

¹¹⁷⁰ Joseph Smith as quoted by John Taylor, Millennial Star, 15 Nov 1851, page 339

¹¹⁷¹ Samuel 16:7

¹¹⁷² John 7:24

¹¹⁷³ Luke 16:15

the things that he didn't actually command be done.¹¹⁷⁴

¹¹⁷⁴ Joseph and Carrie Nelson to their family, Problems with the Church
Section titled Emphasis on Dogma
<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B6IWv1y1m4yzM1psTVF0T3dCNIU>

Undue Influence

Undue Influence is a legal phrase defined as “influence by which a person is induced to act otherwise than by their own free will or without adequate attention to the consequences.” Another definition includes “a loss of free agency.” Other words or phrases for undue influence are “mind control,” “thought reform,” and “brainwashing,” though those are more harsh terms.

Dr. Robert Lifton was a military intelligence psychiatrist in the 50s, who studied Chinese communist brainwashing techniques. Lifton published a book in 1961 titled “Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism.” In this book he outlined eight criteria that any environment could be assessed for brainwashing or thought reform.

1. Milieu control: Tactics that control environment and human communication through the use of social pressure and group language; such tactics may include dogma, protocols, innuendo, slang, and pronunciation, which enables group members to identify other members, or to promote cognitive changes in individuals. Milieu control involves the control of communication within a group environment, that also may (or may not) result in a significant degree of isolation from surrounding society. When non-group members, or outsiders, are considered or potentially labeled as less valuable without basis for stated group-supported and group-reinforced prejudice, group members may have a tendency to then consider themselves as intellectually superior, which can limit alternate points of view, thus becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy in which group members automatically begin to devalue others and the intellect of others that are separate from their group, without logical rationale for doing so. Additionally, Milieu control “includes other techniques to restrict members’ contact with the outside world and to be able to make critical, rational, judgments about information.”
2. Mystical Manipulation: The manipulation of experiences that appears spontaneous but is, in fact, planned and orchestrated by the group or its leaders in order to demonstrate divine authority, spiritual advancement, or some exceptional talent or insight that sets the leader and/or group apart from humanity, and that allows reinterpretation of historical events, scripture, and other experiences. Coincidences and happen-

stance oddities are interpreted as omens or prophecies.

3. Demand for Purity: The world is viewed as black and white and the members are constantly exhorted to conform to the ideology of the group and strive for perfection. The induction of guilt and/or shame is a powerful control device used here.
4. Confession: Sins, as defined by the group, are to be confessed either to a personal monitor or publicly to the group. There is no confidentiality; members’ “sins,” “attitudes,” and “faults” are discussed and exploited by the leaders.
5. Sacred Science: The group’s doctrine or ideology is considered to be the ultimate Truth, beyond all questioning or dispute. Truth is not to be found outside the group. The leader, as the spokesperson for God or for all humanity, is likewise above criticism.
6. Loading the Language: The group interprets or uses words and phrases in new ways so that often the outside world does not understand. This jargon consists of thought-terminating clichés, which serve to alter members’ thought processes to conform to the group’s way of thinking. “The language of the totalist environment is characterized by the thought-terminating cliché. The most far-reaching and complex of human problems are compressed into brief, highly reductive, definitive-sounding phrases, easily memorized and easily expressed. These become the start and finish of any ideological analysis.”
7. Doctrine over person: Members’ personal experiences are subordinated to the sacred science and any contrary experiences must be denied or reinterpreted to fit the ideology of the group.
8. Dispensing of existence: The group has the prerogative to decide who has the right to exist and who does not. This is usually not literal but means that those in the outside world are not saved, unenlightened, unconscious and they must be converted to the group’s ideology. If they do not join the group or are critical of the group, then they must be rejected by the members. Thus, the outside world loses all credibility. In conjunction, should any member leave the group, he or she must be rejected also.

After reading through those eight points, I noticed that they all apply to the church in some way. This only proves to me more that the church is a creation of men, which uses undue influence to bind people under their control. Here is a diagram which does

a good job of organizing and presenting what I just said, which I found on Twitter:¹¹⁷⁵

Loading the Language

I have noticed many words or phrases in Mormonism which have a euphemistic meaning are not the same to the rest of society. Here are some of the examples I can think of:

Adversary

- Euphemism for: Satan
- What it really means in Mormonism: anything that opposes the brethren
- True meaning: an opponent, someone who is not your ally

Apostasy

- Euphemism for: rebellion to God
- What it really is in Mormonism: free speech, opposition to the brethren: right or not
- True meaning: leaving, causing distance to come between
- Irony: someone who relays a dissenting message is an "apostle"

Calling

- Euphemism for: the work God wants you to do
- What it really is in Mormonism: coerced volunteering, busywork
- True meaning: destiny, profession

Covenant

- Euphemism for: a bi-directional promise between a person and God
- What it really is in Mormonism: to swear an oath
- What it really means: a contracted mutual agreement between two free agents
- Irony: Jesus despised all oaths
- Irony: God never signs anything, and neither do you

Modesty

- Euphemism for: covering specific parts of the body
- What it really is in Mormonism: systematic public shaming
- True meaning: humility, moderation

¹¹⁷⁵<https://twitter.com/lunalindsey/status/473205366172286980/photo/1>

- Irony: humility would imbue empathy, which is the antithesis of shaming

Morality

- Euphemism for: chastity
- What it really means in Mormonism: sexual taboo and shame
- True meaning: a sense for what is right and what is wrong
- Irony: it is not moral for any innocent person to die or suffer for the guilty

Obedience

- Euphemism for: accepting God's will
- What it really means in Mormonism: to become "free" by relinquishing your God-given right to freedom of choice to priesthood authority
- True Meaning: to yield to orders from authority
- Irony: In congruence with Morality above: Morality is doing what is right no matter what you are told. Obedience is doing what you are told no matter what is right.¹¹⁷⁶
- Irony: the commandments of men are too often vainly upheld as the will of God

Ordinance

- Euphemism for: oaths actions
- What it really means in Mormonism: oaths in the form outward ritual, imperative to salvation
- True Meaning: legislation, statute, decree
- Irony: the ordinances in the Bible are statutes, not rituals.

Pharisee

- Euphemism for: opposition to Jesus or the church
- What it really means in Mormonism: anyone that persecutes
- True meaning: separatist, elitist, self-righteous, hypocrisy
- Irony: temple worship is the epitome of pretentious separatism, elitism, and self-righteousness
- Irony: the Pharisees would love how the church requires only an outward appearance of righteousness for access to the elite and outwardly beautiful temple, where dirty sinners are banned (and for over a century, races which were not "white, exceedingly fair and delightful"¹¹⁷⁷ were banned, too)

¹¹⁷⁶Dr. Laura Markham, Parenting Your Strong Willed Child

¹¹⁷⁷2 Nephi 5:21

- Irony: In our day, Jesus would be excommunicated from what is supposed to be his church by Pharisaical leaders for the same reasons he originally was

Proclamations/Declarations/Articles of Faith

- Euphemism for: revelation of what God wants us to believe
- What it really means in Mormonism: political expediency
- True meaning: a creed – an official statement of belief by councils of men
- Irony: God told Joseph Smith that creeds of men are an abomination purveyed by professors of corruption¹¹⁷⁸

Swearing

- Euphemism for: taboo words
- What it really means in Mormonism: the use of an explicative from a specific list of culturally despised crude or vulgar words
- True meaning: making an oath, vow, appeal to deity
- Irony: this is euphemized in covenant, as I said above
- Irony: the church redefines this word so we can't tell that its ordinances are exactly this

Stipend

- Euphemism for: salary
- What it really means in Mormonism: modest reimbursement
- True meaning: Latin stipendium, from stips wages + pendere to pay
- Irony: Canon says no leaders of the church should receive any money at all, not even "so much as even one senine."

Use of the Lord's Name in Vain

- Euphemism for: taboo words, much like swearing above
- What it really means in Mormonism: using the "Lord" or "God" in casual speech
- True meaning: using the name of God for your own vain purposes, like "God commanded me to take you as a second wife."
- Irony: Almost every leader of the church has used the name of God in vain

¹¹⁷⁸ Joseph Smith – History 1:19

Thought Termination

One of the points includes thought-stopping clichés or platitudes. Here is a list of some of the ones I can think of (in no particular order):

- A stupor of thought.
- A testimony is found in the bearing of it.
- Anti-Mormon.
- Are you losing your testimony?
- As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may become.
- Avoid the appearance of evil.
- Be in the world, but not of the world.
- Be led by the spirit, not by the flesh.
- Be not wise in your own eyes.
- Be of good faith.
- Be patient, all will be revealed in time.
- Be still and know that I am God.
- Be still and listen to God.
- Cast your cares upon the Lord.
- Choose the right.
- Count your blessings.
- Do not be conformed to this world.
- Do not harden your heart.
- Do not place a question mark where the Lord has placed a period.
- Do not place a question mark where the Lord has placed a period.
- Do not speak evil of the Lord's anointed.
- Do not speak ill of the Lord's anointed.
- Do your duty.
- Don't be led astray by false teachings.
- Don't be of the world, just in it.
- Don't dwindle in unbelief.
- Don't entertain doubts.
- Don't lean on your human understanding.
- Don't lean upon your own understanding.
- Don't let earthly knowledge cloud spiritual understanding.
- Don't let the devil steal your joy.
- Don't let your faith be shaken.
- Don't let your faith waver.
- Don't let your heart be troubled.
- Don't let your human reasoning get in the way of faith.
- Don't let your human reasoning limit your faith.
- Don't let your mind wander.
- Don't lose faith over worldly doubts.
- Don't lose sight of the eternal perspective.
- Don't lose sight of what really matters.
- Don't question, just believe.
- Don't rationalize away your righteousness.
- Don't test God.

- Don't trust your own understanding.
- Don't worry about those little flecks of history.
- Doubt is the enemy of faith.
- Doubt sees the obstacles, faith sees the way.
- Doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith.
- Earth has no sorrow that heaven can't heal.
- Endure to the end.
- Every blessing the Lord gives us is predicated on obedience.
- Every member a missionary.
- Faith doesn't make sense; it makes miracles.
- Faith is believing without seeing.
- Faith is not a science.
- Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
- Faith moves mountains.
- Faith precedes the miracle.
- Families can be together forever.
- Follow the prophet, he knows the way.
- Follow the prophet.
- Get thee behind me, Satan.
- God cannot change, but what He wills for us can.
- God cannot change, but what he wills for us can.
- God knows what he is doing.
- God needed him more than we did.
- God needed them more than we did.
- God never said it would make sense.
- God reveals His secrets to those who fear Him.
- God reveals truth in His own time.
- God will guide you if you let Him.
- God will never allow the prophet to lead the church astray.
- God will not be mocked.
- God will reveal it when you're ready.
- God works in ways we can't understand.
- God's mysteries are revealed to those who seek Him.
- God's silence is not His absence.
- God's thoughts are not our thoughts.
- God's timing is perfect.
- God's timing isn't our timing.
- God's truth is beyond human understanding.
- God's truth is not dependent on our understanding.
- God's ways are higher.
- God's wisdom is a mystery to the natural man.
- God's wisdom is foolishness to men.
- God's wisdom is foolishness to the world.
- God moves in a mysterious way.
- Have faith and don't doubt.
- Have faith in God's plan.
- Have faith in God's timing.
- Have faith, even when you can't see.
- He was speaking as a man, not as a prophet.
- His thoughts are not our thoughts.
- His ways are not our ways.
- History doesn't matter.
- History doesn't matter.
- Hold fast to your faith.
- Hold to the rod.
- Hold your family home evenings.
- I do not know the answer, but I do know God loves his children.
- I do not know the answer, but I do know the Church is true.
- I don't know that we teach that.
- I don't know the answer, but I do know the church is true.
- I love to see the temple.
- I never said it would be easy, I only said it would be worth it.
- I testify with every fiber of my being...
- I would rather have my child return in a pine box than lose their virtue.
- In the last days even the elite will be deceived.
- In the last days, even the very elect will be deceived.
- Is this question essential for my salvation?
- It is not productive use of my time.
- It will all work out in the end.
- It's God's will, not ours.
- It's a heart issue, not a head issue.
- It's a matter of faith, not understanding.
- It's a matter of interpretation.
- It's a matter of personal revelation.
- It's a matter of the heart, not the head.
- It's a spiritual battle, not a physical one.
- It's a spiritual matter, not a logical one.
- It's a test of faith.
- It's all part of God's plan.
- It's better to die defending one's virtue than to live having lost it.
- It's better to prepare and prevent than to repair and repent.
- It's not a religion, it's a relationship.
- It's not about understanding, it's about believing.
- It's not for us to question.
- It's not for us to understand God's ways.
- It's not ours to question why.
- It's not your place to question.
- Just sing your favorite hymn.
- Keep the faith, no matter what happens.
- Keep the faith, no matter what.
- Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus.
- Keep your eyes fixed on the cross.
- Keep your eyes on God, not on man.
- Keep your eyes on the eternal, not the temporal.

- Keep your eyes on the prize.
- Keep your faith strong, don't waver.
- Keep your faith strong.
- Keep your faith, don't lose hope.
- Keep your focus on the eternal, not the temporal.
- Keep your mind on things above, not on earthly things.
- Keep your mind stayed on Jesus.
- Keep your spiritual eyes open.
- Kicking against the pricks.
- Lean not on your own understanding.
- Leave room for the Holy Ghost.
- Lengthen your stride.
- Let go and let God.
- Let the Spirit guide you.
- Let the word of God guide you.
- Love the sinner, hate the sin.
- Man does not live by bread alone.
- Man's wisdom is foolishness to God.
- Milk before meat.
- Millions of members believe and can testify.
- Modest is hottest.
- Mysteries will be resolved in the next life.
- No success can compensate for failure in the home.
- Not all truth is useful.
- Not everything needs an explanation.
- Obedience is the first law of heaven.
- Only faith can reveal the truth.
- Only the prophet can reveal new doctrine.
- Only the pure in heart can understand.
- Only through the spirit can you understand.
- Our mortal minds cannot comprehend God.
- Our wisdom is but foolishness to God.
- Ours is the fastest growing church on earth.
- Pay on net income, forfeit gross blessings.
- People only leave because they want to sin.
- People only leave because they're offended.
- Pray about it and you'll know it's true.
- Pray until something happens.
- Pride is the universal sin.
- Put on the full armor of God.
- Read the scriptures, pray, go to church.
- Read, pray, and attend church, and everything else will work out.
- Remember who you are.
- Remember, God moves in mysterious ways.
- Remember, God's plan is bigger than ours.
- Remember, faith is not a feeling.
- Remember, we see through a glass darkly.
- Remember, you're a soldier in the army of the Lord.
- Remember, you're in the world, not of the world.
- Return with Honor.

- Saturday's warrior.
- Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.
- Seek first the kingdom of God.
- Seek for tender mercies.
- Seek learning by study and also by faith.
- Seek spiritual understanding, not worldly knowledge.
- Serve a mission, marry in the temple, raise a righteous family.
- Some questions aren't meant to be answered.
- Some things are not to be understood in this life.
- Some things aren't meant to be understood.
- Spiritual things are spiritually discerned.
- Spiritual truths can't be discerned with the natural mind.
- Spiritual understanding comes with spiritual maturity.
- Stand firm in the faith.
- Stand firm in your faith, don't waver.
- Stand strong in your faith.
- Stand ye in holy places.
- Stay in the boat.
- Stay in the light.
- Stay on the covenant path.
- Stay on the straight and narrow.
- Stupor of thought.
- Tender mercies.
- That experience is too sacred to talk about.
- That is a conspiracy theory.
- That is just a conspiracy theory.
- That's more of a couplet than anything else.
- That's more of a couplet than anything else.
- The Atonement is an incomprehensible mystery.
- The Church is imperfect, but the gospel is perfect.
- The Church is true.
- The Glory of God is Intelligence.
- The Gospel is simple.
- The Holy Ghost goes to bed at midnight.
- The Lord's ways are higher than our ways.
- The answers will come in God's time.
- The chosen generation.
- The church is imperfect, but the gospel is perfect.
- The church is still true.
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
- The gospel never changes.
- The kingdom of God is within you.
- The mind is a stage.
- The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God.
- The natural man is an enemy to god.
- The plan of salvation.

- The prophet will never lead the Church astray.
- The restoration continues.
- The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.
- The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.
- The spiritual is discerned spiritually.
- The things of God are spiritually discerned.
- The truth will set you free.
- The wisdom of man is foolishness to God.
- The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God.
- The wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight.
- The world can't understand the things of God.
- The world cannot understand spiritual things.
- The world is moving away from the lord.
- The world is ripening in iniquity.
- The world's wisdom is God's foolishness.
- There are many things we can't understand in this life.
- There are some things we just aren't meant to understand in this life.
- There are things that are beyond our understanding. God's plans are beyond our understanding.
- There is safety in counsel.
- These are the latter-days.
- They think they're happy but they're not.
- They think they're happy, but they're not.
- They're in a better place.
- They're not a member, but they're really nice.
- They're in a better place.
- This experience is too sacred to talk about.
- This is a choice land.
- This is a test of faith.
- This is the true and living church.
- This life is a time to prepare to meet god.
- Trust God's plan, not your own.
- Trust and obey, for there's no other way.
- Trust in God, not in man.
- Trust in the Lord with all your heart.
- Trust in the Lord, He knows best.
- Walk by faith and not by sight.
- Walk by faith, not by sight.
- Walk by the Spirit, not by the flesh.
- We are a peculiar people.
- We are living in the fulness of times.
- We are not of this world.
- We are spiritual beings having a human experience.
- We are to live by faith, not by sight.
- We believe all that god has revealed, all that he does now reveal, and we believe that he will yet reveal many great and important things.
- We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men.

- We can't be led astray if we follow the prophet.
- We can't comprehend the ways of God.
- We can't understand God with human reasoning.
- We live by faith, not by sight.
- We must stand in holy places and be not moved.
- We need to obey all we have now before God will reveal more.
- We see through a glass darkly.
- We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ.
- We walk by faith, not by sight.
- We're not supposed to understand everything.
- When life gets too hard to stand, kneel.
- When the prophet speaks, the debate is over.
- When you're on the Lord's errand, you're entitled to the Lord's help.
- Why do you want to dishonor the sacrifices of your ancestors?
- Why would you want to dishonor the sacrifices of your ancestors?
- Worldly wisdom cannot understand spiritual truths.
- You are throwing away being with your family for eternity.
- You can't afford to not pay your tithing.
- You can't put God in a box.
- You can't question God's will.
- You can't understand God's ways with human reasoning.
- You just need to have faith.
- You need spiritual eyes to see spiritual truths.
- You need to have a heart to understand God's will.
- You should become as a little child.
- You should only be reading church approved materials.
- You should only read Church-approved materials.
- You will never know true happiness outside the church.
- You will not be tempted beyond that which you're able.
- You'll have to wait until the next life for the answer to that question.
- You'll have to wait until you die for the answer to that question.
- You're allowing your human understanding to limit God.
- You're allowing your pride to blind you.
- You're being deceived by worldly wisdom.
- You're focusing on the physical, not the spiritual.
- You're focusing on the wrong things.
- You're letting the world cloud your judgement.

- You're letting your earthly desires cloud your judgement.
- You're letting your earthly mind cloud your spiritual understanding.
- You're letting your emotions cloud your faith.
- You're letting your flesh rule your spirit.
- You're letting your intellect cloud your spirit.
- You're looking at it from a worldly perspective.
- You're looking beyond the mark.
- You're not spiritual enough to understand.
- You're questioning too much, just believe.
- You're relying on human wisdom instead of divine revelation.
- You're relying too much on worldly knowledge.
- You're taking it out of context.
- You're thinking too much with your flesh.
- You're thinking too much with your head, not your heart.
- You're thinking with your mind, not your spirit.
- You're throwing away being with your family for eternity.
- You're too caught up in intellectualism.
- You're too focused on worldly wisdom.
- You're trusting too much in your own understanding.
- You're trying to humanize God.
- You're trying to put God in a box.
- You're trying to rationalize the spiritual.
- You're under spiritual attack.
- Your doubts are just a test of faith.
- Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men.
- Your faith will be rewarded in due time.
- Your lack of faith is blinding you.
- Your understanding is clouded by sin.
- Your understanding is limited, but God's is not.
- Your ways are not God's ways.

mind control

steven hassan was once a member of the unification church, nicknamed "moonies," earlier in his life and later came to his senses. he dedicated the rest of his life to the study of cults and the freedom of mind. part of his realization that he was in a cult was influenced by the eight points in dr. lifton's book. steven analyzed and extended the eight points into what he calls the b.i.t.e. model of cult mind control. b.i.t.e. stands for the mind control of four areas: behavior, information, thought, and emotional. let me quote from his web page:¹¹⁷⁹

¹¹⁷⁹ <http://www.freedomofmind.com/info/bite/bitemodel.php>

many people think of mind control as an ambiguous, mystical process that cannot be defined in concrete terms. in reality, mind control refers to a specific set of methods and techniques, such as hypnosis or thought-stopping, that influence how a person thinks, feels, and acts. like many bodies of knowledge, it is not inherently good or evil. if mind control techniques are used to empower an individual to have more choice, and authority for his life remains within himself, the effects can be beneficial. for example, benevolent mind control can be used to help people quit smoking without affecting any behavior.

mind control becomes destructive when the locus of control is external and it is used to undermine a person's ability to think and act independently.

as employed by the most destructive cults, mind control seeks nothing less than to disrupt an individual's authentic identity and reconstruct it in the image of the cult leader. i developed the bite model to help people determine whether or not a group is practicing destructive mind control. the bite model can help you understand how cults suppress individual member's uniqueness and creativity. bite stands for the cult's control of an individual's behavior, intellect, thoughts, and emotions.

it is important to understand that destructive mind control can be determined when the overall effect of these four components promotes dependency and obedience to some leader or cause. it is not necessary for every single item on the list to be present. mind controlled cult members can live in their own apartments, have nine-to-five jobs, be married with children, and still be unable to think for themselves and act independently.

behavior control

missions are particularly mind-controlling. they seem to illustrate to what extents the church will go to control its members if necessary. the environment of a mission is the epitome of brainwashing. here are some bullet points of the bite model as applied to the brainwashing of my own mission:

- i was restricted to the geographic area that i was assigned.
- the person i lived with was assigned to me without any input of my own.
- i had to wear a uniform and my hair had to conform to a specific cut.

- my livelihood was dependent on my obedience and dedication, as meager as it was.
- my every action was watched by someone else.
- i was dictated where and with whom i live.
- any natural attraction to the opposite sex was restricted.
- my meals were regulated, and fasting was a regular practice.
- i had such a small amount of time to cook, that i usually went without.
- i was allotted so little money that i could not buy anything more than staple food.
- i had to rely on the charity of others for decent meals.
- my sleep time was strictly dictated and restricted.
- my finances were strictly dictated and restricted.
- my leisure time was restricted.
- if i was not working, i was to be studying propaganda, having meetings, or caring for very basic human needs.
- i lived in shacks that fulfilled only basic human necessities.
- major life decisions or changes were unthinkable and completely off the table for the duration.
- any misconduct of my companion or other missionaries were encouraged to be reported.
- i could never be alone without the oversight of someone else, except for bathing; even so, my companion was supposed to confront me and encourage me to confess sin if my bathing suspiciously took too long.
- individualism is to be suppressed for group-think.
- there was no margin or wiggle-room within the rigid rules and regulations.

information control

- the information i had access to was restricted. i had no idea there was more to the story.
- i was instructed to only bear my testimony to ex-members and critics and taught to listen to them with only a prejudiced point of view for the threat of doubt and going astray.
- i could not gain access to all other sources of information, especially anti-mormon, and if i did, my companion would report me.
- i had an elitist view of the doctrine i taught; it was the only truth on earth about the matter.
- all of my material was one-sided propaganda.

- all disobedience and sin was to be confessed to my mission president.
- issues with what i was teaching, like historical polygamy, had answers that did not align with true history.
- all of my thoughts, feelings, and activities were reported in statistics and letters to the president.
- i was never allowed to watch television or listen to the radio. access to newsletters, magazines, journals, audiotapes, videotapes, movies, and other media outside of church production was restricted.

thought control

- i was instilled with black and white, us versus the world mentality.
- my sense of self and identity was changed, even my name.
- practically every complex thought was stopped by cliches and platitudes from culture, lessons, and scripture.
- prayer and fasting were used as tools to help indoctrinate and increase devotion.
- only virtuous thoughts were encouraged for righteousness.
- meditation, prayer, singing were tools for the suppression of impure thoughts.
- i was so busy that i did not have time to think beyond the manuals and guides.
- i was to reject all critical thought and doubt, because they are infidelity and treachery.

emotional control

- fear cultural disgrace caused fear of questioning and leaving a mission.
- many emotions were labeled as worldly, sinful, or wrong.
- homesickness was to be forgotten through obedience and dedication.
- i had constant feelings of guilt, shame, and unworthiness for not measuring up to every single rule.
- every letter from home showered love and praise.
- if i dared disobey or disbelieve, i would lose all credibility and cultural identity.
- i taught that all are fallen, are lost, and must perish, and it is my responsibility to save them and bring them happiness and peace.

how can a church that uses mind control techniques have anything to do with what jesus taught about the kingdom of heaven? we are taught in the church that it was not the plan to control choice and behavior. for being a church which teaches that lucifer's plan was a plan of controlling free will, it seems ironic that the church is using just about every method known to man to brainwash and control its members, especially missionaries, robbing them of their free agency.

there is no place for cultist mind control and suppression of free agency in the gospel of jesus. the gospel of jesus does not manipulate and control your mind, it instead frees it. jesus teaches that the universe is governed by love, and you can join in with that love if you want to. when you love, all other things fall into place.

Conclusion

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.¹¹⁸⁰

This work is by no means comprehensive. It contains only some of the thoughts that I remember having occurred to me over the years. I have had many more which have come and gone. There are so many more ideas to consider that they could fill an abyss. Those I list above are only the ones that I have remembered. Some were prompted by current events. Some were prompted by morning thoughts. Even though this is in no way complete, I hope I have given you a good sample of my innermost thoughts.

I realized who Jesus truly was. I recognized my belief in God and his nature. Then, I marveled at why God should require a vengeful human sacrifice to extend his mercy. Those were the first dominoes to fall after perceiving a gentle prod from the divine.

As I came to trust God entirely for my salvation, I no longer had a need for the arm of the flesh to intercede. My mind was freed to explore what I believe about everything. I allowed myself to embark on the quest to find *how deep the rabbit hole goes*.¹¹⁸¹ I freely resolved hundreds of inconsistencies. The true teachings of Jesus awarded more freedom as the cognitive dissonance I experienced throughout my life resolved.

My belief in Jesus and the possibility that his identity could be the creator of this universe has never been stronger. If he is godlike, then the universe is better than I was led to believe. I wish to model the ideals he lived. His universe freely welcomes its creation of free will. His teachings uphold ideal of personal sovereignty. They allow truth to speak for itself. They disarm authority from dictating Truth with a capital T and Command with a capital C. This is conceptually the opposite of the teachings of the church. I have faith in his teachings.

I am on a quest to live his religion, not the idolatrous religion that others later created about him. My current understanding of the universe, my place in it, and my future possibilities beyond this life have never been clearer to me. My perspective of eternity is becoming more clear with each passing day. My happiness and salvation is no longer dependent upon fulfilling strict commands or repeating rituals.

¹¹⁸⁰Henley, William Ernest (1888). A book of verses. London: D. Nutt. pp. 56–57

¹¹⁸¹Wachowski brothers, The Matrix

It is about genuinely and sincerely trying to find and do the will of the Father, upheld by truth, just as Jesus suggested.

The outer passes away; the innermost is the same yesterday, today, and forever.¹¹⁸²

How do I find the will of the Father? It is that eternal spark of divinity within which I seek. God is not outward in the sky. Rather, he is found inward and within. That spark that has sent me on this journey because I dared to listen. It gave me wings to fly beyond the borders, where no one can return. It is inseparably bound with the morsel of immaterial existence that peers through my eyes. God is in me and part of me, while I am in God and part of God. The teachings of Jesus have never been more clear to me before as they are to me now.

Jesus said, "If those who lead you say to you, 'See, the kingdom is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you: 'It is in the sea,' then the fishes will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside of you, and outside of you.

When you come to know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will realize that you are the children of the living Father. But if you will not come to know yourselves, then you dwell in (spiritual) poverty, and it is you who are that poverty."¹¹⁸³

I found that gem in the lost Gospel of Thomas.¹¹⁸⁴ That is this spiritual rebirth that Jesus often talked about. It is his teaching that the Kingdom of Heaven is within. When a being self-realizes what they truly are, a shard of God, then it will know God. That is what it means to be a "son of the living father."

His disciples said to him, "When will the kingdom come?"

Jesus said, "It will not come by waiting for it. It will not be a matter of saying, 'here it is,' or 'there it is.' Rather, the kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth (it is everywhere), and men do not see it"¹¹⁸⁵

There are those who preach that Jesus will descend from the sky when he arrives. They teach that God's

¹¹⁸²Thomas Carlyle

¹¹⁸³Gospel of Thomas 3, NHS20 pp. 52-55

¹¹⁸⁴The Gospel of Thomas was found Coptic writ in December 1945 in Egypt

¹¹⁸⁵Gospel of Thomas, 113, NHS20 pp. 92-93

kingdom is physically in outer space somewhere, that the capital is near a specific star. They teach that his jurisdiction will come, that the walls of his borders will physically encompass the planet. They teach that everyone will submit to his every specific command. These are the teachings of those who use the name of God in vain. They use it to enforce their command in his name. They look at the earth and do not realize what they see. The teachings of Jesus and his parables are an enigma to them.

There will be no point in time when that kind of kingdom arrives. His kingdom is already here. It is not a pathetic authoritarian establishment. It has never been led by men who claim to speak for him. It is not a physical kingdom that should conquer all other nations. It is not something that will forcefully require every knee to bow – that is another teaching of Paul that goes terribly against the teachings of Jesus. The teaching of Jesus is spiritual rebirth. You cannot be reborn spiritually unless you have been born of the water of your mother's womb. Your faculties of mind must exist first. His coming is that spiritual rebirth. There is no specific time, nor is there any specific place that it happens.

There is an eternal nature to the true teachings of Jesus. It is truth and love. It is also a disgust of the requirement of obedience to the sundries of a despot for worthiness. The more people allow themselves to think, the more his teachings will bear fruit. It seems that the kingdom of heaven, as Jesus envisioned, has failed on the earth for the time being. A church of outward ritual and pharisaical rules, the opposite, has taken its place. I look forward to the day when the everyone rebirths into the true kingdom of heaven. A centralized establishment that considers itself elite and singular in truth does not understand the teachings of Jesus. It only causes more division in those that follow Jesus. The true Kingdom of Heaven unites all people. It does not divide, segregate or distinguish anyone's worthiness for glory over anyone else.¹¹⁸⁶



I can't deny integrity its right to join with wisdom and knowledge to have influence on my perception of reality. I wish to allow truth, reason, and wisdom to rule supreme in my mind. They are gifts come from the Father, and doing the will of the Father is the essence of the religion of Jesus. I am having a difficult time maintaining the myopic beliefs that were inculcated in my childhood. For most of my life

¹¹⁸⁶Matthew 12:25

I so naively, unquestioningly, and almost robotically accepted them.

I have arrived at a point where I feel apathy for the enlightenment or moral guidance that the church can provide for my life. That apathy turns to disgust for many points of doctrine that is clearly of men. That disgust turns to abhorrence for hundreds of questionable judgments and motions by people who are supposed to be prophets of God. That disgust turns to anger towards the men who use the name of Jesus in vain as they teach opposing doctrine that would offend him. That anger turns to hatred towards the men who use the name of God in vain as they deceive and grind upon the face of the poor and credulous. I cannot take the church seriously anymore. I can no longer allow myself to be compelled to bow my head to swear an oath to pledge everything, including my very life if necessary, not to God, but to a church led by men who stand to gain from my devotion.

I recognize that men make mistakes. *The leaders are imperfect, but the Gospel is perfect.* That is their thought-stopping platitude. No, their gospel is hardly perfect. They commit the crime of vanity as they fail to fulfill what they say they are, the voice of God on Earth. If they are fallible in their call to speak for God, then it is pointless to follow them. This saying of Jesus is easily applied to them:

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.¹¹⁸⁷

Who exactly does Jesus declare are deceivers of the *very elect*? They are false prophets. Who claims to be a prophet? Again, it is a false prophet that claims the title of prophet. Do ex-members claim to be prophets? No, they do not. Neither do historians, nor do scientists. No one but these fraudulent men claim to be prophets. They are those who deceive the very elect.

They deceived me, but no more. From the perspective of a truth seeker who has found falsity and lies where there should have been truth, the table turns. There is a fundamental problem with the way the message of Jesus is taught in the church. Key teachings of Jesus are routinely omitted, ripped out of context, and blatantly misinterpreted. They know that if they did teach his real message, their establishment would be undermined. The church itself proves to be an enemy to the message of Jesus. It is his ally in

¹¹⁸⁷Matthew 24:24

name only. It then misleads its adherents call Jesus *the Lord*. Jesus did not call himself *the Lord*, and neither should we. The church better aligns with separatist, elitist, hypercritical enemies of Jesus, who lobbied for his execution.

Membership in any church with established observances does not mean participation in the kingdom of heaven that Jesus talked about. Its only true value is community, at least for those who live where practically everyone subscribes to it. The church is social and separatist, while his kingdom of heaven is spiritual and inclusive. The church threatens those who dare to dissent with social exile. They require hypocritical outward renouncement to return to fellowship. They teach the antithesis of the doctrines of Jesus.

The absolute religious genius of Jesus is that he utterly refuses all debt codes, purity codes, religious quarantines and the searching for sinners. He refuses the very starting point of historic religion. He refuses to divide the world into the pure and the impure, much to the chagrin of almost everybody – then and now.¹¹⁸⁸

I must choose: the teachings of Jesus, or the creeds and dogmas of men. The church best represents the latter. They contradict each other. I cannot subscribe to both at the same time. I do not need the pretense of an organized religion to have to have faith in God. I do not need it to have morality, nor to have spirituality.

Religion as an establishment gives men a chance to play god. It is doublespeak to teach that the priesthood should never wield power or influence. That is not true in practice. It does give men dominion over others. If priesthood is farce, then it is all a sham. The god I believe in does not require arm-of-the-flesh administrators of rites and rituals. He does not need magical blessings given by shamans for his will to emerge. That is the profession of the shamans of tribal religion. Are we still savages?



Priesthood is supposed to be the right to act in behalf of Jesus, as if he were here. Abandonment of the doctrines of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young does not help their credibility as mouthpieces of God. The doctrines that led to their improprieties

¹¹⁸⁸Priest Richard Rohr, *Hope Against Darkness: The Transforming Vision of St. Francis in an Age of Anxiety*, p. 152

and prejudices only makes it worse. Those things rip the right to act in behalf of Jesus away.

The church has attempted to address some of the seemingly countless issues in its history and assertedly *perfect* doctrines by publishing essays.¹¹⁸⁹ They were quietly released on its website in attempt to address deep issues with historicity and doctrine. It seems like those who wrote and published them have inadvertently confirmed many facts that were previously vehemently declared as anti-Mormon falsities. They contain so much contradiction, imposition, apology, gaslighting, and obvious lying. Instead of resolving issues, they add more fuel to an already burning fire. Most have no awareness that the essays exist. The vast majority of the membership do not think about the issues addressed by the essays.

The prophets have been backpedaling on doctrine for a while now. The essays exist to downplay the incongruities. They seem intent on distancing themselves from things that make the church a peculiar people. They want to concentrate on the suffering of their Lord as all that is important anymore.

Let me mention a specific inconsistency that they try to address. It is the Book of Abraham. For many people, this is the last straw. The scrolls that pertain to the book were discovered in the 60s, before I was born. Throughout my life, I never knew that they existed. The reality of the scrolls was kept from me and everyone else I know. They are not like the golden plates that were suspiciously returned to an angel. We have them. We can check them. I never knew that their translation has no correspondence with the text. The apologetics for it do not satisfy my own intellectual integrity. They are lies. Their claim that there must have been more papyrus that was lost does not help. Joseph Smith's *Alphabet* document proves that they correspond. The fallaciousness of the published facsimiles in the book itself is painfully obvious. Their claim that the papyrus was a *catalyst* for revelation does not help. Their claim that it does not matter where it came from because of invaluable doctrine does not help. The content itself is a farce. It is not very inspired. I do not care for its fallacious history, nor do I care for its idolatrous doctrine that diminishes God the ultimate into a glorified human. All authority is lost when there is considerable evidence against it. I do not buy from the conjurer of cheap tricks anymore. I am relieved that I no longer have to cram that incongruent quackery into my head.

There has been recent policy made that contradicts a core tenet, the Second Article of Faith. It

¹¹⁸⁹A list of them are found here: <http://mormonessays.com>

bars children from baptism because of the sins of their parents. They have since softened the blow of that policy, but it still flat-out contradicts an imperative creed. I wonder what has to be going through their minds if they enact policies that contradict core tenets.

It doesn't matter what they do for the rank and file. They have their mouths latched to the pipe. They swallow whatever comes.

Talking to her, he realized how easy it was to present an appearance of orthodoxy while having no grasp whatever of what orthodoxy meant. In a way, the world-view of the Party imposed itself most successfully on people incapable of understanding it. They could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity of what was demanded of them, and were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening. By lack of understanding they remained sane. They simply swallowed everything, and what they swallowed did them no harm, because it left no residue behind, just as a grain of corn will pass undigested through the body of a bird.¹¹⁹⁰

The bureaucracy wishes to lull away its thralls. It hypnotizes them with the boredom of whitewashed correlation. Oblivion is a drug that finesses its victims into unconsciousness. It makes the most comfortable fairy tales real. It incriminates doubt. Inconsistencies eventually come out the other end, and the oblivious person will be none the wiser.

I was there. Being unaware is blissful and happy. Many who become aware choose to return to that bliss through the abandonment of reason. It is ironic that the revelation of truth, something prophets are supposed to do, might enlighten and awaken their subjects.

Man in a state of grovelling superstition, from which he has not courage to rise, loses the energy of his mental powers.¹¹⁹¹

When a claim is made for the only true church upon the face of the earth, it should never have any hint of impropriety. It should not be shrouded in secrecy and lies. Its doctrines and policies should not require

¹¹⁹⁰George Orwell, 1984, End of chapter 13

¹¹⁹¹I quoted this before, but it applies again, here.

Thomas Paine, Age of Reason, Part third, section 4
<https://archive.org/stream/ageofreason00paineia/page/203/mode/1up>

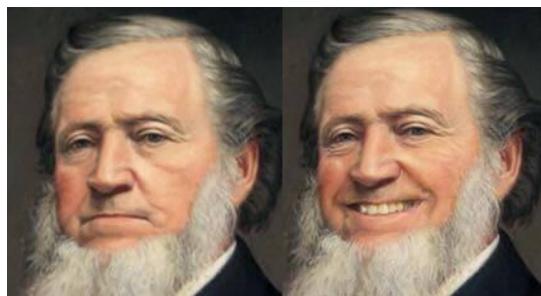
apology. It should not have to censor speech. When a book is declared as the most correct book on earth, There should be overwhelming evidence to support its claims. It should not impose any incriminating anachronisms nor absurdities. As much as I want it to be otherwise, I can't unsee falsity.

It is evident to me that the church claims to be something it is not. I cannot in good conscience put my trust in any organization that idolizes its leaders in eerily cultish songs like "Follow the Prophet." In practice, it has proven dishonest, deceitful, an enemy to truth, and hungry for power and money. I have seen people who live in a single-room house with dirt floors pay their dues to the a corporate behemoth that tells them they cannot afford not to.

The church proclaims that thoughts that contradict dogma are okay if they are never voiced. It requires its members to lie to others and themselves. To be in good standing, members must censor any genuine thoughts that do not align with its dogma and practices. It incriminates human nature and requires constant suppression. It redirects the attention of its subjects into trying to overcome their own personal flaws. It invents more and more ways that they can fail. It declares that it is wrong to criticize its leaders while it criticizes and disfellowships its members for their failures. It requires them to confess and repent, but it hypocritically does no such thing itself. If something is discovered that is wrong with the church, that discovery is for failing to obey every single command or it is for committing the crime of doubt. The church requires cowardly upholding its sacred lies in appearance: it requires its members to be hypocrites. That is not something a true church would need to do.



I remember the Smiles Primary song. As a child I was captivated by its visual aid. It is a silly drawing of a face that is all frowns, but when you turn it upside-down, it becomes all smiles. Only now, decades later, I realize that it teaches children hypocrisy from their tender age in the name of *happiness*.



No one likes a frowning face.
Change it for a smile.
Make the world a better place
By smiling all the while.¹¹⁹²

That song instilled that no one cares to listen to my true thoughts and feelings. It taught me that all feelings other than smiley feelings are not socially acceptable they are even evil and sinful. It taught me that being a hypocrite and putting on a mask would make the world a better place. I should never deal with my sorrow in sincerity, vulnerability, and genuineness. Those are things that facilitate mental health.

Make the world a better place
By living in denial.

I have learned by my own experience that masking sorrow absolutely does not make you happy. It makes it worse. I am fed up with the doctrine of hypocrisy. I cannot live that way.

The Church has been a huge part of my life, not only because of my involvement with it for the last four decades, but also because of the teachings of my parents and of my culture. For me, participation in church meetings was ever because of the teachings, not because of the social aspect. The sociality of church did not fill me, it was the opposite. Throughout my life, I relied heavily on the doctrines of the church as the basis for my devotion and for my understanding of the universe.

People are different. I am more introverted than most other introverts. Those who are not close to me come across as disingenuous if they ask me personal questions when they are compelled to be in my presence. This happens even with my own relatives. They suddenly become interested in intimate details of my life at annual social gatherings. They would otherwise never make that connection on their own. I would otherwise not wish to expend my energy by practicing empty extraversion for someone I only ever see every few months or even years.

My mother was the model member of the church. She was extraverted. Her personality thrives on socialization. I surmise that was one of the reasons why she was so attracted to it.

I am not like my mother. She constantly pushed me to be like her. I thought I was broken. It takes a lot of energy to wear a mask. It is painful to try to live up to expectations that go against innate personality.

¹¹⁹²<https://www.lds.org/music/library/childrens-songbook/smiles?lang=eng>

If we judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree,
it will spend its life thinking it is a failure.¹¹⁹³

I do not, nor have I ever fit in. I do not fit the mold. I am not the model member. I am quiet and reserved. I do not like to raise my hand. I do not like to toot my own horn. I do not like to teach classes. I do not like to lead meetings. I do not like to linger longer. I do not like to lead music. I do not like to perform in choirs front of groups of people. Solos are a nightmare for me.

The socialization of the church does not fill any of my needs. I do not thrive with hundreds of friends and acquaintances. I do better with less relationships than more. For me, community is only my closest friends and family, and I only ever have one or two friends. There is nothing about church society that helps me. Instead, church meetings have ever been a drain on my energy, and I have always come home exhausted.

I have never thrived from classroom lessons. I do not learn that way. I do not like to teach that way. I study best as an apprentice to a master, and teach best as a master to an apprentice. I do not like to stick to a lesson that is often stale, inaccurate, manipulative, or that contains details that go against what I know is true.

I like to critically think and question. That goes against the status quo. It not bode well with the groupthink required for community acceptance that is supposed to be bound together by doctrine. I can't rely on crystallized top-down dogmas to provide unity. To be told to not question betrays Jesus. It is not a virtue to avoid critical thought. Unquestionable lords that stress strict obedience to their commands disgust me. That is what the founding fathers intended to escape. It is difficult to avoid fearing what other people think. I have battled with that task throughout my life, often with little success. I have ever valued independence over reliance, truth over conformity, integrity over social facade, silent dissent over thought stopping.

I used to think that the worst thing in life was to end up alone. It's not. The worst thing in life is to end up with people who make you feel alone.¹¹⁹⁴

¹¹⁹³ Author unknown, but a variation of it can be found by Matthew Kelly that attributes Albert Einstein, 2004, *The rhythm of life: living every day with passion and purpose*, p. 80, Fireside, New York
¹¹⁹⁴ Robin Williams

One day, several years ago, I was trying to reconcile the gulf of contradictions between Paul and Jesus. It suddenly hit me: The Church, even as it is in its *restored* form today, is the same thing Jesus fought during his ministry. A mixture of the doctrines of Paul, heathen mythology, and the ideals of the Pharisees was restored, not the doctrines of Jesus. It is not just one point of doctrine. The church offends the teachings of Jesus in many ways.

At that moment, all of the other contradictions I had been trying to levitate and spin in my mind fell with one large crash. For the first time in my life, I felt a thought come to my mind. For the first time I did not stop it. I allowed myself whisper, "The church is not true."

As I let that thought express itself, it was as though a great burden had been instantly lifted from me. I no longer had to expend so much effort trying to juggle countless inconsistencies in my mind. All of the contradictions amazingly resolve when the possibility of falsity is allowed admittance. I was suddenly completely free to find God's will through my own spiritual connection to him without men and their commandments standing between us, just as Jesus taught I no longer had to depend on the dictatorial arm of the flesh.¹¹⁹⁵ I was no longer obligated to obey any of the commandments of men.¹¹⁹⁶

I felt a rush of peace and freedom come over me. I realized that the true doctrine of Jesus had given me spiritual emancipation, but I also had a profound sense of loss for all that I had wasted in my trusting dedication for the first 40 years of my life. I dreaded the prejudice and shame which would be heaped upon me by devout relatives and friends. I knew that none of them would ever understand me until they themselves were also enlightened because neither would I would have understood before my paradigm shift.



As I began to see outside the bubble, some of the doctrines that oppose Jesus disgusted me. Jesus sought to liberate the meek and ingenuous from powerful establishments of men. I was told to seek out humble people on my mission because they are usually willing to accept the gospel. Now I can see that they could also be inspired by the prosperity doctrine taught by people in suits and ties. If you keep the commandments, you will prosper in the land. If you

¹¹⁹⁵Jeremiah 17:5, 2 Nephi 4:34

¹¹⁹⁶Matthew 15:9

keep the law of tithing, even if you cannot pay your mortgage, you will be blessed with prosperity.

Prosperity doctrine has become disgraceful to me. I preached to the poorest people that they should give ten percent of their income to the rich institution that I represented. They lived in one-room shacks with dirt floors. They had a meager income, probably equivalent to only three dollars a day. I witnessed them pay a regressive tax to an oppressive corporate empire in order to pursue eternal salvation by being baptized.

Subjection of the meek to rich and powerful men is *not* the good news of Jesus. I realized, as did Tolstoy and many others before Joseph Smith lived, that it is the iniquitous who have always sought to control and place burdens upon the innocent. Jesus lived a life as a poor person. He told his apostles and disciples to give up their worldly possessions to follow him. To truly follow Jesus, the apostles and their institution should give all that they have to the poor.

An organization that extorts a cut of the profits from the meek people in their neighborhood they dominate would be called a mafia. Mafias are made up of a highly organized, secretive oligarchy of power-hungry men. They require tribute for their protection from those who could devour.¹¹⁹⁷ They stand between others who would destroy. These are mysteriously attributes of the history of church leadership.

Organized religion is like organized crime; it preys on peoples' weaknesses, generates huge profits for its operators, and is almost impossible to eradicate.¹¹⁹⁸

It is immorality for financially stable men, whose living comes by any church enterprise, to take advantage of the poor by requiring ten percent of their wages for their salvation. They do not appear to be villains, but charisma is a requirement for any swindling profession. Without it, any Ponzi could not do what they do. They should know. By their own double-speak, Satan himself is attractive.



I have heard it taught again and again that is disgraceful to have a cafeteria style belief in this church. President Hinckley often reiterated what have I earlier quoted Joseph Fielding Smith saying, "There is no middle ground." I distinctly remember his declarations in General Conference because it was such a bold thing to say.

¹¹⁹⁷Malachi 3:11

¹¹⁹⁸Mike Hermann

Our whole strength rests on the validity of that [First] vision. It either occurred or it did not occur. If it did not, then this work is a fraud. If it did, then it is the most important and wonderful work under the heavens.¹¹⁹⁹

Each of us has to face the matter – either the Church is true, or it is a fraud. There is no middle ground. It is the Church and kingdom of God, or it is nothing.¹²⁰⁰

Well, it's either true or false. If it's false, we're engaged in a great fraud. If it's true, it's the most important thing in the world. Now, that's the whole picture. It is either right or wrong, true or false, fraudulent or true.¹²⁰¹

With circumspection, this black-or-white ideology makes the reality of this situation painfully clear. Contradiction proves that one side of the dichotomy *must* be false. Contradiction does not guarantee that any side is true, but both cannot be true. The existence of countless contradictions is certain. By the prophets' own requirement, their message cannot be partially true, nor can it only be mostly true. The contradiction is a smoking gun. Contradiction is not the only thing that demonstrates deceit. Any principle, doctrine, or history that can be disproved by fact makes it become partly true. Though fables contain good principles, the fabulous story is never held up to be historical. In a house of cards, if any card is insecure and falls, then the entire house falls.

His declarations only superficially appear to fortify the foundation of a strong testimony. The most devout will only allow themselves to perceive that face of it. It is not obvious that this bold all-or-nothing challenges only increase the probability that the church could be a sham. It is almost as if president Hinckley is relieving his conscience. He subtly renounces his accountability, placing the responsibility his legitimacy upon his followers.

Doubt is not the enemy of truth. It only threatens lies. It is the enemy to authoritarian truth. It jeopardizes their house of cards, so they incessantly preach against it.

I had never had any intention of leaving the church. Instead, when I discovered that the church abandoned both reason and truth, it abandoned me. I would not dissent if it had not. I cannot maintain integrity and live a truly genuine and honest life while

¹¹⁹⁹Gordon B. Hinckley, The Marvelous Foundation of Our Faith, October 2002

¹²⁰⁰Gordon B. Hinckley, Loyalty, April 2003 General Conference

¹²⁰¹Gordon B. Hinckley, The Mormons, PBS, January 2007

actively dedicating time, talents, and everything I will ever possess to the church, the guidance of its leaders, or its doctrines in its current state. I cannot trust the church anymore because it does not follow the teachings of Jesus and it no longer unapologetically waves the banner of truth.

I have discovered many others that do not bear, but they *bury* their testimony, because they know the church isn't true. They have to lay it to rest silently or they face the wrath of their family and community.

Until the so-called prophets, seers, and revelators actually do what their title prescribes, until they harmonize their doctrines with the teachings of Jesus, until they stop lying and tell the truth without clever omission, apology and subterfuge, my involvement in the Church cannot be wholehearted. I can no longer believe that the church is true, nor can I even hope it is true, because I cannot maintain any hope in an organization that oppressively enforces obedience through dead, medieval ideals, or oppresses the poor to build enterprises. I can seek and find God on my own better than the so-called prophets, seers, and revelators are, and so I am. I must stop myself from relying on the arm of the flesh,¹²⁰² and seek the truth from the Spirit directly.¹²⁰³ I keep repeating that because it is imperative to my new philosophy.

I know you might be shocked and worried, and I can understand. I, too, have felt the same thing as I have watched other loved ones become inactive or even resign. At that time, I could not understand them. I truly thought they were choosing eternal damnation. After being inculcated with an elitist point of view, how could I not worry if they were leaving the chosen people? How could they give up such a noble birthright? How could they reclassify themselves as part of the outside world? I have realized that these are cultish tribal ideals. I have been bigoted and prejudiced in my past, and for that I sincerely apologize.

We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.¹²⁰⁴

I claim full right to that privilege. I reserve that right to seek God as I believe is best.

¹²⁰²Jeremiah 17:5-8

¹²⁰³Numbers 11:26-29; Joel 2:28-32

¹²⁰⁴Articles of Faith 11

Please do not worry about me. My religion is now between me and our God with the greatest sincerity I can muster. In my experience with the makeup of my inner being, God is concrete in my inner reality, and as his child he is part of me and I do not need any outside representative of God to administer anything for God.



You may say, "When people leave it is because they want to sin." Please do not discredit me in that way because it completely mischaracterizes my journey. Contrary to the fear propaganda you parrot, this is in not the wide, easy way. This is the narrow, difficult path. It takes great courage to stand against your friends and family as a pioneer for truth.

And after they did enter into that building they did point the finger of scorn at me and those that were partaking of the fruit also; but we heeded them not.¹²⁰⁵

There is great irony in that the above can apply the other way around. I have often observed the finger of scorn pointed from the rameumptom of the great and spacious conference center at all of those who dare to partake of the fruit of that tree of knowledge and wisdom. That fruit is granted by the love of God. God's love does not excommunicate, shun, shame, prejudice, nor does it require worthiness for his love. God is the reality of truth, and truth can only be found by honest questions, not interrogations.

God's love is sweet above all that is sweet, white above all that is white, and pure above all that is pure.¹²⁰⁶ The fruit glows with the light of truth. The only thing that can sate the hunger and thirst for truth, especially after discovering falsity is to allow that falsity to induce doubt and questions, and then to resolve to find the truth and rely on truth. This is when you no longer hunger and thirst for that resolution.¹²⁰⁷

This entire work represents my pilgrimage in grappling with some of the ingrained fear and guilt that comes from daring to stand against my culture and upbringing with the courage to stand for truth and intellectual integrity. I cannot doubt my own mind and what I know I true.

I am not doing any of this because of a desire to sin. I was not unable to live by the commandments

of our religion. I was more strict about that than many people I know. I no longer care for the pharisee-like obedience-for-obedience-sake commandments. I only have a desire to be ruled by truth and wisdom. I only have a desire to follow Jesus more exactly. I only have the desire to seek the will of the Father more ultimately. I only have a desire to genuinely love all of my fellows equally. I no longer look down on those who are not in the tribe as if they are lost, or that I need to be a missionary to bring them to worthiness in God's eyes. I no longer look upon them as aliens to the kingdom of heaven because they might not have performed any ordinances. They're not aliens at all, most of them are already citizens of the kingdom of heaven. God is no respecter of persons, even those who may never be baptized in this life or the next!

Leaving a religion because of enlightenment and expanded understanding is an act of great courage and faith. It is a leap from a zone of former safety and social acceptance to a space of isolation and discovery. Each step is weighted with the question as to whether this is the way to go. Everything is questioned whether it is in line with the seeker's desire for alignment with truth. Where formerly, every attitude and action had been clearly outlined, the seeker is on their own to find the path most suited to their quest. It is difficult work to sincerely try to align with truth more than in the past, but the enlightened exit is surrounded by relief. It is a sense of freedom from oppression. It is not "falling away," it is "climbing out."

This is a totally different experience from leaving a religion because someone was unable to live by its tenets. It is different from those who become inactive while still believing it is true. Those people are not honest with themselves. Their exit is weighted down with guilt and the belief "if only I could get my life together I could go back."

Those who willfully sin against their own conscience are the true infidels. They go astray while still believing, but they somehow think they are morally superior to those who dare to doubt. I once overheard someone dismiss my experience and then brag that they never stopped believing even when they went astray. As if conscious sin were a good thing. As if sincere dedication to faith that does not fear doubt were a bad thing. As if it is a virtue to willfully rebel from their beliefs and then return to being true to what they believed all along. They can lie, cheat, and commit adultery as long as they never betray their loyalty to the rockstars who claim exclusive access to the absent superman they call Christ.

¹²⁰⁵1 Nephi 8:33

¹²⁰⁶Alma 32:42

¹²⁰⁷John 4:13-14

They shout that those who leave the tribe should admit that they did it to sin, just like they did. "I have been where you are," they say. "I lost my way but I never lost my faith," they say. They treat those who have intellectual honesty as infidels. They cannot understand sincere rebellion for dedication to truth and integrity. Morality for morality's sake, without an authoritarian command, is a foreign concept to them. They take offense when apostates speak their mind, while they knock on every door. They say that the people who have left silently are better people than those who speak their mind.

When the debate is lost, slander becomes the tool of the loser.¹²⁰⁸



You may ask, "But, haven't you prayed about this? You have been deceived by the adversary and he is leading you astray. He knows you're intelligent and he is appealing to your intelligence through propaganda that is leading you away from the truth!"

I have followed all of the suggestions in Section 9 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

- I have studied it out in my mind. In depth and without restraint for many years.
- I have asked God if it is right daily, hourly, constantly. Every new concept was asked about ad nauseam.
- My bosom didn't burn, but then again as I have explained, it never really has burned except when I was nervous or anxious. I feel great peace about the answers I have found and I have found new meaning of life and faith in my place in the universe.
- It was most certainly never "a stupor of thought", nor did any stupor "cause [me] to forget the thing that was wrong." In fact, the exact opposite happened. My thoughts were augmented. With every new thought, new quality was added and scope widened! I had the thoughts and the questions, and the answers added a whole new dimension, making more sense, just like a hypercube represents of what a four-dimensional tesseract might look like in our three dimensions. I could finally see beyond my puny three-dimensional mortal view.



¹²⁰⁸Socrates

You may say, "There are so many scholars that remain loyal to the church. If they can, so can I, and so can you. You are not as educated as they are. You are blinded by your pride."

I am afraid it may be the other way around. Indoctrination and peer pressure from family is a very strong force. The constant reiteration that we *know* is perilous. It is not faith. It can cement delusion for even the most intelligent minds.

The most difficult subjects can be explained to the most slow-witted man if he has not formed any idea of them already; but the simplest thing cannot be made clear to the most intelligent man if he is firmly persuaded that he knows already, without a shadow of a doubt, what is laid before him.¹²⁰⁹

That open-mindedness is the core meaning of becoming like a little child, as taught by Jesus. There are parallels to this in the movie *The Matrix*, where Morpheus says:

The Matrix is a system, Neo. That system is our enemy. But when you're inside, you look around, what do you see? Businessmen, teachers, lawyers, carpenters. The very minds of the people we are trying to save. But until we do, these people are still a part of that system and that makes them our enemy. You have to understand, most of these people are not ready to be unplugged. And many of them are so inured, so hopelessly dependent on the system, that they will fight to protect it.¹²¹⁰

They are inured. They biased. They will fight to protect it. In many cases, it is their livelihood. There are many other reasons in the other cases. For some, dedicate to their family and friends outweighs their dedication to truth. For others, it is a personality trait. They cherish stability. They close off from radical ideas that challenge the world view of their entire life.

There is a problem with making oaths to keep a world view. A closed mind hobbles itself. Dedication to compelled promises made in immaturity is not a virtue.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well

¹²⁰⁹Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*

¹²¹⁰Wachowski Brothers, *Morpheus, The Matrix*

concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day. — 'Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.' — Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.¹²¹¹

I have read many of the supposed scholars' ideas in search of truth. I needed to find resolution for the cognitive dissonance I was experiencing. Their apologist technique only disgusted me. It is dishonest to me. I can tell when people grasp at straws. I perceive lies where there should be objectivity. Their use of logical fallacies turns me off. Their imposition ends up making the situation worse than it was.

They are good people. They genuinely try the best they can. It is not their fault. They are victims of the system. Most of them have never allowed themselves to see from the outside in. I know what it feels like to do that. I lived that way for most of my life.

The word *motive* has root in *emotion*. Most people are driven, not by logic, but by emotions. A good or bad feeling can influence every decision made. It can alter the perception of words expressed by anyone, even loved ones. It does not matter what the words themselves are. I am sad to say that I have experienced this. For most people, no reason can trump emotion. The church knows this. Emotion is rarely reasonable. They can preach fallacy after fallacy. That doesn't matter to the devout, nor to invested scholars. At their core, they are not truly driven by evidence and logic.

It is hard to accept new ideas, especially in the realm of inculcated religion. Blending in with a group of people that unquestioningly follows authority is not difficult. That is the easiest path to take. You never have to take the responsibility for your own choices. Every choice is already laid out in great detail. Most people believe that soldiers are not personally responsible for the atrocities they may commit.

When your priority is to blend in, you curb your perception of reality. Living in a bubble can be happiness. Sincere truth seekers will someday have to confront the real truth that exists outside of their bubble. The longer it takes for them to do that, the

¹²¹¹Ralph Waldo Emerson, Self Reliance
<https://archive.org/stream/selfrelianceessay00emerrich#page/23/mode/1up>

more the truth will cut their center and hurt them when they find it. In the end, it is better to be hurt by the truth than to be comforted by a lie. Ignorance may be bliss for the ignorant, but it is an annoying imposition for everyone else.

One of the saddest lessons of history is this: If we've been bamboozled long enough, we tend to reject any evidence of the bamboozle. We're no longer interested in finding out the truth. The bamboozle has captured us. It's simply too painful to acknowledge, even to ourselves, that we've been taken. Once you give a charlatan power over you, you almost never get it back.¹²¹²

Someone wrote this as a comment on the Deseret News website in a response to the "LDS Church posts article about history of plural marriage in early Utah on its website" on December 16, 2013.

We're taught young that we can discern absolute truth with certainty via emotional experiences and then all those experiences validate an "us versus the world" view where we are a minority of God's chosen among billions of spiritually lost. The certainty skews our reasoning. The lost manuscript becomes a faith promoting event rather than a head-scratcher. Joseph Smith's death becomes a dying testimony of truth rather than the consequences of hiding polygamy and destroying a press. Blacks getting priesthood/temple access in 1978 is a great revelation, rather than an overdue correction to racist policies. Staying abroad after a death in the family to continue missionary service is a badge of honor, rather than neglect of family-first principles. Millions in unison sustaining leaders selected by an inner-circle becomes common consensus rather than automated allegiance. Our reasoning becomes so skewed that anyone who learns about Mormonism and doesn't convert or leaves Mormonism is thought to deliberately be choosing an unfortunate and less fulfilling life of sin (of commission and omission) that results in eternal separation from God and family. Openly teaching the suspect aspects of church history is bound to skew our reasoning even further.¹²¹³

In many ways, those who have been faithful to false prophets have been led astray much farther than

¹²¹²Carl Sagan, The Demon-Haunted World, p. 240

¹²¹³It looks like this has since been removed by a moderator, so I can't give credit.

their own intellects would have allowed otherwise, had they been more sincere in their search for truth.



You may ask, "Why have you become anti-Mormon?"

I am not anti-Mormon, I am pro-truth. I have been taught since I was a wee lad that truth is desirable above all, to stand and defend truth at any cost. I am following truth where it leads. It is your prerogative if you want to be blind to truth, to have eyes that cannot see, ears that cannot hear.

If a peddler came into town selling snake oil, and everyone in town bought the snake oil and testified that the snake oil cured their ailments, then by their testimony the snake oil must be a true medicine which heals. However, if I rely on logic and reason to objectively test the snake oil, and conclude by factual evidence that its only active ingredient is placebo, does that make me anti-snake-oil? No, I'm not anti-snake-oil, I have only found that it is not effective and I don't think it will do any good to keep taking it. If you want to keep drinking your snake oil daily, that is entirely up to you. Only you can realize that the snake oil is not doing you any good by your own accord and intellect, not by someone pointing out the error of your ways, because that will only offend you. When you desire truth, you will find it on your own, hence the admonition of Jesus to seek and find in harmony with your own desire for truth. Ironically, the magic world view and the fear of spirits comes from a tribal level of cognition. Essential Oils may make this allegory come alive for some of you. Even an anointing with olive oil has magical healing abilities.

Though it does add fuel to the fire, most of what I write here was not instigated by anti-Mormon literature. It is because of my own deep study of the scriptures. It is because of my own journey for making sense of the Gospel, especially the contrast between the practices of the church in relation to the morality taught by Jesus, the idolatrous practices of Paul, and the irony of the stress on strict Pharisaical obedience.

If anything appears to be anti-Mormon, it either originated from my own mind from church-published materials. I realize only now that it is silly to limit the search for truth to only one source of information. It is often said that if you lose your faith, it is because you aren't studying the scriptures or you have exposed yourself to ex-Mormon material. That is silly. If you lose your faith in the Flat Earth, it is because

you no longer read Flat Earth books every day, and you've exposed yourself to ex-Flat-Earthers.

I am not having a faith crisis. I am having an awakening. The church is having a truth crisis. With the release of the Gospel Essays on the church's website, what was considered anti-Mormon lies before 2013 have now become acknowledged by the church. When I encountered them, my mind was blown and my beliefs were shaken more. It is interesting to consider that the anti-Mormons of yesterday have gained credibility as the scholars of today. Here are some concessions to truth that forced the leaders of the church to confess their impropriety. These points can be found in the essays.

- Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon with a rock in a hat. He used the same rock to dig for treasure, for which he was convicted of a fraud. Church: lied. Anti-Mormons: truth.
- Priesthood and temple ban for Blacks was racism, not revelation. Their undecidedness in the pre-existence was never doctrine. Church: lied. Anti-Mormons: truth.
- Joseph Smith married young women by coercion and the threat of destruction by an angel with a drawn sword. Church: lied. Anti-Mormons: truth.
- Joseph Smith practiced not only polygamy, but also polyandry. Church: lied. Anti-Mormons: truth.
- The Book of Abraham was not translated from the Egyptian papyri. Church: lied. Anti-Mormons: truth.



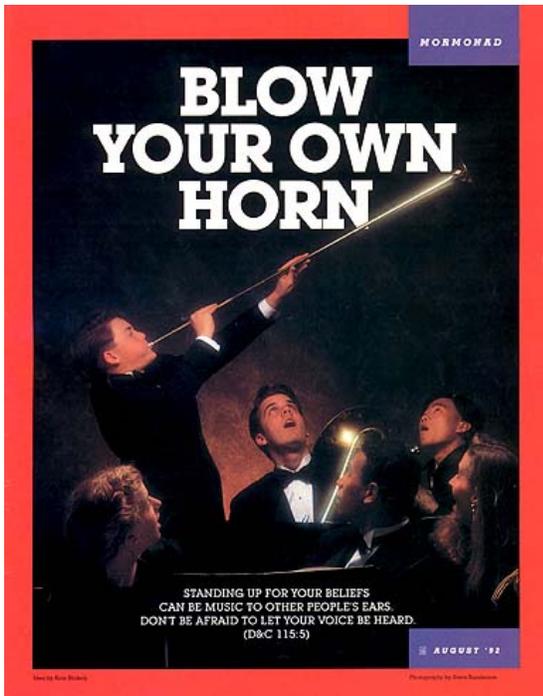
You may ask, "Why can't you just get over it and move on? Why don't you just leave it alone? Why can't you leave me alone?"

I am not the kind of person that goes door to door trying to sell ideas. That was excruciating to do on my mission. I am writing for cathartic therapy. I am not the kind of person who became inactive because I was weak. Those are the people that can walk away silently.

The Gospel has been my life. I can't just drop something that has ever been important to me. It is not something I can *get over* and *leave alone*. I've courageously superseded my inculcated identity and original concept of the requirements for eternal life. I can't stop contemplating my conception of reality. I am trying to heal from post traumatic stress of discovering falsity and dishonesty in people I trusted. I have found that Jesus taught that dedication to great

establishments of men is not necessary. I have observed them lying by omission. I have observed the damage they can do. I found faith and ethics are not dependent upon the commandments of men. All that is necessary is love.

When you treasure the values of standing for truth and daring to do right, you can't suddenly leave falsity alone. You discover that you and all of your loved ones have been unwittingly serving a lie. The truth should be unabashedly trumpeted from the rooftops! Lies are threatened by truth. Truth is not threatened by lies!



This is a huge loss, and such a loss causes grief that must be navigated. I've lost who I originally thought I was, what I thought was real. I've even lost the God I was taught to believe in. I am *divergent*.¹²¹⁴ I've taken the red pill.¹²¹⁵ I've descended down the rabbit hole.¹²¹⁶ I am at the point of no return.¹²¹⁷ I have risked losing *everything*. I risk being consigned to eternal misery and endless torment.¹²¹⁸ Be patient with me and my grieving process. It takes time for a heart and mind to cleanse the poison of lies, to be able to breathe in the light of truth. I believe that I

¹²¹⁴ *Divergent*, Veronica Roth

¹²¹⁵ *The Matrix*

¹²¹⁶ *Alice in Wonderland*

¹²¹⁷ Aviation. The point on a flight at which a plane is no longer capable of returning to the airfield from which it took off.

¹²¹⁸ Alma 9:11, 26:19, 28:11, 40:26, 42:1; Helaman 12:26; Mosiah 3:25

have replaced a religion of dogma and darkness with new concepts that are more enlightening. I desire all to receive it, to all arise.

You may ask, "But if it is good, even though it might be wrong, it is still good. If it is indeed true, you win eternal life. If it is not true, you lose nothing, but you have lived a good life."

That is Pascal's wager.

Let us weigh the gain and the loss in wagering that God is. Let us estimate these two chances. If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing.¹²¹⁹

Pascal's wager applies to any religion. I might as well be a Muslim, a Jew, a Jehovah's Witness. I would still benefit from living a good life. I can live a good life in any religious discipline. In some ways, other traditions are better. I am ashamed of polygamy, group-think, elitism, prejudice, intellectual abuse, orwellian domination, denial of empirical evidence, ongoing history of fraud, meddling in government, subjection of women, opposition to equal rights, empty promises, and the list goes on.

The problem is that the church isn't what it claims to be. It is an institution that claims to be the one true church on the face of the earth, but its ideals are unsound and lies are found within. It has not led society's advancements. It does not actually follow Jesus. It has made the washing of pots and cups,¹²²⁰ or obedience to trivialities, the highest morality. I cannot dedicate to lesser ideals than what I have arrived at on my own. I can be better without an institution telling me what is true. I do not need worthiness, especially the kind that comes from adherence to petty commands. True morality comes when morality is born within, not because of a threat of the loss of exaltation if you fail to obey.

You may ask, "But why do you not want to stand on an established firm foundation?"

When my own thought processes proceeded beyond my inculcation and when I found incongruities and lies, I felt as though the ground underneath me was crumbling. The more incongruities I found, the

¹²¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pascal%27s_Wager

¹²²⁰ Mark 7:8

more uneasy I felt. If I'm wrong about one thing, I could be wrong about everything. Before that, I never thought I could be wrong about anything pertaining to the Gospel.

Uncertainty increases sensitivity to being misled or deceived. It is as though a new sensor sprouts in the mind. Its sensitivity increases as certainty becomes less important. It helps to be able to call out anything that is misleading or deceptive.

Uncertainty can be painful for anyone who has depended upon certainty for most of their life. It increases the desire for study. Eventually uncertainty becomes a thing of beauty. Questions become valued more than answers. Crystallized ideas make growth difficult. Questions let the perspective of the Universe grow forever.



You may ask, "But what about your family? What about your children?"

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.¹²²¹

I can perceive Jesus saying exactly that to the beurocrat-priests who isolate, alienate, guilt, and exile those little ones from their peers, because their guardians happen to have an unconventional relationship.

The chief and most pernicious work of the Church is that which is directed to the deception of children – these very children of whom Christ said: "Woe to him that offendeth one of these little ones." From the very first awakening of the consciousness of the child they begin to deceive him, to instill into him with the utmost solemnity what they do not themselves believe in, and they continue to instill it into him till the deception has by habit grown into the child's nature. They studiously deceive the child on the most important subject in life, and when the deception has so grown into his life that it would be difficult to uproot it, then they reveal to him the whole world of science and reality, which cannot by any means be reconciled with the beliefs that have been instilled into him, leaving it to him to find his way as best he can out of these contradictions.¹²²²

¹²²¹Matthew 18:6

¹²²²Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, Chapter III

You may be put off by what he says about the parents teaching something that they themselves do not believe. Santa Claus is a blatant example of this. My unwillingness to lie to my own children about Santa Claus was met with gasps of disapproval by my relatives. I have discovered that there are many in the church that do not believe, but they remain because of family tradition and social acceptance. Many do not believe to a lesser extent as they keep a long list of shelved inconsistencies. For them, the deception of their children applies.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.¹²²³

This is one of many sayings of Jesus that nagged at my conscience. On my mission, I was told to always teach one-on-one, and never to large groups. I preyed on the weak. If the church were as good as it claims to be, it would need missionaries to screen prospective members instead of trolling for the disadvantaged and susceptible one by one.



I invite you to take the blinders off, pop your bubble, pray, ask, knock, and seek truth. You may surprise yourself. God is more liberal in giving what you ask for than you have thought. He has blessed your mind with the tools that are needed for truth seeking and truth verification. Do not throw that away in the name of obedience.

Something is wrong when institutions of religion look down upon truth seeking without their middlemen. Something is wrong when they stake their claim on ultimate truth through feelings and then censor speech. Do not look to a wolf in sheep's clothing for your enlightenment. It will never come. The wolf will devour you. The Church is a taker, not a giver. It will take everything you have to give.

Not all those who wander are lost.¹²²⁴

I cannot be saved by the tunnel vision required by a despot of an oligarchy of men. No amount of praying, reading the scriptures, or going to church will help me. That is what led me to this journey. Only

¹²²³Matthew 23:15

¹²²⁴All that is gold does not glitter, J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*

something new would need to happen or come to light for me to reconsider.

*An eye single to the glory of God*¹²²⁵ has no reference to purposefully being blind to all light that may come from places you do not expect it. All light comes from God.¹²²⁶ I invite you to sincerely and intensely study the teachings of Jesus. Few understand him. Few rarely genuinely consider his teachings. They rely more on Paul's teachings of idolatrous propitiation of sin through blood. If you want Jesus to call you "friend,"¹²²⁷ you must understand his true message and sincerely follow him.

If you end up looking upon me with a jaundiced eye, despise me, shun my presence, or secretly harbor any feelings¹²²⁸ of disrespect or maybe even malice towards me for any of my thoughts and decisions, please know that it is easy for me to see whether you are a true follower of Jesus and what kind of tree you are by the fruit you produce. If you proudly think you are righteous because you are paying your tithing,¹²²⁹ making and fulfilling all your oaths and covenants,¹²³⁰ performing all of your ordinances,¹²³¹ fulfilling all your callings, and saying long prayers,¹²³² think again. Your haughty feelings of self-righteousness¹²³³ which come from following the laws of men will someday be abased.¹²³⁴ The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican:

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that

exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.¹²³⁵

Those who go away justified are not those who take pride in righteousness because of outward acts. They are not the ones who take pleasure and comfort in obeying every petty command. Some egos are helped along by subtly showing off righteousness by fasting or by publicly praying with eloquence. They feel above others who may not obey as stringently. Instead, those who go away justified are the ones who are humble and seek God for mercy.

In the quiet heart is hidden sorrow that the eye can't see. Who am I to judge another?¹²³⁶

Please do not prejudge me, ye who have a beam in your own eye¹²³⁷ or ye who choose to be blind to all light that does not come from an establishment of men.¹²³⁸ You will not understand me until you open your mind and sincerely seek truth as I have.

Do not let your prejudice repeat the Sunday School answers about why people leave.¹²³⁹ I am not offended by people. I love them. I do not misunderstand the doctrine. I believe I have studied the gospel more intensely than most other people. It is not too hard. Even though I no longer care about them, I am not incapable of obeying the hundreds of commandments. This has nothing to do with anti-mormon literature. It is about real faith based on truth and reason. It is not because of sin. I was the model of obedience before I realized that the church may be a fraud. To prejudge people who leave because of those reasons is so unloving that it hurts.

I am not simply being rebellious. I am not out of my mind. Faith based on truth and reason is very important to me. If you think I will come back without having sincerely listened to me, then I know where your heart lies. Of course, you would not be reading this, but it is cathartic for me to write it down. It proves you love your beliefs more than me. It proves that you would rather doubt my character before you would dare doubt your beliefs. It proves you fear losing your beliefs more than you fear losing me. It proves that you do not love your neighbor more than ideas or culture. It proves that I should not call you my friend.¹²⁴⁰ It proves that I will probably never

¹²²⁵Matthew 6:22-23, Doctrine and Covenants 88:67

¹²²⁶James 1:17

¹²²⁷John 15:15

¹²²⁸Hypocrisy means "critical underneath."

¹²²⁹Matthew 23:23

¹²³⁰Matthew 5:34-37

¹²³¹Matthew 23:24

¹²³²Matthew 23:14

¹²³³Matthew 23:28

¹²³⁴Matthew 23:12

¹²³⁵Luke 18:9-14

¹²³⁶Hymn 220, Lord, I Would Follow Thee

¹²³⁷Luke 6:41-42, Matthew 7:3-5

¹²³⁸Isaiah 44:18, John 9:39, Matthew 13:15

¹²³⁹<https://www.gregtrimble.com/you-should-not-leave-mormonism-for-any-of-these-5-reasons/>

¹²⁴⁰John 15:15, Doctrine and Covenants 84:77, 93:45

know you.¹²⁴¹ Even though I am quiet and reserved, I still deserve love, respect, and benefit of the doubt. If I ever do come back, it will be because I wish to stop being socially rejected, not because of truth.

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.¹²⁴²

The true religion of Jesus is a first-hand religion. As such, it is a highly personal and deeply meaningful religion. Religions with priesthoods, shamans or other God representatives are second-hand, arm of the flesh religions. It seems second-hand religions suffer from authority, tradition, and dogma.

To be spoon-fed the experience of God second-hand through idolatrous rites and rituals performed by priesthood representatives of God in itself proves that the religion is not the religion of Jesus. It does not help validity if saving rites, that should be only between God and his child, can be canceled with simple click of the mouse or a dash of the pen. It does not help the case for being a religion of Jesus if an institution claims authority to impede children of God from being with their family in the afterlife. It does not help if that institution should assert the authority to force the children of a widow, who marries again, to belong to her first husband, even though the second husband and father raised his children. It is the opposite. It proves that it is a bureaucracy of men. There is no possibility for wolves in sheep's clothing nor any middle-man between God and his children in the religion of Jesus.

The world needs more first-hand religion. True religion is not just an understanding a concept of God in your mind taught by a teacher in a class. It is not a belief in God through book-smart education. True religion is the consciousness of a living relationship with God. It is subscription to the spirit of God, that spark of divinity, ever entices to reach for divine potential.

The true religion of Jesus is a religion of love, and it does not alienate anyone. In the true gospel of Jesus, I can love everyone honestly, truly and completely, without judging them for any rituals, ordinances, pacts, oaths, or adherence to Pharisaical

laws they may lack to do. Their salvation is not dependent on any ritual or ordinance. The true religion of Jesus does not consider unbaptized people as anyone less in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus illustrated that fact time and time again by forgiving the sins of people that the priests had rejected. He dealt with the racially impure Samaritans. They were the lowest of the low in the eyes of the Pharisees. He dealt with publicans, the most despised class of the society because they dared to serve the Roman empire.

As John taught, the baptism which John could not provide, and which would arrive with the coming of Jesus,¹²⁴³ is a baptism of the Holy Ghost. This "baptism" of the Holy Ghost is only metaphorical, as it is not an outward ablution or any outward act. It happens when a human transcends the animal and becomes conscious of the spark of divinity within them and deliberately begins to desire, seek, and accept God's will in their choices. When that happens, God has found them, and they have found God because his spirit is working in their heart. Even those who have not yet become conscious of the spirit working in them still may have just as much potential as those that have.

Being born of the spirit is marked by no outward ordinance and cannot be done in hypocrisy.¹²⁴⁴ The LDS Melchizedek priesthood does not and can not even attempt to provide the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and instead can only invite you to receive it. At least that one thing about the priesthood is not a fraud, because it is the teaching of Jesus that the reception of the comforter cannot be done outwardly, nor does the priesthood have any authority give it to anyone by way of ordination. The Father alone can give that gift, and it is only the sincere child of God that will become conscious of it. All other rites of a priesthood are superfluous compared to that pivotal concrete moment when one becomes aware of the enticements of the spirit and begins consciously to seek God's will – to desire good. True religion is your private, personal relationship with God, or your sincere desire for good, and no other person can have anything to bear on it, by virtue of any power given to them by anyone. Anyone that purports take it away with a dash of a pen is likely a wolf in sheep's clothing, laying in wait to devour.

¹²⁴¹Matthew 7:23, 1 Nephi 14:23, Mosiah 26:27

¹²⁴²Luke 6:22-23

¹²⁴³Luke 3:16, Matthew 3:14

¹²⁴⁴John 3:8

You may ask, "You're going against your upbringing and the traditions of our family! What about your mission and other sacrifices you have made? What about the sacrifices of your ancestors?"

I acknowledge that there have been many of my forebears, including my dear father and mother, who were meek and sincere in their dedication and service to the church. They upheld and served what they genuinely believed was the highest truth and morality. There have been many in my family who have dedicated their entire lives to the humble service of the church. This anchor of family history has slowed my journey as it has dragged behind my ship.

O, what a tangled web we weave when first we practise to deceive!¹²⁴⁵

Mormonism is a cobweb of imposition. Its apologists must resort to practically every logical fallacy as they try to cover for the lies that they believe in. Its leaders hide anything that could incriminate them through authoritarian control and even abusive practices. Truth that can destroy the credulity of their followers is not useful to con-men.

I now perceive that my ancestors were naive victims of a blunder that has lasted for almost two centuries before truth could catch up to it. I'm reminded of a quote that traces all the way back to Jonathan Swift, who observed:

Some People may think that such an Accomplishment as this, can be of no great Use to the Owner or his Party, after it has been often Practis'd, and is become Notorious; but they are widely mistaken: Few Lies carry the Inventor's Mark; and the most prostitute Enemy to Truth may spread a thousand without being known for the Author. Besides, as the vilest Writer has his Readers, so the greatest Liar has his Believers; and it often happens, that if a Lie be believ'd only for an Hour, it has done its Work, and there is no farther occasion for it. Falsehood flies, and Truth comes limping after it; so that when Men come to be undeceiv'd, it is too late, the Jest is over, and the Tale has had its Effect: Like a Man who has thought of a good Repartee, when the Discourse is chang'd, or the Company parted: Or, like a Physician who has found out an infallible Medicine, after the Patient is dead.

Considering that natural Disposition in many Men to Lie, and in Multitudes to Believe, I have been perplex'd what to do with that Maxim, so frequent in every Bodies Mouth, That Truth will at last prevail.

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¹²⁴⁵Walter Scott

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Considering the natural Disposition in many Men to Lie, and Multitudes to Believe, I have been perplex'd what to do with that Maxim, so frequent in every Bodies Mouth, That Truth will at last prevail.¹²⁴⁶

Indeed, falsehood flew far, far ahead while truth limped behind for centuries. The patient has indeed died before the Physician found the infallible medicine. The dedication of my ancestors does not legitimize the church, nor does it legitimize the abuse that was inflicted upon them by conceited men who used the name of God in vain. To continue the legacy of my ancestors because of the countless years of service and millions in tithing would be to indulge in the sunk-cost fallacy.¹²⁴⁷ I do not have to go to the show, even though they already paid the price for the tickets. Never cling to a mistake just because you spent a lot of time making it.

If you see fraud and do not say fraud, you are a fraud.¹²⁴⁸

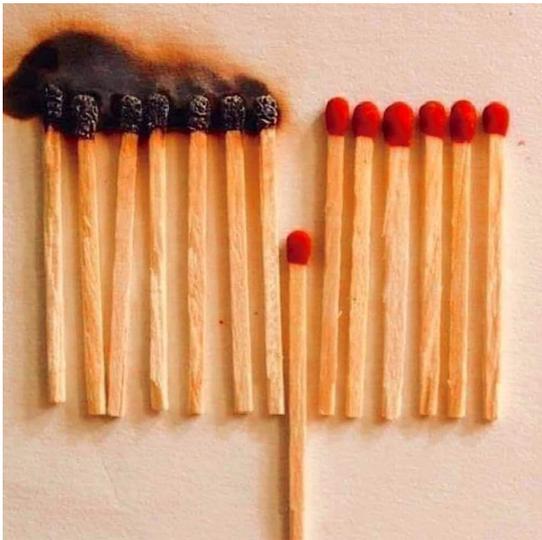
I do not see unsubscribing to an institution that is beneath me as a bad thing, *for they bind heavy burdens that are grievous to be borne and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers*¹²⁴⁹ Instead, it is imperative that the enlightened break the chain of loved ones whose credulity bound them to subservience to a fraudulent mafia.

¹²⁴⁶Jonathan Swift, *The Examiner*, Numb 15, 1710

¹²⁴⁷https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Escalation_of_commitment

¹²⁴⁸Nassim Nicholas Taleb

¹²⁴⁹Matthew 23:4



My ancestors brought their virtue to the church, not the other way around. The church devours the innate goodness of people like a parasite, while they're none the wiser in their innocence. The church teaches them that they couldn't be virtuous on their own. The church sells back their virtue and takes those profits and invests in vast lucrative real-estate against the very teachings of the godly man they revere. They run a corporation, the *president*¹²⁵⁰ is the corporation sole. *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* is a literal trademark of that corporation. They act entirely as a corporation would, with the primary goal of preserving their livelihood. They do this while they impede the body of the church from having any share, nor common consent¹²⁵¹ in their ventures. They spend for housing and feeding the poor is only enough to purvey a facade of goodness. Most of the price for benevolence is paid through the surplus of smaller donations outside of tithing.¹²⁵² To do all of this in the name of God is vanity! They do not know, nor do they represent Jesus of the New Testament. It is not a new thing for the meek to be willingly dominated by vain, pretentious men who seek power. It is the vulgar reality of the majority of human history.

With all due respect to my ancestors, I am actually quite embarrassed about some aspects of my heritage. I am not at all proud of the fact that my very recent ancestors trusted in the imposition that God commanded plural marriage, nor that they were immoral enough to accept it. They trusted an institution for their morality. It betrayed them. Surely their con-

¹²⁵⁰Why should the title of *president* have anything to do with religious institutions?

¹²⁵¹Doctrine and Covenants 26:2, 28:13, 121:39, 124:144, 104:71; Mosiah 29:26

¹²⁵²Like fast offerings.

sciences continuously nagged about it, especially for my grandmothers.

It is not as much that polyamorous households are evil when all parties consent. The greater crime is the imposition made by other men that God commanded it. It is the abuse of women by the dominance of patriarchy in the name of divinity. This is the very definition of using the name of God in vain. It is not careless use of his name in speech. It is not a short prayer, like "oh God!" It is not the use of vulgar taboo words. It is to cause inequities to happen in God's name. That proves the reality of the vanity, illegitimacy, and even hypocrisy of a priesthood of men. If Joseph Smith or Brigham Young lived today, they would undoubtedly be listed in the sex offenders registry.

You are not responsible for how you were programmed in your childhood, but as an adult, you are responsible for becoming more ethical than the society that programmed you.¹²⁵³

The most important time in history for us should be now. There have been countless millennia of inequity. Humans are finally gaining equal rights regardless of their race, religion, or gender. We should honor our founding fathers. They were courageous free-thinking men. They established a country where this could take place; yet they did not finish the work, they only started it. We should honor those who dared to follow the teachings of Jesus by employing peaceful, non-violent means. We should honor Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandhi. In my view, those people were more emergent prophets than any Latter-Day Saint priesthood leader has ever been.

The contrast between them makes the Mormon prophets, seers, and revelators appear like elitist bigots. They vainly use God's name and every mind-control tactic known to man to maintain their archaic, medieval, draconian caste systems. They employ the same control tactics as did the Roman Catholic Church in the middle-ages. They castigate truth-seekers for daring to think out of the box of dogma into isolation or excommunication. They fight to enforce their dominion outside of their dominion. They call upon their rank and file to raise money and campaign for laws that are in their best interests. They wish to impose physical enforcement of their own laws upon the citizens of the entire United States, regardless of their beliefs.

I do not need to outsource my morality when it is beneath me. It is expensive, and not only for its

¹²⁵³Author Unknown

money for worthiness requirement. The church has stood in opposition to every ethical advancement in society. It vehemently fought the equal rights amendment. The E.R.A. has not passed even today, and a good portion of the fault can be attributed to the church. It preached the segregation and inferiority of an entire race as the doctrine of God for well beyond a century. It fought against the emancipation of that race, and finally bowed an entire decade after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. It continues to seek theocratic control as it fights equal rights for people on the basis of sexual orientation. Its acts prove that it wishes to impose laws upon people who do not want any part of the church, against the constitution. It vainly spins manipulative doublespeak that its works are for religious freedom. Until only recently, it never backed down that what it calls *same sex attraction* might have something to do with genetics. It has treated these people badly. It practiced electroshock therapy. Its fruits make it appear as though Jesus isn't at the helm at all. Those blind men are fumbling around in darkness.¹²⁵⁴

The church seems oblivious to the constitution, which prescribes that no religion should have power over government. The constitution safeguards against the despot of any religion. Since the church fought all three of those advancements in society, the church has demonstrated that if it could, the it would tear down the constitution to usurp power and dominion as a theocracy. It prophesies that the constitution will eventually fail. It would enforce its religious laws upon all. To have any organized religion act in such a way is anti-American.

My wife says that I've done a 180° turn, that it is as if we're living in an alternate reality for my daring to have independent thought, and for my seemingly new reliance on reason and God-given freedom of choice. She seems to imply that I am not the person she thought I am. Yet, it almost seems as though she never knew me, because I have ever subscribed to the thought before I found that Ralph Waldo Emerson had expressed it. I have never liked to be known, or my behavior and thought expected, because it impedes me from progress. I can remember this as far back as being a little child, as my mother tried to determine, categorize, and predict my nature.

I would rather be hated for who I am than loved for who I am not.¹²⁵⁵

I do not hoard who or what I am as much as I do not hoard possessions. I reserve the right to change

¹²⁵⁴Luke 6:39-40

¹²⁵⁵Kurt Cobain

when I find previously undiscovered truth. Following the teachings of the church has ever been about the truth for me. It has never been about whether some person in the ward is kind nor whether they are offensive, nor for any other social aspect, because I'm content being alone. When its claim to truth is lost, it loses any claim to my devotion.

I have illustrated church leaders' attempts to circumvent truth and reason problems. They present foolish consistencies, showing their ignorance to the very nature of truth. Truth must be ever sought! No one should ever relent in the search for truth, especially when difficult situations arise! To give up the search for truth is to yield one's intellect to dogma. Any truth that has been established by authority is dogma.

The guilty taketh the truth to be hard, for it cutteth them to the very center¹²⁵⁶

Nephi's observation applies to those who cling to their foolish consistency and refuse to change for newly discovered truth. The truth is very rarely warm and comforting. If anything, it hurts every time it is discovered. Happiness and contentment are hardly ever related to truth, except when you blissfully assert that you have it.

You can't see anything you're not willing to look at. The truth is a lot easier to see when you stop assuming you already have it. It I not a virtue to cover your ears and sing "la, la, la" because you think you already have truth. Ignorance is inversely proportional to humility. To be ignorant of the nature of truth is two levels below sincere truth seeking. First, the misunderstanding of truth, second, the assumption that your view of reality is incontrovertible.

The more you know, the more humble you become. This is the wisdom of Socrates. It can be illustrated by the ignorance of teenagers who pridefully disregard the wisdom of their parents. Jesus often spoke against such delusion and did not approve of such closed-mindedness.¹²⁵⁷ Jesus has ever been misunderstood.

As I quoted Mr. Emerson, "Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood," and "Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood?" After 2,000 years, most people still don't understand the teachings of Jesus. Neither do I expect anyone to understand me, especially when they refuse to think for themselves and refuse to adjust their view with any new light of truth. Plato observed:

¹²⁵⁶1 Nephi 16:2-3

¹²⁵⁷Mark 8:18, Matthew 13:11-15

Those who are able to see beyond the shadows and lies of their culture will never be understood, let alone believed, by the masses.¹²⁵⁸

If Jesus is indeed the example to follow, then losing the respect of my family and not living up to their expectations is clearly the cost¹²⁵⁹ of following in his footsteps. He said that if you follow him, you'll possibly betray your family – your father, mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters. His mention of losing your own life is in reference to the possibility of his own disciples being killed for daring to think freely with him and for daring to go against the priesthood and establishment. He knew they were going to kill him and that he was putting everyone who followed him in danger. Jesus once took the opportunity to interject that he saw his followers just as much as family as his own blood as his own family was asking for him.¹²⁶⁰ We need to understand that his mother and most of his brothers and sisters thought he wasn't fulfilling what they thought was his mission of sitting upon the throne of David, and rarely understood his teachings because of their prejudice and closed-mindedness. Neither did Jesus maintain a foolish consistency to live up to the expectations of his family and childhood friends.

I'm trying to be like Jesus, I'm following in his ways. I'm trying to do as he did, in all that I do and say.¹²⁶¹

I'm following the lead of Jesus by rebuking those proverbial elitist separatist Pharisees who take pride in stressing that obedience of trivialities as more important than the weightier matters of love and mercy. I am following in his footsteps when I choose to show my love for God by seeking his will and doing it, and by valuing that sort of candor above the "Lord, Lord"¹²⁶² hollow outward rites and following Jesus in name only. I'm following his clear counsel when I refuse to believe Paul and Joseph Smith in their stories of secretly seeing Jesus.¹²⁶³ I'm following Jesus by refusing to do missionary work for something that Jesus did not establish. To tell others "Lo here," "Lo there," – to proclaim that God has restored his kingdom is ingenuous, because it was never established that way – "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation."¹²⁶⁴ I'm following in his footsteps when

¹²⁵⁸Plato

¹²⁵⁹Luke 14:26-33

¹²⁶⁰Luke 8:20-21

¹²⁶¹Primary Songbook

¹²⁶²Matthew 7:21

¹²⁶³Matthew 24:23,26, Mark 13:21,23

¹²⁶⁴Luke 17:20-24

I choose good without having been commanded to. I'm following in his footsteps when I reject the idolatrous Old Testament doctrine and also throw away the "old bottles"¹²⁶⁵ or old baggage it came in: the old has passed away, and I put his new gospel in fresh, new bottles, unencumbered with the old which may break. I'm clearly following in his footsteps if I happen to not fast on fast day, or if I might do any work on the Sabbath, because those are old laws of an idolatrous age. I'm following in his footsteps by being abhorred by the immoral injustice in the idolatrous propitiation doctrine; whether it is sacrificing an animal on an altar, or sacrificing Jesus, it is the same. I am following his example by being disgusted by the priestcraft of the Deseret Book store, as well as by all of the ads that come on after conference. I'm clearly following in his footsteps by rebuking those who through priestcraft devour widows' houses. I am following his footsteps by genuinely loving all humankind, including the sinners and those who are despised based on race, sex, or religion, for they deserve that love even more than the self-righteous, no matter whatever rituals or adherence to Pharisaical rules they may be lacking. I follow his example when I refuse to pass judgment and instead show mercy to everyone, and I look forward to him showing that same mercy to me when I stand before his bar. I am following his example by stressing that religion is a personal experience between me and God; that God is in me, as I am in him.

Since I believe that my salvation is not dependent upon an idolatrous Pauline view of propitiation through the blood of a demigod, and since I instead rely entirely on the love of God for my salvation as Jesus himself taught, I have license to follow all truth where it leads. The God I believe in is greater than all of that. The God I believe in already has perfect empathy and mercy. I am no longer bound to buy redemption for a problem that does not exist. It is something that I do not actually need. I gracefully risk my Latter-day Saint eternal salvation in that there is no unfair judgment from an infinitely loving god. There are only open arms, full of love, waiting for our eventual exit from this temporal state. I no longer subscribe to the required idolatry of priestcraft and pharisaical views that the so-called restored gospel prescribes, because it doesn't even solve any of the problems that face the rest of christianity. I am freed from having to constantly bend my mind justifying contradiction, evidence, fact, and truth against dogma.

¹²⁶⁵Matthew 9:17

And now that you do not have to be perfect, you can be good.¹²⁶⁶

And so I say again, I am only me, by virtue of being me. I want to have the courage to be vulnerable. I am no longer willing to be a victim of the overcontrol of men and their requirement for perfect obedience. Perfection is no longer a goal because I don't believe in a god that requires it. I take comfort that I am enough to be as God created me. I no longer need labels to define who I am. I no longer require the foolish consistency of myself to fulfill idolatrous oaths that I made in credulity immaturity.

And so, I offer one more quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson, who seems to best express what I have been trying to say in 1841, 175 years ago:

O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth's.

Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law. I will have no covenants but proximities. I shall endeavour to nourish my parents, to support my family, to be the chaste husband of one wife, — but these relations I must fill after a new and unprecedented way. I appeal from your customs. I must be myself.

I cannot break myself any longer for you, or you. If you can love me for what I am, we shall be the happier. If you cannot, I will still seek to deserve that you should. I will not hide my tastes or aversions. I will so trust that what is deep is holy, that I will do strongly before the sun and moon whatever inly rejoices me, and the heart appoints.

If you are noble, I will love you; if you are not, I will not hurt you and myself by hypocritical attentions. If you are true, but not in the same truth with me, cleave to your companions; I will seek my own. I do this not selfishly, but humbly and truly. It is alike your interest, and mine, and all men's, however long we have dwelt in lies, to live in truth.

Does this sound harsh to-day? You will soon love what is dictated by your nature as well as mine, and, if we follow the truth, it will bring us out safe at last. — But so you may give these friends pain. Yes, but I cannot sell my liberty and my power, to save their sensibility. Besides, all persons have their moments of reason, when they look out into the region of absolute

truth; then will they justify me, and do the same thing.¹²⁶⁷

¹²⁶⁶ John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*, ed 2002, pg 581

¹²⁶⁷ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self Reliance*
<https://archive.org/stream/selfrelianceessay00emerrich#page/40/mode/1up>