

Saints, just as the name Christians was given in derision to the followers of Jesus of Nazareth by the unbelievers of Antioch. But names matter very little; it is principles we are discussing. A jewel covered with cobwebs and dust is still a jewel, and truth is truth whatever it may be called, and is not to be disposed of by pelting it with epithets. "Mormonism," to me, is but another name for God's truth, and to find the fullness of that truth we would have to bring together and aggregate the truth of all religions, adding thereto all others that God would or could reveal.

"Truth is truth, where'er 'tis found,
On Christian or on heathen ground."

This religion called Mormonism is no new thing. According to our view it is the oldest of all religions. It has been upon the earth in different ages, being revealed from heaven from time to time as often as it became necessary to renew the sacred fire upon the altar of the human heart, and revive in men's souls the knowledge of truth which they had turned from and forgotten. Its object from the first has been man's salvation—the salvation of all men, who are universally the children of God. You who have supposed that Mormonism is a narrow and exclusive faith, have not understood it aright. If I knew of a religion that was broader and better I would embrace it. But to me it is the broadest, the best, the most reasonable of all religions, and consequently I remain a Mormon. My religion proposes to save all men, but to save them upon just and consistent principles; not the rewarding of one soul for the good done by another, nor the punishment of the innocent for the misdeeds of the guilty, nor the never-ending punishment of any soul; but the judging of all men according to their works, and their salvation according to their merits in different degrees of glory.

Mormonism teaches that God was once just like ourselves; that the eternal part of Him was enshrined in mortal flesh, subject to mortal ills and earthly pains and toils. I do not now refer to the experience of the Savior in the meridian of time. I mean that in the far away aeons of the past God once dwelt upon an earth like this, and that through its trials and vicissitudes and the experience they afforded He became a more intelligent being than before, ascending finally by obedience to certain principles, ennobling and exalting in their nature, to the plane which He now occupies. These truths, forming the ladder up which He climbed to celestial heights, up which we too are expected to climb from earth to heaven, from mortality to immortality, from a world where grief and sorrow reign, to a better and brighter sphere where sorrow and suffering are unknown—these truths are self-existent and eternal. God did not create them. Intelligence, the light of truth, cannot be created. But by means of His superior intelligence, which is His glory and which makes Him God, He instituted laws whereby the rest, the lesser intelligences, might advance like Himself. These laws we call the Gospel, the plan of salvation, formulated in the heavens before this world was, and revealed again and again to the children of Adam for their salva-

tion. We hold that men are literally the sons and daughters of God; that He intends we shall become like Him; and it is certainly reasonable to expect that the child will eventually develop to the status of the Parent. We are divine beings in embryo, and it is only a question of time when we shall blossom in perfection.

We believe that in that pre-existent life, where the spirits of all men once dwelt, a Savior was prepared, pre-ordained to die for the salvation of the world. We also believe that other great and noble ones were selected—prophets, poets, philosophers, reformers, painters, sculptors, etc., and sent into the world to play their parts, to hold aloft the torch of God-given genius to illumine the pathway leading to perfection. All good gifts are from God, from Him who sent us forth into this school to learn life's lessons, to assist each other to learn, and having gained our education, to return to Him perfected, and dwell in peace eternally. All things sent forth will again seek their origin, as naturally as the rain-drops sprinkled upon the hills trickle back to the ocean whence they came.

We believe that Adam was pre-ordained to fall, and that it was part of the eternal plan that he should fall. "Adam fell that man might be," says Mormonism; became mortal for our sakes, that our spirits might tabernacle in the flesh, and work our way back through thorns and briars to the glorious gardens of Paradise. The fall of Adam was as necessary in the divine plan as the redemption wrought out by Jesus Christ. But to Adam was revealed the Gospel and by means of it he regained paradise, or the presence of his Maker, from which, for a wise purpose, he had been temporarily banished—eternally banished but for the atonement of the Savior. To Enoch was also given the same Gospel, either by transmission from Adam, or by direct revelation from the Almighty.

Noah also had a dispensation of the Gospel committed to him, and no doubt transmitted its truths to his posterity—to the nations which sprang from him. I was conversing once with a gentleman, a late Federal official, with whom I have been more or less intimate, and he was seeking to prove to me that Jesus of Nazareth was not the original thinker that men suppose Him. He showed that Confucius, the Chinese sage, taught, long before Christ, that it was right for one to do unto others as he would wish others to do unto him, and he thought this proved Jesus to be a plagiarist. To me it proved nothing of the kind. It demonstrated that Confucius had become possessed of a portion of the old Gospel, the same yesterday, today and for ever, either by inheritance from Noah, whom the Chinese claim as their great ancestor, or by direct inspiration from heaven. And the fact that Jesus afterwards taught a similar doctrine when He introduced that Gospel in the meridian of time does not prove Him a plagiarist, but rather a restorer—a restorer of that which was previously possessed by Noah, Abraham and Moses, but which had been lost and forgotten so long by their descendants that when preached to the Jews by Jesus they were "astonished at his doctrine." Would

not the similarities that exist between some Christian and some heathen doctrines indicate that both had a common origin? Our Salt Lake is supposed to be the residue of a great inland sea that once surged against these mountain sides, making islands of the loftiest summits, covering the whole area of the Great Basin and communicating with the Pacific Ocean. That sea gradually diminished, until the lake of today, though similar in character, is but a mere pond by comparison. May not the religions of Asia, though differing in some respects from Christianity, the ancient Gospel of which I have been speaking, and yet containing truths belonging to it, be as so many pools of water caught in hollows of the ground or in holes of the rock as the great flood of truth rushed by? The truths of these religions have doubtless been mixed with the doctrines of men, but so are the truths of Christianity. We are all apt to depart from the truth in its primitive purity; hence the need of continued restorations.

We hold that in these latter times God has again restored, to earth the everlasting Gospel, that this is the dispensation of the fulness of times into which flow all former dispensations, like rills and rivers emptying into the ocean; that "He who scattered Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock;" that Zion will be built up on this continent and Jerusalem rebuilt in the land of Palestine; that all things in Christ, both in heaven and on earth, are to be gathered in one, according to the prediction of Paul the Apostle. It is the purpose of Mormonism, which heralds the second coming of Christ, to prepare the world for that coming.

The prophets and poets of the past have spoken of a time to come when the earth should rest, and nation should war no more against nation; when men, as Burns says in beautiful simplicity, would "brothers be and a' that;" and when, as Tennyson prophetically declares:

The war drum throbs no longer
And the battle flags are furled
In the parliament of man,
The federation of the world.

When white-winged peace would spread her wings abroad, and grim-visaged war would sit at her feet and learn wisdom for a thousand years. We think that time is drawing nigh; that the Almighty has set His hand to accomplish just such a work; that we are living in the Saturday night of the world's history, near the end of that week of Time each day of which is a thousand years, and that the seventh day, or Sabbath, will be the day of rest, the Millennium, the reign of peace and righteousness which the Prophets and the poets have predicted.

The Almighty, I believe, began this phase of His work when He sent Columbus across the sea to unveil this hidden hemisphere. He it was who nerved the arm and fired the soul of a Washington to fight and win freedom's battle on this chosen land, and who inspired the pen of a Jefferson to write in words of flame the declaration of American Independence. I revere the Constitution as an emanation of Divinity and, I believe, we will yet see the principles upon which this great government was founded,—prin-