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Dispensations of the kingdom of God as professed respectively by Mormon and Islam

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Thesis.

"Dispersions of the Kingdom of God
as professed respectively by Muslims
and Jews."

◀ 1896 ▶

A comparison of the dispensations of the Kingdom of God, as professed respectively by the Mormons and Mohammedans.

In the world of phenomena, man is not the least. We label that phenomena which appears strange, and man is not least strange of all the peculiar things we find.

In all that which he proudly calls religion, philosophy, science, and art, we find his strange conceits and vagaries mixed with the rational and true. So that he numbers his schools, systems, processes and creeds, by the hundred. All proceeding from different fundamental notions and tastes, leading to the wildest schemes and most absurd claims. But as the process of evolution goes on working out the eternal purpose of God, the everlasting Father, order proceeds out of chaos, and the astrology, necromancy, and divination, the queer social orders and systems, the weird fancies and fearful dreams, of generations dead and gone, give place to rational science and philosophy, and the great unfolding world religion crowns it all.

In no sphere of human activity, have the queer conceits of man taken more fantastic shape, than in that of religion. Here we find the clearest trace of that great moral and mental catastrophe in the dawn of human life, when man chose self in place of God, and took his place as a pupil in a school, other than God intended. Compelled to advance in the darkness, haunted by every shadow, terrified by a shooting star, appalled by the

natural working of the laws of nature, guided by warped and diseased conscience, and a dim vague instinct. And so he has filled the ages with broken and crumbling monuments to his ignorance and folly, his superstition and egotism. To be the laughing stock of the thoughtless of future generations, an object of profound study on the part of the wise, but the subject of unfathomable mercy on the part of God.

No Christian nation, even in the light of the boasted civilization of the nineteenth century, has yet reached a point where even the majority of its citizens have been emancipated from error, as witness "Christian science", spiritualism, Mormonism, yea even sorcery. In the light of our condition, with the truth so available, we are constrained to cry, "How long, O Lord, how long!"

But in all these systems of error, there is that traditional grain of truth, which will ultimately emancipate itself from its chains of falsehood and rise pure and free into the life of God in the souls of redeemed men. To this all history and revelation points. God seeks man and man God. Wherever man is found there we find the phenomena of this universal quest on the part of man. There seems to be no queer form left for the imagination to evolve, which this seeking on the part of man has not assumed at some period in the history of, and by some portion of the race.

But from the very dawn of history there has issued one true faith, that in all its different unfoldings, has been the

same and whose tenets in every period of its history have proclaimed it to be the one great, all embracing world-faith.

Yet even the truth of this one world-faith could not hinder its contamination to a greater or less degree by the great ethnic systems with which it co-existed, and came into contact, by war and commercial intercourse. It could not be intrusted to a peculiar people, specially trained in its precepts, and confined to a certain territory, and not still be influenced and colored by the impure faiths of other people. Human nature was not adequate to the task of conserving its truth and purity in the undeveloped condition of the race. It is little wonder then that even within the pale of the great world-religion itself, systems have been brought forth and have enlisted hosts of followers.

Of these distorted forms of the one true faith it is our purpose to examine and compare two, in their different conceptions of the dispensations of the kingdom of God which they profess to represent.

The first of these systems is that professed by the Mohammedans. This system is the product of imperfectly trained Christianity in contact with heathen mysticism and ignorant superstition. Its component parts are Judaism, Christianity, Heathen philosophy, and superstition.

The second system which we compare with the above, is that by its followers called The Church of God of the Latter Day Saints, or the Church of Mormon. This system is a product of

what we might call pagan Christianity, or father of imperfect conceptions of the Kingdom of God, and the vagaries of an abnormal mind devoted to self-aggrandizement.

We are all familiar with the history of Mohammed, the founder of the first, and it is needless to give the details of the founding of the faith of Islam which numbers its adherents by the hundred million. But Mormonism is not so well known to us in spite of the fact that it has been formulated and developed in our own Country within the last sixty years.

Its founder was Joseph Smith, who was born of New England parents. He came to manhood with but little education and training, and bore a reputation which was not the best. He turned his mind toward religion very early, according to his own account, and tried separately the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, but found no satisfaction in any of them. Finally his agony of mind became so great that he arose in the night and besought heaven for light, and in answer to his agonizing prayer, an angel came to him and informed him, that because of the unfaithfulness of the church, the priesthood had been taken away, but that because of the faithfulness and earnestness of Joseph, he should be commissioned a priest, and prophet, after the order of Melchisedek, and then he should restore the faith of the Church, and prepare it to receive the Lord of the Millennium. And he was to receive out of the ground holy and prophetic records of a family of Jews who had emigrated from Jerusalem in the time of Zedekiah, and

had been led to America.

These records, written on plates of gold, he professed to find, and translated them, forming the book of Mormon. This is their most sacred book, although they class many other writings by their different leaders as inspired.

Smith soon gathered a band of followers as ignorant and superstitious as himself. They settled in Ohio, then went to Mo., and from there to Ill. In all these places they suffered bitter persecutions, and were driven out, and in Ill. Smith was killed by a mob. This persecution only served to swell their ranks, and they rapidly increased in numbers. After many hardships, they finally found a refuge in the unsettled west, on the shores of the Great Salt Lake. Here by their wise policy in dealing with the Indians, they made themselves a secure retreat, at least from persecution by their fellow countrymen. By their industry and frugality they made the desert to bloom like a garden. In 1847 the territory which they occupied was organized by the Federal authorities into the Territory of Utah, and Brigham Young the temporal and spiritual successor of Joseph the seer, was appointed by Pres. Filmore as Governor.

The Church sent out missionaries to Europe and into every State of the Union, and as a result a great tide of emmigration of, in most cases, the most ignorant and superstitious classes of natives and foreigners, and the new State, called by the Mormans themselves, the State of Deserts began to attain a rapid growth.

6

There are many unpleasant rumors connected with its history for the past fifty years, and in most cases these are more than rumors; by well established proof, they appear to be fact.

The Mormon Church by its nature and constitution is intended to be a temporal as well as a spiritual body, and such in fact it was until the Federal Government exacted legislation which deprived the so called saints of their political power. And as railways and the westward progress of the great Gentile populations have filled the territory with other churches and schools, the power of Mormon has begun to rapidly wane.

Asto their form of organization there is no similarity, whatever between Mormon and Islam. The first is a tyrannical hierarchy, the latter is a faith which submits only to the one God and his prophet. In Mormon there is a complicated priesthood, while in Islam every Moslem is his own priest, and he acknowledges the present authority of only one prophet, Mohammed, who has superceded all others. The Mormons have a very extensive and complicated priesthood. First comes the Presidency, composed of three persons, to correspond with the trinity of Heaven; Next the high apostolic college, consisting of twelve apostles, then there are high-priests, priests, elders, bishops, teachers and deacons, besides any saint is liable to be called on at any moment to go out as a missionary or traveling teacher.

The Mormon idea of God is at basis Buddhistic. They conceive of the supreme being as only a perfect man, whose degree of perfection is such, that he may be called infinite.

7

They insist that he has bodily parts, and is to all intents and purposes an advanced man. They make him only one in an infinite series of divine beings, and boldly speak of the grandfather, and great grandfather of God. They themselves expect to become in the next world, Gods little and great, in proportion to the size of their families.

How different is the Moslem conception of the one Supreme Being! "There is no God but one", and this one the Moslem conceives of as pure spirit without beginning or end, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. The Mormon idea is really lower than the pure Buddha's conception, for the Buddha believes that he will lose himself in the supreme ineffable Being; while the Latter Day Saint fondly dreams of a personal God-head for himself.

The Mormon believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Virgin by a material union with God, that the Virgin Mary was actually married to God, and further that God himself was the result of a previous such marriage. They accept his death as an atonement for the sins of every one who believes on him through their Church; nevertheless they make the atonement ineffective by declaring that it is not available for every sin, that even in the Church of Mormon there are some whose sins may not be forgiven them without shedding the last drop of their blood. This doctrine Young and his preachers have openly declared, and advised the people that the greatest favor they could grant some of their friends, was to slay them, which done

in faith, would secure their salvation. They belittle the Savior, still further, by affirming that he was the legal husband of three wives.

Though the Moslem does not admit the divinity of Christ, or recognize him, as they claim, supposed death, yet their conception of his person is infinitely above that of the Morman in moral tone. They acknowledge him next to Mohammed as the greatest prophet and teacher, and Mohammed claims for him what he does not claim for himself, namely, that he was sinless. They believe that his birth was a miracle, caused by God, but deny that God, "who is not begotten nor himself begetter," was his father in any other sense than he is the father of all men. They believe that Christ will announce the Millennium and the establishment of Islam in every part of the world. The Moslem reveres and honors Christ as a great prophet, though secondary to Mohammed, who succeeded him, yet is their conception of him a great deal more praiseworthy, than that of Morman, which in doctrine and practice is a travesty upon everything that the name of the Savior means to the Christian.

The Morman believes that the Holy Spirit is the concomitant will of both Father and Son, binding the two together and harmonizing them in all their work. Thus they claim to believe in a trinity, and they believe in the trinity just as they do in God, for they hold that another trinity preceded the present one, composed of Elohim, Jehovah and Michael, (Adam), and another one back of that, etc.

Mormán and Moslem both believe, as all others believe, that the faith which they profess, and which they claim is a special revelation, is the only true one, and destined to universal adoption, and that there is salvation in no other.

The Mormáns believe that the time is not far away when all people will gather under one ~~xxx~~ banners, one the host of mormán; the other, the army of the Pope of Rome. Between them there is to be a great battle resulting in victory for the hosts of Mormán led by Joseph the seer. They will then take possession of the world, and Christ will come and reign over them here on earth for a thousand years. At the close of this millennium those who have not been sincere in their obedience, will be permitted to show their rebellious spirit under the leadership of Satan, and finally destroyed. The earth will then be celestialized, and given forever to the faithful. They attribute a kind of life to the earth, believing that it is a kind of creature.

The position to be occupied by the saint in this new world is to determined by the size of their families. This doctrine seems to have been the result of plural marriage. Some authorities claim that plural marriage grew out of the doctrine. However, the greater the number of their wives and children, the higher will be their position and the greater their authority and influence as Gods in their own sphere.

The Moslem is also a second adventist. He believes that at death the soul will enter paradise, and in the form of a

little green bird, await the judgment day. The souls of infidels are kept in a certain well in the chambers of death, and are subject to terrible torture until the judgment day. In fact, however, in all these questions there is a great deal of difference among the theologians of Islam. After a great many wars and even a great deal of misfortune to Islam itself, the judgment day will be ushered in by three great blasts, first that of consternation. This will be so awful that heaven and earth will melt with its sound: Second, that of examination will annihilate all things and beings, even the angel of Death, except Paradise and Hell: Third, that of the resurrection, when all men, Mohammed first, will be raised from the dead. The day of judgment is expected to last from one to fifty thousand years and during that time angels, genii, men and animals and devils, The trial over, all both good and bad, will pass over the bridge of Al. Sirat, which is as small as a hair, and sharp as a sword, and hedged with thorns on either side. The righteous will be able to cross all right, --but the wicked will fall headlong to hell, which is divided into seven apartments, and assigned to wicked Mohammedans, Jews, Christians, Sabians, Magians, idolaters, and the lowest of all to hypocrites, who profess religion but really have none. The degree of pain will vary according to the sin. Those found worthy of paradise will there enjoy the most unbounded delights of every sort. Each one will have allotted to him a retinue of eighty thousand servants, and seventy two girls of paradise, besides, if he so desire, he may have

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all the wives which he possessed while on earth.

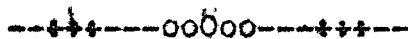
The institution of polygamy, which is really the only similarity between Mormán and Islam, was established in each system from different motives. From a careful and unprejudiced examination of Mormán we are led to believe that plural marriage was not at first added to the system, because of evil desire, but from the doctrine that a saint's position and dignity was to be enhanced by the size of his family. The same doctrine led to the practice of adoption, and a Mormán will adopt anyone and every one whose consent he can obtain, and women are married by a spiritual process to men who have been in their graves for years.

On the other hand, Islam adopted polygamy partly as a solution of the question as to what they should do with the female captives of war. Looking at the subject in the light of the best motives which we are able to attribute to either party we must give the benefit of the best side of the comparison to the Mormáns. But it is not to be denied that motives of lust influenced the leaders of both and, judging from moral surroundings and education we must give the most excuse to Islam. With the exception of this one institution, there is no comparison to be made between the two systems.

Islam, if it has done much evil, has also some good to be credited with. From the 9th to the 13th centuries Islam was the enlightened teacher of barbarous Europe. It had much to do with the development of science and art during this period.

Much classical literature would have been forever lost, had it not found a home in the schools of Islam during the dark ages. On the other hand Mormonism has done nothing, and is nothing; all that it has accomplished would have been accomplished sooner and better had that so called church never come into existence. We are able to say with confidence that Joseph Smith was an impostor.

The Mormon church is rapidly being disintegrated. Islam is waning, and with the end of her political power, her guiding crescent will sink forever beneath the horizon. Increasing intelligence, fostered by peace is slowly, but inevitably preparing the highway for future ages for the triumphal and universal progress of the one true world-faith, The Cross of Jesus Christ.



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