

"As for you, Man, you will be a naked tool all your life, though a user of tools. You will look like an embryo until they bury you, but all the others will be embryos before your might. Eternally undeveloped, you will always remain potential in Our image, able to see some of Our sorrows and to feel some of Our joys. We are partly sorry for you, Man, but partly hopeful. Run along then, and do your best. And listen, Man before you go..."

"Well?" said Adam, turning back from his dismissal.

"We were only going to say," said God shyly, twisting Their hands together. "Well, We were just going to say, God bless you."

-THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING  
(White 1967:193)

"All right," he said, "let's get going."

"Now? You just said that it would take an idiot to go into the desert at this time of day."

"Yeah, well, I'm a mad dog and you're an Englishman. Let's get some of that noontday sun."

-CHINA LAKE  
(Hyde 1992: 293)

This is the fourth section of **THE MECHANICAL GOSPEL**.<sup>{1}</sup> It is to be followed by three more sections. In case the reader has picked this up before reading the First Fascicle, a brief explanation is in order.

The complete text consists of seven sections. The objective<sup>{2}</sup> of the complete work is to formulate a quasi-theoretical<sup>{3}</sup> model of the Plan of Salvation (POS) by incorporating its major components in coherent structures, and extending the basic doctrines logically to see what results. The framework on which the entire structure is hung is the developmental sequence, which we term a 'metamorphosis'<sup>{4}</sup> in the lepidoptran sense, that spirits traverse as they move from the point in "time" where they were created, through a pre-existence state, followed by mortality, then post-mortality and finally a post-resurrection state.<sup>{5}</sup> Each of these states or phases or conditions is treated separately, and in chronological order, so that meanings and understanding emerge naturally from the

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note that chapter numbers and pagination are simply extended from the end points of the first fascicle. They are also continued into the third fascicle. Only footnotes start over in each chapter or section. Also note that the miscellanea that are appended to the entire work, i.e. bibliography, quotations, appendices, appears at the end of the third fascicle.

<sup>2</sup> The complete conception is best summarized by taking a quote from the INTRODUCTION<sup>{1}</sup> of the First Fascicle:

"Superficially, the basic principles of the Gospel are simple enough to be grasped in a brief time. However, there are extraordinary expanses of tantalizing doctrine behind the disarmingly mild appearing superstructure initially encountered. These deeper levels of investigation beckon to anyone interested in detailed explanations for the structure and purpose of the Plan of Salvation (POS). The most commonly stated purpose of the POS is that it is intended to assist wo/men on earth in working out their salvation. That is an adequate and an accurate statement. However, I believe that there are valid truths behind this first level of truth. As one goes beyond that layer, like going into the center of an onion, additional levels of insight into this collation of laws, principles and ordinances appear.

The particular collection of things revealed to mankind as the POS on this earth is anything but an accidental or artificial grouping. The deeper meanings and inter-relationships between various principles are not explained in the standard works of the LDS church, nor need they be from the point of view of the purpose mentioned above. The bare-bones structure gleaned from those works is sufficient to enable anyone to reach the Celestial Kingdom. But deeper meanings and interrelationships exist, which are profoundly moving, and they broaden one's appreciation for and understanding of the POS.

This work, then, is a summary of some of those subtler concepts that have been glimpsed, though only dimly, and perhaps incorrectly. It is a rudimentary attempt to relate principles and laws that don't have obvious inter-relationships. It is more than likely that this rough model is erroneous in many -or, indeed, most- of its details. However, it is an attempt to formulate a hypothetical model integrating all parts of the POS to demonstrate that the Plan is, in fact, more sublime than usually perceived to be. In the world of mathematics, the Plan itself would be termed "elegant" because its apparent simplicity nonetheless has sweeping power to explain, to correlate a broad range of seemingly disparate bits of evidence, and to make predictions beyond the experimental corpus available in mortality. Here we will attempt to develop a hypothetical model that might possess a hint of that elegance." (1994:v-vi)

<sup>3</sup> If you need some background in metatheories and theories, please see chapters 4, 5 and 6 in Fascicle I where details are provided.

<sup>4</sup> For details about this concept, see Chapter 3. METAMORPHOSIS METAPHOR.

<sup>5</sup> A disclaimer is in order: What follows has neither been read, approved nor sanctioned by any officers or authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It is the product of the over-heated imagination of the author, and is offered as a stimulus to others who also ponder meaning behind meaning in this marvelous Gospel. It is intended to stimulate thought and investigation - not to threaten or discourage anyone.

discussion.<sup>{6}</sup>

This section deals solely with salient characteristics and principles of the world we are living in at present, the Mortal Phase<sup>{7}</sup>. There is obviously much more that could be included here,<sup>{8}</sup> but this set of topics seemed particularly pertinent to the discussion of this model.<sup>{9}</sup> After working on this theory long enough, one begins to lose the sense that ANY particular member of the set of the principles of the POS really belongs to only one or two phases. They reappear like sunrise across the grand continuum of the reality our spirits traverse during our metamorphosis. This, of course, is not surprising because these principles are expressions of the priesthood, which priesthood governs everything in all phases. We may not be aware of some of them,<sup>{10}</sup> nor understand how they relate to each other, nor how they apply to us, but they exist and are operational throughout our eternal lives.

This section is the longest of the seven because it is the one I remember the best<sup>{11}</sup>. It talks about where we are right now so is probably more interesting. However, we make a strong claim for this section, a claim that is not borne out in SMD:

<sup>6</sup> We quickly note that we do not claim to have discovered 'truth'. We don't know what that it. This is merely one of a nearly infinite set of possible theories that could be created to describe the POS. We readily acknowledge that most readers will disagree with part, or most, of the model. That's fine. The only test that one can reasonably apply to measure the quality of a theoretical model is this: does it work? Does it produce the output of the corpus under investigation? If it does, then it does. If it doesn't, then it doesn't.

The issue of preference or taste or choice is separate from this test. By this I mean that individual taste will cause each person to select a set of initial conditions to start from, that are not necessarily logical, rather represent personal bias. These choices can not really be argued with because they are sort of like a discussion about apples and oranges. One person likes one, another the other. Neither can persuade the other that his is somehow better because it is a matter of taste.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 3. METAMORPHOSIS METAPHOR for a detail discussion of the states and phases, the differences between them, and how they are organized in this work.

<sup>8</sup> In fact, all knowledge being amassed in the world today is germane to this discussion because the POS does encompass all -and only- truth. But in spite of the enormous amounts of information being discovered, uncovered, recovered, unearthed, divined, etc. today in even sub-sub-specialties, we, as a specie, scarcely have learned more than a fraction of a fraction of the knowledge represented by the world itself. To compare our knowledge, then, to the expansiveness of eternity and all encompassed thereby is to suddenly feel less than a molecule in our own frighteningly immense universe. We will simply invoke "all truth" by reference here, and leave it at that.

<sup>9</sup> Admittedly, some of them are included more because they are fascinating, rather than being essential to this theoretical mode. But they have been handled in such a manner that they nonetheless reveal something about our theory.

<sup>10</sup> Brigham Young referred to these principles in 1877:

"We are as independent in our organization as the Gods are, but still we are creatures of circumstances, influenced by the spirits and by the powers of eternity that are here and round about us. We are here and are operated on by them in our organizations." (Journal of Discourses vol. 19:36)

These powers are believed here to be the principles of the priesthood that we are immersed in and influenced by. There is a curious division here: we are indeed acted up on by priesthood powers, but at the same time, we are also manipulating priesthood powers. This distinction is a small one, but significant because the latter is the embryonic version of the manner in which gods and goddesses operate.

<sup>11</sup> By this, we refer to the manner in which SMD implies that our ultimate state, that is to say our post-resurrection existence, depends solely on our behavior in mortality. Granted, SMD does allow for some sort of proselyting to occur in the post-mortal world, certainly a suggestive allowance, but it is probably safe to say that SMD doesn't cause most LDS to think differently than just described. But there are two other testing phases with the mortal one being enclosed between them.

**This mortal phase is no more significant in its relationship to our lengthy metamorphosis and evolution than either of the other phases.**

This point is generally overlooked, but we hasten to add this the omission is probably not intentional. The blueprint of the POS that is revealed to us contains only the bare bones required for working out our salvation. This type of detail is not necessary, so is not discussed, but it is nonetheless true.

As a reminder, remember that this phase is initiated by the {death+birth} ordinances that were performed on us at the "end" of our pre-existence experience.<sup>{12}</sup> They polished, prepared and protected us for this phase, after which we are ejected from the PE. Then we surfaced in mortal bodies. This phase will also terminate with a {death+birth} sequence that will undo those particular conditions that were essential for the testing we undergo during mortality. Then we will be sent on our way into post-mortality, our final testing phase.<sup>{13}</sup>

Recall that post-mortality is the third phase of the metamorphosis, that it is not to be confused with the post-resurrection state. Post-mortality finds us as confused and bewildered as we are here - and as we were in the pre-existence.

---

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 16 PRE-MORTAL DEATH ORDINANCES and Chapter 17. MORTAL BIRTH ORDINANCES for the background for these assertions.

<sup>13</sup> See 51. NESTED OR CRISS-CROSSED DEPENDENCIES? for more information on this iterative cross-phase ordinances complex.