"By Mine Only Begotten I Created"

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein:

For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. (Psalms 24:1-4)

In the first two chapters of Genesis we have an account of the creation of the earth and its heaven and all things in them, according to the design and command of the Almighty. In the Book of Moses (Pearl of Great Price) we have the same account more plainly stated in which we find the following:

And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I reveal unto you concerning this heaven, and this earth; write the words which I speak. I am the Beginning and the End, the Almighty God; by mine Only Begotten I created these things; yea, in the beginning I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standest. (Moses 2:1)

After the creation of the earth and its heaven and the placing in heaven and upon the earth of all manner of life, man was placed upon the earth and given dominion over all things.

And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and it was so. And I, God, said: Let them have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them. (Moses 1)

And I, God, blessed them, and said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Moses 2:26-28)

Man, The Offspring of God.

Thus, we see, after all things were created and man, the crowning glory of all this creation, was placed upon the earth, he was given dominion over all things with power to govern and have full authority under the directing hand of his eternal Father, who placed him on the earth. Man is the offspring of God, made in the image of the Father and the image of Jesus Christ His Only Begotten Son. He is clothed with intelligence and the power to act for himself, thus becoming a free agent according to the decree of the Father before the foundations of the earth were laid.

When the earth was prepared for the advent of man, the Lord declared that the earth itself and all these creations were "very good." Things did not remain "very good," however, for a great change came. Man fell from his station where there was no death, pain, sin, or sorrow, but where he was unable to distinguish between good and evil, for he had not received the knowledge which the earth-life was destined to bring. In the wake of his fall there came a great change in and upon the earth. Mortality replaced immortality, temptation, misery, sin and death were ushered in and spread over the face of the earth.

What Is the Purpose of Creation?

The question which naturally arises in the mind of the inquiring, thoughtful individual is: What was the purpose of all of this creation which was designed before the earth was formed? Why was man predestined to pass through all the vicissitudes of the mortal probation which we find upon the earth today? Why could not Adam and Eve obey the commandment given to them and multiply and fill the earth with their posterity of spirits clothed with physical tabernacles without passing through the ills of the mortal life? These and like problems have proved to be a mystery which have caused much discussion and have baffled many of the wise and learned of the world through many generations. There are those, of course, who refuse to accept the teaching of the scriptures and who maintain that conditions as they now exist have always been the same upon this earth and that there was never such a thing as the "fall" of Adam. Those who advocate this doctrine teach that death was always here and is, by nature, inherent in all things pertaining to this earth, without any transgression of a law, and hence there is no need of an atonement, and there cannot be a redemption from a condition that by nature always existed.
The solution of these problems comes purely and solely through the revelations of the Lord as he has made them known from time to time to his servants. That the Architect and Builder of this earth had definite plans in relation to the varied life upon the earth and especially so in relation to man, it would be foolish for Latter-day Saints to doubt. We have been taught that "Adam fell that men might be; and men, are, that they might have joy." (2 Ne. 2:25) This, in one terse sentence, presents the whole philosophy of life. As members of the Church we are under obligation to accept the word of the Lord as it has been revealed through the prophets. We are in duty bound to believe that the fall of Adam was a fact and that it was essential to the ultimate destiny of man. We are obliged to accept the atonement of Jesus Christ as being based upon the fall, and brought to pass in order to repair the broken law and atone for the transgression of our first parents, which transgression brought death, both spiritual and mortal, into the world. It was, moreover, through this transgression that the attendant joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains which accompany mortality were ushered in. It is according to the divine eternal plan that man shall pass on into the grave and out again through the resurrection to immortality and eternal life.

The purpose of this earth-life, so far as man is concerned, is that he may, through all the vicissitudes of mortality, prove himself worthy of advancement to the fulness of exaltation, or, through rejection and transgression of divine law, receive a reward of punishment and denial of blessings according to his works. Whether he receives exaltation or condemnation, we are positively informed that it will be a reward based upon individual merit.

Man Walked by Sight

In the spirit world man walked by sight. He was in the presence of the Father and the Son. He had his agency to accept or reject the covenants and commandments which were given there. We are told that one-third of the spirits rebelled against the plan of salvation due to the persuasion of Lucifer, who aspired to become the redeemer of the world through the introduction of unjust principles. In that spirit existence we were able to comprehend that there were many blessings which we did not then possess. We beheld the Father in his glory and, without question, we longed to be like him. The plan of salvation was presented and the spirits of men were informed that only by passing through this mortal probation, where they would come in contact with temptation and all manner of evil as well as the good, and by passing through death and the resurrection, could the exaltation come so that they could be like our glorious Father. We were informed, and the matter was made very clear, that we would have to walk by faith, not by sight. Moreover, many would yield to temptation and sin and would refuse to accept the divine law of the Gospel which should be given us for our guidance and by means of which we could come back into the presence of the Father and the Son. We understood the dangers and the risk of failure in making the journey through the mortal life, yet we rejoiced and were glad to have the opportunity to come and receive all that mortality offered. What we accepted there, without doubt, was accepted by all with eyes open and with understanding of the dangers and advantages fully understood.

Earth Prepared For Sons and Daughters of God

With this objective in view, this earth was prepared for the habitation of the sons and daughters of God, so that they could all pass through mortality and here gain the experience so essential to advancement on to perfection, after the resurrection from the dead. Adam and Eve were placed at the head, and given the responsibility of introducing the mortal life, and making it possible for all the spirits who were assigned to this earth to come in their proper times and seasons, to obtain the experiences here awaiting them.

When Adam was driven out of the Garden of Eden and from the presence of the Lord, because of his transgression, the Lord sent angels to instruct him. He was taught the plan of the Gospel and how, in the Meridian of Time, Jesus Christ would come to make amends for that transgression. When this information was received Adam rejoiced, and the darkness and gloom, which surrounded him after he had been driven out from the presence of the Father and had become spiritually dead, was dissolved, and he rejoiced saying:

Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.

And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient. (Moses 5:10-11)

Adam Had a Perfect Government

The Father conferred upon Adam the Priesthood, and established with him and his posterity a perfect form of government. This government was a theocracy. Men holding the Priesthood ruled under direct revelation and commandment. Jesus Christ, who created the earth, was the rightful ruler. After the transgression of man the Redeemer became the Advocate for man with the Father, and from that day on was and is the rightful Mediator for all mankind. Although he had not at that time obtained the stage of earth-life, and had not a body of flesh and bones, yet he was the Creator and rightful ruler of the earth. He it was, who gave the law to Adam and to all the prophets, and while a government was established among mortals on the earth, yet it was their bounden duty to accept the rule and guidance of Jesus Christ. The government was Patriarchal and the Priesthood ruled. Man was in all respects accountable to God, for, as we quote from the Psalmist David at the beginning of this lesson: "The Earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1). It is his for he made it, and while rebellion has come and men have set up governments of their own, rejecting the divine guidance of the rightful King, yet he has never relinquished his claim and surrendered his place to the authority of mortals upon the earth.
Man Always Accountable To God

Man is, and always will be, accountable to God. No government has ever become so mighty, and has attained such greatness of power and wealth, that it has had vested in it the right to set aside the commandments of God and substitute man-made rule and regulation. Whenever this has been done it has been in rebellion against the Son of God. President John Taylor, in his very excellent and inspirational work, The Government of God, in discoursing on this point has this to say:

This is a subject which it may be necessary for us to inquire into, in order that we may find out how far man is responsible. For if man be not a moral agent, he cannot be responsible for the present position of the world; and it would be unjust in God to punish him for acts that were not his, and for circumstances over which he had no control.

By a careful examination of the Scriptures, we shall find that man has had certain powers vested in his hands, which he holds subject to the control and guidance of the Lord; and that if he has acted without the counsel, guidance, or instruction of God, he has gone beyond the limits assigned him by the Lord, and is as much culpable as a minister plenipotentiary of any nation would be who should exceed the limits of his instructions; or a man holding a farm, or vineyard, by a certain lease, if he should discard the conditions of that lease, and destroy the farm, or vineyard; for the earth is the Lord's and man was put on it by the Lord. It is not man's possession, only as he holds it from God. Man's body was given him by God, and also his spirit, for the purpose heretofore mentioned. God had his object in view in the creation of the world and of man (which it is not necessary here to investigate); and if man is placed as an agent to act for the Lord, and also for himself, and then should neglect the Lord, he would certainly be held responsible to his Creator.

That God had an object in view in regard to the creation of the world, is evident. Or, why was there a consultation in heaven about it? Why the beautiful regulation of sun, moon, and stars? Why the provision made for the redemption of man before he came here? For Christ was the "Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world." (see Moses 7:47; Rev. 13:8) Why the arrangement of the resurrection? The New Jerusalem, and the reign of Jesus on the earth? Will any one say that all these things were done, and all nature organized in its present beauty, and order, without a design? It would be preposterous. If God has a design in those things, and man by his wilfulness, wickedness, corruption and rebellion, should thwart the design of God, and yield himself to another influence, even that of Satan, will he not be held responsible? And whether God has a particular design or not, does not affect the question particularly; for the earth is the Lord's and man also, and God has a perfect right to dictate what laws he pleases.

That the Lord looks upon the world in this manner is evident from the words of our Savior:

There was a certain household which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise.

But last of all he sent unto him his son, saying: They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves. This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." (Matt. 21:33-43)

Here, then, the thing is clearly developed; man's agency; the abuse of that agency; the punishment inflicted for that abuse, together with the awful consequences of resistance to the proper authority. On whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.

God never gave man unlimited control of the affairs of this world; but always speaks of man as being under his guidance, inhabiting his territory, and responsible to him for his acts. The world is His vineyard, and man is the agent. Hence, when God made man,

God blessed [him], and God said unto [him], be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Moses 2:28)

This, then, was man's dominion, given him by the Lord. And the word continues: “And God gave them every herb bearing seed, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree.” These things were given by God; but to show his power and his right to be obeyed, and in order to test man, he forbid his eating of a certain tree; and when he did eat, and thus broke the commandment of God, he thrust him out of the garden and decreed that he should eat his bread by the sweat of his brow ...

Man, then, is a moral agent, possessing the power to do good or to do evil; if he does well, he fulfills the measure of his creation, and secures his happiness in time and in eternity. If he does not well, and is involved in difficulties and misery, it is his own fault, and he may blame himself. ...

Paul says,

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him. (Col. 1:16)

This being the case, without further investigation, we will examine whose right it is to govern it. If the world be the Lord's he certainly has a right to govern it; for we have already stated that man has no authority, except that which is delegated to him. He possesses a moral power to govern his actions, subject at all times to the law of God; but never is authorized to act independent of God; much less is he authorized to rule on the earth without the call and direction of the Lord; therefore, any rule or dominion over the earth, which is not given by the Lord, is surreptitiously obtained and never will be sanctioned by him.

I am aware that kings and queens are anointed, and set apart by their different ministers, according to the different
forms and creeds of the several countries over which they reign. There are two things necessary, however, to make their authority legal, and to authorize them to act as God's representatives on the earth. The first is, that they should be called of God; and the second, that the persons by whom they are anointed are duly authorized to anoint them. First, then, it may be necessary to observe, that, if kings and queens are of God's selection, and are his representatives, they must themselves be appointed by him; for if not so, how can they be considered his representatives? The prophet Hosea complains, that "they have set up kings, but not by me; they have made princes, and I knew it not" (Hosea 8:4). ("Chapter 6: Man's Accountability to God," in The Government of God [Liverpool, 1852] p. 47-49, 51, 57-58)

The Right of Jesus Christ to Rule

It is very evident from all that has been revealed that it is the right of Jesus Christ, who bought us through the shedding of his blood and who is the Redeemer of the world, to reign and rule upon the earth. We have also seen that the Lord did establish his law with man in the beginning, that he gave him commandments and caused him to enter into covenants, which, if he had continued to keep until this day, the earth at this time would be full of righteousness, peace and happiness. It is due entirely to man's rebellion and refusal to accept the guiding hand of Him "whose right it is to rule," that the present distress, misery and wickedness is so prevalent in all parts of the world.