

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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## EVENING AND THE MORNING STAR, THE

*The Evening and The Morning Star* was the first newspaper of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was published in fourteen eight-paged, double-columned monthly issues in Independence, Missouri, from June 1832 to July 1833. When the press in Missouri was destroyed by a mob, publication was resumed several months later in Kirtland, Ohio, with ten issues published from December 1833 to September 1834. W. W. (William Wines) Phelps, its editor in Missouri, printed in it a brief history of the Church, a number of LDS hymns, instructions to members of the Church, letters reporting its progress throughout the country, and many of the revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Oliver COWDERY, its editor in Ohio, printed reports and commentaries about the Saints' difficulties in Missouri and some of the doctrinal writings of Sidney RIGDON, a counselor in the First Presidency.

Because the circulation of the Missouri-printed *Star* was small and localized, Cowdery reprinted all the original twenty-four issues in Kirtland between January 1835 and October 1836, in a new sixteen-page format, with numerous grammatical improvements, and a few articles deleted. *The Evening and the Morning Star* was succeeded by the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* in October 1834 (HC 2:167).

[See also *Messenger and Advocate*.]

RONALD D. DENNIS

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## EVIL

[The LDS concept of evil is also explained in the article on Devils. The following article discusses a view of the purposes of evil and presents an LDS response to traditional discussions of the problem of evil.]

In ordinary discourse, the term "evil" has a very wide definition and, along with the term "bad," is used in English most often to refer to morally wrong intentions, choices, and actions of agents (moral evil); to the operations of nonhuman nature such as disease, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tornadoes (natural evil); and to the human and animal pain and suffering (psychological evil) that moral and natural evils may cause. In more techni-

cal philosophical discourse, it is applied also to inherent human limitations and defects (metaphysical evil).

The term is used with additional meanings in LDS scripture and discourse. In the Old Testament, the term is translated from the Hebrew term, *ra'*, and its cognates, whose applications range widely from (1) what tastes nasty or is ugly, displeasing, or sad, through (2) moral wickedness and the distress, misery, and tragedy that ensue from it, to (3) willful disobedience of God and his intentions for human beings. The latter two senses of the term predominate in the New Testament and in latter-day scriptures. Given its widely variant meanings, the precise meaning of evil must be ascertained from its context.

LDS scripture further illuminates biblical suggestions about God's purposes for his children and, thereby, helps to clarify one fundamental sense of evil. God disclosed to Moses: "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality [resurrection, with everlasting bodily duration] and eternal life [Godlike quality or mode of being] of man" (Moses 1:39). Thus, anything inconsistent with, contrary to, or opposed to the achievement of these ends would be evil.

There seems to be no basis in latter-day scripture for either the privative or relativistic views of evil advocated by some philosophers. In the fifth century, St. Augustine, puzzled by the existence of evil in a world that was created by God, concluded that evil must not be a substance or a positive reality in its own right, but only the absence of good (*privatio boni*). Yet, in the Old and New Testaments, evil is depicted as menacingly real, a view shared by latter-day scripture. Nor is there any scriptural evidence that good and evil are simply matters of personal preference. Rejecting this kind of relativism, Proverbs declares, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12); and Isaiah warns, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isa. 5:20). Relativism is also rejected in latter-day scripture (2 Ne. 28:8).

Nonbelievers and believers alike often question why God would allow evil of any kind to exist. The question becomes especially acute within an Augustinian worldview that affirms God to be the *ex nihilo* or absolute creator of whatever exists

other than himself. On that premise it appears that God is the *ultimate* source or cause of all evil, or, at least, a knowing accessory before the fact, and thus omniresponsible for all evils that occur.

Latter-day Saints reject the troublesome premise of creation *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), affirming rather that there are actualities that are coeternal with God. These coeternal actualities include INTELLIGENCES (sometimes perceived as primal selves or persons), chaotic matter (or mass energy), and laws and principles (perhaps best regarded as the properties and relations of matter and intelligences). Given this plurality of uncreated entities, it does not follow, within an LDS worldview, that God is the ultimate source of evil. Evil is traceable, alternatively, to the choices of other autonomous agents (such as Lucifer, the Devil) who are also coeternal with God, and, perhaps, even to recalcitrant properties of uncreated chaotic matter.

Though on the basis of latter-day revelation it is evident that God is neither the source nor the cause of either moral or natural evil, the question still arises as to why he does not prevent or eliminate it. The ancient philosopher Epicurus posed the problem in the form of a dilemma: Either God is unwilling to prevent the evil that occurs or he is unable to prevent it. If he is unable, then he is not omnipotent; if he is unwilling, then he is not perfectly good. Epicurus' statement of the dilemma is based on two assumptions: (1) a perfectly good being prevents all the evil it can; and (2) an omnipotent being can do anything and, hence, can prevent all evil.

From an LDS perspective the first assumption appears to be false. A perfectly good being would certainly wish to maximize the good, but if, in the nature of things, allowing an experience of evil were a necessary condition of achieving the greatest good, a perfectly good being would allow it. For example, it seems evident that the existence of OPPOSITION and TEMPTATION is a necessary condition for the expression of morally significant FREEDOM and the development of genuinely righteous personalities (see 2 Ne. 2:11–16; Moses 6:55).

Latter-day Saints would also reject the second assumption. Since there are realities that are coeternal with God, his omnipotence must be understood not as the power to bring about any state of affairs absolutely, but rather as the power to bring

about any state of affairs consistent with the natures of coeternal realities. This insight makes possible an instrumentalist view of evil. With Epicurus' basic assumptions thus modified by latter-day revelation, it seems possible to construct a coherent LDS concept of the nature, use, and existence of evil (*see* THEODICY).

[*See also* Great and Abominable Church; Sin; War in Heaven.]

DAVID L. PAULSEN

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## EVOLUTION

The position of the Church on the origin of man was published by the First Presidency in 1909 and stated again by a different First Presidency in 1925:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, basing its belief on divine revelation, ancient and modern, declares man to be the direct and lineal offspring of Deity. . . . Man is the child of God, formed in the divine image and endowed with divine attributes (*see* Appendix, "Doctrinal Expositions of the First Presidency").

The scriptures tell why man was created, but they do not tell how, though the Lord has promised that he will tell that when he comes again (D&C 101:32–33). In 1931, when there was intense discussion on the issue of organic evolution, the First Presidency of the Church, then consisting of Presidents Heber J. Grant, Anthony W. Ivins, and Charles W. Nibley, addressed all of the General Authorities of the Church on the matter, and concluded,

Upon the fundamental doctrines of the Church we are all agreed. Our mission is to bear the message of the restored gospel to the world. Leave geology, biology, archaeology, and anthropology, no one of which has to do with the salvation of the souls of mankind, to scientific research, while we magnify our calling in the realm of the Church. . . .

Upon one thing we should all be able to agree, namely, that Presidents Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund were right when they said: "Adam is the primal parent of our race" [First Presidency Minutes, Apr. 7, 1931].

WILLIAM E. EVENSON