MORMONISM REFUTED IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY. A TESTIMONY TO THE HISTORICAL CHURCH

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In the Light of Scripture and History

A Testimony to the Historical Church

WRITTEN BY JOHN LARSEN

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FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH,
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.,
REV. E. NELANDER, PH. D., PASTOR.

RECOMMENDATION.

Hundreds of Mormon missionaries are at this time spread over all the United States. Nor are they without success in gathering recruits. Not only in Utah, but in parts of Idaho, Wyoming and Arizona there is a large Mormon population with preponderant control. At this writing, a polygamous Mormon is endeavoring to gain admittance to Congress. The Mormon question is evidently a living question. Pastors of all denominations are asking how they may meet the arguments which are being pressed upon their parishioners. Many laymen are perplexed over the plausible tenets of the Mormon faith as presented by its ubiquitous missionaries. There is, therefore, an urgent need of a clear presentation of the matter by one who by experience and ability is fitted for the task. Such a man I conceive the author of this volume to be. As the reader is entitled to know something of the man who has penned the following pages, I cheerfully commend him as a gentleman of earnest piety; and the fact of being a communicant member of an orthodox church, rather than a "free lance," will not lessen the weight of his message.

That Mormonism, in its conception of God, is essentially pantheistic, will be a revelation to many; and the contrasts drawn between the Mormon and the historical Church gives the reader the best and most helpful point of view. In brief, the book is deserving of its title, "Mormonism Refuted," and it gives me much pleasure to commend it.

May God make the publication useful in the promulgation of the truth.

EDWARD NELANDER.

December 5th, 1899.

INTRODUCTION.

While it may remain an open question as to whether Mormonism has in it enough of Christianity to entitle it to the name of a heresy, it is a fact that the Mormons have succeeded in introducing their Church to the Christian world as a Christian institution. They have succeeded in drawing out from the more cultured nations tens of thousands of souls in virtue of the claim that the God of the Christians has revealed himself to the founder of their Church. That there must have been a misstatement of doctrine, or, at least, a withholding of doctrine, in order to accomplish this, is evident from this fact itself. This being true, the consciousness of the great historical Church of Christ is not justified in sitting silently by while the propaganda of Mormonism, under glaring banners of righteousness, is making its headway and inroads upon the Church. Fully aware that many able things have been written in the past in the defense of the Christian Church against this heresiarchy, the author of this little volume appreciates that the few thoughts herein contained will in no essential way make stronger the able defense already published. Yet he feels as though a word, a testimony, added in Christian humility, would possibly do some good, reach some soul who has not decided itself, and hence in some way emphasize what has already been much abler and better stated by the learned writers in the Christian Church.

To systematically deal with Mormonism; to expose its errors by a comparative philosophical exposition, would require a volume of several hundred pages. Not only does the author feel his inability to do the subject justice; but a work of that kind would not answer his aim. His aim is to in a small volume place in the possession of the public at large such facts as he has gathered from comparison, observation, and experience; facts which, to his mind, make the doctrines of Mormonism untenable to the Christian.

The author's only excuse for this work is his love for truth,—truth as it is in Jesus. Notwithstanding the fact that the accusations Mormonism has brought against the historical Church of Christ are radically false, experience has proved that earnest, truth-seeking men and women who probably had not sufficiently acquainted themselves with Christian doctrine and history, have accepted these accusations as true, and embraced Mormonism under the impression that this pantheistic structure was the only and true Church of Christ. To these earnest, but misguided, souls who in the sim-

plicity of faith offer their energy on the altar of Mormonism, thinking thereby to serve God, my heart goes out in sincere Christian sympathy and love, wishing that they, by the light of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God, may come out from the bondage of that materialism and enjoy the saving grace, serving the God of the Christians. The fact that the Mormon propaganda has lifted men and women from poor conditions and circum- in the old world, and, so to speak, given them little homes of their own in this great land of ours, is by no means any proof of Mormonism being the true Church of Christ. Material success is no evidence of spiritual truth. I keenly appreciate the force, the foresight, the will-power, and sagacity of Brigham Young in leading the Mormon people to a material success, such as we witness to-day. Neither can I help but admire the endurance, patience, obedience, and unity of the people who settled the valleys of Utah, and by hard toil and privation made these valleys blossom as the rose. The Mormon people may be a prosperous people; they may have had great leaders; they may have become politically strong. These facts I shall not dispute; I shall not deal with them. These conditions only prove that Brigham Young was a leader and a successful business man, and that is all. No one would claim that these conditions prove him to be a prophet, seer and revelator, not even the Mormons themselves.

It is the spiritual, the Christian, condition of Mormonism into which I shall enquire. The ostensible purpose and mission of the Church of Christ is, and ever has been, to deal with soul conditions, and leave the material conditions to the providence of him who says: "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6 : 33.) Hence, I shall endeavor to show that the part of the doctrines of Mormonism in which it differs from the historical Church, is radically foreign to the entire association of Christian ideas,—foreign to all teaching of the Christian Church through all times and in every locality. This work is in humbleness intended also to be a warning to the many earnest souls who have not yet been deceived by this well-planned deception, but who may yet in the future be approached by its emissaries; a warning and a reminder that HE is not in the desert. (Matt. 24 : 26); but that God is everywhere.

Again assuring the reader that the writing of these pages has been prompted *only* by the love of truth, and that no bitterness has in any way been intended, and sincerely hoping that this work may be accepted as an humble offering on the altar of the faith that saves, it is sent forth in the name of the blessed Redeemer, to whom be glory forever and ever.

THE AUTHOR.

The Fundamental Doctrines of Mormonism are Pantheistic in their Nature.

To arrive at a true conclusion regarding the fundamental doctrines of Mormonism, it is essential not only to be acquainted with its teachings, but also to follow these teachings through their historical development and observe their consummation. Taking Morrisism, Cainanism and Daviesism as the concluding crown and flower of the philosophy of Mormonism—these being the latest, perhaps the last, developments, and hence the logical and concluding results of its original thought—we may expect even in these to find some clue to the fundamental thoughts in that great scheme which first in these have reached their perfect development. Hence we find in these, proclamations of thoughts and doctrines which in Mormonism proper were at best only intimated, yet being contained in the original idea. We must either not treat of Mormonism at all, or else we must make the very appearance of Joseph Smith and his claim to prophetship fundamentally responsible for all the doctrinal points which have developed not only out of the main body of the Mormon Church, but also out of all its branches, all of which profess to believe in the divine mission of Joseph Smith.

The Mormon Conception of God.

The primary and fundamental conception must be the conception of God. Upon this rests the whole structure; hence it is the first to be considered. Mormonism claims that God has emerged from the common world-material or substance, and has become a God by development, (Key to Theology, page 161), or by a union of eternal particles. It blushes not when

it proclaims that God has a wife who is the mother of the souls of men. In a hymn embodied in the Mormon hymn book, and written by Eliza R. Snow, a woman of high standing in the Mormon Church, I find the following:

> "In the heavens are parents single?
> No; the thought makes reason stare!
> Truth is reason; truth eternal
> Tells me, I've a mother there."

If this is a Christian conception of God, then the doctrine of the primacy of the Scriptures has no significance. Verily, God has become like unto man, with the possibilities remaining that he may change with the varying conditions; in fact, is ever changing, governed by the laws which brought him forth.

Here is the declaration of Orson Pratt, an authority of the first rank in Mormon doctrine. In his work entitled "The Kingdom of God," Part I, pages 4 and 5, he says:

> "The Godhead consists of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is a material being. The substance of which he is composed is wholly material. * * * This is equally applicable to the person of the Son. * * * The Holy Spirit being one part of the Godhead, is also a material substance, of the same nature and properties in many respects as the spirits of the Father and Son. This is called God in the Scriptures, as well as the Father and Son. God the Father and God the Son cannot be everywhere present; indeed, they cannot be in two places at the same instant; but God the Holy Spirit is omnipresent—it extends through all space, intermingling with all other matter; yet no one atom of the Holy Spirit can be in two places at the same instant, which in all cases is an absolute impossibility. It must exist in inexhaustible quantities, which is the only possible way for any substance to be omnipresent."

In his "Great First Cause," Section 17, Orson Pratt says:

> "All the organizations of worlds, of minerals, of vegetables, of animals, of man, of angels, of spirits, and of the spiritual personages of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, must, if organized at all, have been the result of the self-combinations and unions of the pre-existent, intelligent,