

Mormonism as a Substitute for Christianity

Sermon Preached at the Methodist Church on Sunday, October 28, 1917, by Dr. Watson B. Duncan.

Text: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." I John 4:1.

Mormonism and all kindred movements are made possible by the amazing credulity of the common people, and most of us belong to that class. We are naturally inclined to receive with a considerable degree of tolerance almost any representative of a religious movement. From infancy we have been taught to respect the messengers of any religious sect. It matters not what may be the character of the creed presented almost any man may formulate any kind of theory under the guise of religion and there will always be found adherents. Frequently the appeal is made to disaffected elements of the organizations already existing. In every denomination there are members who are more or less dissatisfied with the ordinary state of affairs in their own church, hence they are ready for some irregular movement. Generally the leaders in these irregular movements are shrewd enough to put a great deal of Scripture in their literature. This is for the purpose of deceiving the unwary.

So we see the absolute need of an alert mind and careful discrimination in regard to all these enterprises. The exhortation of our text is eminently appropriate at all times—"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." This discrimination is essential for the welfare of the church and the safety of our own spiritual beings. Without it we become the easy prey of all sorts of false doctrines and philosophies. The application of this principle of careful examination does not indicate a spirit of irreverence, but the failure to obey the injunction of the text shows an intellectual and spiritual indolence which is not in harmony with the energy of the Christian religion.

The Master's test—"Judge a tree by its fruit"—must be our invariable rule. This great principle is applicable to all systems of philosophy, to all religious creeds, to all institutions, and to all persons. When we find the harvest produced by any system or organization we may easily ascertain the character of the agency producing the harvest. The philosophy of Treitschke was the inspiration of the bloody world struggle now on in Europe. We may easily see why the Judgment of the Great Day will be based upon character.

A brief history of Mormonism may be of interest to us upon this occasion. The sect of Mormons was founded in this country in 1830 and claims to be called of God to gather within its fold the people of the entire world by the authority of a new dispensation, which is to be the last given to man in his present existence. The adherents of Mormonism style themselves "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints." The sect was founded by Joseph Smith, who was born in the town of Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, December 23, 1805. This founder professed great visions and revelations. He claims to have seen a great light, which descended upon him and thrilled his entire being. He was then told that all Christians were teaching false doctrines, and he was commanded to go after them. He seems to have fallen from grace, for soon after this we find him entangled in the affairs of the world and guilty of immoral practices.

The second light appeared September 21, 1823. At this time Mr. Smith claims to have seen a person who professed to be an angel sent from God. Also that this angel communicated to him the following facts: The Covenant made with ancient Israel was about to be fulfilled; that the great preparatory work for the coming of the Messiah was then to begin; that the true Gospel was to be preached in all the world in order to get a people prepared for the Millennial reign of Christ. Of course, it was announced to Smith that he was to be the leader in this movement and the true Gospel, the "revelations," made to him. It was also made manifest to Smith that the American Indians were descendants of Israel and that when they first came to America they were enlightened; that records had been kept but were hidden; and that he was to find and restore them.

Finally the angel delivered into his hands the "Divine Oracles." Smith, however, hesitated about his enterprise until he found a convert in Sidney Rigdon, a Campbellite preacher, and they having agreed upon a Millennial faith, launched the movement. The following excerpt from a "Historical Sketch of Mormonism" by the

Rev. Dr. D. J. McMillan will be appropriate here:

Its Origin.
"Mormonism had its origin in the junction of two lines of influences under peculiar conditions. One line proceeded from the southwest. Early in the present century, the great new frontier of our country lay between the Alleghany mountains and the Mississippi river, and stretched from Canada to the Gulf. Multitudes from the older states and from other countries rushed into this eldorado with much the same spirit of adventure that marked the recent rush for the Klondyke gold fields of Alaska. There were a few godly ministers of different denominations who sought, with true missionary spirit, to preach the Gospel in the new communities which were springing up everywhere. The increasing demand for the preaching of the Gospel gave rise to the camp-meeting, where crowds gathered and dwelt in tents and booths in order that they might hear the Gospel preached for a season. Great excitement prevailed. The religious emotions of the penitents were manifested in various and unaccountable ways. The dancing exercise, uncontrollable laughter, violent jerking, shouting, and weeping became common. Some yielding to their convictions became fanatically devout, others resisting became violently irreligious. Ministers were too scarce to furnish needful instruction and pastoral care. Pious young men of little knowledge and less training, attempted to supply the demand. These blind leaders of the blind stumbled into many a theological ditch. Strange sects came into being. Some had but a short life and others embraced enough of truth to save them from early death, while others still became permanent and useful branches of the Christian Church.

Among the young preachers who entered the ministry in this irregular way were ignorant and dangerous men of popular gifts, who went from church to church misleading the excitable and finding no certain abiding place in any sect. One of these novices was Sidney Rigdon, whose home was in western Pennsylvania. He was fond of debate, gifted with fluency of speech and pleasing address, and possessed of ambition and energy. He united with the Baptists, but, disappointed in his desire for leadership among them, he sought alliance with Alexander Campbell. But his restless disposition and cunning methods offended the honest men of that church and they soon dispensed with his services. Then he was for a time pastor of an independent church in Pittsburg, and making the book-store and publishing house of Patterson and Lamdin a place of frequent resort, became somewhat familiar with their business. Among the manuscripts was a novel written by Solomon Spaulding, and called "The Manuscript Found." He advanced the theory that the Indians in this country descended from two colonies, one of which came from the Tower of Babel, the other many centuries later from Jerusalem. Mr. Spaulding died without having his novel published. Mr. Rigdon became deeply interested in this novel and must have copied it and changed it by introducing many passages of scripture so as to make it appear to be a revelation from God. But his stay in Pittsburg was short. He started westward on an independent mission. He preached that the latter days were at hand, and that God was about to reveal new truth to his chosen few. He soon had a flourishing church near Mentor, Ohio.

The Other Line.
The family of Joseph Smith claims to be of Scotch extraction and to have lived in New England ever since 1700. The mother of Joseph was a fortune-teller. Both parents were illiterate and superstitious. They were among the people in Vermont who, during the first decade of the present century, followed a strange delusion under the leadership of one Wingate. By the use of an instrument which they called "St. John's Rod" the followers of this impostor claimed to be able to discover gold, silver, currents of water under ground, and medicinal roots and herbs, and to cure all manner of diseases. Like the victims of all such delusions they banked with unlimited impudence upon the "Lost Tribes of Israel," and promised a gathering of the favored people of God, and a "Latter-day Glory" far exceeding the glory of former days. The whole movement proved to be a scheme of a band of swindlers. Wingate, the leader, was arrested, but escaped from justice, and the movement came to an end.

Joseph's birth occurred at the time when the Wingate movement was at its height. Ten years later his parents removed to Palmyra, New York. Here Joseph grew up in a home without refinement. His parents were ignorant, indolent and intemperate. He

CLIMBED STAIRS ON HER HANDS

Too Ill to Walk Upright. Operation Advised. Saved by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

This woman now raises chickens and does manual labor. Read her story: Richmond, Ind.—"For two years I was so sick and weak with troubles



from my age that when going up stairs I had to go very slowly with my hands on the steps, then sit down at the top to rest. The doctor said he thought I should have an operation, and my friends thought I would not live to move into our new house. My daughter asked me to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound as she had taken it with good results. I did so, my weakness disappeared, I gained in strength, moved into our new home, did all kinds of garden work, shoveled dirt, did building and cement work, and raised hundreds of chickens and ducks. I cannot say enough in praise of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if these facts are useful you may publish them for the benefit of other women."—Mrs. M. O. JOHNSON, Route D, Box 130, Richmond, Ind.

had health and strength, an active mind and a vivid imagination. Being without school advantages he followed his own crude ideas. He was fascinated with the wild romance of Captain Kidd, and with a company of youthful followers he would hunt at night for buried money in the fields about his father's home. He is said to have had a religious turn of mind, and during a revival he was exercised very deeply on the subject. His imagination, his superstitions, and his religious excitement combined to create wonderful visions in his untutored mind. He was about fifteen years of age when he began to see visions and dream dreams. These experiences continued through seven years. During four years of this period Joseph was absent from his father's house seeking employment, in various capacities, in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. His movements for two years cannot be definitely traced. But during his absence he was for a time in the employ of Wm. H. Sabine, at whose house the widow of Rev. Solomon Spaulding, was making her home. In the garret of the house was stowed away in an old trunk Mr. Spaulding's "Manuscript Found" referred to above, which she had received from the Pittsburg publisher after Mr. Spaulding's death. Soon after Joseph's return to his father's home, he was visited by Rigdon, from Mentor, Ohio. Whether they had met during Joseph's absence, we do not know. The two doubtless became known to each other through a mutual friend, Mr. Parley P. Pratt, who was a traveling tinker and a preacher of some ability. Mr. Pratt plied his two-fold vocation between Palmyra, New York and Mentor, Ohio. He knew and admired Mr. Rigdon,—indeed was frequently a member of his congregation. After this visit of Mr. Rigdon's,—which was early in the summer of 1827, Joseph said that he was told in dreams and visions, that he was chosen of the Lord to be a great prophet to restore the Gospel which had been taken from the world many centuries ago. He went so far as to declare that an angel came into his room at midnight, awoke him and read to him five chapters of the Bible, and afterward took him to a hill which he called Comorah. The hill is four miles from Palmyra, and is at present the property of Admiral Sampson. There Joseph claims to have discovered the wonderful plates, and unearthed them by the help of the angel. He describes the plates as bound by rings, in the form of a book, and concealed in a stone crypt or vault where they had been hidden from this wicked world 1,400 years. The plates he says were four inches wide and eight inches long, and about the thickness of an ordinary sheet of tin, forming a book about six inches thick.

Joseph Smith concealed himself behind a curtain, which was a bed-blanket, stretched diagonally across one corner of his mother's kitchen, and there read what he claims was a translation of the engravings on the plates, to a scribe who sat outside the blanket and wrote what he read. Thus was the Book of Mormon produced. Eleven men testified that they saw the plates, but none of them were able to read anything that was on them, so we have only Joseph's word for what they contained."

Mormonism is neither dead nor dying. The immoral practices, the dangerous doctrines, and the political ambitions of its adherents constitute a peril that demands serious consideration. Mormonism is a great social peril. It corrupts the home, prostitutes marriage and demoralizes children. It strikes a fatal blow at the home

which is the foundation of our civilization. As the homes of the people of a community so is the character of the social life of the inhabitants. The home is the fountain from which emanate the currents of influence that determine the life of the nation. Here are put in motion the forces that make or mar civilization. In 1906 the United States Senate appointed a committee to investigate the real character of the Mormon Church and the teaching in regard to the home and the nation. The following excerpt from that report will show the social peril of this sect:

Polygamy.
"The first presidency and twelve apostles of the Mormon Church are a self-perpetuating body of fifteen men. The first presidency and twelve apostles govern the church by means of so-called revelations from God, which revelations are given to the membership of the church as emanating from divine authority. Those members of the Mormon Church who refuse to obey the revelations so communicated by the priesthood thereby become out of harmony with the church and are thus practically excluded from the blessings, benefits, and privileges of membership in the church.

"This authority of the first presidency and twelve apostles is so exercised over the members of the Mormon Church as to inculcate a belief in the divine origin of polygamy and its rightfulness as a practice, and also to encourage the membership of that church in the practice of polygamy and polygamous cohabitation.

"It is proved without denial that the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, one of the leading authorities of the Mormon Church and still circulated by that church as a book equal in authority to the Bible and the Book of Mormon, contains the revelation regarding polygamy, of which the following is a part:

Section 132.
"61. And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood: If any man espouse a virgin and desires to espouse another and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins and have vowed to no other man, then he is justified—he can not commit adultery, for they are given unto him; for he can not commit adultery with that that belongeth to him and to no one else.
62. And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law he can not commit adultery, for they belong to him and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.
64. And again, verily, verily, I say unto you, if any man hath a wife who holds the keys of this power and he teaches unto her the law of my priesthood, as pertaining to these things, then shall she believe and administer (plural wives) unto him or she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord your God, for I will destroy her; for I will magnify my name upon all those who receive and abide in my law."

"Other publications of the Mormon Church are still circulated among the members of that church with the knowledge and by the authority of the church officials, which contain arguments in favor of polygamy. The leaders in this church, the first presidency and the twelve apostles, connive at the practice of taking plural wives, and have done so ever since the manifesto was issued which purported to put an end to the practice.

"The list of those who are thus guilty of violating the laws of the State and the rules of public decency is headed by Joseph F. Smith, the first president, prophet, seer and revelator of the Mormon Church, who testified in regard to that subject as follows:

"Mr. Smith. I have had born to me eleven children since 1890, each of my wives being the mother of from one to two of those children.

The Chairman. Mr. Smith, I will not press it, but I will ask if you have any objection to stating how many children you have in all.

Mr. Smith. I have had born to me, sir, forty-two children—twenty-one boys and twenty-one girls—and I am proud of every one of them.

The Chairman. Do you obey the law in having five wives at this time and having them bear to you 11 children since the manifesto of 1890?

Mr. Smith. Mr. Chairman, I have not claimed that in that case I have obeyed the law of the land.

The Chairman. That is all. Mr. Smith. I do not claim so, and, as I said before, that I prefer to stand my chances against the law."

"The first presidency and twelve apostles not only connive at violation of, but protect and honor the violators of the laws against polygamy and polygamous cohabitation.

"It will be seen by the foregoing that not only do the first presidency and twelve apostles encourage polygamy by precept and teaching, but that a majority of the members of that body of rulers of the Mormon people give the practice of polygamy still further and greater encouragement by living the lives of polygamists, and this openly and in the

MRS. HAGUEWOOD TELLS OF STRANGE EXPERIENCES

Anderson Woman Declares She Was Forced to Endure So Much.

DETAILS REMARKABLE

Has Words of Advice for Those Who May Be Experiencing Same Troubles She Did.

"I think every ailing person should take Tanlac," declared Mrs. Girtle Haguewood, of 60 Riverside, Anderson, in a statement she gave May 26th. "I suffered from an aggravated liver trouble and kidney trouble, and I was on the verge of a breakdown when I began taking Tanlac. I frequently had dizzy spells so severe that I could hardly walk, and then I was in considerable pain, too. My back was so weak and hurt me so much I had to have help in leaving my bed, and I had the most awful attacks of sick headache. I could do no work and was just able to be out of bed.

"But the Tanlac got me in fine shape and I am strong and hearty now. My skin has cleared up a lot and I do not have those dizzy spells now. I have a fine appetite, too, and I never belch up my food as I used to. The Tanlac got my kidneys and back in fine shape, too, and I'm not troubled with headache. It is a great medicine, Tanlac is."

Tanlac, the Master Medicine, is sold by Dickson's Drug Store, Manning; H. W. Nettles, Jordan; Shaw & Plowden; New Zion; Farmers' Supply Co., Silver; D. C. Rhame, Summerton.—adv.

sight of all their followers in the Mormon Church.

"And not only do the president and majority of the twelve apostles of the Mormon Church practice polygamy, but in the case of each and every one guilty of this crime who testified before the committee, the determination was expressed openly and defiantly to continue the commission of this crime without regard to the mandates of the law or the prohibition contained in the manifesto.

"It appears that the 'prophet, seer, and revelator' of the Mormon Church pronounces a decree of eternal condemnation throughout all eternity upon all members of the Mormon Church who, having taken plural wives, fail to continue the polygamous relation.

"The testimony upon that subject, taken as a whole, can leave no doubt upon any reasonable mind that those who are in authority in the Mormon Church are encouraging the practice of polygamy among the members of that church, and that polygamy is being practiced to such an extent as to call for the severest condemnation in all legitimate ways."

Mormonism is a political peril. It corrupts politics, contemplates political domination, and is disloyal to the government. The following from the report of the Senatorial Committee referred to above will be amply sufficient to prove these statements:

"The first presidency and twelve apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints exercise a controlling influence over the action of the members of that church in secular affairs as well as spiritual matters.

The method by which the first presidency and twelve apostles of the Mormon Church direct all the temporal affairs of the members of that church, under the claim that such direction is by divine authority, is by requiring the members of the church in all their affairs, both spiritual and temporal, and especially the latter, to 'take counsel.'

The phrase 'to take counsel' does not mean that the members of the church shall inquire of those above them in all cases concerning their action, but that they shall receive counsel—that is, direction—from those above them, and this counsel they are to implicitly obey. If they fail to do so they are excommunicated from the church and deprived, not only of privileges of membership in the church, as they are assured and believe, they thereby forfeit all hope of happiness in a future life. The hierarchy at the head of the Mormon Church has for years past formed a perfect union between the Mormon Church and the State of Utah, and the church through its head dominates the affairs of the State in things both great and small.

In order to realize the potency of the influence which the ruling authorities of the Mormon Church exercise in political affairs, it must be kept in mind that the influence proceeds from men who are believed by their followers to be oracles of God; that whatever they speak is the word of God; and that the first presidency of the Mormon Church and the council of the twelve apostles are the mouthpiece of God.

The fact that the adherents of the Mormon Church hold the balance of

power in politics in some of the States enables the first presidency and the twelve apostles to control the political affairs of those States to any extent they may desire.

The union of church and state in those States under the domination of the Mormon leaders is most abhorrent to our free institution."

The following paragraph from the same Senatorial report will show the disloyalty to the government in the oath of vengeance:

"You and each of you do covenant and promise that you will pray and never cease to pray Almighty God to avenge the blood of the prophets upon this nation, and that you will teach the same to your children and to your children's children unto the third and fourth generation.

The obligation herefor set forth is an oath of disloyalty to the Government which the rulers of the Mormon Church require, or at least encourage, every member of that organization to take."

Mormonism is also a great spiritual peril. It is true many passages of Scripture are incorporated in their Articles of Faith, but these passages are shamefully perverted in their expositions. The doctrine of the union of State and church not only strikes at the foundation of our free institutions, but saps the very life of the spiritual forces of those thus enlisted. The divine right of the priesthood, which is the secret of their power over the ignorant and superstitious masses, paralyzes the spiritual energies of the devotees of this system.

It is time for the people of this entire country to awake to the social, political, and spiritual peril of Mormonism and to strive by all proper methods to exterminate this dangerous sect.

SOLDIERS ESCAPE BURNING CARS

Rathbone, N. Y., Oct. 28.—A mysterious fire destroyed two cars of a Pullman train on the Erie railroad early this morning. Soldiers of the second Idaho infantry, who were on the train, were unable to account for the origin of the fire.

Members of Company C, who occupied the cars which were burned, swarmed out by doors and windows. They could take but little with them and lost all their extra equipment and most of their personal effects. The loss was estimated at \$60,000.

ADVERTISE IN THE TIMES.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, County of Clarendon

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS.

Stepney Stukes, Harison Stukes, John Stukes and Lucretia Jones, Plaintiffs,

against Joseph Stukes, Beulah Johnson, Julius Johnson, Ervin Johnson, Mace Johnson, Lucy Boyd, Carolina Johnson, Lois Mitchell, Haskell Rivers, Robbie Rivers, Laura Ann Cantey, Lorena Rivers, Marie Johnson, T. Rivers, Dozier Rivers, Moses Rivers, Hattie Rivers, James Rivers, Allen Rivers, Arthur Rivers, Nellie Rivers, Lily R. Circletight, Etta Hayes, Amanda Rave-nel, Abraham Rivers, Wilkie Rivers, Charlotte Rivers, Josh Robinson, Henry Robinson, Clara (sometimes called Sissy) Cantey, Agnes Hatfield, Madison Robinson, Julius Robinson, Allison Robinson, Eliza Hilton, C. M. Davis and Joseph E. Davis, the last two as co-partners doing business as C. M. Davis & Son, J. A. Weinberg, J. W. Hilton, Martha Lemon, John Doe and Richard Roe, the last two being fictitious names for the unknown heirs of Henry Rivers, deceased, Defendants.

SUMMONS FOR RELIEF (Complaint not served.) To the Defendants above named: You are hereby summoned and required to answer the Complaint in this action which has been filed in the office of the Clerk of Court of Common Pleas for the said County, and to serve a copy of your answer to the said Complaint on the subscribers at their office in Manning, South Carolina, within twenty days after service thereof, exclusive of the day of such service; and if you fail to answer the Complaint within the time aforesaid, the plaintiff in this action will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

The Defendants, Robbie Rivers, Lorena Rivers, T. Rivers, Dozier Rivers, Moses Rivers, Hattie Rivers, Allen Rivers, Lily R. Circletight, Eliza Hilton and Henry Rivers will also take notice that the original Summons and Complaint in this action were filed in the office of the Clerk of Court of Common Pleas for Clarendon County, South Carolina, on the 29th day of June, 1917.

Dated—A. D. 1917. D. Dant & Ellerbe, Plaintiff's Attorneys.