

## INTRODUCTION

This brief treatise is addressed primarily to the members of the Masonic fraternity. The author requests Masons and others who may read it to patiently consider its contents, and in a spirit of fairness and reason determine whether the ground taken by the writer is truth or error.

In 1925 a booklet was published by the Grand Lodge F. & M. of Utah, entitled "Mormonism and Masonry." The author, S. H. Goodwin, P. G. M., in his introduction, "A note by the way," says: "The present is the fifth printing, in pamphlet and book form of 'Mormonism and Masonry.' As to the number of times it has appeared in Masonic magazines and papers the writer would not hazard a single guess, but he does know that it has been printed in many parts of the United States, in Australia and South Africa."

It is evident from this statement that the publication has had wide circulation.

In 1927 another booklet, entitled, "Additional Studies in Mormonism and Masonry," written by the same author, was published, in which the subject treated in the first issue is further discussed.

The author states that the purpose of his publication is to present reasons why "The Masonry of Utah and the Masonry of the entire country could not open its doors to members of the Latter-day organization."

We grant that Masons and other secret societies organized for a purpose which the members regard as advantageous and proper are at liberty to define the qualifications under which persons may be admitted to membership. If they do not care to admit into their order persons who are affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as the Mormon Church, or members of the Catholic Church, or people who are not identified with any church it is their privilege, and the Mormon Church will make no protest. But if they declare their reason to the world and in doing so, either wilfully or from lack of proper understanding of the subject treated, reach conclusions which are wrong and which tend to create prejudice and establish unjustifiable and incorrect conclusions in regard to the character of a person, or the doctrine of a church, they have committed a great wrong.

The Mormon Church has no quarrel with Free Masonry or any other organization which is formed for a righteous purpose. It advises its members to refrain from identifying themselves with any secret, oath-bound society. It believes that there exist within the Church all the elements which are necessary for spiritual, social, and ethical development of its members. We have observed that affiliation with secret, oath-bound organizations tends to draw people away from the performance of Church duties. It is difficult to serve two masters and do justice to both. Since the establishment of the Church many persons have drifted away from it and become members of

other organizations. We have not discovered an instance where such change has made a man or woman more honest, moral, temperate, and exemplary.

On the other hand men and women from all walks of life, Masons included, who have identified themselves with the Church, testify that their mode of life has been entirely changed. From despair they have found hope, from sin they have found redemption; their lives have been made cleaner, more wholesome, happier. If this is true, is it not proper that the Church advise its members to seek within the circle of its membership the association which is so necessary to provide the ethical atmosphere which is indispensable to human welfare and happiness.

A Mason who may become a member of the Mormon Church is in no way restrained from affiliation with his lodge, nor does the fact that he is a Mason in any degree bar him from receiving the highest order of priesthood that can be conferred upon man, viz, the Melchizedek Priesthood.

As stated, the author of the treatise referred to declares that his purpose in treating the subject of Mormonism and Masonry is to call attention to various reasons why the Masonic lodges are not justified in admitting members of the Mormon Church into "the secrets of their order."

In justification of the attitude assumed he severely criticises the fundamental doctrines upon which the Mormon Church rests. He holds up to ridicule the character of Joseph Smith, who was the instru-

ment in the hands of the Lord in the opening of the present Gospel Dispensation. He objects to the interpretation of the scripture as contained in the standard works of the Church and declares that it was the prophet's knowledge of Masonry which prompted him to write the Book of Mormon and organize the Church. He endeavors to prove that the ordinances administered in Mormon temples are copied from the ceremonies of Masonry.

It is obvious to one familiar with the subject that "Mormonism and Masonry" is simply another of the many abortive attempts which have been made to explain the calling of Joseph Smith, and the opening of the Gospel Dispensation of the Fulness of Times by other means than the direct interposition of God our Father, and Christ our Lord, his Only Begotten Son.

It is the purpose of the writer of this reply to discuss the relationship of Mormonism to Freemasonry in a spirit of fairness and truth, to answer the criticisms of Mr. Goodwin, and leave Masons and Mormons and others who are not affiliated with either organization to decide whether the attitude assumed by the author of the booklet referred to is well taken.