

CHAPTER 3

DOCTRINAL REASONS FOR THE EXCLUSION OF MORMONS FROM THE "MYSTERIES OF MASONRY"

The author of "Mormonism and Masonry" says: "Masonry directs the attention of its initiates to the Bible, the inestimable gift of God to man for the rule and guide of his faith and conduct. The great light in Anglo-Saxon Masonry occupies a prominent and well known position in the ritual and lodge room."

He proceeds to ask if the Bible has become simply a pleasant memory to the Latter-day Saints, superseded, as he suggests that it has been, by the Book of Mormon and the living oracles, as claimed by the Church.

It having been admitted by the author that the Bible is the guide by which our faith and conduct should be governed, the writer will proceed to answer the doctrinal objections which bar a member of the Mormon Church from becoming a Mason, using the Bible as his guide and authority.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

The first objection to which attention is called is the following: "The Church teaches that God the Father, as well as God the Son, is a corporeal personage. That Jesus Christ and his Father are two persons, each of them has an organized individual taber-

nacle embodied in material form, in the likeness of man, and possessing every organ, limb, and physical part that man possesses."

Without argument the following answer to the above objection is submitted:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen. 1:26, 27.)

"This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them. . ." (Gen. 5:1, 2.)

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Gen. 9:6.)

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person . . . sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Hebrews 1:1-3.)

"In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4:4.)

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: . . . who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." (Col. 1:13, 15.)

"Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" (John 14:8, 9.)

If the above scripture is true, if God created man in his own image, does it not logically follow that God must be in the form of man? If Jesus was the

Son of God, and the exact image of his Father, does it not follow that God our Father is in the exact image of the Christ? If it is true that whomsoever had seen Jesus had seen the Father, then the Father must be in the form of a man, for no one will deny the fact that Jesus Christ was a man. He was not only a man, but a man who possessed the attributes of a God, having power over all things, even death.

Every member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accepts this conception of God. "Mormonism and Masonry" says: "The conception of God herein set forth differs so radically from that held by Masons generally, that the question may well arise whether those who accept it would, or could, fit into the Masonic institution or system."

If Masonry will define its conception of God we will be better able to understand the "radical difference" to which the writer refers.

"Among the many doctrines, or principles, held by the Mormon Church—and in this instance, given place among its fundamental teachings—is that of continuous or immediate revelation." ("Mormonism and Masonry," Book 1, p. 53.)

Revelation is the act of revealing, disclosing or opening to view that which is hidden.

"Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21.)

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Tim. 3:16.)

When a man speaks by inspiration of God, his

words become revelation whether uttered in ancient, medieval or modern times.

Why should it appear strange that the Lord has communicated his will to his children who are here upon earth in our day, and used as his medium men who lived, and passed from mortal to immortal life centuries ago?

The ministration of heavenly messengers to Joseph Smith is in harmony with that which He has done throughout the ages.

The Apostle Paul was the enemy of the church. He persecuted the saints and even consented to their death. As he journeyed toward Damascus to continue his merciless persecutions, he says:

"At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

"And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? . . . And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." (Acts 26:13-15.)

As Paul bore witness of this visitation before King Agrippa, Festus cried out: "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

But Paul answering him said: "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

Paul had seen and heard. After a long and tragic ministry he died a martyr to this testimony which he continued to bear.

According to the best available information John, the disciple whom our Savior loved, was banished to the island of Patmos in the Aegean sea, where he was made to work in the stone quarries or mines. It was under these circumstances that the revelation known to us as the Apocalypse, or Revelation, the last book in the Bible, was communicated to him, from which we select the following:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."

Here follows this remarkable revelation without parallel in the Bible.

It will be observed that this was "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," coming from God to him and from him transmitted to John, an angel being the medium through whom it was delivered.

"And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things.

"Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." (Rev. 1:1; 22:8, 9.)

"And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

"And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three taber-

nacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” (Mark 9:2-5.)

The three instances selected from among many, viz.: The appearance of our Lord to Paul as he journeyed to Damascus, the messenger sent to John while he was a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos, and the appearance of Moses and Elias to Jesus and his companions, are sufficient to satisfy the reader that the appearance and ministry of heavenly messengers to mortal men is not unusual, and that these messengers, referred to as angels, are men who have lived in mortality and were sent back to earth with specific missions or messages of vital importance.

In the case of Paul it was a call to be a special witness to the Gentiles, to testify of the divine mission of our Lord, and bear witness that the redemption wrought out by Jesus Christ was to have effect upon all men, and was not for the descendants of Abraham alone, as the Jews had thought.

To John was revealed events which were to occur among the children of men who are upon our earth. The message definitely declares the divinity of Christ and his ultimate dominion over the earth. It predicts the banishment of Lucifer and his hosts, and redemption from death with which he has held mankind in bondage from the beginning, the bands of which are to be broken by means of the atonement wrought by Christ our Lord. It declares the restoration of the Gospel in these words:

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, hav-

ing the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." (Rev. 14: 6, 7; 18:4, 5.)

This scripture definitely declares the restoration of the gospel. It is to be restored by an angel who is to come from heaven, and is to be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and those who receive it are to be gathered together from among the peoples of the world.

When the disciples asked Jesus for a sign of his coming, among other things, he answered:

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24:14.)

With the restoration of the Gospel through Joseph Smith, and the activities of the Church since its organization, the scripture quoted from the revelation to St. John has been fulfilled.

The purpose of the visitation of Moses and Elias to Jesus and his companions is not made plain in the Bible. It is sufficient for our purpose to know that they did appear and minister to the Son of God.

Moses lived from 1738 to about 1618 B. C., and Elias, if we are to identify him with the Elijah of the Bible, lived about 929 B. C.