

## MORMONS AND MORMONISM—OLD AND NEW

By William M. Paden, Executive of National Missions for Utah

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As one compares the Mormon of fifty years ago with the Mormon of today one finds many changes in thought, feeling, and ways of life. Some of these are the natural outcome of the closer contacts of Mormons with the larger world, which has itself been changing. The Mormons are much more hospitable to outside influence than they were in the days of isolation and exclusiveness. Many of the changes have doubtless been due to the incursions of new thought, especially to the pressure of outside standards of education, citizenship, morals, manners, and religious character. They have not been universal and, in some communities, they have been destructive rather than constructive, of a distintegrating rather than a reintegrating type. In others the "die-hards" have stubbornly held their own, but in the cities, in the schools and the Mormon academies and colleges new ways of thinking and new attitudes towards the old-time essentials of Mormon faith and the full and final authority of Joseph Smith and his successors, or the Mormon priesthood, are evident.

### Lapsed Mormons

In isolated and unmissioned counties and communities, as in all dominantly Mormon villages and colonies, one finds a large percentage of the people without any active religious affiliations with the Mormon Church. For example, in Wayne County, in the far south, as in Rich County to the far north of Utah, at least thirty-three per cent of the people have little or no use for Mormonism as a religion and, as a rule, very little interest in any religion. This is not a mere Gentile guess concerning conditions, but finds confirmation in the Mormon report of church membership in these counties, and it also has the endorsement of the more serious resident Mormons of these communities. Some of this group are avowed apostates. The majority are apostates *de facto*; they may be called the paganizing group or the lost sheep of the house of Joseph.

In such communities, as in all distinctively Mormon settlements, there is another group quite as large, of those Mormons who stay in the church for what they can get out of it. They work in the church that they may work the church. They stand by it as the one most influential organization in their community. These men often secure and hold ecclesiastical positions of authority; they become stake presidents or counselors, or bishops. They have an eye to the business, social, and political values of the church; they have only secondary interest in the religious side of Mormonism. They are at once churchmen and secularists. The church is to them an institution, not an inspiration.

### A Part Use the Bible

The third class, made up of perhaps one-third of the Mormon people, seek and sometimes find religious values in Mormonism. They attend and keep up the Sunday services, and the priesthood meetings, or teach in the Sunday school. Many of them are sincere, devout, and earnest. The majority of these good Mormons accept the beliefs of their church without examination and pass them on as heirlooms. It is worthy of note, however, that even these steadfasters are, if not repudiating the peculiarities of the Mormon Church, neglecting to emphasize them as formerly. They do not testify in every speech that they know that Joseph Smith is a prophet; they use the Bible more than the Book of Mormon, and make more of the life of Christ than the life of this Mormon leader. They are also more ready than formerly to hold fellowship with all those who accept Christ as Saviour and Master.

A large body of the Mormons made up of all classes

is concerned with the care of the children and youth in Sunday schools and various young people's organizations. These societies are possibly next to the missionary propaganda the most effectual agencies now at work to recruit and hold the church together. Not only do these societies attract and enlist the children and youth, but they interest large numbers of parents, teachers, and younger leaders who have lost interest in the oft-repeated stores of old-time Mormon experiences and the cut-and-dried repetition of Mormon doctrines. During the past year a great Easter Sunday school service was almost free from distinctively Mormon markings. A children's day meeting in the tabernacle, also, aside from a brief and innocuous pageant covering the start of the Mormons for Utah, was more distinctively Christian than Mormon. Later in the day, however, when the president of the church and apostles got hold of the meeting and gave instructions to the officers, the meeting became Mormon true blue. The result was an interesting exhibition of reversion to the original type. Last year the Mormon young people had for their slogan, "We stand for the divinity of Christ." Joseph Smith was being put into the background. This year the leaders seem to have made note of this danger and Apostle Widtsoe gave out as the young people's slogan for this year, "We stand for a testimony of the divine mission of Joseph Smith." And the young people were asked to join in singing, "We Thank Thee, Oh God, for a Prophet." It should be said that in both these services, as in the meeting of the Y. M. I. A., many of the exercises were of the public school rather than of the church type. This is, however, true also of some of our own Christmas Day or young people's services.

### Partisan Fidelity

A fifth group of Mormons is made up of the more influential church leaders, professors, teachers, and professional men. Many of the conspicuous leaders stand for the old statements of faith as the regular party man stands for the Grand Old Party. Some defend the teachings of their fathers with the zeal and skill of professional advocates. Some sidestep upon the peculiarities of their cult, and when called upon to testify they talk on the word of wisdom, thrift, sanitation, the use of home products, or what not; but some face facts and their interpretation, with intelligence and seriousness, and many of the teachers and professors are striving to fit their newer learning in with the old teachings and traditions of their church. They are putting new wine in old bottles, with a shrug of the shoulder as to the effect on the bottles.

Some of the more notable signs of change are to be found in the more modern books published by members of the Mormon Church. One of these recently published is "Discourses of Brigham Young," edited by Dr. John Andreas Widtsoe, late president of the State University, now an apostle. It is a fat volume of 760 pages, containing excerpts from the 363 sermons preached by Brigham Young and taken from the first nineteen volumes of the *Journal of Discourses*. This volume has been copyrighted by Heber J. Grant for the Church of Latter Day Saints. The first edition of 15,000 was sold within a few weeks and the second edition of 10,000 is now nearly exhausted, though the book sells at \$2.50 per copy. It was evidently called forth by the free use of quotations of another sort from Brigham Young's discourses by Mr. Werner in his recent life of President Young. One may be sure that Dr. Widtsoe does not exhume such samples of Brigham Young's preaching as are found in Mr. Werner's book, not that Mr.

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Werner did not get his quotations from these discourses and not that he quoted only the rawest passages. The excerpts now published by the church give evidence of certain changes in the manner, morals, and theology of the Mormon leaders.

All of President Young's many deliverances in the defense of and enforcement of plural marriage are omitted save one, which is by the way of apology for the practice and in defense of the Mormon doctrine of the pre-existence of spirits. Here is the quotation: "There are multitudes of pure and holy spirits waiting to take tabernacles. Now what is our duty? It is the duty of every righteous man and woman to prepare tabernacles for all the spirits they can. This is the reason why the doctrine of plurality of wives was revealed. It was that noble spirits which are waiting for tabernacles might be brought forth."

Of course, Dr. Widtsoe does not quote Brigham Young's deliverance in a previous sermon (Vol. 3-266): "Now if any of you will deny the plurality of wives and continue to do so, I promise that they will be damned, and I go further and say take this revelation or any other revelation that the Lord has given us and deny it in your feelings and you will be damned."

The doctrine that Adam is the God of the human race is also omitted from this selection of Brigham Young's discourses. It is evident that the church authorities are no longer willing to stand sponsor for this doctrine. While comparing Dr. Widtsoe's quotation concerning Adam with the sermons as originally published, one finds that he has quoted all around but has omitted the following statements. In a previous sermon he had asserted that Adam was the God of the human race and the only god with whom we had to do. This was evidently strong doctrine, even for the Mormons of his day, so he gaily modifies his assertion, saying: "Whether Adam is the personage we should consider as our Heavenly Father is a considerable mystery to a good many. I do not care for a moment how that is. It is no matter whether we are to consider him as our God or whether it is his father or grandfather, for in either case we are all of one species." So Brigham Young prepared the way for the repudiation of the Adam-God doctrine but enhanced the doctrine still held by the orthodox Mormon leaders that God and men are of one species.

It is only fair to note that Brigham Young himself sometimes repudiated certain accepted beliefs of his day. "I am no stereotyped Mormon," he exclaimed one day. "Are we going to stand still? Away with stereotyped Mormons." This saying of Brigham Young's is worthy of consideration by the Mormons of today and that it is quoted by Dr. Widtsoe opens the way for progressive changes. In another sermon Brigham Young says: "Knowledge increases among God's peo-

ple; they know more of the things of the Kingdom of God today than they did in the days of Joseph Smith." It also surprised me to find that Brigham Young had spoken with hope and appreciation of John Wesley and other Christian leaders, and that Dr. Widtsoe has given prominence to his declaration as regards the place there is for us sectarians in the Father's house of many mansions in his selection from the discourses. He quotes Brigham Young as saying: "I never passed John Wesley's church in London without stopping to look at it. Was he a good man? Yes. I suppose him to have been, by all accounts, as good as ever walked on this earth, according to his knowledge. Has he entered into rest? Yes, greater than ever entered into his mind to expect, and so have thousands of others of the various denominations." Again he said: "There are mansions in sufficient number to suit the different classes of mankind, and variety will always exist through all eternity. Then do not imagine that if the Kingdom of God is established over all the earth that all the people will be Latter Day Saints."

Yet these selections from the discourses of Brigham Young as endorsed by Heber J. Grant are essentially and distinctively Mormonism of the conventional type. We find in almost every chapter such teachings as that there is a plurality of gods, that men and gods are of the same species, that God is a personage with body, parts, and passions, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, seer, and revelator, and the founder of a new dispensation, that the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants are inspired and authoritative, and that the president of the church is the channel of all revelations of God to the Church. Brigham Young is quoted by Dr. Widtsoe as saying: "I could give revelation upon the subject of tithing and building a temple in the name of the Lord,—for the light is in me; and were it written it would then be a written revelation as truly as are the revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants." Here is one of the possibilities, and I believe probabilities, of change in the teachings of the Mormon Church. Dr. Widtsoe quotes Brigham Young as saying: "I do not even believe that there is a single revelation among the many God has given to the church that is perfect in its fullness." So presidents and apostolic quorums in days to come may, in accord with Mormon doctrine and practice, add to or set aside as obsolete various articles in the constitution and various rules for the government of the Mormon Church. As good kings or bad kings carried the Jewish people forward or backward, so under a Mormon theocracy, wise or foolish, Christian or non-Christian, prophets, seers, and revelators, may with their apostles swing the Mormon Church now towards and now away from the truth as it is in Jesus.

### Incautious Lady

"Where did you steal that rug?"

"I didn't steal it. A lady gave it to me and told me to beat it."

## A WOMAN'S LETTER FROM WASHINGTON, D. C.

### The Ku Klux Klan Parade

on September 13, 1926, was altogether the most picturesque company of people since the close of the Civil War. Then it was the crutches and the canes which touched the imagination, now it is the picturesque costume. In long white robes and the picturesque white-peaked caps, but with unmasked faces, the group at some places numbered from thirty to thirty-two abreast and took three hours in passing my point. Near my home were two long sight-seeing cars which came from the State of Georgia. The Knights of Columbus asked the President to forbid the Klan marching. He replied that he had permitted the Knights to march and must grant others the same privilege. Officers and leaders had picturesque costumes of several colors and there were twenty-five bands of music. The Klan sang such hymns as "Onward Christian Soldiers." The order claims 5,000,000 members.

### The Gospel Mission

has been blessed spiritually, but we are yet behind financially. We need 120 more sheets for dormitories, sixty-three by ninety inches. We are now for a short time supplied with sheets for children's cots. They wear out so rapidly. Pennsylvania churches, remember us with your harvest home. Have a barrel at the chapel of the Sunday school and have each member bring a potato or apple and send to our forlorn, homeless ones.

### What if This Were Your Son?

A man recently came to the Mission from a prison in the west. He stopped at his father's home in a large western city to see his wealthy father. The latter refused to see him till he had made good. The poor fellow came to the Mission broken and he said, "Do help me to find Jesus if He will help me be a good, honorable man." He stood a severe civil service examination including trigonometry and kindred branches, and when he has made good will probably get a good position in engineering from his government. Help him by your prayers and gifts to the Mission. Is it worthwhile?

### St. Paul's and Epiphany Lutheran Churches

of Washington, D. C., are steadily preparing to move toward Chevy Chase. They have secured an entire acre of ground and have an architect preparing plans.

The Luther Memorial Church will lose some members but some also will not follow St. Paul's. Most of St. Paul's people have automobiles and distance does not matter as much as formerly.

### What Salvation Does for a Man

I have told this story before but wish to repeat it for some who do not understand the renovating character of what is called conversion. About twelve years ago a man so lousy, dirty and drunken that one would hesitate to touch him, kneeled at the Mission and putting up two hands said, "Lord, I do not know how