

XI

WHO AND WHAT ARE THE MORMONS?

'THE Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints'—commonly called the Mormons, after the *Book of Mormon*, on which their religion is founded—owes its origin to a man called Joseph Smith, who was born at Sharon, Vermont, on 23rd December 1805. His father, a small farmer, moved to Palmyra, New York, in 1815, and four years later, to Manchester. By every trustworthy record, we are assured that young Joseph had very little education, and owing to his constant 'fits' was not subjected to any discipline.

Later in life, he openly described himself as 'a rough stone, desiring the learning of Heaven alone.' Certainly, he had very little of the learning of this world; he was described by some of his fellow-townsmen as the 'illiterate son of an ignorant father,' and by the historiographer of the Mormons as being 'but poorly educated.'

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So far as we can gather, he was subject to what we should now call 'epileptic fits,' though he and his friends afterwards described them as 'visions' and 'trances.' In one of these visions, when he was a boy of fifteen, he claimed that he had received a 'divine call' as a Prophet of the Most High. Three years later, in 1823, he assured his friends that he had been visited by a 'glorious messenger' from the presence of God. His own account of the visit is as follows. 'He (the

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angel) said that there was a book deposited, written upon golden plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Saviour to the ancient inhabitants. Also that there were two stones in silver bows deposited with the plates, and the possession and use of these stones was what constituted seers in ancient and former times, and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book. . . . While he was conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it.'

Four years later, according to his own account, the angel of the Lord delivered the plates into his hands. By the angel's command he dug them up 'on the west side of a hill, not far from the top, about four miles from Palmyra, in the county of Ontario, and near the mail-road which leads thence to the little town of Manchester.' These gold plates, according to the Mormon records, were 'nearly eight inches long by seven wide, a little thinner than ordinary tin, and bound together by three rings running through the whole. The volume of gold plates was altogether about six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed.'¹ The unsealed part was written or engraved with small beautifully formed hieroglyphics or characters in an unknown language, which the Mormons have since called 'Reformed Egyptian.'

Along with the gold plates in the stone box Smith

¹ *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, article 'Mormons' by the historiographer of the Mormon Church

states that he found an instrument, a peekstone, not unlike a pair of spectacles, by means of which, when he looked through them, he, though an unlettered young man, could read this unknown 'Reformed Egyptian'—for which there was no other known key. He called this mysterious pair of spectacles 'Urim and Thummim,' and by its aid he claimed that he was able to translate these ancient indecipherable records into modern English.

What this so-called 'Reformed Egyptian' writing can possibly mean, no scholar can hazard. Hieroglyphic writing in Egypt in both its forms—hieratic and demotic—remained constant and unchanged from the fourth or fifth dynasty up till the fourth or fifth century A.D., when it was superseded. Historically, this leaves no possible room for any such development as this 'Reformed Egyptian.' Moreover, when we consider with what unflagging patience and research our best scholars pursued the deciphering of Egyptian writing, and yet took generations to discover the secret—and that mainly by the chance discovery of the famous Rosetta Stone—it is stupendous to think that Joseph Smith, with or without the magical glasses, could read it off at dictation speed! It would need to be an amazingly *reformed* Egyptian—perhaps reformed into American—for this man or any other to translate any form of Egyptian hieroglyphic.

The story continues that he carried these gold plates home and began to translate them by means of the magic spectacles. We are told that he sat behind a blanket or curtain with the precious gold plates in his hands, and dictated through the curtain his translation to scribes on the other side, who took down his words. This copy became what was called *The Book of Mormon*,

begun at Manchester in 1827 and finished at Fayette, New York, in 1829. The original manuscript, taken down from his dictation, has disappeared ; only a duplicate made by Smith's principal scribe, Oliver Cowdery, now remains, containing however Smith's preface with its original mis-spellings, wonky grammar, solecisms, and vulgarisms.

But the best of the story remains. What happened to the precious gold plates ? They were truly 'precious,' not only as gold, but more so as a solid and genuine proof of Smith's story of his revelation. How satisfactory and convincing the production of these gold plates would have been to rebut the doubts and objections of any unbeliever ! But alas, the gold plates have vanished. Smith tells us that as soon as the translation of the hieroglyphics was completed by the aid of the magic spectacles, the angel returned in person and took away the gold plates back to Heaven. For the purposes of proof regarding this most astounding claim, the least we can say is that this was a most inconvenient disappearance. The only possible proof of these 'material' gold plates was to produce the material itself. He does not mention what happened to the spectacles, though presumably these also went heavenwards with the plates. At least, neither the stone box nor the plates were ever seen again. All we have is the copied account made by the scribes from Smith's translation from behind the blanket. A plain man may be forgiven for saying that the story might well have been taken from the *Arabian Nights*, with its magic carpet and its Aladdin's Lamp. And perhaps the one is just as capable of proof or verification as the other !

What was this *Book of Mormon* which Joseph Smith claims to have translated from the gold plates, by means of the magic spectacles? Here is his own summary of the contents of this miraculous book :

‘ We are informed by these records that America, in ancient times, has been inhabited by two distinct races of people. The first were called Jaredites, and came directly from the Tower of Babel. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem about six hundred years before Christ. They were principally Israelites, of the descendants of Joseph. The Jaredites were destroyed, about the time that the Israelites came from Jerusalem, who succeeded them in the inhabitation of the country. The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the end of the fourth century. The remnant are the *Indians*, who now inhabit the country. This book also tells us that Our Saviour made His appearance upon this continent after His resurrection : that He planted the gospel here in all its fullness and richness, and power and blessing ; that they had apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists ; the same order, the same priesthood, the same ordinances, gifts, powers, and blessing, as was enjoyed on the Eastern Continent ; that the people were cut off in consequence of their transgressions ; that the last of their prophets who existed among them was commanded to write an abridgment of their prophecies, history, etc., and to hide it up in the earth, and that it should come forth and be united with the Bible for the accomplishment of the purposes of God in the last days.’¹

¹ Smith’s article ‘Mormonism,’ in *An Original History of the Religious Denominations of the United States*, by I. D. Rupp, 1844, p. 4.

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This is Joseph Smith's own rendering of the contents of the *Book of Mormon*—'An account written by the hand of Mormon,' the last prophet of ancient days, before America was swamped in darkness. Let us detail its claims in plain words: (i) The American Indians are the lost ten tribes of Israel. (ii) Jesus came in person after His resurrection and brought the full gospel to the ancient people of America. (iii) These American Indians in old days, thus evangelized by Jesus Himself, had all the orders of apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers, and possessed a full Christian civilization. (iv) All this civilization, so full and rich, was none the less lost and submerged in utter darkness and ignorance. (v) Mormon, the last of these Christian prophets, wrote down on plates of gold this amazing story in indecipherable hieroglyphics—'Reformed Egyptian'—and then dug the plates into a hill, in a stone box, along with a magic pair of spectacles; (vi) Centuries afterwards, an angel revealed this astonishing secret to Joseph Smith, an uneducated man, who was chosen to be Mormon's successor and God's prophet. (vii) By the aid of the magic spectacles Joseph Smith translated this hidden record of the past from an indecipherable language. And (viii) This record and revelation should be '*united with the Bible*' as God's revelation to man—'*united with the Bible*' as its equal and necessary supplement.

3

The second phase of Smith's career as 'Prophet, Seer, and Revelator' began with the publication of *The Book of Commandments*. This, with *The Book of Doctrines and Covenants*, contains his constant revelations 'for the

building up of the Kingdom of God in the last days.' These oracles deal with the Bible, with the duties of his people, with rites and customs, and finish up with predictions of the Second Advent. They form the basis for the Mormon belief which looks for a continuance of apostolic revelations and miracles, the gift of tongues, faith-healing, prophecies, an American Zion, a coming Millennium, and a rebirth of the world under Christ's new rule.

The formation of this new church, especially owing to its original advocacy of polygamy, did not pass without serious opposition from the American people. The Mormons were at constant strife with their neighbours, and especially with the good citizens of any of the various towns where they chose to settle; and in consequence of this they were always forced to keep moving farther west. Regarding their progress in numbers and influence, I quote from their historiographer. 'The new religion spread rapidly and gained many converts. Branches of the church were established in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, the British Provinces, and the New England States. The prophet was fiercely attacked by the leaders and preachers of the other religious denominations, but held his ground firmly. Though but poorly educated, he was a formidable opponent in the polemical field. In January 1831, in compliance with revelation, the church moved westward and established its headquarters in Kirkland, Ohio, where it began to thrive amazingly. In the summer of 1831 a colony from Kirkland migrated to Missouri, which had been revealed to the Mormon prophet as the chosen site for the city of Zion.'¹ Note in the by-going two

¹ The Mormon historiographer's article 'Mormons,' in *Chambers's Encyclopædia*

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things (i) the historiographer's open admission that Smith was 'but poorly educated,' and (ii) the fact that Missouri had been 'revealed' as the chosen site for the New Zion.

The historiographer's admission that Smith was 'but poorly educated' introduces us to what must be considered as the only real problem in Mormonism, viz. how an ill-educated man like Joseph Smith could have invented such an elaborate system of rules and ideas, with many interesting historical references, ingenious speculations, and imaginative flights, and moreover how he could have expounded them in a style of writing apparently foreign to his ordinary speech and range of culture. His own followers regard this interesting fact as the best proof that his work was indeed a 'revelation' in a real sense ; for they freely admit, even boast, that his usual level of knowledge and speech was low and mean. On the other hand the charge of his enemies, that the whole system is merely a clever invention and fraud, does not touch the problem ; for this charge does not explain, and cannot explain, how such an ill-educated man could produce so elaborate a system. This is a bigger problem than most people imagine. It requires an exceedingly able scholar to foist a highly wrought-out fraud that lasts for over a century upon the public, however credulous. The mere credulity of the people in any case does not explain the matter ; for the elaborate system, expressed in fairly dignified language, and with some interesting historical speculations, still remains unexplained.

A former explanation of this puzzle—that Joseph Smith concocted history from an old romance of pre-historic America written in Ohio in 1812 by Solomon Spaulding, a Congregational minister—has had to be

given up. The theory was that Smith, aided by Sidney Rigdon, one of his friends and an ex-Baptist minister, used this old romance as the basis of the story of Mormon. But the recovery in 1885 of the original manuscript of Spaulding's story has proved, at least to the Saints themselves, that there is no resemblance between this and the *Book of Mormon*. 'The theory is further invalidated by the fact that it is impossible to show how, when, or through whom Smith could have obtained one of the two copies of the Spaulding MS.'¹

Perhaps the only theory that may explain the phenomenon is the psychological hypothesis of 'dissociated personality.' Smith lived in an age of great theological debate, when the hedgerows and the taverns were the scenes of general discussion. Professor Jastrow the psychologist considers that people like Smith can absorb, in their unconscious activity, many ideas and expressions which they do not normally understand, and then in their 'visions' and 'trances' or under some self-hypnotism, can speak with apparent ease of ideas and expressions quite foreign to their usual intelligence. There have been proved cases of people with dissociated and multiple personality. Smith certainly was a pathological case; and in his visions and fainting fits, like many other cases of dissociated personality, he may have been able to recall ideas only half assimilated by his normal intelligence, and could speak in an accent and language quite different from his normal. Mere 'fraud' and clever 'invention' only aggravate the problem, for this makes Smith to be much more accomplished than either friends or foes believed. Be the solution what it may, I am certain

¹ *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, 'Saints, Latter-Day'

that it is psychological in its nature. In his pathological 'fits' he was able to recall ideas of which he was not aware in his usual consciousness, and he spoke in Biblical language which he had unconsciously absorbed from the general discussions of his day. Moreover, we must remember that among his earliest friends was the man Sidney Rigdon, to whom I have referred, an ex-Baptist preacher, who was a considerable Biblical scholar, and learned in history and literature, a man of wide ideas. Whether Smith could normally understand his friend's ideas and language is beside the point, so long as he could recall and use them in his moments of 'visionary' elevation.

To return to our history. In spite of the 'revelation' about Missouri, this was not to be the end of their migration. Fresh troubles, due to hot strife on both sides, forced the Mormons to go still farther west. They moved to the banks of the Mississippi, at or near Commerce, Hancock County, Illinois, where they again bought homesteads and founded the city of Nauvoo. (By the way, they always proved themselves a most industrious people.) I quote again from the Mormon historiographer: 'After a few years of comparative peace and prosperity, the tempest of persecution again burst upon the Mormon community. Governor Ford ordered into service several hundred men, had Joseph Smith arrested with his brother Hyrum and immured in Carthage gaol. In the afternoon of 27th June 1844, a mob of about one hundred and fifty men with blackened faces broke into the gaol and shot the two brothers Smith dead. The assassins were never brought to justice. Mormonism was now thought to be doomed, but under the leadership of Brigham Young it survived the shock of its prophet's martyrdom.'

Perhaps that unruly mob did Mormonism its biggest indirect service, for its supporters were now able to speak of Joseph Smith as 'God's martyr.' If the rioters had only let this queer religion alone, it might have died its own natural death among people of any enlightenment. We can however understand—partially at least—the fury of that wild mob. They believed that this man and his church, by their proclamation of the rights of Mormons to marry as many wives as they cared, were undermining the moral integrity of the nation and the laws of Christian decency. This is no possible excuse for the brutal conduct and lawlessness of the mob, but it does allow us to see some of the motives which led them to commit their vicious crime.

In the spring of 1847 Brigham Young, now at the head of the church, started with a picked band for the Rocky Mountains. They arrived in the valley of the Great Salt Lake, the site of their present city, then almost virgin desert, and began to plough the land and put in crops the same day. Seven hundred more wagons arrived that autumn, and one thousand wagons in the following autumn, 1848. In December 1844 Brigham Young had been officially chosen President of the church, an office left vacant since the death of Joseph Smith. From then they went on to build a great city and form a state of their own, a sure monument of their enthusiasm and industry. In 1849 a provisional government was formed, a state constitution adopted, and a delegate sent to Congress to ask for admission into the Union. This request was refused at the time because of their beliefs about marriage and the family, and it was not until as late as 1895, *after they had officially foresworn their practice of polygamy*, that they were admitted into the United States as a

State of the Federal Union. In 1904 their Church President, Joseph F. Smith, nephew of the founder, at the annual conference pronounced officially against all future polygamy. This does not mean that the Mormon State ever gave up this practice of polygamy *on principle*—for many of their writers since that time have tried to justify it in theory—but it does mean that the opinion of all the other states has exercised a restrictive and purifying influence on the early ideas and practices of the Mormon community.

4

What are the principles and teachings of this new church founded by Joseph Smith? As I have stated earlier, he produced three books on which his church is founded—the *Book of Mormon*, the *Book of Commandments*, and the *Book of Doctrines and Covenants*.

The quality of these and other writings may perhaps be best judged by the *Book of Mormon*. As we have already seen, this professes to be a translation, by the aid of the magic glasses, of ancient writings in 'Reformed Egyptian,' some of them over two thousand years old. The question arises—what claim have these books to any historical accuracy? Alas! that vicious thing, modern criticism, has somewhat spoiled the picture. Let us take one or two instances. The speech of Nephi, who presumably lived before Jesus, contains quotations, word for word, from the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, first drawn up and published in the early seventeenth century. A speech of Lehi states the exact heretical tenets of an obscure sect which flourished in New York in Joseph Smith's own day. Again, on page 19 of this *Book of Mormon*—composed, let us

remember, by the dead Mormon in the early centuries after Christ—we have an exact verbal transcription of Luke iii.4, and John i.26-27, as given in the Authorized Version of the New Testament which was only published in A.D. 1611.

Again on page 47, Nephi in his speech talks about finding 'the cow and the ox, the ass and the horse' in America about the year 500 B.C. But even Macaulay's famous 'schoolboy' should know that these animals did not exist in America until they were introduced there by Europeans after the discovery of the continent! And to crown all, Lehi concludes one of his speeches by quoting some lines from *William Shakespeare*! There are some folk nowadays who believe that Shakespeare was Francis Bacon. But we are now forced to believe that the man who wrote *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* was a deported Jew, Lehi, who flourished in the backwoods of America about 500 B.C.

To normal sensible people all this might be only a delightful source of light entertainment and comedy, were it not for the stupendous credulity of many simple people who will believe anything if it is only sufficiently asserted. And the more miraculous it seems, the more will they swallow it!

I wonder if we realize how many people from our own country, especially women, have been induced to become Mormons and migrate to their colony in past days. I cannot of course give the latest figures, for I have never seen them published, but I can supply one striking example from their own historiographer. In 1837 some of their preachers landed in England at Liverpool. I quote, 'Three days later they began preaching in Preston, and met with such remarkable success that within the next eight months they had

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converted and baptized 2,000 people. This British Mission was the first foreign mission of the Mormon Church.'¹

From this it is evident that even a system which is built on such an incredible claim as the message of the hidden gold plates, and which teaches outlived patriarchal ideas of polygamy, can influence many simple-minded people. Some of our alarmed friends assert that the Mormons ought to be prohibited from preaching their doctrines, in our cities and villages. I disagree. We believe in freedom of speech, and we have no right to prevent any Church from declaring its faith. But nevertheless I think it is our duty to expose the origin and the claims of this religion. A man's best defence against error is some knowledge of the truth.

5

We have considered the origin of this new faith : Joseph Smith's claim that the angel revealed to him the hidden gold plates containing the message of Mormon, the last of the prophets, which he translated from 'Reformed Egyptian' by the aid of the magic spectacles. Let us now ask what the Latter-Day Saints believe and teach ?

In the expression of their faith and the statement of their doctrines, they are apparently in the general line of the reformed churches. Their articles of faith are defined thus : ' We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in his Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ all mankind may

¹ *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, article 'Mormons'

be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. We believe that these ordinances are (i) faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; (ii) repentance; (iii) baptism by immersion for remission of sins; (iv) laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. We believe that a man must be called of God by "prophecy and by the laying on of hands" by those who are in authority, to preach the gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof. We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive church, viz. apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc. We believe in the gifts of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healings, interpretation of tongues, etc. We believe the Bible to be the word of God, as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the *Book of Mormon* to be the word of God. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the ten tribes; that Zion will be built upon this [American] continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth, and that the earth will be renewed and will reach its paradisaic glory.' (Joseph Smith.)

The main point to observe in this statement is the claim that all authority to administer rites and sacraments must come directly from God, i.e. by special revelation. This differs entirely from the quite understandable theory of the 'inward light' as preached by George Fox and the Quakers, where the revelation is one given to the personal soul by God in prayer and communion. Here 'revelation' means authority given to the prescribed rulers of the church who can alone

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pass on the word of God to chosen workers, thus making the Mormon system as much a 'hierarchy' as any that exists in an autocratic church. This involves special revelation—if need be, daily revelation—to those who are in authority. It is not enough to have what we consider the full and perfect revelation given once for all in Jesus Christ. There must be revelation from God direct to special people, as occasion may demand. Incidentally, this gives us a by-glance on the Mormon view of Jesus Christ. His revelation of the mind and will of God must be continually *supplemented* by new revelations, which may be 'united with the Bible' for the guidance and direction of the Church in a strict equality. In other words, Christ's revelation is merely one of many.

Their argument continues as follows : Since direct revelation finished with the Apostles, the world had been without any divine authority to administer gospel ordinances until Joseph Smith came. 'There having been no communication with heaven for hundreds of years, the world was without divine authority to administer gospel ordinances until Joseph Smith came.' He received the holy apostleship and the keys of the kingdom, by his direct revelation from God. 'By John the Baptist, he was ordained to the lesser or Aaronic priesthood, and by Peter, James, and John to the higher or Melchizedek priesthood, receiving the Holy Apostleship and the keys of heaven with power to seal on earth so that it might be sealed in heaven.' He was commanded, in his own phrase, to gather the saints and build the New Jerusalem, to be ready for Christ's Second Coming. This he, or rather his successor, Brigham Young, did by the founding of Salt Lake City, which is indeed the modern Jerusalem !

‘Revelation from God is progressive’—and, of course, other revelations came! Among the later revelations to the Mormon Church are the doctrines of *Baptism for the Dead* and *Celestial Marriage*. Let us look at each of these in turn.

(a) *Baptism for the Dead*. The Mormon argument runs as follows. Since there was no revelation from the days of the Apostles until the coming of Joseph Smith, and since ordinances and sacraments are *invalid* without direct revelation, it follows at once that all the people who died since the days of the Apostles ‘died in their sins.’ Unless they are baptized in true Mormon fashion, they are irretrievably lost. ‘As there was no authority among men to administer the ordinances of the gospel from the days of the early apostles, or shortly after, to the time of the restoration of the priesthood to Joseph Smith the Prophet, all the baptisms during the intervening period were void.’ (We should not miss the intolerable conceit of this Mormon belief, or its vicious cruelty.) But the Mormon opens a door for these lost souls. A living person to-day may take the name of some dead person on his lips, and receive baptism on his behalf. ‘The friends of the dead, however, are permitted to take their names and be baptized in their stead, the ceremony being duly witnessed and recorded on earth, and accepted and ratified in heaven. Other ordinances may also be admitted by proxy, the living on behalf of the dead.’ Thus, if you believe that Augustine or Bunyan or Murray McCheyne, or your old saintly mother is lost in sin, you may, provided you are a true Mormon, take their names in baptism, and so save them from perdition. ‘As baptism is essential to the salvation of the living, it is likewise indispensable to the redemption of the

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dead.’¹ What can we think of this astounding creed ? What idea of God do these people have ? What is their notion of baptism ? And especially, what has this to do with the love and mercy of Jesus Christ ?

(b) *Celestial Marriage*. Let me quote from *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 132 : ‘ If any man espouse a virgin, and desire 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 is he justified ; he cannot commit adultery, for they are given unto him ; and if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong unto him, and they are given unto him ; therefore is he justified.’ One of their ‘ philosophers,’ Orson Pratt, tries to justify this promulgation of polygamy thus, ‘ Celestial marriage opens the way for all women who wish to marry to fill the measure of their creation. The larger progeny a man has, the greater will be the fullness of his eternal glory.’ One of their most recent apologists, Robert C. Webb, in his book, *The Real Mormonism*, writes as follows (as recently as 1916) : ‘ In this aspect of the matter, it is easy to see how that parenthood could be made to assume the aspect of a high virtue, involving that a person who had brought many souls into life was entitled to honour, as an instrument in God’s hands in the grand work of populating the world with a race whose leading attribute is the possession of the Divine Spirit. Because, however, the child-bearing capacity of the average woman is limited, it is evident that the only available means by which a man could multiply his offspring would be by taking to himself a plurality of wives.’

It is common knowledge that the United States

¹ *Articles of Faith*, Talmage, p. 152

Government stepped in and put down this wholesale advocacy and practice of polygamy—not without warfare, however, and not without Mormon defiance. Since then, cases have been authenticated before the courts in America to show that polygamy has been secretly practised within recent¹ times. Apart from that, and even admitting that the strong hand of Government has made polygamy impossible, the point to observe is that the belief in a plurality of wives has not been surrendered by the Mormons. Even their modern apologists twist the old dark days of the Bible Patriarchs to support their views. Thus Mormonism still remains, in principle and by its own apology, a social and moral danger; and there can be no doubt that its doctrines have only been suppressed by the general Christian view of the sacredness of marriage and the family.

6

Should Mormon missionaries in days to come—when travel facilities become easier—return to Europe and other lands to proclaim their religion, our people should at least know what they represent. Because of the recent invasion of ‘Gentiles’—the ordinary American citizen—into their territory in pursuit of commercial adventures, the leaders of their Church are very eager to import new converts to balance the vote of the State. Before the two World Wars all sorts of inducements were held out to emigrants, especially women; and no doubt many thousands were enticed to go. Simple people, however, should be warned that the invitation is not merely to emigration but to *proselytism*, to a religion which lives in the decayed customs of the

¹ *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*, article ‘Saints, Latter-Day’

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Patriarchs of the Old Testament, which disregards the moral standards of the Christian gospel, and which is founded on an imposture of heavenly gold plates written in 'Reformed Egyptian.'

The whole creed would not be worth exposing but for the fact that during past generations thousands of guileless but gullible people have been induced to go out to Utah and Salt Lake City. There is nothing wrong with Utah—I understand that it is a well-doing and well-conducted State. Moreover the Mormons have worked hard to make the desert blossom like the rose by their skill and industry. But after all, this is not what matters. As I have said, it is not a question of *emigration* but of *proselytism*. In view of this I wish to put these points in summary :

(i) As we have seen in regard to some other religions, we believe that in all the great revelations of the past, God has always chosen the best and noblest as His messengers—prophets and saints of character and dreams. He has never revealed His deep secrets to people who lived the kind of life that Joseph Smith or Brigham Young lived. God uses the best to reveal the best, men of honesty, worth, and honour. By every record we possess, Smith was an idle, shiftless, and at times an indecent man. He involved thousands in ruin by a heartless bank scandal. I imagine that there would have been little further heard of the man or his 'revelations' had it not been for his tragic murder. Since then, with his own people at least, he has become Joseph the Martyr. Many credulous people think that he was put to death for his religious views, and not for the social hate his public conduct had aroused. I repeat, this is not the kind of man whom God has chosen in the past for His messenger

to declare His righteousness and wisdom. He that handles the vessels of the Lord should have clean hands.

(ii) The Bible does not need any supplement of revelation, least of all the kind of incredible supplement which the *Book of Mormon* provides. The book contains little else than wrong facts, wrong history, wrong morals, and wrong views of religion and life.

(iii) God's revelation of His Mind and Will in Jesus Christ is enough for the world. That revelation is so wonderful and so rich that it is the despair of our souls. It angers us to think that a man like Joseph Smith, idle, shiftless, and epileptic, should presume to pass his judgment on Christ's message of salvation, and fill up the 'gaps' in the revelation of our Lord.

(iv) In the course of my reading, I have been scandalized by all the extra-Church systems which try to interpret God's Kingdom in a brutally *material* fashion. A New Jerusalem here, a Second Advent there, a great physical Millennium on this little earth of ours. . . . Christ's promised kingdom is spiritual; and at the end, when He comes, it will be to *the kingdom of the gathered souls of His people*, of those who have loved His name and lived in the light of His truth.

(v) Jesus is first and last; and Joseph Smith is nowhere. But in Mormonism there are lords many, wives many, saviours many, and revelations many; and Joseph Smith is everywhere. Mormonism as a creed does not justify its claim to the name 'Christian,' for to it Jesus is merely one of those who graciously prepared the way for Joseph Smith, himself God's chosen Arch-Priest for the installation of His kingdom, the New Jerusalem on earth.

(vi) The obliquity of the system, before it was corrected by legal force, shocks not only Christians, but

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also the decent citizens of the world, Christian or otherwise. That the Mormons should found their philosophy of polygamy on the old days of patriarchal life, thereby passing over the mind and teaching of Jesus, and that they should proclaim the need of ever new revelations in addition to the revelation of Jesus Christ, is the measure of their Christianity.