

MORMONISM

(A Personal Testimony)

I WAS BORN IN UTAH in 1909, and like countless thousands, I was brought up in the religion of my people. I was taught to accept the Mormon faith as the true Church of Jesus Christ, and was baptized at the age of eight.

We lived in Utah until I came to California with my sister in 1926. Up to that time I hardly knew of any denomination other than Mormonism. I was taught that my salvation depended on being baptized, obedience to the ordinances of the Gospel (so-called by the Mormons), and a life of good works, and I considered myself very fortunate to be a Mormon.

In California I was soon meeting people belonging to other denominations who believed the same thing, and then I reasoned with myself: "What difference does it make what a person believes as long as he does the best he can? What more does God expect?"

As time went on I became very restless—would work only a few months here and there, and then would move on to some other place. There was something lacking in my life, and I could not think what it was. I never knew

anything about the Lord Jesus Christ who died for my sins. I was never taught that I was a sinner and needed a Saviour. I began to plunge into the things of the world, trying to satisfy a longing in my soul.

My brother William, who had come to California in the meantime and who, like myself, was reared a Mormon, also realized that his life lacked something, and he began to read the Bible. As he read, he came to see himself a lost sinner, and he cried to God to save him. God heard him and saved him. No human instrument was used in his salvation. The Holy Spirit brought him under conviction, and through the reading of the Word of God he was saved. He began to talk to me about the things of the Lord, but could not tell me how to be saved except to read the Bible myself. I was interested, because I believed the Bible to be the Word of God.

Time passed, and I met a Catholic girl but that did not matter to me because I was in love with her. I thought that what had been lacking in my life was this one person. But after we were happily married a short time, I realized that there was something definitely lacking in both our lives. We went to dances and shows and, although we enjoyed these pleasures at the time, we were not satisfied.

One evening I asked my wife, "Honey, what is it all about? Isn't there something to life besides just working, eating, and trying to have a good time?" She suggested that we attend church on Sundays and see if we would not be better satisfied. I then proceeded to make a good Mor-

mon out of my wife, and we started to attend Sunday school. I had two Mormon missionary girls come to our home every Monday night to instruct my wife in what to believe and do to become a Mormon.

Meantime I had subscribed to a Christian magazine. My brother William had encouraged me to take it, and I read for the first time a message on the new birth, and I became deeply interested.

At this time I had a baker working for me who was a Christian. He told me what a change had come into his life when he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. I invited him to our home, and he told me about a group of men known as "First Mate Bob and the Crew of the Good Ship Grace," who had held meetings that he attended in San Diego, and how through their ministry he had come to know Christ as his Saviour. He then told me they were coming to the First Baptist Church in Escondido, California, about two weeks hence. My wife and I decided to go and hear them. During this time I was coming under conviction. I wondered about God and the hereafter, and whether there was any way for a person to know for sure about eternity. I was very miserable, and did not care whether I lived or died.

Then one day I picked up the Bible my brother had given me, and I happened to open to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 7, and read these verses: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in

thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

I said, “O Lord, I guess I am lost.” I could see the broad way leading to destruction. I had been taught that we could be saved only by baptism and a life of good works. Here I read that only a few people, in comparison with the multitudes, would be saved. So I said to myself that I surely must be lost. I realized then that I could not merit entrance into Heaven in my own righteousness. I may say that when we had decided to go to church, which we did, and to the Mormon Church, it did not satisfy us. There was still something lacking. We needed to know the Lord Jesus as our personal Saviour, but of course up to this time we knew nothing of Him or of His power to save.

The Saturday night came when “First Mate Bob and the Crew of the Good Ship Grace” were in Escondido. (Up to this time, to my knowledge, I had never attended any other church service than that of the Mormons.) The church was packed when we arrived, but we were successful in getting a seat on the platform. First Mate Bob gave his testimony, then the quartet sang. Oh, how it thrilled me when they began to sing! Then one by one the men gave their testimony of what God had done for them, and I realized that they had something I did not have. When the service was over they gave the invitation for anyone to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour. I was so much under conviction that tears were running down my cheeks. That

night I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour. I was born of the Spirit of God.

The Mormon missionary girls were still coming to our home instructing my wife. I sensed something was wrong with the Mormon doctrines, but I could not understand what it was. The day was approaching when my wife was to be baptized into the Mormon Church, and we set a certain morning to meet with some of the Mormon elders and missionaries at our home.

In the meantime I heard that a Christian evangelist was coming to San Diego to hold meetings. I wrote him that if there was anything we could do to help while he was in San Diego to call on us and we would be glad to do what we could. The following week I received a letter from him telling me he would be at a friend's home in San Diego, and on a certain morning about ten o'clock I could call for him there. He would come to our home to discuss some things with us. We had already arranged with the Mormons for a meeting on this same morning. We decided to call the Mormons and tell them that the evangelist would be at our home the same morning, and invite them to meet him. The president of the Mormon missionaries said that he could not say for certain whether they would be able to come, but if they could it would be about nine o'clock.

The morning arrived. Nine o'clock, then 9:30; still the Mormons did not arrive. At 9:45 I had to leave to call for the evangelist. My wife and I concluded that the Mormons were not coming.