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How the "Mormons" Got Their Name

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Abstract: The term “Mormon,” a nickname given to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was derived from the scripture called the Book of Mormon. Members of the Church, however, are quick to point out that the proper name of their Church is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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"In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword" (JOB 5 : 20).

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HOW THE "MORMONS" GOT THEIR NAME.

BY DR. JAMES E. TALMAGE.

THE term "Mormon," with its many derivatives, was first applied to the people by way of nickname. It came into use through common reference to the Book of Mormon, which was published to the world in 1830, the year in which the so-called "Mormon" Church was organized.

The Book of Mormon is known to-day, by name, at least, among reading and thinking people generally; and the misrepresentation embodied in its pseudonym, the "Mormon Bible," is now pretty well understood. As set forth upon the title-page of this much-discussed work, the book purports to be a translation of certain ancient records, which in turn were in part an abridgement of more extended writings giving an account of the aboriginal peoples of the western continent, of whom the American Indians are the degenerate posterity.

The "Mormons" know no substitute for the Holy Bible of Christendom, which they affirm to be a sacred Scripture, and verily the word of God unto the world. Their Bible is the authorized, or King James' version; and this they accept without reservation, save as to certain mistranslations, most of which are proclaimed by theologians and Bible scholars of the world.

The "Mormon" people do not resent the misnomer by which they are commonly known, and which has been fastened upon them by popular usage. They deplore, however, the possible misunderstanding that the Church to which they belong professes to be the church of Mormon. It should be remembered that Mormon was a man, a very distinguished and a very able man, it is true, an eminent prophet and historian, according to the record bearing his name, but a man, nevertheless. The "Mormon" Church affirms

itself to be in no sense the church of Mormon, nor the church of Joseph Smith, nor of Brigham Young, nor of any man other than the Savior and Redeemer of the race. The true name of this Church, the designation by which it is officially known as an organization among men, is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The "Mormons" claim that this distinguishing title was given through divine revelation; and they cite as evidence of propriety and consistency attaching to its bestowal the words of the resurrected Christ to the disciples of the ancient Church in the West, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, page 536. To the supplication: "Lord, we will that thou wouldst tell us the name whereby we shall call this church; for there are disputations among the people concerning this matter." The Lord Jesus Christ, there visibly present, replied:

"Verily, verily I say unto you, why is it that the people should murmur and dispute because of this thing? Have they not read the scriptures, which say ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name? for by this name shall ye be called at the last day; and whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day; therefore whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name, that he will bless the church for my sake; and how be it my church, save it be called in my name? for if a church be called in Moses' name, then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man, then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name, then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel. Verily I say unto you, that ye are built upon my gospel; therefore ye shall call whatsoever things ye do call, in my name; therefore if ye call upon the Father for the church, if it be in my name, the Father will hear you; and if it so be that the church is built upon my gospel, then will the Father shew forth his own works in it."

The "Mormon" people aver that the distinguishing features of their religious system, in short, the essentials of the philosophy of "Mormonism," are epitomized in the name of their organization—the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"OUR Lord came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. Even if we are past the meridian, we have hardly yet begun to taste how good the waters of life are. The best is yet to be. * * * And so, setting ourselves in quiet confidence to the task of each new day, we also say by faith, with that hard-pressed comrade in the good fight, 'Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'"—SELECTED.