

Correspondence.

CHOCKTAW, COUNTY, MISS.,

March, 1870.

Editor Deseret News.—Dear Sir,—
Having studied the principles and doctrines of the Latter-day Saints, until I am thoroughly satisfied that they teach the same things that were taught by Christ and His Apostles, and being desirous that others might see and believe, I have not shunned on all proper occasions to speak my convictions, and send to them the works which I have read. (Spencer's Letters, The Voice of Warning, and an occasional copy of the Deseret News) sent to me by my brother, now of Pine Creek, Beaver City; and later, Elder J. W. Crosby sent me a work entitled The Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon, which I consider the ablest document I ever read.

Reading these books to others, and letting them read for themselves, and as I said above, expressing my conviction of the truth of the same, has gotten me a number of religious enemies, among my former brethren of the Baptists. Having been a Baptist for some twenty-five years, and filled a number of stations of trust in that denomination, I became extensively, and I believe, favorably known among them. It is proper to state here that I began the investigation of the doctrine of the Latter-day Saints under as unfavorable circumstances as any perhaps in the United States, and nothing but respect to my brother induced me to undertake it. My first sensations on reading Spencer's Letters were those of surprise. I read it again and again, and every time with a firmer conviction of its truth. I should have stated above that the Book of Mormon was the first book my brother sent me, which I had read but little, having been strongly impressed with the idea that it was exclusively man's production. After reading Spencer's Letters I then read the Book of Mormon to see whether it coincided with the Bible, and finding it did not, so far as I was able to judge, I began to distrust for other books from the same source. My brother kindly sent me others. I now have, in connection with those named, the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, a pamphlet recently sent for entitled, Answers to Questions, etc., with perhaps a dozen copies of the Deseret News. I have been advised to stop reading these publications. One Rev. divine said I had better stop, if I didn't, the first thing I knew I would be a "Mormon." I replied to the good brother who told me that I was not obliged to imitate error, and so far as my investigations had gone, I saw nothing to dread, and that my investigations thus far had had a tendency to exalt the character of God, and place man, where he ought to be, at the foot of the cross; and hence I could as soon lay aside the whole plan of redemption, as taught in the New Testament, as to quit the investigation of this subject, for it was, emphatically, the gospel of Jesus, as far as I was able to understand it. Another Rev. sir, who has been a preacher for about forty years, and who professes to have come in contact with the "Mormons," and utterly routed them, said the other day to a good Methodist brother, who is reading my books, "Ah! Brother, it won't do; they only want to get rid of their old wives' tales and many others." He remarked that he hit it. "Mormonism," on all proper occasions; revelations had ceased, the day of miracles had passed, etc. And he said he was sorry for me, that I should imitate such error. Oh how I wish some able elder would come into this community, filled with the spirit of truth and confront him, and let the honest inquirers after truth judge for themselves of the doctrine. This Rev. divine wound up to our Methodist by retelling the following, as he did to me on a former occasion:

"A couple of 'Mormons' lived neighbors within this man's field of labor. One of them had no corn while the other had plenty. The former said to the latter one day, 'Well, brother, I have had a revelation that I must have some corn from you.' 'When did you have that revelation,' quoth the other? 'Yesterday,' was the reply. 'Well,' said the first, 'I have had a revelation to-day, and you are not to have the corn.'"

Such are the tales of slander and vituperation that are vended out to the credit of the "Mormons" here, tales, too, which I was disposed to believe true, till I made myself familiar with the tenets of your church. I am now so well satisfied that you possess the pure principles of the gospel that I am constrained to say that there is no truth believed by any of the sects but what is a part and parcel of "Mormonism," and that "Mormonism" embraces all the truth held by others and reaches far beyond even to all truth ever revealed to man.

You will see by this where I stand. It has been my misfortune hitherto, never to see a Latter-day Saint. I would be truly glad if some one or more elders would pay this country a visit, and set the truth in its purity before the people here. I have recently read the first three chapters in The Voice of Warning to the pastor of the Baptist church in which is my membership, who seemed to take a deep interest in the work, and expressed himself anxious to hear the whole of it, and also the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon, which I will send him as soon as an opportunity offers. Oh how I should be delighted if he should embrace it and preach it, for he is a man of great influence here! Pray with me, my brother (permit me to call you such) that his eyes may be opened to see and embrace the truth. One such here, would perhaps do more good than many elders from abroad. I think that all that is needed, is to get the people to investigate, but so long as they refuse to do this, they must remain in ignorance of the doctrine of your church. If this good brother could be induced to embrace the truth fully, numbers would wake up, and be anxious to see the steps by which he was led to change his religious views. But it is a hard struggle to renounce the religion of long training, in which our fathers lived and died, for one so odious in the eyes of nearly every one; but the sacrifice must be made. Some say here: "Let the Mormons come here and heal the sick, cast out devils and impart the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands that we may know for ourselves that they do possess these gifts, etc." I have been

asked the question often, if I thought they really did possess these gifts? I could only answer that I did not know, never having seen them, but of one thing I was sure: they were promised by Christ to the believer, and testified by Paul they did follow such; and that it was more likely that the Mormons possessed them than any others, as no others pretended to any such thing—in fact, denied that they were any longer necessary. But the main thing that attaches so much odium to "Mormonism" is your polygamic system of marriage. Please excuse this liberty of an entire stranger.

Yours, etc., H. P. DOTSON.

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