

of God; for the very first of the Commandments absolutely forbids us to have more than one God even in thought; "Thou shalt have none other Gods before me!" This absolutely forbids all the above and similar ideas of God ever dreamed of on the face of the earth, and makes any and all of them to be simply idolatry! and the advocacy of them blasphemy!

This may seem severe language. But if there is anything on earth which merits severe words it is such fundamental sin against God and the whole human race as teaching these idolatrous ideas of God! It is time that some one cried out to warn this people, and it may as well be the writer as any one else, perhaps. (See Ezek. 3: 17—21.) The utter awfulness of such doctrines as these is almost past comprehension in an age of supposed enlightenment! These words are not written in anger, but in grieved indignation and sorrowful love for the souls of men who are thus being deceived.

Let me close with somewhat of the Word of God about this very kind of doctrine, which was quite as well known to the Children of Israel as to Mormons of today. In Exod. 22:20 God says, "He that sacrificeth unto any god save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed." And in Deut. 13. He says, again; "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. . . . And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt." (Read the rest of the chapter also.) This shows how God looks upon enticements to the worship of false gods; and the same is as true of mental idolatry as of physical. It also shows that in all ages of the world false miracles and false prophecies—of classes remarkably similar to those of Mormonism—have been used by Satan for the purpose of deceiving the people about God and religious things. Here is food for very solemn thought by every Mormon. It is a question which every one must settle between himself and that True God whom He will have to meet face to face bye-and-bye, and who has clearly described himself in his Word as stated in the Christian belief above! What is God? Which doctrine is true?

#### The Reply.

We agree with the Rev. John D. Nutting, that the doctrine of God is of the utmost importance. Our Savior affirms that it is eternal life to know the only true God and Him whom He has sent. (John, 17: 3.) It behooves us, then, to approach the subject with an earnest desire to receive some of that knowledge, that light which is the essence of life eternal, lest through prejudice, ignorance or condemnable preference for vain philosophy and the traditions of men we should err fatally.

The question at issue has hardly been touched by Mr. Nutting. It is this: Does Mormonism teach anything concerning the Deity, contrary to that which is revealed through the authors of the various books of the Bible? In other words, Do the revelations on record in the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price accord with those recorded in the Old and New Testaments? If so, the assertion that "Mormonism is not true Christianity" is false.

It matters not whether the logical deductions of the theological doctors of the world, from the earliest ages down to the present one, agree or disagree with those of the writers or speakers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In the interest of truth an investigation into this subject must be carried back to the fundamental facts on which the deductions rest. Is there agreement or disagreement between the statements of fact, as found in the Bible and the other sacred books mentioned? That is the vital question.

To illustrate: The Bible may in places seem to represent the Supreme Being as a universally diffused power and in others as a material being with hands, feet etc. Now, one theologian, in his efforts to harmonize to his thinking the apparent discrepancy, may arrive at the conclusion that the first representation is to be understood literally and the second only figuratively, and he forms his ideas of God accordingly. He concludes that the Omnipotent is a being without form and passions. That is his deduction. Another may feel that this reasoning is faulty and he prefers, therefore, to regard both sets of revelations as literal descriptions of God. That is his deduction. Now there is a wide difference between these two concepts of the Deity, but the facts that form the initial point from which both start are the same. It is therefore perfectly clear that the real question turns not upon the agreement or disagreement between theologians but upon the facts which are, so to speak, the raw material of the science of theology.

The sacred writings present a striking analogy to nature. The great Author of the universe did not arrange the objects of creation in genus and species but scattered them in endless variety. The arrangement in classes and groups, which after all must be more or less defective and arbitrary, is the work of the geologist, the botanist, the zoologist, and other scientists. It is so with the sacred Scriptures. The truths revealed are scattered all over, sometimes in the form of law and sometimes in historical narrative; sometimes in the form of promises and sometimes in the form of doctrine. The careful student investigates the facts and classifies them when found. Thus he forms his theology, just as the naturalist shapes his particular "science." The value of the latter depends, of course, chiefly on the knowledge and intelligence of its exponent. The opinion of an untutored savage concerning the causes of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, for instance, counts for very little when compared to that of a scholarly student of geology. It is so in theology. The value of a particular system or of a particular doctrine in that system depends entirely on the qualifications of the exponent thereof, and more especially on the measure of inspiration with which he has applied himself to the investigation of his subject. But whatever the doctrine, or the system, may be, these must be considered separately from the revealed facts on which they rest, just as nature in its multiform features is essentially distinct from the scientific systems framed for the purpose of aiding us to comprehend those features.

With this clearly understood, we repeat the question, Do the revelations concerning God on record in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price agree?

Let us first notice a few statements in the Bible on the subject under consideration. On the very first page of Genesis we are told that God—the Hebrew noun being plural—is the author of the universe and that the Spirit of God—the word Spirit in the Hebrew

being a feminine noun—moved upon the waters. As we continue reading we find that man, male and female, was created in the image of God, or Gods,—the Hebrew noun being plural—"after our likeness;" and an attentive reader of the narrative of the creation of man must notice the fact that a distinction is made between the counsel of Gods ("Let US make man in OUR image") preceding the creation, and the creation itself. ("So God created man in HIS image.") In the next chapter of Genesis the God Jehovah, or Lord God, is presented. We read further and find that the serpent in tempting our first parents holds out as an inducement to them to eat of the fruit, that by so doing they shall be as "Gods" (Gen. 3: 5), a statement that was not entirely false, since the God Jehovah later on said: "Behold Adam is become as ONE OF US." (Gen. 3: 22.) In Gen. 11, we read that Jehovah "came down" to see the city and tower being built in the plain of Shinar. "Let US go down," He says. Further, Jehovah "appeared" to Abram (Gen. 17: 1) and "talked" to him (v 3, see also chap. 18.) Jacob believed he saw God face to face at Peniel. (Gen. 32: 30.) Moses spoke to the Lord "face to face." (Ex. 33: 11.) He was covered with the "hand" of the Lord, while He passed by him and he saw His "back parts." (Ex. 33: 18—23.) And finally, the Prophet Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne in the Temple. (Is. 6: 1—5.) In numerous passages we read of God having hands (Ex. 33), eyes (Psalms 139), lips (Isa. 30), finger (Deut. 9), ears (Psal. 18), etc. Such references to the Lord God are very numerous. As to His attributes, He is described as a Spirit, omnipotent, merciful, long-suffering, just, eternal, jealous, compassionate, righteous, unsearchable, immutable, omnipresent, the source of truth, life and light, manifest in creation and history, the judge of all men, the searcher of hearts and the author of our salvation.

In the New Testament, especially, He is represented as the Father, who gives His Son as a Savior of the world. But there are three personalities, not one, equally concerned in this great work—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. The Son is the "express image" of the Father, the "first born," the "only begotten," the head of the Church, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Stephen the martyr, saw Him "standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7: 5-6.) This was after His ascension. The Holy Spirit is represented as the instructor and comforter of the Saints, proceeding from the Father, through the intercession of Christ. (John 14: 16.) He abides with the Saints, testifies of Christ and reveals the things of God. The Holy Spirit is likened unto refreshing water, purifying fire, powerful wind, illuminating oil, rain and dew, a dove, a voice and a seal.

Such, in brief, is the sacred material left us by the authors of the Bible from which to form, in all reverence and humility, our concepts of the Deity. Is that which has been preserved in the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price different in any way from this? Most emphatically not.

To quote one single instance: In the remarkable vision of the brother of Jared (Book of Ether, 3: 1-16) we read, that the Lord showed his finger, and that it was "as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood." The explanation is added: "Because of thy faith thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood." The personage speaking says: "I am the Father and the Son," implying the unity of the Godhead as plainly as this doctrine is ever taught in Holy Writ. "Man," it is further said, "I created after the