

An Open Letter

to

Daniel Macgregor

also

AN ARTICLE

from the pen of

DANIEL MACGREGOR

in defense of

The Reorganization from an Attack, and a Challenge
of its President to a Debate, by R. C. Evans

FROM E. O. CLARK

January 2, 1926.

Mr. Daniel Macgregor,

Independence, Mo.

Dear Sir and Brother:

Some time ago I received through the mails a pamphlet from you, entitled "WHY." I read it very carefully, and it raised some "whys" in my own mind. Then a few days later I received a copy of your paper, "Zion's Advocate," which raised some more "whys" and some "hows," which I would like to propound to you.

You are posing before the church and the world as a witness, as well as an advocate; and it becomes the duty of those whose attention you may attract, to examine your past record so as to be able to pass upon your credibility as a witness; to compare your present testimony with that which you have offered in the past.

Your testimony now is to the effect that the Reorganized church is an apostate church, wrong in name, organization, doctrine and practice; and that the church of Christ (Hedrickite) is the true church. This testimony, I believe, dates from the last General Conference.

For a number of years prior to the last Conference you were an active member and missionary of the Reorganization, advocating and defending its claim to be the true church, in name, organization, doctrine and practice. Many, many times in public and private you "testified" to its divine origin and its acceptance with God. You related many divine manifestations received by yourself and others, confirming and establishing you in the faith. You and they "knew" this to be the work and church of God. Through your activities as an advocate and missionary, and your testimonies as a witness you succeeded in converting some hundreds to the Reorganization, many of whom, if not all, have testified and are testifying to the same things which you affirmed to be true.

Now you are renouncing this testimony and work of years, by offering a new testimony, entirely and absolutely different and contradictory to the first. Thus you stand before us a self-impeached witness; destroying the value as evidence, of both your former and this latter testimony; therefore our confidence in you is gone, and we cannot consider the position you now take from the standpoint of your "testimony"; but we may take a glance at it from the standpoint of consistency and logic.

Before doing this, however, there comes ringing in our ears with great force and power the language of the apostle Paul as found in Acts 20:28-31, which reads as follows:

Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, (The priesthood. E. O. C.) and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

As a result of the action of last Conference, we now have three would-be leaders, each striving with might and main "to draw away disciples after them." "WHY" has this opposition to the Reorganization developed THREE leaders? "WHY" do not these forces of secession get together under ONE leader?

All three of these leaders claim to hold priesthood by divine call and

authority. They received it in, through and by the ministrations of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which church, according to your present testimony, is an apostate church, and as such is not recognized or accepted of God. Consistent, isn't it?

We now have three leaders apparently running a race to see who can produce the greatest number of witnesses to being healed or being recipients of inspired dreams and other divine manifestations, attesting divine approval of their respective movements and leaderships. What a spectacle! May I offer a suggestion here? You are all mere novices in this respect. Go to the Apostolics or Pentacostals, who can show you under twenty to one with this kind of evidence, and take a few lessons from them.

If you maintain that the evidences, manifestations, etc., testified to while in the Reorganization were genuine, in spite of the fact of the church being apostate, you then and thereby accuse the Almighty of being a party to a deception. It is incredible that God would give to any one evidences of his approval and acceptance while they were in gross error, thus tending to confirm and establish them in that error. Especially when the truth and the true church were in existence and right at their elbows.

If, on the other hand, you admit you were misled during all those years, HOW do you know, and HOW ARE WE to know that you are not misled NOW?

It is very evident from the conduct of yourself and associates that had the Conference REJECTED the "Document on Church Government," and adopted the "Proposed Basis of Agreement," or the principles set forth in the "Open Letter," you each and all would have remained "in darkness even until now." The thing which seems to have removed "the scales from your eyes," and to reveal the deformities, irregularities and errors of the Reorganization was the adoption by the Conference of the "Document on Church Government" containing certain references to "supreme directional control" and "effective discipline." How thankful you ought to be that this was done. Were it not so, you would still be groping in spiritual darkness and error; you would have kept right on preaching and converting people to an apostate church; and the Almighty, in harmony with his past dealings with you, would have kept right on giving you and your converts "evidences," "manifestations," etc., of his divine approval and acceptance.

"Supreme Directional Control," and opposition to it, are both very old. In fact they are older than the creation of man. It seems that in the aeons ago, God possessed and exercised "supreme directional control," together with "effective discipline," throughout his dominions. Among the heavenly hosts was an individual named Lucifer, 'a Son of the Morning.' An angel of great authority and influence. But he became very ambitious. He felt that God had too much power, authority and glory, and that he was deserving of more; therefore he made certain proposals to God, a sort of "basis of agreement" by the terms of which he, Lucifer, was to become a partner on equal terms with God. God, then, would no longer be supreme, but the supremacy would be held jointly between them. God rejected these overtures, and rebellion and war followed. Lucifer, and all those who rallied to his standard, were "cast out." They came to the earth and were here in waiting to renew the fight when man came. Lucifer doesn't think he was cast out because he was in the wrong, but because the majority was in the wrong. He is now very busy trying to recruit his forces so he will have at least a fighting chance when the next vote is called.

Speaking for myself, I most decidedly prefer to be on the side of "Supreme Directional Control" and "Effective Discipline," for that is God's side.

A great deal was said by yourself and others before and at the time of last General Conference about "Common Consent" and "Majority Rule";

but when Conference spoke, it developed that your belief in those principles had strings tied to them. Majority rule and common consent were all right when they coincided with your views, but when they did not so agree, then they were all wrong, and the minority were under no obligations to abide by such decision.

Of course, in this instance, the majority are not to be pitied nor sympathized with, for you served notice upon them before the vote was taken to the effect that if the "Document on Church Government" was adopted, "we solemnly declare that we will not support nor countenance this attempt to change the fundamental principles of government given of God and will consider ourselves justified in taking such steps as will protect the constitutional rights of the officers and members of the church against the insidious departure from the faith." Certainly we all knew what you meant, and perhaps we should have surrendered our judgment and opinions in the face of this threat, and voted against our honest convictions in order to placate this turbulent element.

The doctrine of **minority control**, as practiced, if not taught, by yourself and others, is infinitely more dangerous than "supreme directional control" could ever be. No organization or institution, human or divine, could long survive such practice.

Truly the "sifting time" is upon us in earnest, and the time may be nearer than we think when the separation of the "wise" and "foolish" will take place. I might remark, too, just here, that there is no account of the "wise" being split into three separate factions under three leaders.

About three years ago you came to Des Moines to hold a series of meetings, and before beginning, you very plainly asked for "supreme directional control" in all matters pertaining to said meetings. The Branch and its Officers were merely to furnish financial backing, and carry out your instructions without question. If Bro. T. W. Williams could have known of this, he could have pointed to another case of "Supreme Directional Control in Operation."

A few months later, while on your way to General Conference, you stopped over in Des Moines and preached for us. In one of your sermons you told us that just before you left home you were somewhat in doubt as to the attitude you should take toward our worthy president, F. M. Smith; you made it a subject of prayer, and the Lord made known to you that you were to support and uphold him. We all felt good over this, and rejoiced in our souls. But subsequent events proved that you did not carry out the Lord's instruction. Either a case of wrong manifestations, or a case of pure obstinacy, which?

Your past record in the church has been that of an agitator. During the latter part of dear old Bro. E. L. Kelly's most excellent service as Presiding Bishop, your shafts of criticism and inuendo were hurled at him without mercy or reserve. And that grand old man bore it with a patience and fortitude borne of a higher world than this, and of a higher power than man. Would to God we were all able to imitate Bro. Kelly's example.

After the Lord said to Bro. Kelly, "it is enough," and released him from the burdens, cares, anxieties and trials he had borne so long and so well, thus removing him out of the range of your guns, you promptly looked around for another target, and found one in the person of our honored president, Fred M. Smith. At once your proclivities for criticism, fault finding, and scrapping were turned loose on him, and have been leveled at him ever since.

Then there is that oil proposition away up in Canada. The Lord's counsel to the church has always been to gather to Zion as fast as preparation could be made, or circumstances would permit, and to send up all our surplus monies to purchase the land and to establish industries, for the purpose of its redemption and the establishment of equality among his

people. Later on, because of obvious necessity, he counseled against, or we might say, forbade "speculation," etc. But contrary to this counsel, you urged saints, wherever you could, to invest money in your Canadian Oil Co. Then somebody said something about what the Lord had said about "speculation," and you forthwith made a direct attack upon the revelation in question in one of your pamphlets.

I have been very credibly informed by some of your oil stock victims that you claimed to be under divine direction in the matter, that God had revealed to yourself and wife that oil and wealth in great abundance would be the reward of those who went into the project. Accordingly several thousands of dollars of the saints' good money was subscribed and paid in, and I presume by this time spent in an honest effort to "strike oil." But the gusher hasn't materialized.

Such things as these indicate the esteem in which you hold the word of the Lord. If it agrees with your ideas and notions, it is all right; and if it does not, it is just a mere "scrap of paper" to be contemptuously ignored.

As I said before, our confidence in you is gone. We should like to be able to repose confidence in you again, but that can only be when you are willing to "bury the old man with his deeds," return to the Father's house and build up "a new man in Christ Jesus."

May God open your eyes and those of your colleagues and associates to the terrible mistake you have made and are making and give you strength and courage to return before the 'door is shut,' no more to open, is my sincere desire and prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Respectfully submitted,

E. O. CLARK,

2500 Logan Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa.

The writer of the foregoing Open Letter to Mr. McGregor was not aware of the existence of the following article at the time of writing him, but received a copy a few days later; and when it was decided to print the letter in tract form, he thought it a very good idea to pass Bro. McGregor's article along also; so here it is. Of course Bro. McGregor will not appreciate being hit by shells from his own battery, but he is to blame, not we.—E. O. C.

MACGREGOR TURNS ON LIGHT AS TO BISHOP EVANS' DISAFFECTION

St. Thomas Times-Journal, Saturday, April 5, 1919.

To the Editor of the Times-Journal:

Sir:—The latest reinforcements hurried to the field of battle by some one interested, consists of a stale excerpt from a Toronto Daily of the 31st ult.

It is a purported digest of Bishop Evans' statement as to why he left "the Mormon Church."

We have no objection to taking on another in this little controversy, although, according to all the rules of warfare, "two unto one isn't fair." However, a more charitable view would be that Denison's light brigade having broken and fled, the advance of Evans into the fight may be taken as a reconstruction of the enemy forces under a more experienced general, having guns of heavier calibre.

In all probability we shall see the old Marshal, with Denison as his aide-de-camp, on the grounds in a few days.

The Bishop challenges President F. M. Smith to a public discussion on a

proposition involving the integrity and moral standing of his grandfather, Joseph Smith. He asks President Smith to negative a proposition affirming that the said Joseph Smith was a polygamist.

Such a proposition publicly thrown at a man of President Smith's standing, a near blood relative of Joseph, the martyred prophet, is neither decent nor courteous and no self-respecting man would entertain it. Mr. Evans, a keen discernor of the fitness of things, felt perfectly safe in brandishing such a proposition, knowing that the sense of very ordinary propriety would not permit a man of President Smith's position to desert the dignity of his station, to accommodate the inordinate thirst for distinction on the part of the gifted orator from Toronto.

But Mr. Evans knew that the policy pursued by those of the First Presidency of the church has been to refrain from public discussion. To my personal knowledge he himself, when associated with President Smith as his councillor, side-stepped a challenge from one Clark Braden at Grand Valley, Ont., because, as he stated, the dignity of office which he was then holding would not permit his engagement in any controversy.

If Bishop Evans really wants a public investigation of the matters at issue he can be accommodated. President Smith has done everything in his power, compatible with dignity, to arrange with him the debate the Bishop would have the public believe he wants.

To this end Elder Thomas W. Williams, a giant of intellectual fame, or ripe experience and scholarly attainments, was brought from Los Angeles, Cal., and appointed in charge of our church affairs in Toronto, and for the express purpose of looking after Mr. Evans' ambitions.

Elder Williams was no sooner on the job than he penned his defy to Mr. Evans, challenging him to meet the issues involved. Ten long months have since gone by and during that time Williams' challenge, nailed to the mast, has been fluttering to the breeze; but up to date the one time fearless fire-eater, Evans, has failed to accept the gauge of battle.

Mr. Evans' excuse is that "he was anxious to save the little fellow from annihilation." Yes; but which "little fellow?"

The Bishop states that his reason for leaving the church was that he found out Joseph Smith was "a deceiver, a liar, an adulterer, polygamist and a murderer." And, just think, it took him forty-two years to find this out. The public will appreciate the fact, of course, that during this time Mr. Evans was not secreted in a closet where information might not reach him, but was constantly in the imelight of prominence. He was always before the public and traveled from the Atlantic to the Pacific. He was a member of the leading councils of the church, the quorum of Seventy, the Twelve, and the Presidency, and sat cheek and jowl with President Smith himself. And yet with all this opportunity for inside information, he has the unparalleled nerve to tell us that it took him "forty years and more" to find out that Joseph Smith was a deceiver and he himself humbugged all this time.

The charges urged against Joseph Smith are no common, petty complaints, but the very reverse. They are monstrous and enormous, and as such would be noticed anywhere, everywhere, and their number is legion. And yet we are asked to believe that this mountain of criminality was only discovered by Mr. Evans after forty years' internal and external inspection.

Joseph Smith lived and died among his fellow compatriots, always in the forefront of publicity, a nation's interest or curiosity was forever focussed upon him as the herald of extraordinary tidings; and yet, notwithstanding this constant association with a world set and arrayed for or against the man, with the eye of inquiry and suspicion eternally tensioned,

it has taken nearly 100 years to find out that he was a bad man, and that, only after a close and concentrated inspection, by the brainy R. C. Evans.

Ye gods! prostrate your crowns of superknowledge at the feet of this student prodigy, this Forty Year Wonder!

Perhaps a little inside information will serve to show the REAL reason why Mr. Evans left the church. The following is an excerpt from an official statement of the church relating to the disaffection of the Bishop:

"A long series of complaints, together with some very unfortunate developments in the Toronto Branch, taken at the dictation of R. C. Evans, made it clear that some steps must authoritatively be taken to save the situation. This resulted in the joint council of First Presidency, Quorum of Twelve, and Presiding Bishopric, held at Independence, Missouri, this spring, authorizing a committee to investigate these matters and take such action as might be considered advisable.

"It is only just to say that this matter is not of recent origin, even officially; for since 1908 serious complaints against the conduct, official actions, and personal attacks on different people came to the knowledge of the Quorum of Twelve, which resulted in an investigation at which R. C. Evans was present and had the opportunity of hearing what the ones who complained alleged, and made what defense he could at the time.

During the following year these matters developed still further, and it became clearly evident that this man, who at the time was one of the First Presidency, could not be sustained in such position under the conditions which were proved to exist. In the beginning of the sessions of the Quorum of Twelve for the year 1909 the question of sustaining the First Presidency was formally introduced, the result being that President Joseph Smith was sustained, also F. M. Smith, but R. C. Evans was not sustained.—Unity, No. 2, 1918."

But let us view Mr. Evans as a witness, reliable or otherwise. Hear him say in his own words what he thought of the charge of misconduct urged against Joseph Smith:

"Those who knew and loved Joseph Smith, that is, his wife, his three sons, and many thousands of his people, urge that he was innocent of the charge. There is not a single word in all the sermons, lectures, editorials, books or other literature published during the lifetime of Joseph Smith wherein he, by a single word, indorsed the doctrine of polygamy. Eight years after his death, long after Brigham Young had departed from the faith, organized a new church, different in faith, hope and doctrine from the true Latter Day Saint Church, far away in Utah, Brigham Young presented a paper to his people which he claimed Joseph Smith had given on the subject of polygamy. When challenged to produce the original paper, he said Emma Smith, Joseph's wife, had burned it. Now, sir, Mrs. Smith lived to be an old woman, loved and respected by all who knew her, and she claimed all through her life to the day of her death that she had never seen or heard of that paper; that she did not burn it; that her husband never had any wife but herself.

"You choose to reject all the public sermons, all the books and other literature given to the world by Joseph Smith, turn down the testimony of his wife, his children, and thousands of his followers, and accept the word of Brigham Young and those who, with him, wallow in the cesspit of polygamy. Yes; you prefer to take the word of Brigham Young and his kind. Well, I have heard that "a man is known by the company he keeps." You are welcome to the inference. I prefer to take the word of Joseph Smith, his wife, his children, and thousands of good men and women. You may continue to take the word of Brigham Young."

The above is taken from a pamphlet published by Bishop Evans in 1917, covering a controversy he was then holding with Rev. McKenzie. Does this read as though the disease of unbelief in the prophetic mission of

Joseph Smith was a fungus growing affair, or does it not reveal that up to 1917, the date when this was published, the Bishop's faith was sound.

Again from his Book of Sermons, published at his own election, we read:

"There is not a sermon, book or pamphlet printed in the lifetime of Joseph Smith, under his instructions, that can be produced to show that he ever taught, practiced or sanctioned polygamy. Suppose we say he (Joseph Smith) did teach, practice or sanction polygamy privately, but the church did not know it. If he did, the church should not be to blame for that. Again, if Joseph Smith secretly taught or practiced polygamy, he did it contrary to all public revelations. He did it in direct conflict with the Book of Covenants, with the Book of Mormons, and with the Inspired Translation of the Bible.—Page 328."

Incidentally may we ask, when was Mr. Evans telling the truth, before or after he left the church. If before, then he is misrepresenting the facts now. If now, his testimony is discredited by reason of his forty-two years of contrary assertions.

Mr. Evans has left us another legacy over his own signature which, whether true or false as to its heavenly origin, will assist to solve the question as to the reliability of his present testimony:

"According to promise, I write for you the vision. Last Sunday afternoon, while the quartet was singing a song composed by Joseph, entitled "Light on the Other Shore," I was wrapped in glory. The church passed away and I found myself in a most gorgeous park or garden with majestic trees, pretty flowers, verdant slopes and murmuring waters. While gazing with delight upon nature in all her wealth of beauty, I beheld six persons walking towards a magnificent fountain of water. I was given to know them, and with great joy in my soul I watched them as they approached the marble circle that surrounded the base of the fountain. The persons whom I recognized were Jesus, Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, our Joseph, Alexander, and David. The Master was speaking, and the brethren were listening with great attention as they neared the fountain. Our Joseph recognized me; he waved his hand and smiled very sweetly.

"Having arrived at the base of the fountain, they stood there, when all of a sudden the Master turned toward me, and walking four steps away from the brethren, he lifted his hand and, looking at me, spoke my own name, in a gentle but firm tone of voice, saying, 'Richard, you are justified in taking the position that the principle of polygamy is an abomination in my sight.' I watched them for a moment as they stood by the fountain of waer, when the vision closed, and I found myself bathed in tears, seated behind the pulpit, surrounded by Saints

"Perhaps I had better say to you that none of the six persons looked to be more than thirty years of age. Our Joseph and Alexander, whom I knew in life to be men weighing more than two hundred pounds, were not nearly so fleshy as when in the flesh; they appeared as young men, strong and beautiful in the full vigor of manhood, as did the others.

"My whole being was charmed and filled with joy when our Joseph, looking at me, smiled and waved his hand. When I saw him last he was looking worn, weary, decrepit and feeble, suffering, as he said, 'R. C., please do not pray that I recover; I am so tired I want to go to rest'; and now to see him young, strong and smiling, in the company of the Master whom he served so faithfully, strolling along mid flowers of perpetual bloom, gazing with pleasure on the sparkling waters gushing from the majestic fountain, enjoying the society of his father, uncle and his two brothers, I was glad beyond expression. May the Lord give us each strength to wage a faithful warfare, so that when the struggle here is over we, too, may be permitted to bask 'mid the sunbeams of celestial splendors in the presence of Jesus

and those who have kept faith, is my prayer.—R. C., in Saints' Herald, July 24, 1918."

At the time this vision was seen by Mr. Evans, he had just completed a brilliant defense of Joseph Smith and of his son, whose memorial service was even then being observed; he had outlined the position of the church on polygamy and denounced the doctrine. As confirmation to him that his position was correct God gave him this vision.

From the above we gather: These men were with Jesus. They were enjoying his presence; they had "kept the faith"; they had "waged a faithful warfare"; they were permitted to "bask 'mid the sunbeams of celestial splendors in the presence of Jesus and those who have kept the faith."

What say you, Mr. Reader, did Mr. Evans really see the vision? If so, then his position today is all wrong. If he did not, then he is utterly discredited and his testimony is absolutely unreliable.

The Bishop speaks of his financial reward—ah, yes; that is the thing that has turned many a man's head. He speaks of receiving only a hundred dollars a year.

By this the public will understand that the Reorganized Latter Day Saint Church is no feeding ground for the hireling minister. And if Mr. Evans with all his undoubted ability could command no more than \$100 a year, it is proof positive that the other fellows less distinguished and less influential were receiving no more.

Indeed, in the earlier years of the church when the question of finance was in its infancy, many a man went forth and preached the Gospel, receiving even less than the allowance received by Mr. Evans. It was, and is a clear case of going forth with neither "purse or scrip."

But Bishop Evans should not complain about God's goodness to him as a Latter Day Saint. He came into the church with little or nothing of this world's goods, as he himself admits, and went out of it with a family fortune running into thousands and thousands of dollars. Some say eighty thousand, while others think it was more or less.

Be that as it may, no one begrudges him all that he has gained, but as Latter Day Saints who helped in many ways to contribute to the accumulation of so vast an estate, we feel like saying, in the language of decent dealing, "Don't bite the hand that's feeding you."

In conclusion, may we ask why is it that Mr. Evans still continues to bask in that honor of office conferred upon him by the Reorganized church? He still claims to be Bishop, although his only ordination thereto was received under the hands of Joseph Smith and E. L. Kelly.

If the church he denounces is wrong, then the ordination virtue from such a church is wrong also, and Mr. Evans, instead of being an accredited representative of this or any other church, is nothing more or less than an unblushing impostor.

The writer will occupy in the Columbia theater Sunday evening at 8 p. m. on the subject of "The Book of Mormon, Its Origin, Is It Divine or Human?"

St. Thomas, April 4, 1919.

Respectfully,

DANIEL MACGREGOR.