

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BY

ELDER ORSON PRATT,

IN THE

Fourteenth Ward Assembly Rooms,
on Sunday Afternoon, Decem-
ber 2nd, 1877.

REPORTED BY GEO. F. GIBBS.

I WILL call the attention of the congregation to a passage in the prophecy of Joel, second chapter, commencing with the 28th verse.

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions."

"And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth,—blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke."

"And the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."

These words were spoken by the inspired man long before the first coming of our Savior; they refer to the future condition of the world, a state of things that has never been known to have existed upon upon our earth since the prophet lived here. All flesh should be under the influence of the spirit of God, and not only all human flesh, but also the animal creation, and all things living. The effect of the outpouring of this Holy Spirit upon mankind will be to cause the young people to prophesy, making revelators of them, and the older ones to dream dreams. This prophecy was quoted by the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, when under the influence of the same spirit. It was not referred to, however, with the intention of declaring its fulfillment at that time, but merely to inform the unbelieving Jews that it was the same spirit which Joel spoke of. It will be remembered, that on the morning of the day of Pentecost, about 120 disciples had received this spirit. On that occasion, while assembled in the Temple, it operated so powerfully upon them, that the illiterate and unlearned were enabled to speak in different languages, and that it manifested itself in the form of cloven tongues, like fire in appearance. The people who witnessed these operations marvelled and wondered exceedingly. But some were inclined to evil, and accused these men of God of drunkenness. It was then that the Apostle Peter, in order to correct any false impression upon the minds of the congregation, arose, and after denying the accusation of these evil disposed persons, said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," quoting the prophecy nearly word for word.

Some have supposed that the prophecy was then fulfilled. It is very evident to every one who will reflect for a few moments, that such was not the case; but that the spirit which vested upon those one hundred and twenty was the same spirit that should, in the last days, be poured out upon all flesh. It is still further evident that it was not then fulfilled, as appears from the following: "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood," etc., having reference to His second coming, when these great events should take place. It is generally believed, by the various Christian churches, that there are to be no more revelations, or visions, or dreams, given by the spirit of God, and this belief has been entertained for generations, by millions of people, terming themselves Christians. But when this prophecy is really fulfilled, all men and women upon the earth will become revelators, receiving from the heavens information and knowledge by the power of that spirit poured out upon them. I think our present Bible will then be greatly enlarged, should their revelations be written.

Before all flesh receive the spirit of God, the kingdom of God is to appear upon the earth. The work is to be commenced, and His spirit poured out upon a few, preparatory to the coming of the Son of Man, that there may be prophets and revelators again on the earth, and the true Church of God again exist among men, as anciently. The time having fully arrived, in this the 19th century, for the prophecies

to be fulfilled, in regard to the setting up of the latter-day kingdom, the Lord and his angel, as predicted in the 14th chapter of John's Revelations, revealed the original plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, which book, having been translated by inspiration and the aid of the Urim and Thummim, is found to contain the fullness of the gospel of the Son of God, as revealed in ancient times to the Israelites of this western hemisphere, the forefathers of our Indian race. They understood the Gospel and also the law of Moses, the latter of which they had kept for nearly 600 years before Christ. After His crucifixion and resurrection from the dead, they were favored with His personal ministry; the Gospel was taught them in great plainness, and twelve men were chosen on this continent, and commissioned to go forth and preach the fullness of the Gospel to all the inhabitants of the land. These Twelve men, like the Apostles of the eastern hemisphere, preached faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and baptism by immersion in water for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost; and upon those who believed and obeyed, the Spirit of the Lord was poured out to a very great extent. They had visions, and dreams, and revelations, and great manifestations of the power of God, and the people generally of both North and South America were converted and were taught and instructed in the things of God. Yet this did not include all flesh, and therefore did not fulfil the prophecy of Joel.

The Lord has brought to light these ancient records, containing the fullness of the Gospel, which he has commanded to be preached and published to every nation and in every tongue upon the face of the earth, that all of his numerous children may have the opportunity to hear, and, through obedience to its requirements, may receive the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, which should reveal to them the mind and will of God concerning them, and lead them in the path of truth. This command strictly specifies that this Gospel is to be preached to all the world, but first to the Gentile nations, and when they are fully warned, and their times are fulfilled, then the Lord will declare the law and the testimony sealed, so far as preaching any more to them is concerned; and he will once more commission his servants to go to the Jews, the House of Israel, whom the Lord will prepare, through his own power and wisdom, to receive the message, and not reject it as they anciently did. Scores of thousands, among the different nations, have already received the ministry of the Gospel, revealed by the angel, and they have been filled with the Holy Ghost, according to the promise made to every soul who will believe and repent of his sins; and they have measurably become revelators and prophets. This, therefore, is the beginning of the great latter-day work, which will never end, until all flesh, that will not be destroyed from the face of the earth by the judgments spoken of, will be made partakers of this same Spirit, and it will have the same effect promised.

You may ask, Why it has not been the case since the first century of the Christian era? Why it has not been fulfilled among the various Christian denominations of our globe? Why they have not received dreams, and visions, and revelations by the power of the Holy Ghost? It may be a mystery to some, why so long a period should have elapsed among the people of the different nations, during which they have had no revelations, no visions, no prophecies, no voice of God. The reason of this, as revealed by the Lord, is because the people did turn away from the ancient gospel; they did, as had been predicted they would do, change the ordinances and break the everlasting covenants; they did apostatize from the truth so that the authority of the apostleship ceased among them; the authority to baptize no longer existed, the authority to lay on hands that they might receive the Holy Ghost no longer existed, and they were no longer able to minister authoritatively in the name of the Lord in any of the ordinances of the Church. There were many good moral people that lived. But where was to be found the Church organized according to the New Testament pattern, with Apostles, living Apostles

receiving revelation from heaven, and possessing the power that those anciently possessed? You could find churches in abundance, which were called Christian churches—thus denominated by themselves, some called by certain names and some by others; all of them believing in separate, distinct doctrines which characterized them; one believing one principle of the Gospel, and another believing some other; one believing in one mode of baptism, another in some other; one receiving part of the Gospel, and another claiming some other part. This was the condition of the Christian nations when the Lord sent his angel to reveal the fullness of the Gospel to Joseph Smith, a mere boy, who was raised up specially by the hands of God to bring to light another record, agreeing with the one which already existed, called the New Testament; not another Gospel, but the same gospel taught to another branch of the house of Israel. Our Heavenly Father is not a respecter of persons; he respects one branch of the house of Israel just as much as another; and inasmuch as he did by his own power, according to their own records, bring a remnant of the tribe of Joseph out of the land of Jerusalem to this continent, he had as much regard for them as he had for the Jews, and as he had for the ten tribes who were taken away from the land of Palestine some 720 years before Christ. They were led away to the north country, but where, we do not exactly know. He had equal respect to all these branches of the seed of Israel; and as all had a knowledge before their dispersion about the coming of the future Messiah, it would be perfectly reasonable that when he should come to suffer and be crucified for the sins of the world, the Jews, only a portion of Israel, should not be the only portion who should be favored and blessed with his personal ministry; it is perfectly reasonable that he should go to the ten tribes, and also come to this great continent, where a part of one tribe existed, and minister to them. You know Jesus himself says, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Not merely to the Jews, for they were only a part of them, he had others dispersed in various countries, and upon the islands of the sea; and inasmuch as they all had a knowledge of the coming of Christ, and that he would offer the great and last sacrifice, thereby doing away with the rite of sacrifice which they had for so many generations held sacred, it would seem consistent that he should inform them in whatever land they might have been, that the true Messiah had come and offered himself, and therefore they should no longer offer up beasts and birds as sacrifices, but forever afterwards believe in Him. It is also just as reasonable, that a branch of Israel, existing thousands of miles from Palestine, having the personal ministry of Christ, would keep a record of his teachings, just as much as they did in the land of Jerusalem; and that his teachings would be just as sacred, when written, as the New Testament is. And it is again just as reasonable that they should receive the same gospel and the same spirit, and that the same effects should be produced among them, as among those at Jerusalem.

Jesus informs us too in St. John's Gospel, that he had other sheep besides those at Jerusalem. The passage reads: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." He did not go to the Gentiles, as they were not the "other sheep" referred to; they were never denominated in any of the Scriptural writings as the sheep of Israel, they were always called by their own name. But the sheep that Jesus speaks of were those he meant to visit; "they shall hear my voice"—that is, he would minister to them, and they would see Him and they would hear His voice. And the instruction that he gave, they were commanded to write, with a view of its coming forth in the latter-days, preparatory to the time when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;" not merely the knowledge of God contained in the Jewish record, but the knowledge of God contained in all the records. The Book of Mormon informs us that the ten tribes in the north country will have a record as well as the Jews, a Bible of their own, if you please. Indeed Jesus,

after having instructed the remnant of Joseph upon this land and revealed to them His gospel, said to them, "But now I go unto the Father, and also to show myself unto the lost tribes of Israel, for they are not lost unto the Father, for He knoweth whither He hath taken them." And it was predicted concerning them, by one of the ancient American prophets, who lived in those days, that when God should bring these ten tribes from the north country, they would bring their records with them. And it should come to pass that they should have the records of the Nephites, and the Nephites should have the records of the Jews, and the Jews and the Nephites should have the records of the lost tribes of the house of Israel, and the lost tribes of Israel should have the records of the Nephites and the Jews. "It shall come to pass that I will gather my people together, and I will also gather my word in one." Not only the people are to be gathered from the distant portions of our globe, but their records, or bibles, will also be united in one.

In the good old book believed in by the world of Christianity, we have a prophecy which may be found in the 37th chapter of Ezekiel, concerning the uniting together of two of the records. I will read the prophecy. "The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying:

"Moreover, thou Son of Man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel, his companions; then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions.

"And join them one to another into one stick, and they shall become one in thine hand."

"And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these?

"Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand."

"And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before thine eyes."

Why was he commanded to do this simple thing, for surely it would be considered simple in our day for a man to take two sticks, writing upon one for Judah, and upon another one for Joseph, and then joining the two sticks together, and holding them up in his hands to become one? If we were to undertake to preach in this way the people would think we were insane. But it was a familiar way by which the Lord intended to instruct his people, and the interpretation is this: These two sticks were to represent what the Lord would do. Says he, "When the children of thy people shall speak unto thee saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these two sticks, that they become one in thine hand, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, (not Ezekiel) will take the stick of Joseph, etc." And what will you do with it? I will put it with the stick written upon for Judah, and will make them one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before thine eyes;" one being a representation of the other. But when will it take place? Read the next verse.

"And say unto them, thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and will bring them into their own land:

"And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to all, and they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:

"Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God."

Has this been fulfilled? Has He done this for the House of Israel, scattered among the heathen, bringing them back and making them one nation in the land and upon the mountains, with one king to reign over them all? Has there

ever been a period since the twelve tribes lived, some two thousand five hundred years ago, that the House of Judah has been made one? It is very well known that such things have not yet taken place. But the prophecy will be fulfilled, and that too in our day. The Lord will gather the ten tribes from the north, and the House of Judah from the four quarters of the earth whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land, making of them one nation under one king never more to be divided, neither, says the Lord, shall they any more defile themselves with their detestable things, etc. "And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto my servant Jacob, wherein your fathers have dwelt, etc." It is not a spiritual thing, it is natural, and will take place even as it is written. How will He accomplish this work? In the very way He has pointed out in this chapter? He will take the stick, or records, of Joseph written upon for Joseph, and join it with that of the Jews, written upon by the Jewish nation; and when they become one in His hand, then He will bring Israel from the four quarters of the earth and fulfill all that has been said concerning them.

Here (holding the Book of Mormon in his hand) we present a record of this American continent, a history of a branch of the tribe of Joseph, for nearly 600 years before Christ, and until 420 years after Christ, a history of the Lord's dealings with them from the time they left Jerusalem until one of their principal nations fell in battle, because of their apostasy; and the descendants of the remaining remnant are this degenerated people we call Indians, who still exist. Their record has been brought to light; the Lord has done it, not Joseph Smith. He has already united the record and testimonies of Joseph with those of Judah that we may have additional evidence that Jesus is the Christ, that we may have the testimony of two great nations—the Jewish nation and the nation of Joseph that dwell on this land, and which afterwards became a "multitude of nations," according to the blessing pronounced by the ancient patriarch, Jacob, when blessing his two grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Here we find on this continent a multitude of nations; and when we come to examine the language they all speak, we find that it evidently sprang from the same source. Antiquarians who have searched diligently into this matter, all testify to this one fact—that their language evidently sprang from the same source. It is also stated by them that they must have lived for many generations on this continent in order to have become so diversified in their several tongues. You know where people have no written language, as we have, that it will become corrupted, and as they separate from each other, as the Indian race has done, it will corrupt itself more and more. When you come to trace the languages spoken by the aborigines of our country, you will find that they have the same origin; also that this "multitude of nations" are the descendants of Joseph, in fulfillment of the promise God made him through his father Jacob. Patriarchs used to bless their children in ancient days and tell them what would come to pass in the latter days. Jacob so blessed his twelve sons; and when he came to Joseph he pronounced a peculiar blessing upon his head. It reads—"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall," signifying that a portion of his seed would not always stay with the main body of his people, but would branch off "run over the wall," depart out of the land of Jerusalem. "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." Jacob's progenitors were Abraham and Isaac. What blessings were given to them? Palestine. But says the Patriarch, I have a greater blessing, it has prevailed above that of my progenitors. How much above theirs? Unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. Said he, I will give this to you, Joseph; or, "they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." How marvelous are the dealings of God with man in bringing to pass the prophetic utterances of his servants! There was another blessing pronounced upon his head by Moses, before he was taken out from the midst of Israel, which was very distinct from the rest of the tribes. It reads—"And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven. And for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof." As much as to say, his land shall be very choice. Instead of being blessed with lands side by side with the rest of the tribes, he was to be a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills, and there he should be blessed with all kinds of climate; the temperate and the torrid zone; the blessings of the earth and fullness thereof, so far as the temperate zones are concerned; then the blessings of the earth, so far as the torrid zone is concerned.

Here then we perceive with all these predictions and prophecies that the Lord