DISCOURSE

BY

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WE are living in the latter days, at a time which all the prophets of God, who lived upon the earth in former times looked forward to with anticipation. The servants of God whose writings have been handed down to us in the book called the Bible, were all blessed in their day and generation with some foresight in regard to the last great dispensation of God's mercy to man. The Spirit of God opened up to them views concerning the great latter-day work, which God should perform, in which He would consummate His purposes, in which He would perfect His work, in regard to the people of this earth. And they were strengthened in the performance of the duties devolving upon them by glimpses of the latter-day glory. They were called to pass through very trying circumstances. As the Apostle Paul says: "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep skins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Generally speaking, the prophets of God were rejected by the majority of the children of men. By the spirit of prophecy which rested upon them, they could preceive how small would be the impressions which they would be able to make upon the people who lived in their day, and they saw also that although they might be able to accomplish some good in the name of the Lord, yet the Adversary would come in like a flood, so to speak, and overwhelm the influences which they were able to bring to bear. They saw that the work which they were engaged in could not continue, at least but for a little while. But they looked down to the last days when the Kingdom of God should be established on the earth, when it should not be pervailed against nor be overcome, but should remain and continue to grow and increase and spread forth, until its influence should extend to the uttermost parts of the earth, until all things should be subdued unto the Lord, until the wicked should be destroyed, until misrule and tyranny and oppression and falsehood and false doctrine and the powers of evil should be banished from the earth, and the light of God should stream forth to lighten every land, and the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ, and He should rule from pole to pole and from shore to shore. In this they rejoiced exceedingly, and they were encouraged to perform the work entrusted to them, by the foresight that God gave to them of the great latter day work. The Apostle Paul referred to this dispensation in these words: "Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." By this we see that the Apostle Paul—and he was imbued with the same spirit and understanding as his brethren of the Apostleship—looked forward to another dispensation than that in which they labored, which is generally called the Christian dispensation, because it was introduced by Jesus who was the Christ. Paul called the dispensa- that was to come after His day "the dispensation of the fullness of times," and declared in that dispensation God would gather together in one all things in Christ; not only the things in the earth, but also the things in the heavens—they should all be gathered together in one.

Now, the Apostle Paul, and others in his time—like those ancient prophets to whom I have referred—had the understanding that the work in which he was engaged, although it would accomplish that whereunto it was sent, would only make its impression for a time and for a season; that the time would come when darkness would come in again; when false doctrine would prevail; when the servants of God would be taken from the earth and false prophets and false teachers would arise who would, (to use the Apostle Peter's own words) "bring in damnable heresies," who would turn away the hearts of the people from the truth. The Apostles saw that the time would come when the people would be "heady and high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof;" when false teachers would arise and "make merchandise of the souls of men, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction," "and many," we are told "shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." John, the beloved disciple, wrote a glorious vision that God gave to him when he was upon the Isle of Patmos, being banished there for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, and in that vision the Lord showed to him that a spurious church should arise which would have influence over all the earth. It was pictured to him in the form of a woman sitting upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, and upon her forehead a name written, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of Harlots." And he saw that she held in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication, and he beheld that all nations were made drunk with the wine that was in that golden cup. It was not merely to be partaken of by a few, but by all nations. He also saw that the time should come,—foreseen by Isaiah the prophet—"When darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people." When Jesus was upon the earth He told His disciples that the time would come when false Christs and false prophets would arise, and when because of the iniquity that should abound, the love of many would wax cold. And we find by searching both the Old and New Testaments that the prophets of God who lived in former times and had dispensations committed unto them, saw that the time would come when the work which they performed would seem to be lost from the earth; apostacy would ensue; people would "go after other Gods; they would transgress the laws, change the ordinances, and break the everlasting covenant." But the ancient prophets had a glimpse of what God would do in the latter days. They saw the time when He would establish His work in the earth no more to be thrown down forever; when He would establish His Kingdom not to be left to another people, not to be overcome, not to be trampled under foot, but to arise and shine and the light thereof go forth to all the world that kings might come to its light and the gentiles to the brightness of its rising.

Now, my brethren and sisters, we are blessed with the privilege of living upon the earth in the latter days, in the time to which all the prophets looked forward with pleasure with rejoicing and with thanksgiving; the time just preceding the coming of the Son of man, not as the babe of Bethlehem, not to be born in a stable and cradled in a manger, not to be "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," not to be lifted up on the cross and His life's blood poured out because of the wickedness of men, but as King of Kings and Lord of Lords; to come vested with all power on the earth and in the heavens; to "sit upon the throne of His father David," and to "reign from the rivers even unto the ends of the earth;" to subdue all things unto himself; to abolish wickedness, to banish evil, to bind Satan and his hosts, and to fill the earth with light and glory and the power of God; that the lion and the lamb may dwell together; that enmity may depart between man and man and between man and beast; that nation may not lift up sword against nation, and that people may study the art of war no more; but that peace may be ushered in, and that the power of God and the Spirit of God may be poured out upon all flesh and all nations be influenced thereby. We are living upon the earth in the time preceding these great events—in the latter days, in the last dispensation.

The question may arise, is this great dispensation which the prophets foresaw, and which Paul spoke of, already ushered in? has the dispensation of the fulness of times been introduced for the benefit of the children of men? or are we still under the old dispensation opened up by the Savior and carried on for a time by the Apostles? That is a serious question, though if left to the Latter-day Saints to answer, one that would be settled in a very short time; for go where you might in this Territory and ask the Latter-day Saints concerning it, and they would answer, "I know the dispensation of the fulness of times is ushered in; I do not merely believe it, but I know it as well as I know that I live." And if you were to ask them how they know it, they would answer, "By the revelations of the Holy Ghost." They would tell you they know that God has again spoken from the heavens, that angels have descended from the courts of glory and communicated with man, and that through the direct agency of divine and holy beings, this great and last dispensation of God's mercy to man has been opened up. They would tell you further, that they know it will remain and prevail; that all that has been designed must be accomplished under its auspices; and the work which has been begun must continue and grow—because it is the work of God—even until the whole earth is subdued unto Him, and all things are prepared for the coming of Him whose right it is to reign; and that no man or nation or government or influence or society, or all combined can have the slightest influence or power to stop its onward spread.

It would be interesting perhaps to consider how the dispensation of the fulness of times was to be opened up. We read that the works of God are one eternal round, "He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever," without variableness or any change whatever. As He acted in ancient times, then, so may we expect Him to act in latter times. That if He has a work to perform amongst men, He will commence and carry it out in the same way that He did formerly. Whenever darkness has covered the face of the earth and the people have gone astray, we find, by reading the Bible, that God spoke from the heavens, that He sent heavenly messengers to some man or men whom He, not the people, chose, to whom He communicated His mind and will, and whom He authorized to preach to the rest. They went with "the burden of the word of the Lord," they did not go forth preaching for doctrine the commandments of men. They did not aim to please the eyes or the ears of the people. They did not as a general thing possess much learning; in fact, they were to some extent ignorant, that is, they were not versed in the learning of the world. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the earth to confound the things which are mighty." But have we any intimation in the Scriptures that God would act like that in the last days? If we had not we might reason from what He has done to what He will do. But we have any amount of testimony in the Scriptures, written in both Testaments, as to what He will do in the last days. In the first place we read that "God will do nothing except He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets." And we are told in the revelation from which I quoted concerning the general apostacy, when all nations shall become drunken from drinking the contents of that golden cup in the hands of the mother of abominations, an angel should come and bring to the earth again the everlasting Gospel. You will find what I refer to in the 14th Chapter of Revelations, and the 6th and 7th Verses. John says, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water." And after this he declares that there followed another angel, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornications."

Some one may enquire, Did the things that John saw in the vision signify events that had taken place already, or were they to take place in the future? That can be easily settled by reading the 1st verse of the 4th chapter of that book, which reads as follows: "After this I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be *hereafter*." And in the 14th Chapter he says that he saw another angel flying in the midst of "[illegible] the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." So this Gospel that John saw the angel bringing to earth was for the benefit of generations to come, for the Christians as well as those who are termed the heathen. We who are styled "Christians" are in the habit of calling all other nations heathen; I am inclined to believe that there are a great many people who are "christian" heathen.

This revelation that was given to John will seem very strange to a great many people, who are under the impression that the everlasting Gospel has been upon the earth ever since it was taught by Jesus Christ and His Apostles. But if that were so, what need would there be for the Lord to send an angel with it? As I before explained, John saw the time when the whole earth would be under the influence of that wicked power which he saw sitting on a scarlet colored beast, and out of the cup which she held in her hand, all nations were to *drink—not merely* the heathen nations, but all the nations of the earth *without exception*. I am well aware that this will not sit very comfortably on the bosoms of some of our Christian friends. But what we are after, or should be after, is truth; and we should be desirous to obtain the truth notwithstanding that it may come in contact with our preconceived notions. John saw that the whole earth would go astray; and all the Apostles spoke more or less of the time when people would depart from the Church, when they would "not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts they would heap to themselves teachers having itching ears;" and says the Apostle, "they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables;" their teachers shall "preach for doctrine the commandments of men;" and the Apostle might have added, that if they did not preach to suit the people, they would discharge them and hire others. The time was to come when "darkness would cover the earth, and gross darkness the people," but preceding the destruction of Babylon the great an angel was to come to earth with the everlasting Gospel to preach to all nations; and the burden of his message was, to call upon the people with a loud voice, saying, "Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water," signifying that the people had gone astray and were worshipping some other god or gods.

It is the general view that after the days of Jesus and the Apostles there were to be no more angels to visit the earth. This has been taught to the people diligently. What for? Because the men who teach this doctrine do not receive any visitations from heaven themselves. They have no communication with the powers on high. The heavens to them are indeed as brass. They pray, but they do not expect to receive any answer to their prayers, except in some mystical fashion which neither they nor anybody else can understand. They do not expect to receive answers to their prayers as the prophets of old did. And they have taught the people for hundreds of years that there is to be no more communications from heaven. And why? Because they pretend to greater light; because they claim to live in an age of gospel blaze, and christianity, as they term it, has attained such a high standard of excellence that they need no divine revelation. And yet when you investigate their condition, you will find they do not comprehend the Gospel; they differ amongst themselves, they contend with each other even on fundamental principles. They have no positive knowledge in regard to the things of God. Some of the clergy teach what they believe, and others teach what they do not believe, being infidel at heart. It is true there have been sincere men who have labored for the benefit of humanity, and who have done a great deal of good; and they will be rewarded by the Almighty for all the good they have accomplished. But wherein they have presumed to minister in the name of the Lord when He never authorized them to act for Him, they have run before they were sent, and will have to answer to Him for their presumption. Wherein men have administered in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and at the same time acknowledge that they have had no communication with those higher powers, declaring that the Holy Trinity has ceased to speak to mortals, they show by their own words and make actual confession that they have no authority. They could not possibly have any, because there has been no communication from those individuals who alone had the right to give it, and wherein they have presumed to act in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost without authority, they must give an account when they appear before the bar of God. But the ministers who have preached religion for hundreds of years have no definite *knowledge* in regard to these matters and have to tell what they think and what their [illegible] are, and they disagree with each other in regard to their opinions. Yet they tell the people there is no need now for any revelation from on high; that there is no need of angels to come to the earth and make plain the way of life and salvation, because, forsooth, they know so much. The canon of Scripture they say is full; and it ceased to speak after He gave the *revelation to* John on the Isle of *Patmos*.

"*Well*," some one perhaps will say, "does not the book itself say so?" No, it does not, but the ministers have taught that it does. In the last chapter of the Book of Revelation are we not told that if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book?" Yes; but we are *also* told that, "if any man *shall take away* from the words of *the book of this* prophecy, God shall take *away his* part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." The angel merely told John what God told His servants in former times, that when He gave revelation, man should not add to it. He *told the* same thing as we see—"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it." That is *quite right*. But man is prone to do that which is forbidden. When God reveals anything some one is sure to *add to* or take away from it, and *try to* improve it or make it void. *Hence the* angel told John that no man *was to* take away from the words of the book of this prophecy. What book? The book *that* John was writing—*the Book of Revelation*—does not refer at all to the Bible. There was no such book as the Bible then. Those books that are compiled in the Bible—and many more that are not—were scattered abroad, and hundreds of years after that, they were hunted up and examined: those that we now have were taken from a great mass *of manuscripts* and compiled; *others were thrown* away as non-canonical. The canon of Scripture was not made in John, but was made up in the [illegible] I have described; and there is no intimation *anywhere* from God to man that He would give no more revelations; but the whole [illegible] *from* beginning to end [illegible] contrary. We are told [illegible] and work righteousness, [illegible] upon His holy name and He will be nigh to answer. "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and the door shall be opened unto you; *for everyone* that asketh findeth, etc." That is the word of the Lord. It does not say that God would not give any more revelation, but it does say that man should not add to that which God does give. In that very revelation we read that an angel came to John and gave him a little book and told him to eat it. He took the book as he was told to do, and the angel said to him in explanation: "Thou must prophesy again before many people, and nations and tongues, and kings." If he was to prophesy to nations, and kings, and before kings, would not this be the word of the Lord? Yes, just as much as that which is written in the book. So it does not imply that there was not to be any more revelation. The injunction that man shall not add to or take from any revelation that God gives is that has been a standing rule for generations.

But if this passage in the last chapter of the Book of Revelation could be so construed as to make it appear that there was to be no more revelation, such a construction would conflict with what we find in the 14th chapter of Revelation, the effect that an angel was to come "having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on