

of the nations of the world at this time, must know that religion is a very popular thing—it has many followers; and they must also know that the religions of the day are very diversified; and that they are in a great measure framed to meet the conveniences, traditions, and situations of the children of men, with but little regard to the declarations of the Bible, or the revelations of Jesus Christ. Every man that will read the scripture of the Old and New Testaments, will see that there was an organization in the days of Jesus Christ, a system for the salvation of the children of men. It is laid down plainly and definitely for the inhabitants of the earth to follow. But, if we search throughout the earth at this day we cannot find a system existing that has scarcely any resemblance to the example laid down by Christ and the apostles. And I will here say that the persecution, opposition, and oppression that this church has met with from its first organization, has been in a great measure in consequence of carrying out that very system, those very ordinances, that same gospel which Jesus Christ and his apostles established in their day, and which cost the most of them their lives.

The New Testament clearly shows that whenever God has had a people upon the earth—when he has had a church and kingdom in the world, it has been organized with prophets and apostles, and has been endowed with revelations, with divers kinds of gifts, with healing power, with miracles, with dreams, and I may say with every member that belongs to the body of Christ, necessary for the edifying of the body, for the work of the ministry, or sanctifying of the people. We cannot find anywhere within the lids of the Bible, where the Lord ever had a people he acknowledged, except they were led by immediate revelation. The Lord never had a people in any age of the world without prophets to lead them, even to the present day; and this is the reason why this church and kingdom is so diverse from the views, feelings, and traditions of the nations around us, and that has caused it to meet with great opposition, persecution, and opposing spirits from the commencement, and perhaps may continue to do so until the winding up scene.

Many of the prophets have prophesied that such an order of things as that which Christ and his apostles established, should again be established in the last days, after ages of apostasy and darkness. When the Jews fell through unbelief, as the Apostle says, the gospel was taken from them and given to the Gentiles. Did the kingdom go to the Gentiles stripped of any of its powers, or portion of its organization, because the Jews would not receive it? No, verily it did not. When the kingdom was presented to the Gentiles, it was presented with apostles and prophets, with healing powers, with revelations direct from God, and with every gift and grace the Jews believed in, and enjoyed while they remained faithful: when it went to the Gentiles it was perfect in its organization, but in process of time they changed the ordinances of the kingdom of God, and fell through the same example of unbelief, and have remained for centuries without the true order of heaven among them.

Ask any portion of Christendom why the ancient order of the Church of Christ is not among them—apostles, prophets, revelations, and other gifts, and they will inform you that they were only needed in the dark ages of the world, to establish the kingdom of God, but in this enlightened age are not necessary. It makes me think of a remark made by Mr. Kirkham in his Grammar; he says, "The Lord hung the Bible out of heaven, and retired." It appears so indeed among the Gentile nations, for in process of time the gifts, and graces, and powers of the kingdom of God were taken away, and the men who officiated in the ancient church of God were nearly all put to death; they were slain because they endeavored to maintain it in its purity, and tried with all their might to establish the principles that God had revealed to the Jews, for they were the chosen people of God, the promised seed; but they fell because they would not receive the Messiah, the Shilo, their Savior; when they put him to death, and imbrued their hands in the best blood that had flowed through the lineage of Judah, they had to foot the bill; blood was shed, the laws of God were broken, the ordinances were changed, and the priesthood of high Heaven trampled upon: the Jews must, therefore, suffer to pay the debt they contracted. Jesus Christ told them what would come upon them before he was taken away, for he mourned over them, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Again, he says to them, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous: and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets; wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Again, "Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." He also told them that their temple would be destroyed, and not one stone be left upon another that would not be thrown down, and thus they had to suffer until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. Jesus Christ lifted up his voice, and spared not, for he knew what was awaiting that nation; and his heart yearned over them when he saw them as a nation rushing madly on to destruction, and sowing seed that would cause a thousand years of sorrow and mourning by their posterity. They had their agency to act upon as

seemed them good, and they became wicked and corrupt, and instituted their own systems of religion and ordinances, instead of the true order of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus told them they would be dispersed among the Gentiles, and be trodden down, and afflicted by them until the times of the Gentiles should be accomplished.

We understand from the scriptures, that have been referred to from time to time in this desk, that the Lord will set his hand again to gather Israel. We heard this subject treated upon a few Sabbaths ago, and what would take place in the last dispensation, even in the dispensation of the fullness of times.

But those who have been taught after the traditions of the fathers, have been taught that the Bible should be spiritualized, that it does not mean what it says, nor say what it means; we have been taught to believe that where the Lord says Israel shall be gathered, it means spiritually. When we read any portion of scripture, which did not agree with our traditions, every man had his own system of spiritualizing, to make it bend to his own views. Instead of this, we have now learned that God means what he says, and says what he means.

When we read the history of the United States, or the history of General Washington, no man in his sober senses would have the least idea of spiritualizing it. When we read the history of our revolutionary fathers, who sat in solemn council to deliberate upon, and sign the Declaration of Independence, because of the grievances they were called upon to bear from the mother country, no man would for a moment dream of spiritualizing these events; but every man would understand that the historian meant them to be read and understood literally.

Now, if we so read and believe the history of the foundation of our national government, or the history of the Jewish nation, or any other nation, that has been written by men who do not make any pretensions to inspiration, if we should never think of spiritualizing their writings, but take them and understand them as they are given to us, why should we take it upon ourselves to spiritualize and twist the words, and the meaning of the words of that God who rules the nations?

When he gives to us revelations of the greatest moment to us, will he not set forth his mind and will in their true meaning, as he intends they shall be fulfilled, and as he intends we shall understand them? The Latter-day Saints as a people have learned to take God at his word. We admit that there are in the Bible metaphors, figures, and parables.

When Jesus was teaching the women the things of the kingdom of God, he used comparisons which they understood. Hence he says, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." He knew the women understood about making bread. And so he talks to the farmer about sowing grain, that some sow seed on good ground, and others on stony ground, and others among thorns, likening the kingdom of heaven unto it. He used these metaphors to make a deeper impression upon the minds of the children of men; and at other times he used dark sayings in the same way. We understand a figure as a figure, and a parable as a parable, but the meaning of the Savior is plainly manifest in them.

When the Lord says by the mouth of his prophet, "And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dry shod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people which shall be left from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt;" and again, "And they shall bring your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain, Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord;" again, when he says, "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them; I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first born;" we believe he means what he says, for we have ourselves seen many of these prophecies literally fulfilled in this generation. Again, we believe he means what he says, when the Lord declares through his prophet, that "an angel shall fly through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come." We believe he means what he says. To fulfill this declaration we believe it is necessary for an angel of God to come to the earth, and deliver the gospel—the true gospel, and the only gospel that ever was revealed for the exaltation and glory of man.

Why does it require an angel to bring the gospel from heaven in these last days, when the earth is deluged with gospel, with religion, with different systems and plans of salvation? Because that none of them are according to the order, organization that God has given to govern and control the human family when they would be controlled by him. If there had been a true organization of the kingdom of God upon the earth in these latter days, there would have been no need of an angel to visit the earth to teach men the first principles of the gospel of Christ, and administer its ordinances to them.

When the apostles of old dwelt upon the earth, the angel that appeared to Saul of Tarsus, and the angel that appeared to Cornelius did not administer the gospel to them, but instructed them to apply to those men whom Christ had ordained to that authority, and who held the keys, the gifts and graces, and priesthood of the kingdom of God. So it would have been in the last days, if there had been authority, and the true priesthood of God on

the earth; there would, in that case, have been no necessity for an angel to come with the gospel.

Angels are sent as ministering spirits to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. We believe the Lord means what he says. We believe Israel were led formerly by prophets who were full of wisdom and truth; and they are again to be led by holy prophets, that have the priesthood of the Most High upon them, and power to lead, and to teach the children of men. When Daniel the prophet declared that the Kingdom of God should be set up in the last days, and that it should break in pieces all other kingdoms, and have no end, he meant what he said. When we read the prophecies that declare unto us that great wickedness shall be upon the earth in the latter days, and that great plagues will be poured out upon the world; that angels are to pour out the vials of the wrath of the Almighty, and that previous to this all men are to be warned by the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ; we believe those declarations will have a literal fulfillment.

Before I ever heard of Mormonism, when reading the Scriptures I often wondered why it was that we had no prophets, no apostles, no gifts and graces, no healings by the power of God, no visions, no angels, no revelations, no voice of God. I often wondered why these things were not continued among the children of men, why they were not enjoyed by the different churches and denominations of the day, and in my conversation with theologians and divines, I often referred to these things, but they all told me that such supernatural manifestations were unnecessary in our day and age of the world, that such power as only necessary in a day of darkness, among an ignorant generation of people, they needed prophets to lead them; but we who live in the blaze of gospel light need no such thing; we need no revelation only that which is in the Bible; we need no visitation of angels now, those things were given to establish the doctrine of Christ, and when it was once established they were no longer needed.

This logic always appeared strange to me. I said then and I say now, may the Lord give me such periods of darkness as were enjoyed by the Apostles and saints of old in preference to the gospel blaze of modern Christianity. The ancient doctrine and power will unlock the mysteries of heaven, and pour forth that gospel light, knowledge, and truth, of which the heavens are full, and which has been poured out in every generation when prophets appeared among the children of men. But the gospel of modern Christendom shuts up the Lord, and stops all communication with Him. I want nothing to do with such a gospel, I would rather prefer the gospel of the dark ages, so called.

I do not wish to be understood that we are now living in a dark age of the world, but for the last fourteen hundred years the world have been enveloped in darkness, in which wickedness has ruled, and the powers of darkness have prevailed among the children of men, and the nations have been bound down by false traditions, and incorrect principles, but the day has now dawned, the dark clouds have now broken up and soon will pass away, and the sun of righteousness will arise in its glory, and show forth the light of heaven; and for that I am thankful, and rejoice, and so do thousands and tens of thousands in this dispensation who have been touched with the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ which has been revealed in our day by the administering of holy angels in all its fullness, beauty, power and glory; this gospel has caused prophets, elders, and saints to rejoice; it has nerved up their spirits with fortitude and strength and borne them up against every opposing influence; this has been the case in every dispensation when this light and power has been enjoyed by the children of men.

The gospel has gone forth in our day in its true glory, power, order, and light, as it always did when God had a people among men that he acknowledged. That same organization and gospel that Christ died for, and the apostles spilled their blood to vindicate, is again established in this generation. How did it come? By the ministering of an holy angel from God, out of heaven, who held converse with man, and revealed unto him the darkness that enveloped the world, and unfolded unto him the gross darkness that surrounded the nations, those scenes that should take place in this generation, and would follow each other in quick succession even unto the coming of the Messiah. The angel taught Joseph Smith those principles which are necessary for the salvation of the world; and the Lord gave him commandments, and sealed upon him the priesthood, and gave him power to administer the ordinances of the house of the Lord. He told him the gospel was not among men, and that there was not a true organization of his kingdom in the world, that the people had turned away from his true order, changed the ordinances and broken the everlasting covenant, and inherited lies and things wherein their was no profit.

He told him the time had come to lay the foundation for the establishment of the Kingdom of God among men for the last time preparatory to the winding up scene. Joseph was strengthened by the spirit and power of God, and was enabled to listen to the teachings of the angel. He told him he should be made an instrument in the hands of the Lord, if he kept his commandments, in doing a good work upon the earth, that his name should be held in honor by the honest in heart, and in dishonor throughout the nations by the wicked. He told him he should be an instrument in laying the foundation of a work that should gather tens of thousands of the children of men, in the generation in which he lived, from every nation under heaven who should hear the sound of it through his instrumentality. He told him the nations were wrapt in wickedness and abomination, and that the judgments of God were ready to be poured out upon them in their fullness; that the angels were holding the vials of his

wrath in readiness, but the decree is, that they shall not be poured out until the nations are warned, that they may be left without an excuse.

This man to whom the angel appeared obeyed the gospel; he received in meekness and humility, and bowed down before the Lord and worshipped him, and did the best he could in his illiterate state, he was as it were but a mere plowboy. He laid hold of it with all his heart, though he saw he would have to wage war with sin and wickedness, and abominations, and the oppositions of the people; he began to trust in the Lord; and what was the consequence? Wherever the words of the gospel, which the angel revealed to him, were preached among the children of men, it has had its effect. The church was at length organized with a few humble men. The learned might laugh at them because of their ignorance, but their words were like daggers to their hearts, and like a two-edged sword piercing and dividing asunder the very thoughts and intents of the hearts of men. The honest in heart began to receive their testimony, and it continued to spread from town to town, from city to city, from state to state, and from nation to nation, until we see the fruits of it here to-day in this Tabernacle of the Lord in the tops of the mountains.

I say I rejoice before the Lord this day that we have leaders in Israel that are qualified for their place and station to preside over this people, and who will seek their welfare, and are not afraid or ashamed to rebuke wickedness in high places, whether manifested by their brethren or neighbors if they do wrong. Their minds are quick as the vivid lightning of heaven; they are filled with the visions of eternity; they are not asleep, but they comprehend the elements around them; they read and digest them, and they know exactly what course to pursue; the leaders of this people know what they are doing, what is approaching this people, and what is approaching the world; and we may all know the same things, by reading the Scriptures, and by prayer, and through the ministering of the Holy Ghost conferred upon us. What man is there who reads the Scriptures, and believes that God means what he says, and says what he means but what can see a flood of dreadful events ready to be poured out upon this generation with the rapidity of lightning. No man can escape the influence of these events that are about to burst upon the heads of this generation. The gospel has gone forth, and when the nations are warned, another angel will cry "Babylon is fallen." War and famine, and the plague will overwhelm the nations of the earth, and none can escape.

As Latter Day Saints, we look upon the signs of the times, we are not ignorant of them, but we understand them. We look upon the events that are rolling upon us with great interest. It matters not what the minds and feelings of men are, the Lord is determined to raise up a people that will worship him; and if he has to whip, and scourge, and drive us through a whole generation, he will chastise us until we are willing to submit to righteousness and truth, or until we are like clay in the hands of the potter. The chastisement we have had from time to time have been for our good, and are essential to learn wisdom, and carry us through a school of experience we never could have passed through without. I hope then, that we may learn from the experience we have had to be faithful, and humble, and be passive in the hands of God and do his commandments. Do I blame President Young because he chastises us? No. Would he be a father to us, a Prophet and an High Priest of God if he saw his brethren going wrong, and would not warn and chastise them? The chastisement of a friend is far better than the kisses of an enemy. When I am out of the way, and when you are out of the way I thank God that we have a man to preside over us, who loves us enough to chastise us; it is for our good, and I believe we have been always ready to receive the chastening rod from our superiors when they thought fit to give it to us, and kiss the rod that chastened us. If a prophet is called to lead and chastise Israel, shall he not rebuke wickedness when it is not in Israel? The very spirit that vibrates in the soul of President Young, and every act of his life show to all acquainted with him, that he will do his duty in this respect, as well as in every thing else wherein he stands connected, while he dwells upon the earth, regardless of all consequences, and will leave the event in the hands of God, and his counselors are governed by the same spirit and principles. The Lord has reproved the wicked in all ages and he will do it again. He also inspires his servants to reprove and rebuke wickedness; he controls all nations, and the destiny of the world is in his hands as much now as it was in the days of Israel when he himself led them out of the land of Canaan.

Wickedness is in the earth, and satan has great power over the hearts of men, and he seeks to destroy them, and he seeks to destroy this people, and lead away the elders of Israel; and when he overcomes a man that has made a covenant with God, who has been baptized in this church and kingdom he gains a great victory over him, than over one who never made any profession. Why have old grey headed Israelites turned their faces for generations past towards Jerusalem, and lifted up their voices and mourned in sorrow? Because their fathers had rejected the Messiah and broken their covenants with God. Why are these Lamanites roaming about in misery and wretchedness living upon reptiles of the earth; why are they cursed so bitterly, and brought down so low, for they are of the seed of Israel? It is because the chastening rod of the Almighty has rested upon them and upon their fathers. We should be very cautious and careful to keep the commandments of God and do right while we have such examples of the dealings of God with the nations who have broken his laws. We shall be corrected in all our errors, that we may become sanctified, and be prepared for those glories, principles, powers, and privileges which the Lord has promised to reveal to us.