

then, was Jesus Christ being introduced by His Father to Joseph Smith, the praying boy, who next was informed by the Great Redeemer Himself, that all the sects of the day were wrong, that all their creeds were an abomination in His sight, that the modern professors and teachers taught for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; "that he (Joseph) should join none of these churches, but that the true church should be revealed to him at some future time. This, then, was Joseph's authority. Jesus Christ himself, the Redeemer of the world, the Son of God, He that was crucified and put to death on Mount Calvary, but who arose triumphant from the grave, the founder, the organizer, the head, the President of the Christian Church, explained to Joseph Smith the condition of the world. There is no higher authority than He. If anyone in heaven or earth has a right to say what is true Christianity, and what is not, Christ himself, the founder of the church, has that right. With that authority to back him, Joseph Smith had no fear that his declarations would be met with successful contradiction. There is only one question that can present itself to our minds in that connection, and that is: Did the boy tell the truth? Did he really converse with Jesus Christ, or was it an imagination of a bewildered and excited mind? We shall see as we proceed. I will first introduce the Prophet's own testimony concerning this his first vision. He says in his history:

It has often caused me serious reflections, both then and since, how very strange it was that an obscure boy, of a little over fourteen years of age, and one, too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor, should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, so as to create in them a spirit of the hottest persecution and reviling. But strange or not, so it was, and was often cause of great sorrow to myself. However it was, nevertheless, a fact, that I had had a vision. I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul when he made his defense before King Agrippa, and related the account of the vision he had when he saw a light and heard a voice; but still there were but few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad, and he was ridiculed and reviled; but all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise; and though they should persecute him unto death, yet he knew, and would know unto his latest breath, that he had both seen a light and heard a voice speaking to him, and all the world could not make him think or believe otherwise.

"So it was with me; I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two personages, and they did in reality speak unto me, or one of them did; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me and speaking against me, falsely, for so saying, I was led to say in my heart, Why persecute for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision, and who am I that I can withstand God? Or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I have seen a vision. I

knew it, and I know that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dare I do it, at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God and come under condemnation."

Since the time Joseph had this vision the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have traversed the globe, they have visited all the so-called Christian nations of the earth; they have examined the creeds and organizations of the Christian sects of every land and every clime, and have learned beyond doubt that the true Church of Christ was not upon the earth at the time Joseph made his sweeping declaration, and that it does not exist outside of the Church organized under the direction and authority of the Redeemer Himself by Joseph Smith.

THE WORDS OF THE ANGEL.

On the 22nd of September, 1823, Joseph Smith, after spending the previous night under the tutorship of the angel Moroni, was again visited by that holy personage on the hill Cumorah in the western part of the State of New York, and was shown the plates, which were delivered to him four years later and from which he translated the Book of Mormon. While standing on this historic hill, with the angel at his side, he again received glorious instructions and warnings, and among other things was told that when he should bring forth the Book of Mormon, the workers of iniquity would seek his overthrow. Says the angel:

"They will circulate falsehoods to destroy your reputation, and also will seek to take your life; but remember this, if you are faithful, and shall hereafter continue to keep the commandments of the Lord, you shall be preserved to bring these things forth; for in due time he will give you a commandment to come and take them. When they are interpreted, the Lord will give the holy Priesthood to some, and they shall begin to proclaim this Gospel and baptize by water, and after that they shall have power to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Then will persecution rage more and more; for the iniquities of men shall be revealed, and those who are not built upon the rock will seek to overthrow the Church; but it will increase the more opposed, and spread further and further."

The angel further told him:

"Your name shall be known among the nations; for the work which the Lord will perform by your hands shall cause the righteous to rejoice and the wicked to rage; with the one it shall be had in honor and with the other in reproach." (*Historical Record*: page 362.)

These prophetic sayings have had so literal a fulfillment that no further explanation is necessary. If the predictions here made were Joseph's own productions, and no angel of God had a part in it, is it not strange that every word of it should prove true?

TRIBULATIONS PREDICTED.

In 1831 the Saints were commanded to gather to Jackson County, Mo., which was designated as a land of inheritance for the Saints in the last days, and also as the identical spot where they should build that great city, the New Jerusalem, about which the ancient Prophets and Saints had sung, prayed and rejoiced so much. Joseph Smith had just arrived in that goodly land, together with a number

of his brethren, when a revelation, containing some very strange sayings was given on the 1st of August, 1831. The Lord said:

"Hearken, O ye Elders of my Church, and give ear to my word, and learn of me what I will concerning you, and also concerning this land unto which I have sent you. For verily I say unto you, blessed is he that keepeth my commandments, whether in life or in death; and he that is faithful in tribulation, the reward of the same is greater in the kingdom of heaven. Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning these things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation. For after much tribulation cometh the blessings. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand. Remember this, which I tell you before, that you may lay it to heart, and receive that which shall follow." (Doc. and Cov., lviii: 1-5.)

Here is an opportunity for sound reasoning. If Joseph Smith was an impostor, and if he was trying to carry out a scheme with a view to benefit himself financially; or if he was ambitious and seeking for vain glory or the honor of men, could anything be more absurd than to predict troubles and difficulties, when none such were immediately apparent.

If a schemer was doing that which Joseph on that occasion was doing, namely, planting a colony of his followers in one of the most desirable sections of country within the borders of the United States, would he not have enlarged upon the prospects ahead and predicted success and prosperity instead of difficulties and tribulations? Most assuredly he would. But Joseph spoke as he was directed by the Lord, and his own desires or ambition, if any such he possessed, cut no figure in the matter.

And now, to the fulfilment of the prophecy or revelation? No one who is acquainted with the history of the Church will hesitate to testify that since that time the Saints have indeed passed through much tribulation. In less than three years after the revelation was given they were driven from their homes in Jackson County. Three years after that they were forced to leave their temporary possessions in Clay County, Mo., and still two years later, under the exterminating order of Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, they were driven from the State of Missouri. Seven years after their expulsion from that State, wicked mobs, after first killing the Prophet and Patriarch in cold blood in Carthage jail, drove the Saints from Nauvoo into the wilderness, which was full of savage Indians; and even after coming to these mountains we have been subject to wicked persecutions and persecutions. If all this don't mean "much tribulation," what does it mean?

THE GATHERING OF THE NATIONS.

In a revelation given through Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio, Sept 11, 1831, the following occurs:

"For behold, I say unto you that Zion shall flourish, and the glory of the Lord shall be upon her. And she shall be an ensign unto the people, and there shall come to her out of every nation under heaven." (Doc. and Cov. 81: 41, 42.)

The many different nationalities