

DISCOURSE

BY

PREST. GEORGE Q. CANNON,

DELIVERED

In the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,
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REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

The speaker read the 18th chapter of the Revelation of St. John, and said: This chapter which I have read in your hearing contains a series of important predictions concerning Babylon. It is found four chapters after another prediction concerning the restoration of the gospel. The sixth verse of the 14th chapter of this same book 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." The next verse says: "And there followed another angel saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." We would infer from this that one consequence of the preaching of the gospel, or the declaration of it by this angel that should fly through the midst of heaven, would be the downfall of Babylon. We are not left in doubt, as Latter-day Saints, respecting the application of this name Babylon. Commentators have been puzzled to explain what this meant, or to what city or people it applied, but in the records that have come to us this is made so plain that I suppose there is no Latter-day saint who entertains any doubt respecting this matter. One consequence, which should follow the preaching of the Gospel, as I have said, should be the downfall of Babylon; but in the first verses that I have read it appears there should be a cry go forth before Babylon should fall. "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues." There should be, it appears from these passages that I have read in your hearing, several events connected with the preaching of the declaration of the gospel by this angel that should fly through the midst of heaven—there should be a cry go forth among the people to come out of Babylon; out of this system which had made all nations drunk with her fornications, and no doubt this would be done in a manner that would be so remarkable that all the inhabitants of the earth would have a testimony concerning it.

There have been a number of predictions made concerning the gathering together of people from various nations and from the midst of various peoples. Isaiah and Micah, two ancient prophet, have left on record their plain predictions concerning certain events that should take place in the last days connected with the gathering of people together. Their predictions concerning these events are among the most remarkable that are contained in their books, and as Latter-day Saints we fully believe these events are taking place and have been taking place for a great many years. Isaiah, in speaking about this matter, uses very much the same language as Micah. He says in the 2nd chapter, commencing at the 2nd verse: "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many shall say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Now this is a remarkable prediction concerning the gathering together of the people in the last days. I have often thought in connection with this latter-day work that one of the most remarkable features of the divinity of the work is to be found in the gathering together of the people called Latter-day Saints. As we firmly believe, the prediction that I read concerning the coming of the angel with the

everlasting gospel has been fulfilled in the establishment of this Church. The Elders of this Church have testified of this for many years, in fact since its first organization—that it was necessary for the everlasting Gospel to be restored in its primitive simplicity and purity from heaven, there being no Church in existence upon the earth that possessed it, and, therefore, God the Eternal Father, in fulfillment of His designs and the predictions of the holy Prophets, condescended to send angels from heaven to restore the primitive Gospel with its accompanying gifts and powers from heaven.

The Elders of this Church have often been questioned as to the necessity of such a revelation; for the gospel, as they believe, was in existence upon the earth. "Why," it has been asked, "do you mean to say that we do not have the Gospel? that we do not have churches organized by the will of heaven? that the Christian religion as believed and practiced by us is not divine?" These queries have often been propounded to the Elders of this Church when they have testified that God has restored through the ministration of holy angels the everlasting Gospel in its original purity. There has been but one answer to these queries; that if the Church of Christ existed in its original purity upon the earth, then which out of the numerous sects was that Church? How shall we distinguish it? Hundreds of sects exist upon the earth that profess to be the church of Christ. The ministers of these various sects claim that they are the ministers of Jesus Christ, yet in many instances contend concerning doctrine, concerning methods of Salvation, concerning ordinances, concerning many matters that in the mind of the great majority are deemed essential unto salvation. For instance, there are Christian churches to-day which believe in at least three forms of baptism. Now Paul has expressly declared that there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. Yet, as I have said there are churches which are considered orthodox in Christendom that have three different forms of baptism. One believes in sprinkling, another in pouring, and another in immersion. And they differ as to the methods of immersion and the preparatory steps to be taken before being immersed, and before being sprinkled, and so with almost every cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion. There being this diversity, a man with the Bible in his hand going forth in the midst of the Christian sects with an anxious desire to know which is of God would be puzzled beyond expression to find out which of the various churches laying claim to being divine, and to being the authentic church of Christ, was the true church. He, if he could not obtain knowledge from God, or some communication that would satisfy his mind, would be compelled to give up in despair, or to content himself with the idea that he would join that which suited him best and risk the consequences, hoping that he would fall into the hands of a merciful God. It is on this account that the Elders of this Church have constantly testified that there was a necessity for divine revelation; that in these days, God being the same yesterday, to day and forever, those who sought unto Him to obtain knowledge from Him in the proper way could obtain that knowledge, and could receive some communication that would satisfy them as to the course which they should take.

The Church of Christ—which is called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—has been organized as we testify according to the original pattern, with Apostles and Prophets, with Evangelists, with Pastors and Teachers, and the various officers that were contained in the ancient church, having all the essential features of the primitive church. But not this alone. The Gospel as taught is claimed to be the same Gospel in every particular as was preached by the Savior while upon the earth, and committed by Him to His Apostles to declare unto all nations; the same doctrine, the same ordinances, the same gifts and the same blessings. The Latter-day Saints are distinct from all other denominations which claim to be Christian in this respect: That they claim that if they obey the same form of doctrine that was taught by the servants of God anciently, and have the ordinances administered by those having authority from heaven, that the same results will follow, that the same gifts, the same

blessings, the same supernatural manifestations will attend the believers in those doctrines to-day that attended believers in ancient days. Numerous testimonies have been borne that these have been the results. In every land where the Elders of this Church have gone to preach the Gospel, hundreds have embraced it, and after having embraced it have testified that they have received the gifts as promised by the Savior, and as promised also by those who have gone forth to declare this Gospel. I suppose that when these declarations have been made thousands of persons have said—"If this be true, and if the supernatural gifts that Jesus promised unto his disciples follow the preaching of your Gospel, or that which you call 'Mormonism,' then why cannot you give us a sign, that we may see for ourselves and be convinced that it is divine?" This is a very easy way of appealing to the Elders, as many believe, of cutting them off from any further statement respecting their claims until they show a sign. But those who ask this forget that Jesus himself gave no signs to convince unbelievers. When applied to himself to give a sign, He said it was a wicked and an adulterous generation that sought for a sign, and no sign should be given them. And on one occasion, when He visited a certain place it is recorded of Him that he did no miracle because of the unbelief of the people. Now it would seem that if signs had to be given to convince the people that would have been the best place Jesus could have labored, a place where unbelief was most prevalent, and when He himself was appealed to. But He refused to do so. He did not come for the purpose of giving men signs. They were told in the Scriptures that "these signs shall follow them that believe," they should not come to convince men and to make them believe. Now in this respect the Latter-day Saints have had considerable experience. We know very well that the Lord has not given signs for any such purpose, and yet I suppose in this congregation, were liberty given to speak and to bear testimony, there are hundreds and perhaps thousands under the shade of this roof who would testify that they have seen the mighty power of God follow the administration of the ordinances of this Church. But I think myself that God has given unto us greater evidences and more convincing than the working of miracles. In these days when there are so many materialists, as they are called, when the senses of men are appealed to, to convince them of supernatural power, it seems to me that this is about one of the weakest evidences that could be brought forward to establish the divinity of the work. If men were to work miracles before me, to convince me of the truth of any system, I could not be convinced by any such evidence. My mind is of such a character that I could not accept miracles as evidence of the divinity of the system with which the men were connected who worked these wonderful powers. In fact we are told in the scriptures that the day would come when miracles should be wrought by false prophets, and men would be deceived by false evidence of this character. It is an easy thing to deceive the senses, we see it every time our theatre is occupied by a magician—we see things done that hoodwink our senses. Our eyes are deceived, our ears are deceived; all our senses are deceived by shrewd, cunning men, by men who are expert in manipulating various articles, and if they were to set themselves up as the apostles of some system, and declare that these were the evidences of the divinity of that system, and we should believe this sort of evidence, we might be converted to error. All those who are familiar with the Bible know the experience of Moses before Pharaoh. There was scarcely a miracle that Moses wrought that the magicians of the king did not imitate, and every miracle that was wrought only tended to harden the heart of the king, and make him determined that he would not let the children of Israel go, so that we see that miracles in and of themselves are no evidence of the divinity of any system, nor of the power and the authority from God of the men who work them.

But did the Lord ever have a people upon the earth at any time whom He called His own who did not have power from God? If there ever was such a people the Bible has failed to give us any account of

them. From the days of Adam down to the days of John the Revelator—a portion of whose writing I have read this afternoon—He made manifest His power unto His servants, and through His servants unto the inhabitants of the earth. He has communicated His mind and His will in great plainness whenever He had a people upon the earth; there is not a single exception. John the Baptist, it is said was a mighty prophet. Jesus said no greater prophet had been born of woman. Yet did no miracles, but he was attended by great power. One reason why he was called the greatest prophet ever born of women was that he had the privilege of baptizing the Son of God, a privilege that no other human being had, and it was so great a privilege that doubtless it distinguished him above all the prophets that had preceded him or that followed him. But he had revelation from God, though he did no miracle, yet he was a prophet. He was filled with the spirit of prophecy and of revelation, and he declared in great plainness to the people who lived in Judea that the coming of the Messiah was near at hand, and when he baptized Him, he bore testimony that He was the veritable Son of God, the Messiah, and He was greatly endowed by the Almighty, as were all His servants of whom we have any account in the scriptures. But as I have said, there are evidences connected with the Church of God at all times which are greater than those manifestations to which I have alluded which are called supernatural and which men seem to greatly desire to behold. I believe that if it were to be told to the inhabitants of the earth that a man that was nigh unto death was about to be administered to by "Mormon" Elders, and that he would be raised up from that bed of sickness, that people would flock by thousands to witness that manifestation. And if God would consent to do such a thing, do you think they would believe any more in the divinity of the work of God or in the mission of the men who had thus administered than they did before? I do not believe that men can be convinced as they should be convinced by such manifestations. It has been a matter of remark among those who have had experience in this Church that where men have been brought into the Church by such manifestations, it has required a constant succession of them to keep them in the Church; their faith has had to be constantly strengthened by witnessing some such manifestations; but where they have been convinced by the outpouring of the spirit of God, where their judgment has been convinced, where they have examined for themselves and become satisfied by the testimony of Jesus in answer to their prayers and to their faithful seeking unto the Lord for knowledge—where this has been the case they have been more likely to stand, more likely to endure persecution and trial than those who have been convinced through some supernatural manifestation of the character to which I have alluded.

Now, this Apostle, whose writings I have read, has borne testimony that a cry should go forth after the declaration of the everlasting gospel to all the inhabitants of the earth to come out of Babylon. It is a very remarkable fact connected with the preaching of this gospel that wherever it has been preached, in every land to which the Elders of the Church have gone, though nothing was said unto the people for years after the Church was organized, concerning the doctrine which had been revealed to the Church, that is, the doctrine of gathering—though nothing had been said concerning that doctrine the spirit of gathering together took possession of the converts of this Church. There are thousands of people throughout this Territory who before they received this gospel never expected to leave the land of their birth. Some born in the Eastern States, some in the Middle States, some in the Southern States, some in the Western States, some in Canada and in Europe and in various parts of the earth—they had not the remotest idea in their minds before they heard the preaching of the "Mormon" Elders that they would ever leave their homes; they never thought of it, it never entered into their minds. And yet it is a very remarkable thing that when they heard the Gospel and became convinced by its truth, directly afterwards, or simultaneously with the

hearing of it they were seized with an intense desire to leave the land of their nativity, break up their old associations, and gather with the people of God. I look upon this as one of the most remarkable phenomena that has ever been witnessed. There is nothing we read of in either sacred or profane history that approaches this work in being remarkable. It is true that Moses led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. But they were one people, they were only sojourning in the land of Egypt. The traditions which had come down to them from their fathers were that they should leave that land and go back to the land which God had promised to their great ancestor Abraham. When Moses came to them he came to fulfil preconceived ideas; he came to carry out traditions that had come down to them and which were sacred in their memories; they were looking for some such even as the leading of them forth from bondage in Egypt to the land of Canaan. On this account, therefore, it is not a parallel case. But we see in these mountains from north to south, extending some 800 or perhaps 800 miles north and south, a string of settlements built up by people of various nations who have not come to this land because of the desirableness of the land; who have not come to Utah because it is rich in minerals, who have not come to Utah because it abounds in agricultural resources; who have not come to Utah because it is a healthy climate, or because of some advantages of this character. If we visit the settlements in Idaho and converse with the people who live in these settlements, and travel from there through Utah, down into Arizona, and converse with the people in their settlements and ask them the motive that prompted them to come to this land—why are you here? Why did you leave your former homes? Some of you are eastern people, some southern, some western, some from the middle States, some from the various countries of Europe, some from far off Australia and New Zealand, and some even from Africa and from the East Indies—you ask these people why did you come here? What motive had you in view when you came to Utah to settle? and the universal reply would be from every adult member of this Church, "I came here because I believed it was the will of God I should do so. I was prompted by a feeling I could not resist to leave my former home, to dissolve my connection with my kindred, to break my old associations and to travel and cast my lot with the Latter-day Saints." This would be the universal response if the people were interrogated upon this point. Some have left pleasant homes, which before hearing and obeying the Gospel they never expected to leave, it was a matter they had not contemplated. Now to my mind, my brethren and sisters, this is one of the most remarkable features of this work to see a people moved upon as this people have been in various lands, all taking up their line of march and gathering together in one place. As I have said, we fail to see anything in history that corresponds with it. In the days of the Apostles, such a doctrine was not taught. The Apostles built up branches of the Church in various places where they could get opportunity. They baptized the people and organized them and left them, and they were overcome in time. There was no gathering place. It was so in previous ages. But in these days, in conformity as I firmly believe, and as the most of you doubtless believe—in conformity with the prediction that I have read, the prediction of Isaiah, and in conformity with the prediction of the Apostle John, when he said there should be another voice calling upon the people to come out from Babylon—in conformity with these predictions these things have been accomplished. Now if I were to ask you, could I or could any other man induce you by any human reasoning to have done this unless you yourselves had been moved upon? I know very well what your response would be. You would say that it would be impossible for any human influence to have operated upon your minds to have brought this about. You are witnesses in this respect of the power of God upon you. You know whether it was the inducements held out by the Elders; you know whether it was the preaching of the Elders, whether it was the arguments of the Elders, or whether it was any other influence of this character that operated upon your mind in this matter. If the thousands