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Joseph & Smith.

WAS HE A PROPHET OF GOD?

An Investigation and Testimony,

BY

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PREFACE.

DURING recent travels in the Holy Land, where the voice of Prophets and Apostles, and of the Son of God, Himself, was heard in former days, the author was led to direct his attention to the subject discussed on the following pages. The result of an earnest investigation appeared at the time in THE DESERET NEWS, and is now, by request of friends, offered to the world as a humble testimony to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by

THE AUTHOR.

JOSEPH SMITH.

WAS HE A PROPHET OF GOD?

THE controversy between the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the various churches of the world turns upon one great question, viz.: Has God again revealed His will to mankind through Joseph Smith, the Prophet? If he has, and this can be proven, then the controversy is at an end, and it is the duty of all to accept the message of that prophet as from God. Then to accept the gospel which Joseph Smith preached is to accept God, who sent him, and to reject it is to reject God. This question is, therefore, one of the greatest importance and should be carefully considered by everyone who is concerned about the salvation of his own soul and the souls of those who are dear to him.

The question is a twofold one, and each part of it demands a separate consideration.

1. Are the books of the Bible all that is necessary for the guidance of men to eternal life and exaltation, or, is continuous revelation necessary?

2. Is there any evidence, supposing continuous revelation to be necessary, that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God?

I.

The question: Are the books of the Bible all that is necessary to guide us to the attainment of eternal salvation? has been variously answered.

The Romanists claim that they are not. They give to genuine tradition the same authority as to the written word and submit both to the interpretation of their infallible Pope.

Most of the Protestants deny the authority of the tradition

and the infallibility of any one representative of the church. They claim that the written word, as contained in the Bible, is the only necessary and authoritative guide in matters of religion. An eminent Baptist divine, Dr. Angus, says: "As the Holy Scriptures claim to be regarded as the book of God, a divine authority, so they claim to be the only authority. It is not *a* rule, it is *the* rule both of practice and faith. To ascertain its meaning, we employ reason and the opinions of good men, and the experience of a devout heart; but no one of these helps, nor all combined, can be regarded as of co-ordinate authority." (Bible Handbook, page 69.)

Bishop Grundtvig was aware of the weakness of this Protestant position, taken and vigorously defended by the reformers. For the guidance of the "church" he claimed in the first place a "living word," a continuous tradition, expounding the "written word," which, he insisted, is nothing but a dead letter until quickened by the Holy Spirit, present in the "church;" and in his view, curiously enough, not the books of the Bible but the Apostolic Symbol was *the* written word, *par excellence*, composed, probably, by our Savior himself and transmitted from the Apostles to the posterity in all ages. The worthy bishop gave to the Apostolic Symbol the place that is otherwise generally accorded to the books of the Bible, and agreed with the Romanists in holding the necessity of a living interpreter, directed by the Spirit, while, with the Protestants, he denied the claims of the Pope, or any pope, as to the monopoly of this office.

The Latter-day Saints hold that the books of the Bible were sufficient for the people to whom they were addressed and for the purpose for which they were written. As records of God's dealings with mankind in ages past, and as prophecies of things yet future, they contain instructions for all ages and all nations; but as circumstances change, as new emergencies arise, and the plans of God develop, continued revelations are just as necessary for the guidance of the church as revelation ever was. "A religion that excludes new revelation from its principles, is just the very religion that suits the devil * * * for he knows well that God has nothing to do, nor ever had, with any religion that did not acknowledge prophets and revelators, through whom He

could speak and reveal His will to His sons and daughters." (Orson Pratt. *The Seer*, vol. ii, No. 5, May, 1854.)

Thus the various views on the question may be briefly stated.

The word of God, the Bible itself, amply justifies, I think, the position of the Latter-day Saints on this important question. The purposes for which the various books were written; the difficulties that present themselves when the exact meaning of many passages is investigated; the usual dealings of God with his people, as explained in the Bible, and many predictions of new revelations, all these facts give evidence of the correctness of the position taken by the Church of Christ in this last dispensation. What man needs, is not only a Bible and a genuine tradition, expounded by an interpreter, even if this should have, in some degree, the Holy Spirit, but he needs first of all and above all a direct communication with God, his heavenly Father. He may study the written word humbly and carefully, and thereby he will certainly, through the aid of the Holy Spirit, acquire much useful knowledge concerning religion and eternal truths; he will, if following the precepts laid down, be led onward and forward and attain a certain degree of eternal happiness. But the knowledge necessary for the work to be done in connection with the establishment of the dispensation of the fulness of times or for the obtaining of the glory emanating from the ordinances of this dispensation, he will never acquire by his own study of any amount of sacred literature.

The truth of this statement becomes self-evident, when we mark the purpose for which the sacred books were written. If there were any book of the Bible by God designated to be a complete code of laws, all-sufficient for all times and all conditions, such a fact might reasonably be expected to be either expressly stated, or implied somewhere within the covers of the sacred volume. But no such statement is to be found, nor can it be shown to be implied, when the scope of each book is clearly understood.

THE PENTATEUCH.

The Pentateuch, for instance, contains the principles on

which the Jewish theocracy was founded, a dispensation that was, according to prophetic declarations, only to last for a certain time. In the first eleven chapters of Genesis we find a few outlines of the Patriarchal dispensation, and some of the ordinances of that dispensation are referred to without any detailed account. The last chapters of Genesis contain merely a brief historical sketch of the transition from the patriarchal dispensation to the Mosaic dispensation. The remaining books of Moses (as indeed all of the Old Testament) are chiefly an incomplete history of the dealings of God with that one nation which He had chosen for the purpose of communicating His will to mankind, until the appearance of the promised "Seed." But the dispensation itself was a transient one. The principles upon which it was founded must necessarily also be subject to such modifications as a new dispensation would require. Paul, the greatest Jewish scholar of his age, is very emphatic on this point. "It (the Mosaic law) was added because of transgression, *till* the Seed should come to whom the promise was made." "Before faith came we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law *was* our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Galatians iii, 23-25.) "(God) also has made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death (the Mosaic law), written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? * * For if that *which is done away* (the law) was glorious, much more that which remaineth." (II Cor. iii, 6-11.)

The laws of the Mosaic dispensation have, according to the same apostle, no more claim or binding force, relative to the members of the Christian dispensation, than a dead husband has to a living wife: "For the woman which has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her

husband; * * wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." (Rom. vii, 2-4.)

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS.

Of the remaining historical books of the Old Testament much need not be said. The book of Joshua describes the settlement of the Israelites in the Holy Land. In the Judges we read of repeated apostacy, its punishment and God's mercy in delivering the penitent. The books of Samuel show the establishment of the ancient prophetic office and also the rejection of this divine appointment and of God as *the* ruler, and how God, yielding to the demands of His blinded people, allows them to have a king. In the Books of the Kings, to which the Chronicles seem to be a supplement, we can trace the awful consequences of the revolt of the people against the prophetic office, until the nation, after a short time of prosperity under David and Solomon, falls to pieces and are carried away captives.

THE POETICAL BOOKS.

The poetical books are effusions of devout hearts contemplating the past mercies of God, His present goodness and faithfulness, and containing more or less distinct predictions of the future events in the Kingdom of God. The Psalms, many of which were composed by David, were intended for the edification of the people when gathered to their national festivities in Jerusalem. The singing of them formed, no doubt, an important part of the service. The book of Job and the Song of Songs are specimens of early dramatic compositions. The hero of the book of Job was an inhabitant of Uz, in the northeast part of the Arabian desert, and a contemporary, perhaps, of Terah, the father of Abraham. There are some grand lessons laid down in the book. The question is discussed whether great suffering is not an evidence of great guilt. The friends of Job affirm this, while he, himself, under the greatest afflictions, denies it, appealing to God's righteousness and faithfulness. The Song of Songs, the best one of the one thousand and five which Solomon composed (I Kings iv, 32), is a description of wedded love, one of the noblest affections which man is capable of enjoying, and was probably composed when Solomon

introduced into his family an Egyptian princess (I Kings iii, 1; vii, 8; ix, 24) as a plural wife. The Proverbs, and the Ecclesiastes contain many sentiments showing both the wisdom and the vanity of the world, pointing to Him who is the Wisdom, the Truth, and the Light of the World.

In all these books we find truths scattered as numerous and as beautifully as the stars in a clear November evening sky; but the very scope of each book is such that it cannot be accepted as a closed and finished code of revelations, sufficient for all contingencies that can ever arise in the history of the human race, any more than the beautifully sparkling light of the stars is all that is necessary for the illumination of the earth.

THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS.

These contain many predictions bearing directly on the last days, for prophecy is a record of *future* events, as history is a record of *past* events. But in reading ancient prophecy, one very common error must be avoided, viz., to suppose that the prophets generally described the events of the last days. This they evidently do not do. Their prophecies *generally* concern such events as were immediately future in their own time, and in which their own generation was, on that account, mostly interested. Prophecies are often read as if they all related to events which are still future, and which *we* therefore look at with anxious interest, whereas the truth is that events long ago transpired, and which we have almost forgotten, but which once were the great epochs of history, form the important theme of the bulk of prophetical predictions. In some cases prophecy covers the ground of events yet to transpire. But then, it is noticeable that the more remote the events described are, the more vague and dim the visions concerning them become, until we clearly perceive that, were it not for the new additional light of continued revelations upon the last scenes of the history of the world, we would never, from the first predictions delivered, be able to form a clear and distinct idea of these scenes.

Notice, as an illustration of this, the first prediction of the "seed of woman" who should crush the head of the serpent, and follow the gradual development of this prophecy, until

later prophets are able by the Spirit of God to describe not only many minute details of the birth, life and death of our Savior, (Isaiah) but also the precise time for his coming in the flesh (Daniel). And so it is with all predictions given. They increase in clearness as the events draw near. They indicate, therefore, by their very nature the necessity of continued revelation, as the first rays of morning indicate the approach of the coming daylight.

In reading the prophetical books, this must be kept in view.

JONAH is the most ancient of the prophets whose written records have come down to us. He lived more than eight hundred years before Christ. His book is a narrative of how the prophet was called on a mission to the great city of Nineveh but in disobedience to the command of God, he fled in an opposite direction, intending to go to Tarshish. On the way, however, a great storm arose. Jonah, on his own suggestion, was thrown into the sea, and by a great fish carried back to the land he had left. After this miraculous deliverance, he goes to Nineveh and delivers his message, which results in the repentance of the inhabitants and the repeal of the announced judgment.

The spiritual lessons conveyed in the narrative are very important and instructive. Yet the prediction delivered is one that chiefly concerned the people of Nineveh for whom it was intended.

It has been observed that the prophet himself, in his miraculous deliverance from the deep, furnishes "the fullest and nearest shadow of Christ's lying in the grave, which the scriptures afford," but then it must also be remembered that this type would by no means have been clear to us had not Christ himself pointed it out. It is only through new revelation on the subject that we are enabled to see the resemblance between the deliverance of Jonah and the resurrection of Christ. This "fullest and nearest shadow" is therefore in itself a proof of the necessity of continuous revelation.

JOEL was contemporary with Jonah. He lived B.C. 810-795, and addressed himself to Judah. He first delineates an impending devastation under the picture of successive armies of locusts, and of burning drought.

There are some differences of opinion as to the events to which these opening visions refer. They most probably refer to the successive subjugations of the country by Assyrians, Persians, Greeks and Romans.

Then follows an exhortation to penitence, fasting and prayer, and a promise of deliverance from the evils predicted. In the second chapter, *v.* 18-31, the effusion of the Holy Spirit, previous to the destruction of Jerusalem and subsequent calamities, "the great and terrible day of the Lord," is clearly predicted. But here again a new revelation, which was given through Peter (Acts ii, 16-21) was needed to point out that the fulfilment of the prediction took place at the day of Pentecost. The Jews were well conversant with the writings of this prophet and held him in great reverence, but they could not see the connection between the prophecy and its fulfilment, until pointed out to them by an inspired servant of God. And this remark applies to almost all prophecy.

The last clause of the last verse of the second chapter, as well as the third chapter, refer to events yet future. The gathering of the nations of the earth to the valley of Jehoshaphat and their destruction, the establishment of Jerusalem as the holy city and the glorious state of the millennial kingdom are the themes treated on. But—let us repeat the remark—when the fulfilment of these predictions comes, the world will need inspired men to point that fulfilment out, just as the Jews needed on the day of Pentecost. The book of Joel furnishes decisive proof of the necessity of continuous revelation.

AMOS was another contemporary of Jonah and of Joel. He lived B. C. 810-785. His residence was Bethel, and he was sent as a messenger to Israel. The first two chapters of his book contain predictions of the judgments of God upon the various states surrounding Judea. "The Lord will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem," an indication of the anger of Jehovah against these states. The punishment of Syria, of the Philistines, of Tyre, Edom and Ammon, Moab, and, finally, also of Judah and Israel are foretold. The prophet then devotes four chapters to exhorting the people to repentance, reminds them of what God had done for them. But as he sees that his exhortations have no effect, he sets forth

in visions the approaching destruction of the people, until the inhabitants of Bethel tried to prohibit him from prophesying any more among them (chapter vii). The prophet, however, continues in the name of the Lord, who had called him to the office, to describe the near destruction of the nation. And having done so he closes his book with a few verses (chapter ix, 11-15) on a still future restoration, the glory of which shall be shared by Edom and other Gentile nations, a prediction that is referred to by Peter (Acts, xv, 17), as beginning to be fulfilled in the establishment of the Church of Christ. And here, again, a new revelation was required to make the precise meaning of the prediction clear.

HOSEA was a native of Israel, and lived B. C. 800-725. His ministry lasted about sixty years, until the ten tribes were led captive by the Assyrians, and his prophecies are almost exclusively directed against Israel, the most prominent tribe of which was Ephraim, with the capital of Samaria. At the time of this prophet the idolatry commenced by Jeroboam in Dan and Bethel had continued for one hundred and fifty years, and all classes of the people were sunk in vices of various kinds.

The first three chapters of his book contain a symbolic representation of the fallen people and God's statement that He had now rejected them. In order to exemplify this, the prophet is commanded to wed a "wife of whoredoms" and to give to the children names indicating the wrath of God. The prophet having complied with this command is again directed to love another adulteress "according to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel" (iii; 1), thus giving to the ten tribes remarkable object lessons concerning their faithlessness towards Jehovah. The severe denunciations in this part of the book close with promises of a final restoration (chapter ii, 14-24; iii, 4, 5).

The following chapters reiterate more fully the subjects of the first three. In chapters iv-x, the prophet brings up the charges against the people: "There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, lying, killing, stealing and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood." "The priests are like the people." For these sins the judgment of destruction is pronounced, but the

book closes with a prediction of God's blessings as the final outcome.

Whether these last promises refer to the return of some Israelites under Ezra or whether they remain to be fulfilled is not clear from the book itself. Paul, directed by the Spirit of revelation, applies some of these promises to the Gentiles (Romans ix, 25, 26), an application that could not be made except by the light of continuous revelation.

ISAIAH lived B.C. 765-698 and was, consequently, part of the time contemporary with Hosea. He prophesied among the Jews, as Hosea prophesied among the Israelites.

The political aspect of the world at this time is important to notice. Judea and Israel had not long been two kingdoms, and the latter was fast approaching her destruction. With Moab, Edom and the Philistines, Judah had repeated conflicts, each of these tributaries striving more or less successfully to gain independence. Assyria was now growing in strength and extending her conquests on all sides. Egypt had been subdued by Ethiopia and the two countries were strengthened by a union. A struggle between Egypt and Assyria, the two rival powers of the world, was coming, and both of these powers endeavored to secure the alliance of Judah as well as of Israel, wherefore the injunctions of the prophets were for the people of God to keep a strictly neutral position without any regard to flatteries or threatenings. Babylon had just commenced her struggle for independence, and tried to form an alliance with Judah, for which purpose a special ambassador, Merodach Baladan, was sent to King Hezekiah. This pious king in an unguarded moment, entertained the messengers and displayed to them his own treasurers and the treasures of the house of the Lord, which kindness and courtesy drew forth from the more clear seeing prophet of God the awful announcement that the time would come when all these treasures would be carried away into Babylon, and that even the princes of Judah should be made base slaves in the palace of Babel (chapter xxxix).

During the time of this prophet, the kingdom of Judah was invaded by the combined forces of Syria and Israel. This unfortunate kingdom, Israel, had fallen through idolatry and every sin, but she filled her cup of iniquity by combin-

ing with an idolatrous nation in war upon her brethren. This brought the long predicted destruction, and Israel was captured by the Assyrians. The event stands out more clearly as a judgment of God when it is remembered that the same Assyrian power was miraculously defeated when attempting to invade Judah.

If we keep these facts in view, the writings of Isaiah become intelligible and clear.

The first twelve chapters of this book contain reproofs, warnings and promises, chiefly directed to Judah and Israel. In these promises, predictions of the coming Messiah and his work are prominent. The next chapters (xiii-xxiii) are directed against Assyria, Babylon, Moab, Egypt, Philistia, Syria, Edom, and Tyre. In chapters xxiv-xxxv the sins and the misery of the people are rebuked. The Assyrian invasion is predicted and the destruction of Samaria, while the deliverance of Jerusalem is being promised. The following four chapters are historical, describing the invasion of Senacherib and the defeat of his army, and also the sickness of the King Hezekiah and his recovery. The closing chapters (xl-lxvi) are again prophetic, embracing events from the Babylonian captivity to the establishment of the millennial Kingdom of Christ. The deliverance of the Jews from Babylon, the character, sufferings, death and glory of Messiah; the gospel call of the Gentile world; the wickedness of the Jews in rejecting Messiah and their consequent scattering; their final return and the prevalence of the Kingdom of God, all these are clearly predicted, but the subjects are often blended together, and the transition from one to another is sometimes so rapid as to render it difficult to follow the connection. Indeed, in order to understand fully the passages that refer to events yet future, some divine revelation seems to be necessary. For it is only by the aid of the spirit of prophecy that prophecies can be fully understood.

MICAH, B. C. 758-699, was a contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah, and lived in the southern part of the kingdom of Judah. He does little more than reiterate the predictions of the two mentioned prophets, adding such illustrations and exhortations as were suitable to the class among whom he labored.

One of his most remarkable predictions states that the gift

of prophecy should be withdrawn from the ten tribes for a long time. "Therefore, night shall be sent you, that ye shall not have a vision, and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer from God" (iii: 6,7). Here it is predicted that the people should be left in spiritual darkness because of the cessation of prophecy, but the darkness shall not be an everlasting one, for it is a "night" caused by the "setting of the sun," and consequently, as day follows night, so a time will again come when the prophetic day shall dawn upon the people. This is clearly implied in the language used, so that the very threat to withdraw the Spirit of prophecy implies a promise of its renewal.

NAHUM, B. C. 720-690. This prophet was contemporary with Micah and Isaiah. He commenced his ministry at the time of the captivity of the ten tribes. And while the Assyrian power was boasting over this success, he is called upon to announce the fall and destruction of their great metropolis, Nineveh. This is the theme of the whole book. Nahum wrote his predictions in poetical form, and its sublimity of style is unsurpassed. The twelfth and thirteenth verses of the first chapter are a parenthetical insertion, giving to the captives in Assyria a promise of deliverance at some future time.

INTERVAL OF FIFTY YEARS.

For a space of one hundred and fifty years the voice of prophecy had now been heard among the people. Sometimes two or more inspired men had been raised up at the same time, in different parts of the country. But with the death of Isaiah, Micah, and Nahum, an interval of fifty years comes, during which period no prophecies were delivered, as far as we know. During this time the ten tribes toil in their captivity, and Judah, still in possession of his inheritance in Palestine, is growing in sin and hastening on to destruction. But as this fatal moment approaches, God again sends inspired messengers to warn the people, and to declare His decrees. He never overthrows nations without due warning. He never said that further revelations were superfluous.

REVIVAL OF PROPHECY.

ZEPHANIAH, B. C. 640-609, revives the prophetic office again after fifty years' interval. It seems that God left the people to themselves during the reign of the wicked King Manasseh, and first when Josiah had ascended the throne the voice of God was again heard. This prophet announces the approaching judgment upon Judah on account of their idolatry and other sins. Baal, with his black-robed priests (chemarin), and Moloch are to be cut off, men and beasts, fowls and fishes to be consumed (chapter i). In the second chapter he predicts the overthrow of the Philistines, the Moabites Ammonites and Ethiopians, as well as the de olation of the great Assyrian capital, Nineveh. The book closes with promises of a restoration yet future.

JEREMIAH, B.C. 628-585, was called to the prophetic office some years before the death of Zephaniah. His prophecies are delivered in various places. He commences in his native place, Anathoth, but he was soon compelled to flee from here on account of his persecutions; wherefore he took up his residence in Jerusalem. During the reign of Josiah and Jehoahaz he continued his ministry uninterrupted, but when Jehojachim ascended the throne, Jeremiah was incarcerated and sentenced to death, although the sentence was never carried out. In prison the prophet committed his message to writing and commissioned one Baruch to read it in the temple on a fast-day. The reckless monarch, after having heard a few pages, had the roll cut to pieces and burned. During the reign of the next king, Jehojachin, the prophet again utters a voice of warning, but without effect. Zedekiah became king. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, besieged Jerusalem, but withdrew on hearing that the Egyptians were coming to rescue. On this occasion the prophet delivered the prediction that the Chaldeans should come again and take the city and burn it with fire. Having delivered this message he left Jerusalem, as did, according to the Book of Mormon, at the same time another righteous man with his family, Lehi. But Jeremiah was apprehended and thrown into prison, where he remained until the city was taken by Nebuchadnezzar.

The incarceration of the prophet of God was the sin that

filled the cup of iniquity of the Jews at this time, and it brought speedy judgment.

The Babylonian king gave the prophet the choice of following the captives to Babylon or to remain with the remnant. He chose the latter; and from this time all his endeavors are to turn the people to God, promising them that if they would do so, God would yet build them up in their desolate country. But they did not listen to his advice. They left the country and emigrated to Egypt, bringing the prophet with them (chapter xliii). Here he once more lifts up his voice, trying to induce the people to turn to the Lord. After this we hear no more of him. Tradition says he was put to death in Egypt by his own people.

Among the predictions of this remarkable prophet, we note the following: The fate of Zedekiah (xxxiv, 2, 3); the precise duration of the Babylonian captivity, viz., seventy years (xxv, 11, 12.); the downfall of Babylon and the return of the Jews (xxix, 10-14). There are also many predictions concerning Messiah, whom he calls "Jehovah our righteousness." The final salvation of Israel is set forth in many passages: iii, 15-18; xxxi, 31-34; 1, 4, 5.

As the predictions of Jeremiah are not chronologically arranged, and no clue is left as to their true chronological order, it is sometimes very difficult to decide which predictions have already been fulfilled and which refer to events yet future. Only through the Spirit of revelation can this be determined.

HABAKKUK, B. C. 612-598, is thought to have lived in Judea shortly before the captivity. If this supposition is correct, he was contemporary with Jeremiah. The prophet commences his book with a lamentation over the sins of Judah, foretelling the judgment that was to be poured out over the people through the invasion of the Chaldeans. Then the destruction of the Chaldeans is shown unto him in a vision (chapter ii), and the book closes with a song, composed probably for the use of the people in public worship, and designed to comfort them under the coming afflictions.

DANIEL, B. C. 606-534, was born shortly before the Babylonian captivity and carried to Babylon in his eighteenth year. Here, through his faithfulness to his God, he soon rose to an eminent position, and retained his power during both the

Babylonian and the Persian dynasties. He prophesied during the whole of the captivity, his last two prophecies being delivered two years after the return of the captives. He did not return to Palestine, but died in Babylon, at least ninety years old.

The first six chapters are a historic record, setting forth the events which led to the recognition of Daniel as a prophet of God, also the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar, the fall of Belshazzar and the promotion of Daniel to the office of a president over one hundred and twenty princes "who should be over the whole kingdom." This historic record is interwoven with predictions relating to the various kingdoms of the world. Thus in the second chapter we see before us, as in a beautiful panorama, a succession of kingdoms until the kingdom of God is being established, "never to be destroyed," "but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

This prediction is distinct and clear, yet the remark made repeatedly before is applicable here: Revelation is necessary in order to understand the details of its fulfilment. That God in the last days will establish an everlasting kingdom, is foretold plainly enough. But "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom," so that the prediction given does not exclude the necessity of continuous revelation. Through revelation Daniel was enabled to predict the establishment of this kingdom; through revelation only can we perceive the establishment thereof and recognize its existence.

The second part of the book is prophetic and comprises in its wonderful views events from the time of Daniel to the final resurrection of the dead. It is an epitomized history of the world, written in advance of the events.

In chapter vii, the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman empires are represented by the four beasts: a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a fourth beast "dreadful and terrible, and strong, exceedingly." This, the Roman beast (or kingdom) has ten horns, among which a "little horn" came up, having "eyes like a man and a mouth speaking great things." The prophet follows the proceedings of this beast and particularly the little horn until "the ancient of days" sits in judgment. Note that the whole of this vision has reference to the four empires

in their religious connection with each other, as the dream of Nebuchadnezzar (chapter ii.) represents them in their political connection. The "little horn" is therefore to be understood to represent the papal power, which afterward is said to have a time of twelve hundred and sixty years allotted to its blasphemous rule, after which time comes the triumph of the "Saints of the Most High "

In the eighth chapter the prophet has a vision concerning the Medo-Persian and the Grecian empires, the second and the third "beasts" of the previous vision. The Medo-Persian empire is represented by a ram with two horns, and the Grecian by a goat having a "notable horn," Alexander the Great, between its eyes. The conquests of Alexander are described, and also the divisions of his kingdom into four parts. Then rises "a little horn" as in the previous vision, a false, crafty tyrant, probably Antiochus Epiphanes, whose character is outlined, and whose oppressions of the people of God causes Daniel to faint and feel sick for many days. That this little horn represents Antiochus Epiphanes is a view entertained by the most ancient writers, but this does not exclude the probability that the papal power is also referred to as the complete fulfilment of this part of the prophecy. What Antiochus was to the Jews during the time of the Maccabees, the papal power has been to the Church of Christ in all ages.

The ninth chapter contains a prayer offered by the prophet in behalf of himself and his people. He particularly supplicates God to again restore the sanctuary in Jerusalem. As an answer to this prayer, Gabriel appears and informs him of the precise time for the coming of Messiah, "to finish the transgression, and to make an end to sin, and to make a reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." In seven weeks, or in forty-nine years, reckoning from the decree of Artaxerxes, 457 B. C., the walls of Jerusalem were to be rebuilt, though in times of great trouble. In sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and thirty four years, Christ was to appear, and in the midst of one week, that is after three years and a half, to be slain.

In the tenth chapter we are allowed to cast a glance behind the veil, and contemplate the wonderful fact that heavenly

messengers are employed to convey intelligence to holy men, and that they, while so doing, have to overcome opposing powers, much as mortal men have in the performance of their duties. A divine messenger has been sent to instruct Daniel concerning some records in "the Scripture of Truth," a heavenly record, but this messenger is met and opposed by "the prince of the kingdom of Persia," whereupon a struggle that lasts for twenty days follows. The victory would apparently have been dubious had not Michael himself come to the assistance of the messenger.

In the eleventh chapter, the things noted in "the Scripture of Truth" are detailed. These things commence with the history of Persia. Four kings are foretold: Cambyses, Smerdis, Darius and Xerxes (*v.* 2). Then follows a prediction of Alexander the Great, his history and his successors in "the South" (Egypt) and the North (Syria), down to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (*v.* 3-29). Then follows the conquest of Syria by the Romans "Chittim," (*v.* 30), with the rise of the papal power (*v.* 31-89). The character of this power and many of its corrupt doctrines are here predicted with minuteness. Then come the invasions of the Saracens (the king of the South) and of the Turks (the king of the North). The countries to be conquered by the Turks are enumerated (*v.* 41-43), as are also those that were to escape. The chapter closes with a prediction concerning the end of the Turkish empire, yet to be fulfilled: "He shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

The first verse of the twelfth chapter predicts the full deliverance of the Jewish nation through the interposition of "the great prince," Michael, an event to be looked for after the fall of "the king of the North," or the Turkish empire, and the next verses refer to the resurrection of mankind. The book closes with some chronological statements, unintelligible even to the prophet, himself (*v.* 8), but the promise is given that at the end of time many shall receive knowledge concerning these predictions (*v.* 4), a promise which evidently implies renewed revelations. For how could these things in the last days be known without such revelation, any more than Daniel could know them without revelation?

One thing is noticeable all through this prophetic record. Each new vision requires a new revelation from God. Daniel is constantly seeking knowledge from God concerning the right understanding of the visions given, and it is only through this means that he receives his knowledge. Continuous revelation was necessary to this the most remarkable prophet of the ancient world. So it is to us, if we want to understand the plans and purposes of the Almighty. Where there is no revelation spiritual darkness prevails, notwithstanding the plainest writings of God. A Belshazzar and the whole collegium of learned priests may see on the wall the "Mene, mene, thekel, upharsin," but a Daniel, a man in constant communication with God, is required to interpret it according to its right meaning.

EZEKIEL, B. C. 595-574, was carried captive to Babylon at the first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem. He was contemporary with Jeremiah and Daniel, but lived some two hundred miles north of Babylon on the banks of the river Chebar. Tradition has it that he was put to death by a fellow-exile whom he had rebuked for idolatry.

The predictions of this prophet were delivered, some before and some after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Before this event he calls upon the people to repent and warns them against seeking aid of the Egyptians. He assures them that the fall of their beloved city was now unavoidable. When the Chaldean king commenced his siege of the city, God revealed this to the prophet in his exile: "Son of man," God says to him, "write thee the name of the day, even of this day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day" (xxiv, 2). This was in the ninth year of his captivity. Three years later he received the intelligence that the city had fallen (xxxiii, 21). During this period all the predictions of the prophet are directed against foreign nations. After he had heard of the fall of Jerusalem, his principal object in view is to comfort the people with promises of restoration and future blessings.

The closing chapters (xl-xlvi) of the book of Ezekiel undoubtedly refer to events yet future. The descriptions of the glorious building there given will no doubt once be recog-

nized in a structure hereafter to be reared by the people of God. But as yet, like all unfulfilled predictions, much of it is obscure and cannot be understood until the light of revelation removes all obscurity therefrom.

OBADIAH, B. C. 588-583, is supposed to have prophesied during the period between the fall of Jerusalem and the conquest of Edom, five years later. On this supposition, he was a contemporary of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.

His predictions are directed against the Edomites. And he especially points out that there was a great difference between the judgments executed upon Judah and upon Edom. For Judah should again be raised from her present fall and finally possess not only Judea, but also the land of the Philistines and that of the Edomites, while Edom should be "as though they had not been" (*v.* 16), a prediction that has been remarkably fulfilled to our own day. And while Edom is thus utterly swallowed up, "saviors shall come upon Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (*v.* 21).

Three nations were foremost in afflicting the ancient people of God, viz.: the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, and the Edomites. Three prophets were commissioned by the Lord to announce the judgment upon these three nations: "Nahum foretells the destruction of the Assyrians, Habakkuk of the Chaldeans, and Obadiah of the Edomites.

THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

As had been foretold by the prophets, and particularly by Isaiah, the exiled Jews were permitted to return home during the reign of Cyrus. As soon as they reached the Holy Land, we find them uniting their efforts to re-establish the religious rites of their fathers, aided by the noble leaders, Zerubbabel, Joshua, Ezra and Nehemiah. They erect an altar of burnt offering and rebuild the destroyed temple. Then the city wall is built, and various officers appointed as circumstances required. For further particulars the reader is referred to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

It may be well to state here—although the remark may, to some extent, deviate from the subject under consideration—that the restoration of the Jewish nation at this time was very

far from being that complete restoration to more than former privileges, liberty and glory, of which all the prophets had spoken in such glorious terms. The promise was that the whole remnant should be delivered, even if they were as numerous as the sand on the sea shore. But from Babylon only comparatively few ever returned. The company of Zerubbabel consisted of fifty thousand persons, and Ezra led six thousand more home. The great bulk of people that had been born in the foreign land never returned. (See Book of Esther).

Again, the promise was that a kingdom should be established, with the Holy City as the capital, an everlasting kingdom governed by God himself through Messiah. This promise has never yet been fulfilled. In fact, the Jews have never since their overthrow by Nebuchadnezzar been an independent nation, governed by rulers of their own, except during the very short rule of the Maccabees. After their return they continued to be tributary to the Persian king for about one hundred years, as a province of Syria. When Alexander had conquered Persia (Syria and Palestine with it), they fell into his hands. When the Grecian empire was divided, Palestine fell into the hands of Ptolemy Lagus as a part of the Egyptian monarchy, and it remained so for about one hundred years, when it was transferred to the kings of Syria, in which situation it greatly suffered during the frequent wars between Egypt and Syria. Antiochus Epiphanes, one of the Syrian kings, plundered the city and the temple and enslaved the people. For about three years and a half they were reduced to worse than Egyptian thralldom. Their sacred manuscripts were burnt, and the people were compelled to sacrifice to idols. The temple itself was dedicated to Jupiter, a statue of which was erected on the altar of God. Compare Daniel's prediction of "the little horn" (chapter viii, 9-12). Through the noble enthusiasm and patriotism of Mattathias and his sons, a struggle against the oppressor now took place which secured to the Jews a few years of dearly bought liberty and independence, but they were soon conquered by the Romans. Pompey marched his army into Judea, conquered Jerusalem and made the country tributary to Rome. Herod the Great deposed the last of the Maccabean family from his office,

and Palestine has never since been an independent state. Ever since the Babylonian captivity the great bulk of the Jewish nation has been scattered abroad, without home, without temple, without an altar, and strangers have been masters in the land of promise. It is therefore clear that all the prophecies that relate to the glorious restoration of the Jews must be understood of a great restoration yet future, a very important fact for the right understanding of those prophecies.

THE LAST PROPHETS OF THE OLD COVENANT.

But to return to our subject. It has been already stated that the first care of the returned exiles was to re-establish their religion. To do this, they were under the necessity of having new revelations. True, they had the writings of Moses and of the prophets, and they had inspired interpreters, like Ezra and Nehemiah. True, their aim was not to construct a new economy, but simply to re-establish the old one. And yet even this they could not do acceptably to God without the aid of revelation. Hence God raised up three prophets—Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, the last three of the old covenant. What an overwhelming proof of the necessity of continuous revelation!

HAGGAI, B.C. 520–518, is thought to have been born in Babylon, and to have emigrated with Zerubbabel.

His book contains four prophetic messages. In the first the people are reproved for neglecting to build the temple, while they were adorning their own houses, and a command is given to begin the construction immediately (chapter i, 1–11), to which command the people, led by Zerubbabel and Joshua, willingly responded (i, 12–15). But in a month the zeal of the people seems to have cooled off and the second, message is delivered, declaring that the Spirit of God was still with the people. “A little while,” God says, “and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land” (which according to Paul, Hebrews xii, 22–28, was fulfilled when the old dispensation was superceded by the gospel dispensation), “and the desire of all nations (Messiah) shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts,” (chapter ii, 1–9), which “glory” is thought to refer to the

presence of Christ in this second temple instead of the Shekinah that had illuminated the first temple. In the third message, delivered two months afterwards, the people are being rebuked for polluting themselves while working in the holy building and offering sacrifices. God reminds them that He had blessed them abundantly, from the time they had laid the corner-stone of the temple (chapter ii, 10-19). The fourth message is delivered the same day. It contains a general prediction of the overthrow of the kingdoms of the world and the promise of a special blessing to Zerubbabel at that time. It is clear enough that the right interpretation of this promise can be comprehended by no man, until divine revelation shall make it known.

ZECHARIAH was, like Haggai, born in Babylonia and went to Palestine with Zerubbabel. The general object of his ministry is identical with that of Haggai, and through the encouragement and wise counsels of these prophets the people prospered, and the temple was completed in six years. But besides this general object, Zechariah describes through direct predictions and symbolic acts, the history of the Jews until the end of time. Daniel deals with the history of the world; Zechariah with the history of the covenant people. Among the predictions of this prophet we will here notice some of the last. According to the ninth chapter, the surrounding heathen nations are to be destroyed. Messiah shall come as a king (v. 9) and establish His reign upon the earth. "His dominion shall be from sea even to sea and from the rivers to the ends of the earth" (verse 10). Scenes of destruction are to intervene, however, but the Lord will deliver His people, both Judah and Ephraim (chapter x, 1-12). "I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; and they shall be as though I had not cast them off; for I am the Lord their God, and will hear them. And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man," a glorious prediction of the restorative work, commenced in our own day by God, through His servant Joseph, the prophet. We are further told that Jerusalem shall be besieged by many nations and the result thereof (chapter xii, 1-14); Christ shall finally appear and all the world will become "Holiness to the Lord" (chapter xiv).

Thus prophecy, so far from leading us to expect that revelation finally will cease, being superfluous, expressly states that Christ Himself in person will appear and communicate His will to men. "Why?" it may be asked; and the answer is clear: "Because revelation is essential to true religion."

MALACHI, B. C. 420-397, was the successor of Haggai and the last prophet of the old covenant. The temple had now been finished and the service of the altar established. But a spirit of worldliness and insincerity is getting hold of both the priesthood and the people, and this prophet is especially commissioned to warn them against their sins.

But his warnings are not heeded. The people prepare themselves for calamities. The Spirit of prophecy is withdrawn for a period of four hundred years. The temple and the people are given into the hands of Antiochus Epiphanes. The old dispensation is virtually closed.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FOREGOING.

The conclusions arrived at now are clear and need only to be briefly stated. We have seen that no book of the Old Testament, although all are written and preserved for the instruction of the human race in all ages, contains anything that is of such a nature as to exclude further revelation. Not one single passage, nor all the passages combined, are so written as to exclude the necessity of the revelations contained in the New Testament, for instance. On the contrary, one revelation leads to another, God always giving "line upon line, precept upon precept," imparting knowledge as men are willing and able to receive it. For it is through revelation that God educates His servants and His people; and as in any branch of study we are led on from the fundamental principles and find that each new truth suggests others, so here, each new truth revealed leads us to others, until—were such a case possible—we have been permitted to exhaust the entire fulness of divine knowledge.

We have also seen that the servants of God in the old covenant declare the continuation of revelation. They do not consider the prophetic gift or the gift of receiving revelations as peculiar to their own dispensation. They

point to "the last days" as a time in which the Spirit of the Lord is to be poured out more abundantly than in any former period. And His presence is to be manifested through "dreams and visions." The withdrawal of these they designate as a calamity. They speak of the time in which such heavenly gifts are withdrawn, as "night" and "darkness," while consequently, the presence of them indicate day and light. Now, are day and light necessary for the physical welfare of man? If so, revelations are also necessary for his spiritual advancement.

We have further seen that the establishment of new economies requires new revelations. Moses was familiar with the revelations given to the patriarchs before him. But when he was called upon to usher in the dispensation of the law, he could not do this without new revelations. Nor could Zerubbabel re-establish this dispensation after the return from Babylon without the aid of revelation. Through the revelations given to the Prophet Haggai the people "prospered" and were able to complete their work as commanded by the Lord (Ezra vi, 14). Without this, they would not have been able to prosper.

Sometimes we see that revelations are given to faithful servants of God as a special favor to them. In such cases, what is seen or heard must not be recorded—as was the case with some visions of Paul in the New Testament—or, if recorded, is sealed up in mystical expressions, unintelligible to the common reader, until the Spirit of revelation gives the true interpretation thereof. This was the case with some of Daniel's visions, and with at least one of the visions of John (Rev. x, 4, 5).

Are revelations, then, given in order to establish new economies, to preserve the children of God from falling into darkness, to instruct them about things known to God alone, in one word to lead men unto salvation? Surely, there never can be a time when revelation is not necessary.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

But it will be said, no one (except the Jews perhaps) contend that the Old Testament alone contains all that is necessary to know. The New Testament is a supplement to the

Old Testament, and the two together contain the fulness of God's revelations. The prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New, and to the volume thus completed nothing must be added.

Is there anything in the New Testament to verify this statement so universally accepted as true among the "Christian" Protestant world? Or does the New Testament confirm the conclusions we have arrived at in the perusal of the Old?

The New Testament contains five historic books, viz.: the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; fourteen letters written by Paul; three by John, and two by Peter, one letter by James, and one by Jude, to which collection comes one prophetic book by John.

THE FOUR GOSPELS.

The four Gospels are brief, biographical sketches, records of a few of the works and teachings of our Lord.

It may be supposed that those disciples of Christ that were able to write, like Matthew and John, would keep journals while they followed their master, witnessing his works and listening to his teachings. These journals would, after the crucifixion and ascension, naturally be read in private and in public. They would be copied and distributed in the various branches of the church and form texts for discourses, and thus be augmented with such incidents or sayings which were still retained in the memories of those who had been eye witnesses. In this way several versions of the doings and sayings of our Lord began to circulate, some, no doubt, contradicting others, until the necessity became universally felt to have some authentic record, showing exactly what was reliable of the many circulating reports, and what was not reliable. And the result is the four gospels according to Matthew Mark, Luke and John.

At what precise time these gospels were completed in their present form is a question not yet settled between the various critics. That they, in their present form, were issued by the apostles, whose names they bear, seems irreconcilable with some facts. There are, for instance, words and phrases found, which could hardly have had any significance until

some time after the time of the apostles. The word "kephas" (John i, 43) does not occur in classical Hebrew, but is used by later Talmudistic writers signifying something hard, a rock. "Petra" (Matt. xvi, 18) meaning a "rock," has a strong Latin color, while the Hebrew for "rock" is "zur." And the expression "to take up the cross," or "to bear the cross," is all the more remarkable, as in the Hebrew there was at that time no word equivalent to "cross," which is of Latin origin. Even later Jewish writers found it difficult to adequately express the idea of a cross, and hence used the word *zelem*, which, however, signifies an image, and the translations of the New Testament, both into Hebrew and Arabic, have found no better way out of the difficulty than to adopt the Chaldaic *zeliba*, gallows. Of this a modern form, *zelab*, is made to represent the idea "cross." From these and many other circumstances, we seem justified in the conclusion that the four gospels have been subjected to foreign influences, which have modified their form in various ways. But that they are based upon and contain the "memoirs" of our Lord, as published by the apostles, by mouth and pen, need not be doubted. The testimony of antiquity is conclusive on this point.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

According to general tradition in the early church, the annotations of Matthew were written in the vernacular tongue of Palestine, Syro-Chaldaic, a tradition very probable indeed. But as Greek at this time was the literary language, the original was soon translated into this tongue, under the supervision of Matthew himself, about thirty years after the crucifixion. It may be safely assumed that our "Gospel According to St. Matthew" is in the main identical with this original document of the apostle.

The aim of this gospel is clearly to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the promised Messiah. It frequently refers to the prophets, refutes the various Jewish sects, and tries to prepare the Jewish nation for the acceptance of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

While Matthew was penning his gospel for the Jews, Mark

was preparing his, chiefly for the converts among the Gentiles. This Mark was not an apostle and had not been an eye-witness to the life and deeds of our Lord. But he was a native of Jerusalem and an intimate friend of the apostles. He accompanied Paul on some of his journeys and attended Peter for a considerable period, and during this time he no doubt wrote the gospel that bears his name, according to the dictates of Peter. Some have called this the "Gospel According to St. Peter," and Peter himself, in his second epistle, refers, perhaps, to this gospel when he says: "We make known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE.

The gospel according to Luke was written in Rome by Luke, the physician, one of Paul's most faithful companions and friends. The author states that many had undertaken to collect the facts preached concerning Christ and believed among the Christians, according to the traditions handed down from eye-witnesses, and consequently, in order to secure a collection that would be reliable, he himself had diligently searched out everything that at the time of the writing was available. These data, the result of diligent research, Luke endeavors to put before the readers in chronological order, while the two previous evangelists pay but little attention to chronology. The gospel was written under the supervision of Paul.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

The latest of the gospels is that of John. It is said to have been written at Ephesus, where John resided, presiding over the branches originated by Paul. John, having before him copies of the three previous gospels, naturally omits many data there recorded, introducing others which he had preserved from oblivion. The chief aim of John is to set forth the divine nature of our Lord. The previous evangelists dwell mostly on the works of our Savior in Galilee. John omits most of that, recording his works in Judea.

Let it be remembered that this book is the last written of all the books of the Bible, about ninety-seven years after Christ, and that its aim is to correct the errors of doctrine,

then becoming common among the churches, concerning the true character of Christ.

TESTIMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

We may now ask: When these books were written, were they intended to contain all that would ever be necessary for men to know concerning God's plans and purposes, thus making all further revelation superfluous? What do the gospels teach concerning this question?

The first pages of the gospel confirm the lesson we have drawn from the Old Testament, that revelation is necessary for the establishment of a new dispensation. For the gospel dispensation is ushered in and established through revelation. Zacharias is visited by an angel (Luke i, 11-20). Gabriel appears to Mary (Luke i, 26-38). John the Baptist is commissioned by God to preach and baptize (John i, 6, 33). That Jesus was Messiah is manifest to John through revelation. The Spirit descends and a voice from heaven is heard (John i, 32, 34; Matt. iii, 16, 17). And this point is particularly noteworthy. All the ancient prophets had predicted the coming of the Messiah. Some of them had given details about where He would be born, His parentage, and the precise time of His coming, and yet it was necessary, when He came, to give new revelations, pointing Him out to the most devout servant of God then living. Previous revelations are here clearly seen *not* to render new revelations useless. And as the gospels thus begin with revelations, so they close with declarations that revelation should continue. For in His farewell address to His disciples, Christ says: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: *and he will show you things to come*" (John xvi, 12, 13). Christ here expressly states that His ministry did not complete God's revelations. There were *many* other things to learn than those which he had communicated, and among these were also "things to come," all of which the Spirit should communicate to the Twelve. Revelation, then, was not to be done away with at the departure of our Lord. The last verse of

the fourth gospel, the last verse ever written in our New Testament states, moreover, that the things recorded in the gospels are only a small fragment of all that could be written concerning the works of Christ. These works and the lessons to be conveyed were no doubt necessary, and yet we have no record of them. The gospels, therefore, openly admit that they are not intended to be a complete record of all that is necessary for man to know. They claim to be written for the purpose of directing men's hearts to Jesus (John xx, 31), and point out His promise to continue the revelation of truth through the Spirit. This is the important testimony of the gospels. All the works and the teachings of Christ were not enough for the guidance of the first Christians. They needed and were promised further revelation. To us has come a record not of all of Christ's teachings, but only of a very few, merely a fragment. If all the teachings of Christ given during His ministry upon the earth were not sufficient for the guidance of the apostles, how much less can the gospels, which contain only a small part of these teachings, be sufficient for other men? The thought is as irrational as it is without foundation in the Word of God.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

The only question now remains: Do the Acts of the Apostles and their Epistles supply us with all the teachings that the Spirit of Truth, according to our Savior's promise, was to reveal to the Apostles, and which were necessary for their guidance? If not, continuous revelation will be just as necessary after the New Testament dispensation as it was after the Mosaic economy.

The book called the Acts of the Apostles was written by Luke, and may be considered as a continuation of his Gospel. In this book we can trace the growth of Christian churches during the greater part of the first century after Christ. It covers the period from the time of the crucifixion to the second year of the first imprisonment of Paul in Rome, A. D. 63, and there it breaks off even without recording the issue of the trial. The book may be divided in two parts. The first twelve chapters describe the growth of the Church of Christ among the Jews in Palestine, chiefly through the

labors of Peter. The last sixteen chapters treat of the spread of the Gospel among other nations, chiefly through the labors of Paul. Of the works of the rest of the Apostles we have no account.

Tradition has it, that Matthew suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia; Philip in Phrygia; Thomas in India, and so on. But of their work for the promulgating the gospel in the different parts of the world we have no record. What they taught, what difficulties they encountered, how they preached, suffered and endured may be conjectured. But it has not reached us in any historic record.

Nor is the Acts of the Apostles a complete record of the works of the two servants of God, whose ardent labors are noticed. It is as fragmentary as are the gospels. Many important transactions, referred to elsewhere, are omitted. There is no account whatever of the branch in Jerusalem after the imprisonment and deliverance of Peter. Nothing is told of the introduction of the Gospel in Rome, the capital of the world at that time. Nor does it say anything of Paul's many voyages, which he incidentally mentions (II Cor. xi, 25).

Considering all this, it seems as if the Spirit of Truth had been anxious to guard against the impression that this book was intended to conclude God's revelations to mankind.

Let us consider the facts. Christ had promised to send the Spirit of Truth to His chosen Twelve. What this Spirit was to reveal was, of course, as essential and necessary to salvation as anything that our Savior had revealed Himself. But of all this that the Spirit, according to the promise, has revealed to the Twelve, only a small part has been recorded. How can this small part be sufficient to us, since it was not sufficient to the first Christians?

But, besides this, the book of the Acts shows plainly the necessity of continuous revelation; for wherever the gospel is being accepted, the gift of receiving revelation is being imparted through faith. Peter, in his first sermon, declares that the time has now come when the Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh. Prophecy, visions, dreams were to attend the believers (Acts ii, 17, 18); and, accordingly, whenever the gospel is preached and believed, these manifestations follow. The heavens are opened to Stephen, and he is permitted to see the

Son of God on the right hand of the Father (Acts vi, 55, 56); an angel of the Lord appears and directs Philip (Acts viii, 26); Christ appears to Saul (Acts ix, 3-6); through the vision of an angel Cornelius is led to send for Peter, and he receives supernatural gifts (Acts x, 1-48); an angel delivers Peter from prison (Acts xii, 7, 8); the Holy Ghost reveals to the brethren in Antioch that they should send Paul and Barnabas on a mission (Acts xiii, 1-4); through the Spirit the apostles and elders are able to settle the dispute about the doctrine of circumcision (Acts xv, 1-31); twelve men in Ephesus receive the Holy Ghost through the administration of Paul, and prophesy and speak in tongues (Acts xix, 1-7). Wherever the gospel message is delivered and believed, in Palestine, in Greece, in Asia Minor, the results are the same. The Holy Ghost is given, and His presence is manifested through these gifts.

The Acts of the Apostles has taught us this important lesson—that the gift of receiving revelations was not confined to the Twelve nor was the gift to cease with them. The gift itself was inseparable from the gospel. Where there is no gospel there are no revelations, but where the true gospel of Jesus Christ is, there is revelation also. The promise of receiving the Holy Ghost, the promised Spirit of truth that was to lead into all truth and to reveal things to come, is a universal promise: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts ii, 39).

THE EPISTLES.

The epistles of the apostles confirm most emphatically the necessity of constant revelations from God. The apostolic churches could not do without such revelations. Hence the necessity of the churches communicating with the apostles and the apostles writing their epistles, embodying the will of God.

For instance, an error arises, as was the case in Colossæ. Paul was at the time in Rome, but the church in Colossæ sent a special messenger to Paul, viz.: Epaphras, who explained the situation to the apostle and caused the letter to the Colossians to be written as a refutation of that peculiar error. The Scriptures were not sufficient for the guidance of the

Colossians. The new emergency required a new communication from God, a new revelation, and God gave it through Paul, his servant.

So with all the epistles. Each has a particular object. None is a treatise on theology, putting forth all that is necessary to know for all ages and all men. There is not one written for that purpose.

The first epistles of Paul, I and II Thessalonians, 52 and 53 A. D., express the joy and satisfaction of the apostle on account of the manner in which the people of Thessalonica had received the gospel. He cautions them against the sins prevalent in that great city, and comforts those who mourned over the loss of dear relatives. The "dead in the Lord" will be resurrected at the coming of the Lord, and this event is more fully explained, in accordance with the prophecy of Daniel concerning the "little horn" (Dan. viii).

The next epistle, that to the Galatians, A. D. 53 or 57, is a warning to the churches in that district not to mix up the rites of the Mosaic law with the ordinances of the gospel, as the two were so different from each other as Ishmael and Isaac, Sinai and Zion. And to give this admonition force, the writer proves that his knowledge of Christian truth was derived not from human teaching, but from God through immediate revelation, wherefore the apostles of the Lord had recognized him as their equal (chap. i, 2).

The epistles to the Corinthians were written A. D. 57 in reply to a letter received by Paul from the branch in Corinth, requesting his advice on certain points (ch. vii, 1); also to correct some errors of which he had heard by report (i, 11; v, 1; xi, 18). The state of the branch was, however, such that the Apostle deemed it necessary to send Timothy there also, thus imparting both by letter and by verbal preaching communications from God. Mark how special emergencies require special revelations!

The epistle to the Romans (A. D. 58) is the most systematic of all the writings of Paul, and one that by Protestants is considered the basis of gospel theology. The scope of this epistle is to reconcile the Jews and the Gentiles in the church of Christ, by placing all on one level in the sight of God. "All have sinned;" "all must be saved by the same means."

This is the whole epistle in one sentence. Now, it is instructive to notice how the apostle in this important letter to the Romans illustrates the question under consideration. In the very first chapter he says he is constantly praying that God may give him an opportunity of visiting Rome, not indeed as a tourist and sightseer, but "that I might impart unto you some spiritual gift" (ch. i, 11). What "spiritual gifts" are, we learn in I Cor. xii, viz.: "Word of wisdom," of "knowledge," "faith," "healing," "miracles," "prophecy," etc. So that it was not enough, according to Paul, for the Christians in Rome to have all the sacred Scriptures, including this letter, but they needed something more. They needed "spiritual gifts" continued among them. It has been reserved for later "Christians" to discover that Paul was wrong, and that "spiritual gifts" were of no account as long as the Scriptures were to be had at a cheap price.

To have the Spirit of God is, further, put forth as the necessary condition of a "child" of God. "If Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (chap. viii). Such is the importance given to the possession of the Spirit of God. But we have already seen that the very office of the Spirit is to "lead into all truth, and to reveal things to come." He who has the Spirit has, therefore, the Spirit of revelation, and the apostle contends that man without the Spirit of revelation is a stranger and an enemy to God (chap. viii, 5-9). The apostle further states that at the time when the fulness of the Gentiles has been gathered in, direct communication from God will still continue. "For there shall come out of Zion the deliverer and turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (chap. xi, 26). How could this be possible if all communication with God had ceased with the close of the New Testament? But they have not ceased, "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (chap. xi, 29).

This may suffice to show that the great Apostle of the Gentiles never meant his letter to the Romans nor any other letter to close the channels of revelation.

Let us remind ourselves of one more fact. The writers of the New Testament themselves state that they had not *written* all that was necessary for instruction. In writing to the Corinthians about the partaking of the Lord's supper Paul gives some general directions, but concludes by saying: "The rest will I set in order when I come" (I Cor. xi, 34). Now, what instructions or arrangements are here left out? We do not know. But we see that the written word was not meant to convey all that was necessary to know. The same expression we find in the second letter of John. "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face" (II John, 12). See also (III John, 13). Who can then say that we in the books of the Bible have all that written which God ever intended to convey to mankind, and that revelation has ceased? The idea is a direct contrast to the word of the apostles.

It is instructive to notice how theologians have been compelled to turn their own reasons upside down, and to stretch the various passages of Scripture on their learned racks in order to make them fit for all occasions. Luther's explanation of our Lord's prayer is a curious instance. "Daily bread" means, according to that noted reformer, not only what you eat and drink, but "bread" means also a house and a wife, obedient children, good neighbors and "other such things." Whether in "daily bread" was included the beer-keg that Luther received among his wedding presents, the reformer does not state, but in the "other such things" is room for a considerable quantity of "bread." Of course, that kind of exegesis fills everything into the Bible. By it anything can be got of anything or of nothing, but God never put it there. Man did it, and, by so doing, proved himself to be on the wrong track, to say the least.

In order to gain a sound understanding of the word of God, the various books must be read as Mr. Locke says the Epistles ought to be read. He requires you to read through one epistle at a sitting, and observe its drift and aim. "If," says he, "the first reading gave some light, the second gave me more; and so I persisted on reading constantly the whole epistle over at once, till I came to have a general view of the

writer's purpose, the chief branches of his discourse, the arguments he used, and the disposition of the whole. This, I confess, is not to be obtained by one or two hasty readings ; it must be repeated again and again, with a close attention to the tenor of the discourse, and a perfect neglect of the divisions into chapters and verses." If this plan be adopted, and the books of the Bible be read with a humble, prayerful heart, a heart in unison with the authors that wrote, the true meaning of the word will be grasped.

And the clearer this true meaning becomes, the more it will appear that nothing short of continued communication with God can satisfy the heart. For it is the very purpose of the written word of God to lead men to seek this communication with God, to guide, in other words, the straying child to its loving father.

PROPHECIES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Without entering into a more minute examination of the remaining epistles, we will proceed to consider some of the prophecies of the Gospel dispensation.

Prominent among these prophecies are those which predict the establishment of a new dispensation in the last days. Our Savior calls it "the regeneration," and says that in that dispensation "the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory," and the Twelve "shall sit upon twelve thrones" (Matt. xix, 28).

Peter says that Christ is to be in heaven until this new dispensation, "the times of the restitution of all things" comes (Acts iii, 21).

Jude quotes a prophecy delivered by Enoch about this dispensation: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints to execute judgment upon all." (Jude 14, 15).

Paul (II Thess. ii.) is very clear and minute concerning the events that had to transpire between his own time and the dispensation of the last days. (1) A "falling away"—a general apostacy was to take place first, and (2) "that man of sin, the son of perdition, be revealed." It is further pointed out that the power of apostacy was already, at the time of the writing of Paul, secretly at work, only there was something that hindered this power from appearing openly. But as soon as this obstacle (the Roman imperial power) had been removed,

the "man of sin," i. e., the embodiment of the spirit of apostasy, would boldly appear, and this "man of sin" would hold his sway over the world until destroyed by the "brightness of the coming" of the Lord (v. 8). And this apostate power is further described as one opposing and exalting himself above every other authority, or "god," both on earth and in heaven. He is "lawless" and "sitteth in the temple," that is, he is a "Christian" not an infidel power; his coming is the work of Satan, and is accompanied by "powers, signs and lying wonders," deceiving all that would not believe the truth. Among the doctrines that should be advanced by this apostate power is noted particularly as a departure from the faith, "doctrines of devils," also a prohibition of marriage, which was a revival of heathenism (see I Timothy, iv, 1-5), all of which was fulfilled to the letter in the evolution from Christianity to Romanism. Nothing can be clearer, from these prophecies of Paul than this: Shortly after his own time, a period of apostasy would follow, during which all kinds of lies were to be promulgated in the name of God. But this period of apostasy would again be followed by a new dispensation of truth and light, the coming of the Son of God in glory.

John was the last of the apostles. He lived to see the spirit of apostasy still more developed than did Paul. In speaking of it he says that "many anti-Christ" had already come (I John ii, 18, 19; iv, 3). To him it was given to see, in his apocalyptic visions, the calamities that crushed the Roman empire, thus making way for the "man of sin," or the "little horn" of Daniel or the anti-Christ, namely the great church of the world with her pontifical "image" in Rome. He was permitted to see the subjugation and flight to the wilderness of the Church of Christ and the subsequent darkness that followed. But he also, like the former seers and prophets of the Lord, was permitted to behold in the future the first rays of the new dispensation, the millennial kingdom, to be established, never to be overthrown.

Let us pause for one moment and reflect. If the word of God is sure, this fact is surely established, that the reign of anti-Christ shall be followed by a new, glorious dispensation, the millennial reign of the Son of God. There is scarcely an event in the Scriptures more frequently predicted than this.

All the previous dispensations of God are only preparations for this the last and most glorious of all, at the commencement of which the hosts of heaven join the Saints below in shouting, "Hosannah! Hosannah! Hosannah! The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xi, 15).

But it has before been proved that God never established a new dispensation without renewing revelations. During the Adamic dispensation, which continued while man was yet without sin, God revealed himself. So also during the patriarchal dispensation. God taught man how to offer sacrifices and to conduct worship. The Mosaic dispensation was established through revelation continued through centuries until four hundred years before Christ. The New Testament dispensation or Gospel dispensation was wonderfully rich in revelations, until the Priesthood was taken away "unto God" (Rev. vii, 5); and now, can we believe that revelation then and there ceased? Shall the last dispensation, the most glorious of all, the millennial reign of Christ, be established without revelation, only through the wisdom of man, which, by the way, is foolishness to God? No! Such a view is madness. It may be sound, worldly theology. But it is not the word of God. All the prophecies that have been fulfilled so far, have in that fulfilment been accompanied by divine revelation.

Those prophecies that remain to be fulfilled will as surely be accompanied by revelations. When Christ first came, His coming was heralded by angels, and by the Spirit of God operating on men; His ministry was followed by revelations on the mount, in Gethsemane, and the Spirit was poured out upon His followers. And yet, at His first coming, He appeared in humility, despised by men in general. What will not His second coming, judging from this, bring with it? Surely revelations *cannot* cease as long as God has promised to send His Son in glory to visit this earth and its inhabitants. Preparations *on* the earth are necessary for such an event, preparations that no man can make without the aid of divine revelations.

During the ages past God has tried the human race in

every respect. The patriarchal dispensation ended in a corruption which even the deluge could not check. The Mosaic dispensation ended in the rejection and the dispersion of the covenant people. The Gospel dispensation ended in the apostacy of the apostolic churches and the reign of anti-Christ. But God is prepared to gain the victory yet. He promised in the end of time to establish that kingdom which shall stand forever, never to be overthrown, and hence the necessity of continuous revelation.

DIFFICULTIES IN ASCERTAINING THE MEANING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

In considering the question whether the Bible is sufficient for the guidance of men to salvation, it becomes a matter of great importance to ascertain whether the language employed by the sacred writers is sufficiently clear to be understood, in all main points at least. If the Spirit of God, in directing the composition of the books of the Bible, intended to make these books a code of divine laws whereby further revelation should be rendered superfluous, we may reasonably expect to find in the Bible clear language conveying the ideas in a manner to be easily understood by the earnest reader. We may expect to find no ambiguity, no indistinctness.

Human laws are written with the greatest possible care. Lawmakers aim at clearness, seeing that this is indispensable when laws are made for the guidance of the citizen. Yet with all possible care in framing laws, it has been found that no law ever was framed, however carefully worded, that could not be construed in more than one way. Hence the necessity of a supreme court to which all cases can be appealed, the meaning of any disputed paragraph of the law authoritatively given. No human law would ever be a complete guidance for the citizens without such a supreme court.

Now, the question is simply this: Is the Bible clear enough so that it undoubtedly can be understood in only one way? If it be, then there may not be any need for the "supreme court" of divine revelation to appeal to in order to ascertain its meaning, since this is in no instance doubtful. But if the Bible is not clear enough; if it is so worded that, in many instances, the same passage may be understood in more than

one way, then further revelation is necessary in order to settle these points. If every passage of the Bible does not convey only one meaning and this unmistakably; if many passages can be, and have been, construed in various ways, and if divine revelation be abolished then we are exactly in this position: We have a code of laws and a collection of doctrines; but for the right understanding of those laws and doctrines we are entirely at the mercy of the sagacity or the stupidity of the (theological) lawyers with whom we happen to be connected. - There is, then, no appeal, no authority, no certainty.

Let us honestly consider some of the facts in the case, without shrinking from the inevitable conclusion.

First, we are met by the sad fact that mankind has not yet been able to decide exactly how many and which of the ancient books really belong to the Bible. The Protestant churches now accept sixty-five books in all, viz., thirty-eight in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New. But Luther was not quite certain about the canonicity of all of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. The Revelation of John was always suspicious to him, because he did not understand it, and the Epistle of James, he thought, was more fit to be burned than to be read. As to the books of the Old Testament, a much later and better informed critic, Michaelis, has proposed to exclude the two books of Chronicles from the canon, while others have had their grave doubts concerning the Song of Songs. But the Catholic church, so far from being disposed to diminish the number of books, has added all those which by Protestants have been called apocryphal. The whole apocryphal collection was by the Council of Trent, 1545, declared to be holy Scripture, and the council did so with some antiquity in support of the decision, too. For the book of Baruch is quoted as canonical by Origen, Athanasius, Cyril, and Epiphanius. Tobith, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus and the Maccabees are quoted as canonical by the great Augustine. Whether, then, the Bible should consist of seventy-nine books (including the fourteen apocrypha) or of sixty-five, or of only sixty-one, excluding the two Chronicles and James and the Revelation, is yet a question awaiting its final decision. And it would seem but reasonable not to abolish

the immediate revelations from God until this problem has been satisfactorily solved.

Second'y, accepting any of the above mentioned books as canonical, a great difficulty presents itself in determining the precise text. What the first authors wrote is in some cases impossible to determine. Let it be remembered that our present Bibles, with their divisions of chapters and verses, are by no means exactly such as the first authors left them. Much is the work of uninspired men. The original manuscripts were copied in numerous editions, and it was always possible in copying to drop a letter, to misspell a word, to leave out a word, etc. Translations and paraphrases have been made. These were not always correct in every particular. In the case of the Old Testament the original authors did not write the vowels, but only the consonants. It was the work of later men to insert all the vowels, but whether these later men in all instances, or even in most, inserted the right vowels is another open question. At all events, if it were possible to prove that all the consonants of the Old Testament are identical with those written by the original authors, and therefore inspired, yet all the vowels, which are added many years afterwards by uninspired men, cannot be proved to be of divine origin or such as God originally intended them to be.

A few instances may be quoted to illustrate the nature of such easily recognized changes as the sacred text has suffered. In Jonah i, 9, the prophet says: "I am a Hebrew," where the original reading probably was (as the Septuagint has it): "I am a servant of Jehovah." The difference is between *Ivri*, Hebrew, and *Ivdi*, the servant of Jehovah. In I Peter ii : 3, it will always be dubious whether the correct reading is: "If ye have tasted that the Lord is *gracious*," or "that the Lord is *Christ*." The fact is that both these words were sometimes written with the letters *Chs*, standing for both *Christos* and *Chrestos*, gracious. In Genesis i, 8, the words: "God saw that it was good" is wanting at the end of the second day's creation, but it is found in verse 10, in the middle of the third day's work, indicating a transposition. Sometimes verses have been added by later copyists. Such variations amount to many thousands in all, leaving the present text very far from satisfactory in its details.

Theologians, in admitting this, as they are compelled to do by the facts, generally smooth the disagreeable impression over with the assurance that none of all these variations in the text affect the meaning in the least degree. "The most inaccurate text ever written," they say, "leaves the truths of Scripture substantially unchanged." But this is evidently said more for the sake of the effect than for the sake of truth. For the theologians themselves—particularly the Protestants—*always* insist on the very letter of the text. The little words "this is" were sufficient in the quibble between Luther and Calvin to cut the Protestant party in two halves, each wishing to roast the other in hell. Yes, the theologians build doctrines not only on words but on *forms* of words, discriminating between the meaning of the same words when used in this form or the other. In a text where words are so important, it is ridiculous to say that many thousand variations are of no importance. And besides, since we know there are many thousand variations, how do we know that there are not many thousand more which have not yet been detected?

This question must be solved before we are prepared to admit that the Bible is a sufficient guide, and has done away with the necessity of further revelation.

But we will pass by the difficulties thus far pointed out. We will suppose that we have settled beyond doubt the number of books to be accepted as canonical. We will suppose that the original text has been preserved, and that the translations thereof in our vernacular tongues are correct. All this we suppose, for the sake of the argument, and yet we will find the greatest difficulty still exists—that of understanding the sacred volume correctly. Indeed, this difficulty is so great that probably not one single man now living can understand it all, and those that understand part of it right do so by the aid of the Spirit of God.

Some of the difficulties in understanding even the translations of the Bible may now be pointed out.

It is admitted that the words used in the Scriptures are sometimes to be used in a figurative sense and sometimes in a literal sense. What words are, in each case, to be understood strictly literal and what figuratively must be left to the

judgment of the reader. And from this fact numerous errors have arisen.

People have sometimes allegorized where no allegory was intended, as Origen in reading that Abraham in his old age married Keturah. Now, he says, the word Keturah means "sweet odor;" and "sweet odor" refers to the fragrance of righteousness. Hence he concludes that Abraham in his old age became very pious or righteous, and that this fact is meant when Moses states that the patriarch married Keturah. Equally absurd is the following *a la* Swedenborg: "Adam represents the intellect and Eve the feeling. That Adam and Eve begat sons and daughters means, therefore, that the union between intellect and feeling is what produces knowledge in man." These instances are extremely absurd and the errors of this kind of interpretation are easily perceived. But sometimes the errors are not so palpable, although equally absurd. As for instance, when it is contended that the "kingdom" of Christ means a religion and not a real kingdom, or that "the first resurrection" means a revival of the principles for which the martyrs were killed. In such cases the errors are great, and hundreds of Bible readers commit just such errors, in many instances without even knowing it.

Then, sometimes words that are really used figuratively are understood literally. You will see pictures, occasionally, where Lazarus is enjoying his heavenly bliss by sitting in the lap ("the bosom") of Father Abraham, the artist having misunderstood the figurative expression used by our Lord.

This kind of error is more easily committed in reading the prophetic portions of the Bible. The prophets borrow words denoting natural objects in order to represent what is spiritual and abstract. Their books are hieroglyphical, although they do not draw their hieroglyphic pictures, as did the Egyptian priests, but describe them in words. Hence the great difficulty in interpreting prophecy. It is not less difficult than to interpret many ancient Egyptian records. The prophets, for instance, talk of a "horn" and mean a "crown" or a "kingdom." "Beast" is a usurping tyrannical power. "Key" stands for lawful authority. "Virgins" are faithful worshipers, not defiled by idolatry.

Generally it must be borne in mind that every word should be understood as it was commonly understood at the time the Bible was written. Much minute inquiry, in fact more than most people are prepared to give, is needed in order to avoid errors arising from a violation of this rule.

Sometimes a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek is absolutely necessary for the right understanding of a passage. In I Kings ii,8, 9, David is made to say concerning Simei: "Hold him not guiltless, * * but his hoary head bring down with blood to the grave." This is, of course, a contradiction. And, besides, David had sworn not to kill Simei. It seems therefore as if one of the last acts of David was to break his oath and his royal word. But a knowledge of Hebrew idioms clears this up; for the word "not" refers to both clauses: "Hold him not guiltless, * * but bring not his hoary head down with blood." That is the meaning, and Solomon understood it so. "The end of the world" spoken of in Matt. xxiv,3, a Greek scholar will discover to be not the end of the physical world (*telos tou kosmou*) but the termination of the then existing economy; for the words are *synteleia tou aionos*. The interpretation of the whole prophecy of our Lord hangs upon this one word. Matthew (xii,40) makes Christ say: "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly," whereas the fact is, that there is not, and probably never was, a whale in the Mediterranean. The Hebrew has "a great fish" (Jonah i,17) which the translator of the Septuagint made into a whale, and the misleading quotation slipped into the New Testament from the Septuagint.

Sometimes people put a mystical sense into the most plain expressions. Christ says: "But one thing is needful" (Luke x,42) and many an edifying sermon has been preached upon this one "needful thing," and much curiosity has been needlessly excited to know what that one needful thing is that in itself is necessary and sufficient to salvation. People have been so eager to make a mystery that they have forgotten the fact that Christ for the time does not refer to salvation at all, but is speaking of a much more trivial subject, yet not less interesting or noteworthy. Christ has called on His friends, Lazarus, Martha and Maria. The two ladies are both anxious to entertain Him to the best of their ability. But Martha seems

to have had an idea that lots of things were necessary in order to make a comfortable meal. In order to be ready in a hurry Martha wanted her sister to help her, upon which the Savior politely remarks that "only one thing is needful." There was no cause for so much serving. He would not enter their house as a stranger for whom they would have to prepare so many extra dishes. He would come as their friend and be entertained as such. This would give both sisters time to sit down and listen to His instructions, which after all was the "good part" of the entertainment. Stripping this narrative of the mysteries of theologians and letting common sense be common sense, we have a beautiful incident at once pleasing and instructive.

Sometimes the reader will be misled by the numbers of the Bible, because he does not know how they originally were used. "Ten" sometimes stands for "several." In Gen. xxxi, 7, Jacob says that Laban had changed his wages "ten times," meaning of course "several times." Perhaps the division of the Roman Empire into "ten" as predicted by Daniel ought to be understood in the same way, since so far no one has been able exactly to tell in what "ten" (the word taken literally) kingdoms that empire on its downfall was divided. If understood to mean "several" kingdoms, there is no difficulty. "Forty," in the same way, often means "many." "Seven" and "seventy" denote a large and complete number, although uncertain to the speaker.

Sometimes a knowledge of history is required for the right understanding of passages. (Acts ix, 31): "The churches had rest throughout all Judea and Galilee" has sometimes been understood to have been the consequence of the conversion of Paul, whereas the real cause of this temporary rest was that at this time Caligula attempted to raise a statue of himself in the "Holy of holies" in the temple. The consternation which this caused among the bloodthirsty Jews made them for a time forget the Christian churches.

Nor less important is a knowledge of ancient chronology, geography, of botany, of mineralogy, zoology, and archæology in its various branches. But we cannot here multiply instances.

To understand the Bible, even the plainest translation, all

these things are necessary as helps, and yet, without the Spirit of God to lead into all truth, not all of these helps are sufficient; so numerous and so vast are the difficulties to be encountered in ascertaining the true meaning of the Bible.

Nor need we be surprised at this. The various books are written in the remote antiquity. Language changes like all that is human. Words do not remain stationary in their significations. Every word has its own history, and antique literature always requires a knowledge of the history of the words. The authors of the Bible write each from his own standpoint. Some are lawyers, as Moses. Others are humble shepherds, as Amos. Some are learned men, as Paul and Luke. Others are uneducated fishermen, as Peter and John. Some are statesmen like Daniel. Others follow more lowly occupations of life, as Jeremiah. Some write poetry, others history, others letters and others visions. Some write in the deserts of Arabia, some by the banks of the rivers in Babylon, some in the palace in Jerusalem, some in prisons in Rome. Each has his own peculiarity of style, and to understand it all, you would have to be conversant with almost every branch of human learning. It is no figure of speech when Locke says that theology is the direction of all knowledge to its true end, or when Parley P. Pratt says: "It is the science of all other sciences and useful arts, being in fact, the very fountain from which they emanate. It includes philosophy, astronomy, history, mathematics, geography, languages, the science of letters, and blends the knowledge of all matters of fact in every branch of art or research" (Key to Theology, p. 2).

Seeing now that such requirements are made upon us in order to understand the Bible, and that lack of knowledge necessarily involves misunderstanding of many of the sacred passages, we ask every reasonable being, Can it be supposed that the Bible ever was intended to be a substitute for immediate divine revelation? If it were intended for this purpose it has signally failed in its purpose; and if the Bible alone be intended to be the guide to heaven, it is to be feared that a majority of people will be led to hell for the simple reason that they never had an opportunity of mastering the difficulties attending their attempts at understanding what the Bible doctrines really are.

"CHRISTIAN" SECTS AN EVIDENCE.

If further proofs for the necessity of continuous revelation were needed, the deplorable state of the Christian world, where "each goes his own way," furnishes those proofs in abundance.

The object God had in view in giving to His people men through whom He could reveal His plans and purposes was to "perfect the Saints" and preserve "unity of faith" (Eph. iv, 11-14). As long as the church had apostles and prophets, there was no necessity for the churches breaking up into factions or sects. Differences could arise, and did arise, but when referred to the inspired men, God, through His Holy Spirit always settled the difficulties, preserving the unity.

Some instances, illustrating this, have been recorded for our information.

In the church at Jerusalem, as the members increased, a feeling of jealousy grew up between the different nationalities. The "Grecians" thought that their widows did not receive a fair portion of the alms daily distributed among the poor, the "Hebrews" keeping all for their widows. Among the Jews the "Grecians," that is to say, such Jews that were not born in Palestine, were held in contempt like everything that originated outside the confines of the Holy Land. It was thought that the Jewish converts to Christianity had retained this feeling, and so "neglected their foreign brethren. Now, here was a secret power of evil at work, strong enough to break the first church up in factions. For evil grows, if not conquered, and what at first appears like a cloud, the size of a man's hand, develops into a terrible storm with thunder and lightning. Small as the matter appeared to be, it was an attempt at destroying the unity of the Church of Christ. But the church was equal to this occasion. Its foundations were solid and its guardians awake. The whole matter was laid before the apostles, and these found the proper remedy. "Look ye out among you," they said to the church members, "seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." The people, on hearing this wise counsel, made their choice, and the apostles set the chosen apart for this office. And it may be noted as a characteristic feature of God's way of managing elections, in

contrast to the farcical proceedings of the iniquitous world, that the seven men elected on this occasion were all "Grecians," judging from their names. The majority, prompted by the love of God, gave to the minority—the complaining party—the whole control of the distribution. The church was saved from the spirit of destruction. Unity was preserved. But it took inspired men to solve the difficulty in *this* way, so contrary to all rules, recognized among men (see Acts. vi, 1-8).

The next instance is a difference concerning doctrine.

As soon as the Gospel principles spread and were embraced by the Gentiles, a struggle necessarily followed between the Jewish and the Gentile element. Both had much to give up and much to learn from each other, before a complete unity could be secured. In this struggle, various questions were brought up for discussion, and amongst others this :

Ought not a Gentile convert to first be circumcised and promise to keep the law, before he was baptized and incorporated in the church? Many Jewish converts held that this was necessary. For to them the entrance to the church ought to be through the Mosaic dispensation, to Gentiles as it had been to Jews. But the Gentiles considered this an unnecessary circuitous road to the church, holding that the acceptance of Christ and his ordinances was all that should be required. Here was a difficult question to decide, and the principle involved was one of vital importance to the whole Christian community. The danger of a split was great, but the church had inspired leaders, men who communed with God. To them the question was referred. And they decided it, not only according to the Scriptures but according to the revelation given for the occasion. "It seemed good," they say, "to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves ye shall do well." (Acts xv, 28, 29.) Here is a decision arrived at under the direct influence of the Holy Ghost, and one that brought unity into the churches and joy among the various Gentile branches.

Thus we see exemplified the object of continuous revelation, and the necessity of it. Without it unity cannot be pre-

served. "That ye may be one" as Christ is one with His Father, is, however, the very essence of Christianity, the mark on which it can be distinguished from the "world," which is all strife and contention. Destroy the unity, and Christianity is gone, or, since unity is impossible without continuous revelation, abandon such revelation, and Christianity is no more.

It is noticeable that the Christian churches, as long as the inspired men were among them and they listened to their words, kept clear of all schisms. *So long*, we say, but no longer. For soon men arose who thought themselves too wise to listen to the counsel of inspired men. And such imposed themselves upon the church with big words and subtle sophistry, thus drawing many away from the path of righteousness. This was the work of the spirit of anti-Christ, and the result was schisms,sects. But still the spirit of revelation lingered among the churches, uniting the honest everywhere in the love of God and of one another, until after a long struggle, amid persecution from the outside and rebellion from the inside,the Spirit of revelation was withdrawn. "The child was taken up to the throne of God." (Rev. xii, 5). The light gave way to darkness.

Not that the Christian churches became annihilated, not that the doctrines preached by Christ or, what is the same, the Christian theology at once vanished. No! It was all there, but wrapped in darkness.

Suppose yourself on a ship trying to make for the harbor on a dark,stormy night. There are the lights along the shore,according to whose guiding rays alone you can steer your course. But suppose all these lights are suddenly extinguished. You can see no more where to go. All your calculations are in vain. Those rays of lights from the lighthouses were just as necessary for your safety as are your maps and your compass. Something analogous to this happened to the world, or,rather to the Christian churches. The guiding light of continuous revelation was extinguished and the ship left in darkness. At what precise time this took place we do not presume to say. But it is certain that the time of revelation did not extend much beyond the age of the apostles. The church was still there for years, but the lighthouses were not shining.

What followed? The most pitiable confusion. The leaders of the church, no longer guided by inspiration, were unable to preserve love and unity. Factions became numerous and each faction leader claimed the supreme authority for himself. Contests for power ensued, accompanied by scandalous scenes. The church was abandoned, each faction constructing their own raft and each steering their own course, occasionally trying to sink other rafts as these by wind and current were driven about. This was the result of the withdrawal of divine revelation.

People were in total darkness. They split on the most trivial questions as well as over the more important ones. What are we to think when we read the "history of the church" and find that "Christians" were trying to find out whether Christ was a real man or only an apparition! Or where to had truth gone, when, after long struggles about the doctrine of the Godhead, it was finally decided, as the standard of orthodoxy, that: "Incomprehensible is the Father, incomprehensible is the Son, and incomprehensible is the Holy Ghost; yet not three incomprehensibles, but one." (Symbol Athan.)? Christ says: "This is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John, xvii, 3); Paul prays that he may know Christ and the power of His resurrection. (Philippians, vi, 7-10); and John says that we by keeping God's commandments know that we "know" Him. (I John ii, 3), but the Church, as soon as the Spirit of revelation withdrew, declared that she was in darkness. God, she said, is incomprehensible. The contrast is so conspicuous that only a blind man can help seeing it.

This spirit of darkness still enwraps the whole "Christian" world. The work of dissolution has been going on all the time, and is still going on. The "Christians" stand against each other like enemies on a battlefield. Nobody knows where to seek or to find truth. Has the Roman Catholic church the truth? or the Coptic? or the Armenian? or the Reformed church? or the church of England? or Luther's faction? or Methodists? or Baptists? or Presbyterians? or Irvingians or Adventists? or Universalists? or Quakers? Which has the truth? Which faction is the Church of Christ?

Paul says that factions are the result of a "carnal" condi-

tion. "For whereas there is among you envyings and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (I Cor. iii, 3.) The "Christian" world to-day, the Apostle then declares to be a "carnal" christendom. But to be carnally minded, we further learn (Rom. viii, 6, 7), is "death," and "enmity against God." The Christian world to-day is therefore in a state of "death" and "enmity against God." The word of God has pronounced His judgment, and all as a consequence of their having despised and rejected continuous revelation from God.

This suggests the remedy to be applied: Divine revelation.

God has promised, in the last days, "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, your young men shall see visions * * * * and it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call" (Joel ii, 28-33). And this promise God will fulfil. Revelations are necessary for the deliverance of His people in these last days, and God is faithful.

Already the light of revelation has broken through the dark clouds of medieval errors. The prophets of God have again spoken, revealing *God's* way of salvation. Will the "Christian" world believe? Or will they, like the Jews formerly, reject the light of revelation, to their own damnation?

One objection, and only one, needs to be answered before we close this part of our investigation. It has been said that God prohibits people from adding anything to the Bible, since John the Revelator says: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book" (Rev. xxii, 18). The prohibition is given for any "man" to add anything of his own to the book of Revelation, or to the word of God. And woe to the man who is preposterous enough to add his own productions to the sacred compositions of God! But neither this passage nor any other passage in the Bible states that God would never any more reveal anything. God does not prohibit himself from adding whatever He thinks necessary.

In fact, God has added to the volume of the New Testament since the book of Revelation was written. The Gospel of John, and, in all probability, the three epistles of John, were all written after the book of Revelation. The latest date assigned to the Revelation is 96 A. D., while others (and more probably) give it the date of 67 or 68. The three epistles were written 68 and the gospel 97, so that there is no possibility for thinking that God did not intend to add anything to the existing records.

The Gospel of John is the last book of the New Testament. And in this very book we have the comforting promise of Christ recorded: "He (the Spirit) shall glorify Me: for he shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father has are Mine: therefore, said I, that he shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John xvi, 14, 15). Here is a promise of continuous revelation.

II.

Having seen, now, that continuous revelation is necessary for the guidance of men unto eternal salvation, and also that God through his ancient prophets has promised to manifest Himself preparatory to the foundation of the kingdom of the Son of God upon the earth, it becomes necessary to enquire into the evidences that present themselves of the truth of the claims of Joseph Smith, the Prophet. Did God speak through him, or, was he an enthusiast, an impostor? This question concerns every human being.

With a voice like that of the angel whom John saw in his visions on Patmos, Joseph proclaims in the name of the Lord: "Hearken, O, ye people of My Church, saith the voice of Him who dwells on high, and whose eyes are upon all men, yea, verily I say, hearken ye people from afar, and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together. For verily *the voice of the Lord is unto all men* . . . in Cov. sec. i, 1, 2).

For centuries past the world had cherished the thought that the voice of the Lord should no more be heard, when suddenly, thunderlike, a messenger appeared, heralding from one end of heaven to another the above quoted intelligence. God has spoken.

To the chosen seed these were, indeed, tidings of great

joy, but the world at large, influenced, as the Jews formerly were, by priests and rabbis, denounced the messenger as a bold impostor. He offered the strongest proof a man ever can offer as a demonstration of the truth of his message; he gave his life, sealing his testimony with his blood. Yet a sceptical world refused to believe, refused, to a large extent, even to investigate.

What was, then, the nature of his message? That the day of the Lord is at hand; that the inhabitants of the earth must repent of their sins and false doctrines, and turn unto God; that those who would obey should be made happy in the kingdom of the Son of God, but on all disobedient souls fearful judgments would speedily fall. To prepare for the coming of Christ was the message sent from God to man through His servant, the Prophet Joseph. That was the nature of the message.

It will be perceived that this is in full harmony with the sacred writ, and its very nature should be a sufficient proof of its divine origin. If it harmonizes with the Bible, how can it be false? How can those who believe the one reject the other? Is not that the very same contradiction as that of which the Jews were guilty who believed the sacred writings of the Old Testament at the same time they rejected Christ? Clearly, when the Bible is first proved to be true, everything that is in perfect harmony with the Bible must be true, too. In such relation to the Bible stands the divine message of which we are speaking.

This is a subject that must not be treated lightly. The highest interests are here at stake—interests dearer than life itself, which lasts but a moment. If God has spoken to this generation, woe, woe, woe unto those who wilfully shut their ears and harden their hearts against the word of God! The antediluvian world was drowned by a flood because the people did not heed the warning voice. The cities of the plain were wrapped in flames and buried in a sulphurous tomb because they rejected the message of God. Jerusalem fell because she did not know the time of her visitation. And how can the present world escape a similar fate under similar circumstances?

With these lessons of past ages before us, let every honest soul investigate the evidences of the truth of this message of

the latter days. An honest investigation is the very least that can be demanded for a subject of this vast importance.

The attention of theological students who are familiar with the evidences of the truth of Christianity is particularly called to the line of thought here offered, as it is proposed to show that the message delivered by Joseph Smith is supported by the same evidence as the message delivered by former prophets or apostles. Christianity and "Mormonism" must stand or fall together. If the evidence here presented is sufficient for the one, it is sufficient for both.

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE.

The books of the Old Testament abound with predictions foretelling the work of Christ on earth. It is distinctly predicted that a deliverer should come, "the seed of woman;" he should spring out of the people of Abraham; a new covenant would be made; the deliverer would be despised, put to death, and yet reign for ever and ever. Such wonderful predictions run like a string through the Old Testament, and are always pointed to as an evidence of the truth of Christianity. This is what is sometimes called retrospective evidence. Christ himself points to these predictions as such evidence. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter His glory? Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke xxiv, 26, 27. Compare John v, 46, 47.)

But the same prophets foretell with equal clearness the grand work in which the Latter-day Saints are now engaged, as will appear on investigation of the following passages.

Isaiah has many remarkable predictions, some of which were fulfilled shortly after their delivery. Syria and Israel, for instance, were to be conquered by Assyria, before the infant son of the prophet could say "my father" (Isaiah viii, 4). The glory of Kedar was to fail in one year (xxi, 6), that of Moab in three years (xvi, 14), that of Ephraim in sixty-five years (vii, 8), that of Tyre in seventy years (xxiii, 15). Other predictions relate to more distant times. Thus that portion of his book which is contained in chapter xl, to lxiv. embraces the whole period from the Babylonian captivity to the end of the Christain dispensation.

In this portion of the book the prophet predicts the de-

liverance of the Jews by Cyrus (xliv, 28; xlv, 1-5, xlvii); the return to Judea (xliv, 28), the coming, suffering and glory of the Messiah, the downfall of idolatry, the rejection of Christ by the Jews, and their consequent rejection by God; also their final conversion and recovery (lii, 3; lxii; lxv).

Speaking of this last event, the final gathering of the Jews—an event which is about to be fulfilled in our own time—the prophet (chapter lv) says that there should be a people or a nation, previously unknown to the Jews, who should be willing to join the Jews in their worship of God Almighty. “Behold, thou shalt call a people which thou didst not know; and a people which did not know thee shall run to thee for the sake of Jehovah, thy God, and for the sake of the Holy One in Israel, for he hath glorified thee.”

Could language more clearly convey that at the time of the final restoration of the Jews there should exist another people, too, who would share with the Jews the glory in store for them? In the next chapter (lxvi, 6-8) this other people is more clearly described: “And the sons of the stranger who follow Jehovah in order to serve Him, and to love Jehovah’s name * * * those I will bring to My holy mountain, and they shall rejoice in My house.” These predictions are very clear, and it is a literal fulfilment thereof that the Saints are called out of all nations of the earth so that they may form that one nation here spoken of, and the latter part of Isaiah’s predictions are as literally verified as that part which relates to former events.

Among the predictions of the prophet Micah we notice “the invasion of Shalmaneser (i, 6-8), and Sennacherib (i, 9-16), the dispersion of Israel (v, 7-8) the destruction of Jerusalem (iii, 12). He also foretells the gathering of Israel and the exaltation of Christ over all nations. Speaking of the gathering of Israel, he says that a forerunner should first come, and this forerunner is described as a people with a leader at their head and Jehovah as their guide, alluding to Israel in the wilderness, where Moses was their prophet, Jehovah going before them. Thus saith Micah ii, 12, 13: “Certainly I will gather thee, Jacob, and bring together the rest of Israel. * * * The forerunner (or rather the one who ‘breaks’ the way) goes before them; * * * the prince goes be-

fore them and Jehovah leads." In chapter iv. the prophet more fully describes what should happen before the gathering of Jacob: "At the end of the days the mountain of the house of Jehovah shall be established upon the top of the mountains, * * and the nations shall run thereto. * * * In the same days saith Jehovah, shall I gather the remnant." Read chapter iv, 1-10 carefully. It predicts unmistakably that at the time of the final delivery of the Jews there should exist a people gathered among the mountains in order to serve the Lord, a people endowed with wisdom to exercise judgment in the affairs of the nations of the world, and yet be a peaceful, agricultural people, who had thrown away their swords for peaceful occupations. This prediction is as clear as any ever given concerning Christ and His work, and it is fulfilled in the gathering of the Saints. If prophetic evidence is required, God has given it to us.

Let us turn to Jeremiah, who flourished a hundred years later.

The chronological arrangement of the predictions of this prophet, as has been already remarked, is not very plain, but passages relating to the first salvation of Israel are easily recognized. Chapter iii, 15-18, are among these. Here the prophet in words that cannot be mistaken, says that the house of Judah shall go to the house of Israel, and "they shall come together from the land of the north to the land which I have given your fathers."

That this prediction does not relate to the deliverance from Babylon is evident from the fact that the prophet says: "the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel." The house of Israel must then already be gathered, or else the house of Judah could not go with them. At the return from Babylon Judah took the lead, and the Israelites who returned had to come to Judah. Judah took the lead. Here is a deliverance and return predicted in which Israel takes the lead. Israel must consequently be gathered as well as Judah and previous to Judah. Compare this with the message delivered through Joseph the Prophet, and the evidence is both strong and conclusive.

No less clear is Daniel. In his second chapter, this great prophet predicts coming events with the clearness of history. Four kingdoms are described: The Babylonian, under the

dynasty of Nebuchadnezzar; the Medo-Persian, the Grecian and the Roman. The last named is divided into ten, all of which in their composition carry the seed of their dissolution. Iron (political power) and clay (man-invented religion) mixed together, was their inheritance from Rome, and the cause of their weakness. But in the days of these ten kingdoms the kingdom of heaven is founded, a stone cut out without hands of man, yet of miraculous origin; mighty as a mountain, and, finally, superior to the finest metals, the most splendid earthly thrones.

That this prediction was not fulfilled at the time of Christ is clear from two facts: First, that Christ came before the dissolution of the Roman empire; and, secondly, that Christ did not found a kingdom at all when He was here. Only by the most lamentable perversion of Scripture can this passage be made to apply to the first coming of Christ. It must apply to His second coming or have no meaning at all. But to His second coming it applies. Then His kingdom will fill all the earth, but the stone must first roll, and, while so doing, grow until it becomes fit to perform the work assigned to it.

In chapter seven the prophet treats of the same subject. The four kingdoms are represented by four beasts, and the ten kingdoms by ten horns; three of the horns or kingdoms are subdued by a little horn, the papal, anti-Christian power, which exercises its tyrannical reign, and overcomes the Saints for a period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years. Here, too, the time is fully defined, showing beyond the possibility of doubt that the restoration of the Kingdom of God belongs to this century, counting from the appearance of the little horn, the papal power.

Thus the ancient prophets have spoken of the time in which we live, and their predictions are irrefutable evidence of the truth of the message accepted by the Latter-day Saints.

Let us add one more testimony. John, the great prophet of the New Testament, while on Patmos, has a vision in which the Turkish conquest is shown (chapter ix). Four angels, bound in the great river Euphrates, are let loose to spread war and desolation upon the earth for a period of about four hundred years (Rev. ix, 15). Their great numbers are described, their armors, their national colors, their power to

hurt an idolatrous "Christian" world, tormenting those who had abandoned the worship of God for the worship of Saints and images. After this (chapter x) a messenger appears with a little book, signifying that the Spirit of prophecy should again be manifested before "many people, and nations, and tongues and kings" (Rev. x, 1-11). How very clear is this prediction as to the great event of our time. In reading the vision we feel that John saw the youthful Prophet Joseph with the little book in his hand, and heard his mighty voice declaring that the fulness of times had come. "And the angel (or messenger) which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth (embracing both hemispheres) lifted up his hands to heaven and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever * * * * that there shall be time no longer, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel * * * * the mystery of God should be finished" (x, 5-7). Is not this the very essence of the message delivered by Joseph the Prophet?

With such frequency and with such clearness the Spirit of prophecy in all past ages foretells the work in which the Latter-day Saints are now engaged. If Christ can point to predictions as an evidence of His divine mission; if Christians can point to prophecy as an evidence of the truth of Christianity, why are not these predictions, these prophecies, equally infallible evidence of the truth of the divine mission of Joseph Smith? How one can be accepted and the other rejected I fail to see.

PROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE.

Our Lord refers more than once to prophecies delivered by Himself as evidence of His divine mission: "And now I have told you before it came to pass, that when it is come to pass ye might believe." (John xiv, 29.) This kind of evidence has been called prospective. When we read, for instance, the prophecy of our Lord announcing the destruction of Jerusalem, compare the prediction with the description of the fearful event given by Josephus, and see how literally everything was fulfilled, we can understand what strong evidence the prophecy is of the divine mission of the Lord. Jerusalem, Babylon, Nineveh are all witnesses of the truth of the word of God, and their testimony is unanimously accepted by everyone who

is able to trace the finger of God. The conclusion is this, that when a man foretells an event which no human wisdom could foresee, the occurrence of such an event is a sure proof that God spoke through that man. So God Himself reasons: "Who hath declared this from ancient times? Have not I, the Lord?" (Isaiah, xlv, 20-22.)

If we apply this rule to the message delivered through Joseph Smith, we unavoidably reach the same conclusion. We are forced by the most plain logic to acknowledge his divine mission.

The following is offered for consideration: In the Book of Doctrine and Covenants many predictions are given concerning the Saints, some of which have already been fulfilled, while others are still awaiting fulfilment.

In 1830, when the Church was still in her earliest infancy, it was predicted: "Zion shall rejoice upon the hills and flourish before the final salvation of Israel" (Doctrine and Covenants, sec. xxxv, 24, 25). This remarkable prediction is often repeated, and finally, in the year 1838, at Far West, Missouri, it is again announced: "Therefore, will I not make solitary places to bud and to blossom, and to bring forth in abundance, saith the Lord? Is there not room enough upon the mountains?" (Doctrine and Covenants, sec. cxvii, 7, 8.)

From the very foundation of the Church the Spirit of God, through the prophet, thus announces in no uncertain way that Zion, the Saints, should move to "the hills," "the mountains," "the solitary places," and there be prosperous, "blossom" gloriously. It must be remembered that these predictions were delivered at a time when no human wisdom could foresee such an event. When the Church was founded in 1830, there was no possibility—speaking from a mere human point of view—of foreseeing her removal to the hills, much less that she would be removed and prosper in the "hills." Nor is there in the whole history of mankind anything analogous to this exodus of the Church. The probability, speaking from a human point of view, when the Church was founded, was either that she would be favored by the world and remain where she was, or that she would be crushed on the spot by an immense hostility. Either of these two occurrences might have been considered probable at the time; but none of them

was predicted. The Church should blossom in the hills. Has not this prediction, delivered half a century ago, been remarkably fulfilled? Who can travel through the valleys of the mountains to-day, among fragrant gardens and orchards, and notice the friendly, peaceful homes that everywhere smile upon the stranger, or observe the condition of the Saints, without seeing that the predictions have come literally true? Zion now blossoms in the mountains.

The fulfilment of these predictions has not been brought about by man, otherwise than in this way that ungodly men, without their own knowledge, were the instruments. The Saints were driven from place to place. They went not with a *calculation* to fulfil prophecy, but because they could not help themselves. In the same way the Jews and the Romans fulfilled the predictions of our Lord.

Anyone who will honestly consider these facts will see that the events prominent in the history of the Latter-day Saints indelibly mark Joseph Smith as a prophet of God.

Other predictions delivered by Joseph the Prophet concern the nations of the earth. In 1832 the following prediction was given: "For after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes, that shall cause groanings in the midst of her, and man shall fall upon the ground, and shall not be able to stand. And also cometh the testimony of the voice of thunders, and the voice of lightnings, and the voice of tempests, and the voice of the waves of the sea, heaving themselves beyond their bounds. And all things shall be in commotion; and, surely, men's hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all men." (Doctrine and Covenants, sec. lxxvii, lxxxix, xci).

True, this prediction has not yet in all its details been fulfilled; still, the events of the last ten years fully indicate that the time is drawing near when the "testimony of thunders" shall roll over the earth. I refer to numerous calamities which the last years have witnessed. Earthquakes, floods, storms, fires, conflagrations, wars, anarchy have filled the newspapers with horrible reading matter. We need only remember the earthquake in Charleston, the overflow of the Yellow River in China, the conflagration of several theatres, the riots in Chicago. So noted have these years been for calamities of

every description that astrologers have pointed out that they were caused by certain planets which, during the past years, have had a peculiar position in relation to each other and to the earth. Be this as it may, the fact remains that we live in a time of visitation—a visitation already foretold by Joseph the Prophet. Here, again, we see his words verified, and he himself vindicated as a prophet of God.

Another prediction, the fulfilment of which is written in letters of blood on the pages of the history of the American nation, cannot be contradicted. In 1832 God declared through Joseph Smith: "Behold the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the Southern States shall call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves, and thus war shall be poured out upon all nations." (Doctrine and Covenants, sec. lxxxvii, 3). Concerning this war, it was foretold that it should terminate in "death and misery to many, many souls." Also the place where the first shot was to be fired was foretold: "Verily, thus saith the Lord, concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina." (Doctrine and Covenants, sec. lxxxvii, 1; cxxx: 12, 13.)

These minute predictions were given at a time when people generally did not believe it possible for the United States to engage in a war with each other. Those acquainted with the sentiments that prevailed in America at that time, all agree in this. Nay, even when the report reached the Northern States that their Southern brethren had actually commenced the tragedy, it was hard for the Northern States to believe it. There was no possibility at the time of Joseph for human sagacity to foresee this war. Yet the despised prophet predicted it with a clearness not surpassed by Isaiah or Daniel.

Did it come true? Did the war break out in South Carolina? Was the slave question the *casus belli*? Did the Southern States apply to other nations for help? Did the war cause "death and misery to many souls?" Every particular came true, and the world knows it, even if it fails to acknowledge that all had been predicted years before it happened.

It would be a reasonable supposition that the literal fulfil-

ment of a prediction like this should be proof enough of the divine mission of the prophet. Or, what is required of a true prophet? Is not that enough that his predictions are proved to be true? In the case of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, John, nothing more is required. When we see that their predictions have come true we grant that they were true prophets. Must we, then, reverse every rule of logic in the case of Joseph Smith? Must we say his predictions have been fulfilled; *ergo* he was a *false* prophet? The absurdity of this is too great to need refutation.

We know that an objection has been raised that the prediction of the war did not come true in every particular—that the war was confined to the United States, and was not poured out upon all nations.

To this objection we answer that, in one sense, it was poured out upon all nations. The population of the United States consists, as is well known, of people from almost every nation under the sun, and England, Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, all were represented in the armies of that war. All contributed to the death list in that long and fearful combat. How much misery, how much sorrow, how many tears did that war cause far beyond the borders of the great republic, when aged mothers and fathers, and sisters and brothers in the old countries received the intelligence that a son or a brother was wounded or dead? If we will consider this in all its consequences we will soon find that the expression, "War shall be poured out upon all nations" is no idle figure of speech. It is a stern fact. Thousands beyond the rolling waves of the ocean drank the bitter cup filled with the curse of that war. Understood in this way, the prediction is literally fulfilled in all its details.

But it must also be remembered that we have not yet reached the last scene of the drama. It is a grave question with some clear-seeing politicians to-day whether the slave question has yet reached its final solution. If it has not, we may yet see the prediction in question fulfilled in every particular.

The prediction itself plainly states that some time would elapse between the fulfilment of its various parts. Verse 3, section 87, foretells that the war should be caused by the

division of the United States into two great parties, and that the Southern States should call upon Great Britain; "and thus war should be poured out upon all nations." Then verse 4 explains that this should be continued "*after many days,*" thereby that the slaves (the negroes) should rise up, and also the remnant (the Indians), and new wars, new bloodshed take place. The prophecy thus clearly marks two divisions, the events of which are separated from each other by a period of *many* days, or years; for days in the prophetic language are always understood to mean years. Thus the prediction itself is plain. It foretells the so-called War of the Rebellion, its subsequent result as well as its causes. It further intimates that the question out of which it arose should be settled for many years, but that again the flames of war should be kindled and spread wider than before. The first part of this prediction has been fulfilled. The second belongs to the future.

Having thus removed the objection made to the prediction, it may not be out of place to show that this way of putting close together, in prophetical sentences, events which are in time far separated from each other, is common to prophetical writers. In this respect the Prophet Joseph resembles the ancient prophets, a fact which ought not to be the ground of objection.

Isaiah, speaking of the mission of Christ (chapter lxi, 1-3), says: "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me * * to proclaim the year of acceptance of Jehovah and the day of vengeance of our God." Christ, in reading and expounding this text in Nazareth, reads to the middle of the verse, closes the book and exclaims: "To-day this scripture is fulfilled in your ears." (Luke iv, 21.) Indeed, with the coming of Christ the year of acceptance of Jehovah had come. The first part of the verse was fulfilled, but the second portion—the day of vengeance—was not yet. Thousands of years lie between the first part of this verse and the second.

So the Prophet Joel, in his second chapter, verses 28-32, foretells in one sentence the wonders of the day of Pentecost (compare Acts ii, 16-21) and the great day of Jehovah, when no one can escape the judgments to come except those who take their refuge upon Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, events which are separated from each other by thousands of years.

The objection to the prediction of Joseph Smith is therefore no objection at all, unless the ancient prophets must be rejected on the same ground. On the contrary, an honest investigation leads to the discovery that the very language of prophecy as delivered by the Prophet of this dispensation is in harmony with ancient prophecies, that they flow from one and the same source—the Spirit of God.

DIRECT EVIDENCE.

With “direct evidence,” theologians mean such evidence as is supplied by the miracles of the Lord and his servants.

It is true that miracles are often appealed to as evidence of the divine mission of Christ. Nicodemus says: “No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him” (John iii, 2). Christ Himself supports this view. “I have greater witness than that of John; for the work which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me” (John v, 36). “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works’ sake” (John xiv, 11). Also: “But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He says to the sick of palsy), I say unto thee, ‘Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way unto thine house’” (Mark ii, 10, 11). Here, clearly, miracles are furnished as evidence of Christ’s divine mission.

But it must be remembered that the performance of miracles is not always a proof of divine authority. The Egyptian magicians worked several miracles, it seems, in the sight of Pharaoh, thereby turning his heart away *from* God. The disciples of the Pharisees at the time of Christ also performed miracles. They charged Christ with the crime of being connected with the powers of darkness, and that He by such aid cast out demons; to which charge Christ with holy indignation, replies: “If I cast out demons with the aid of Beelzebub, by whom do *your children* cast out demons?” So that miracles were by no means something which Christ claimed as his exclusive prerogative. It has also been clearly foretold that anti-Christ should claim miraculous powers and thereby deceive many. “His coming is after the workings of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (II Thess.

ii, 9). "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast" (Rev. xiii, 13, 14). From these passages it is clear that caution is needed in accepting this kind of evidence. Miracles may be evidence of the presence of God or the presence of anti-Christ.

Nor is the performance of miracles always necessary to prove divine authority. A man may be sent from God in order to fulfil a very important mission without having to prove this by miracles. Thus John the Baptist had a very important mission. He came to "prepare the way" for the appearance of Christ, yet it is not known that he proved his mission by miracles.

It is true that Christ and His Apostles after Him worked many striking miracles, even the raising of the dead, but these miracles were, after all, not so frequent as has sometimes been imagined. Those men of God did not touch everything with supernatural power, healing every sick person they saw, raising every dead one, changing the common day occurrences of life into scenes matching the stories of the "Arabian Nights." Not at all. Their miracles were comparatively scarce; they were exceptional occurrences. Thus when Paul was incarcerated in Rome, the cold prison walls forming but a poor shelter for his body during the winter, and his resources probably being exhausted, he asks Timothy kindly to bring with him the cloak which Paul had forgotten at Troas, at the house of one of the brethren, called Carpus. (II Tim., iv, 13). The passage is as prosaic as it could possibly be, and has nothing supernatural about it. Still more, in the same chapter we hear Paul diligently plead with Timothy to come to Rome to him, for he was now alone. All except Luke had forsaken him, and among other misfortunes was this—that he had had to leave Trophimus sick at Miletum. "Eras-tus abode at Corinth, but Trophimus have I left at Miletum, sick" (II Tim. iv, 20). Sick? Why did not the great Apostle cure him instead of leaving him sick? If the Apostles had been such miracle-makers as modern fancy has represented them to be, an occurrence of this nature would have been impossible. But this is not the only one recorded. Timothy

one of Paul's converts and fellow laborers, is always spoken of in terms of high praise, and he is a noble instance of eminent gifts and grace in one young in years. This favorite of the apostle was sick, however, and in his letter Paul therefore exhorts him to be careful about his health: "Drink no longer water but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (I Tim. v, 23). Let those who have over estimated the frequency of miracles at the time of the first Christian churches, consider this passage well, and they will be likely to see their mistake. Here was a prominent man of the church, himself possessing great spiritual gifts, constantly suffering from "infirmities." Here is the great "Apostle of the Gentiles," whose power always was great, advising that prominent man to use a little medicine. Why did he not promise him a miracle? Why? That we do not know, but this we do know, that miracles were never by God strewn round, "plenty as black berries."

Anyone who will study the miracles of our Lord and his apostles, will find that they were always performed for the glory of God, and conveyed a lesson necessary and appropriate. Although individuals were thereby benefited, yet this was not the only or ultimate aim. Christ, for instance, heals with a touch a man whom the law had pronounced unclean, and whom no Jew would touch. He shows by His miracles that he is the Lord over disease, over demons, over physical nature, over brute creatures, in order that we may have confidence in Him in all things. We see him forgiving sins, answering prayers, direct (Mat. ix, 20-22), intercessory (23-26), united (27-31), and even unuttered (32-33). The same characteristics may be observed in the miracles of the apostles. They were never performed for selfish purposes, nor for the gratification of curiosity, never for the sake of show. The epistles explain that miraculous gifts, including prophecy, were given to confirm the truth of the Gospel, promote its rapid dissemination, and edify the churches.

Such miracles, then, are from God, and may be relied upon as evidence of the truth of those revelations which they are intended to prove.

Two questions now become appropriate in our investigation: Did miraculous manifestations follow the message of

Joseph the Prophet, and, if so, were these miraculous manifestations of such a nature as to warrant the conclusion that he had his power from God? Let us see.

In the year 1830 the Lord declared through His prophet: "And it shall come to pass that there shall be a great work in the land, even among the Gentiles * * * for I am God and mine arm is not shortened; and I will show miracles, signs and wonders, unto all those who believe on my name; and who shall ask it in my name in faith they shall cast out devils (demons); they shall heal the sick; they shall cause the blind to receive their sight, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk. The time speedily cometh when great things are to be shown forth unto the children of men." (Doctrine and Covenants., sec. xxxv 7-10.) Here we have an unmistakably clear promise that miracles should attend the message of our Prophet; and this promise is repeated at other times. But was this promise also kept? Were those "great things" shown unto the children of men? Or was the promise a false one?

How could it be false? This was one of the very first promises given. When we remember how rapidly the Church spread in those early days, no other conclusion is possible than this: that the promise given was also kept to the very letter. Men are not so foolish as to follow a man who promises "great things" and never keeps his promises. This the ministers of the world have learnt, wherefore they wisely abstain from promising any "great things" before the millenium, possibly. It is always convenient to have a future to draw on during present poverty. But here is a man who, contrary to most ministers of the world, declares in the name of the Lord that the time had now come for the manifestations of "great things." Thousands heard this and believed, in itself a sure proof that "great things" really were shown. The sick were healed, the blind received their sight, the deaf heard, the dumb spake and the lame walked.

At the time of Joseph it was generally accepted, even among the enemies, as a fact that the Prophet performed many great miracles. We remember a romance from that time wherein Joseph is represented as raising a dead lady. Of course, the author of this romance explains it as humbug,

the apparent death being caused by a dose of morphine or something else. Other authors ascribe the works of the Prophet to magnetism. Joseph Smith, they say, knew the mysteries of magnetism and understood how to turn them to good account. These efforts on the part of the enemies to explain or account for the miracles of the prophet are a proof as sure as any one can desire that he showed those "great things" which he promised to show in the name of the Lord. Had there been nothing, the enemies would have nothing to account for. "He did it through magnetism" is the modern expression for: "He did it through Beelzebub." Had Joseph been an impostor, how easily that could have been exposed. Here he promises that the sick should be healed by faith. Yet no attempt has been made to prove that the promise was never kept, only that he kept it through magnetism! The enemies well knew that such works followed the testimony of Joseph the Prophet, works for which they could not account in the usual way.

As an instance of how commonly the enemies believed in Joseph's power, the following well-known incident may be referred to. A man once came to the Prophet and asked him to show a miracle. It was not the Prophet's way to make "show" of such works; wherefore he positively refused. But the man grew impertinent and abusive, and talked lightly of the work of God. Finally the prophet said in a voice which penetrated the soul of the miracle-seeking visitor: "You want a miracle. Tell me what you want. Do you want to be struck blind, deaf or dumb? In the name of the Lord God I tell you, you shall have it." Upon this the man left the presence of the prophet in a hurry. Now, why did not this man stay and have a fair trial? Joseph promised him a miracle. Why did he not wait and get it? Simply for the reason that he dared not. In common with all who knew Joseph, he was too well aware of the power of God through the Prophet. The enemies themselves are thus testifying to the fact that miracles attended this Prophet.

Orson Pratt in his work has recorded a number of cases of wonderful healing.

Nor are we referred exclusively to dead witnesses. There are still living men and women in Utah and elsewhere

who were personally acquainted with the Prophet, and they are willing to testify, to the last, of the great works they have seen with their eyes and heard with their ears, performed by the Prophet. Moreover, great works still continue. To deny, therefore, that miraculous manifestations followed the message of Joseph the Prophet is to deny facts.

These miracles, on the closest investigation, will all be found to partake of the nature of genuine Scriptural miracles. Their aim is the glory of God, as they are always ascribed to Him alone, not to the power of man. Nor are they performed in order to glorify any one man, or set of men. They are performed as a confirmation of faith, not to produce faith.

These points are important and instructive. While the miracles of the Catholic Church appear to be either silly nonsense or worked in support of some notoriously false doctrine, in order to gain proselytes, or otherwise exhibit their spurious origin, the miraculous manifestations following the Church of Christ exhibit no such marks. Their origin is divine, and they bear the divine marks in themselves. Like God's works in nature, these miracles must be closely studied in order to be known in all their beauty. The indifferent pass them by without notice. There is nothing of "show" in them. But this is one proof of their divine origin. Man always works in a "showy" way when left to himself; God's ways are "in the deep."

I have pointed out that true miracles are referred to as evidence of a divine mission. We have proof that such miracles attended the message of Joseph the Prophet. The conclusion is therefore given. He was a man sent from God, and his message was divine.

When applied to Christianity no one doubts the correctness of the conclusion, if he believes in miracles at all; but if the premises are granted and the conclusion accepted in the case of Christianity, what a fearful corruption of mind there must be in a man who can deny both premises and conclusion when the rule is applied to test the claims of Joseph the Prophet. Surely, in order to be consistent, we must either accept or reject both. A third we do not see.

The evidence thus far considered is external and direct,

appealing to our senses. Another class of evidence remains which has been called internal. Applied to Christianity this kind of evidence is thus explained: If Christianity is not of divine origin, it must be a cunningly devised fable. Which is the most probable supposition? Internal evidence tries to answer that question.

The same process of reasoning by which this question is answered when applied to Christianity can also be applied to the message brought by Joseph the Prophet. If this message is not from God it must be from man; it must be forged in order to deceive and must be termed the greatest fraud of the century. It is either a divine truth or a diabolical lie. *Tertium non est.* Which is the more likely supposition?

In order to decide this question we must consider the moral precepts given by the messenger, his own character, and the character of those who receive it and profess to follow its precepts. For it is very clear that any message which in itself is "good" and which also produces good results in the hearts and lives of men, is not likely to be from the evil one. What is good is from God. Was Joseph the Prophet a good man? Did he inculcate holy principles unto his fellow-men? Does the gospel he preached tend to make men holy? If so, his message must be from God.

MORAL EVIDENCE.

That the moral character of a man who professes to be a divine messenger is very important as an evidence of the truth of his message is admitted on all hands. The following is the opinion of an eminent writer: "The character of Christ is a wonderful proof of the divinity of the Bible. The Hindoo cannot think of his Brahmin saint other than possessing the abstemiousness and austerity which he admires in his living models. The Socrates of Plato is composed of elements practically Greek, being a compound of the virtues deemed necessary to adorn the sage. A model of the Jewish teacher might easily be drawn from the writings of the Rabbis, and he would prove to be the very reflection of these Scribes and Pharisees who are reproved in the Gospel. But in the life of our Redeemer a character is represented which departs in every way from the national type of the writers, from the

character of all ancient nations, and is at variance with all the features which custom, education, religion and patriotism seem to have consecrated as most beautiful. Four different authors have recorded different facts, but they exhibit the same conception, a conception differing from all they had ever witnessed or heard, and necessarily copied from the same original. Moreover, this glorious character, while borrowing nothing from the Greek, Indian or Jew, having nothing in common with established laws of perfection, is yet to every believer a type of excellence. He is followed by the Greek, though a founder of none of his sects, revered by the Brahmin, though preached by one of the fisherman caste, and worshiped by the red man of Canada, though belonging to the hated paleface."

This very striking picture of our Savior is true in all its details. In the Gospels we see him described as holy (John vii, xlvii, li, 8, 46, 10, 32; Matt. xxvi, lix, 27, 23, 24; Luke xxiii, 13-15); full of benevolence and compassion (John iv, Luke ix, 55, x, 30-37); kindness and affection (Matt. xiv, 27-31; Luke xix, 5; xli, 22-61; John xi, xix, 25-27); having meekness and humility (Matt. ix, 28, xviii, 22); moral courage, firmness and resignation (Matt. xxvi, 39-46; Mark x, 32; Luke iv, 23; John xi, 7; xviii, 4); abhorring hypocrisy and popularity (Matt. vi, 1-18; x, 16-39; xxii, 18; Mark xii, 38-40; Luke xi, 44; John xvi, 1-16); being moderate and free from enthusiastic austerity (Matt. viii, 19; xxiii, 23; Luke v, 29-35; John ii, 1; Mark xii, 17.)

Looking at all these characteristics of our Savior, so eminently "good," and hearing Him solemnly declare that He has a message from God to man, we feel bound to admit that He is no deceiver. His words are true. He is the Son of God. Thus His character becomes an evidence.

Now, concerning the subject under consideration, must we not also admit that Joseph the Prophet was a man sent from God, when we find that his character is in perfect harmony with those qualities that are peculiar to a servant of God?

Those who want to investigate this are referred to works extant, which treat on the "Life of Joseph Smith," and I think any unprejudiced reader will feel impressed with the fact that Joseph was a good man—a "man of God."

How he urges holiness as the condition of happiness! In his benevolence he seemed boundless, embracing every race of humanity, white, red and black! His kindness and affection are touching. Of meekness and humility he exhibits the most striking examples which shall ever be worthy of imitation. The moral courage and firmness which prompted him to face a hostile world and to die "calm as a summer morning," must be admired. His straightforwardness, for which hypocrisy ever stood rebuked, is well-known to his friends and acquaintances. His whole career and the doctrines he taught are indisputable proofs that, although he was inspired by a noble enthusiasm, yet he was far from being what is called an enthusiast.

Here then, we find all the marks of a true disciple of Christ, proving, if anything at all, that Joseph the Prophet, was a man of God. His message must be therefore from God, too. We know that his antagonists have done all in their power to prove the bad character of the prophet. But we also know what credit must be attached to slanderers inspired by bigotry and hatred.

Were we to draw our information from such sources concerning Christ himself, we would have to reject even Him, the spotless Lamb of God. For the enemies did not fail to stain the character of Christ. "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils" (Luke xi, 15.) "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan (an infidel?) and hast a devil?" (John viii, 48.) A special charge against Jesus was that He was a drunkard (Matt. xi, 19), and generally he was accused of being on intimate terms with "sinners" (Luke xv, 2), by which term the Jews understood outcasts, reprobates, the company of which was contaminating in its influences. Finally, as is well known, our Savior was tried and condemned to death by the ecclesiastical authorities for blasphemy and by the civil court for treason. Must all this be believed? Certainly not. We know that those charges were dictated by hatred. Neither must we believe what hatred has dictated against Joseph the Prophet.

After all, the most diligent slanderers have not been able to bring anything against the Prophet worse than was brought as a charge against the first Christians. When a great calam-

ity befel the Roman empire, or a part thereof, the Christians were the originators. Pests and famines, it was thought, came on account of the Christians, or even that the Christians made them through secret exorcisms in their private meetings. During the reign of Nero, Rome was consumed by a conflagration that lasted for seven days. Five-sevenths of the city were laid in ashes, including temples, palaces and other monumental buildings. Although the embittered people had reason to believe that the emperor himself had caused the fire, yet as soon as the report was started that the Christians had done it, this was willingly believed and a persecution broke out in which most of the apostles of our Lord were cruelly put to death. That the Christians practiced bloody sins in their meetings, that they killed and ate the children and that they plotted against the state were common charges. But we know that these and similar accusations had no foundation in reality.

A very strong proof (as anyone acquainted with human nature will admit) that Joseph the Prophet was a man whose life corresponded with his teachings is the fact that those who knew him best from private intercourse with him were his most earnest admirers. His wife, his brothers, his parents, are all found among the first who joined the Church. How could this be if Joseph the Prophet had not in his daily life been a living witness to the fact that he really communicated with God? This is well worth consideration. A man who professes to have a divine message must live accordingly or else stand rebuked as a liar before those who know him.

Not less remarkable is the fact that even apostates testify to the truth of the claims of Joseph. Thus David Whitmer, although his position towards the Church in later years was not exactly a friendly one, yet on being asked if he believed that Joseph was a true prophet, he invariably answered: "Do I still believe that Joseph Smith was a divinely inspired prophet? I know he was; it is not a matter of belief," and this testimony the old man has given to the world on his very death-bed.

Considering all this, we must conclude that the life of the prophet and the doctrines which he taught were in such harmony with each other as to impress his surroundings and

friends with the fact that he was a man of God. If so, his message must be divine, for no evil power could operate through a righteous person.

This kind of evidence, however, is more to be felt, as it were, than described. Its force on the mind will depend on the moral character of the investigator. Pure minds, practical in holiness, will feel its force stronger than other less pure minds. All will depend on those "relationships of spirits" of which even poets have dreamed. The Nathanael, the "Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile," could feel in the mere presence of Christ, through the Spirit, that emanated from Him, that here was more than man, and he had to exclaim, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." So will men whose hearts are pure, in following Joseph the Prophet through his short but exceedingly eventful career, certainly feel in their hearts that here is a messenger of God and perhaps sing with the poet:

"We thank thee, O God, for a Prophet.
To guide us in these latter days."

PECULIARITIES OF THE MESSAGE.

When Christianity was introduced into the world it was brought in contact with many different religious and philosophical systems. The Romans were proud of their military glory, the Greeks of their superior wisdom. Among the Jews a pharisaic spirit prevailed, and the whole nation was divided in factions. They mutually hated each other and all agreed in hating their Roman oppressors and the gentile world at large. A mere human teacher, it has been justly said, would under such circumstances have become either a partisan or have flattered each sect by exposing the faults of the rest, or he would have endeavored to gain the favor of the nation by condemning their conquerors. Instances of this kind of *Bessermachen* are not unheard of in our time among the "Christian" world, when all stress is often laid on one principle at the sacrifice of the rest. But Christ did not follow this course. He stood up as an independent Teacher, rebuking all error, condemning all the sects, and yet taught principles contrary to the inclinations of the human heart. Hence, Christianity has several peculiarities of its own. In opposi-

tion to an empty ritualism it teaches personal holiness as the condition of eternal happiness. All men are alike brought before the bar of God. Even those who have been apostles and worked miracles will fall condemned if they be workers of iniquity. It bids men return good for evil, not to "get even" with everybody; it instructs men to love their enemies, to be humble and forgiving, qualities which philosophers considered weaknesses instead of virtues; it places every race and every station as on a level before God, except for the free mercy of God, whose choice has fallen upon one individual or one section in preference to another. Such doctrines were acceptable to none, and yet they are again and again repeated and enforced.

In the teachings of Christianity, moreover, sin is always spoken of as transgression against God, a contrast to the idea prevalent among the Greek philosophers, who taught, according to Cicero, that "the Deity is never displeased, nor does He inflict injury on man" (*De Off.* iii, 28). God is traced everywhere—in nature, in history, in revelation; and as for men's acts, they are traced to their very source in the human heart, and there, if evil, condemned. Christianity does not content itself with condemning sin, when already committed, like every human law; but it condemns the thought, the feeling, if not pure, thus striking at the very root of sin.

Well may we, when we rightly understand these facts, with the theologians exclaim: "It must be felt that the morality of the Gospel is not of man. Bad men could not have taught such truths, and good men would not have deceived the people."

But when we apply this great truth to the subject under consideration we reach the same conclusion. The message delivered by Joseph the Prophet, like Christianity in its primitive purity, has peculiarities of its own, all of which prove it to be from God.

First of all, let us consider the importance which this message attaches to faith. While theologians of the world either give the pre-eminence to works, like the Catholics, or like Protestants, give to faith a secondary place in their system, here comes a young man and declares, "Faith is the first principle of revealed religion, and the foundation of all

righteousness." He gives to faith its right place as the very beginning of the new life, the foundation of the structure. Where had he learnt this? There is not a theological school within the sphere of our knowledge which has discovered this great truth. Men had for centuries been exhorted to repent first and then try to believe, as if it were possible to produce repentance without faith. Or, men were instructed to do good, as if works could be meritorious without faith. Not only is faith placed in its right place, but the definition of it is given strictly in harmony with ancient revelations. Faith is declared to be the only principle from which obedience and success can flow. In relation to God faith is, indeed, a confession of our weakness and utter inability for everything that is good; and yet, as to success in all things pertaining to our exaltation and glorification, it is omnipotent. (See Doc. and Cov. Lectures on Faith). Now, from where had the youthful Prophet this discovery taught in the Bible, but not understood by the world? Who had pointed out this great philosophical truth to him? Who but God.

Nor is this all. In the message delivered through Joseph the Prophet, faith has been established on the only sure foundation ever given: The Word of God—REVELATION. This was done at a time when almost everybody thought revelation a thing of the past. No theologian in the whole wide world had discovered the great secret that faith must be based on a communication from God, given not only to people who belong to antiquity, but to the individual who is required to believe. Let everybody honestly investigate the real cause of the weakness of faith as it exists among men. How is it that, notwithstanding all preaching, faith is almost extinct on earth? It is this, that people are required to believe *only* that which God said anciently. This is the real cause. We are so constructed that we cannot by any force of will take the same lively interest in what happened thousands of years ago as what happened to-day; nor can we realize in the same way what happens to others as that which immediately concerns ourselves. Hence, naturally, all the preaching about what God revealed formerly has only a weak impression comparatively, and it does not take the effect that it should. The faith it produces is something as powerless as

faith possibly can be. In order to produce this, preachers are under the necessity of resorting to all sorts of sentimental anecdotes, death scenes, war scenes, dreams, etc., or even to drums and tambourines. Revivalists know the effects of these artificial methods and prefer them to the simple tale of Him who died on Golgotha—a proof of the poverty, spiritually, of the prevalent systems. Now, how is this changed by the simple announcement: “God has spoken!” This at once stirs the whole world and the whole hell and something definitive comes out of that. It produces either faith or condemnation. Where faith is the result it is a strong faith. What gave the former-day Saints the power to endure all for their religion? What gave the Prophet and his fellow martyrs power to endure all hardship and death at the hands of enemies? This assurance: God has spoken. God has revealed His will. Such faith this assurance will always produce. How had Joseph the Prophet come to discover this fundamental truth? No Catholic, no Lutheran, no Episcopalian, no Presbyterian, no Methodist, no Baptist was in the position of teaching Joseph this truth; none but God.

Let us further consider the great truth revealed in these last days concerning God. While all the world, as far as the influence of Christianity is felt, knows how to repeat the words of the prayer which our Lord taught His disciples: “Our Father, which art in heaven,” yet who has understood this one word “Father” in its full meaning? We call upon every honest, believing soul in the whole world to inquire into his own mind and see whether this beautiful prayer before the days of Joseph the Prophet had any more significance than being a beautiful figure of speech? Or was there one single theologian who had understood that God really is what He teaches us to call Him, Father? If there be, we are not aware of it. But here comes a young man, educated in no school, formed according to no existant religious system, and opens up to us an infinite view of eternities past and eternities to come by declaring that God is in reality our Father, that we are His children, and that we are here for certain purposes, which accomplished will bring us back to an eternal home, in a circle of real brothers and sisters. Say,

O ye inhabitants of the world, can this glorious truth emanate from anybody but God?

Another peculiarity which marks this message is the importance it attaches to obedience to God. "By the prayer of your faith ye shall receive My law," (Doc. and Cov., sec xli, 3); "None shall be exempt from the justice and the laws of God" (Ibid, cvii, 84); "Verily, I say unto you, that in time ye shall have no king or ruler, for I will be your King and watch over you; wherefore hear My voice and follow Me, and ye shall be a free people, and ye shall have no laws but My laws when I come, for I am your law giver." (Ibid, xxxviii 21 22). Had Joseph the Prophet received his instructions from men he would have appointed a pope, a bishop, a presbytery, a synod, or something similar as the highest authority of the Church, but he did not. For God alone obedience is demanded; a proof that he was a messenger of God

This will be better appreciated when it is considered that, although obedience is required, yet the liberty of man is fully preserved. Obedience is required, but not from fear, not from servitude, but from free choice. In looking over the history of the world we find that it has always been the great trouble of mankind to find the proper middle way in this respect. Nations have had their liberty, but it has not been possible to regulate this so as to give no room for abuses. Liberty has been perverted into lawlessness; the people have been the victims of unprincipled agitators who, under the cover of patriotism, seduced and robbed the masses, until the people, tired of this "liberty," after many sufferings, rose and laid the power down into the hands of a few, or even of one, preferring the chance of having one or a few public robbers to many thousands. But as anciently Scylla avoided, Charybdis was near, so here. What was once done as a safeguard against spoliation and lawlessness became in course of time a curse. It developed into despotism. The people suffered for centuries perhaps, but finally the oppression becoming too great, the burdens too heavy, the people rose and crushed the tyrants under its weight. Freedom was again established, and the progress in the circle again commenced. For these two extremes, equally dangerous, despotism and licentiousness, have always been the trouble with mankind. Now, here

comes a young man, Joseph the Prophet, who had studied no politics, no history, and teaches us a system by which both these extremes, both these dangers are to be avoided, how to obey without becoming serfs, and at the same time to enjoy personal liberty, without placing us in danger of licentiousness. If God had not taught the prophet this "Doctrine of common consent," who had? Who was his teacher?

Another peculiarity, not less marked, is found in what might be called the rites observed in this last dispensation. Almost the entire world had lost the right form of baptism, for instance, and all had forgotten the true signification and use of that rite. A man who had only human wisdom for guidance would under such circumstances probably have either disregarded the act altogether as a mere outward form or would have attached very little importance to it. Both these tendencies are found abundantly among Christian professors. But here comes a young man and teaches us not only the right form of baptism (although this was the most unpopular one), but also its true signification and its use both for living and dead.

Looking at baptism, the doctrine of gathering, the temple services, all the rites revealed through Joseph the Prophet, as an acceptable worship, we must ask: "Is it possible that all this is from men? Is it likely that a deceiver would have taught doctrines so unpopular, so little calculated to gain public favor?" We think not. When a man wants to deceive he must follow popular roads, flatter the vanity of the masses, yield to their prejudices and establish himself on the very ground of their ignorance. Advanced truth, truth trampled under the feet of men, always comes from God.

People who know the religious observances here spoken of only from representations given by a hostile press, where everything is ridiculed, cannot, of course, appreciate the force of the proof they convey. But every one who is familiar with these to the Latter-day Saint's peculiar rites, and who understands that their sole object is to teach the people "Holiness to the Lord"—any one who shall consider that similar means were adopted under the grand Mosaic dispensation in order to impress the people then living with this same lesson, "Holiness to the Lord," and any one who perceives how wonderfully

well these rites, in every detail, are calculated to impress this very idea, that without holiness no one can see the Lord, he will feel in the contemplation of all this that here surely is the wisdom of God revealed to man. No analysis, however, can do full justice to this subject. It must be felt and realized in the experience of man in order to be appreciated.

In conclusion, like Scripture itself the message of Joseph the Prophet begins its work with a recognition of our fall, our total ruin; it then brings the soul into harmony with God and with itself; it enlightens and educates the conscience, quickens and purifies the feeling, subjects instinct to reason, reason to love, and all to God. It provides us with ample means for reaching happiness never dreamt of, worlds without end. Hence, the conclusion necessarily follows that the man who taught us this must himself have been a scholar of God.

EFFECTS OF THE DOCTRINES.

When investigating the claims of a religious system it becomes necessary also to consider the effects which such a system produces in the lives and characters of those who embrace it, as well as its general influence. If a tree is known by its fruits, so are also doctrines. Those that produce good fruits cannot be evil.

It is, therefore, customary to refer to the effect of the gospel in the first part of our era as an evidence of the truth of its claims. These effects are well-known and worthy of consideration. Paul points out that some of the Corinthians had been "fornicators, adulterers, thieves, drunkards," previous to their embracing the gospel; but now they were "washed, sanctified, and justified" (I Cor. vi, 11). Peter speaks of some of the converts as having once been "walking in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (I Peter iv, 3). But these sinners who lived in a dissolute age and under the worst of governments, became converted, became eminent in virtue above their fellowmen.

This eminence is acknowledged by all unprejudiced writers of the age. Clement of Rome (A. D. 100) says: "Who did ever live among you that did not admire your sober and moderate piety and declare the greatness of your hospitality?"

You are humble and not proud, content with the daily bread which God supplies, hearing diligently His word, and are enlarged in charity." Justin Martyr (A. D. 165), formerly a Platonic philosopher, says: "We who formerly delighted in adultery, now observe the strictest chastity; we who used the charms of magic have devoted ourselves to the true God, and we who valued money and gain above all things now cast what we have in common, and distribute to every man according to his necessities." It has been supposed that the United Order of which we read, and which was founded in Jerusalem at the commencement of the Church, very soon collapsed. But, judging from this expression of Justin, it appears that that order still existed more than one hundred years after Christ. Minucius Felix, to a heathen opponent, says: "You punish wickedness when it is committed. We think it sinful to indulge in a sinful thought. It is with your party that the prisons are crowded, but not a single Christian is there, except it be as a confessor or apostate."

The influence of the gospel was gradually felt among the heathen nations who heard it. In Greece, men like Lycurgus and Solon had encouraged impurities. At Rome they were openly practiced and approved; and nearly all ancient nations are said to have commended self-murder. Human sacrifices and the exposure of children were allowed. But wherever the gospel was preached and believed all such practices were condemned and finally destroyed. That this was not the work of civilization, but of the gospel, may be gathered from the fact that it was nations far above the humble Christians in refinement and education, who committed the greatest outrages. Suppression of sin never keeps pace with the progress of civilization, but with the triumph of the gospel.

Another effect of the gospel was the many charitable institutions that always followed in its track. The relief of distress and the care of the poor are peculiar to Christianity. The gospel, if rightly understood, would have already abolished the horrors of war, prevented slavery, put down feudal oppression, made all men brethren. For such are its doctrines, that when once understood and practiced, they will naturally exterminate all miseries of the human family.

These effects are truly wonderful, and may justly be appealed to as evidences of the truth of the gospel.

But are such effects less strong evidence of the divine origin of the message of Joseph the Prophet, when it can be proved that they invariably follow the acceptance of this message? We think not. Here are facts open to the inspection of everybody. We need not refer to a bygone antiquity to ascertain the effects of this message upon the people who have accepted it. The Latter-day Saints live to-day and their works may be scanned by all. Every honest investigator will find that the fruits produced to-day, as seen among the Latter-day Saints, are precisely the same as those which were seen among the early Christians, and to which we have above briefly referred.

We do not say that everyone who professes to be a Latter-day Saint is an evidence of the divinity of the gospel. Nor was every individual who professed Christianity an evidence of its truth. On the contrary, many, even in the apostolic age, showed by their deeds that they were nothing but professors; and it is clearly not the profession that is the main feature. A man may profess to be what he is not.

Nor do we contend that the Latter-day Saints, considered as a religious community, are the best people on the earth. This is not for us to decide; nor is that our present question. The Saints may be the best people, taken as a whole, or they may not; yet in their present stage of development they have reached a high standard of excellence that is most desirable. This, however, does not affect our present argument.

What we do contend, and what we urgently invite everybody to ascertain for themselves, is this: that the message delivered through Joseph the Prophet, when accepted and honestly carried out in practice, has a tendency to change men for the better and produce fruits of faith, hope and charity, thus proving its divine origin by its fruits; for no deceptive fraud could produce these fruits. This is what we contend. Facts speak for themselves.

We live in an age when social questions threaten to blast society to its very foundations. Where in the whole world have these questions found their only possible solution to the satisfaction of all parties concerned? Not among the various

religious bodies of the world; not among the capitalists, nor among the anarchists, communists, socialists, or nihilists, but among the Saints. Over the thresholds of their peaceful homes these troublesome questions—ghosts at the appearance of which the world trembles—cannot enter. In the valleys of the mountains they are unknown, and must remain so as long as the Gospel is being carried out in practice.

Again, who has solved the question of the true relation between the sexes, at once assigning to marriage its divinity of origin and eternal importance, thereby checking the waves of sin which inundate the world, and securing happiness to all? We answer: The Latter-day Saints. One of the first fruits seen as the result of their doctrines is absolute purity.

Further, who fills the prisons as criminals? Not the Latter-day Saints, but outsiders, those who habitually speak of the degradation of the "Mormons;" those Christian associates give the stuff that contributes to the filling up of the prisons—a fact which of itself ought to be enough to convince the whole world of the divine origin of the message delivered through Joseph the Prophet. It is clear that doctrines which are strong enough to keep humanity from committing crimes—to which every human heart is more or less inclined—must be from God.

It may be asked, who fills the saloons and gambling hells? Who swears and lies and slanders? Who is proud and vain, lazy and filthy? No one who has accepted the Gospel in reality—no Latter-day Saint. The Saints are, as such, temperate, industrious, humble, clean, loving, forbearing, long-suffering, rejoicing, fearing God; in short, bearing the fruits of righteousness. Such virtues the Gospel enjoins and such fruits always accompany its real acceptance.

Could we speak of all the cases where men who were in every respect worldly, walking in sin, accepted the Gospel and became changed in every respect, this evidence would, indeed, amount to demonstration. Thousands are our witnesses to these facts—men who were fallen, on their way down to ruin and hell—families who have been happy by the restoration of their fallen ones to virtue, to society and to God.

Finally, has the world exhibited any nobler examples of

self-sacrificing faith, of firmness and endurance under suffering and persecution than have many of those despised followers of the martyred Prophet?

True, persecution has been raging against the Saints; but, like the palm tree, which is said to grow all the higher the more weight there is placed thereon, they have stood firm; in persecution they have been patiently enduring, knowing that, after all, God is the Supreme Ruler, and with this knowledge they have faced all adversity calmly and risen through their faith and hope far above the plots of those who know not God.

Such, then, are the effects of the message under consideration. Well may we ask: Is it possible that such noble fruits of faith, hope and charity could be produced from anything that men could invent? An honest inquirer must answer in the negative, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v, 22, 23), and it is evident, therefore, that where these are found the Spirit of God is manifested.

Here, then, we again arrive at the same conclusion: Joseph the Prophet was sent from God. If he was not, his whole career would be an enigma, and his work the most profound of mysteries. Then we would have the problem of a man working a system of peculiar doctrines for the salvation of mankind, a religion producing the fruits of the Spirit in accordance with the Gospel of Christ; and all this through whom? Through mere human wisdom? Or, shall we say through the devil? Can any rational man for a moment think that the devil, even if he felt so inclined, could frame a moral system the effects of which upon men would be purity and holiness? The idea is so absurd that it is hardly worthy even of suggestion, and yet the Rev. Mr. Lamb has suggested that the faith of the "Mormons" is possibly due to "demoniacal" influence—a theological possibility which the reverend gentleman may have from studying the theology of the Pharisees, who were perplexed at the manifestations of the power of God in Christ.

No honest man, however good an opinion he may have of the devil, can honestly believe the adversary of God capable of making men holy and virtuous. Nor is it possible for mere

human wisdom to do it without the aid of God. Our only alternative is to acknowledge the hand of God, and humbly bow in obedience to the message delivered through Joseph the Prophet.

SPIRITUAL EVIDENCE.

Stronger than any of the evidences thus far considered is another kind of evidence which may be called spiritual, being the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the soul. This testimony has been promised to every one who is willing to "do the will of God."

When the Holy Spirit enlightens and operates upon the heart and mind of man, he is made to perceive intuitively, as it were, the perfect truth of the message of which we speak. Having received this testimony, a man is no longer dependent upon demonstrations for his belief. His eyes are opened; he can see for himself.

What a miserable existence we should have on this earth if everything had first to be "proved" to us before we would accept it as truth. We see that the sun shines; we hear the harmony of music; we feel or we are conscious of our existence. Such facts we do not require anybody to prove to us. So is it when our spiritual nature has been quickened and called into activity by the operations of the Holy Spirit. We "see the kingdom of heaven;" we feel and are conscious of its blessings through our spiritual senses. This is the testimony of the Spirit in our soul, and the strongest evidence that can be produced.

When we are told through the Gospel that "Ye have strayed from Mine (God's) ordinances," and "broken His everlasting covenant," and that "every man walketh in his own way," we feel this to be true. When the word of revelation declares that men stand incriminated before the bar of God, not only for the *acts* of transgression, but also for a deep and inveterate *habit* of ungodliness in the innermost recesses of the soul, we feel this to be so. If man, when honestly searching himself, found that, after all, he is good enough, and his desire is to serve God, to keep His commandments; that his highest anxiety is to promote not his own interests but the kingdom of God, then he might feel that the message which depicts man as a sinner, outwardly and inwardly, is

not from God. But through the aid of the Spirit he feels the truth of the Gospel when it condemns sin, and is (with the Prophet) led to acknowledge the "*corruption* of human nature," as such. (Pearl of Great Price, p. 92.)

This is not all. Through the same Spirit he is led to feel that the provisions made through the Gospel are more than sufficient to restore himself and the human family at large, and even inanimate creation, to all its original beauty and glory. Is man guilty? Here is the pardon provided. Is he corrupt? Here is provision made for his edification. Is he surrounded by temptation? Here is divine strength imparted unto him. Is he surrounded by problems, many of which he cannot solve? Is he dying and fears a coming eternity? Has he lost his dearest upon earth, and feels as if life itself were lost? Oh, here are remedies for all wants. Here is a Gospel that opens the eternities to the eye once dim by tears, perhaps, and for the views the soul here perceives, all earthly troubles vanish like a light cloud, and the following words of Paul become clear: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed to us." (Rom. viii, 18). Thus it is observed that the message given is precisely what we in our fallen condition wanted, and, let us say, what we might expect from a merciful Father.

To this comes also that the experience of the believer in the message harmonizes exactly with the promises or threatenings accompanying it. Joseph the Prophet frequently told what would be the experience of those who would be faithful and of those who would not be faithful to their covenants made with God. Each promise of blessing to the faithful, each warning to the unfaithful, is a prediction, the fulfilment of which adds to the strength of the testimony. This experience grows with our growth, and multiplies with every step of our progress in the knowledge and love of truth.

It must be added, however, that this spiritual and experimental evidence is of value only to the believer, who already enjoys the testimony. But to him it is sufficient were it even alone. He cannot sometimes understand that it is possible for anyone to doubt what he himself already "feels," "sees," and "perceives" to be true. He has the witness within him-

self and needs no other; for he knows that Joseph the Prophet was a man sent from God, just with the same degree of certainty and in the same way that he knows Jesus is the Christ.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The several evidences now considered are indeed important enough to establish the claims of Joseph Smith, and all taken together are overwhelming. We have seen the Prophet stand forth, a man whose desire was to be just, true, and righteous, and we have heard him proclaim his message: "Thus saith the Lord." We have seen that the ancient prophecies predict that such a messenger should come just about the time of Joseph; we have proved that Joseph showed his authority from God by miracles and prophecies; that his message bears peculiar internal marks of divine origin, produces fruits of righteousness in the believers, and is accompanied by that testimony of the Spirit which God alone can give. To deny the divinity of the message, or the divine authority of the messenger, in view of this overwhelming evidence, seems to be nothing short of total blindness, or something much worse.

We do not claim that by each one of these evidences, nor by all together, all objections are answered, all difficulties are removed. To prove religious truth above a possibility of objection is beyond the possibilities of this earth. In religious matters, as in others, our views must necessarily be limited and dimmed by mists.

Nor is it necessary, or even desirable, that all difficulties should be removed. Were there no difficulties any longer, were everything clear even to a mere worldly mind, religion would no longer be religion, for there could be no room for the exercise of faith. Faith is, indeed, after all the very moving power of practical religion. It is therefore clear that difficulties must exist so that faith may be exercised.

It is so with Christianity at large and the Bible itself. Difficulties exist great enough to strengthen, by exercise, the faith of the believer, and to become stumbling blocks to those who do not want to believe. We are finite. Could we expect that God, when talking about matters of infinite interest, should always have that to say which we can understand in

every particular, thus leaving no difficulties? Certainly not. Concerning the Bible, an eminent theologian of our own time has said: "We can dispense with nothing, not even the difficulties. Every element (the apparent discrepancies among the rest) is essential to the force of the whole.

But this important truth applies just as much to the message delivered through Joseph the Prophet. We can dispense with nothing in it, not even the apparent difficulties which follow it. Suppose that Joseph had given a code of laws or system of theology in which everything was plainly demonstrated like a handbook in geometry, having every idea defined, every step proved. Who would have believed such a work to have emanated from the Spirit of God? Would it not have carried with it a suspicion on its very surface? For God never before worked in that way. In nature everything is apparently huddled together without system. To man it has been given to arrange God's works in nature into classes, genera, and species, thereby encountering many difficulties but also learning what otherwise could not be learned. The same arrangement we find in the Bible. Principles, maxims, doctrines are given without regard to system, sometimes in plain words, sometimes in narrative or parables. To man it has been given to search diligently and arrange the facts presented into a system. Now, when we find that the message of Joseph the Prophet partakes of the same characteristics as God's works in nature and in revelations recorded in the Bible, this fact is certainly more in favor of the message than otherwise. The very difficulties are evidence of its divine origin.

There is also this peculiarity: that the more we learn of the ways of God, the wider our horizon becomes. That is, we see and understand more; at the same time, we perceive that there is more to comprehend beyond. Ever more; or as Pascal puts it: "The last step of reason is to know that there is an infinitude of things which surpasses it." When a man has learned to acknowledge this, there are no longer any real difficulties to him in connection with the message sent from God. They are all more or less solved. Some are cleared by diligent research and study; others are perceived by faith to melt into unity and harmony when they can be

traced back to their first source and studied in the light which flows from the throne of God.

Our investigation is finished. We have seen that the same evidences which are thought sufficient to establish the truth of the claims of the Gospel as preached in early ages, apply with equal force to the message delivered through Joseph the Prophet. Thousands upon thousands are willing to bear their testimony that they know this to be so. What can we do better than accept it? If true—and how can it be otherwise—what an awful thing to reject it! No less interests than life and salvation are at stake. When God speaks, our greatest wisdom is clearly to hear and obey.

“Let the mountains shout for joy and all ye valleys cry aloud, and all seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your eternal king. And ye rivers and brooks and rills flow down with gladness. Let the woods, and all the trees of the field praise the Lord, and ye solid rocks weep for joy. And let the sun, moon and morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy. And let the eternal creation declare his names for ever and ever.” (Doc. and Cov., Sec. cxxviii, 23).



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