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Was He a False Prophet?

BY ELDER J. W. PETERSON

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“Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”—1 Thess. 5:20, 21.

Because of the efforts made by the enemies of Joseph Smith to defame his character, it has been next to impossible to get the majority of people to give him more than a passing thought. If his enemies have represented him correctly, then I could not blame persons for being disinterested, and even considering him beneath their notice. But did you ever stop to think, that what his enemies have said of him, is very apt to be highly colored to suit themselves? To say the least it would be onesided. But is it not possible that there is another side to this question? You may be assured there is, and a difference between reputation and character. Perhaps you never knew a person that was not misunderstood in some things at least; especially if he were a public teacher. There would not be a single act of his life but what would be mis-stated, should his enemies choose to do so.

If you cannot say that you know the truth concerning Joseph Smith, will you be kind enough to listen to the facts we have to present? I am sure you would not condemn the worst criminal in the country until you had heard him or his witnesses testify. The law of the land positively forbids your doing so. I would consider myself un-American, as well as unjust, if I were to condemn Joseph Smith until I had fairly examined both the statements of his friends and his enemies. Others may look at it as they may, but the wise man said, “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”—Prov. 18:13. What applies to other matters doubtless applies to men as well. No one knows more about a man than his friends; nor would be more apt to tell the truth about him either. We judge of Jesus by what his friends have written of him. If only one side could be obtained the one told by one’s friends is the safest, but if the man himself can be heard, hear him. A wise statesman at one time silenced the Jewish Sanhedrin by asking, “Doth our law judge any man before it heareth him and know what he doeth?” (St. John 7:51). My experience has taught me that a very large majority of people do that very thing with Joseph Smith, contrary to the law of God and the law of the land.

We feel that we have a legal right to demand that the other side be as fairly heard as the one told by his enemies. If we do not get that hearing here, we will appeal the matter to the judgment bar of Him who knoweth all things, as a testimony against the prejudiced ones of earth, if no more. Do not think this matter can be put aside without a just consideration, for truth is aggressive and will force its way, even to the supreme bench of the Highest. Inasmuch then as the truth concerning Joseph Smith will be known at some time, why not seek to know it now before it is too late to be benefited by the truth he proclaimed, and also be charged by the great Judge with being wilfully blind? If he was indeed what his friends say of him, it will pay to examine into the matter. If he was not, then his friends should be shown their error. But I trust all are willing to hear me patiently while I give you the facts in the case as I see them. We are of course willing that all should read what our enemies have to say, but we are equally as anxious that you should hear us also. Indeed if the books written by our enemies were read and studied more an opposing effort would scarcely be necessary. But somehow a great many fail to notice the contradictions, inconsistencies and impossibilities in—what we will call for want of a better term—the devil's side of this question. They fail to notice that Mrs. Ward says, "Joseph Smith was shot on horseback." Wife No. 19 (Ann Eliza) says he was shot in jail, and the engraving in her book represents him sitting on a bed in the jail when his final end came, as she says, "July 7, 1844;" that Beadle and others say he was shot June 27, 1844, while jumping from a jail window, and Wm. F. Cody saw him on the plains in the fifties. One says he was shot with one bullet, another says with four, and still others with more. One says he was killed in Nauvoo, another in Carthage and others in the country. If then there is so much recklessness in trying to tell something about him, and so much disagreement on so public an event, what must be the confusion upon things of lesser note? I can only answer, Read and see?

I am sorry to say too that our school histories are no better in many regards, for the reason that they have copied from their unauthentic sources, and many times copying their exact words. The history I find in common use in the public schools in this (Clayton) county, says, "Joseph Smith was killed in 1845," when the facts in the case are he was killed by a mob June 27, 1844. Our encyclopedias also are quite as contradictory, and in some cases breathe a spirit of hatred and revenge from start to finish. One says, "It cannot

possibly be proven that Joseph Smith was a polygamist." Others attempt to show that he was, but they differ as to number of wives. Most of them do not even attempt to give proof, but simply assert and assert. But the time is going by when thinking people are willing to accept assertion for proof. Bancroft the great American historian, in order to get the facts concerning Joseph Smith and the church God through him organized, first read 884 books and pamphlets. Of these he says in his preface, "Most of these books are wholly unreliable as to facts, but were written with a view of deriving profit by pandering to a vitiated public taste." If then the greatest American historian passes judgment on these books and says "most of them are wholly unreliable as to facts," we are not alone in our opinion of them. If I had never read what the friends of Joseph Smith had said of him, I could not accept the statements of his enemies, for they are too contradictory—a medley of trash in many instances. They furnish me simply assertion, not proof.

In many places where we first introduce our faith we have this expression, "Old Joe Smith, the false prophet." I do not know that I can answer for the rest of my brethren of the ministry, but I confess so far as I am concerned that it would take more than a thousand years to convince me that he was a false prophet by using such paralyzing arguments(?) as that. I suppose if that is a proper mode of conversion the Methodists would forsake their faith by the score if I were to howl "Old Jack Wesley the ranter!" at them; or the Baptists all be convinced of error if I should cry "Old Jack Rogers the dipper!" at their ministry; or the Disciples accept more of the truth if I were to say "Old Alex Campbell the ignoramus!" every time I saw one of their ministers. Logic is logical. Then if they would consider such expressions unchristian, coming from me, and it would indicate the spirit I was of, can it be any the less true of our persecutors? Just why he should be called "Old Joe," when he was the youngest of all religious organizers and but 38 years old when he was so cowardly murdered, I shall possibly never be able to tell. Nor shall I ever be able to guess why they call him a false prophet, until they produce a prophecy of his that has failed of fulfillment. Many times I have asked for the false prophecy, but so far it has not been produced. Then why call him a false prophet? Till his enemies produce it, it is improper to call him that. He certainly is clear so far from that charge. The word "false" should be attached to those who make the charge without the proof.

Jesus said, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and

persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." This text proves, if it proves anything, that all true prophets would be persecuted and falsely represented. Why should it not be so under existing circumstances? Till the devil is bound you may be sure he will be found at his old trade. It is to his interest to oppose the truth and to do so in every conceivable way. He has had almost six thousand years of practice among men and if "practice makes perfect," he must be about perfected in his line. He evidently understands his work thoroughly. The only wonder is, man has not learned to detect the devil in his snares yet. They do not seem to realize that where the brightest truth is there the devil will send the most of his darkest imps. When I see a number of bees swarming around a flower I am apt to think they want to rob it of its honey. When I see a number of imps swarming around a person I am apt to think there is a saint being robbed of his influence. When I hear so many contradictory stories about any one I am apt to think the devil is afraid of that man's influence, hence he wants to destroy it if possible.

So it was with Joseph Smith. The devil did his very worst, because he was afraid of the truth he bore, and many honest men and women are yet being kept in the dark by him in this same matter. But "truth crushed to earth will rise again." Never was a proverb more correctly applied than in Joseph Smith's case. Though "a lie may girdle the earth while truth is getting on his boots," yet we are beginning to see all around us that "error is dying amid her worshippers." The truth concerning Joseph Smith is beginning to be known. The clergy led the way in the persecution and the laity followed. Now the laity are seeing the truth and the clergy must follow, for time corrects all errors. Though they are slow to tell where they learned the new truths, yet it is a fact that every religious advancement during the last fifty years has come nearer the principles advocated by Joseph Smith, until today I could point out many new doctrines in the various secular churches that are purely Latter-day Saint in their character. We are glad to see the world being benefited by Mr. Smith's teachings, though they may receive it unconscious of its origin. Today many of the advanced thinkers of this country and Europe are more nearly in harmony with Joseph Smith than they were fifty years ago. The greatest cause for the merciless persecution which Joseph Smith received was, he thought far ahead of his time.

I at one time attended a lecture in Wisconsin, delivered by a lady who was on her way home from Japan where she had been laboring as a missionary, in which she said, "One of the greatest hindrances we meet in Japan is, the common people do not understand us. And the Buddhist priests misrepresent us and our religion and its founders every opportunity they get. And they are the more active if they see that we are about to make an impression on some of their members. They will tell them that Jesus was an illegitimate child and that he taught the people not to work, to let the morrow look out for itself, that his followers were low and ignorant, and lived all together and had all things common, wives and otherwise. The most ridiculous stories are told about us, and the people of course believe them because they have never been told differently. We are therefore looked upon with suspicion. And when we do get one to see the truth they will often say, 'I did not know Jesus was that kind of a person. The priests have told us differently. I thought you were bad people and not good to associate with.'"

While she was talking I thought how true that is of the Latter-day Saints today, even in enlightened America. But after all, human nature is about the same everywhere, and the devil's work is similar among all people. After the lecture she extended the privilege to ask questions, so I thought I would test her reasoning faculties to see if she had profited by her experience. I therefore arose and asked her if she thought those "priests in Japan were guided by the Spirit of God when they were persecuting and misrepresenting the Christian religion and its founder." She said, "No, certainly not, they know nothing whatever of the Spirit of God." "Then," I asked, "if the same thing should be practiced in this country, would you not come to the same conclusion?" She said, "I think I would." I thanked her for her fairness and informed her that I represented the principles advocated by Joseph Smith, and I found the same difficulty in this country that she had found in Japan, and that like her I was far from believing that such persecution was of God. I received no reply.

Some one may say, "There is so much said against Joseph Smith. Is there not a little fire where there is so much smoke?" But did you ever stop to think that what you see is only dust or fog? It certainly appears that when one person tells one story about him, and another contradicts him, and still another tells a different tale, that there is not enough fire at least to hurt anybody. Some one has been throwing blinding dust in the air, that's all, and in your hurry you did

not notice that it was not smoke at all. When so much was said in the early centuries against our Savior, and Peter, and Paul, in fact every other man of God, did it prove that part of it was true just because so much was said? "Oh no," you will doubtless say. Then does it prove that because so much was asserted against Joseph Smith that part of it must be true? Assertion is not proof. Jesus said, "As they persecuted me, they will also persecute you." We could expect nothing else if Mr. Smith were really a servant of God. It is one sign of his genuineness.

By careful reading it will be seen that the chief reason so many rejected the Messiah, was because they mistook reputation for character (reputation is what is said about a man, character is what he really is) and so also are very many doing today with Joseph Smith. They do not seem willing to profit by the experiences of the past, but like the Jews, they do as their fathers had done. Jesus said to them, "Ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute." (Luke 11:47-49). So with many today, they revere the ancient prophets, but slay the present ones.

While the world is flattering itself that they are really judging Mr. Smith by his works according to Matt. 7:15, 16, which says, "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits," they make the fatal mistake of judging the fruits they are *told* are his, without knowing whether it really is or not. This scripture bids us to beware of *false* prophets, not true ones, and gave us a rule to test the two. If no true prophets were to come he would not have given this rule, but would have said, "all coming after me claiming to be prophets shall be false ones, therefore beware." He evidently intended that we should use the rule rightly, justly and without prejudice. We are very willing this rule should be applied to Joseph Smith. We are willing that he be judged by his own works. Nay more, we are anxious that he be so tried. We do not fear the results of a candid, honest investigation. You cannot determine the truth of any matter and know you have the truth, without justly examining both and all sides of it. Some will doubtlessly say, "Surely polygamy, blood atonement, robbery, lying, stealing, and like things, are enough to condemn Joseph Smith." Yes, a thousand times yes. If he was guilty of all or any one of those evils,

either in precept or practice, he ought to be rejected as a public teacher. Here is just where the matter hinges. Was he guilty? We say no, emphatically no. I have made diligent inquiry of those who actually knew Mr. Smith, and thus far I have failed to find the first person, who the neighbors would believe in other matters, that will say they believed him to have been a bad man. Many disinterested parties have told me that he was the best man in some respects they ever knew. So successful have I been in my research that I am really surprised myself that so little is said against him by those who knew him. I do not refer to those who may have seen him passing by one time, but those who had talked with him, heard him preach, and had dealings with him. Some of you may wish to ask, "Did you ever meet any one who would say anything against him?" O yes, plenty of them, but I discredit their testimony. "Ah!" surmises one, I think, "you discredit every one's testimony that is against him." Not too fast, please, if that be your thought. False surmisings are not gentlemanly. Don't accuse me of that till you have proven me guilty. If you are not careful you will be doing with me just what the world is doing with Joseph Smith; that is, "Jumping at conclusions, and charging falsely before you have the proof," or in other words, "begging the question." I discredit their testimony just as you would do. For instance: A lady walked several miles one time to tell me something she said she "wanted me to know about Old Joe Smith." She said she knew about Joseph walking on the water one time at Nauvoo. That her two brothers were among the rest that removed one of the planks which he had laid under the water to walk on, that she was present the next Sunday when he went to walk, and saw him fall in and get wet when he came to the missing plank, and heard him say when he finally swam ashore that his "faith failed him." I asked her if her brothers were younger or older than she and she said, "they were both younger." I then asked her how old she was and she said she was born in 1843. I informed her that Joseph Smith was killed in 1844, and suggested that her memory was excellent to remember things so young, and that her brothers, both younger, must have been young acrobats indeed. Do you blame me for discrediting her testimony? Would you not have done so too? But that woman is not the only person that has told me that old fib. I hear it in almost every neighborhood and upon no better authority. For some reason they forget that less credulous people will ask how it was that Mr. Smith could see the planks others could not, and

how it was that he could see the sides of the planks so as not to step off at the sides, but could not see the end—could not see where the one was missing. Somehow they fail to consider the depth of the Mississippi river, and the steamboats and the rapids, the floodwood, rafts, ties and various other things. What a pity that he could not have erected foot bridges every few miles across the Mississippi river. While this story is only one of the many, yet if people would only apply a little reason they would easily detect their origin and need not be deceived by any of them. Those who circulate such stories exhibit their ignorance of the teaching of Joseph Smith, for he taught that miracles were not to make believers. He could have had no object in view in attempting such a thing, nor did he either.

I am also acquainted with many of Joseph Smith's relatives, and though I am of a criticizing nature I must say I never met more noble men and women. If you reflect you will not remember having seen or heard any story damaging to their characters as christian men and women. I cannot say what may yet come after they die. How is it then that he could be so very bad and they are not? Are none of them "chips off the old block?" How could they all believe implicitly in the work of their predecessor and not be mean, if he was such? Let us bring our reason to bear on these questions as well as the others. Not one of his family emigrated to Utah, nor accepted Brigham Young as a leader. Nor did they ever accept the faith advocated in Utah. The doctrine of Brigham Young differed from that advocated by Joseph Smith as widely as could be. There is no point where the two systems of faith exactly agree, and in many places they are as wide apart as the antipodes. So we ask you to put Utah Mormonism out of your minds when considering this subject, for Joseph Smith had nothing whatever to do with it. After Joseph's death Brigham and about one-third of the church left the states, and in a few years so altered their faith that the courts of Ohio and Missouri would not give them title to the original church property. Before Joseph Smith's death he prophesied many times that if Brigham Young ever led the church he would lead it to hell. If I can see aright, many of those who went with him have been facing in that direction for a number of years.

I next introduce the proof that Joseph Smith was a good, well behaved, christian man, and that the church over which he presided did not endorse polygamy, blood atonement, robbery, lying or theft. Nor was Joseph Smith guilty of such things. The first proof is the decision of Hon. Judge L. S.

Sherman, in Court of Common Pleas, Lake County, Ohio, as found in the Journal Entry, February term, 1880. "The court do find as matters of fact * * * that the church in Utah, the defendant, of which John Taylor is president [John Taylor was Brigham Young's successor], has materially and largely departed from the faith, doctrines, laws, ordinances and usages of said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and has incorporated into its system of faith the doctrine of 'celestial' marriage and a plurality or wives, and the doctrine of Adam-God worship, contrary to the laws and constitution of said original church.

"And the court do further find that the plaintiff, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is the true and lawful continuation of, and successors to, the said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, organized in 1830, and is entitled in law to all its rights and property."

Court decisions are worth more than rumors, even though they might be printed in histories and encyclopedias, and in this case proves that the church over which Joseph Smith presided did not endorse polygamy. How then could they have endorsed him if he were a polygamist? As a matter of fact he was not a polygamist in either theory or practice. The bishop of the true Latter-day Saint church a few years ago offered one hundred dollars in gold to any man who would produce a word or sentence either written or spoken by Joseph Smith that in any way endorsed polygamy. But as yet the money has not been called for. Even the Utah folks dare not attempt it. Judge Sherman's decision shows that polygamy was introduced into the Utah system and not into the church over which Joseph presided.

Let us next hear the decision of Judge Phillips, one of the Supreme judges for the western district of Missouri. In speaking of polygamy he says, "Its first appearance as a dogma of the church was in the Utah church in 1852." Further in the decision he says, "It is charged by the Respondents, as an echo of the Utah church, that Joseph Smith, the martyr, secretly taught and practiced polygamy, and the Utah contingent furnishes the evidence, and two of the women to prove this fact. It perhaps would be uncharitable to say of these women that they have borne false testimony as to their connection with Joseph Smith, but in view of all the evidences and circumstances surrounding the alleged intercourse, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that at most they were but sports in nest hiding. In view of the contention of the Salt Lake party, that polygamy obtained,

in Nauvoo as early as 1841, it must be a little embarrassing to President Woodruff of that organization when he is confronted, as he was in the evidence in this case, with a published card in the church organ at Nauvoo, in October, 1843, certifying that he knew of no other rule or system of marriage than the one published in the Book of Doctrine & Covenants, and that the 'secret wife system' charged against the church was a creature of invention by one Dr. Bennett, and that they knew of no such society. That certificate was signed by the leading members of the church, including John Taylor, the former president of the Utah church. And a similar certificate was published by the Ladies' Relief Society of the same place, signed by Emma Smith, the wife of Joseph Smith, and Phoebe Woodruff, wife of the present President Woodruff. No such marriage ever occurred under the rules of the church, and no offspring came from the imputed illicit intercourse."—"Palmyra to Independence," pp. 225, 226. Here we have the decision of a judge who had listened to all sides of this question, and he, like all others must do when the evidence is properly considered, decided that in the matter of polygamy Joseph Smith was not guilty.

Let us hear the testimony of Joseph Smith's only wife:—

Q.—"What about the revelation on polygamy? Did Joseph Smith have anything like it? What of spiritual wifery?"

A.—"There was no revelation on either polygamy or spiritual wifery."

Q.—"Was there nothing about spiritual wives that you recollect?"

A.—"No such thing as polygamy or spiritual wifery was taught, privately or publicly, before my husband's death, that I have now or ever had any knowledge of."

Q.—"Did he not have other wives than yourself?"

A.—"He had no other wife but me, nor did he to my knowledge ever have. I know that he had no other wife or wives than myself in any sense, either spiritual or otherwise."

This I consider quite sufficient to prove that Joseph Smith had nothing to do with that corrupt doctrine. There may have been some rumors started as a means of persecution. But thinking people will not base their faith on rumors. Especially when the facts are just the reverse of the rumors, as in this case.

We next produce the testimony of one of Joseph's neighbors as to his behavior as a boy as well as a man. A lawyer and a preacher once visited Joseph Smith's neighbors a few years ago and obtained their testimony. Many of them knew

but little of him, but those who did knew nothing against him or his father's family, and some of them were very high in their praises of them. Here is what Mr. Orlando Saunders said, "Well, you have come to a poor house to find out anything. I don't know anything against these men myself." "Were you acquainted with them, Mr. Saunders?" "Yes, sir, I knew all of the Smith family well; there were six boys, Alvin, Hyrum, Joseph, Harrison, William and Carlos, and there were two girls; the old man was a cooper. They have all worked for me many a day; they were very good people. Young Joe (as we called him) has worked for me, and he was a good worker; they all were. I did not consider them good managers about business, but they were poor people; the old man had a large family." "In what respect did they differ from other people, if at all?" "I never noticed that they were different from other neighbors; they were the best family in the neighborhood in case of sickness; one of them was at my house nearly all the time when my father died. I always thought them honest; they were owing me some money when they left here. * * * One of them came back in about a year and paid me. * * * How well did you know young Joseph Smith? Oh! just as well as one could very well; he has worked for me many a time, and been about my place a great deal. He stopped with me many a time when through here, after they went west to Kirtland; he was always a gentleman when about my place."—"Palmyra to Independence," pp. 350, 351.

Next I abbreviate the testimony of an infidel lecturer who knew the Smiths. "I knew them very well, they were nice men too; the only trouble was they were ahead of the people, who—as in every such case—turned out to abuse them, because they had the manhood to stand for their convictions. Smith was always ready to exchange views with the best men they had. Why didn't they like Smith? To tell the truth * * * he knew more than they did and it made them mad. But a good many people tell stories about them being low people and liars, and such like things. How is that? * * * I have had a home here and been here all my life—ever since I came to this country, and I know these fellows. They make these lies on Smith because they love a lie better than the truth. I can take you to a great many old settlers here who will substantiate what I say, and if you want to go just come around to my place across the street there and I'll go with you." What more need be said as to Joseph Smith's character? Only religious zealots and those who loved to lie were his enemies. The best thinking men were his warmest friends. All who knew him speak highly of his qualities as a christian

gentleman. Even infidels could find no fault with him.

I next introduce a part of a revelation which Joseph Smith gave to the church in February 1831. This was duly considered by the church and compared with God's word in other ages of the world, and accepted as a rule of faith. This expresses the heart of the man and also gives us an insight into his inner thought.

"Again, I say, thou shalt not kill, but he that killeth shall die. Thou shalt not steal, and he that stealeth and will not repent shall be cast out. Thou shalt not lie; he that lieth and will not repent shall be cast out. Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else, and he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit, and if he repent not he shall be cast out. Thou shalt not commit adultery, and he that committeth adultery and repenteth not shall be cast out; but he that has committed adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsaketh it, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive; but if he doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven but shall be cast out. Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, nor do him any harm. Thou knowest my laws concerning these things are given in my scriptures; he that sinneth and repenteth not, shall be cast out." Those who have examined the principles advocated by Joseph Smith have said, "No purer set of morals was ever taught at any time by any man." So those who charge him with being immoral bring the blush of shame to our cheeks for their ignorance. When it is known that we base our salvation upon our own individual works in part, it will be seen how weak the charge of "immoral teaching" or "immoral conduct" is.

I have been thus particular to remove the objections based on false reports circulated against Joseph Smith, and have shown that if he was a servant of God he but received from the world what might be expected according to the philosophy of Jesus, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19). If Jesus gave a perfect test in the above scripture, then no better proof could be given that the work Mr. Smith performed, and the life he lived, was after the divine pattern, at least was not of the world, inasmuch as he received only their hatred. Of course it does not prove that he was right simply because he was opposed by the world, but it does testify very largely in his favor, when we prove that their persecution was based on false reports, as

Jesus said again, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you *falsely*."

I have been asked why these reports were not contradicted before now if they were not true. They have been vigorously denied from the very first, but the enemy that actively circulated the stories, as actively subdued the denials. Even the talented Mr. Talmage permitted a scathingly erroneous article in the proud *Christian Herald* from General John Eaton, to sadly misrepresent us, and all the begging and imploring we could do would not induce him to permit us to reply; nor would he correct the mistake himself. What system would not be misunderstood under such inhuman persecution?

Having removed the secular objections before introducing the proofs on that line, it becomes necessary next to remove the so-called scriptural objections. If we would see clearly we must keep our windows clear of rubbish and dust. Also if we shall be able to help you to see this matter clearly we must remove the dust and tradition of ages. We are well aware that proof would be of little worth to those who look through objections based on the traditions of their fathers. It would be of little use to build a mansion until we had first cleared away the rubbish and gotten down to bed rock.

As we have cleared away the vile rubbish stories and trashy yarns concerning Mr. Smith's character and proved it good, let us not forget the words of our text, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is *good*." We shall always feel that those who refuse to examine into the facts concerning Mr. Smith, if they have time and opportunity, are really breaking the commandments of God, for the same Bible that contains the Ten Commandments contains also another. Let me quote it to you, "Prove all things."

Another part of my text says, "Despise not prophesyings." This is as much a commandment of God as the rest of the text, and being in the New Testament and written to christians, is applicable to you and me today if we profess to be christians and accept the New Testament as our rule of faith. How many can look into their hearts and say, "I do not despise prophesyings." With this thought clearly in our minds let us notice that one of the first indications of a prophet is *unpopularity*. We call your attention first to Matthew 23:34, "Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city."

You will notice in this that Christ was to send prophets after the days of John the Baptist. This also answers the old objection that there were to be "no prophets after John the Baptist," and shows how they were to be received when sent, certainly not in a popular way, if some were to be killed and others persecuted. This likewise agrees with the words of the Master to which we have twice before called your attention in Matthew 5: 11, 12, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." This text proves what we have before said, and also that men who were falsely spoken of for Christ's sake would be the blessed of God, and if the world did such things to the prophets of old they would do so now. Why should we expect anything else so long as human nature is the same rebellious nature it has been from the beginning? That Mr. Smith was killed by a mob only proves that one of the prophets whom Jesus was to send was killed, as he said they would be, and that he shared like fate with like men of old. So do not expect to try God's work by popular opinion, for you will fail as others have. Surely if unpopularity is one proof of a true prophet, then Joseph Smith has a good start in the right direction. We are sometimes charged by those who are unacquainted with our system with trying to create sympathy by referring to Mr. Smith as a "martyr." As a matter of fact we do not refer to that matter half as much as our enemies do. We would not refer to it, nor to Mr. Smith more than others do to their founders, if our opponents did not drive us to it by first mentioning the matter and misrepresenting the man. We wish to defend our faith honorably and fairly, not by pandering to sympathy. And those who know us best will not charge us with that. Those who are acquainted with our faith know that we do not ask any one to follow Joseph Smith or any other man farther than he followed Jesus Christ. When he surrendered himself into the hands of those whom he knew would take his life he bade his family a solemn good-bye 'mid sobs and tears, telling them that he was "going like a lamb to the slaughter," and that he would never see them again in the flesh, he simply proved to the world that he was not a hypocrite—that he believed what he taught.

Some of you may wish to ask, "Do you really believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God?" We answer this question "No and yes." We do not think he was perfect. We do not think he was infallible. We do not think he was inspired

at all times. We do not think he was more than a man. Indeed, we do not believe any of the prophets of old were perfect, infallible, *continually* inspired, no more than men. So our answer depends on the understanding of the questioner as to what he thinks a prophet is. Allow us to explain our meaning, and we say we believe he was at times inspired by the Holy Ghost. In this light we say "yes." With the popular understanding of the word prophet, we say "no."

Let us now proceed to answer some of the leading objections said to be based on certain passages of scripture. But let us do so in fairness, treating those who differ from us kindly, considering their objections honestly, by doing unto others as we would that they should do unto us, remembering to "prove all things and hold fast that which is good."

One may ask, "Is it not contrary to the Bible to expect prophets now?" No, positively no, for God is just the same today as he was anciently. His ear is not dull, his mouth is not dumb, and his love for man is not abated. His Spirit also will have the same effect on man today as of old. We cannot say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost--by revelation. To receive the testimony of Jesus is to receive the spirit of prophecy, for an angel of God has said, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19:10).

I have already answered in part the statement that there were to be "no more prophets after John the Baptist," and in further proof I will read from St. John 16: 13, "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 shall show you things to come." Surely if the Spirit was to show them things to come, it would make prophets of some who received it. Unless those who urge this objection can show that the Spirit was not given after John's day, their case is lost. And if professed christians today believe in the gift of the Spirit, they cannot escape the conclusion that it will do its work according to the promise. Again we have in Acts 21: 9, 10, the following: "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus." Nothing could be more plain than the fact that there were prophets in the christian church long after the death of John the Baptist. But to make the matter doubly plain and sure, we will read the advice of an early christian prophet. 1 Corinthians 14:31, "For ye may all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all be comforted." It would seem that prophets really began in earnest when Christ came,

or rather when the Holy Ghost came. If, as Peter said, "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," then why not men who received that Spirit in the christian age even though that age reaches to our day, be moved to prophesy as well as those of old? Indeed, we read in Acts 19:6 that such was the case. "And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied." Surely no one before me will, after taking the second thought, still insist that prophets ended with John. Such thought is squarely against the Bible, for it shows that both apostles and prophets were set in and given to the church to continue "until we all come to the unity of the faith." (Eph. 4: 11-13).

Another objection is, "We have the word of God now, and therefore we do not need prophets now." Oh no, that is a wrong conclusion, as well as a false statement, for it makes God changeable; besides we have in the Bible only a history of the word of God but not the word itself. What we need is the word of God to us, which we could not have if there were no prophets or revelations now. Because some one has written what God has said in the past, even though they wrote by inspiration, it does not necessarily follow that we were to hear no more from him. If so, it robs God of one of his attributes, and forbids the full operation of the Holy Ghost. To say that we do not need prophets now, is purely an expression without divine sanction and squarely against the facts in the case as also the scripture. The facts are, that though we have the New Testament, we are worse off than the primitive christians in some things at least, for we do not agree on its meaning. In case of a disagreement why not God be allowed to interpret his own word, or further explain what was given in the past, or to restore what has been lost? The world, though wanting to be christian, is puzzled to know which one of the churches is right in its interpretation of the plan of salvation. Why may not God speak and tell us which? Certainly if there ever was a time when there was need of a prophet, it is now. So the statement that we need no more prophets because we have the Bible, is erroneous and unreasonable.

The Scriptures show that there were to be prophets in our day, in proof of which I read Joel 2: 28, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out of 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." The prophet Joel had been speaking of the land of Palestine, and had predicted that a curse of drouth

would rest upon it, but that after the curse "the former and latter rains should be restored," and the land would again yield as in former times. This prophecy has been fulfilled in this century—since 1852. In our fathers' boyhood days that land was still a wilderness, parched and dry. Today it is indeed "blossoming as a rose," so much so that the Jews are just on the eve of establishing a monarchy there, so numerous has become the Jewish population in that land in the last thirty years. This prophecy of Joel's speaks plainly that "afterward"—after the land began to yield as in former times, then their sons and daughters were to prophesy. Does this not prove conclusively that there were to be prophets in our time? Some may say "that prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and that Peter says so." We answer no, Peter does not say that at all. He simply says the Spirit then received on that day was the same Spirit spoken of by Joel. Surely no one, after looking the second time, will say Joel's prophecy was fulfilled then. No one will say at the risk of their reason that all flesh was gathered there in that "upper room" on Pentecost, or that the Spirit of God was then poured out on all flesh, or that some fell asleep during so interesting a meeting and dreamed dreams, or that the young men saw visions. But Peter quotes this passage a little differently than Joel said it, if the translators have properly translated it. Acts 2: 16, 17, "But this is that [Spirit] which was spoken [of] by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." Where Joel said "afterward" Peter said "in the last days." Doubtless Peter understood that the afterward was to be in the last days, and proves, when taken in connection with the facts concerning Palestine, that there were to be prophets in our day.

Another objection urged by some is, "The Bible contains all that God ever intended to give for our instruction, and pronounces a curse upon any one that would add to the Bible." Those who urge this objection, it appears to me, are very much mistaken for several reasons. First, The Bible does not contain all that God gave or caused to be given to man. There are twenty-four books at least, referred to in the Bible, which are not there now. (See Num. 21:14; 1 Sam. 10:25; Josh. 10:13; 1 Kings 4:32,33; 1 Kings 11:41; 1 Chron. 29:29; 2 Chron. 9:29; 2 Chron. 12: 15; 2 Chron. 20: 34; 2 Chron. 26: 22; 2 Chron. 33: 19; Jer. 36: 32; Jer. 51: 60, 61; Dan. 12: 4; 1 Cor. 5: 9; Col. 4: 16; Jude 3).

Second, No such thought is presented in the Bible as that

God caused to be written all that he had spoken. But on the contrary, it teaches that God is unchangeable, and in several places he advertises himself to be unchangeable—the God of the living and not the God of the dead only. He plainly tells us that life is dependent on bread both earthly and heavenly. As natural life is sustained by the bread of earth, so spiritual life is sustained by the bread of heaven, which is his word by direct revelation and not merely the history of his word which the Bible really is. Natural life is not sustained by food given 1800 years ago, neither is spiritual life sustained by the bread of life given then. We cannot do better in support of this fact than to quote the words of Frederick William Robertson and the comments of E. E. Bisby in the January *Arena* for 1896, pp. 187, 188:

“The God of the mere theologian is scarcely a living God. He did live, but for some 1800 years, we are credibly informed, that no trace of his life has been seen. The canon is closed. The proofs that he was are in the things that he has made, and the books of men to whom he spake, but he inspires and works wonders no more. According to the theologians he gives us proofs of design instead of God; doctrines instead of the life indeed.”

Mr. Bisby commenting on the above, says, “Never was there a truer statement of a false theology, a theology from which the world must break away or wander in endless night. The denial of present day inspiration comes from the identification of inspiration with infallibility. Herein lies one of the strangest inconsistencies of religious logic. Theologians claim absolute Biblical infallibility, but deny present day infallibility; they therefore feel obliged to deny present day inspiration. It will be a great day for the human race when it is freely admitted that infallibility is not the necessary logical consequence of inspiration. To acknowledge the every day presence and power of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of revelation and truth, and with the same breath to declare revelation ended and sealed is the height of absurdity. Theologians feel this, and in order to escape they tell us that the Bible is a special revelation, a revelation having the especial credentials of the Almighty such as miracles and minute predictions. They acknowledge that God is always the same, that his years fail not, that he is no respecter of persons, that he is the common Father of the great brotherhood of man, that in him we live and move and have our being, and yet by pre-determination he waited several thousand years after the dawn of civilization before he began his so-called special revelation, and then sealed it up in one of the

darkest hours of the world's history. It is this erroneous view, this false conception of God and revelation which has retarded progress and is the great danger of the present hour."

Third, By a superficial view of Revelation 22: 18. Our opponents affirm as stated above, that God pronounces a curse upon any one that "will add to the prophecy of this book," which word "book" they interpret to mean the Bible, notwithstanding the New Testament was not then compiled. And by so doing they are compelled to throw out the three general epistles of St. John, for they were written by the same John after he wrote the book of Revelation. The text simply and plainly shows that the book of Revelation is the one referred to, and not the Bible, and that man is forbidden to add to it, but that God is not prohibited from speaking when he pleases.

Another objector quotes 1 Corinthians 12: 31, as being against us. It is as follows: "But covet earnestly the best gifts and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." From this it is argued that a different way than having the gift of tongues and prophecy, is sought to be established by Paul. Why then did he wish them to covet them earnestly? It is clear that he had no reference whatever to the gifts, but to those who would secure them. Whether every member would receive all the gifts or whether some might receive one and some another. So he argues it is better that way and proceeds to say, "Are all apostles? are all prophets? etc., but covet earnestly the best gifts [tongues and prophecy among the rest] and yet show I unto you a more excellent way," than to have all of one kind. He could not have meant that the excellent way was to reject prophecy or any of the gifts of the Spirit, for he continues the same line of argument in the following chapters, one of which especially says, "Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." (1 Cor. 14: 1).

Another objection urged is, "We have advanced in science, literature and art, why not in the gospel of Christ. Why not outgrow the one as well as the other?" Because one is perfect and—emanating from a perfect Being—was always perfect, the other is more or less imperfectly discovered by man. To outgrow the "perfect law of the Lord"—the everlasting gospel (Rev. 14: 6) is to outgrow perfection and become imperfect. And that is just what the sectarian world has been doing for centuries, outgrowing perfection.

We will answer one more objection and then enter upon the direct proofs. This objection is based upon a text found in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, and reads as follows: "Charity never

faileth: but whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." From this text it is argued by some that in the future from that time prophecies were to fail and tongues cease. So they were, but when? Has the time come yet? I answer no. For they were each to continue as long as knowledge. No one will claim that knowledge has yet vanished away, besides they were all three to continue until "that which is perfect is come." That time has not come yet so far as language, prophecy or knowledge is concerned. If it refers to the perfect One, then he has not yet appeared personally, and spiritually he is no more here now than then. If it refers to the gospel as some think, then we answer, The gospel was perfect then and had been from the beginning, and could not become more so. But it doubtless refers to the perfect One. It is further evident that the Holy Ghost was to continue in full working power when men would open their hearts to receive it, until the perfect One should come the second time without sin unto salvation, and establish peace and perfection upon the earth.

Having noticed so many objections said to be Biblical, and having shown that most of them are in our favor, rather than against us, and the others not against us in the least, let us see what the Bible says of the work Joseph Smith really performed and whether such a man is really spoken of therein. I will call your attention first to Malachi 3: 1-4, which reads as follows:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in days of old, and as in former years."

The coming of the Lord here spoken of certainly was not his first coming, for he did not come suddenly to his temple, nor did any one have any difficulty to stand when he then appeared, neither did he come as a judge or refiner. All the

expressions used in this passage show that the second coming of the Savior is spoken of. You will take notice that a messenger was to precede his second coming therefore, as well as his first, and that the same messenger was to precede both. The Savior said this messenger was John the Baptist, so also did John say the same of himself. John did not accomplish all that was spoken of him previous to the first coming of the Messiah, therefore when taken in connection with the rest of the passage, shows that John was to do the work in our day, and the ultimatum of his latter day work was to qualify "Judea and Jerusalem to offer a pleasant offering unto the Lord" previous to his second coming.

Joseph Smith claimed to have been ordained and directed by John the Baptist. If he was not, will the world receive him today if he were to come? He must come or the prophecy will fail. Why could he not have appeared to Joseph Smith, and ordained him to do the very work spoken of in his claims at least, and it is that which we are now examining. Let us hear what he and others say of the matter: "While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying unto us, 'Upon you, my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.' He said this Aaronic priesthood had not the power of laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but that this should be conferred on us hereafter; and he commanded us to go and be baptized, and gave us directions that I should baptize Oliver Cowdery, and afterward that he should baptize me. Accordingly we went and were baptized, I baptized him first, and afterward he baptized me, after which I laid my hands on his head and ordained him to the holy priesthood, and afterward he laid his hands on me and ordained me to the same priesthood, for so we were commanded. The messenger who visited us upon this occasion, and conferred the priesthood upon us, said that his name was John the Baptist in the New Testament. * * * It was on the fifteenth day of May, eighteen hundred and twenty-nine, that we were baptized and ordained under the hand of the messenger."—History of the Church, Vol. 1, pp. 34-36.

In the above we have a divine command to organize a church, or at least to preach and baptize.

Unlike the reformers who assumed authority, Mr. Smith was divinely directed to do his work. Instead of having a secular church—a church of man—we have here the beginning of the kingdom of God, a divine church. When I say beginning I mean the beginning of its organization or restoration to earth again. While the world is consoling itself that God no more sends his messengers to earth, God moves steadily forward and continues his work as in former times. The ministers will doubtless continue to assert that God has changed, that he has no more work for the angels, that they are all mustered out of service, and the world will continue to believe it, and never ask for the proof. One fact, however, stares us directly in the face. John's work was not completed 1800 years ago. If he did not appear to Joseph Smith, will the world be any more ready to accept him if he should yet come? He must come. He must finish his mission; he must prepare a people to meet the Savior at his second coming. Why should he not have appeared to Joseph as he testifies.

Let us hear what Oliver Cowdery, a New York school teacher, has to say of the same event:

"This was not long desired before it was realized. The Lord, who is rich in mercy, and ever willing to answer the consistent prayer of the humble, after we had called upon him in a fervent manner, aside from the abodes of men, condescended to manifest to us his will. On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us, while the veil was parted, and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the gospel of repentance! What joy! What wonder! What amazement! While the world was racked and distracted—while millions were groping as the blind for the wall and while all men were resting upon uncertainty, as a general mass, our eyes beheld, our ears heard. As in the blaze of day—yes, more—above the glitter of the May sunbeams, which then shed its brilliancy over the face of nature! Then his voice, though mild, pierced to the center, and his words, 'I am thy fellow servant,' dispelled every fear. We listened, we gazed, we admired! 'Twas the voice of an angel from glory—'twas a message from the Most High! And as we heard we rejoiced, while his love enkindled upon our souls and we were wrapped in the vision of the Almighty! Where was room for doubt? Nowhere; uncertainty had fled, doubt had sunk no more to rise, while fiction and deception had fled forever. But, dear brother, think, further think for a moment, what joy filled our hearts and with what surprise we must have bowed (for who would not have bowed the knee

(for such a blessing?) when we received under his hands the holy priesthood, as he said, 'Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of the Messiah I confer this priesthood and this authority, which shall remain upon the earth, that the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.'—History of the Church, Vol. 1, pp. 37, 38.

The men who bore this testimony suffered all manner of persecution, but to the last, even in the face of death, they still maintained its truthfulness. There is no reason why this testimony should not be believed; and in it we have the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy concerning the messenger John as quoted above, also in the same book, Malachi 4: 5, 6, as follows: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the beginning of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Elijah did come. Jesus said John the Baptist was he in Matthew 11: 11-15, but he did not say John accomplished all that was spoken of him. Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord he was also to come. If the world will not receive it, it is none the less the fact that he did commission Joseph Smith to do that very work. The careful reader will notice that he was to precede the second coming of our dear Savior as well as the first. The time when he should come as a purifier, etc. The manner of his first coming certainly does not in all points correspond to the description here given. He certainly did not fully accomplish all that is here spoken of him.

Another passage of scripture in harmony with the one quoted above is found in Zechariah 2: 2-4: "Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as a town without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein."

Several times Jerusalem has been rebuilt and inhabited, but not until since 1850 has it been inhabited "without walls." This of itself locates the fulfillment of the prophecy in our time, and it will be noticed that the prophet saw that a young man was to make a proclamation because of instructions from an angel. Joseph Smith was so informed by an angel and did so proclaim when only a youth, besides he afterwards sent one of the elders of the church to Palestine to bless the land and

pray the Lord to remove the curse. Following is the instruction of the angel to Joseph and the prayer of Orson Hyde which are as follows. I will read first of the instruction of the angel:

“While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in the room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor. He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that anything could be made to appear so exceeding white and brilliant; his hands were naked, and his arms also a little above the wrists. So also were his feet naked, as were his legs a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing but this robe, as it was open so that I could see into his bosom. Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceeding light, but not so very light as immediately around his person. When I first looked upon him I was afraid, but the fear soon left me. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Nephi. That God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds and tongues; or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. * * * After telling me these things he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi; and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our own Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus: ‘For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble, for they that cometh shall burn them saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.’ Again he quoted the fifth verse thus: ‘Behold I will reveal unto you the priesthood by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.’ He also quoted the next verse differently: ‘And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to their father; if it were not so the whole earth would be wasted at his coming.’ In addition to these he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled. He quoted also the third

chapter of Acts, 22d and 23d verses, precisely as they stand in our New Testament. He said that that prophet was Christ, but the day had not yet come when 'they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people,' but soon would come. He also quoted the second chapter of Joel from the 28th to the last verse. He also said this was not yet fulfilled, but soon would be. And he further stated that the fullness of the Gentiles was soon to come in."—History of the Church, Vol. 1, pp. 13-15.

You will notice that the two last references by the angel plainly referred to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its escapement from Gentile oppression. The above communication was given September 21, 1823. Let my hearers search the history of Palestine at that time and see if there were any signs of what we now see. Look again and see if the angel told the truth when he said these prophecies were soon to be fulfilled. Search and see that the Turks then had passed a law making it a crime punishable with death for anyone under the government of Turkey to embrace Christianity. In 1844 the combined powers of Europe compelled Turkey to revoke that law. Did Joseph Smith prophesy correctly when he said the time would soon come.

Three years before the revoking of the iron clad law before alluded to, Joseph Smith sent Orson Hyde to Palestine to bless that land and pray God to remove the curse and gather the Jews. Following is part of the prayer he offered from Mount Olivet October 24, 1841:

"Now, O Lord, thy servant has been obedient to the heavenly vision which thou gavest him in his native land; and under the shadow of thine out-stretched arm, he has safely arrived in this place to dedicate and consecrate this land unto thee. For the gathering together of Judah's scattered remnants, according to the predictions of the holy prophets, for the building up of Jerusalem again after it has been trodden down of the Gentiles so long, and for rearing a temple to thy name. Everlasting thanks be ascribed unto thee, O Father! Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast preserved thy servant from dangers of the seas, and from plagues and pestilences which have caused the land to mourn. * * * O thou who didst covenant with Abraham, thy friend, and who didst renew that covenant with Isaac, and confirm the same with Jacob with an oath, that thou wouldst not only give them this land for an everlasting inheritance, but that thou wouldst also remember their seed forever. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have long since closed their eyes in death, and made the grave their mansion. Their children are

scattered and dispersed abroad among the nations of the Gentiles like sheep that have no shepherd, and are still looking forward for the fulfillment of those promises which thou didst make concerning them: and even this land, which thou poured forth nature's richest bounty, and flowed, as it were, with milk and honey, has, to a certain extent, been smitten with barrenness, and sterility since it drank from murderous hands the blood of him who never sinned.

"Grant, therefore, O Lord, in the name of thy well beloved Son Jesus Christ, to remove the barrenness and sterility of the land, and let springs of living water break forth to water its thirsty soil. Let the vine and the olive produce in their strength and the fig tree bloom and flourish, let the land become abundantly fruitful when possessed by its rightful heirs: let it again flow with plenty to feed the returning prodigals who come with a spirit of grace and supplication; upon it let the clouds distill virtue and richness, and let the field smile with plenty. Let the herds and flocks greatly increase and multiply upon the mountains and the hills; and let thy great kindness conquer and subdue the unbelief of the people. Do thou take from them their stony heart, and give them a heart of flesh, and may the sun of thy favor dispel the cold mists of darkness which have beclouded their atmosphere. Incline them to gather in upon this land according to thy word. Let them come like clouds and like doves to their windows. Let the large ships of the nations bring them from their distant isles; and let kings become their nursing fathers, and queens with their motherly fondness, wipe the tears of sorrow from their eyes.

"Thou, O Lord, didst once move upon the heart of Cyrus to show favor to Jerusalem and her children. Do thou now also be pleased to inspire the hearts of the kings and powers of the earth to look with a friendly eye toward this place, and with a desire to see thy righteous purposes executed in relation thereto. Let them know that it is thy good pleasure to restore the kingdom to Israel—raise up Jerusalem as a capital. * * *"—*Autumn Leaves*, Vol. 1, pp. 50, 51.

Let the daily reports that come to us of the wonderful productiveness of that land since 1835 answer whether the above prayer was answered, and the angel rightly informed Joseph of its near approach in 1823. Let the thousands of Israel now safely located upon the land of their fathers answer as to whether Joseph was a true prophet. None of the reformers, while young men or youths, made such predictions, nor did any man aside from Joseph Smith. If he was a fraud in this matter, so also was the Lord, for he began

at once to fulfill the prophecy and remove the curse and gather the Jews to the land of their fathers.

Right in harmony with this is the following from Isaiah 11: 11, 12: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

In the days of Cyrus, several hundred years before Christ, the Lord set his hand the first time and gathered Israel back from the Babylonian captivity; there they remained until they rebelled or were carried away captive, until in our day the Lord has set his hand the "second" time to gather them home from whithersoever they have gone. You will notice closely that Isaiah here says in that day he will also set up an ensign for the nations. The ensign could refer to none other thing than his kingdom—his church, and it was to be set up among the nations, and not among Israel, and the fifth chapter and twenty-sixth verse show it was to be afar off—at the end of the earth. Also the eighteenth chapter shows that it was to be on America, a land beyond Ethiopia, also a land shadowing with wings, and that swift messengers were to be sent from this land shadowing with wings. The second verse shows they were to be swift messengers in ships, or in other words, swift ships. This also locates the time subsequent to 1829 when the first steamboat, Savannah, crossed the Atlantic.

The early Methodists believed in their day that this ensign had not yet been set up, when they used to sing:

"Almighty God of love,
Set up the attractive sign."

Again they looked forward to the gathering of the Hebrews to their home land, for in the same song they sang:

"Oh call the Hebrew home,
From East and West and North and South,
Let all the wanderers come."

The work of Joseph Smith corresponds to all these prophecies in time, place and condition, and is especially interwoven with the Jewish movement, in gathering to their own land and building up their city. It dovetails in with all the important history of the world, for God has been in both.

Again in Daniel 2: 28, 44 we have the following: "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets and maketh

known to the king, Nebuchadnezzar, what shall be in the latter days. * * * And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever."

From the above we learn that "in the latter days" a divine kingdom or church was to be set up. This latter day kingdom was not to be thrown down nor given to another people. It could not have reference to the primitive church of Jesus Christ, as some think, for that was thrown down, the entire flock was destroyed. (Acts 20: 29). They turned away their ears from the truth. (2 Tim. 4:4). Only a little while was the light with them. (St. John 12:35). The kingdom was taken by force with violent hands. (Matt. 11:12). Also Jesus said, "The kingdom shall be taken from you and given to another people bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21: 43). Joseph Smith claimed to be the instrument in God's hands to set up this kingdom. No other man ever made such claim and the time is now passed. Of course the destruction of other kingdoms as spoken of in the text was to be according to God's only plan; by love and conversion as in all ages of the world, for God is unchangeable.

Perhaps the clearest chapter in the Bible concerning just such a work as no other man but Joseph Smith performed, is the 29th chapter of Isaiah. I have not the time now to dwell upon the sealed book that in the last days was to be delivered to an unlearned man, as mentioned in the twelfth verse, but call your attention to the fact that God was to do a marvelous work and a wonder at a certain time in the world's history. Let us first find out when. Verse nineteen: "Is it not a very little while and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field?" Here we have the same time as mentioned so many times in both the Old and New Testament concerning the restoration of the land of Palestine (Lebanon is in that land) to its former productiveness in the last days. You will be careful to notice that just a little while before this event God was to do a marvelous work and a wonder among certain people who were without seers and prophets, and the chief instrument in his hands to accomplish this marvelous work and a wonder was to be an unlearned man, as verses twelve and fourteen plainly and pointedly show, as follows: "And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this: I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. * * * Therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise

men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." All of the reformers were more or less wise and learned, some of them decidedly so. Therefore it will not be in harmony with the scripture to apply it to any one or all of them; besides, they lived too soon in the world's history, for Palestine had not yet become fruitful. Unless Isaiah prophesied falsely, there was to be an unlearned man chosen of God in our day to bring about a marvelous work and a wonder. Who was it? It could have been none other than Joseph Smith. No other man fills the description. While he is not called by name, yet the very work that he really did is actually pointed out by the prophets, and time and place pointed out so clearly, that he who runs may read. That he was unlearned even his best friends do not deny. But during the fourteen years of his experience as president of the Church of Jesus Christ, he made rapid advancement in learning. No other man has yet even claimed to be the unlearned man here spoken of, and it is now too late for such a man to arise, for Lebanon has long since become a fruitful field, but did not become such until a little while after he reorganized the Church of Jesus Christ by divine order, April 6, 1830.

Another passage referring directly to the work begun by Joseph Smith will be found in Revelations 14: 6, 7: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come."

Just before the judgment an angel is to fly with the gospel to be preached on earth. The angel that visited Joseph Smith ordained him to preach the everlasting gospel. Not a new one, but the old. So those that look upon Mr. Smith as bringing a new gospel, a new doctrine or a new religion, simply misunderstand the man and his work. But, you may ask, what evidence have we to furnish that an angel visited Joseph Smith and commissioned him to re-organize the Church of Jesus Christ and restore the primitive order of things? The best evidence in all the world, God's approval. These signs shall follow them that believe (Mark 16: 16, 17), also the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, healings, faith, wisdom, etc., but best of all—"He that doeth the will of the Father shall know of the doctrine," said Jesus. So do we claim also, he that doeth the will of God shall know for himself that the work Joseph Smith performed, under direction of God, was really acknowledged of him. If Joseph Smith was really an im-

poster, it would have been no use to say to the people that "God will bear record of my work." It would have been a death blow to his work. But thousands testify today that God does witness to them that this work is divine. What better evidence can you ask for? We are willing to risk our case here. We can afford to do so. So could Joseph Smith. And so did he. We leave the matter with you. Test and try.

Of the many prophecies given by Joseph Smith, one given December 25, 1832, reads as follows: "Verily, thus saith the Lord, concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls. The days will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at that place; for behold, the southern states will be divided against the northern states, and the southern states will 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 against other nations; and thus war shall be poured out upon other nations. And it shall come to pass after many days, slaves shall rise up against their masters, who shall be marshalled and disciplined for war; and it shall come to pass also, that the remnants [Indians] who are left of the land, will marshal themselves, and shall become exceeding angry, and shall vex the Gentiles with a sore vexation; and thus, with the sword, and by bloodshed, the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquakes, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed, hath made a full end of all nations; that the cry of the Saints, and the blood of the Saints, shall cease to come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, from the earth, to be avenged of their enemies. Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly, saith the Lord, Amen."

Comment is needless further than to say that because of this revelation the people of Missouri were afraid the Latter-day Saints would finally liberate their slaves and sought to drive the Saints from the state, which they in a large measure accomplished. So that Latter-day Saints actually fought the battle of the rebellion twenty-two years before the war took place as recorded in history. But they fought on the defensive as they were misunderstood in this regard as in many other things.

The following from *Zion's Ensign* of September 30, 1897,

taken from the *Kansas City Journal* of September 20, 1897, proves my conclusion correct as to the reason why the Saints were driven from Missouri:

“SIXTY-YEAR-OLD PAPER.

“Lexington, Mo., Sept. 20, 1897.—(Special). Dr. Minos Adams, of Lexington, lives in a house that once belonged to Miss Elizabeth Aull, the founder of the seminary of that name in Lexington. A few days ago he found in the attic a newspaper dated June 30, 1836, called *The Far West*, edited by Peter H. Burnett (afterward governor of California). Its place of issue was Liberty, Clay county. It was a copy that belonged to James Aull, who was afterward murdered in his store in Chihuahua by Mexicans.

“There is an account of a public meeting, held to warn the Mormons that if they do not leave Clay county, ‘civil war is inevitable.’ Among the reasons given are the following: ‘They are eastern men, whose manners, habits, customs and even dialect, are essentially different from our own; they are non-slaveholders, and opposed to slavery, which in this peculiar period, when abolition has reared its deformed and haggard visage in our land, is well calculated to excite deep and abiding prejudice in any community where slavery is tolerated and practiced.’

“The chairman was John Bird, who was called on motion of Dr. Woodson J. Moss; the secretary was John F. Doherty, called on motion of Colonel Wm. T. Wood. On motion of Colonel Wm. T. Wood the preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted. Now known as Judge Wood, brother of the late Dr. Joseph Wood, the eminent physician of Kansas City, William T. Wood is still living in Lexington, partly paralyzed. Miss Ryland, a granddaughter of Gov. Burnett, is at present visiting in Lexington.”

From the above prophecy I conclude Joseph Smith was a prophet. That the Holy Ghost, according to the promise of the Savior, did show him things to come—did take of the things of the Father and reveal them unto him. He was not infallible. No prophet ever was. When not inspired (and no man was ever inspired only at times), he was like other uninspired men, and his words worth no more than others when not speaking by the Spirit. When inspired he was as other inspired men. Inspiration does not indicate infallibility in the man speaking. I cannot better prove this thought than by referring you again to the *January Arena* of 1896, as before quoted. Also the following from the same issue, page 188: “It is also true and demands special emphasis that God is ever the same, that revelation is continuous and eternal,

that inspiration is given in all ages to all who meet the conditions, that there has never been more than one dispensation, and that the Holy Spirit has been given from the time of the first man, and in equal degree to all who have equally opened their hearts to him." Again on page 189: "The idea, then, of God's immediate, eternal and inspiring presence ought to be preached and emphasized. By preaching otherwise the race has been robbed of a glorious hope, civilization has been retarded, and tradition has usurped the throne of reason."

We do not look upon Joseph Smith as it is reported of us, for it is said, "he as prophet was entitled to all obedience," and our faith compelled us to accept everything he said. Nothing could be further from the truth. We accept the Bible as a rule of faith and practice, and could not therefore accept anything that is not in harmony with that. We could not follow any man any further than he followed Jesus Christ. Nor did any of Joseph Smith's teaching advise any one to do so. He was as subject to the law as any one in the church. He was neither king, governor, nor ruler of the church, but its servant. Under the regulations of church government he could not have ruled the church if he wanted to, for the simple reason that the presidency of the church consists of three persons holding equal authority. Therefore there were two others besides himself that must be consulted and consent obtained. Paul says: "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge." (1 Cor. 14:29). When therefore the Holy Ghost inspired him to speak, it must be judged and tried by others of the church before it became a law. As God is unchangeable no communication would be received if not in exact harmony with the word of God in other ages. Hence one of the fundamental principles of the true Latter-day Saint is, "The right of certain ones to preside only by consent of the ones presided over." Also the right of the church as Paul understood for the other to judge of what was revealed to another.

If our enemies who misrepresent us had only read a few of Joseph Smith's communications to the church, they would have discovered this statement: "All things shall be done in the church by common consent," and had they read further they would have found that same statement repeated time and again. We look upon Mr. Smith simply as a man, no more perfect than many others, yet at times receiving the gift of the Spirit of God for the good of the church whose servant he was as well as the servant of God. Asking the will of God for the church, giving the will of God to the church.

I cannot better close this discourse than by reading again

from that excellent article in the *Arena*, pages 190, 191: "So long as they appeal to the inspiration of the past for all authority, disclaim any right of their own to speak in the name of Jehovah, teach that revelation is finished and sealed up, so long they will go halting and their words be well nigh powerless. While they need not assume a boastful spirit, yet they should have wrought within their souls a conviction of the truths they utter, should feel that these truths are from God and that in expressing them they speak for God. They should, moreover, teach the possibility of present day prophets and prepare the people to receive them. Let this be done, and then, when a new prophet arises, he will be quickly understood. *** Today the cry comes to the clergy of America as never before, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord.*"

One would almost think from this reading that the writer was a Latter-day Saint, but such is not the case. He perhaps never met one. But his reasoning is logical and sounds like the New Testament writers. Understanding the nature of man and anticipating the times in which we live, he proceeds to point out what might be expected if a new prophet should arise, and in doing so he tells the story of Joseph Smith as represented by his enemies as clearly as you may find it in print or rumor. He continues: "But in making the transition from the old to the new [new because the old has been forgotten], there are some practical difficulties to be overcome. The utterance of new truth invariably brings the cry of 'heresy.' The honest preacher will be charged with skepticism, even infidelity. The professed friends of truth will do all they can to destroy his influence, if not by argument, by the use of opprobrious epithets."

He then quotes Bishop Wilberforce as follows:

"You need boldness to risk all for God; to stand by the truth and its supporters against man's threatenings and the devil's wrath. You need a patient meekness to bear the galling calumnies and false surmises with which if you are faithful, that Satanic working which—if it could—would burn your body. will assuredly assail you daily through the pens and tongues of deceivers and deceived, who under a semblance of zeal for Christ, will cover or distort your words, misrepresent your motives, rejoice in your failings, exaggerate your errors, and seek by every poisoned breath of slander to destroy your powers of service."

So it was with Joseph Smith. The clergy were his bitter opposers. He was misrepresented, misunderstood and maltreated by religious zealots. Their words and their writings

have crept into the literature of today and many thousands who honestly believe that they know the man, know only a man of straw.

The evidences, when properly weighed, prove beyond dispute that he was a man inspired of God to do what he did, for the good of his fellowman without fear or favor from any; doing the bidding of God, leaving the result with Him, as do we.

