

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

"ELIJAH" AS THE RESTORER

Such a proposition as is here suggested seems to fill the ordinary mind with a decided negation—even to the point of rejecting or ignoring the wonderful promise given by Christ himself to his three disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, as recorded in Matthew 17; and to use a phrase that is commonly used by would-be evangelists of to-day, "There is nothing else to be done, for Christ finished it all on Calvary." This, to such otherwise well-intentioned people, constitutes the sum and substance of the "faith once delivered to the Saints."

This perverted view of the gospel of the kingdom was brought to my notice quite recently in the city of Glasgow, Scotland, when I had the opportunity of taking the platform in the Tolbooth Hall, (headquarters of a nonsectarian mission) for four occasions in one week. Once I occupied for the whole time, and thrice shared the time with a preacher of the Open Brethren, who gave utterance to the foregoing sentiments.

"Elias truly shall first come and restore all things as the prophets have written," is plain and terse enough to rivet the attention of any seeker after truth. And yet the generality of Bible students have either misstudied or not studied this vital point at all. It is a vital point in the interest of Bible truth, as much to Latter Day Saints as to others, for it is the central point connecting its prophetic aspect and its actual fulfillment.

The Prophet Malachi, as the mouthpiece of God, says:

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?

This evidently cannot refer to the first advent of Christ, for everyone then living abode the day of his coming, and stood when he appeared; proving there was to be another appearing in the flesh.

This is further amplified by his last utterance, as if to dispose of the matter finally, in the words:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Now the mission of Christ was to reveal to mankind the Father's pleasure concerning his kingdom,

then and in the latter days. The Jews themselves were in hourly expectation of their own kingdom being reestablished. But just as Malachi describes, the priests and rulers of the whole house of Israel had departed from their first love, had forgotten the covenant made with the wife of their youth. The true worship of the God of Israel had given place to idolatry, superstition, and priestcraft. So that in order that the ancient covenant might still be made good, it was necessary for the unchangeable God to send his messenger before him, to prepare his way and make his paths straight.

The first path which led to Calvary was heralded by John the Baptist, whom Christ declared had come as, or in the spirit and power of Elias. He was a man sent from God; a fiery messenger sent from the realms of glory to inhabit the body of clay prepared for him in a miraculous manner, through the agency of Zacharias and Elizabeth. And we read, he was holy from his mother's womb.

Truly a messenger of light, for as Elijah was caught up into heaven in a chariot of fire, descriptive of both light and power, so did the voice crying in the wilderness, "Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," burn like fire in the souls of those who resorted to him, and with such power as to make them heed his message even to the point of repentance and baptism.

But when he whom he had heralded actually came, priestcraft reasserted itself, and they did unto John "whatsoever they listed," and persuaded the people that it was impossible for their Messiah to come in the person of the son of a humble carpenter. And although he did establish his kingdom amongst the scribes and Pharisees, together with the true Melchisedec priesthood, it was all lost again in the great apostasy which supervened, and so it became necessary for a restoration, and for a messenger to come again and restore all things.

Whatever God has found and declared necessary to do in order to fulfill his plan and purpose, that he has always done and will do. But his words, "Elias truly shall first come and restore all things," leaves no room to doubt that something was going to be lost which would be restored again.

The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent seeketh to take it by force from the day of John the Baptist until now, is significant in itself, without his and the apostles' prophetic warnings of the same. The 1260 years sojourn of the woman, kingdom, gospel, and priesthood in the wilderness, was indeed accompanied with darkness over all the earth, and gross darkness in the minds of the people—a great famine not of bread and water, but that of hearing the word of the Lord.

The people groped in darkness, and prayed for

the light, fire and power of truth. Sick and tired of the strong delusion that God had sent upon them that they believed a lie, also to their undoing. But through all that terrible period of darkness, God was true; his purpose unchanged as it always was; and Christ's promise that "all things should be restored" by Elijah the prophet was fulfilled by that glorious angel flying in the midst of heaven having (bringing back again, restoring) the everlasting gospel to preach to all the dwellers upon earth, and to every nation, kindred, tongue and people, crying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him who made heaven and earth and the fountains of water."

Can anyone doubt that his judgment has come? Are not the terrible scenes of bloodshed on the battlefields of Europe, the gross departure from the common laws of decency, the corrupt practices permeating every class of society, the excessive love of pleasure, the cry of the poor and downtrodden, and the widows and orphans, a sufficient indication that as it was in the days of Noah so it is also now in these days?

And then, what? Simply, that the Lord whom we seek shall suddenly come to his temple. But who shall abide his coming, and who will stand when he appeareth? Surely not those who reject the prophet's warning, the burning, fiery message of the restoring angel, whom Christ declared would be Elijah the prophet.

It is fitting that Elijah should be chosen of God to be the actual messenger, for, "He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire." Both Moses and Elijah had some experience of flaming fire. Moses when God appeared to him in the burning bush; and Elijah in the chariot and horses of fire. Consider also, how he caused fire to rain down from heaven, and the other miracles attending his ministry as a prophet of God; the raising of the widow's son to life, the cruse of oil failing not, being fed by ravens, the waters of Jordan parting by smiting them with his mantle, and the positive knowledge that he was about to be taken up into heaven from Elisha, and finally his appearance with Moses in the Holy Mount as a spirit being.

It is no small wonder that Elijah prayed for a double portion of his spirit and power to fall on him, such spirit and power could only be identified with a true prophet and minister of God, and so John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elias, with the scorching rays of the baptismal door into the kingdom searching out the hearts and consciences of men, especially they of a proud and rebellious spirit.

What more natural then, if all this spirit, power

and authority, being lost to mankind, even after its confirmation and ratification by our Lord and his apostles, should need to be restored again, in order that the ancient covenant, as well as the new covenant should still be consummated; Israel's Messiah acknowledged as king, the priesthood reestablished as ministers in ruling the nations with a rod of iron, and the church triumphant?

The effect that the angel message was to have upon the faithful in heart, was to cause the fathers to turn their hearts to the children, and the children to their fathers.

The fathers of Israel, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the holy prophets and patriarchs, had their vision enlarged, which enabled them to see the advent of Christ and the restoration of all things.

Paul assures us that all who believe with faithful Abraham are counted as children of promise, the seed of Abraham, children of adoption, and joint heirs with Christ in his kingdom. Such children do indeed turn their hearts to their adopted father, and look forward with rejoicing hope to the time, now not far off, when they will meet them, and fall upon each others' necks and kiss each other, and dwell forever as the pure in heart—even Zion.

It is very certain that if this condition of things did not obtain amongst the very few of earth's children, the reverse would be manifested, and God would smite the earth again with a curse. Thank God for Elijah, who was instrumental in turning aside the curse, and bringing to us a blessing instead, by reason of which, in spite of, and in the midst of such awful visitations now on the earth, we are able, if we wait upon the Lord, to renew our strength, and mount up with wings as eagles.

It appears then, that as God's kingdom has been set up again and a plan of salvation formulated, and an effectual door opened by way of admission into that kingdom, as Christ declared, there is still a work for everyone to do. He finished his own work, or rather that part which he came to earth to do in such an efficient manner. He is still working for us as a meditator with the Father, and in preparing places for those who are accounted as the seed of Abraham, by reason of their obedience and observance of those "good works" which prove and make manifest their faith, just as Abraham, by the work of offering up his son Isaac, manifested his faith.

Then according to his own prophecy, while we are working while the day lasts, and just prior to his second coming, Elijah has a work to do by visiting this earth and restoring all that has been lost. So that it is safe to assert with all reverence, and having a due regard to the efficacy of the cross, that our Lord did not "finish it all," thereby leaving noth-

ing for us to do but just believe; for if that were so, the devils would be justified, for they believe, yet they tremble, just as the nations will tremble when they realize the result of the work performed by Elijah, the prophet and the restorer.

WILLIAM MOORE.

THE PLEA OF A PROPHET

(Sermon by Elder S. S. Smith, delivered at Spokane, Washington.)

The lesson of the hour is found in the prophecy of Isaiah, in the fifty-fifth chapter, and from the first to the fifth verses, inclusive:

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and a commander to the people.

The text will be the first verse of this lesson:

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

The subject for the morning is the plea of a prophet. The word of Isaiah here chronicled in this lesson and text were uttered at a time of great perplexity when the national life of Judah as well as the religious life was at a very low ebb. The reference here given from the prophetic impulse of the prophet, which so beautifully carries away the mind has reference to the gospel and the coming Redeemer, and no one need be at a loss in applying at least some things he has said in his book, to the mission, character, and events in the noble life of the Son of God. Isaiah, the prophet of high dignity, whom we rate as the prince of Jewish prophets, here extolled the excellencies of the plan of salvation as given by Christ. This text is characteristic of his entire prophecy which abounds in transcendent dignity, and affords the finest models of poetic imagery. He is sublime, forceful, and ornamental, with which he unites dignity and variety. His sense of true religion is revealed in the happy remedy by which Judah may be soothed, cheered, and their thirst assuaged in the midst of their national distress. In the metaphorical allusions here given we see a portrayal of the gospel light that was to come like a bright star that was to ascend at a time of universal and intolerable darkness. The chapter gives promise of Christ, and here calls backslidden Israel to faith and repentance, and gives promise of pardon, and speaks of the ultimate joy and blessing

that will come to them and their land. In the discussion of this text, which we attempt this morning, we will make three classifications: First, the catholicity of the address; second, the commodities announced; and third, the benevolent invitation.

THE CATHOLICITY OF THE ADDRESS

That the gospel is a universal one the prophet here seemed to indicate, for it is stated it is to "every one that thirsteth." It could hardly apply to the Jewish government and the Mosaic law, for that government and law were restricted in their operation to the distinct blood of Israel. (Here Genesis 17: 7-14; Leviticus 20: 24-26; Deuteronomy 7: 1-4; Exodus 19: 5, 6, and Ezra 9: 2, were read.) The gospel is different from this, and is a free message of grace to all who will take advantage of its privileges, for there was no restrictions to any nation, kindred or tongue, in fact the commission was to "all the world" and to "every creature." (Matthew 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15; and Acts 10: 34, 35, were here read.) We cannot doubt the Prophet Isaiah in the text read made reference to the gospel which is the revelation of the grace of God to fallen man, and we shall properly apply it that way. The statement of the text we believe applies to all who feel the need of Christ and his salvation.

The prophet here uses the term *thirsteth* as applying to those in need and desiring the gospel. Thirst we define as a painful natural sensation, occasioned by the absence of moisture from the physical system. It is a sensation that is attended by a vehement desire to partake. The term is often used in scripture in a metaphorical sense expressive of any strong mental desire, and this desire, like the sensation of thirst is accompanied with pain.

Now I verily believe a sense of guilt and sinful perversity before God causes mental distress, and under its dominion our true enjoyment ceases, fear possesses the mind and the life is embittered. In this condition we sense our true state, and our heart seeks repentance, and "thirsteth" after righteousness. When the heart laden with guilt commences to seek favor, and repent, it many times is accompanied with vehement desire, God's mercy will be earnestly solicited, the soul will earnestly entreat, and "as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." As thirst is a sensation of pain, so also a sense of sin is many times a state of great mental distress. Sin is a disease; in fact it truly has been compared to the "leprosy of the soul." Sin makes life wretched, and brings it into a state of captivity, and many times the shackles of this bondage is as bands of iron that bruise the flesh, and gladly would we be free from its servitude.