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## THE LAST DISPENSATION.

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BY ELDER W. J. SMITH.

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Beloved friends, I am pleased to have the privilege of talking to you this evening, and will call your attention to a passage of scripture found in the 29th chapter of Isaiah, the 14th verse, which I shall use as the basis of my remarks. It reads as follows:

“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.”

I have selected this passage of scripture tonight as the foundation for my remarks, because we believe that it outlines a work that was to be accomplished in the day and generation in which we now live. That it refers particularly to the work I have the honor to represent, and that the prophecy has never been completely fulfilled until within the present century. The prophet utters the prediction about seven hundred and twelve years prior to the Christian era, and in thus speaking he tells the children of Israel, or those to whom he addressed the prophecy, that at some time in the world's history God would perform a marvelous and wonderful work among the children of men; and in view of this thought, it seems to me that if this marvelous and wonderful work was of sufficient importance to engage the mind of the prophet, that he might delineate or outline that work for us, that it is of equal importance that we understand it, and that we give our attention to it, and

learn if we may, WHEN God would perform this marvelous work and a wonder.

In my remarks I shall endeavor to call your attention to the fact that the prophet, in thus speaking, refers to a work that was to be done in the generation in which we live. I shall try to prove this point. In the attempt, however, I am fully aware that I shall meet with opposition, even from professing Christians in the position I shall take relative to this text; but all I ask is a patient hearing and a careful examination of the evidences that may be offered in its support.

I remember of taking up a certain work last winter, in which the author offered comments in relation to many of the different prophecies (I believe Dr. Adam Clark was the author of the work) and I, being a little curious to know his ideas in regard to different portions of the Scriptures, and especially the passage we have under consideration tonight, turned to his comments and found him trying to show that

this marvelous work and a wonder, of which the prophet here speaks, was performed away back yonder about eighteen hundred years ago in the work accomplished by Jesus the Christ. That God performed this work at that time, and as evidence in support of this theory, says, in substance, that in consequence of the work performed through Jesus Christ the wisdom of their wise men perished indeed as indicated in this text, insomuch that their wisest men of the time could not gainsay the wisdom exemplified in the poor, humble fishermen of Galilee chosen by the Christ as his servants to spread that marvelous and wonderful work, and quotes Paul, in 1st Corinthians 26: 28, where he said: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things

of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are." This, and other scriptures, was cited to support the argument that the work done by Jesus Christ was in fulfillment of our text. Of course, I am willing to admit, and I verily believe that the work done by Christ eighteen hundred years ago, was a marvelous and most wonderful work; but I do not believe that that work came in fulfillment of the language of our text, from the fact that the conditions surrounding its fulfillment were not accomplished then, nor did the people among whom God should perform this work, thus specified, exist at that time. God here says: "I will proceed to do a marvelous work among THIS PEOPLE;" and if I prove that the term THIS PEOPLE does not apply to those existing in the days of Jesus Christ; that they did not exist then but that they do exist in this age of the world, then I think I have sufficient proof for my argument, have a

prima facie case; that is, if we are willing to allow that the prophet was right in specifying among what particular people God would perform his marvelous and wonderful work.

But that we may be prepared to understand more particularly how God would perform his wonderful work, I desire to impress upon your mind the fact that he changes not; hence always acts just like himself, and if we may ascertain from the history of his dealings with the children of men in the past, how, and by what means he has ever performed any work he has accomplished, we will learn something as to the manner of his work in performing the marvelous and wonderful work spoken of in our text. In all or any work that God has ever done for the children of men, we do not learn of his ever having vacated the throne in heaven to come down and perform a work individually, or to personally do that work, but in every single instance he has always selected

agents, or an agent, by, and through whom he has performed his will. For example: please notice the promise God made to Abraham. After bringing him out from his father's country into the land of Canaan and promising him that he should become the father of many nations, and that as the stars were in number, so should his seed be in multitude. He also declared that his seed should serve in cruel bondage for a long time; and in the proper time the Lord would deliver them. We pass down the stream of time and eventually we find the great-grandsons of Abraham migrating into Egypt, and in process of time we behold their posterity suffering under the cruel heel of tyranny and despotism—slaves in a strange land for hundreds of years. The time having then come for God to deliver them according to his promise to Abraham, he sends an angel as his representative to a man by the name of Moses, selecting him as the agent through whom he would work in delivering Israel.

The martyr Stephen represents God as saying to Moses: "I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses \* \* did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush."—Acts 7: 34, 35. Thus you see, God, in delivering Israel according to his promise, sends an agent—Moses—through whom he performs that work. And as we, in the history of the case, behold Moses going out from Egypt at the head of an army, six hundred thousand strong, according to the word of the Lord: "It came to pass the selfsame day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies."—Ex. 12: 51.

Having thus learned how God performed that work back there, we think it sufficient (though we might present other illustrations) to serve as a key to solve the matter regard-



ing how he will perform the marvelous and wonderful work spoken of in our text, for he always acts in harmony with himself. We will now turn back to the text, and learn if we can, when God is to do this great and marvelous work; and by reading the text with its connections I think we may readily ascertain something of the time. It has been said, and I think wisely too, that in reading the Scriptures if we will always observe the rule to learn first who the speaker is, to whom he is speaking, and what he is speaking about, it will assist us materially in solving what would otherwise appear as a very perplexing problem. First, then, God is speaking through the prophet Isaiah. Second, he is speaking to those professing to be his people, and third, he is speaking about a certain people among whom he would perform a wonderful work. He speaks as follows, beginning at the 9th verse: "Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with

wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, \* \* Behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among THIS people, even a marvelous work and a wonder."

Mark the phraseology: "I will proceed to do a marvelous work among THIS people." This people of whom he had just been speaking; a people who were drunken, but not with wine; a people who slumbered in deep sleep; a people who had no prophets sent of God; a people who had no God-appointed rulers, and no seers. It was among this peo-

ple that God should perform his marvelous and wonderful work. The Lord further specifies them by saying that this people had removed their hearts far from him, and that their fear towards God was taught by the precepts of men. Now if the people back there among whom Jesus Christ performed his work eighteen hundred years ago were not the people thus specified, what more need we ask in proof that this marvelous and wonderful work spoken of in our text was not then performed? Let us see, then, whether THIS people existed then or not. We will first see if they, among whom Jesus came, back there, had any prophets or not; and we find Jesus speaking of John who had preceeded him, saying: "But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet; for \* \* among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Not only was John the Baptist a prophet, but we are informed that the father of John,

—Zacharias—was a prophet. See St. Luke 1:67, also 2:25–38, concerning Simeon and Anna. But the work spoken of in our text was to be accomplished when there were no prophets. Neither were there to have any rulers, that is, rulers appointed of God. But that that people did have such, is evidenced in the fact of Zacharias “executing the priest’s office before God.”—Luke 1:8. It is also a fact that God had made choice of the tribe of Levi to serve as his ministers, and decreed that: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.” Thus they had both prophets and rulers. And as we are told in 1 Samuel 9:9, that “He that is now called a prophet was before time called a seer,” and, as I have thus shown, they did have prophets, what becomes of the argument that Christ performed the work that is specifically mentioned in my text?

We might take this matter back a little further, and in so doing we

learn that God, under the administration of Moses, appointed a quorum of twelve, one from each tribe, and a quorum of seventy as rulers in the church of that time; and Nicodemus belonged to the quorum of seventy, or in other words, was a member of the Sanhedrim. It was after this pattern that Christ organized his church also eighteen hundred years ago; but today we are told by professing Christians, that "We do not need apostles or seventies now, nor are the ministry appointed of God by revelation, for that is done away; but those who have the desire to do good, we educate for the ministry, ordain and send them out to preach."

Dear friends, it is at just such a time as this that the Lord was to perform his marvelous work. I think you can see the necessity of the Lord performing a marvelous work among the people of the nineteenth century, when you consider the fact that we are told that "The awful voice of prophecy has become

silent and God has ceased to reveal himself since he gave his revelation to John on the Isle of Patmos. No more revelations nor gifts of inspiration now, for they are all done away." Jesus said: "My Kingdom is not of this world;" hence, if he has revealed nothing within the last eighteen hundred years, what right have men here to assume to regulate the kingdom of God, or act as his ambassadors, seeing that he has said: "A man can take unto himself nothing, except it be given him from heaven."—St. John 3: 27. And Paul declares in Heb. 5: 4, that "No man taketh this honor unto himself but he that is called of God as was Aaron." Aaron was called by direct revelation from God as may be seen by reference to Exodus 4: 10-16, 27, 28.

Going back to Isaiah again, we find, as we have already read, that the people among whom God should perform the work of our text, were not only a people who had neither prophets, rulers nor seers, but that they should be "drunken, but not

with wine," they should "stagger but not with strong drink," in consequence of which the vision of ALL should become as the words of a book that is sealed. Now as the words of a book that is sealed would be unintelligible to us, so should the vision (perception) of all be in regard to the work of God while thus drunken. The word A-L-L all, does not mean a little handful somewhere, but it means what it says in the absolute sense of the word; for it is in consequence of all being thus drunken that God does this work. And that the time here alluded to by the prophet was future from his day, nay, future from the days of Christ and his apostles, is evident from the fact that John the Revelator describes the same conditions of things in telling the things that God showed him, "Which must shortly come to pass." Mark you, John, while receiving the revelation, was not shown things which had already transpired, but the words of the Spirit to him were: "Come up hither, and I will shew "

things which must be hereafter.”—Rev. 4: 1; 1: 1. And in beholding those things that were to take place in after days, he says: “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made DRUNK with the wine of her fornication.”—Rev. 17: 1, 2. Here we find the prophet describing the same event that Isaiah speaks of in the 29th chapter. “But,” says one, “the Revelator does not say all the inhabitants of the earth were drunk.” Ah, indeed! But let us see. Does he not say, “The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk?” and the definite article “the” being used in connection with “inhabitants of the earth” implies all; just as Isaiah said: “The vision of all is become as the words of a book that is sealed,” etc. If the position is



correct that all the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk, then we can readily perceive the necessity of God's arising to maintain his own cause, that the bride of Christ may be ready when the bridegroom returns; and we therefore turn to the 18th chapter, and the 3d verse declares that "All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." And in the 23d verse he says: "Thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." Now, the Latter Day Saints did not put that there; and if there is any fault to be found with the statement that all nations have been deceived, and that, too, since this beloved disciple received his revelation on Patmos, we simply roll the burden upon his shoulders, while he in turn tells us that the revelation he received declaring that all nations should be deceived—become drunk, etc.,—was: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must

shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.”—Rev. 1: 1. Now, John the Revelator and the golden tongued prophet, Isaiah, agree in describing the condition of the inhabitants of the earth; declare they were “drunk, but not with wine.” For further information, we will read Revelation 17: 6: “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration.” Drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus! Fox’s book of Martyrs lays at the feet of the Roman Catholic church the horrible crime of putting to death in various ways from fifty to seventy millions of people. Thus it was that the woman was drunken with the blood of the saints; and by reason of her power, both political and ecclesiastical, in that she held sway over all the earth—by her “sorceries were all nations deceived.” Protestantism usually interprets this woman

to mean the Roman Catholic church. She had, upon the forehead, a name written: "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the Earth." If it is true that Roman Catholicism is the mother of harlots (and Pope Pius IX says: "I acknowledge the holy Roman Catholic church to be mother and mistress of all churches)," will his congregation please answer the question: "Who are the harlots here spoken of?" Protestants affirm the Roman Catholic church to be the mother of harlots, and Catholics agree that she is the mother of all churches. In this they are agreed; hence the harlots can only be those to whom the Church of Rome has given birth. And if they who have come out from Romanism are harlots, surely none of them can constitute the bride, the Lamb's wife, hence the necessity of a recommitment of the gospel unto the children of men which would indeed be, to the slumbering nations, a marvelous work and a wonder.

Another point I wish you to observe is, that Isaiah declares, of those among whom God should perform this marvelous and wonderful work, that "The Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep." Jesus, speaking of the kingdom of heaven, says: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom, and five of them were wise, and five were foolish. \* \* While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." Now, while differences of opinion may obtain concerning this parable in regard to point of time, yet in one thing we must agree, if believing the parable at all, and that is that while Christ, the bridegroom, tarried, they ALL—the wise as well as the foolish—should slumber and sleep, which coincides perfectly with the quotation just furnished from Isaiah. If the sleeping time here referred to had its fulfillment in the "dark and cloudy day" when "darkness covered the earth and

gross darkness the minds of the people," then our minds may readily grasp the idea advanced by the Christ, that, "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him," as referring to the same event that was spoken of by the Seer of Patmos, when he said: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."—Rev. 18: 4. How beautifully this harmonizes the thought that the "marvelous work and a wonder" should be accomplished just a little while before the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ to reign with his people.

That this matter may indeed appear evident, and without a doubt in your minds, I will read a little further in Isaiah 29th, calling attention in particular to the 17th and 18th verses. They read as follows: "Is it not yet [that is after God should perform this marvelous work] a very little while, and Leb-

anon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest. And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness."

Is it not a fact that for hundreds of years, Lebanon, or Palestine, has lain as a barren, desolate and dreary waste, refusing to the husbandman proper returns for his toil? Have not the rains which gave fertility to the land, been withheld from Palestine? Yet Louis Van Buren, Sen., writing, November 14th, 1867, says: "It is a fact that the rain and dew are RESTORED; recently, in 1853, the former and the latter rains were restored, to the astonishment of the natives."—See also Chambers' Encyclopedia, Vol. 7, p. 11—Palestine, and Dictionary of Bible by Wm. Smith, p. 636.—Art. Palestine, for similar testimony regarding the restoration of the former and latter rain. Mr. Van Buren also says in regard to the fertility of the land: "It is certainly a land

of most wonderful fruitfulness with a delightful climate, producing everything, if properly cultivated, and from two to three crops in a year. They have grain, fruit and vegetables all the year round; in fact, I never was in such a country before. I have seen much good country in Europe and America, but none to compare with Palestine; its fruitfulness is uncommon, and the climate the most delightful; even in winter I did not see the least sort of frost, and vegetables of every sort were growing in perfection in gardens."

The fact that this marvelous and wonderful work of God was to be performed just a little while before Lebanon should be turned into a fruitful field, and the still further fact of Palestine being recently—within the present century—restored to a "land of most wonderful fruitfulness," calls for our inquiry and careful investigation, for it must be apparent to all, that, if Palestine has already become a fruitful field, it is too late now for the ac-

completing of the marvelous work and a wonder. I desire, for a few moments, to examine into the views of some of the leading minds of the past, relative to the re-commitment of the gospel unto the children of men, that Zion might arise and shine just prior to the coming of Christ. I think that by so doing you will get a better understanding of the points I desire to make.

First, Mr. Roger Williams, the founder of the first Baptist Church in America is represented as having said, "I conceive that the apostacy of anti-christ hath so far corrupted all, that there can be no recovery out of that apostacy, till Christ shall send forth new apostles to plant churches anew." Thus we learn that he realized the benighted condition of apostate Christianity, and looked forward to the event when God should organize his church after the primitive pattern in sending apostles to do that work. John Wesley was in harmony with this view of Mr. Williams when he said, "How is it that men, who can



discern the face of the sky \* \* do not now discern the signs of the glorious times, which, if not begun, are nigh, even at the door? \* \* What could God have done which he hath not done to convince you that the day is COMING, [not that the time has come, mark you], that the time is at hand when he will fulfill this glorious promise and will arise to maintain his own cause [perform his marvelous and wonderful work] and set up his kingdom."—John Wesley, sermon 71.

It was in view of this thought that he and his brother Charles sang:

"Almighty God of love,  
Set up the attracting sign;  
And summon whom thou dost approve,  
For messengers divine.

"From favored Abraham's seed  
The new apostles choose.  
In isles and continents to spread  
The dead reviving news."

By this we learn that Mr. Wesley believed that the Spirit giving life and vitality to the message of salvation had fled, leaving that message void of the Spirit, hence dead; but that that message was again be-

ginning to revive; and that "the day was near at hand" when God should choose a divine messenger to set up the ensign, and would send forth new apostles to spread the gospel over the continents and islands of the sea. In fact it was not merely a belief with him for he says, "We know it must be done!" Not that it has been done, or is now being done, but "We know it must [or shall] be done." We ask, how, Mr. Wesley, do you know that? And he answers:

"We know it must be done,  
 For God hath spoke the word.  
 All Israel shall the Savior own,  
 To their first state restored.

"Send then thy servants forth,  
 To call the Hebrews home;  
 From east and west, from south and north,  
 Let all the wanderers come."

Seeing, then, that Mr. Wesley anticipated the marvelous work and a wonder, we come down the stream of time still further, and we find Alexander Campbell—the founder of the Disciple church—saying, "At evening time there shall be light. The primitive gospel, in its efful-

gence and power, is yet to shine out in its original splendor to regenerate the world." According to this, Mr. Campbell recognized the fact of there having been a great apostacy, insomuch that the "primitive gospel," or gospel, of Christ, did not then manifest itself, either in its "effulgence" and glory, nor did the "power" attending the primitive gospel then appear. But the gospel with all its attendant blessings, its effulgence and power is YET to shine out in its original splendor, and that, too, "to regenerate the world." Seeing then that those men looked for God to manifest himself in the setting up of the ensign, we must look elsewhere for it; and as it was to take place prior to the time of the restoration of Palestine, let us see if we can find when and where that work was to be done. And passing down through the line of all the reformers we fail to find them even making the claim of a restoration of the primitive gospel, or being the agents selected of God by and through whom he

would perform his marvelous and wonderful work.

Martin Luther left the Roman Catholic church because of its corruptions, and in the work accomplished by him he never makes a claim to inspiration, nor that God had chosen him by special appointment to usher in the marvelous and wonderful work of God. In fact, the work performed by Mr. Luther was precipitated in consequence of the unholy methods of the Roman Hierarchy of obtaining means for the completion of St. Peter church at Rome. His holiness, the pope, had commissioned a man by the name of Tetzal to travel and sell indulgences, the purchasers of which were licensed to commit any crime they might desire, the penalty of the sin being revoked and absolution granted by the pope—all this for a money consideration—the iniquity of which aroused the perception of Mr. Luther, and he at once set about to correct this nefarious practice, and his work of reformation culminated in his ninety-five

propositions which he constantly urged against that church until his death. It was not because God had revealed to him that he should serve as his agent in bringing about his marvelous and wonderful work, that he acted as he did, but because his better judgment rebelled against the unholy principles practiced under the sacred garb of religion. But when the Lord should perform his "marvelous work and a wonder," he must have a prophet on the earth unto whom he can make manifest his will in the supervision of that work, for "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants, the prophets," (Amos 3: 7), which is prima facie evidence that the marvelous and wonderful work of our text was not accomplished under the administration of Mr. Luther, and what will apply to him in this line, will apply to all the reformers, for none of them claimed that God delegated special power and authority to them to serve as his agents—prophets—in the bring-

ing about of so great a work. Even the great Wesley said, in 1739, respecting the infant church which now bears his name: "Such a society is no other than a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

Roger Williams is represented as having said, in 1652 (years after he organized the Baptist Church in America): "In the poor small span of my life, I desired to have been a diligent and constant observer, and have been myself many ways engaged, in city, in country, in courts, in schools, in universities, in church, in Old and New England, and yet I cannot, in the holy presence of God, bring in the result of a satisfactory discovery, that either the begetting ministry of the apostles or messengers to the nations, or the feeding or nourishing ministry of teachers, according to the first insti-

tution of the Lord Jesus, ARE YET RESTORED AND EXTANT." And one of his biographers says, "He denied that any ministry now exists, which is authorized to preach the gospel to the impenitent or to administer the ordinances. He believed that the junctions belonged to the apostolic race of ministers which was interrupted and discontinued when the reign of anti-christ commenced, and which will not, as he thought, be restored, till the witnesses, (See Rev. 11: 11), shall have been slain and rise again." Thus you see, my friends, that according to the statements of those men the re-commitment of the gospel was confidentially believed as a work to be established farther down the stream of time. As we have observed, according to the prophecies, the "marvelous work and a wonder," should be established just a little while prior to the time when Palestine should "be turned into a fruitful field," and the fact of Palestine's fruitfulness and fertility having been restored calls for that work

now as having been already begun, or else we must reject the prophecies, which we can ill afford to do. Hence, without offering any apology for the following, I desire to tell you that a little better than sixty years ago, in the state of New York, an unlearned, illiterate boy, of about seventeen years of age, declared in the face of all the opposing forces which were brought to bear against him, that an angel had come to him in fulfillment of Revelation 14: 6, 7, and declared to him that the time for fulfilling the covenant which God made with ancient Israel concerning their posterity, was at hand; that the great preparatory work for the second coming of the Messiah was speedily to commence—that the time was at hand for the gospel, in its fullness, to be preached in power unto all nations, that a people might be prepared with faith and righteousness for the millennial reign of universal peace and joy, and that he was the chosen instrument in the hand of God to usher in the dispensation of the fullness



of times when the Lord should pour out his Spirit upon all flesh; that Jerusalem was to be rebuilt, and the dispersed of Judah should be gathered to their own land, and the poor among men might again rejoice under the benign influence of the Spirit of God as shed forth upon the pure in heart, eighteen hundred years ago. This young man's name was Joseph Smith. "Ah, there," says one, "you have spoiled all you have previously said, by referring to that man. Why, he was a base fraud, a deceiver, a villain and altogether an unscrupulous man." But hold, dear friends, for a little while, and let me ask you, Who is it that says he was such a base impostor? Is it his friends or his enemies? If it is his enemies, let me ask: Which one of you would feel willing that I should erect as the standard the sayings of your enemies by which to judge you? Would you be willing that I should take the statements of your avowed enemies and judge you by those statements? If not, why

should you judge Joseph Smith by such a rule—the statements of his enemies? The enemies of Christ said he was a bad man; and of the apostles it was said, by their enemies, that they were “daring and arrogant, enemies to public tranquility and excitors to civil wars and contentions, haters of mankind; and their doctrine was called a destructive superstition.”—Mosheim, vol. 1, p. 73. If we are not willing to judge Christ and his apostles by the statements of their enemies, would it not be the better way to examine the teachings of Joseph Smith, rather than to hearken to what Mrs. Grundy said that Deacon Sniffles said that his aunt Jerusha Jane told him that her grandmother’s aunt’s cousin lived in a neighborhood where there was a man who said Joseph Smith went to school with him and that he was a bad fellow? This “He said, that she said, that I said, that you said that they said that somebody else said,” is getting a little too stale for intelligence to be blended with,

and hence, if we find that the work Joseph Smith did was in harmony with that which the prophets predicted should be done, and was accomplished at the time pointed out by the unerring Spirit of prophecy; and if those prophecies were not fulfilled by any one else, and the time has passed for their fulfillment, we must of necessity accept of that one as appointed of God to perform that work, even though the scoffs of the foolish and frowns of bigots, the sneers of hypocrites and calumny of the slanderer, or the ridicule and popular prejudice of the people estranged from God, may be urged against him.

Joseph Smith declares that an holy angel appeared to him with the message that he had been selected and chosen of God to serve as his agent in bringing to pass the marvelous and wonderful work spoken of by the prophets; and on the 6th day of April, 1830, he organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints which has been, and is today, marvelous and wonder-

ful indeed. Thus organized, the infant church immediately began operation among the children of men; and as the servants of God made the proclamation, "Behold, your Savior cometh, his reward is with him and his work before him; repent ye therefore and believe the gospel, for the hour of his judgment is come," hundreds and thousands of people gave heed to the warning, insomuch that in the short space of fourteen years, upward of two hundred thousand souls had rallied round the standard and by covenant with God entered into the sacred precincts of the fold of Christ. This work was accomplished by an unlettered ministry, who went forth with this unpopular message without purse or scrip, and the power of God attended their ministrations. Joseph organized the church upon its primitive basis, having apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, deacon and bishops; together with various helps in the church or government of God; while faith in God and in Jesus Christ,

together with repentance and baptism (immersion) for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands by those in authority in the church, for the gift of the Holy Spirit, were the initiatory principles by which aliens might become adopted sons and daughters into the kingdom of God. Compliance to these principles being had, if then adding to their faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity, being rooted and grounded in love, always abounding in the work of the Lord, that they should then know of the doctrine; that the signs spoken of in St. Mark 16: 14-18, would follow such an obedience, and by the testimony of the Spirit in confirmation of the work they would be enabled to testify of a surety "our gospel came not in word only but in power and with the Holy Ghost, and MUCH ASSURANCE." This claim of Joseph Smith's is in exact accord with Revelation 14: 6, 7, where it is expressly declared that in the hour of God's

judgment, (elsewhere spoken of as "the dispensation of the fullness of times;" "the times of the restitution of all things;" "The eleventh hour;" "God's great preparation day,") an angel should fly through the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel that it might be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. This was all to take place just before Palestine should become a fruitful field, and as the fertility of that land has been restored, it is too late now for the accomplishment, or to establish the marvelous work and a wonder. We therefore hold out to you, dear friends, the promise of Jesus the Christ that, "If any man will do the will of the Father he SHALL KNOW of the doctrine, whether it is of God, or whether I speak of myself."

The Prophet Isaiah said that when God should perform his marvelous and wonderful work, one of the results should be: "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured

shall learn doctrine." Oh, what comfort this should bring to those, who, although trying to serve God, yet because of the "traditions of the elders," can hardly accept of him as being just. To illustrate. That fond mother who lavished her dearest affections upon her infant child, is now brought face to face with the grim monster, death, who, heedless of her love and prayers, mocks her despairing cry, and snatches from her tender bosom the sunlight of her home. She had heard the old tradition, and had been reared in the belief, that,

"There is a never ending hell, and never dying pains,

Where sinners must with demons dwell in darkness, fire and chains;

Have faith the same with endless shame to all the human race,

For hell is crammed with infants, damned, without a day of grace."

She, believing that her child having not been christened (or baptized as she calls it), that, therefore, it cannot be saved, and must go to hell to welter in the flames of eternal burning; and in the agony of her soul she murmurs against God, crying, "Why did he take away my child

to burn it forever and ever, ere I had the privilege to obtain for it the sacrament of baptism? Why has God foreordained that my child should suffer the vengeance of eternal woe, while other children which are no better by nature than mine, are predestined to dwell in the realms of peace forevermore?"

The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage—the great Electric Light of this continent—in speaking of hell's torments, says: "If at the end of a century a soul might come out it would not be so bad. If there were any time in all the future, in billions and quadrillions of years, that the soul might come out, it would not be so bad; but if the Bible be true—Far into the ages one lost soul shall cry out to another lost soul: 'How long have you been here?' and the soul will reply, 'The years of my ruin are countless. I estimated the time for thousands of years; but what is the use of estimating when all these rolling cycles bring us no nearer the terminus.' Ages! Ages! Ages! Eternity!



Eternity! Eternity! The wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath to come! No medicine to cure that marasmus of the soul. No hammer to strike off the handcuffs of that incarceration. No burglar's key to pick the locks which the Lord hath fastened. \* \* The lost soul will cry out: 'I cannot stand this! I cannot stand this! Is there no way out?' And the echo will answer 'No way out.' And the soul will cry, 'Is this forever?' And the echo will answer, 'Forever.'” President Finny, of Oberlin College, Ohio, is represented as having said: “The torment increases eternally, insomuch that they suffer more in one hour of the second thousand years than they did in all the first thousand years,” and, “Hell is so hot when they are first cast in that if they were taken out and put into a chaldron of red-hot potash they would freeze to death instantly.” Do you wonder that that fond mother should murmur and say: “Where is there justice in sending my child to such a place?” Ah, my

friends, they who preach such a doctrine, misrepresent God. And when his marvelous and wonderful work is presented to those honest-hearted murmuring ones, they will learn the doctrine of God's justice to all his creatures, which indeed, is like a shining pearl on the placid bosom of a tranquil sea. He is no respecter of persons, and "whatsoever a man sows, THAT shall he reap."

In conclusion let me say, we claim to represent the great and marvelous work of God spoken of in my text, and earnestly invite you to examine it. "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good," was the great Apostle Paul's injunction; and with regard to this work, we claim that it came forth at the right time—just before Lebanon should be turned into a fruitful field. That it came forth in the right manner—was restored by an angel to a young man, as Zechariah declares, in his second chapter, verses one to five, it should be, and which John beheld as being done in the hour of God's

judgment, of which you may read in Revelation 14: 6, 7. That it was properly organized.—having apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc., and teaches the same doctrine advocated by Christ and his apostles eighteen hundred years ago; and the blessings, as bestowed upon the church in the days of Christ and his apostles, are given to the humble, faithful and pure in heart today, confirming them in the faith, cheering their hopes and brightening the dreary path of life. Take this matter to God in prayer, dear friends, ask him to direct you in the matter, and if you will impartially weigh it, asking God to direct you, he will surely manifest the truth to you; for in the language of Tertullian to the Emperor: “Whoever looked well into our religion that did not embrace it?” Thanking you for your kind attention, I pray God that the benediction of heaven may ever be with you. Amen.

