

No. 301

APOSTASY  
AND  
RESTORATION

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## No. 301.—“The Apostasy and the Restoration.”

BY J. W. RUSHTON.

One of the most prolific sources of misunderstanding in regard to religion is the refusal to acknowledge that there has been a universal departure from the original gospel as taught by Christ. Most people are aware that such an event as the Reformation was the reactionary result of the great abuses which had obtained in the Roman Catholic Church; yet it seldom occurs to the minds of these people that to concede the need of a reformation is a tacit admission that an apostasy from the true gospel had taken place; otherwise the so-called reformation was not only unnecessary, but actually an evil. In face of this important piece of history it is really unaccountable that there should be so much indifference to this very important event and the consequences which necessarily result therefrom.

If we are believing and practicing a religion or a creed other than the one authorized and accepted by God, or associated with a Church other than the “body or Church of Jesus Christ,” our religious service must be valueless so far as effecting our salvation is concerned. To argue that we can believe what we please and join any Church we choose and obtain salvation, not only discounts the “word of God,” but introduces successful competition in regard to the salvation of mankind, which work the Bible most emphatically teaches is exclusively the mission and work of Jesus Christ our Lord. The following scriptures are selected from a number in support of this: Matthew 15:8, 9; Colossians 2:22; 2 John 9-11; James 1:25; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. From these we learn that service rendered unto God in a way or manner different from the “way,” “plan,” or “method” revealed in the word of God will not only result in disappointment in this life, but will yield disaster and loss in the life which is to

come. Men and women are not only forbidden to worship God in a manner different from the way shown to us by Christ, but all blessings here and hereafter can only be realized when we believe in and conform to the gospel of Christ. (Read very carefully Acts 4:12; 2 John 9; John 4:23, 24; Matthew 7:21-28; John 3:16; John 5:24; John 12:47-50; Hebrews 5:9.)

In the epistle of Paul to the Galatians, 1:6-9, is depicted in unequivocal terms the fate of any one so daring as to attempt to compete with Christ in the presentation of a gospel by and through which it is argued salvation can be obtained. This scripture forbids the thought that any religion will do, or that it is a matter of no importance which Church we belong to. To persist in such a thought is not only hazardous and foolish, but wicked in that it dishonors God and Christ, besides jeopardizing the salvation of those who are influenced by such teachings. Further: if, by being members of any Church, whether it be Catholic, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Methodist, etc., we shall be all right, let us put the question, Why did God in the days of Christ disapprove and reject all other Churches and forms of religion and command Christ to build his Church? If any Church or creed will do, then obviously such a work was altogether unnecessary. (See Matthew 16:18, 19; Matthew 6:33; John 3:3-5; Colossians 1:13.) The fact that God is unchangeable and no respecter of persons, coupled with the foregoing fact that such Church or kingdom was established as the means of salvation (see Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Malachi 3:6; Matthew 5:18; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17), gives to us the following conclusion: Inasmuch as it was necessary in the days of Christ to become members of his "body" or "Church" or "kingdom," in order to be in a saved condition, and in order to become members thereof

it was imperative that man should conform to his gospel; then, God not being subject to change nor having respect for persons, exactly the same means and process must be in evidence and operation now. Therefore we reject the popular and delusive teaching because of it being untenable and contradictory to the word of God.

Some, indeed many, urge that the church of Christ is composed of individuals scattered in the various Churches. Obviously this is a fallacy; for the body or Church can only be composed of those individuals who do his will and keep his commandments. The following scriptures expose this fallacy: Matthew 12:49, 50; John 10:27, 28; John 3:3-5. The attempt to claim this relationship with Christ short of or different from this divine plan will prove abortive and calamitous. (See John 10:1.) Jesus, the Shepherd, entered into the fold or Church by that means (see verse 2 and Matthew 3:13-17); and his sheep enter in by the same way. (See verse 4.) Those only who follow Christ are counted as sheep; those who do not are rebels. (See also John 1:12.)

These divine premises warrant the conclusion that it is necessary for us to become members of the *one true body* of (Church of) Christ; otherwise we are in jeopardy and salvation unrealized.

It is so obvious to every thinking person, that it is not necessary to enter into details to prove there is something seriously wrong in the religious realm of our day. Such a vast number of diverse organizations or Churches (numbering, it is commonly computed, over five hundred), each claiming to be "the Church," yet every one different from its fellows. That Christ can only be "the head" of the one *body* ("which is his Church," Colossians 1:18) is self-evident, so that there can be one only whose claim is right and legal and four hundred and ninety-nine of these religious *bodies* (Churches) must be

without a head. The great question to be solved is, How can we know which (if any) of these different Churches is really the true one? The only way is to examine them in point of organic structure, doctrine, and results. This is the only effective way. (See Isaiah 8:20; John 3:34; 2 John 10, 11; Mark 16:16-19; Matthew 16:17, 18.) All Churches must be tested by this divine standard, and any or all that fall short must be rejected.

We now come to the consideration of our claim that there has been a universal apostasy, and ask of you a candid, unbiased investigation of the evidences adduced. As a preface we give the authentic definitions of the terms we are using; viz., *Apostasy*, *Reformation*, and *Restoration*:

*Apostasy*.—Abandonment of one's religion, principles, or party; a revolt from ecclesiastical obedience, from a religious profession, or from holy orders. (Greek: A standing away: *Apo*, from. *Stasis*, a standing.)

*Reformation*.—The act of forming again; the act of reforming; amendment; improvement.

*Reform*, v. t.—To form again or anew, to transform; to make better; to remove that which is objectionable from; to repair or improve; to reclaim.

*Reform*, v. i.—To become better; to abandon evil; to be corrected or improved.

*Reform*, n.—A forming anew, change, amendment, improvement.

*Restoration*. — Act of restoring; replacement; recovery; revival; reparation; renewal; restoration of a building to its original design.

*Restore*.—To repair; to replace; to return; to bring back to its former state; to revive; to cure; to compensate; to mend.

The foregoing definitions are all taken from Chambers' English Dictionary, 1898.

To claim a restoration of the original gospel of

Jesus Christ and the Church established by him (as the Latter Day Saints do), implies that there has been a departure from this gospel and a forsaking of the Church. The Reformation can not be entertained as being adequate to meet the demands arising from a universal departure from the truth. At the very most all that is ever claimed for the Reformation is that it attempted to reform the abuses and evils that had arisen in the Roman Catholic Church. (See D' Aubigné's History of the Reformation, pages 237, 238.) There was no one in a position to bring back again the wanderers—the apostates; for all were saturated with the evils of superstition, unsound doctrine, and sacerdotalism. (See the "Homily on Idolatry" of the Church of England, which reads: "Laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, men, women and children, of all ages, sexes, and degrees, of whole Christendom, have been at once buried in the most abominable idolatry (a most dreadful thing to think), and that for the space of eight hundred years or more.")

It is a matter of historical fact that the reformers were seceders from the Roman Catholic Church, and in most instances were ordained clergymen or priests. Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Knox, Cranmer, etc., were prominent in the vanguard of Protestantism, and these all were apostates from the papacy. Not only so, but every one of the Churches established under the influence of the Reformation borrowed from the Roman Catholic theology many of its distinctive doctrines, and more or less tenaciously hold them to-day. If it is urged that the Catholic Church was the one true Church, then it did not need any human reformation; for if it emanated from a perfect designer it could not be improved either by addition or by subtraction. At this juncture we cheerfully pay tribute to the memories of the noble host of "reformation" martyrs and protesters against the

crying evils of that age, and believe without question that they were more or less inspired by the Spirit of God to resent the arrogant efforts to enslave the minds and consciences of men and throw off the yoke of sacerdotalism and so prepare the way to a large extent for the subsequent introduction of God's purpose. A careful study of history shows the strict relationship and sequence of events one with the other, and the Reformation beyond question swept away immense barriers, which, had they remained, would have frustrated the designs of God.

So to-day the religious world is divided into three distinct sections; namely, Roman Catholics, Protestant or Reformers, and the ones who hold and claim a divine restoration. It is true the latter section is comparatively very small, but that by no means can be an evidence of error, but rather the reverse; for truth always has been unpopular, even though its humble following was graced by the actual presence of the Son of God. The question to be decided, then, is, Which of these three sections is right?

We shall now collate evidences from the Scriptures to show that an apostasy was not only prophesied of and anticipated by the inspired servants of God, but that this condition of affairs had already obtained in the early days of Christianity, and would spread wider and wider until its direful shadow would cast its gloom over the entire world. The events inscribed in history abundantly prove that these men were not carried away by fanatical alarms, nor did they speak presumptuously.

We now invite a studious perusal of the following passages:

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”—Matthew 11:12. (Read also Matthew 13:24–26.)

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and

shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."—Matthew 24: 9-12.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."—Acts 20: 28-30.

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [of Christ's second advent] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [hinders] will let, until he be taken out of the way."—2 Thessalonians 2: 3-7. (Read entire chapter.)

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."—1 Timothy 4: 1-3.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous

times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now for a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."—2 Peter 2:1-3.

(Read now Jude's Epistle, and Revelation, chapters two and three.)

These scriptures are conspicuous and remarkable in that they not only narrate then current history, but with an accuracy that could only result from the divine afflatus being possessed by these men, the future is unveiled, even down to the present time, and a minute catalogue of the characteristic evils of the age is tabulated as evidencing the apostate condition of these latter days. They more than established the claims we have advanced; viz., That universal apostasy was not only predicted, but had even then made rapid encroachment in very many of the various branches of the Church.

It is not our business to discuss the multifarious causes which brought about such a direful condition; it is only within our province to show the fact that such a condition did obtain.

We now invite your attention to a careful reading of Revelation, chapter twelve. Here under the symbol of a woman the church of Christ is portrayed in all her primitive glory and purity. Radiant with the glory and power of God, encircled with a crown of apostles, symbolized by the stars; and as the stars received their light and brilliancy from the center of the solar system, so the apostles were then receiving light, intelligence, and power by being in communion with God, the great center of the universe. Having under her feet the Mosaic law, typifying the ascendancy of the Church above the light of the Mosaic law, and basking in the effulgence of God's direct presence, above the medium of the "law of carnal commands and outward ordinances."

But, as we look upon this prophetic panorama, we see the Church is assailed by a power represented by the "great red dragon," symbolical of paganism, and is prevailed against. "Her child," representing "the authority or priesthood," is caught up to heaven, while the Church is driven into the wilderness. When next we meet this woman it is under a vastly different aspect. (Read now very carefully Revelation, chapter seventeen.) Instead of being clad in the habiliments of God's power and glory, the tawdry, tinsel vestments of human and worldly glamour now attract the attention. Instead of being the consort and bride-elect of God, she is now the voluptuous mistress of earthly potentates, courting first their smiles, protection, and flattery, and afterwards without any mercy or compunction treads under foot these very powers which have given to her this unholy exaltation; for, "she reigneth over the kings of the earth." Instead of the virgin comeliness of innocence and virtue, the marks of vice, dissipation, and selfishness are chiseled in her form; instead of being upheld by the strength and power of God, she is riding on a beast, typical of the power of the world.

The once persecuted now becomes the relentless persecutor, and in turn actually becomes the scourge of the world. "And now the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."—Verse 18.

When we take hold of ecclesiastical history these salient features are fully corroborated, and with no more vividness than that which attends these features revealed by divine prescience.

We can not within the compass of a small tract narrate all the events of history dealing with these events, but we just present the following synopsis:

As is seen from the Scriptures, in the first century the Church was manifesting signs of departure from the Christian truth and form. These became more and more pronounced as time went along; but it was not until Constantine's conversion (A. D. 312) when Christianity, hitherto confined very largely to the poorer classes, became popular, and as a consequence the asceticism which had been so characteristic of the Church was entirely abolished, and pride, selfishness, unholy ambition, and licentiousness drove away every vestige of the primitive power and graces and paved the way for the inglorious quarrels which very shortly afterwards arose among the prelates and officials at Byzantium (or Constantinople), Rome, Carthage, and Alexandria. With the evil of a man-made ministry there came the consequent aspirations of the one to lord it over his brethren, and then came the divisions, the most important of which was the great schism of the Church when it was divided into the eastern and western sections; the one under the bishop of Constantinople, and the other owning the bishop of Rome as supreme bishop. It is apparent that these two factions could only be inimical to each other's interests, hence it is not difficult to account for the disgraceful scenes of contention and bitterness that frequently occurred. Things seemed to reach a

climax in A. D. 538, when Emperor Justinian united church and state and thus affected the transformation so graphically foreshadowed in Revelation, chapters twelve and seventeen.

In A. D. 605 Boniface solicited from Emperor Phocas the title of universal bishop with the privilege of handing it down to his successors. This profligate potentate who had a grudge against the bishop of Constantinople granted the request, conferring it in 606. History reveals that from this time the tragic and wonderful fulfillment of prophecy was rapid and complete.

The Pope of Rome acquired more and more power, became more arrogant, proud, and selfish, forced by every means his degenerate dogmas upon all nations, until in the sixteenth century the inherent power of God-given intelligence rebelled against such an abject mental and spiritual slavery, flung off the fetters, and soared aloft; until from the pinnacles of newly discovered truths these pioneers of the Reformation sighted the "promised land of knowledge, truth, and power which we are enjoying to-day.

We have already discussed the Reformation, its place, influence, and effect upon the history of man, and have seen that it did not nor could it supply that which was lost. This could only be done by God himself. So we now present evidences to show that just as surely as the baneful effect of a universal apostasy was predicted by the power of God, so also was the divine restoration; a theme that did not escape the vigilant eye of the prophet.

First of all, we introduce Revelation 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: and worship him that made

heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." We especially emphasize the following points in this remarkable scripture:

1. The everlasting gospel was sometime future from A. D. 96, to be restored to earth (a proof that it was to be taken away).

2. It would be restored by angelic ministration.

3. No nation or people would be in possession of it at the time this gospel would be thus restored.

4. This event would take place just prior to the judgments of God being poured out.

A glance at Revelation 1: 1 informs us that a series of events shortly to transpire was shown to John. Verse one of chapter four introduces us to a new series of events which would take place hereafter, this restoration being among the events catalogued under the latter heading. We present the following references to locate as nearly as possible the time when this event would take place. (Read remainder of chapter fourteen.) We gather therefrom that this angel would come just prior to the fall of Babylon; then there transpires the end of the world or "harvest." These all clearly point to the latter days, the time just before the end. This is corroborated by Jesus in Matthew 24: 14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." The great sign to signal the near approach of Christ's second advent would be the restoration of this same unchangeable gospel to be preached to every nation; when this had been done then should the end come. The Old Testament furnishes a multitude of evidences bearing upon this, which will admit of no other application.

(Read Ezekiel 37: 15-28.) These two sticks represent the two records; one of the children of Joseph, and one of the children of Israel, or the Jews. These two records were to be joined in one, for the accom-

plishment of God's purposes, revealed in verses twenty-two to twenty-eight, viz., the reconciling of the different tribes one to the other and all to God; that they may realize the blessings so frequently promised to them. Verses twenty-two and twenty-three show the time when this shall transpire, just prior to the restoration of the national rights and hereditary blessings to Israel. The uniting of the two records or testimonies was to prove a factor in the accomplishment of these purposes. We certainly all agree that the Bible is the record of the Jews, but where and what is this stick or record of Joseph? (Now turn to Isaiah 11:10-16.) We cull the following information: In the days of the gathering of Israel, the Lord would set an ensign for both Jew and Gentile and "unto him shall the gathering of the people be." That ensign is Christ. And, as Christ and his gospel are inseparably connected, we can readily see that in the day of this gathering it was contemplated by God to set up the "Light of the world," Christ, for the gathering of both Jews and Gentiles. (Turn now to Isaiah 18.) Here we have again the statement that an ensign would be set up; a description of the land, and its location where this ensign would be set up, also the time. "A land shadowing with wings," lying west of Jerusalem, beyond the rivers of Ethiopia (now called Africa), just before "the harvest" of "the world." Jesus defines the harvest of the world in Matthew 13:39: "The harvest is the end of the world."

We now present a summary of discoveries:

1. There would be an apostasy from the truth.
2. Sometime, subsequently to A. D. 96, in the hereafter, an angel would come from heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to all the world.
3. This event is synonymous with the setting up of a "standard" or "ensign," prophesied of by Isaiah and Ezekiel.

4. That standard is the gospel of Christ.

5. Contemporaneous with this, then, would come to light the record of Joseph and it would be joined with the record of the Jews, that is, the Bible.

6. These events would transpire just prior to the gathering of Israel, Judah, and Ephraim, the removal of the curse for disobedience; just anterior to the coming of God's judgments, or the end (harvest) of the world.

7. The place or locality where these events would be inaugurated would be in a land west of Jerusalem, beyond the African rivers.

The foregoing features stand out clearly and unmistakably in the word; they must have a significance and fulfillment.

We now turn to Isaiah 29, where we obtain proof that the foregoing summary is not a vague medley to bolster up an impostor's dream or story. The first six verses tell of the disasters to befall the city of Jerusalem; especially do the denunciations apply to the time when Jerusalem should be besieged so persistently that the invaders would not desist until they had literally razed it to the ground, only the debris of dust and stones bearing melancholy witness of the erstwhile glory. In A. D. 70 Vespasian, and after him his son Titus, literally fulfilled this scripture, and also the one given by Christ in Luke 19:41-44. Verses seven and eight depict the condition of the nations which had been engaged in warfare against Jerusalem. The literal fulfillment of this is so tragically evident that we scarcely need to produce evidence to prove its veracity. Nineveh, Babylon, and Rome are now but names that flit intermittently across the page of history; the ancient glory and existence are but "dreams of a night vision." Verses nine and ten portray not only the obliteration of these hostile nations, but also the fact of a great spiritual lethargy and famine. The spirit of prophecy

would no longer operate; neither communion with God, which ever has been the safeguard of the Church. In short, we have the state and condition of the world under the influence of apostasy clearly and concisely reflected. Verses eleven to fourteen speak of a book that is sealed which comes to light during this time, "the words" of which are delivered to one that is learned, with the request that he read (decipher) it. The reply is made, "I can not; for it is sealed." "The book" then is delivered to one that is "not learned," with the same request, "Read this." The reply is, "I am not learned." Because of the base hypocrisy manifest among the people, having a pretense of worship, hollow and insincere, the Lord says, "Behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder," a work in which the wisdom and learning of the world shall have no part; but this work of God shall be in opposition to all the wisdom of men. Verses fifteen and sixteen reflect the spirit of agnosticism and infidelity which would be rife at the time these things would take place: Men excusing the sin and evil by disputing God's existence; those not so bold and daring seeking to undervalue his matchless skill and creative power, and questioning his inscrutable wisdom and providence. If these characteristics fail to reveal the time, verse seventeen dispels all doubt. In the form of a query we are informed that just subsequent to the coming of this book and the introduction of God's marvelous work Lebanon, that is, Palestine, shall once again become fruitful to such an extent that it will be regarded as "a forest." Then shall the blind and deaf (spiritually) see and hear. Prophecy and revelation would once again be introduced. The "sealed book" would be unsealed; that is, interpreted or deciphered, and hence the poor among men rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. Verses twenty-two to twenty-four show that after this the curse upon the Jews shall be

removed, and they return from their backslidings, to be restored to their national rights. Their faces shall lose the hunted, pallid look of the outcast, and instead the bright hue of health and vigor will bespeak the spirit of independence. God and the Holy One (Jesus Christ) shall be sanctified and revered among them, and the gospel so long rejected by them will correct the proud spirit, and reveal the "goodness, mercy, and love of God which endureth for ever."

We now adduce a short synopsis of historical fact concerning the inception of this latter-day work, and ask you to note carefully the concurrence between prophecy and history in the restoration, as we have in regard to the apostasy. We venture to affirm that never, in all the history of God's dealings with man, has there been any event, or series of events foreshadowed by prophecy, more accurate, detailed, and astounding. Wonderful, marvelous, improbable it may appear,—but fraudulent, never.

The chief person connected with the inception and early history of this latter-day movement was Joseph Smith, the third son of Joseph and Lucy Smith (whose maiden name was Mack), daughter of Solomon Mack. Joseph Smith was born December 23, 1805, in the town of Sharon, Windsor County, state of Vermont, United States of America. He lived the ordinary life of one born of working people; the family was poor, but honest and industrious, and capable in such employment as was open to settlers of that time in a comparatively new land. Joseph was not learned, nor educated in any sense, but was illiterate. But before his death he became a good scholar for the time, was a fair linguist, writer, speaker, and grammarian. Certainly he could not have been such a lazy, worthless vagabond as his enemies say to attain even to this condition when his life was ended before he was thirty-nine years old. At the age of fifteen his mind was turned to religion,

owing to the influence of a conjoint religious revival among the various sects in the town of Manchester, where this family lived at the time. He was much exercised and anxious to find out the true church; for, what seems to be common experience, he was perplexed in regard to the matter; for after the revival quarreling ensued as to which was the right church; of course they each claimed to be.

The effect of this unseemly contention was to repel the boy, and create a desire in him to search the Scriptures for himself. One of the first scriptures that attracted his attention was James 1:5. Here, he thought, was the solution of his difficulties and perplexities. So, on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of 1820, he retired to a secluded spot in the wood not far from his home, and in the spirit of prayer presented to God the desire of his heart. While in the attitude of prayer two personages appeared to him, and one addressed him by name, saying, pointing to the other one, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." He stated his dilemma, and was informed that he must join none of the churches, as they were all wrong and their creeds were an abomination in His sight. Much more instruction was given him. In obedience to this instruction he kept himself aloof from all the religious bodies in the locality of his home, and made known to one of the ministers his reason for doing so. At once he became the subject of much bitter persecution and many inexcusable methods were adopted to prevent the influence of such a claim spreading. Hence it is very easy to account for the vulgar falsehoods circulated about him. Romances and slanders of the foulest kind were gotten up, some of which are far more miraculous and incredible than anything ever Joseph claimed; yet because they are bad, people readily believe them in lieu of the truth. Three years elapsed, when one evening (September 21,

1823,) after retiring, Joseph engaged in fervent prayer and had another visit from a heavenly being, all radiant in celestial glory, who said his name was Moroni, and that he had been sent of God to inform him that God had a work for him to perform; that his name should be had for good and evil among all nations; and further stated that there was deposited in a box in the earth a record written upon metal plates giving an account of the former inhabitants of America, revealing their origin, containing also an account of the fullness of the gospel as delivered by Christ unto them. Deposited in the box, also, was an instrument known as the Urim and Thummim, by which the characters on the plates could be translated. He quoted many prophecies of the Scriptures, among them Malachi third chapter, also the fourth chapter; Isaiah eleventh chapter; Acts third chapter, verses twenty-two and twenty-three; Joel third chapter, from verse twenty-eight to the end, and stated the time was at hand for the fulfillment of them. In the vision he was shown the locality where the plates were deposited, and that so distinctly that he recognized the place when he visited it. This same messenger came back twice in the same night. The visions and conversations occupied all night; for morning light had diffused itself upon the earth when the glory of the messenger had faded away. After four years, on September 21, 1827, the plates and the Urim and Thummim were given into Joseph Smith's keeping, with instructions to care for them and let no harm come to them. These plates were seen and handled by eleven persons besides Joseph Smith. Three of them, namely, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris, had them shown to them by an angel. The testimonies of all the witnesses appear on one of the first pages of the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon was published in March, 1830, as the result of the translation. In February,

of 1828, Martin Harris took a paper containing a transcript of some of the words of this book to Professor Anthon of New York, for him to decipher. He certified that the characters were genuine and the translation of them correct. Upon Harris informing Anthon of the peculiar circumstances under which the plates had been obtained, he said if the book was brought to him he would read it; but, being informed by Harris that the book was sealed the Professor replied, "I can not read a sealed book." Many manifestations of God's power were experienced, besides revelations being received from him; and on the 6th day of April, 1830, the Church of Jesus Christ once again was organized by the power and authority of God, according to the primitive pattern reflected in the New Testament, with apostles, prophets, seventies, high priests, elders, priests, teachers, and deacons, pastors and evangelists. The everlasting gospel once again was committed to earth by angelic ministration, to be preached and practiced as in the days of Christ and his immediate disciples, including faith, repentance, baptism (by immersion) for the remission of sins, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God was poured out upon them in power, the gifts of the gospel were common experience (see Mark 16: 16-20); healing of the sick, blind, and lame, the gift of tongues, prophecy, etc., etc. The points of identity between the prophecies quoted and the history epitomized are very plain to be seen.

Just one point more needs emphasis; that is, in the year 1852 the former and latter rains were restored to the land of Palestine, and instead of a barren waste there now is one of the most fertile and productive countries in the world. It is also notorious that the Jews are gradually losing their national ostracism and are now occupying foremost positions in financial, political, and scientific circles, besides being con-

spicuous in art, literature, and philosophy. It is common history that they are rapidly gathering back to their long desolate home. The great Zionistic movement can at least be valued as evidence that the time is not far distant when "the highway of the Lord" shall be established and all Israel be gathered home "with songs of everlasting joy."

I ask in face of prophetic verity and historical fact, Can we account for these strange, complete harmonies between the Scriptures, history, and the latter-day work, by calling Joseph Smith a charlatan, fraud, or deceiver? Intelligent men and women must have, and they demand, a more reasonable, honorable, and truthful explanation of this otherwise phenomenon than the traducing of the dead. Can it be that Joseph Smith by mere trickery or precocious sagacity succeeded the divine end of God's own word to perpetuate a fraud of such stupendous proportions? *Never!* The thousands of the poor among men who are to-day "rejoicing in the Holy One of Israel" because of the latter-day work, are a standing witness against such an insult to intelligence. While the evils of Utah Mormonism have caused the work among the uninformed to be evilly spoken of, yet as it was in the early Church, so it is repeated in latter-day history, "they went out from us, but they were not of us." The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has by sheer merit and perseverance won for itself a recognition at the hands of the intelligent and fair-minded.

We feel justified, in conclusion, in claiming that, if the Bible is any guide to us upon the questions of spiritual and ecclesiastical identity, then this work through Joseph Smith is indeed the "great and marvelous work" God pledged himself to introduce in the latter days, in fulfillment of his own word.