

LATTER DAY REVELATION

*Rays of
Living Light*



LATTER DAY REVELATION

BY PRESIDENT CHARLES W. PENROSE

A POPULAR ERROR

In proclaiming the great truths that the silence of centuries has been broken; that the voice of God has again been heard from heaven; that Jesus Christ his Son has manifested himself in these latter days; that angels from the courts of glory have ministered to man on earth in the present age; that a sacred record has been brought forth from the ground, disclosing the history of a hemisphere and bearing the same truths as those recorded in the Bible, that a Prophet, Seer and Revelator has been raised up to bring in the last dispensation; that Apostles and other inspired servants of God now minister among men; that the Church of Christ, with all its former organizations, ordinances, gifts and spiritual power, has been reorganized on earth; and that communications may be had with Deity by men and women of faith now, as at any period in the world's history, the servants of God are met with the assertion that the day of revelation has long since passed, and that they must of necessity be either impostors or deluded, because there is to be no more scripture, prophecy, miracles, angelic ministrations, visions or actual communication from heaven to earth. This popular error is fostered and propagated by the ministers of various so-called Christian denominations, and is accepted by the masses of the people as a settled and foregone conclusion.

REVELATION TO BE EXPECTED

On what grounds is such an irrational position assumed? Is not the Almighty declared in scripture to be unchangeable? Has not his work on earth always been conducted by men divinely chosen, appointed and inspired? Is there not

as much need of divine revelation to settle religious feuds and doctrinal differences in the 20th century, as at any previous period? Would not the word of the Lord be of much more value to mankind than the varied opinions of uninspired men, no matter how great may be their human learning? Ought not the inhabitants of the earth to be not only willing, but eager, to receive a message from the eternal worlds?

CHRIST'S PROMISE

“Ah!” exclaims the objector, “but there were to be no more prophets after Christ. He finished the divine plan and completed the revelation of God to the earth. He warned his disciples against false prophets and false Christs, and said if it were possible they would deceive the very elect.” Does not the very fact that Christ said there would be false prophets, convey the idea that there would be true prophets also? If there were to be no more true Prophets, it would have been easy for the Savior plainly to say so, and thus there would be no place for deceivers. But he declared emphatically: “Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.”¹ Were not Prophets established in the Church of Christ as members of his body? Read First Cor. 12:28. “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” Did not Christ promise his disciples that after he went away the Comforter should come? And was not one of the offices of the Spirit to show them “things to come”?² Was not the gift of prophecy bestowed upon members of the Church of Christ as one of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit³

¹Matthew 23:34.

²John 16:13.

³1 Corinthians 12:10.

And can anybody possess the true testimony of Jesus without that Spirit? The angel that appeared to John the Apostle said: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."⁴ Paul prayed for the Ephesians "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him."⁵ If revelation and prophecy ceased with Christ, what about the New Testament, all written after his death and resurrection, by men now believed to be inspired? Did not the Apostle John behold a glorious vision and receive a grand revelation, when banished to the island of Patmos?

SCRIPTURES MISUNDERSTOOD

Here again the objection will be raised: "But that revelation was the last communication from heaven, and its closing chapter forbids any further revelation." That is also a popular error promulgated by men professing to be ministers of Christ, and finding themselves destitute of divine power and inspiration. Here is the passage they quote: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."⁶ It is astonishing how plain and simple language can be wrested from its evident meaning to suit the purposes of sophistry. There is not a word in the text which conveys the remotest intimation that revelation and prophecy were to cease, or that God would no more speak to man. It is a prohibition against the addition by man of anything to that which God reveals. The next verse forbids the taking away of anything from the "book of this prophecy." That is, the Book of Revelation. These last commands have reference to the one book, and that only. The compilers of the New Testament have placed it last in the collection of scriptural books, and the strained, unnatural

⁴Revelation 19:10.

⁵Ephesians 1:17.

⁶Revelation 22:18.

and absurd application which has been made of the words we have quoted have been attached to the whole volume of the Bible. It is all wrong and ridiculous. The idea that the Almighty placed a seal upon his own mouth when he simply forbade men to add to what he said, is certainly most remarkable for sane people to entertain. If that singular notion was correct, then both the angel who gave the revelation, and John who received it, violated the heavenly injunction, for we read that the angel gave to John a mission in figurative manner, which he thus explained: "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." It is well known that the Epistles of St. John were written after he received the revelation on Patmos.

CHRIST'S CHURCH LED BY REVELATION

While the true Church of Christ remained on earth the spirit of revelation and prophecy remained. When that spirit departed there was but a dead form left. Only by the restoration of divine communication with men could the Church of Christ be re-established on earth. Only by raising up a prophet to commence the latter-day dispensation could our Heavenly Father maintain his invariable method from the beginning of the world. And instead of men, professing to be his servants, opposing and fighting against divine revelation, they ought to hail with gladness the re-opening of the heavens and shout for joy that the rays of the Millennial morning have burst upon the world.

PREDICTIONS CONCERNING THE LAST DAYS

It is passing strange that persons familiar with the prophetic writings of the Bible could hold the opinion that there would be no revelation in the latter days. The Bible teems with prophecies of the Latter-day glory, when the mightiest miracles ever wrought by divine power should

⁷Revelation 10:11.

be displayed; when God should set up an "ensign for the nations," "assemble the outcasts of Israel," gather together "the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth," and not only repeat the wonders of the Mosaic journey from Egypt to Canaan, but display his power to such an extent that it will no more be said, "The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them."⁸ Not only is the Lord to gather Israel and Judah, "with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm," but he is to bring "his elect together from the four quarters of the earth." They are to go up into the tops of the mountains, whence the House of the Lord is to be reared, from which his law is to go forth, and where his people shall learn his ways and walk in his paths. When he has rebuked the nations, and cleansed the earth from its iniquity, so that the meek shall inherit it, he is to pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, with the result not only that his sons and his daughters shall prophesy and see visions, but they shall all be taught of God, until "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."⁹

THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES

That there was to be a new and final dispensation after the great apostasy from primitive Christianity foretold by the Apostles, is evident from the statement of Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians. He says: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."¹⁰ How could this, the

⁸Jeremiah 23:7-8; Isaiah 11:6-16; Zechariah 10:6-11.

⁹Joel 2:28-32; Isaiah 11:9; Micah 4:1-7; Isaiah 35; Isaiah 54:13.

¹⁰Ephesians 1:9-10.

greatest of all dispensations, be ushered in without a Prophet and without revelation from God? Did the Almighty ever commence a dispensation since the world began without a Prophet to declare his word and without revealing his will? The Apostle Peter calls this great dispensation "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began,"¹¹ in which Jesus Christ is to come in glory. If all things are to be restored in that great gathering dispensation, then Prophets must be restored, revelation, angelic visitations, gifts, signs, miracles, and all the manifestations of former times must also be restored. For, the consummation of all things is to be accomplished, and the earth be prepared for the presence of its rightful ruler, its Redeemer and King.

GOD'S LATTER-DAY WORK HAS COMMENCED

Be it known to all people that the Lord, in his infinite mercy, has once more opened the heavens and revealed himself to man. The last dispensation has been commenced. The voice of Christ has again been heard. Angels have come down from heaven to earth. Prophets, Apostles and other inspired men declared the word and will of the Lord. A sacred record of the ancient people of a vast continent has been brought out of the ground, and, united with the Jewish Bible, bears witness that God is the same yesterday, today and forever, and that by faith mankind in all ages may learn of him and have communion with him. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, baptism is administered by divine authority for the remission of sins, the Holy Ghost is conferred as of old, by the laying on of hands of men clothed with the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, the unity of faith is enjoyed, the sick are healed, prophecies are uttered, the gifts of tongues and of interpretations are attainable, and

¹¹Acts 3:21

by visions and dreams and the witness of the Comforter, God is testifying to those who receive his word, that he has commenced the great latter-day work spoken of by his holy prophets.

THE GREAT PROPHET OF LATTER DAYS

The man chosen of God to commence the work of the last dispensation was Joseph Smith, who was slain at Carthage, Illinois, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. No Prophet who ever lived on earth, except the Son of God Himself, accomplished a greater work, brought forth more truth or received greater revelations from on high than he. Having finished the grand mission required of him by the Lord, he sealed his testimony with his blood, and stands with the martyrs who will be crowned in the presence of God and of the Lamb as Kings and Priests unto them forever. The truth of this testimony has been sealed upon the hearts of many thousands of people, who rejoice in the certain knowledge that they are accepted of God. And this knowledge may be obtained by every soul who shall believe in Christ, repent of sin, be baptized for the remission of sins, and receive the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, O reader! come unto the light, obey the Gospel and be saved! This is the only way of eternal life and everlasting happiness in the Father's presence.

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Published by
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints