

RESTORATION

*Rays of
Living Light*



RESTORATION

BY PRESIDENT CHARLES W. PENROSE

JOHN'S PROPHECY CONCERNING THE RESTORATION

“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: And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, the great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”¹ In these inspired words John the beloved Apostle predicted the restoration of the Gospel to the earth, and the subsequent destruction of the power which had filled the earth with the darkness of spiritual inebriety and wickedness. That these events were not revelations of the past, but prophecies of the future manifested to the Apostle John, is made certain by what he says in chapter 4, verse 1: “After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.” The angels spoken of in the 14th chapter, quoted above, were among the things which John was told “must be hereafter.” It should be observed that when the angel should fly to the earth bearing the everlasting Gospel, it was to be at a time when every nation and kindred, and tongue, and people would be without the Gospel in its fulness. That this has been the condition of the world for a long time has already been demonstrated in previous tracts.

¹Revelation 14 :6-8.

FORETOLD BY THE SAVIOR

In predicting events that would occur previous to his coming and the "end of the world" Christ declared, "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."² From this we learn that the Gospel as preached by Christ and delivered by him to the Apostles, is to be preached in all the world as a witness of his second advent and a sign of the approaching end.

ISAIAH'S PROPHECY

The foregoing predictions correspond with the prophecy of Isaiah: "Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."³ All the prophets whose writings have been collected in the sacred volume called the Bible, have proclaimed the glory of the latter days and the final triumphs of truth over error, and the power of God over the deceptions of that Evil One.

THROUGH WHOM WOULD THE GOSPEL BE RESTORED?

Thus not only the restoration of the Gospel after the great apostasy that was to take place was foretold by holy men of God, but the manner of its revelation was also explained. It was to be by the coming of an angel from heaven. To whom might it be expected that this angel should appear? To the learned divines and contending sectaries of modern Christendom? Do they not all declare that revela-

²Matthew 24:3, 14.

³Isaiah 29:13-14.

tion ceased when John received his vision, recorded in the Book of Revelation? Do they not teach that though angels once ministered to men the day of their coming has long since passed? Have they any faith to call on God for a divine communication? And will the Almighty reveal anything except to those who call upon him in faith? God's ways are not as man's ways. Therefore, as Paul expressed it, "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; . . . That no flesh should glory in his presence."⁴ And as quoted above, the Lord determined that in bringing forth his latter-day work, "a marvellous work and a wonder," the wisdom of the wise should perish and the understanding of the prudent should be hid.

ACCOUNT OF THE RESTORATION

It was in the year 1823 that the angel spoken of by John the Revelator came with the everlasting Gospel to a young man seventeen years of age, of obscure though respectable parentage, and without the learning of the schools. His name, too, was common, and his occupation that of a farmer's boy. Joseph Smith, whom the Lord raised up to receive his word, establish his Church, and prepare the way for the Redeemer's second coming, was led to inquire of the Lord through reading the scriptures, for the purpose of finding out which of all the disputing religions was right. Coming to the Epistle of James, 1st chapter and 5th and 6th verses he read: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." Relying on his word, he went into the woods to pray, and in the simplicity of his heart called on God for the wisdom which he felt he greatly needed. He

⁴1 Corinthians 1:26-27, 29.

was then not fifteen years of age, but his faith was strong and wavered not. His prayers were heard, and in a heavenly vision in open daylight, the Father and the Son revealed themselves to his astonished gaze. The Father, pointing to the Son, proclaimed, "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" Our Savior spoke to the boy, and in answer to his question as to which of all the religious sects was right, he was told that they had all gone out of the way, and was commanded to go after none of them, but was promised that in due time the true gospel of Christ should be revealed to him.

APPEARANCE OF AN ANGEL

When the angel appeared to him three years later, it was in his chamber, just as he had retired for the night. Coming in glory, the angel showed to Joseph the place where an ancient record was hidden in the side of a hill, containing the history of the former inhabitants of the American continent, including an account of a visit made to them by Jesus Christ after his resurrection from the dead, when he declared to them the same Gospel that he had preached in Palestine, and also established his Church among them after the same pattern as that organized on the eastern hemisphere. He was informed that this record should be subsequently placed in his hands to translate by the gift and power of God to be given to him through means which the Lord had prepared for that purpose. This manifestation was thrice repeated that night that Joseph might be fully assured of its reality. Under the inspiration of Almighty God, the young man was able to obtain possession of this precious record, inscribed in small and curious characters upon metallic plates. The Gospel is there set forth in plain and simple language, and no one who reads the book, which is called the Book of Mormon, with a prayerful and unprejudiced heart, will fail to be impressed with its divine origin.

PRIESTHOOD CONFERRED

After being thus favored of the Lord, Joseph Smith received a visitation from John the Baptist, who held authority in ancient times to preach and administer baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. He came as a ministering angel, and ordained Joseph Smith and his companion, Oliver Cowdery, to that Priesthood and authority. Thus endowed, these young men baptized each other, and at a later date were ministered to by the Apostles Peter and James and John, who conferred upon them to the higher priesthood, with authority to lay hands on baptized believers and confer the gift of the Holy Ghost, also to build and organize the Church of Christ according to the original pattern.

CHURCH ORGANIZED

On the sixth day of April, 1830, the Church of Jesus Christ was organized in the State of New York, with six members, Latter-day Saints who had been baptized for the remission of sins and had been confirmed by the laying on of hands. The Holy Ghost was manifested unto them, and as the Church grew in numbers the gifts of the Spirit were imparted; and the organization was eventually made complete with apostles, prophets, sevens, elders, priests, teachers, deacons, also bishops and other officers that were in the primitive Christian Church; indeed, all the grades of the Melchizedek and Aaronic Priesthood, with their keys, powers and endowments, and all the ordinances, ministrations and divine manifestations necessary to the true Church of Christ were restored. Men thus divinely authorized, were sent out into the world to preach the gospel like the apostles of old, without purse or scrip, without salary and without pay of any kind, depending upon the Lord and friends whom he might raise up to minister to their temporal wants. Wherever they went and

people received their testimony and were baptized for the remission of sins, the Holy Ghost was poured out upon them through the laying on of hands, and they invariably obtained a testimony from God that they were accepted of him, and that he had in very deed re-established his Church on earth. There are now many thousands of living witnesses to the truth of these things. They are natives of various countries, speaking different languages, reared in divers religions; they are now brought to the unity of the faith; they have come to a knowledge of the truth; doubt has fled and darkness has been dispersed; the light of heaven shines in their souls. They are in the straight and narrow way. They are members of the body of Christ, and his Spirit, which searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God, is the abiding witness from on high and shows them things past, present and to come.

DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES

This is the latter-day work spoken of by the holy prophets. It is the dispensation of the fulness of times, in the which God will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."⁵ It is the last and greatest of all dispensations. In it will be accomplished the "restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."⁶ It is to prepare the way for the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will come "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," and "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: . . . When he shall come to be glorified in his Saints."⁷ In this dispensation, after all people have been warned and the Gospel has been preached for a witness to all nations, and the elect are gathered together from the four winds, namely the

⁵Ephesians 1:10.

⁶Acts 3:21.

⁷2 Thessalonians 1:8, 10.

East, West, North, and South, the great tribulations and judgments will be poured out, the end of the world, that is, the end of the rule of Satan and of the wicked will come, the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our God and his Christ, and he will reign over them forever.

ALL MANKIND CALLED TO REPENTANCE

“The times of ignorance God hath winked at, but he now commands all men everywhere to repent.” Therefore, O, ye inhabitants of the earth, hearken to the voice of the Lord, which is unto all people, Christian and Pagan, preachers and hearers, Papists, Protestants, infidels, secularists and agnostics, rich and poor, kings, presidents, rulers, peasants and men and women of all races, religions and degrees, saying, Repent of your sins, of your false creeds, of your dead forms, and of all your unbelief and iniquities, and come unto me and be baptized by my servants, on whom I have placed my authority, and receive the laying on of their hands, and you shall have the remission of your sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and shall know that I am God, and that I have set my hand to accomplish my great work in the earth, and if you abide in me you shall inherit the earth when it is cleansed and glorified, and shall be crowned with eternal life !

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