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The Book of Mormon, and the End of the World

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Abstract: This is a six-part series discussing how Mormonism fulfills biblical prophecy concerning the last days: the coming of Elijah, restoration of the gospel, and correct ordinances such as baptism by immersion and the sacrament, Church organization, and continuing revelation. The second part covers the necessity of baptism and the restoration of the gospel.

LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."
—ISAIAH xxiv, 5.

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THE BOOK OF MORMON, AND THE END OF THE WORLD.

BY ELDER L. F. MONCH.

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[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 196].

"In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."—Matt. xviii, 16.

IN the Revelation of St. John, 14th chapter, 6th and 7th verses, we find the following prophecy: "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."

Here we have another prophecy that an angel is to come from heaven, and the time of his coming is so plainly given that no one need be deceived if he takes into consideration the nature of his mission, and observes closely the signs noted in this prophecy. And here, as in the appearance of the previous angel, we cannot say that he came in the days of the Savior or the Apostles, for we have no record that such an event tran-

spired any time during their administration or after their death, and the histories of all the reformers are also silent upon it. When the disciples asked the Savior, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He said, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." And now we know why it was not given for them to know; the time had not come, for nearly 1,900 years have passed since then, and it has not yet taken place. But at the time when this angel was to make his appearance, it was to be no longer a mystery, hidden from the world, for His warning voice is to be to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come." And then, after His judgments have swept the earth, will the kingdoms of this earth become the kingdoms of our Father and our God

and He whose right it is to reign, will reign, and establish His throne among Israel His chosen people.

The first question that presents itself to our minds in connection with this prophecy is, how will this angel make his appearance? Will every one see him fly through the heavens, and hear the sound of his voice as he utters the proclamation to the nations of the earth? Here, again, we must repeat the same answer as with the previous angel. Our Father in heaven has never revealed His work to mankind in this manner. He sent His angels to Abraham, Jacob, Elijah, Jesus, Peter, Paul, John the Revelator and others, who have left us their testimony that they saw these heavenly messengers, but to the world they were bidden—the world in general did not have the privilege of beholding their faces. The Lord performs His work among the nations of the earth in a natural manner, and if the world will not receive His word in this way, they would not believe it “though one rose from the dead.” He sends His messenger to His chosen servant, and then prepares the way for us by which we can by unmistakable signs find out if the message is from heaven or not. We have such signs given us in this very prophecy by which we can detect without doubt whether any message promulgated by any man or set of men is the one entrusted to this angel or not; it must be the “everlasting Gospel,” established “in the mouth of two or three witnesses;” the first is the given sign by which we can detect it, the second the law by which it “may be established.” According to these and all known laws governing the works and mysteries of the Creator, we must put forth our efforts to find this Gospel by the keys given us, and if our readers will accompany us, we will see if it is now on the earth, and if it is, where we can find it, and what sect or denomination is now the happy possessor of it.

The question is a very important one to every individual, because upon it depends deliverance from those terrible judgments mentioned in connection with this prophecy, and which will come over the nations of the

earth “like a thief in the night,” for just at this time the commandment is given to the angels: “Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” Again we read: “And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.” And if we wish to know how terrible these judgments will be, we have only to read a little further, where we will find the following: “And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them” (Rev. vii, 3, and ix, 4, 6.) Malachi also makes a great promise if we do what this same angel tells us. We read: “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts” (Mal. iv, 2, 3). It will be observed that the words are nearly the same as those of the angel: “Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.” With this sword hanging over us if we do not listen to the voice of this angel, and deliverance on the other hand if we do, how necessary it is for us to exert ourselves to find this message, the “everlasting Gospel” of this angel, if it is on the earth. Let us see.

We are informed from various sources that there are hundreds of gospels in the world which predicate their belief upon the Bible, and nearly all look upon the Savior as their Redeemer. But there can be but one true Gospel, according to the words of Paul: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be ac-

cursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. i, 6, 7, 8, 9.) It will be observed that the curse was not only to rest upon angels who would preach any other Gospel, but also upon men, for in the last verse it says distinctly: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." These many gospels are all different from each other, and established by different men, and hence, according to the words of Paul, there must be a great many men accursed for establishing false gospels, as well as those who are to-day preaching them, and according to the words of Isaiah, subsequently confirmed by our Savior, they who believe in these so-called gospels serve Him in vain. We read: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. xv, 9). Their baptisms, their church goings, therefore, can be of little benefit to them, for according to these words they serve Him in vain.

The question next presents itself, What constitutes the difference between one Gospel and another? It is certainly not belief in the Bible, for these many gospels all regard the Bible as the word of God, and, therefore, believe in advocating its doctrines as the guide by which their members should regulate their lives; it is also not in believing on a God, for they all profess to believe in and worship Him; it is also not in believing in His Son Jesus Christ, for they nearly all believe that He died for their sins; also not in praying, for they all believe in praying to Him; also not in observing the Sabbath, for they nearly all believe in observing that day; also not in church-going, nor erecting church buildings, for they all erect church buildings with the object of holding divine worship in them. The difference, therefore, is not in either of the above enumerated items, it is in something altogether different.

We are informed that history repeats itself, therefore let us see what the great difference was between the Gospel established by our Father in heaven through His Son Jesus Christ,

and the gospels believed in by the various sects and denominations existing at that time, and in which the elders, high priests and scribes believed, as well as the Pharisees and Sadducees; then, perhaps, we can find a key by which we can unravel this mystery.

In Luke iii, 2, 3, we read as follows: "Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Again we read: "And John bear record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John i, 32, 33). In obedience, therefore, to this commandment from God, was the Savior baptized by John the Baptist. His disciples in like manner must have received the same ordinance, for we read: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we" (Acts x, 47). Peter again observed in another place: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Act ii, 38). These words show plainly that it was not only necessary for Jesus to obey this commandment of God, but it was equally obligatory upon His disciples, for Peter's first remark respecting Cornelius and his family, that they were prepared to receive the ordinance of baptism the same as he and those with him, plainly explains it, while in the second quotation the words "every one of you" are general in their meaning, for we are told they were obeyed by 3,000 people; and if it was necessary for the Savior and "every one" to be baptized, it was certainly necessary for Peter and the rest of the Twelve; for this reason we read of Paul: "And he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized" (Acts ix, 18). With-

out doubt, therefore, was it necessary for "every one" to be baptized in obedience to the commandment of God to John the Baptist.

But we read again: "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke vii, 29, 30). In Matthew, 21st chapter, we read as follows: "And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus and said, we cannot tell." In reply Jesus said: "Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." Here, then, is the first difference; they did not believe in the ceremony of baptism for the remission of sins; "they rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him;" they did not believe it was necessary; they believed they could be saved without it.

There are just such gospels to-day, where ministers advocate that it is not necessary to be baptized in order to be saved, notwithstanding the Savior said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi, 16). Of course, if they do not believe they will not be baptized, like those Pharisees, elders, high priests

and lawyers. The Savior said again "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii, 19). "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Here we have two of the highest witnesses that we know anything about, the Father and the Son, to the fact that baptism is necessary to salvation; and yet we find gospels just as in the days of the Savior, whose ministers declare that baptism is to-day no longer necessary. The author of this article once asked a leading divine of one of the churches in Bern, Switzerland: "What shall I do to be saved?" The answer was: "Just go to meeting." Again: "Is it not necessary for me to be baptized by a servant of God, having power to administer this ordinance?" Answer: "O no; baptism is no longer necessary now." Again: "Who has said it was no longer necessary? I do not read anywhere that God ever gave a commandment doing away with this ordinance." Answer: "Mankind have so declared it; divines and the law of the land declare it is no longer necessary." But we read: "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees." Our Father in heaven and His Son Jesus Christ have instituted the law of baptism for salvation; ministers set it on one side by declaring it is no longer necessary, thus virtually repealing this law of God, and hence decreeing "unrighteous decrees."

How closely are the words of the Savior spoken to the Scribes and Pharisees, applicable to these divines. "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. xxiii, 13). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Therefore, without baptism it is an impossibility to be saved. The ministers do not believe in baptism, hence they cannot be saved. They tell the people it is no longer necessary to salvation, hence they do not suffer them to go in that would be willing to enter. Such men, however, should carefully read the words

in the next verse: "Therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."

None of the gospels, therefore, which set aside the ordinance of baptism, can be regarded as the everlasting Gospel, for as He our Father is everlasting, so are also His laws. Baptism was instituted by Him, and hence it must still be a part of this everlasting Gospel which this angel is to restore to the earth, or else it would not be everlasting. Again, should this not be a part of it, it

would be a different gospel than the one taught by Paul and his companions, the disciples of Jesus, and this angel, therefore would fall under the curse pronounced against such a change. And for the same reason men who have established such gospels, and those who are preaching them, are guilty of this violation, and hence must be regarded as false ministers and false prophets, and their followers worship God in vain, obeying only the precepts of men.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MINUTES OF A DISTRICT MEETING

HELD IN THE TEMPERANCE HALL, HENRY STREET, BURY, ON SUNDAY,
MARCH 21, 1886.

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Present on the stand: Thomas Sleight, President of, and John Stoddard, E. T. Woolley, W. C. B. Orrock and N. Y. Schofield, Traveling Elders in the Manchester Conference.

2 p.m.

Meeting called to order by President Sleight.

Singing. Prayer by Elder John Stoddard. Singing.

Sacrament was administered by Elders Woolley and Schofield.

Elder Woolley said he was pleased to see so many strangers present. Was aware that in the town of Bury many slanderous reports had recently been circulated against the Latter-day Saints, but it was the consciousness of knowing these to be false and utterly without foundation, that gave to him and his brethren courage to stand before the people and fearlessly declare the plan of salvation, the truth as contained in the Scripture, and as taught and practiced by the Latter-day Saints. By way of modifying the opinion entertained by many regarding the character of the Latter-day Saints, he read a few extracts from a pamphlet entitled "Fruits of Mormonism, by non-Mormon witnesses," after which he recited our Articles of Faith, made clear some of the first principles of the Gospel, and demonstrated the fact that unless men would yield obedience to that "one faith" and that "one baptism" spoken

of by Paul, and recognized by the Savior Himself, it was folly to suppose they would ever attain that salvation they were looking for, and which they so much desired.

President Sleight said in connection with our desire to induce people to investigate the principles of the Latter-day Saints, we also held out every facility to that end. With what consistency could "Christians" object to a truthful explanation of Bible teachings? We were not there to misrepresent, not there to find fault with the belief of others, but to truthfully portray the plan of salvation according to the Scripture of divine truth. Baptism was taught in the Bible for the salvation of mankind, and the Savior complied with it. Said no man could be saved without it, and should we assert we know a better plan than that instituted by Jesus? And what benefit would be derived from baptism unless the man who baptized us was authorized to perform that ordinance? A reasonable thinking man would say, I want to be baptized by one whom God has sent, that I may have my sins remitted, and enjoy the blessings promised by obedience to that command. The only way to be saved in these modern times, as taught by the Latter-day Saints, was the only way to be saved in ancient times, as taught by the former-day Saints—by Christ and His