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A New Witness for God: Chapter III

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Abstract: Bible passages are used in this article to refute the belief that the Bible contains all the revelation God has ever given to man.

 THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

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 A NEW WITNESS FOR GOD.

CHAPTER III.

Thou fool, that shall say, a Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. . . . Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth? Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word? Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together, the testimony of the two nations shall run together also. . . . Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible, ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written.—*Word of the Lord to the Gentiles* (II Nephi xxix chap.)

Another belief nearly universal among Christians, and one equally as absurd as that considered in our last chapter, is that the Bible contains all the revelations God has ever given to man. One way of refuting this prevailing error would be to refer to the Bible itself, in which there are a number of references to revelations and scriptures which are not to be found in that compilation of sacred books. For instance, of certain wicked characters Jude says:

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him (Jude 14, 15).

It is quite evident that Jude was acquainted with some of the writings of Enoch—some of his prophecies relating to the glorious coming of the Son of God, and the judgments connected with that event. But this is the only reference in the whole Bible to the writings of Enoch. Nor is there any way of accounting for this quotation from them by St. Jude. Even the tradition of the Catholic Church—held by them to be the unwritten word of God—cannot account for it. “She (meaning the Roman Catholic Church) does not dictate an exposition of the whole Bible, because she has no tradition concerning a very great portion of it, as for example the prophecy of Enoch,

quoted by Jude" (End of Religious Controversy, p. 169). And yet, that such sacred writings as the prophecies of Enoch existed, who can doubt?

We give another example:

And the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed (Gal. iii, 8).

From this it is evident there were Scriptures in the days of Abraham—perhaps those written by Enoch—and from them Abraham learned something of the Gospel, and that God would justify the heathen through faith. Yet Lord Bacon calls Moses God's first Pen, and the idea is generally accepted. Still here we have prophecies alluded to and scriptures spoken of which teach the Gospel to people ages before Moses was born, and predict the glorious coming of the Lord and the judgments that should attend it. What light, what intelligence these ancient Scriptures might impart to us if we only had them spread out before us! How many things that are now dark and inexplicable in the Scriptures we have might be made clear! But we have them not. They are lost to us, together with many other Scriptures of a later date.

To refer to Jude again:

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the Saints (Jude 3).

Here is a distinct, positive reference to a former work written by Jude upon the important subject of "The Common Salvation," yet in the collection of sacred books—the Bible—we have but this one short epistle out of the writings of Jude.

We have but one epistle of Paul to the Ephesians; yet in that one we have a reference to one that he had before written to them, and which contained a revelation to Paul concerning the Gospel going to the Gentiles:

If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ); . . . that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, . . . and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel (Eph. iii, 2—6).

So we might continue until we referred to some fifteen or twenty books spoken of in the Bible and referred to as sacred, but of which the world has no knowledge. These facts of themselves prove beyond the power of all contradiction that the Bible does not contain all that God has revealed. But there are other phases of the question I am more particularly desirous of discussing.

When on Mars Hill among the philosophers of Athens, the Apostle Paul said:

God that made the world and all things therein, . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us (Acts xvii, 24—27).

From this passage we learn the following facts: (1) the fatherhood of God;

(2) the brotherhood of man; (3) the right of all races of men to seek the Lord; (4) and a very strong intimation that if they do so they will find Him—for He is not far from every one of them. Yet with these facts before them, Christians will maintain that all the revelations that God has ever given are contained in the Bible. What a narrow, contracted view of God's hand-dealings with His children in respect to giving revelation is this! How partial does it make Him appear, of whom it is so often and with such emphasis said that He is no respecter of persons! Let us examine these thoughts more closely.

It is not yet four hundred years since the continent of America was discovered by Columbus. When that continent was discovered, it was not uninhabited. On the contrary, it was thickly populated. And while it is true that for the most part the inhabitants were savages, still there were some semi-civilized people among them, living in cities and towns, cultivating the soil, engaging in manufacturing industries, and living under a system of government more or less regular and stable. Such was the condition of the inhabitants of Mexico and Peru when found by the Europeans.

Throughout the land of America, from the north to the south, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but more especially in Mexico and Peru, were evidences of a higher civilization having existed than that found among the inhabitants of America at the advent of the Europeans among them. The evidences all go to show that an ancient civilization of a very high order had met with revolutions and disaster which had proven too much for the strength of its texture, and it had gone to pieces. Whatever of civilization the Europeans found among the Peruvians and Mexicans, was merely the half resurrected fragments of that grander civilization which had preceded it, the evidences of which exist throughout the land, and the splendor of which lived in the traditions of the people. I deem it unnecessary to quote authority to sustain these views. Indeed I believe among the informed they are universally conceded. The explorations of Carthwood and Stephens and Humboldt sustain them, the works of Wilson and Prescott, and lastly a more elaborate work—Bancroft's Native Races—confirms them.

Who were these people inhabiting America? Who were those ancient inhabitants whose cities, judging from the ruins still existing, equaled in splendor and greatness the cities of Tyre and Sidon, and Nineveh and Babylon, and whose empires rivaled in power and extent ancient Egypt, Persia and Macedon—for, as Marcus Wilson says, of these cities and empires of the east, the plains of Asia exhibit fewer signs of their having existed than is to be found in America to testify to the grandeur and extent of the cities and empires which at one time, perhaps coeval with the cities and nations of the east referred to, must have flourished there.

But who were they, and whence their civilization? However various and unsatisfactory the answers given by the learned to that question may be, of one thing we may be certain, and I think there can be no variation of opinion on the subject, and that is they form a part of the same great race as ourselves—children are they of the self same God—since "God . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and

hath decreed the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation. Yet see how partial and unjust this idea that the Bible contains all the revelations of heaven to man makes our God! Here are two vast continents, peopled by the children of the same Father, but separated by two mighty oceans, with no means of communicating with each other for many centuries. The population of these two continents have equal claims upon their common Father, for if there is one truth made more emphatic in Holy Writ than another, it is that God is no respecter of persons; "but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him:" and as we have before seen, God hath not only made of one blood all nations of men, but has also given them the privilege of seeking for and finding Him.

Yet with these facts and principles standing out in bold relief before us, Christian sects ask us to believe that God sent prophets and holy men to teach and instruct His children on the eastern continent; that He revealed to them something of His own character and attributes; that by revelation direct from heaven, accompanied by demonstrations of His own marvelous power, He made known to them something of the object of their creation, and gave them the hope of eternal life; that in the meridian of time He sent His Only Begotten Son among them, in order that life and immortality might be more clearly brought to light; that the matchless Son of God by example as well as by precept taught the inhabitants of the eastern continent the way of life—the divine will—taught them the Gospel—organized a Church to perpetuate His doctrines—commissioned apostles and others to carry on the glorious work of salvation—and thus made ample provisions for carrying the Gospel throughout Asia, Africa and Europe, for His Church was organized where these natural divisions of the continent centre. Yet, while the Lord made all these efforts for the instruction and salvation of His children in the east, this idea that the Bible contains all the revelations that God has ever given, compels us to believe that He altogether neglected His children on the western continent. No prophet was sent to them with a message to explain the mystery of existence, to let them know whence their origin, the object of their creation, or bid them indulge in the pleasing hope of immortality. No angel from the bright worlds on high came to reveal the splendor of heaven, or show the path which leads to endless bliss: no messenger came bounding from the wilderness to them crying repentance, and making the glorious announcement that the kingdom of heaven was at hand: no Messiah of gentle mein and sweetest disposition taught them the mystery of the divine love which works out man's redemption, healed their sick, raised their dead, or even so much as blessed their children. No, according to the Christian theory of the extent of revelation, God neglected them entirely—left them to perish in darkness and ignorance and unbelief; unknowing and unknown! Out upon all such narrow and contracted, not to say bigoted views of the hand dealings of God with His children! They are a travesty on His mercy and justice, a base libel on His character. R.

From Elder Levi Naylor, President of the Norwich Conference, we learn that a new Branch of the Church has been organized at Dilham, in Norfolk County, with eleven members, most of whom have been baptized since the