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A New Witness for God, I and II

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Abstract: Describes why the Book of Mormon is needed as a new witness for God. Bible passages are used to show that revelation from God has not ceased, that prophecy continues in modern times, and that the Book of Mormon is a new witness for Jesus Christ brought forth through this modern revelation. Bible passages that have been used to cast doubt on the Book of Mormon are explained and the arguments refuted.

forcement of law. Yet no law had been broken or resisted. The conclusion was resistless to the Latter-day Saints that if Drummond's lies were potent enough to send an army, they would be potent enough, under judges of the same ilk, with an army at their back, to punish for the crimes they so falsely alleged. Fearing a reign of bloodshed and terror, caused by prejudice and the supposed necessity of doing something against the Mormons, in which crusade camp-followers, emigrants, discharged soldiers, and other transients, as well as apostates, would be permitted to play a prominent part

as grand and petit jurors, the Latter-day Saints acted entirely in self-preservation when they took measures to hold the army until the morning of reason might dawn upon the night of prejudice.

Who can doubt, if the army had not been resisted, and had, with accompanying officials, in the full flush of success, entered Utah, in 1857, a war would have been forced upon the Mormons? Nothing proves better than the issue of the affair, the propriety of Mormon conduct, for with the winter came a demand for investigation, and with investigation, an understanding and settlement. *R. W. Young.*

A NEW WITNESS FOR GOD.

I.

Some millions must be wrong, that's pretty clear.

* * * * *

'Tis time that some new prophet should appear,
Or old indulge man with a second sight;
Opinions wear out in some thousand years
Without a small refreshment from the spheres.

THAT mankind is in need of a new witness for God, is evident. The irreligion of the times; the steady progress of infidelity in Christian lands; the disagreement among professing Christian people on the principles of religion, resulting in the multiplication of sects; the absence of a living, active faith in God and the Gospel of His Son even among professing Christians, prove our statement to be true.

The position of the Christian world to-day is analogous to that of the Jews at the advent of the Son of God among them. To the forefathers of the Jews had been committed a system of religion, a code of morals, and an order of government which reflected the wisdom, justice, goodness and power of its Author—God. But they and their children perverted that religion, no longer lived in the spirit of its moral teachings, and through transgression were deprived of their God-given government; so that the advent of the Messiah found them in bondage, and following the perverted religion—paying tithes on mint and anise

and cummin, but omitting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; making long prayers on the street corners to be heard of men, but at the same time robbing widows' houses; making the outside of the platter clean, but within they were full of extortion and excesses; garnishing the tombs of the prophets of former days, yet slaying those whom God sent as His messengers to them; boasting themselves of the seed of Abraham, yet neglecting to do the works of Abraham; priding themselves in the law given by God to their fathers, yet making the law of no effect by their traditions. Such was the condition of the Jews nineteen centuries ago—such is the condition of the Christians, of to-day.

To the fathers was the Gospel of the Son of God committed in its purity, simplicity and power; but as years rolled on and the voices of inspired prophets and apostles were hushed in death, the Gospel was perverted. Damnable heresies were privily brought into the Church, and the way of truth was evil spoken of; refusing longer to endure sound doctrine, and having itching ears, the people heaped to themselves teachers, and the truth was turned to fables; of themselves men arose teaching perverse things to draw away disciples after them. And thus were the laws of the Gospel transgressed, its ordinances changed and

the covenant broken; and such was the mingling of pagan philosophy with the few truths of the Gospel that remained, that even their lustre was nearly eclipsed.

Succeeding generations floundering in the darkness, multiplied the errors of those who had gone before them; schism seems only to have begotten schism, until the Christian religious world is split up into conflicting factions, nothing but confusion remains, and mankind are being fed upon the dry husks of a man-arranged and dead theology.

I may be charged with severity in making this arraignment of the Christian world, but examination will prove that it is no more severe than it is true. Instead of that unity existing among the Christians which the whole tenor of Scripture leads us to expect will be one of the characteristics of the Church of Christ, and which is one of the signs of her divinity, we find confusion confounded and the whole fabric split up into contending sects. Instead of an inspired priesthood, consisting of apostles, prophets, sevens, elders, bishops, etc., with a direct communication with the heavens, either through holy angels or the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, we have various forms of church government devised by man, more or less elaborate and learned, but lacking both a commission from God and the inspiration of heaven. Instead of a faith which lays hold of and enjoys the gifts and graces connected with the Gospel of the Son of God, such as the gift of knowledge, wisdom, faith, healing the sick, prophecy, discerning of spirits, etc., the mistaken ministers of modern Christendom teach their followers that these spiritual powers, so characteristic of the ancient Saints, are no longer to be enjoyed; and to excuse their absence, tell their dupes they are no longer needed. Thus instead of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints, as admonished by the Scriptures to do, they are taught not to contend for it; nay, they are told it is not needed. Instead of possessing the Holy Ghost, which not only brings peace, joy, love, gentleness, goodness, meekness and

temperance; but also guides into all truth, teaches all things, testifies that Jesus is the Christ—so that man may not be left in uncertainty on so grave a question—takes of the things of the Father and reveals it unto man, and shows him things to come—in fact is the very spirit of prophecy, and the power by which the Scriptures were written—but instead of possessing that spirit, and rejoicing in the manifestations of its highest and noblest powers, Christians, and especially the ministers of Christendom, tell us it was never intended that the Holy Ghost should continuously bestow upon man these extraordinary God-given powers. That, however, is an assumption on their part, pure and simple, for which there is not only no warrant in Scripture, but it is contrary to the whole tenor and spirit of the word of God.

Thus the heaven-born religion of Jesus Christ has been degraded to a mere form of godliness lacking the power thereof. Unbelief in the churches is common and constantly increasing. Proving that the evidence which convinced and satisfied the fathers is not sufficient to produce the same result in the children. Christianity of to-day is losing its power as a religion: it is as a social institution rather than a religion that it exercises whatever of force it still possesses. It stands on nationality, on tradition rather than upon faith.

I would not be understood as saying there is nothing good or true in the religious sects of modern Christendom. Long after the sun sinks below our horizon his light is seen gilding the mountain tops and the clouds floating in the placid sky of evening; and we enjoy for some time the glorious though subdued light he leaves behind. So it is with the religion of Jesus Christ. The Son of God brought such a splendid system of religious and moral truth into the world, that it flooded the whole earth with its glory; and though men corrupted with their vain and false philosophy His Gospel—departed from its principles and precepts, making it of no effect through their traditions, and burying its lustre

under the rubbish of human superstition and folly—yet they could not altogether destroy the gems of truth it here and there left behind it. And those truths, like diamonds amid unsightly heaps of *debris*, have attracted the attention of men of noblest minds and superior intellects, who have been so enraptured with the fragments of the Gospel they found that they imagined they had discovered the entire mine, instead of a few detached gems; and have founded systems of religion which incorporate within their structures some of the principles taught by the Son of God. So far, so good. But as all the rays of artificial light which man can create, if condensed into one ray, would not make a sun; so if all the truths held by Christian sects were brought together into one organization, they would not make up that perfect system of truth known as the Gospel of Jesus Christ. None but God can restore that in its fulness.

Nor would I, in the strictures I make respecting the religious world, be understood as even hinting that there are not tens and hundreds of thousands of both men and women in the various sectarian churches who are sincere and devout in their worship, and who are loved of God. But these are cases where individuals rise above their creeds, and whose souls are so deeply stirred by true veneration for God, and an honest effort to act in harmony with the divine will, that in spite of false, dead systems of faith and powerless churches, they hold communion with God and are conscious of His approval.

But, in order to stay the progress of infidelity, and close the mouths of blasphemers; to evangelize the world and bring it to a unity of faith; to strengthen and confirm the faith of professing Christians; and to infuse new life into the religious world—a new witness for God is absolutely needed. And God has given it.

II.

"And because my words shall hiss forth, many of the Gentiles shall say, a Bible! a Bible! we have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible." — *Word of the Lord to Nephi (11 Nephi xxix, 3)*,

THE new witness of which I have spoken is one that has been brought to light through the revelations of God to man in this our age. And here, on the very threshold of this subject, I meet with an obstacle that must needs be removed before I can hope to secure the attention of the reader. I refer to the almost universal belief among Christians that the canon of Scripture is closed, and that no more revelation is to be given. Had I been able to say that the New Witness had been unearthed by the researches of man; that by some such fortunate discovery as the finding of the Rosetta Stone, there had been brought to light additional evidence to the truthfulness of the Jewish Scriptures; or that learned scientists by means of microscope or telescope had found new facts which tended to confirm the revelations contained in Holy Writ, no doubt what I would then have to say would be listened to with some degree of attention. But among Christian sects the belief that God will give no more revelation to man is so general, that to say our New Witness has been brought to light through a modern revelation, is to raise against it all the prejudice existing against what is called new revelation. Hence, I say, this obstacle, meeting us at the commencement of our subject, must be discussed and removed.

Nothing could be more untrue, or out of all harmony with the spirit and teachings of Holy Writ, than that doctrine which teaches that the stream of revelation from God, stopped nineteen centuries ago, and will no more be renewed. Any one who will take the pains to read Acts ii, 38, 39, will admit, no doubt, that a universal promise of the Holy Ghost is there made to those whom God shall call to obedience to His Gospel; the language is:

"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. *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

I know not how a promise more universal than that could well be made. It

extends to all people, and to all ages. If men realize the fulfillment of this promise made by one commissioned to speak with authority in the name of God, they would enjoy the powers of that spirit; and one of its powers is to make known the things of God, and to show things which are to come. Here is the passage which proves it:

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, [which is the Holy Ghost] is come, he will guide you unto all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak; and *he will show you things to come.* * * * All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."—*John xvi, 13—15.*

Furthermore it is said of this Spirit, that it will testify of Christ (*John xv, 26*), and Paul says that—

"No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed, and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost."—*I Cor. xii, 3.*

From this it appears that the Holy Ghost is a witness for Christ, a testimony for Jesus; and it will be remembered that when John the Revelator fell at the feet of the angel and was about to worship him, the angel said:

"See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: *for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*"—*Rev. xix, 10.*

And since, as we have seen, the Holy Ghost is the "testimony of Jesus," therefore the Holy Ghost is the spirit of prophecy. It was under the influence of that Spirit that what Scripture we have was written. Says the Apostle Peter:

"For prophecy came not in olden time by the will of God, but holy men of God spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost."—*2 Peter i, 21.*

And that which these holy men spake was written down and became Scripture.

Seeing, then, that the Holy Ghost is the source of divine inspiration and revelation, and that a universal promise of the Holy Ghost is made to those whom God shall call to yield obedience to His Gospel, as well to men in this age as to those who lived in former ages, how comes it that men revolt against the idea of God giving through revelation a new

witness for Himself in this unbelieving generation? We shall see. But we desire to show here that this doctrine of a cessation of revelation is directly contrary to the word and promises of God.

The Apostle Peter in refuting the charge of drunkenness laid upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost by the multitude, who heard them speaking in tongues and prophesying, quoted from a prophecy of Joel's, which he read as follows:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; *and they shall prophesy.*"—*Acts ii, 17, 18.*

I am aware that many will contend that this prophecy of Joel's was fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost. But this is not the case, as will appear by a second reading, and a careful noting of the terms of the prophecy. In the first place it is worthy of note that the outpouring of this Spirit is to occur in *the last days*; second, the outpouring of the Spirit is to be upon *all flesh*, upon the handmaidens of the Lord as well as upon His servants. But on the day of Pentecost the Spirit descended upon the apostles only, instead of upon *all flesh*; upon some of the servants of the lord, but not upon his handmaidens: Hence on the day of Pentecost the terms of Joel's prophecy were not fulfilled, nor will they be until that happy time shall come when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and all enmity between man and the brute creation has departed, and they shall not hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. How then are we to understand Peter's reference to this prophecy of Joel's in connection with the Holy Ghost descending on the apostles, for he says: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." The apostle simply meant that that which the people then witnessed was the manifestation of the same Spirit spoken of by Joel, which eventually will be poured out

upon all flesh; upon God's handmaidens, as well as upon His servants. Hence we conclude from the Scriptures that in the last days there is to be a more wonderful outpouring of the spirit of prophecy upon the people than has been yet known among men.

Moreover we find a number of Scriptures which plainly declare the visitation of heavenly messengers to the earth in the last days—in days manifestly after those in which the apostles lived. Such for instance as—

An angel to visit the earth in the hour of God's judgment, which is connected with the glorious coming of the Messiah, bringing with him the everlasting Gospel, which is then to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people (Rev. xiv, 6, 7):

A special messenger to prepare the way for the glorious coming of the Son of God—when he shall suddenly come to His temple—when it will be difficult to abide the day of his coming—when he shall come to purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer an offering in righteousness unto the Lord (Malachi iii, 1-5):

Elijah, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, whose peculiar mission it is to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and *vice versa* (Malachi iv, 5, 6.):

Angels to gather the elect "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. xxiv, 31):

Two prophets yet to be raised up in Jerusalem who will have power to shut heaven that it rain not, but who, notwithstanding their great powers, will become martyrs—will seal their testimony with their blood (Rev. xi, 3-14).

Yet with all these events plainly predicted in Holy Writ, all Christendom has been persuaded to believe, contrary to the teachings of the word of God, that no revelations are to be given of later date than those contained in the New Testament. To fix that idea in the mind the professed teachers of religion, instead of following the admonition of Jude, and urging their followers to contend earnestly for the faith once de-

livered to the Saints (Jude iii), which was sufficient to bring down a continuous stream of revelation from God and the visitation of angels—they have sought to make them believe that the Scriptures teach that prophecy is to cease, the visitation of angels forever to be discontinued, and the voice of revelation to be heard no more. I shall briefly examine some of those passages which are supposed to support these views respecting the discontinuance of prophecy and revelation:

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, *It is finished*, and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost."—*John xix, 30*.

This passage is taken from John's description of the last moments of Jesus on the cross; and the words, "*It is finished*," by the opponents of new revelation, are twisted to mean that the work of Christ being completed, no more revelation was to be given.

That these words wrung from the trembling lips of the expiring Christ meant no such thing, is proven by the fact that nearly all the revelations in the New Testament were given after those words—"It is finished"—were uttered. Nor can they mean that the work of Christ was finished, for we find Him even after His resurrection laboring forty days among His disciples, teaching them all things respecting the kingdom of heaven (Acts i, 3). What Jesus did mean was that His suffering was finished—He had drunk the cup given Him of the Father, and wrung out the dregs in bitterest anguish.

"Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."—*Cor. xiii, 8*.

Here, it is claimed, is a plain declaration that prophecy shall cease; and the opponent of new revelation, without stopping to inquire when or under what circumstances it shall cease, justifies himself in rejecting everything purporting to be a revelation from God, which is outside the lids of the Bible. But if those who rely upon this passage as justifying their rejection of new revelation will look at its context, they will

discover *when* prophecies shall fail, and when the gift of tongues shall cease, etc.—it will be when that which is perfect is come. As Paul remarks—continuing where my last quotation ended—

“For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”—*Cor. xiii. 9, 10;*

and then goes on to say that at that time, that is in the apostles own day, they saw as through a glass darkly, but when that which was perfect should come, he promised them, they should see face to face, and know as they were known—that time did not come in the days of Paul, it has not yet come, and until that perfect state in which we shall see face to face with God, and know as we are known, and all knowledge which is in part shall be swallowed up in a knowledge that shall be perfect, we have need of revelation, the gift of prophecy, and the visitations of angels even to enable us to see as through a glass darkly.

That Paul did not wish to create any idea in the minds of the Saints against the continuation of revelation from God, so long as they are in a state where even with the aid of the spiritual gifts of revelation, prophecy and tongues they can see only as through a glass darkly, is evident from the exhortation he gives in the chapter following the one we have just quoted, saying:

“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.”—*Cor. xiv, 1.*

Now I come to the passage which is supposed to settle the question beyond all doubting. The reader will consider the passages we have dealt with as but the outer walls; and having broken them down, we come to the citadel itself—the stronghold:

“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; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

This passage occurring near the close

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of the last chapter of the last book of the Bible, it has been argued that it closed the canon of Scripture, and forbids the addition of any more revelation to that contained in the Bible; and upon the authority of this passage, men justify themselves in refusing to accept anything purporting to be a new revelation from God. This argument is specious, and the conclusion based upon it will be found to be most incorrect, for the following very good reasons:

I.° The Book of Revelation in which the passage occurs was not placed in its present position—the last in the Bible,—by its author, nor by any person authorized by him, nor by the command of God. The Book of Revelations, like the other books and epistles of the New Testament, existed as a single book or pamphlet, for a number of generations, separate and apart from any collection of books such as we find in the New Testament—so that the words quoted, let them mean what they will, refer to the Book of Revelation alone, and not to the whole Bible.

II. If this passage means that no more Scripture is to be written—that the fountain of inspiration therefore was forever to remain dried up—then John the apostle, himself, was a violator of his own prohibition, for it is admitted by all biblical scholars of note, that the Gospel of St. John *was written after the Book of Revelations.*

III. The language in the passage is, “If any *man* should add unto these things,” *i.e.*, the things written in the Book of Revelations—“God shall add unto him the plagues,” etc. It will be seen from this, then, it is simply *man* who is prohibited adding to the things written in that book, not God. Because the Lord has forbidden *man* to add anything more to a revelation He has given, it by no means follows that the Lord has also closed His own mouth so that He cannot give a further revelation.

Words very similar to these in Revelations are to be found in the writings of Moses:

“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought

from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you."—*Deut. iv, 2.*

Yet no one believes those words close up the revelations of God to man—in-
deed volumes of revelations were given
after they were written. Still the Jews
would have been just as reasonable—as
much justified in rejecting the revelations
of God given subsequent to the writing
down of those words, as Christians of to-
day are in rejecting what purports to be
a new revelation from God, because of
what is written in the last chapter in the

Bible. In both cases man is prohibited
from adding his own words to the things
which God has revealed, and passing
them off as the word of God; but God is
free to add revelation to that already
given as seemeth Him good.

There is nothing in these passages
which are quoted to sustain the idea that
no more revelation is to be given from
God. It is a subterfuge of man's to hide
his own spiritual weakness—to excuse
the absence of the powers of God which
brings to earth the revelations of heaven.

B. H. Roberts.

THE TOWER OF LONDON.

THIS monument of ancient times and
customs is built on the bank of the river
Thames, and stands on the brow of the
eminence called Tower Hill; the spot
where so many persons of distinguished
character met death at the hands of the
executioner. Judging from the position
of the Tower it seems probable that it
was intended to defend the approach by
water to the famous metropolis of the
British Empire.

It has been confidently asserted that
the Tower owes its origin to the Ro-
mans. Mr. Bailey in his history of the
Tower says that it was built about the
time of Constantine the Great, and that
it was used as a mint and treasury at
least in the days of the early Saxon
kings. Among other grounds given for
this assertion are, that in laying founda-
tions for a new ordnance office in 1777,
the workmen discovered an ingot of
silver bearing the impression of Roman
characters and also several gold coins.

Judging from these circumstances and
also from the naturally favorable posi-
tion of the eminence on which it stands,
it seems probable that the Romans had
some kind of fortress on the site of the
present building. The fortress which
Alfred the Great rebuilt in 886 stood on
the same site, and the east wall of the
city of London was near its base. This
spot was selected by William the Con-
queror soon after he took possession of

the kingdom, in 1066, as a fit place for
both a fortress and a palace. The ex-
act year when building was commenced
is unknown. In 1078, however, they
had already made some progress. The
old fortress had at that time been torn
down and its old base afforded a firm
foundation for the new.

Thus amidst the terrible conflict which
sprung up from the Norman's ruthless
endeavor to quench the spirit of liberty,
the great White Tower arose. The
patriot citizens of England so spurned
the iron rule of him who sought to
crush them, that the policy of the Con-
queror would lead him to provide some
stronghold adapted at once to shelter
himself and awe the rebellious. The
massive grandeur of the structure erect-
ed by William fitted it well to accom-
plish these ends. The site too was
wisely chosen; just outside the city, east-
ward, on the northern bank of the river
Thames where the ground is gently ele-
vated above the surrounding country.
Thus the Tower of London was the off-
spring of England's tempestuous morn-
ing. As the storms gradually subsided
and constitutional freedom shone forth
with steadier and brighter ray, the
frowning *donjon* of the Normans occu-
pied a less prominent place in England's
history. At present the gloomy old pile
is almost lost amidst the all-pervading
light, and the Tower has become but