

SEVENTH LETTER OF ORSON SPENCER TO THE REV. W. CROWEL, A.M.

Editor of the Christian Watchman, Boston, Massachusetts, U. S. A.

Rev. and Dear Sir,—The next subject in the order of my promise, contained in my first letter to you, is, THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF AN APOSTOLIC CHURCH, after the similitude and power of the primitive church. Such an occurrence as this, truly demands proof of a palpable and satisfactory order, which, by the help of God, I will proceed to give you.

The beloved apostle John, who survived many of his fellow-labourers in the gospel, and saw many damnable heresies coming into the church, and making havoc of all the faithful, and even the seven most faithful churches in all the earth probably, right under his own faithful supervision, yielding to APOSTACY, and going over to Satan. This apostle, dear sir, in his solitary grief, was shewn, by revelation from God, the RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TRUE CHURCH, with such wrath and vengeance following its wake, as should make an utter end of wickedness, give the righteous a thousand years rest, cleanse the earth by blood and burning, and bind the devil until the "little season."

Now mark, sir, the emphatic words of this apostle before he left the earth, concerning what he saw would come in the last days. Hear now with a fixed ear, and an unbiassed, determined purpose to believe, and abide the declaration of your own apostle John. Now to the momentous words that cheered the few banished, persecuted Saints, that survived the bloody hand of Gentile apostacy. Says he:—"I saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people; saying, Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come." There is no obscurity about this language. It is quite as intelligible and free from ambiguity as the language that predicted the marvellous manner of the coming of Christ, which, however, men would not understand through prejudice. "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son," &c. Now, sir, is it at all incredible that an angel should come to men? Or is it incredible that he should come soaring, or "*flying*, in the midst of heaven to earth?" You certainly believe, that Jesus Christ and Elijah soared from the earth up through the air, or visible heavens. Is it not also credible, that God should employ an angel to carry a message to the nations? And as God ministered the law by angels to one man, Moses, for a whole nation, even so the angel that John saw, would minister his gospel message to some *particular* man, and that man should bear it to the nations of the earth. Now, to what man might we expect an angel would bring such a message of vast importance? A great and wise man, or obscure and ignorant, or an old or young man? If we look at the past, we shall find that John was a boisterous fellow, from the wilderness, that had no fellowship for any existing religion whatever. He struck the axe deep at the root of every religious organization, notwithstanding there were, probably, some good men in every sect, but they were in error. This man, sir, was first and chief pioneer to the Lord of life.

And who comes next to receive a message for all nations, and hold the keys of revelation for all nations? Now, reverend sir, fix the eye of your mind steadily upon him. And who is he? An honest, hardy, illiterate, bold, rough fisherman, that perhaps never saw the inside of a gentleman's drawing-room. Here, sir, is the wisdom of God and confusion of man. But to return. Who is the man, to whom the angel shall give the gospel message for all nations, in the last days, according to the vision of John, the revelator? Let God, the Holy One of all the earth, speak in this matter, and let all the ends of the earth believe HIS holy word. The Lord God of all flesh, sir, by the mouth of His servant Zechariah, tells us precisely what kind of man this angel would speak to, and give the gospel, in the last dispensation. Speaking of the two great events, (the building of Zion and Jerusalem, in the last days), Zechariah, with his ear open to the revelation of the same great event as John's was, says he heard the mandate of the Almighty to the angel, saying:—"Go and speak to that *young* man." Here we have it, sir, in the language and testimony of God himself, by the mouths of his two servants, John, the revelator, and

Zechariah. John saw, after much inquiry before God, about the restoration of the gospel to the earth, in clear vision, the angel in his downward flight through the heavens to earth, and also heard him proclaim his errand, and the message of joy and wo to the nations of the last days. The other servant of God, Zechariah, like John, equally intent to know, whether the true gospel ever would triumph in all the earth, and wickedness come to an end, had the happiness to see the angel, at the end of his downward flight, place his feet upon the earth, and witness the finger of God raised, and pointing the angel to a *young* man, saying, "go speak to that *young* man."

Now, sir, that you may be convinced beyond controversy, I will beg your attention to the marvellous coincidence, between the matter of fact, as related by a guileless *young* man, and the declaration of John and Zechariah; but first, you must readily admit, that according to the testimony of two prophets of God, an angel must come down through the midst of heaven to earth, in *some* period of the last days, subsequent to the life time of John, with such a gospel as was not on the earth; and that angel must communicate his gospel message to some certain *young* man which the finger of God should point out to the angel. Now, was the young man Joseph *the* man, or look we for another? His testimony concerning the angel that he saw, and the message that he received, if you will read it, coincides perfectly with what the two prophets had long since declared should take place. He was, indeed, an illiterate and obscure youth of seventeen, of humble parentage, from the mountains of Vermont; but was he any less fit to receive such a message than any other youth, because he was illiterate or poor, or obscure, or rough and vulgar. This simple country youth told a tale of what he had seen and heard, in the face of all the broad blazing science and christianity of the nineteenth century; but was he any less likely to be *the* youth that the prophets saw and spoke of on that account? Was it a marvellous tale that he told? so likewise was the tale that the Virgin Mary told about her *offspring* as *begotten of God* the Father. Did the message that Joseph received, lead him to disfellowship all the religious systems of the day, as incompatible with the primitive pattern? so did Jesus, with the religions of his day. But lest some lingering doubt should remain upon your mind, whether the young man Joseph was the identical youth spoken of by the prophets just named, you shall have other proofs until reason is satisfied.

The prophet Daniel being greatly beloved of God, and of great faith, saw this scene of the visitation of the angel to the *young* man, and the laying of the corner stone of a millennial kingdom, and the time of its organization, and calculated the same, to a day, as will be developed in due time. Job wished that his words, or revelations and history, were written with a pen of iron (the engraver's tool) and laid in a rock. Now many of the prophets that lived and suffered on the American continent, and settled that continent about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem under Zedekiah, also wished *their* words written and laid in rock or stone. By great faith they obtained permission to have their records and prophecies laid up in *stone*, being neatly engraved with a pen of iron, on plates of the most enduring metal. Now Daniel saw this *stone* that contained the records, and spoke of it. Now this stone, containing the words of these prophets of that "*other fold*" spoken of by Christ, had been buried about fourteen hundred years previous to its discovery, probably to a considerable depth in the earth, in what was then called the mountain of Cumorah. Daniel's language is very remarkable in regard to the manner in which this *stone*, with its contents, and connexion with the angelic message, should come forth "*out of the mountain without hands.*" The stone, probably, in consequence of the wear of the elements upon the earth under the guidance of God, was gradually resurrected from the depths of its burial, until it was literally *out* of the mountain, and visible without the aid of hands.

Oh! how marvellous, literal, and exact the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy! **THE MOUNTAIN! THE VISIBILITY OF THE LONG BURIED STONE WITHOUT HANDS!** The contents of this stone, long harped upon by commentators, joined with the whole of the angelic message foreseen by John and Zechariah, were to lay the foundation of a kingdom that should extend over the whole earth, and break in pieces all others, and never be thrown down. Daniel not only saw the stone, and mountain, and *young* man, and the whole beginning of this latter day work, and

calculated the precise year and day of the month when the kingdom (not the coming of Christ) should be set up; but he describes the small and weak governments into which the four great universal governments should be divided and subdivided. The governments that should exist on the earth when this stone should be brought to light, would be, in comparison with the four universal and potent governments of previous ages, as the numerously divided toes of a man's feet in magnitude, to his body.

When Jesus Christ came to organize the kingdom, the Romish government was universal, and all the world were required to be taxed for its support, consequently Daniel did not speak of *his* organization, which all the apostles saw and declared would be overcome. But he saw that the kingdom which Christ would never take from the earth would be set up, when the image of great kingdoms would be reduced to the simile of mere toes, or petty kingdoms, just such as exist all over the earth now—weak and small, and buddled together as thick as some of the super-numerary toes of the feet of some ancient prodigies. The kingdoms of this world, just precisely like the religions of this world, are small, very numerous and contentious—all the present governments of the earth being based on mixed, heterogenous, and discordant principles, will readily crumble, like dry clay, before the march of truth, until the dust thereof is carried away, and these kingdoms and diversified religions are known only in the past. You, sir, know very well whether the signs of the times fully indicate the tottering state, and general disruption of all the governments of the earth. But before I close this part of my subject, I will still multiply the testimony of the prophets even further upon it.

Omitting Ezekiel, I will next introduce the testimony of Isaiah. This prophet has probably said more on the re-establishment of the church in the last days, and the surpassing glory of it than any other, and deserves rather to be read as a whole than suffer mutilation from a single extract or two. How any man can read Isaiah's testimony and not see that an extraordinary scene, just like the one I have been describing, was in full vision before him, it is difficult to explain, except their hearts are waxed gross and dull to perceive, and the veil remains untaken away in reading the Old Testament prophecies. Instead of citing passages of scripture verbatim, I will here name topics which Isaiah distinctly exhibited, bearing directly upon the subject at issue. First, he speaks unequivocally of an extraordinary BOOK, and says it would be a "*sealed book*," that neither the learned or unlearned could read. Second, in the context, he gives a cutting rebuke, because there is no prophet or seer to read it, and administers a most withering reproof to the religious world, that draw near to Him with their lips, and honor Him with their mouths only, and for lack of the spirit of *revelation and prophecy*, resort to their own ingenuity of teaching the fear of the Lord by human precepts. Third, he says the "*vision*" of all is become as a BOOK that is sealed which cannot be read. How is this, sir, that the prophecies and revelations of *all* are locked up in a book, that neither learned nor unlearned can read, and the men that uttered them, prophets and seers, are covered—shut out from the knowledge of mankind.

The visions of the Old and New Testament are so plainly legible in many books, that he who runs may read. Those who had these latter visions, instead of being covered or unknown, are well known, and preached every Sabbath day. Don't shrink from this issue, sir, but meet it like one who feels his destiny to be suspended on a correct faith in revealed truth. What mysterious collection of visions, arranged into the form of a BOOK, that no uninspired man can read, IS THIS? It must be the visions of *some* prophets and seers, that have lived and prophesied to *some* people, that have now faded from the knowledge of men. Mankind is ignorant of them. And when the BOOK that contains their *records* is found, (taken out of the earth, as I shall shew by Isaiah's testimony), no man can read it, or is the wiser for it, (unless God reveals it). Now, sir, as you are a teacher, professing to be sent from God, I again ask, whose visions are all these, so curiously wrapped up in a BOOK, and sealed too, and kept hid from the knowledge of mankind? You will not deny that the prophet saw *a book*, containing important records of some certain unknown prophets and seers. But if you believe the prophet, as I know you do, and humbly acknowledge, that you cannot tell what this mysterious BOOK of RECORDS means, then, by the spirit and blessing of God, I

will further endeavour to shew, that it is the same that the angel announced to the young man Joseph.

This mysterious BOOK of records was found in that identical *stone*, spoken of by Daniel the prophet. The prophets and seers, whose records constitute that book, lived among a mighty nation on the American continent, whose history is as important as that of other continents in its place. Another topic, dwelt upon by Isaiah, is that "truth," plainly alluding to this book of inspired records, should "*speak out of the ground*, and thy speech shall be low *out of the dust*, and thy voice shall be as of one that hath a familiar spirit *out of the ground*, and thy speech shall whisper *out of the dust*." Is it a marvellous thing that this wonderful book of the visions of all the American seers should be so skilfully entombed in *stone*, and then buried in the earth? Where should they have deposited it, so that it could have answered the purpose intended, so well as in the ground? How could the STONE, containing it, ever have been CUT OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN, WITHOUT HANDS, if it had never been put *into the mountain*? Isaiah says, the people should be besieged and brought *low*, (nearly all were slain), but by the records of their seers should, after a long time, speak *out of the ground*, and their records should be as the voice of a familiar spirit? Who, sir, that has read them does not clearly perceive that they speak familiarly of things past, present, and to come. So truly do these records speak of what shall transpire, after the BOOK has been shewn to them, that many have slanderously said, that it was written by an eye witness of the things spoken of. It speaks also of the ruins of cities,—of antiquities since discovered on the American continent, by travellers and antiquarians, that have excited the curiosity and wonder of the world.

This Book of Mormon, is one of the most unexceptionable and God-honouring books that was ever published to the world. An uninspired man might as well attempt to originally compose the Old and New Testament as it. Its language (the best butt of cavillers) is said not to harmonize with the philological rules of the nineteenth century. One word in reply. Peter and John were illiterate men, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and their language was accredited to unlearned men by their hearers. Now, if redundant and ungrammatical language may be the medium through which the Holy Ghost communicates by men in speaking, may it not with equal propriety be employed in *writing*, by a similar class of men? It is not denied, that there is something wonderful about all this matter. The prophet Isaiah considered it wonderful, when he calls it a "marvellous work: a marvellous work and a wonder." "The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid." All the learned commentaries of divines, as this gospel advances, shall be buried in oblivion, as so much rubbish. God declares, by the same prophet, that he has seen the wickedness of the wicked, and the oppression of the poor and upright, until he rises up to "*do his work, his strange work*, and bring to pass his act, his strange act." He warns men against making a mock of this strange and marvellous work, lest their "bands be made strong," for he has "*decreed a consumption upon the whole earth*." This is what John also says:—"The hour of *His* judgment" is measurably simultaneous with the proclamation of the gospel. Habakkuk, the prophet, told men to wait for this same vision of American prophets, written on tables, (tabular plates), which would be a long time before it made its appearance; but it would "*surely come*," because God had promised these seers that a remnant of their seed, on that continent, should be saved. No pen can describe the joy and exultation that they must have felt in obtaining such a promise, or the bliss now experienced by them in the fulfilment of it. But for the fulfilment of this promise, none of them or their righteous contemporaries would ever have been made perfect.

Oh! how great the goodness and mercy of God to every nation, without respect of persons! How great, too, the indebtedness of this generation to Almighty God for that most precious "*stone*" of prophetic records, that reveals at once the history of the American continent! A continent of otherwise unfathomable antiquities and wonders. A land that embowels the bones of a numerous and mighty race of people, with all their implements of husbandry and of art. Where, also, are the ruins of splendid cities, the former glory of which might surpass even gigantic London! Within that stone, too, was written with a pen of iron, as in-

fallibly as the marks on Belshazzer's palace, the future destiny of the American people.

In conclusion, do you ask if the Apostolic Church is again re-established? where is it? I reply, it is in the mountains where the Lord's House is to be built in the last days. Driven by the cruel hand of persecution to the very place where the Lord has declared He will "*hide* them till the indignation be overpast." Do you also ask what kind of organization this Church has? The answer is, the same as that of the Apostolic Church in the days of Peter, consisting of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, &c.; with the gifts of healing, tongues, interpretation, casting out devils, prophesyings, &c. Do you ask who has seen any of these miraculous fruits of this Church? I answer, a hundred thousand living witnesses are ready to testify that the "signs" which Christ said "shall follow them that believe," *do*, in very deed, follow believers in *this* Church. Do you say, are they credible witnesses? They were generally accounted credible persons until they believed and obeyed this gospel. Do their lives show that they do sincerely believe and love the apostolic gospel which they profess? Nothing as yet, has been able to separate them from it; neither home nor country, nor the inheritances of their fathers, nor penury or reproach, or evil report, or cold, or nakedness, and no certain dwelling place for years.

I now close this simple and unembellished statement of truth, being written in a state of convalescence from severe sickness, hoping a portion of your enquiries will have been satisfactorily answered,

Your friend and servant,

ORSON SPENCER.

CONFERENCE MINUTES.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

This conference was held on the 13th June, 1847, in the parish of Himbleton, in the regular house used by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for worship, for several years, (being the first place where the gospel was received, by James and Elizabeth Hunting, at Earls Common).

The meeting was called to order by Elder Henry Ruff, the first person that was ordained to the office of an Elder in this region of country.

Opened by singing, prayer by Elder Ruff. After the second hymn had been sung, he made some remarks on obeying and following counsel. He then proposed that Elder John Banks preside over this meeting. It was seconded and carried.

Brother Banks stated that he had been sent by Elder Orson Spencer (which they would see by a letter from Liverpool, which Elder Lickerish had read to them) to set in order all things found wanting in doctrine and discipline, &c.

The letter spoke in very high terms of Elder John Banks and of his services in the church, and as such, to receive him liberally, &c., in the absence of Elder Thomas Smith, who was on a mission at Norwich, in the county of Norfolk, about 200 miles from here.

It was moved and seconded that Elder Lickerish act as clerk to this conference. Carried unanimously.

The President then gave instructions on the subject before-named, on counsel and order. He said that he knew from Elder Smith, a long time since, that he wanted to leave this conference, because minds had been knit up by wrong teaching from himself, that had brought it so that his family had been in want of bread—bringing in a system of obtaining funds, that made those, whose circumstances were easy, and those who were ground down by the rich, to deal out alike, and that sparingly. He said, what had been done by Elder Smith was through fear of offence, but these things must be altered. They had been dividing seven penny worth between twenty of them per week, and that not without complaining. Seven penny worth of blessings to be divided among twenty of them, &c., &c.

Number of officers present—1 high priest, 13 elders, 12 priests, 4 teachers, and 3 deacons.