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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DIVINE AUTHORITY; OR, THE QUESTION: WAS JOSEPH SMITH SENT OF GOD? ***

DIVINE AUTHORITY; OR THE QUESTION, WAS JOSEPH SMITH SENT OF GOD?

BY ORSON PRATT,
ONE OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

A few days since, Mrs. Pratt and myself, together with some others, were kindly invited to take tea with a very respectable gentleman of this town (Liverpool), who, though not connected with our church, yet was, with his family, sincerely enquiring after the truth. They seemed to be fully convinced in relation to the most important features of our doctrine, and were desirous of extending their investigations still further. We hope that their researches may happily result in a full conviction of the truth, and that they may obtain that certainty, so much to be desired, as to the *divine* authority of the great and important message *now* revealed from heaven—a message which must assuredly prove a savor of *life* or *death* to the generation now living. This message is beginning to awake the attention of the honest, virtuous, and upright among all classes of society. They seem to be aroused from the slumber of ages.

A message of simple truth, when sent from God—when published by divine authority, through divinely inspired men, penetrates the mind like a sharp two-edged sword, and cuts asunder the deeply-rooted prejudices, the iron-bound sinews of ancient error and tradition, made sacred by age and rendered popular by human wisdom. It severs with undeviating exactness between truth and falsehood—between the doctrine of Christ and the doctrines of men; it levels with the most perfect ease every argument that human learning may array against it. Opinions, creeds invented by uninspired men, and doctrines originated in schools of divinity, all vanish like the morning dew—all sink into insignificance when compared with a message direct from heaven. Such a message shines upon the understanding like the splendors of the noon-day sun; it whispers in the ears of mortals, saying, "this is the way, walk ye in it." Certainty and assurance are its constant companions; it is entirely unlike all plans or systems ever invented by human authority; it has no alliance, connexion, or fellowship with any of them; it speaks with divine authority, and all nations, without an exception, are required to obey. He that receives the message and endures to the end will be saved; he that rejects it will be damned. It matters not what his former righteousness may have been—none can be excused.

As a specimen of the anxious inquiry which now pervades the minds of many in relation to this church, we publish the following extract from a letter, which was kindly read to us during our afore-mentioned visit, by the gentleman who received it from his friend in London. We were struck with the apparent candor, the sound judgment, and the correct conclusions of the author of the letter, and earnestly solicited the privilege of publishing it. Permission was granted on condition that we would withhold names. We here present it to our readers, and shall endeavor, in the same spirit of candor, to answer the all-important inquiries contained in it.

July 15th.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have been expecting, time after time, to be able to return you the "Letters" you so kindly left with me. As I informed you in my last, I cursorily read through the letters, and then handed the book to Mr. —. With him it is at the present time. The impression made thereby on his mind is very

remarkable, and he requests me to inform you, that if you will allow him, he means to keep the book, if you will please to let him know the price thereof. He and I concur in our view of Mormonism at present. Do you enquire what that view is? I will then proceed to state it. We consider that the proofs which Mormonism gives of the apostasy are, without question, clear and demonstrative; we entirely concur also in the personal appearance and reign of our Lord; we are persuaded that all the preachers and teachers of the day are without *authority*—that their teachings and interpretations are uncertain as to the truth—that the translations of the scripture, being done without inspiration, are also uncertain. All is uncertain! melancholy thought! a deplorable picture but a true one!—the different teachers doing the best they can!—all jarring—all contending! The result—division, multiplied division! And they have a right if they think proper to divide from an authority *merely human*. But their multiplied division is a multiplied proof that they are wrong—that they are without that spirit who guides into truth, *and truth is ONE!*

My dear sir, the "Saints" have made out a strong and irrefragable case to show that "*authority to teach*" is no where, if not with them; but the proposition that *they have authority to teach, interpret &c.*, is one that at present does not create a conviction in Mr. — or my mind. We admit that it is very reasonable to suppose that, under such circumstances, God would raise up and send *one invested with authority*. Whether Joseph Smith was such an one is the all important question. I also admit, that so far as I am acquainted with his history, there is something very remarkable about him; perhaps I should be fully convinced if I were more fully read in writings relating to him. I wish I lived near to you, and then I would read more fully on the subject I confess my mind is much concerned to arrive at a clear conclusion upon the point.

Mr. — wishes you, if you will be so good, to select a few books that you think clearly prove the divine mission of Joseph Smith, and send them in a parcel to him with the prices; he will feel much obliged, and will send you a post-office order for the amount; he believes your selection will be a judicious one. I have heard Mr. Banks twice since I saw you, and other individual teachers also. There is much in their public services I approve. I am struck with the simplicity of their celebration of the ordinances. Mr. Banks and the others *assert strongly* the divinity of Joseph Smith's mission; this is, however, not enough: the church of the early saints had proofs to give by inspired apostles like Peter, inspired deacons like Stephen, inspired evangelists like Philip, inspired prophets like Agabus, and inspired prophetesses like Philip's daughters. All this was the result of the *Spirit* being in and with them *in authority and power*. The church of the latter day ought to be the same, if having the *same spirit of authority and power*. The sects are without these proofs, therefore they are sects groping in the dark, and hoping, and thinking, and guessing they are right, and all this convinces that they are not "the Church, the body of Christ;" bodies they are of their doctors and founders sure enough! Now I think the Church of the Latter-day Saints must resemble the original, or it is at once proved only a sect. One result of my conversation with you and Banks, and perusing the Letters, is, that I can be no longer connected with any sect. So far as I see, I can without difficulty confound in argument—plain scriptural argument—any into whose company I am at any time thrown. The Methodist *system* I am convinced is the worst, because its pretensions are highest. I stand, therefore, fully alone. I declare I should be glad to be convinced that Mormonism is what it professes to be; I would join it to-day if my mind could be convinced that its elders had *authority to baptize me for the remission of sins, and lay hands on me for the gift of the Holy Ghost*. These sacred ordinances I would obey gladly, if I knew men having authority to administer them! To have these ordinances administered without divine authority is mere child's play. Thus you see my position. A Methodist leader, an old friend, said to me the other day, "Are you connected with the church of Christ now?—I hear you are not with us now." I answered, "Where is the church of Christ?" He replied it is found among the different sects. I then inquired, "Are you in the church of Christ? for if you are, you must be a member of all the sects." This rather puzzled him. I then asked him "Shew me the sect that resembled the church at the beginning; does any one of them, or do they all put together resemble the church at the beginning?" He said certainly not. I enquired why not? He was shrewd enough to be silent and to see that his own mouth must condemn his sect and all the sects. Observe, in the absence of the spirit, men must do as well as they can. This I am trying to do, only I confess that I am poor, and blind, and naked, bereft of the glory of the *certainty of the authority and truth of the church of Christ*. The sects, however, are satisfied, though "poor, blind, and naked," to boast of increase of goods, chapels, rich friends, preachers, &c., &c. So much for my present views and standing. I suppose by this time you have acted on your convictions, and are joined to the Saints; in all honesty you ought, I confess. The moment the conviction that *divine authority and certainty of teaching* is with them, that moment will I join them. ***

Farewell. My respectful regards to Mrs. —, and ever believe me, my dear sir, yours very truly,

First.—The author of the above letter has carefully examined the present state of the world, and declares himself fully convinced of the awful apostacy which now so universally prevails. He unhesitatingly admits that all authority to teach—to administer ordinances—to build up the church of Christ, has entirely ceased from the earth—that "all is uncertain." He also admits that "it is very reasonable to suppose, that under such circumstances, God would raise up and send one *invested with authority*. Whether Joseph Smith was such a one is the all-important question." Yes, indeed, it is an important question, and one that involves the fate of the present generation. If Joseph Smith was not sent of God, this church cannot be the church of God, and the tens of thousands who have been baptized into this church are yet in their sins, and no better off than the millions that have gone before them. *The form*, without the power and authority, is no better than the hundreds of human forms that have no resemblance to the ancient pattern; indeed, it is more dangerous, because better calculated to deceive. Other churches do not profess to have inspired apostles, prophets, prophetesses, evangelists, &c., hence we *know*, if the New Testament be true, that they cannot be the church of God. But the Latter-day Saints profess to have all these officers and gifts among them, and profess to have authority to administer in every form, ordinance, and blessing of the ancient church; hence we know, that so far as the officers, doctrines, ordinances, and ceremonies are evidence, this Church can exhibit a perfect pattern. In these things, then, both ancient and modern Saints are exactly alike. By the New Testament then we cannot be condemned.

If the Latter-day Saints are not what they profess to be, one thing is certain, that no one ever will be able to

confute their doctrine by the scriptures; however imperfect the people may be, their doctrine is *infallible*. Can this be said of any other people who have existed on the eastern hemisphere during the last 1700 years? No. Their doctrines have been a heterogenous mixture of truth and error, that would not stand the test one moment when measured by a pattern of inspiration; some disparity could be seen and pointed out—some deviation either in the organization or in the ordinances of the gospel could be shown to exist. And now after so many centuries have elapsed, and when human wisdom has been exerted to its utmost strength, and the most exalted and gigantic talents displayed to lay a stable foundation whereon to build, we awake and behold all an empty bubble—a vain show—a phantom of man's creation, with scarcely a vestige of the ancient *form*, to say nothing of the *power*. In the midst of all this thick darkness, a young, illiterate, obscure, and inexperienced man announces a message from heaven, before which darkness flees away; human dogmas are overturned; the traditions of ages are uprooted; all forms of church government tremble like an aspen leaf at its approach, and the mighty fabric of popular sectarianism is convulsed and shaken to its very foundation. How happens all this? If Joseph Smith were an impostor, whence his superior wisdom? What power enervated his mind in laying the foundation of a church according to the ancient order? How could an impostor so far surpass the combined wisdom of seventeen centuries as to originate a system diverse from every other system under heaven, and yet harmonise with the system of Jesus and his apostles in every particular? What! an impostor discover the gross darkness of ages, and publish a doctrine perfect in every respect, against which not one scriptural argument can be adduced! The idea is preposterous! The *purity* and *infallibility* of the doctrine of this great modern prophet is a presumptive evidence of no small moment in favor of his divine mission.

We do not pretend that a *perfect doctrine* is an *infallible* evidence in favour of the *divine authority* of the one who teaches it. We can conceive it possible, though not probable, for a man to teach a doctrine unmixed with error, and yet be without authority to administer its ordinances. Swedenborg, Irving, and many others taught doctrines in some respects true, in other respects false; hence their authority should be rejected, even though they should perform miracles. We have no examples on the records of history, of a doctrine perfect in every respect, being taught by any person or persons, unless they were inspired with divine authority. If Joseph Smith taught a doctrine in any respect false, he should be rejected as an impostor, though he should, like the magicians of Egypt, turn rivers of water into blood, or create frogs in abundance, or even raise the dead like the witch of Endor. On the other hand, if he taught a true and perfect doctrine, he might be sent of God, though he himself should perform no miracle, like John the Baptist, or the Prophet Noah, or many other prophets of the Old Testament.

In ancient times, many great prophets were sent of God, and we have no record of their doing miracles, yet their respective messages were of infinite importance, and could not be rejected without condemnation. Where is there a man, no matter how great his attainments, that can show Mr. Smith's doctrine to be false? Did the ancient saints teach baptism to the penitent believer for the remission of sins? So did Mr. S. Did they teach the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit? So did Mr. S. Did the Former-day Saints teach that apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, deacons, bishops, elders, &c., all inspired of God, were necessary in the church? So did Mr. S. Did the ancient Saints teach that dreams, visions, new revelations, ministering of angels, healings, tongues, interpretations, and all other spiritual gifts were necessary in the church? So did this modern prophet. Where then is the discrepancy between the ancient and modern teachings? No where. The teaching of the one is as perfect as the other; and we again assert that this perfect coincidence in teaching, in every point, is a strong presumptive evidence that *Mr. Smith was sent of God*.

Second.—In what manner does Joseph Smith declare that a dispensation of the gospel was committed unto him? He testifies that an angel of God, whose name was Moroni, appeared unto him; that this angel was formerly an ancient prophet among a remnant of the tribe of Joseph on the continent of America. He testifies that Moroni revealed unto him where he deposited the sacred records of his nation some fourteen hundred years ago; that these records contained the "everlasting gospel" as it was anciently taught and recorded by this branch of Israel. He gave Mr. Smith power to reveal the contents of those records to the nations of the earth. Now, how does this testimony of Joseph Smith agree with the book of John's prophecy given on the Isle of Patmos? John testifies that when the dispensation of the gospel is again committed to the nations, it shall be through the medium of an *angel* from heaven. J. Smith testifies that a dispensation of the gospel for all nations has been committed to him by an *angel*. The one uttered the prediction; the other testifies its fulfillment. Though Mr. Smith had taught a perfect doctrine, yet if he had testified that his doctrine was not restored by an angel, all would at once have known him to be an impostor. How came Mr. Smith, if an impostor, to not only discover a perfect doctrine, but also to discover the precise medium through which that doctrine should be restored to the earth? Did Swedenborg, Irving, Wesley, or any other persons, not only teach a pure system, but at the same time did they declare that it was committed to them by an angel from heaven? If not, however pure and holy their teaching, they were not divinely authorised to administer in ordinances. If Mr. Smith had professed to have accidentally discovered those records, and that he was inspired to reveal their contents through the Urim and Thummim; or if he had professed to have received a message of the gospel through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, or the Urim and Thummim, or in any other way but that of the ministering of an angel, we should, without further inquiry, have known him to be without authority. How came Mr. Smith, if a deceiver, to think of all this? Did Martin Luther, Wesley, Whitfield, Swedenborg, or Irving think of this? Whence his superior intellect—his depth of understanding—his extensive foresight—that he should so far surpass all former impostors for 1700 years? John testifies that when the everlasting gospel is restored to the earth it shall be by an *angel*. Smith testifies that it was restored by an *angel*, and in no other way. *This is another presumptive evidence that he was sent of God*.

Third.—A revelation and restoration to the earth of the "*everlasting gospel*" through the angel Moroni would be of no benefit to the nations, unless some one should be ordained with authority to preach it and administer its ordinances. Moroni might reveal a book containing a beautiful and glorious system of salvation, but no one could obey even its first principles without a legally authorized administrator, ordained to preach, baptize, lay on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, &c. Did Moroni ordain Mr. Smith to the apostleship, and command him to administer ordinances? No, he did not. But why not confer authority by ordination, as well as reveal the everlasting gospel? Because in all probability he had not the right so to do. All angels have not the same authority—they do not all hold the same keys. Moroni was a prophet, but we have no account of his holding the office of an apostle; and if not, he had no right to ordain Mr. Smith to an office which he himself never possessed. He no doubt went as far as he was authorized, and that was to reveal the

"*stick of Ephraim*"—the record of his fathers containing the "*everlasting gospel*." How then did Mr. Smith obtain the office of an apostle, if Moroni had no authority to ordain him to such office? Mr. Smith testifies that Peter, James, and John came to him in the capacity of ministering angels, and by the laying on of hands ordained him an apostle, and commanded him to preach, baptize, lay on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and administer all other ordinances of the gospel as they themselves did in ancient days. Did Swedenborg—did Irving's apostles—or did any other imposters during the long age of darkness—profess that the apostleship was conferred upon them by those who held it last—by an angel who held the office himself? No; and therefore they are not apostles, but deceivers. If Mr. Smith had pretended that he received the apostleship by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, without an ordination under the hands of an apostle, we should at once know that his pretensions were vain, and that he was a deceiver. If an impostor, how came Mr. Smith to discover this? Why did he not, like the Irvingites, assume the apostleship without an apostle to ordain him? How came he to possess so much more wisdom than Irving, as to discover that he could not be an apostle without being ordained under the hands of an apostle? If Mr. Smith be a false apostle, it must be confessed that he has exhibited far more judgment than all the false apostles who have preceded him, learned and talented as they were. Is not this another presumptive evidence of *Joseph Smith's divine mission*? Such a correctness upon matters of so great a moment, and upon subjects on which millions have heretofore erred, indicates something more than *human*—it indicates inspiration of the Almighty. The purity of Mr. Smith's doctrine—the perfect coincidence of his testimony with that of John's, in relation to the manner of the restoration of the everlasting Gospel to the earth, and the consistency of his testimony in relation to the manner of the restoration of the apostleship, are strong presumptive evidences that beautifully harmonize with and strengthen each other; the evidence is therefore accumulative, and increases with every additional condition or circumstance in a multiplied ratio, and seems almost irresistibly to force conviction upon the mind.

Fourth.—Joseph Smith not only professes, through the medium of angels, to have received a dispensation of the gospel, and the power and authority of the apostleship, but he also professes to have received, through *revelation* and *commandment* from God, a dispensation for the gathering of the Saints from all nations. Now the doctrine of the gathering of the Saints in the last days must either be *false* or *true*; if false, then J. Smith must be an impostor. It matters not how correct he may have been in all other points of his system, if this one point—the doctrine of the gathering—be false, he *must* be a deceiver. Why? Because he professes to have received *this doctrine* by direct *revelation* and *commandment*. On the other hand, if the doctrine of the gathering of the Saints be a *true* doctrine and scriptural, this will be another presumptive evidence that Mr. Smith was sent of God.

Now a doctrine may be *true* and not be *scriptural*; as for example, Newton's doctrine or law of universal gravitation is a *true* doctrine, but not a *scriptural* one; that is, it can neither be proved nor disproved by the scriptures. So, Noah's doctrine of gathering into an ark—Lot's doctrine of fleeing out of Sodom—Christ's doctrine to depart out of Jerusalem and flee to the mountains to escape destruction, were all *true*; but neither of them could be proved or disproved by any scripture given to any of the former prophets. So likewise Mr. Smith's doctrine of the gathering of the Saints in the last days might be *true*, even though there should be no former scripture that predicted such an event; but in this case such a doctrine would be no evidence that Mr. Smith, who advocated it, was sent of God; but if such a doctrine can be proved to be a *scriptural* doctrine, that is, if the gathering of the Saints was predicted in ancient scriptures as an event to take place in a certain age, in a certain way, and through certain means, and Mr. Smith comes in *that age*, professing to have a message to gather the Saints in *such way*, and by *such means* as the scriptures have foretold, then the exact and perfect agreement between the professed message of Mr. Smith, and the scriptural predictions relating to such a message or work, would be a presumptive evidence of great weight in favor of his divine mission.

The doctrine of the gathering of the people of God, including Israel, is one so clearly predicted by the inspired writers, that it seems almost superfluous to refer to the numerous passages relating to it. The dispensation in which the people of God were to be gathered in one, is called by the apostle Paul, "*the dispensation of the fulness of times*," which he represents as being an event then in the future. John, nearly one hundred years after the birth of our Saviour, saw the wonderful events and sceneries of unborn generations displayed in majestic and awful grandeur before him. He saw the churches of Asia, then under his own personal watch-care, lukewarm, corrupted, and about ready to be moved out of their place. He saw the universal apostacy [sic] that was soon to succeed and hold dominion for ages over all kindred and tongues, under the name of the Mother of Harlots—the great Babylon that should make all nations drunk with her wickedness. He saw that after the nations had been thus overwhelmed in thick darkness for ages, without the church of God, without apostles, without prophets, without the ministering of angels, without one cheering message from heaven, that there would be one more proclamation of mercy made to all people—one more dispensation of glad tidings from the heavens, to be ushered in by an angel restoring the everlasting gospel, which was to receive a universal proclamation to all the inhabitants of the earth, accompanied with a loud cry, that "*the hour of God's judgment is come*". He saw the universal proclamation of this warning message immediately followed by another angel, proclaiming the complete overthrow and downfall of Babylon. Between the interval of the flying of these two angels, he "heard another *voice from heaven*, saying, COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Remember, that this voice, commanding the people to come out of Babylon, was to be a "*voice from heaven*." It was not to be a cunningly devised plan of uninspired man, brought about by human ingenuity, but it was to be a voice from heaven—a message sent from God—a new revelation, commanding the Saints to come out of Babylon previous to its downfall. How came Mr. Smith, if an impostor, to get, not only all the other particulars which we have mentioned, perfectly exact, but also to discover that there must be a gathering of the Saints out of Babylon, and that that work must immediately follow the introduction of the gospel by an angel? Why did he not say, My doctrine is true, and if you will embrace it, you can be saved, and still remain where you are? It matters not how correct his doctrine might have been in all other points, if he had told his disciples to remain among the corrupt nations, and not gather together—this alone would have exposed the cloven foot, and proved him to be a deceiver. Swedenborg, Wesley, Irving, and a numerous host of others, during the last seventeen hundred years, have entirely neglected the gathering, which proves that they were without authority—that a dispensation of the gospel was never committed to them—that the voice from heaven to come out of Babylon had never saluted their ears. Previous to the restoration of the *gospel* by an angel, God had no people in Babylon, and therefore could not call them out. An unauthorised, uninspired priesthood, preaching a perverted gospel, never could raise up a people of God in Babylon; for they themselves are Babylon, and all their converts or children are begotten

after their own likeness with Babylonish inscriptions upon their foreheads. It is only when the gospel, apostleship, and power are again restored in the way and manner predicted, that a people of God can be raised up among the nations. It is then, and not till then, that the voice is heard from heaven, calling that people out from among the nations. Mr. Smith did not forget this. It is marvellously strange, indeed, that he should be an impostor, and yet embrace in his system every particular that was to characterize the great dispensation of the latter times. It matters not how diverse the points of his doctrine were to the popular current among the great modern systems of religion. He seems to have introduced his system without paying the least regard as to what would be popular or unpopular—as to whether it would suit the learned or the unlearned—as to whether it would suit the temporal circumstances of man or not. He did not stop to make the inquiry whether the gathering of the Saints would be congenial to the feelings of those who occupied splendid mansions, upon fine farms, surrounded with every luxury of life. He did not stop to consider any of those things, but spoke as one having authority; saying, "*thus saith the Lord*," upon every point of doctrine which he promulgated. Now, for a young man, inexperienced and illiterate, to profess to give the word of the Lord upon subjects of so great a moment—to reveal doctrines which were directly opposed, not only to his own traditions, but to the teachings and doctrines of the most popular, numerous, and powerful sects of the day, and at the same time have those doctrines exactly accord, not only with the ancient gospel, but with every minute prediction relative to the dispensation of the last days—is an evidence that carries TRUTH upon the face of it, and leaves a deep and lasting impression upon every reflecting mind, and we can hardly refrain from assenting in our hearts, that surely *he must have been sent of God*.

Fifth.—What else besides the "everlasting gospel" does the Book of Mormon profess to contain? It professes to contain a brief but faithful history of a small branch of the *tribe of Joseph*, and the revelations given to them both before and after Christ, written by a succession of prophets who were the literal descendants of Joseph; hence it professes to be, in the full sense of the word, the *writings or records of the tribe of Joseph*. It contains numerous and pointed predictions, shewing expressly that the age in which their records should, by the power of God, be revealed to the nations, should also be the day in which Israel should be gathered; and that their records, in conjunction with the records of the Jews, should be the powerful instruments in the hands of the servants of God in bringing about that great work. Now, how does this accord with the word of the Lord to Ezekiel upon the same subject? Ezekiel was commanded to write upon two sticks, one for Judah, and the other for Joseph; after which he was commanded to join them together into one. And when the children of Israel should make enquiry what these two united writings of Judah and Joseph meant, he was to say unto them, that the Lord God would join the writings of Joseph with those of Judah; immediately after which he would take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they were gone, and would gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and that he would make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and that one king should be king to them all; and that they should no more be two nations or kingdoms. Ezekiel testifies that the *writings of Joseph* should be joined with the *writings of Judah*. Mr. Smith presents this generation with a book, consisting of several hundred pages, professing to be the sacred writings of the inspired prophets of the tribe of Joseph, who anciently inhabited the great western hemisphere. Ezekiel testifies that Israel should be gathered, never again to be scattered, immediately after the union of these two records. The professed record of Joseph, brought to light by Mr. Smith, testifies in the most positive language, that this is the age in which Israel shall be gathered through the instrumentality of the word and power of God, contained in the two records. Ezekiel uttered the prediction. Mr. Smith presents a professed fulfilment. This is another presumptive evidence in favor of the divine authority of his mission; for if the gathering of Israel had not been included in the mission of Mr. Smith, as an important part of the great work of the last dispensation, all would have had good reason for rejecting him without further inquiry. The ministering of an angel—the restoration of the gospel—the conferring of the apostleship—the setting up of the kingdom of God—the gathering of the Saints—the revelation of the record of Joseph, and its union with the Jewish record—and the restoration of all the house of Israel to their own lands, are the wonderful events to be fulfilled in the great "dispensation of the fullness of times." Whatever person or persons are divinely commissioned to usher in that dispensation, must have the keys of authority to perform every work pertaining thereunto. If Joseph Smith had included all these remarkable events in his mission, *excepting one*; then that *one* exception would be sufficient to prove him to be acting without authority. But where, we ask, is there one exception? What particular event or circumstance pertaining to the dispensation, of which he professed to hold the keys, has he excluded from his system? Did John predict the restoration of the gospel by an angel? It is included in Mr. Smith's system. Did John predict that the Saints should receive a message from heaven, commanding them to come out of Babylon? It also is included in the system of Joseph Smith, and the Saints are now obeying it. Did Ezekiel predict the final gathering of Israel as an immediate result of the union of the two records of Joseph and Judah? Mr. Smith also includes this in his system. The two records are already united in their testimony, and will soon accomplish the purpose for which they were sent forth. What then is lacking? Is there any of the prophets, or inspired writers of ancient times, who have pointed out some other way for the latter day dispensation to be brought about? Can any man show that the gospel will not be restored by an angel, or that the Saints will not be called out of Babylon by a message from heaven? or that the record of the tribe of Joseph will not be joined with the Jewish record—the Bible? or that Israel will not be gathered to their own lands through the instrumentality of more revelation? or that the kingdom of God will not be set up in the latter days to break in pieces all other kingdoms? or that apostles and prophets will not be restored to the earth as in ancient times? If all these things are possible, probable, and scriptural—if all these events must come to pass in their time, and in the manner predicted—can any one show that this is not the time? that the Book of Mormon is not the record of Joseph, about which Ezekiel prophesied? Can any one show any cause why Joseph Smith should not receive the ministering of an angel? why he should not be ordained an apostle, or prophet, or receive revelations and commandments from God? If the gospel is to be restored by an angel, it must be restored at the first to some person. Why not that person be Mr. Smith? If the records of two different tribes are to be joined in one, why not the Book of Mormon and the Bible be the two records? and why not Mr. Smith be the instrument in the hands of God in fulfilling this prophecy? If these things are not not the fulfillment of those ancient predictions, will the generation that lives when they do come to pass be any more believing than they are at present in this work? Will they be any more ready to receive new revelations, visions, angels, or ancient sacred records than they are now? When God sets up his kingdom, will mankind be any more willing to receive the apostles, prophets, and inspired officers of that kingdom, than they are now? One thing is certain; if the angel has not come—if the gospel is not restored—if the records of Joseph are not revealed—then there is no kingdom of God on the earth, no authority to preach or administer the ordinances among men; all is gross darkness—all is uncertainty—and our only alternative is to wait till the voice of the angel is heard, till the great work of the last dispensation is ushered

in. But will we then receive it? Will not our prejudices be as great then as they are now against Mr. Smith? Are there any qualifications that Mr. Smith should possess that he did not possess? Were there any doctrines which he advocated adverse to scriptural doctrine? Were there any principles connected with his system inconsistent with the prophecies? If then perfection characterizes every doctrine embraced in the great scheme of this modern prophet, who can say that he was not sent of God? Who dare oppose so great and perfect a system, without the least shadow of evidence to prove its falsity? Who so lost to every sense of reason and sound judgment, as not to perceive an overwhelming evidence flowing in from every quarter to establish the divine mission of Joseph Smith? Who that has examined his mission or system impartially, can bring even one evidence against it? Are we not bound then to yield, at least, our faith on the side of evidence? What excuse then can the learned, and great, and wise of the earth, render for opposing a work of so great importance with nought but ridicule, and slander, and vile reproaches? Let them bring forth their strong reasonings, or else let them hear, and say, it is TRUTH.

Sixth.—The perfect agreement between the prediction of Isaiah (chap. xxix) and Mr. Smith's account of the finding and translation of the Book of Mormon, is another collateral proof that he was divinely commissioned. Mr. Smith testifies that the plates from which that book was translated were taken *out of the ground*, from where they were originally deposited by the prophet Moroni; that the box containing them was composed of stone, so constructed as to exclude, in a great degree, the moisture of the soil; that with the plates he discovered a Urim and Thummim, through the aid of which he afterwards was enabled to translate the book into the English language. Soon after obtaining the plates, a quantity of the characters were correctly transcribed, and sent to some of the most learned individuals in the United States, to see if they could translate them. Among the rest, they were presented to Professor Anthon, of New York city. But no man was found able to read them by his own learning or wisdom. Mr. Smith, though an unlearned man, testifies that he was commanded to translate them, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by the aid of the Urim and Thummim, and that the Book of Mormon is that translation. Now, Isaiah says to Israel, "*Thou shalt be brought down, and shalt 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.*"

Who cannot perceive the perfect harmony between Isaiah's prediction and Mr. Smith's testimony? Isaiah, as if to impress it upon the minds of those who should live in future generations, gives no less than four repetitions of the same prediction in the same passage, informing us, in the most definite language, that after Israel should be brought down, they should speak in a very familiar manner "*out of the ground*," and whisper "low out of the dust." Mr. Smith has been an instrument in the hands of God of fulfilling this prediction to the very letter. He has taken "*out of the ground*" the ancient history of one half of our globe—the sacred records of a great nation of Israel—the writings of a remnant of the tribe of Joseph, who once flourished as a powerful and great nation on the western hemisphere. The mouldering ruins of their ancient forts, and towers, and cities proclaim their former greatness, in mournful contrast with their present sad condition. They have been brought down like all the rest of Israel; but the words of their ancient prophets "*speak out of the ground*," and "whisper out of the dust" to the ears of the present generation, revealing in a very "*familiar*" manner the history of ancient America, which before was entirely unknown to the nations. Isaiah says, that Israel should "*speak out of the ground*." Mr. Smith says, that he obtained the writings of Joseph from "*out of the ground*." Now, if Mr. Smith had professed that he had got his book as Swedenborg obtained his, or as the Shakers obtained theirs; that is, if he had professed to have obtained this book to usher in this last dispensation in any other way but "*out of the ground*," we should have had reason to suppose him a deceiver, like Swedenborg and thousands of others. Again, Isaiah says, that "the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precepts 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." All this was fulfilled before Mr. Smith was aware that it had been so clearly predicted by Isaiah. He sent the "*WORDS of a book*" which he found, as before stated, to Professor Anthon. But it was a sealed writing to the learned professor—the aboriginal language of ancient America could not be deciphered by him. He was as much puzzled as the wise men of Babylon were to interpret the unknown writing upon the wall. Human wisdom and learning, in this case, were altogether insufficient. It required another Daniel, who was found in the person of Mr. Smith. What a marvellous work! What a wonder! How the wisdom of the wise and learned was made to perish by the gift of interpretation given to the unlearned! If the Book of Mormon is what it professes to be—a sacred record—then it must be the very book mentioned in Isaiah's prediction; for the Prophet Nephi, one of the writers of the Book of Mormon, who lived upwards of 2400 years ago, informs us that their writings should be brought to light in the last days, in fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction; he also delivers a prophecy in relation to the same book, and predicts many events in connexion therewith, which are not mentioned by Isaiah. We here give an extract from his prediction, as also his quotations from Isaiah:

Behold, in the last days, or in the days of the Gentiles; yea, behold all the nations of the Gentiles, and also the Jews, both those who shall come upon this land, and those who shall be upon other lands; yea, even upon all the lands of the earth; behold, they will be drunk with iniquity, and all manner of abominations; and when that day shall come, they shall be visited of the Lord of Hosts, with thunder, and with earthquake, and with a great noise, and with storm and with tempest, and with the flame of devouring fire; and all the nations that fight against Zion, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision; yea, it shall be unto them, even as unto a hungry man, which dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he awaketh and his soul is empty; or like unto a thirsty man, which dreameth, and behold he drinketh, but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: yea, even so shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against mount Zion: for behold, all ye that do iniquity, stay yourselves and wonder, for ye shall cry out, and cry, yea, ye shall be drunken, but not with wine; ye shall stagger, but not with strong drink: for behold, the Lord hath poured out upon you, the spirit of deep sleep. For behold, ye have closed your eyes, and ye have rejected the prophets, and your rulers, and the seers hath he covered because of your iniquity.

And it shall come to pass, that the Lord God shall bring forth unto you the words of a book, and they shall

be the words of them who have slumbered. And behold the book shall be sealed: and in the book shall be a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof. Wherefore, because of the things which are sealed up, the things which are sealed shall not be delivered in the day of the wickedness and abominations of the people. Wherefore the book shall be kept from them. But the book shall be delivered unto a man, and he shall deliver the words of the book, which are the words of those who have slumbered in the dust; and he shall deliver these words unto another; but the words which are sealed, he shall not deliver, neither shall he deliver the book. For the book shall be sealed by the power of God, and the revelation which was sealed, shall be kept in the book until the own due time of the Lord, that they may come forth: for, behold, they reveal all things from the foundation of the world unto the end thereof. And the day cometh that the words of the book which were sealed, shall be read upon the house-tops; and they shall be read by the power of Christ: and all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever have been among the children of men, and which ever will be, even unto the end of the earth. Wherefore, at that day when the book shall be delivered unto the man of whom I have spoken, the book shall be hid from the eyes of the world, that the eyes of none shall behold it, save it be that three witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered; and they shall testify to the truth of the book, and the things therein. And there is none other which shall view it, save it be a few, according to the will of God, to bear testimony of his word unto the children of men: for the Lord God hath said, that the words of the faithful should speak as if it were from the dead. Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to bring forth the words of the book; and in the mouth of as many witnesses as seemeth him good, will he establish his word; and wo be unto him that rejecteth the word of God.

But behold, it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall say unto him to whom he shall deliver the book, take these words which are not sealed, and deliver them to another, that he may show them unto the learned, saying: read this, I pray thee. And the learned shall say, bring hither the book, and I will read them: and now, because of the glory of the world, and to get gain, will they say this, and not for the glory of God. And the man shall say, I cannot bring the book, for it is sealed. Then shall the learned say, I cannot read it. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that the Lord God will deliver again the book and the words thereof to him that is not learned; and the man that is not learned, shall say, I am not learned. Then shall the Lord God say unto him, the learned shall not read them, for they have rejected them, and I am able to do mine own work; wherefore, thou shalt read the words which I shall give unto thee. Touch not the things which are sealed, for I will bring them forth in my own due time: for I will shew unto the children of men that I am able to do mine own work. Wherefore, when thou hast read the words which I have commanded thee, and obtained the witnesses which I have promised unto thee, then shalt thou seal up the book again, and hide it up unto me, that I may preserve the words which thou hast not read, until I shall see fit in mine own wisdom, to reveal all things unto the children of men. For behold, I am God; and I am a God of miracles; and I will shew unto the world that I am the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; and I work not among the children of men, save it be according to their faith.

And again it shall come to pass, that the Lord shall say unto him that shall read the words that shall be delivered him, forasmuch as this people draw near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men, therefore, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people; yea, a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of the wise and learned shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid. And wo unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord. And their works are in the dark; and they say, who seeth us; and who knoweth us? And they also say, surely, your turning of things upside down, shall be esteemed as the potter's clay. But behold, I will shew unto them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I know all their works. For shall the work say of him that made it, he made me not? Or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, he had no understanding? But behold, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will shew unto the children of men, that it is not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field; and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest. And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book; and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness; and the meek also shall increase, and their joy shall be in the Lord; and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For assuredly as the Lord liveth, they shall see that the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off; and they that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought. Therefore thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of my hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

Here it will at once be perceived that the Book of Mormon is actually the book predicted by Isaiah, or else it must be an imposture. The book mentioned by Isaiah was to have every characteristic which seems to accompany the Book of Mormon. Did Isaiah predict that the "deaf should hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind see out of obscurity, and out of darkness?" It has been fulfilled by the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Did Isaiah say that in the day his predicted book should speak out of the ground, then those who "erred in spirit should come to understanding, and they that murmured should learn doctrine?" It has been fulfilled to the very letter through the instrumentality of the Book of Mormon. Tens of thousands of honest men, who erred in spirit because of the doctrines and precepts of men, have come to understanding. Many points of doctrine which had been in controversy for ages are made perfectly plain in the Book of Mormon; hence those who have murmured because of the darkness and obscurity thrown over the scriptures by human wisdom and learning, have "*learned doctrine*." Did Isaiah prophecy that when the predicted book should make its appearance, that then "the house of Jacob should no longer be made ashamed, neither should the face of Jacob any more wax pale?" The Book of Mormon has come, declaring that the time is at hand for the gathering of the house of Jacob, no more to be scattered. Did Isaiah predict that in the day of the revelation of a certain book, "the terrible one should be brought to nought, the scorner be consumed, and all that watch for iniquity be cut off;" and finally that "all the nations who should fight against Mount Zion, should pass away as the dream of a night

vision, and be destroyed by earthquake and the flame of devouring fire?" The Book of Mormon comes testifying that the hour of these judgments is at hand. And finally, there is no circumstance mentioned by Isaiah, connected with the revelation and translation of the book he mentions, but what is connected with the Book of Mormon. If Joseph Smith was an impostor and wished to palm himself off upon the world as the great prophet who was to usher in the preparatory dispensation for the coming of the Lord, how came he to discover all these minute particulars contained in Isaiah's prophecy, so as to so exactly and perfectly incorporate in his great scheme of imposture each and every one of them? If this illiterate youth was a deceiver, he has far outstretched all the learned divines or impostors of the last eighteen hundred years—he has made his great and extended scheme to harmonize in every particular, not only with the ancient gospel but with the ancient prophecies, and this, too, so perfectly, that no one can detect the delusion. Reader, does not such a scheme savour very strongly of the truth? Does it not require a greater effort of mind to disbelieve such a scheme than it does to believe it? If such a scheme can not be credited, where is there a scheme or system in the whole world that can be credited? Can you find a scheme more perfect than the one introduced by Mr. Smith? Can you find one equal to it in perfection? Can you find one that contains the one-twentieth part of the truth which his system contains? If, then, you doubt the authority of Mr. Smith, how much more ought you to doubt the authority of every other man now on the earth? If Mr. Smith's perfect scheme should be rejected, surely all other schemes or doctrines, which can be shown to be ten times more imperfect, should also be rejected. If any are to be received, surely that one should be received which seems to contain all the elements of a true doctrine, and in which there cannot be detected the least evidence of imposture. To invent a scheme apparently every way suited to the last dispensation or preparatory work for the second advent of our Lord—to have that scheme agree in every minute particular with the endless circumstances and numberless events predicted by the ancient prophets, bespeaks a wisdom far superior to that of man: it bespeaks the wisdom of God. This endless train of circumstances—all harmonizing—all combining—all concentrating as it were into one focus—carries with it such irresistible evidence of truth that it is almost impossible for the careful investigator to reject the divinity of Joseph Smith's mission. Like investigating the works of nature, the more he examines the more he perceives the wisdom of the Deity enstamped upon every sentence.

Seventh.—According to the Book of Mormon, all of the great western continent, with all the valleys, hills, and mountains, riches and resources pertaining thereunto, was given to the remnant of Joseph, as their "*land of promise*." The Almighty sealed this covenant and promise by an oath, saying, that the land should be given unto them for ever. The western world, including both North and South America, is the "*land of promise*," to the remnant of Joseph, in the same sense that the land of Palestine is a promised land unto the twelve tribes of Israel. Now this testimony of the Book of Mormon agrees most perfectly with the prophetic blessing placed upon the head of Joseph by the patriarch Jacob; who, just previous to his death, called together his sons and predicted upon each what should befall them or their tribes "*in the last days*." The blessing upon the tribe of Joseph is as follows:—(Genesis xlix chap.) "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb: *the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills*: they shall be the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." In the preceeding chapter, when blessing the two sons of Joseph, he says, "let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." And again, "his seed shall become a multitude of nations." From these predictions it will be perceived that Jacob prevailed with God, and obtained a greater blessing in behalf of the tribe of Joseph than what Abraham and Isaac, his progenitors, had obtained. While the blessing of Jacob's progenitors was limited to the land of Palestine, Joseph had confirmed upon him a blessing or country above, or far greater than Palestine—a country at a distance, represented by "*the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills*." Some of the "*branches*" of the "*fruitful bough*" of Joseph were to spread far abroad from the parent tree—they were to "*run over the wall*" of the mighty ocean—they were to "*become a multitude of nations in the midst of the earth*." There, among the "*everlasting hills*," they were to be "*made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob*." It was to be there, among the "*multitude of nations*" of the posterity of Joseph, that the "*Shepherd—the stone of Israel*" was to establish a kingdom, which should break in pieces all other kingdoms, and "*fill the whole earth*."

In America there is a "*multitude of nations*," called by us "*Indians*." These Indians evidently sprang from the same source as is indicated by their color, features, customs, dialects, traditions, &c.; that they are of Israelitish origin is also evident from their religious ceremonies, their language, their traditions, and the discovery of Hebrew inscriptions, &c. If America is not the land given to a branch of Joseph, where, or in what part of the globe shall that tribe receive the fulfillment of Jacob's prediction? where, if not in America, has a land been peopled by a multitude of the nations of Joseph? Can a multitude of the nations of Joseph be found in Europe, Asia, or Africa, or in any of the adjoining islands? If not, then America seems to be the only place where that great prediction could receive its accomplishment. The Book of Mormon testifies that America is "*the land of Joseph*," given to them by promise. Is not this an additional evidence that *Mr. Smith was sent of God*? If Mr. Smith was an impostor, how came he to discover that the tribe of Joseph was to be favored so much above all the other tribes of Israel? Perhaps it may be replied, that it was easy to discover *that* from the scriptures; but, we ask, why did not Swedenborg, Wesley, Irving, or some of the other impostors of former times, make this scriptural discovery, and incorporate it in their pretended dispensations? It would be, at first, thought far more natural to suppose the American Indians to be the ten lost tribes of Israel; indeed, this is the opinion of many of the learned at the present day. Why did not this modern prophet, if a deceiver, form his deceptive scheme more in accordance with the opinions of the learned? or why should he choose a remnant of the tribe of Joseph to people ancient America? Out of the twelve tribes of Israel, why did he select only a branch of one tribe to people this vast continent? All can *now* perceive why the Book of Mormon should profess to be the history of a remnant of one tribe, instead of being the history of the ten tribes. All can see, why America should be represented as a promised land to Joseph, instead of being given to Reuben, Simeon, or any of the other tribes. All can *now* see, though it was not seen at the first, that if the Book of Mormon was different from what it now is; that is, if it professed to contain a history of the ten lost tribes; or if it had given the great western continent to any other people, or to any other tribe than that of Joseph, that it would have proved itself false—it would not have been the book or record which the prophets predicted should come forth to usher in the great work of the last days. An impostor would be obliged to take into consideration all these minute circumstances, many of which are in direct opposition to the established traditions of the day; yet none

of them could be neglected without proving fatal to his scheme. But Mr. Smith, with all the accuracy of a profound mathematician, has combined all the minute elements of both doctrine and prophecy in his grand and wonderful scheme—nothing is wanting. Whatever department of his system is examined it will be found invulnerable. What an invaluable amount of evidence to establish the *divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith!*

Eighth.—In the Book of Mormon are given the names and locations of numerous cities of great magnitude, which once flourished among the ancient nations of America. The northern portions of South America, and also Central America, were the most densely populated. Splendid edifices, palaces, towers, forts, and cities, were reared in all directions. A careful reader of that interesting book, can trace the relative bearings and distances of many of these cities from each other; and if acquainted with the present geographical features of the country, he can, by the descriptions given in that book, determine, very nearly, the precise spot of ground they once occupied. Now since that invaluable book made its appearance in print, it is a remarkable fact, that the mouldering ruins of many splendid edifices and towers, and magnificent cities of great extent, have been discovered by Catherwood and Stephens in the interior wilds of Central America, in the very region where the ancient cities described in the Book of Mormon were said to exist. Here then, is a *certain and indisputable evidence* that this illiterate youth—the translator of the Book of Mormon, was inspired of God. Mr. Smith's translation describes the region of country where great and populous cities anciently existed, together with their relative bearings and approximate distances from each other. Years after, Messrs. Catherwood and Stephens discovered the ruins of forty-four of these very cities and in the very place described. What, but the power of God, could have revealed beforehand this unknown fact, demonstrated years after by actual discovery?

Ninth.—The fulfillment of a vast number of prophecies delivered by Mr. Smith is another infallible evidence of his divine mission. Out of the many hundreds of fulfilled predictions uttered by him, we select the following as examples.

1. Soon after Mr. Smith found the plates, he commenced translating them. He had not proceeded far before he discovered from his own translation of the prophecy of Nephi, as before quoted, that "THREE WITNESSES," besides himself, should behold the book by the power of God, and should know and testify of its truth. Some length of time after this, or in the month of June, A.D. 1829, the Lord gave a revelation, through Mr. Smith, to Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris, promising them that if they would exercise faith, they should have a view of the plates, and also of the Urim and Thummim. This prediction was afterwards fulfilled; and these three persons send forth their written testimony, in connexion with the Book of Mormon, to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, declaring that an angel of God descended from heaven, and took the plates and exhibited them before their eyes; and that, at the same time, the voice of the Lord from the heavens testified to them of the truth contained in Mr. Smith's translation of these records. Now an impostor might indeed predict the raising of "THREE WITNESSES," but he could never call down an angel from heaven, in the presence of these "WITNESSES," to fulfill his prediction.

2. Before the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" had any existence upon the earth, the prophecy of Moroni was translated and printed in the Book of Mormon. It is expressly predicted in this prophecy, that in the day that that book should be revealed, "*the blood of the Saints should cry unto the Lord from the ground,*" because of the wickedness of the people, and that the "*time should soon come when,*" because of the cries and mourning of "*widows and orphans*" whose husbands and fathers should be slain by wicked hands, "*the Lord should avenge the blood of his Saints.*" And again, in August, 1831, the word of the Lord came to Mr. Smith, saying that "*the Saints should be scourged from city to city, and from synagogue to synagogue,*" and that but "FEW" of those then in the Church should "*stand to receive an inheritance.*"—(See Book of Doctrine and Covenants, page 151 [sec. 63.]) The blood of many hundreds of Saints who have been slain and martyred in this church, is an incontrovertible evidence of the truth of the prediction. Surely Mr Smith must have been a prophet of God to have foreseen not only the rise of the church of the Saints, but that their blood should cry aloud from the ground for vengeance upon the nation who should perpetrate these bloody deeds. No human foresight could have seen the bloody sceneries that were to take place after the rise of the church. All natural appearances in the United States were against the fulfillment of this dreadful prediction. Every religious society throughout the whole country was strongly guarded against persecution and religious intolerance by the strong arm of the civil law. The glorious constitution of this great and free people proclaimed religious freedom to every son and daughter of Columbia's soil: yet, in the midst of this boasted land of freedom and religious rights, where universal peace seemed to have selected her quiet dwelling place, the voice of the great prophet is heard predicting the rise of the Latter-day Church, and the bloody persecutions that should follow her "from city to city, and from synagogue to synagogue." Never were there any prophecies more literally and palpably fulfilled since the creation of the earth. If the foretelling of future events that could not possibly have been foreseen by human wisdom—events, too, that to all outward appearances were very unlikely to come to pass: if the predicting of such events and their subsequent fulfillment constitute a true prophet, then Joseph Smith must have been a true prophet, and, if a true prophet, *he must have been sent of God.*

Tenth.—There are many thousands of living witnesses who testify that God has *revealed* unto them the truth of the Book of Mormon, by dreams, by visions, by the revelations of the Holy Ghost, by the ministering of angels, and by his own voice. Now, if Mr. Smith is an impostor, all these witnesses must be impostors also. Perhaps it may be said, that these witnesses are not impostors, but are deceived themselves. But, we ask, can any man testify that he KNOWS a false doctrine to be true, and still not be an impostor? Men frequently are deceived when they testify their *opinions*, but never deceived when they testify they have a *knowledge*. Such must either be impostors, or else their doctrine must be true. Now, would it not be marvellously strange indeed, if even three or four men who were entirely disconnected, being strangers to each other, should all undertake to deceive mankind by testifying that an angel of God had descended before them, or that an heavenly vision had been shown to them, or that God had in some other marvellous way manifested to them the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon? If the testimony of three or four impostors would appear marvellous, how infinitely more marvellous would appear the testimony of tens of thousands of impostors in different countries, widely separated from each other, and who never saw each other's faces, and yet all endeavouring to palm upon the world the same great imposition! If many thousands of witnesses do testify boldly, with words of soberness, that God has revealed to them that this is his church or kingdom that was to be set up in the last days, then we have an overwhelming flood of collateral evidence to establish the divine mission of Joseph Smith.

Eleventh.—The miracles wrought by Joseph Smith are evidences of no small moment to establish his divine

authority. In the name of the Lord he cast out devils, healed the sick, spoke with new tongues, interpreted ancient languages, and predicted future events. Many of these miracles were wrought before numerous multitudes of both believers and unbelievers, and upon persons not connected with our church. And again, the numerous miracles wrought through the instrumentality of thousands of the officers and members of this church, are additional evidences that the man who was instrumental in founding the church *must have been sent of God*. The thousands of sick that have been miraculously healed in all parts of the world where this gospel is preached, give forth a strong and almost irresistible testimony that Mr. Smith's authority is "*from heaven*." Although the great majority of mankind consider miracles to be an *infallible* evidence in favor of the divine authority of the one who performs them, yet we do most distinctly dissent from this idea. If miracles be admitted as an *infallible* evidence, then all that have ever wrought miracles must have been sent of God. The magicians of Egypt wrought some splendid miracles before that nation; they created serpents and frogs, and turned rivers of water into blood. If miraculous evidence is *infallible*, the Egyptians were bound to receive the contradictory messages of both Moses and the magicians as of divine authority. According to this idea, the witch of Endor must have established her divine mission beyond all controversy by calling forth a dead man from the grave in the presence of Saul, king of Israel. A certain wicked power described by John (Rev. viii chap.) was to do "great wonders" and "*miracles*," and cause "*fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men*." If miracles were infallible evidences, surely no one should reject the divine authority of John's beast. Again (in Rev. chapter xvi) John "*saw three unclean spirits like frogs*," which he expressly says, "*are the SPIRITS OF DEVILS WORKING MIRACLES, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty*." The learned divines and clergy of the nineteenth century boldly declare that "*miracles are an INFALLIBLE evidence of the divine mission of the one who performs them*." If so, who can blame "*the kings of the earth*," and these learned divines, and all their followers for embracing the message of these divinely inspired devils? For according to their argument, they should in no wise reject them, for they prove their mission by evidences which they say are infallible. We shall expect in a few years, to see an innumerable host of sectarian ministers as well as kings, taking up their line of march for the great valley of "Armageddon," near Jerusalem, and thus prove by their works that they do really believe in the *infallibility of miraculous evidence*. Devils can work miracles as well as God, and as they have already persuaded the religious world that miracles are infallible evidences of divine authority, they will not have much difficulty among the followers of modern christianity in establishing the divinity of their mission. But the "Latter-day Saints" do not believe in the infallibility of miraculous evidence. We believe that miraculous gifts are absolutely necessary in the church of Christ, without which it cannot exist on the earth. Miracles, when taken in connexion with a pure, holy, and perfect doctrine, reasonable and scriptural, is a very strong collateral evidence in favour of that doctrine, and of the divine authority of those who preach it. But abstract miracles alone, unconnected with other evidences, instead of being *infallible* proofs are no proofs at all: they are as likely to be *false* as true. So baptism "*for the remission of sins*" is essential in the church of Christ, and when taken in connexion with all other points of doctrine embraced in the gospel, is a presumptive evidence for the divine authority of the person who preaches it. But baptism "*for the remission of sins*," unconnected with other parts of the doctrine of Christ, would be no evidence either for or against the divine authority of any man. The many thousands of miracles wrought in this church, being connected as they are with an infallible doctrine, and with a vast number of other proofs, have carried an almost irresistible conviction to the minds of vast multitudes, who have, in consequence, yielded obedience to the message, and become in their turn the happy recipients of the same power of God, by which they themselves can also heal the sick and work by faith in the name of the Lord; thus demonstrating to themselves the truth of the Saviour's promise, viz:—that certain miraculous "*signs shall follow them that believe*." (See Mark, chap. xvi.)

There is one thing connected with Joseph Smith's message which will at once prove him to be an impostor or else a true prophet. It is a certain promise contained in a revelation which was given through him to the apostles of this Church in the year 1832. It reads as follows: "Go ye into all the world, and whatsoever place ye cannot go into, ye shall send, that the testimony may go from you into all the world unto every creature. And as I said unto mine apostles, even so I say unto you, for you are mine apostles, even God's high priests; ye are they whom my Father hath given me—ye are my friends; therefore, as I said unto mine apostles, I say unto you again, that every soul who believeth on your words, and is baptized by water for the remission of sins, shall receive the Holy Ghost. And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name they shall do many wonderful works; in my name they shall cast out devils; in my name they shall heal the sick; in my name they shall open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf; and the tongue of the dumb shall speak; and if any man shall administer poison unto them it shall not hurt them; and the poison of a serpent shall not have power to harm them. * * * Verily, verily, I say unto you, they who believe not on your words, and are not baptized in water in my name, for the remission of their sins, that they may receive the Holy Ghost, shall be damned, and shall not come into my Father's kingdom, where my Father and I am. And this revelation unto you, and commandment, is in force from this very hour upon all the world." (Doctrine and Covenants, page 86. [Sec. 84:62-75]) Here, then, this great modern prophet has presented himself before the whole world with a bold unequivocal promise to every soul who would believe on his message—a promise, too, that no impostor would dare to make with the most distant hope of success. An impostor might indeed make such a promise to his followers, but they never would realize a fulfilment of it. If these miraculous signs have not followed according to the above promise, then the tens of thousands who have complied with the conditions would know Joseph Smith to be an impostor, and with one accord would turn away, and that would be the end of the imposition. But the very fact that vast multitudes are annually being added to the Church, and continue therein year after year, is a demonstrative evidence that the promise is fulfilled—that the Holy Ghost is given, and the miraculous signs also. Dare any other societies in all the world make such a promise unto the believers in their respective systems? No, they dare not; they know full well that it would be the speedy downfall and utter overthrow of their vain, unauthorized, and powerless religions. O, what a wide and marked difference between the religion of Joseph Smith and that of Protestant and Catholic religion—between his authority and that of sectarian divines! The one promises all the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost to his followers, the other is as powerless as the dry stubble prepared for the burning. While the followers of this great prophet cast out devils, speak with new tongues, heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, cause the lame to walk, obtain heavenly visions, and converse with angels, the followers of those unauthorized, deluded, and crafty sects not only deny these great and glorious gifts, or impute them in these days to the power of the devil, but they grasp the sword, and fire-arms, and deadly weapons, to kill off the Saints, and drive them from the face of what they call civilized society. While the one class are suffering martyrdom by scores for their testimony, the other class are rolling in all the luxuries and splendors of Great Babylon, with fat salaries of from ten to twenty-seven thousand pounds sterling per annum.

As we have briefly examined into the nature of the evidences in favour of Joseph Smith's divine mission, it may be well at the close of this number to give a short summary of the proofs and arguments contained in the foregoing.

1. Joseph Smith's doctrine is reasonable, scriptural, perfect, and infallible in all its precepts, commands, ordinances, promises, blessings and gifts. In his organization of the church, no officer mentioned in the New Testament organization is omitted. Inspired apostles and prophets are considered as necessary as pastors, teachers, or any other officer.

2. Joseph Smith's account of the restoration of the gospel by an angel—of his taking out of the ground the sacred records of the tribe of Joseph—of their subsequent translation by the gift of God—and of the great western continent's being given to a remnant of Joseph, where they have grown into a multitude of nations, are all events clearly predicted by the ancient Jewish apostles and prophets, together with the minute circumstances connected therewith. The times and season in which these events should transpire, and the purposes which they should accomplish are also all plainly foretold. Joseph Smith presents the world with the fulfilment at the predicted time—in the predicted manner—and for the predicted purpose as anciently specified.

3. Joseph Smith incorporates in his mission the gathering of the Saints out of Babylon, and every other predicted event that was to characterise the great preparatory dispensation for the second advent of our Lord.

4. The revelation in the Book of Mormon, pointing out the location of man [sic] ancient cities, the ruins of which were subsequently discovered by Catherwood and Stephens—the direct and palpable fulfilment of many of the prophecies of Joseph Smith, which no human sagacity could have foreseen, all natural appearances and circumstances being entirely against their expected fulfillment—the raising up of numerous other witnesses who also testify to the ministering of angels and the manifestations of the power of God confirmatory of this message—the performance of many splendid miracles by Mr. Smith and his followers, and the bold unequivocal promise of the miraculous gifts to all who should believe and embrace this message, are all evidences such as no impostor ever has given, or ever can give. They are evidences such as will prove the salvation of every creature that receives the message, and the damnation of every soul that rejects it.

15, Wilton Street, Liverpool, September 30th, 1848.

R. James, Printer, 39, South Castle Street, Liverpool

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DIVINE AUTHORITY; OR, THE QUESTION: WAS JOSEPH SMITH SENT OF GOD? ***

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