

covered—the plan of some politician or statesman?

Verily no; it was no such thing. What was it? It was a proclamation made, declaring that a holy angel from heaven had appeared—that he had revealed himself unto a young man that was born in the backwoods of America—a farmer's son, without any particular educational advantages; that this angel, having appeared unto him, had revealed unto him an ancient record that gave an account of the aboriginal inhabitants of this country; that in this record there was an account of Prophets having existed on this continent in former days, of Jesus having appeared, and of angels having administered unto them—an account of their having been in possession of the Gospel, having the same doctrines, the same blessings, the same privileges and powers that were associated with the Gospel on the Asiatic continent; and that this record agreed with the Bible in doctrines, ordinances, teachings, and blessings.

And furthermore, these men referred us to the Bible, and showed us that this book was spoken of—that it was to come forth—that it was the “stick of Joseph,” and that it was to be one with the “stick of Judah,”—one in prophecy, one in revelation, one in unfolding the purposes of God, and one in bringing to pass the great events that were to transpire in the last days.

We heard of these things, and to many of us they seemed foolish. We heard the cry of “False prophet and deceiver!” The first thing that I heard from a priest, after hearing this Gospel preached by Parley P. Pratt, some twenty years ago, was the cry of “Delusion!” I was immediately informed that “Joe Smith was a money-digger,” that he tried to deceive people by walking on planks laid under the water, and that he was a

wicked and corrupt man, a deceiver, and one of the biggest fools in creation, and so forth. I heard every kind of story; and the priests have kept up the same things, pretty much, to the present day.

I remember, when I first had an Elder introduced to me, I said to him, “I do not know what to think about you ‘Mormons.’ I do not believe any kind of fanaticism: I profess to be acquainted with the Bible; and, sir,” said I, “in any conversation we may have, I wish you to confine yourself to the Bible; for I tell you I shall not listen to anything in opposition to that word.”

From the report which I had heard of “Mormonism,” I thought it was anything but a religious system. I was told about the French prophets—I was told about Matthias, Johanna Southcote, and of all the follies that had existed for centuries; and then they put “Mormonism” at the end of them all.

In my researches, I examined things very carefully and critically. I wrote down six of the first sermons I heard preached by Parley P. Pratt, in order that I might compare them with the Bible, and I could not find any difference. I could easily controvert any other doctrine, but I could not overturn one principle of “Mormonism.”

I have traveled to preach these doctrines in most of the United States and in the Canadas; I have preached them in England, in Scotland, in Wales, in the Isles of Man and the Jerseys, in France, Germany, in the principal cities of America and Europe, and to many prominent men in the world; and I have not yet found a man that could controvert one principle of “Mormonism” upon scriptural grounds. If there is a man, I have yet to find him.

The first proclamation by the Elders was, that the ancient Gospel had been restored. We had had