

and when this is pretty general it is called a revival of religion. But when the excitement subsides and the converts have obtained what is termed “a hope,” then the sects who may have united in bringing about such results begin to scramble to secure the converts. It was so at the time to which I have referred in western New York. The Baptists wanted their share, and the Methodists and Presbyterians theirs; and the scramble ended in a very unpleasant and unchristian state of feeling.

Joseph Smith had attended these meetings, and when this result was reached he saw clearly that something was wrong. He had read the Bible and had found that passage in James which says, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not,” and taking this literally, he went humbly before the Lord and inquired of Him, and the Lord answered his prayer, and revealed to Joseph, by the ministration of angels, the true condition of the religious world. When the holy angel appeared, Joseph inquired which of all these denominations was right and which he should join, and was told they were all wrong—they had all gone astray, transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances and broken the everlasting covenant, and that the Lord was about to restore the priesthood and establish His Church, which would be the only true and living Church on the face of the whole earth.

Joseph, feeling that to make known such a vision would be to subject himself to the ridicule of all around him, knew not what to do. But the vision was repeated several times, and in these repetitions he was instructed to communicate that which he had seen to his father. His father was not a member of any church,

but was a man of exemplary life. His mother and bro. Hyrum were members of the Presbyterian church. Joseph communicated what he had seen to his father, who believed his testimony, and told him to observe the instructions that had been given him.

These visits led, in a short time, to the bringing forth of the record known as the Book of Mormon, which contained the fullness of the Gospel as it had been preached by the Savior and his apostles to the inhabitants of this land; also a history of the falling away of the people who dwelt on this continent and the dealings of God with them.

A great many of us can recollect that when we read the Bible in our young days it was like a sealed book; and we were taught, and the sentiment had been impressed upon us, that its contents had a two or threefold spiritual meaning, and that it required a man who had studied divinity to explain these hidden meanings. Yet we found in the New Testament that “no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” When we read the Book of Mormon it was a key to unlock the scriptures to our understandings; while perusing its pages, light burst upon our minds, and in this way the Book of Mormon revealed to us the light of the Gospel which before had seemed obscure.

The Gospel has connected with it certain ordinances, such for instance as the ordinance of baptism. Who has authority to administer this ordinance?

If we make the inquiry among the sects, the Baptists will say, “We have.” Where did you get it? “One Peter Waldo, a merchant, translated the four gospels and he established