



Type: Magazine Article

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## The Messiah Craze

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Source: *The Young Woman's Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (April 1891), pp. 268–271

Published by: Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association

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**Abstract:** No abstract available.

golden sunlight, painted with its own beautiful colors. Through it sparkling rivers flow gaily along, catching and sporting with the bright beams above or give back the silvery light of the gleaming stars that look lovingly upon its calm bosom; or we wander amid the roseate chambers of dawn, when the happy sky-lark weaves the sweet clear wishes of song, and holds through the ideal of our nature secret communion with the oread, that sinks in mist adown the mountain's side. This wondrous unchanging part of our being, this inhabitant of our heart of hearts—communes with all the beings heaven has made, finds a music in the wind "that makes the green leaves dance," that plays across the stream, answers to its own pure song. Among the stars of evening it finds a secret sympathy—a holy feeling—answer there. It needs not words or language, it mingles with its kindred essences of purity and hope. This beautiful ideal stirs within us the desire to be noble, to search for the living fount of true wisdom, to commune

with the skies, it gives to us the glorious shapes of heaven, yearnings to soar beyond our mortal state,—oh, there is a truth in the fiction of the unseen worlds! There are bright lingerers by the forest and stream! there are winged essences of life that look forth from the soft stars, that tremble in the sweet flowers, mingling in thought with the deeply beautiful of our souls. It is the clear moonlight track upon the waters of our youth, the whispers by which the ideal speaks to its sympathetic ideal; the secret and unaccountable affinity by which the beautiful of our nature is drawn to the beautiful of another nature, and with it holds pure and lofty communings. This something that unites the children of earth to the spirits of a finer race, this lofty aspiration, this subtle something that makes life sunny golden, and gilds our path with joy—this mysterious, yet beautiful ideal is the love of the soul that desires the pure, the bright, the unattained taking its flight upward toward the ever-shining way.

## CURRENT ISSUES.

### THE MESSIAH CRAZE.

JOSEPH F. SMITH.

To the Editor of the YOUNG WOMAN'S JOURNAL:

YOUR communication has been received. In response, I send you a few of my reflections on the subject of the, so called, "Messiah craze" among the Lamanites. I shall not attempt to go into the subject elaborately, or critically. The fact that extraordinary manifestations of some kind have de-

veloped among certain of the tribes of the much abused remnants of this much favored land is almost universally acknowledged and believed by the general public.

I take this for granted, without attempting to adduce evidences of the fact. Just what these manifestations have been, is a matter of some doubt, in my mind, not as to their evident purpose, judging from the many newspaper reports of the main features of

the manifestations so much talked about, for it seems clear that the purpose or object thereof has been to awaken in the benighted minds of these degenerate people a belief and faith in and ultimately a knowledge of a crucified and risen Redeemer, and the righteous precepts which He taught. "Thou shalt not kill" was and is one of the great commands of God. "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not bear false witness," "Thou shalt not commit adultery." These are among the great commands written by the finger of God upon the tables of stone in the mount.

These have, perhaps, been the most abused and the least understood of all the precepts of the gospel among the Lamanites (or Indians, so called) upon this continent. Not so much so in regard to "bearing false witness," for to the world they have been almost dumb—not even their piteous cries against the wrongs perpetrated upon them by their "pale-faced" neighbors reaching the ears of mankind—but theft, adultery and murder have been their deadliest sins, and against these this "voice crying in the wilderness" to the "roving redman" has declaimed, and they have been enjoined not to kill and not to steal, but to live in peace.

There can be no doubt as to the character of the source from whence these precepts have come. But the manner in which they are said to have come, and the agency or agencies through whom they are said to have come, are the features of this so-called "Messiah craze," as claimed by the reports we have heard, which are shrouded in mystery and which cause me to doubt.

That God will manifest His pur-

poses to the Lamanites in His own time and way, there can be no doubt in the minds of those who believe in the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon—for in that book this fact is made unmistakably clear, but just how He will do so in every particular, and just what agencies He will use to bring about His purposes in this regard, may be matters of conjecture, beyond what has actually been revealed. One of the agencies, we know, will be the Book of Mormon itself. Through the medium of the Holy Priesthood, which has been restored to the earth in these latter times, God will also operate to accomplish His will. So far, however, but little of good has been effected through either of these channels, on account of the extremely benighted condition of the minds, and the wild, nomadic habits of the red men. And for many other sufficient reasons they have not been susceptible to the impressions of the Holy Spirit, nor capable of rising to the comprehension of its power.

The time had not come, and is not yet come for them to receive the message and the work bequeathed them by their fathers, as designed of God—but the time will come, and may be nearer at hand than many anticipate. That these supernatural manifestations, if they indeed are such, indicate the beginning of that time may without inconsistency be believed. To suppose that the work will be accomplished in a day—or in any very brief period—would be folly. God has not heretofore worked, nor will He be likely to so work among this remnant of His people. Their fall and degradation came slowly, by degrees; and in like manner will their redemption, doubtless, come to pass. Yet He will

cut His work short in righteousness, and it behooves the Saints to be always ready.

That the Lord will hasten their enlightenment by means of dreams, visions and heavenly manifestations when the time shall come, and that holy messengers may appear to them from time to time, and that men among them shall yet be inspired of God and raised up as teachers to instruct them in the truth, we cannot doubt, for these things have been promised in the last times both in the Book of Mormon and in the Bible, and also in the revelations to Joseph Smith the Prophet. But all these things will come to pass as God has determined, in His own time and way. And blessed will he be who shall be worthy to bear the message of good tidings and the offering of peace, the word of God and the means of redemption to the seed of Joseph, to whom the promises are made, and woe to him who shall despise and scoff in the day of God's power.

With reference to who the personage is (one or more) who is claimed by the Lamanites to have visited them, there appears to me to be room for grave doubts. From all the reports I have seen upon this subject, it is not at all conclusive to my mind that he was indeed the Messiah. Upon this point we must consider the sources of our information; it has come to us second handed, through interpreters and writers whose knowledge of the Lamanitish tongues may or may not be very imperfect, who have absolutely no knowledge of the ancient history of the race, and of the purposes and promises of God concerning them. That they know the scriptural account of Jesus, the Son of God, His cruci-

fixion, resurrection, and ascension on high, with the promise to come again in like manner as He ascended, and this only, we need not question; but knowing only this and nothing more respecting this matter, they might easily be misled by the accounts given by the actual witnesses themselves of these phenomena, and much more likely to be misled by the reports coming from persons far removed from the actual witnesses.

But suppose Porcupine himself related to a good interpreter, and that interpreter translated the story to a Bible Christian that he, Porcupine, met a heavenly messenger near Walker Lake in Nevada, and said messenger taught him the lessons of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection, laying stress upon the manner of His death, the wounds in His hands and feet and side made upon the cross, that that same Jesus would come again and redeem His people and restore them to their own lands. And so vividly were these impressions made upon the mind of Porcupine, and so earnestly expressed by him, what more natural conclusion could said Bible Christian reach than that the Messiah Himself had really appeared to the untutored Lamanite, as it was thought he himself claimed?

And yet to a Latter-day Saint, who knows something of the history of those people and of the promises made to them by their forefathers, hearing the same story, would conclude that perhaps one or more of the three Nephite disciples who tarried, whose mission was to minister to the remnants of their own race, had made an appearance to Porcupine and perhaps to many others, and taught them Jesus and Him crucified and risen from the

dead, and that He was soon to come again in power and great glory to avenge them of their wrongs upon the wicked and restore them to their lands and to the knowledge of their fathers and of the Son of God.

This would be a very natural conclusion and not at all inconsistent with the established principles of the gospel and our knowledge of the manner of God's dealings with the children of men. While it is more than likely that Christ might send messengers to the Lamanites to prepare the way for His coming in the fullness of time, it is highly improbable that Christ Himself would appear to a people so utterly unprepared to receive and comprehend Him.

True, the Father and the Son appeared to the boy Joseph in the beginning of this dispensation, but he was a chosen instrument from eternity to open up the last dispensation of the gospel, and God had prepared a chosen band to join him in that work. But Moroni, John, Peter, James and John, and divers other messengers were sent to open the way and prepare the foundations of this great work and restore the records of the ancient people of this continent to the world. The foundations of that work having been laid, the authority of God established, the order of the Priesthood and the laws of the Church revealed, shall we look for these things to be ignored, or for the knowledge of God to come through the appointed channels?

While messengers may come from God, they will come in harmony with revealed and established truth, and not in conflict therewith, nor in conflict with the order of heaven which exists on the earth. The object to be attained by such manifestations as the

Lamanites claim to have had, admitting the same to be true and from God, can be no other than to begin the preparation of the Lamanites to receive a correct knowledge of God and of their fathers, and of the holy gospel already revealed and established among men, that they might believe, obey and be saved thereby.

Far be it from me to wish to close the channels of communication between the Savior of the world Himself and the remnants of Lehi. No one can be more free to admit His perfect right and power to visit whom He pleases, at His pleasure, for the channels of communication between God and man cannot be cut off nor closed by man, nor ever will be while God has a purpose to accomplish by revealing Himself. But that we may not be deceived, led into error, "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine," the foolish vagaries or the cunning craftiness of men, or follow the false cry of "Lo! here is Christ, or there," God has instituted the true order of communication between Himself and man, and has established it in *His Church*, and to this truth all mankind will do well to take heed, lest they be deceived. That which is in harmony with this is of God, that which is contrary to it is from beneath. It is in perfect harmony with the order of heaven for ministering spirits or messengers from God or Christ to visit the Lamanites or any other people, as Cornelius of old was visited, and as Christ visited Saul, and for the same purposes.

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THINK not those faithful who praise all thy words and actions, but those who kindly reprove thy faults.