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Although not in answer to any specific attacks on the Mormons, *False prophets* is a defense against the widespread accusation that the Mormons were false prophets. As Dan Jones explained to Brigham Young in a letter dated 3 December 1845, this was one of the favorite epithets used by the opponents of the Church in Wales:

Their priests warn the people tis dangerous to hear me, that I'm the arch impostor of Wales: many an honest fellow has been turned out of their synagogues for coming to hear me, while the old women send their children to cry false prophets, etc., etc., after me through the streets and sometimes a hundred of these little urchins amuse me by their parrot tongues. (Church Archives)

Although similar in size and topic to Thomas Ward's "On the false prophets of the last days" (*Millennial Star*, April 1842, pp. 177–84), *False prophets* is neither a translation nor a reworking of Ward's writing. For most of his doctrinal writings, Dan Jones borrowed quite heavily from articles and pamphlets already in print, but *False prophets* appears to be an exception.

FALSE PROPHETS.

“FOR THERE SHALL ARISE FALSE CHRISTS, AND FALSE PROPHETS, AND SHALL SHEW GREAT SIGNS AND WONDERS; INSOMUCH THAT, IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, THEY SHALL DECEIVE THE VERY ELECT,”—*Matt. xxiv, 24.*

THE most particular reason that impels us to notice these words now is, that not only the preachers from the pulpits, but also writers and members of the various religious denominations throughout the country, are accusing the Latter-day Saints of being guilty of this character. “Has Christ not warned us,” they say, “that *false prophets* would come? and here they are come already.” When they are asked how they know that the Saints are they, they say, “Well, because they alone of all the people of the world profess to be prophets in these days.” According to this reasoning, everyone who professes to be a prophet in this age must of necessity be a *false* prophet. If so, the same reasoning makes every one of the prophets that has ever been, from the least to the great Prophet himself, a *false* prophet, as well as the Saints, because they all in their day professed the same thing! What better is this than deism, or at least the stupidest kind of foolishness and deceptive reasoning! This assertion would be much more consistent from the lips of professed atheists than from the lips of those who profess to believe in the ancient prophets. The Saints are not false prophets because the popularity of this age gives them that name, any more than the religious believers, Rabbis, and Pharisees of the apostolic age proved our great Leader and his prophets to be *false prophets*, by shouting that from the pulpits, and proclaiming as if from the newspapers of the country, that they were false prophets. We do not remember one true prophet who was on our earth at whom the same group did not shout unanimously at the top of their voices, “False prophet,” and thereby incited such persecution of him that he was martyred, perhaps, sooner or later; and the more pious the prophet, the louder they would shout “false prophet” at him, until after his death their children believed that the prophet their fathers killed as *false* was *true*.

It is important for everyone to understand whether it is the Saints, or their accusers, or just who are the *false prophets*, so that they can be delivered from them. To be led by such would be to lose one’s soul; condemning the Saints as such without proving them to be false prophets, through fair and detailed examination, would be to lose one’s soul in that way, as the former ages did that rejected the message of God’s prophets, and they as false prophets; for God has never sent a prophet to the world upon compliance with whose message the salvation of that age did not depend. If we are the false prophets we would like to know it. We are ready for a fair trial on the subject; and if as much as one scripture can be brought forth to prove us so, we would be glad to confess honestly, leave the false then and there, and seek the truth; for what

reason would there be for a man to hold fast to deceit in order to lose his soul? Man gives everything for his soul: so we give our profession, creeds, forms, and everything, yes, even our lives, if necessary, in order to find the truth; and we reasonably expect our accusers to jump into the other end of the scales, in order to see above whom, in actuality, the “Mene, tekel, upharsin” is to be written. The yardstick or the scales which are fair on both sides, are those *even balances* with which the Son of God weighed, namely — “Ye shall know them by their fruits.” Read Matt. vii, 15—21. “Beware of false prophets.” It is seen from the sheep’s clothing they wear that they would be professors and not mockers. Here the Saints jump into one end of the scales, saying, “Woe unto you, when the world shall speak well of you, for so spoke they about the false prophets before you.” Come, all you respectable theologians, all you noble doctors, and all you preachers who are greeted with bowed heads by every male, and to whom every female curtsies when she meets you on the street; you who walk along *imported carpets* to the highest places in your magnificent synagogues, your elbows on multicolored cushions of silk, *satin*, and *velvet*. It is easy to shout “false prophets” after climbing as high as that; it is easy for your followers to believe that black is white, and that truth is false, when it comes from such a holy place as that. But what does the Judge of the whole earth say, he who walked along our earth without a place to rest his head, or a better title than “false prophet” from those high thrones? Who answers that description, I wonder? Our accusers know that it is not the Saints! Again, Christ says, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you,” and he could have added, “and calleth you false prophets.” The scales are in our favor here too. Yes, the fruits borne by our accusers in general do prove that the Saints are not the false prophets, according to what Paul says, “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” It is evil men that persecute, and they always persecute those better than themselves. It was not the true prophets who persecuted and reviled the false prophets in the time of the apostles; but it was completely the opposite; and does not the same cause bring about the same effect now?

Yet again, we shall throw another of the false prophets’ pomegranates into the scales, namely, their actions, “And they shall shew great signs and wonders,” with intent to deceive. The only weight they set against us in these scales, is to assert that the Saints do not show any signs, or work any wonders. Well, then, how can they fill the description of false prophets according to Christ’s words? for the false prophets were to *do* the one and the other, yes, “*and shall shew great signs.*” Our accusers admit too much here to serve their side—they prove here that the Saints are *not* the false prophets; and since they have admitted it so honestly, let us find out who they are then. “Oh, not us,” they say, “because we do not believe in ‘signs and wonders’ in this age.” Wait a while, and your fruits shall prove you, and your words shall judge you. Is it not you who seek signs from the Saints, and constantly beg them to perform a miracle, promising you will believe that they are true prophets if they do one little miracle for you? And do you not see that it was the *false* and not the *true* that gave signs! If you are not proving yourselves to be false prophets, it is obvious that you are putting the cart before the horse,

yes, completely back to front! What! “judges of the age,” “shepherds of Jesus’ flock,” having certified that the Saints are false prophets, and warned their sheep not to listen to them; and after all, saying that they will believe the complete opposite to what they know for sure, if they have one little miracle! and then they will persuade their flock to leave their folds, and go to the “*wolves*.” Here at last is a miracle of theirs! Here are “signs” for their flock of the blind leading the blind to the fold of the “wolves,” yes, here we have found the “false prophets who shew wonders in order to deceive” their flock, poor things!! Let it be weighed carefully; there is the *false* prophet in one end of the scales, and the *true* prophet in the other end. Which of the two asks for a miracle? Never the *true* from the *false*, in order to prove the false true; but always the *false* from the *true*! Which is heavier in these scales again? “By their fruits” always! But, they say, “your profession of your miraculous ability imitates the ‘false prophets’ more than do we who completely deny such ability.” Let us put this in the scales again. The Saints have never professed “miraculous ability” of themselves, only that they are servants of that God who you admit is unchanging, yes, who you admit performed miracles in the early days, and, if he is *unchanging*, will perform them again, if he has the same sort of instruments, through the restoration of the same means according to his promise. Is this not the *profession* of every true prophet? here again your *profession* differs from that of the true prophets, and ours is the same as theirs. Can the same *profession* prove the Latter-day Saints to be *false*, as is admitted to be strong proof of the *truth* of the Saints of former days? This is an example of the *logic* of “false prophets.” It was not the purpose of God’s servants in giving signs, or God’s purpose either, to prove that they were true prophets, because then there would be only one way of proving the false and the true as well. The purpose of the false in giving signs would be to make men believe they were true; but the way the true prophets did it was to proclaim the message of their God—“preaching Christ crucified,” etc., appealing to the reason of their listeners; and *after* they had believed and obeyed the message, they would receive the Holy Ghost, who worked powerfully in them and through them, to enable them to work great wonders, but all “for the benefit and edifying of the church,” and not in order to convince the world. The few exceptions God made to this do not give any of his servants the right to make exceptions to the divine rule, which is—“And these signs shall *follow* the believers,” and then ask for them to *precede*, as do the “false prophets.” There is no possibility of deception with the one method; the other, namely, the false signs, is intended to deceive.

If Christ had said, Beware of *prophets*, then there would be some excuse for the harsh verdict of our judges on us. But their job is only to link the other five letters, namely, *false*, to the Saints, and this they do as did every “false prophet” with the true, that is, without offering any sort of proof of it. And we challenge all the people of the world to prove that the Saints deserve that character. Does not Christ’s action in using the word *false* prove that there would be *true* prophets? or else is it a superfluous word from the lips of him who said, “That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” We consider that to be a natural conclusion.

It is not for us to prove what time period Christ refers to; but our accusers prove that it is this age, by claiming that we are the “false prophets” that were to come! and for the sake of convenience, and catching them in their own net, we shall take their timing for granted. And so they must admit the fulfillment of the preceding verses which are connected, especially verse 14, “And THIS gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a WITNESS unto all nations; and THEN SHALL THE END COME.” One need only find out what sort of gospel that was to which he refers, and compare it with all the opinions and creeds preached by all the religious believers of this age, in order to see that it is not to them that Christ refers here. It was a gospel miraculously confirmed by spiritual gifts that Christ and his apostles preached, one which was “the power of God unto salvation,” “not in word only, but also in power, and in much assurance in the Holy Ghost.” The sectarian “gospels” of this age are “gospels” without spiritual gifts or any need for them; with no *assurance*, only *doubt* and fears as far as the death bed; and a “Holy Ghost” leading them by their feelings, not “to a unity of the faith,” but to some hundreds of different faiths and creeds! Christ’s gospel was one that taught its adepts to pray for them which despitefully use them, and persecute them; and “THIS GOSPEL” to which he refers will be preached in the days in which our accusers say the false prophets would come, namely, the Saints, according to our accusers. But the “gospels” of the theologians of this age are “gospels” which teach their listeners to persecute all who do not belong to their faction, to call the Saints “false prophets,” and teach them to shout that at them from the pulpits, and in the streets. “Covet to prophesy”—“desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy,” was the gospel of Paul. “Shout ‘false prophets’ at anyone who professes the spirit of prophecy,” say the gospels of this age. Completely opposite to each other, are they not? It is seen, then, according to their timing and the truthfulness of Jesus Christ, that some prophet is to come to preach “THIS gospel,” namely, a gospel that has its signs with it, like “THIS GOSPEL” that Christ himself preached. And according to their admission, it is now that it would be preached, and that “*false* prophets” would shout “False prophets” at its preachers! We thank them for this admission, but we wonder greatly how they can fulfill prophecies that are so clear, and prove themselves to be “false prophets” in such a light as this! They dare not hide from the examination in their pulpits, and shout “false prophets” at the true ones any more: reasonable men are beginning to understand how to *handle* the scales themselves. “The false prophets who live in glass houses should not start throwing stones at others.” It can be seen that they are still too short of weight in the scales. They have admitted that prophets like the Saints are to come in *this* age, and to preach “THIS *gospel*” which the Saints preach, and that they would receive the same treatment as they receive! And our accusers have still not brought one proof against us.

Since the public has a duty to know who the false prophets are, and recognize them, we shall put all the preachers of the age who deny the existence of true prophets, or the need for them, in the scales again, and we shall see how much they weigh! Who are they, and what do they profess to be among the stalwarts of the age? We answer, that we have heard them screaming from the pulpits, “The Saints are false prophets, but we are ministers of Christ’s

gospel, emissaries from God, witnesses of Jesus, &c.” Weigh them carefully, and it will be seen that it is a *contradiction in terms*, impossible to be true! What, men claiming in the same breath that they are witnesses for Christ, and denying the spirit of prophecy! Bring your scales forward, John, to weigh these strange sayings! Rev. xix, 10, “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” You come too, Paul. “For no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” What does Christ say? “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” You also, Peter, tell us how you said that Jesus “is the Christ, Son of the living God.” Was it by seeing his miracles, his signs, and his wonders? No. “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven,” that is, by direct revelation through the Holy Ghost, as Paul says above, that no one could say that any other way, except through the Holy Ghost, who, says John, is ‘the testimony of Jesus,’ which is ‘the spirit of prophecy.’ And so if I were to ask, how can men possess the Holy Ghost, or be missionaries for Christ, while denying the spirit of prophecy, I would be surprised if any men of wisdom among them all were found to answer! And yet, how unreasonable for men to claim to be such until they can answer! And if they answered correctly, they would have to become Mormons, or Saints, like us, and admit a gospel which brings revelation, and the spirit of prophecy, or be without a gospel. And so in one end of the scales as in the other, they would prove themselves to be *false prophets*.

Is it not to this time, and to these religions, that Paul refers; 2 Tim. iv, 3. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine [such as ‘*this*’ gospel, the spirit of prophecy and the spiritual gifts]; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers [not sent from God through revelation, &c., as before], having itching ears;” verse 4. “And they shall turn away their ears [shouting false prophets, &c.] from the truth [which Christ and his apostles preached], and shall be turned unto fables.”

We know of nothing more like the “fables” than the stories, the private interpretations, and the imaginings they preach from the pulpits, under the name “gospel.” But it is evident that Paul weighs these scales down to the ground in favor of the Saints again, and forces our opponents’ minds up into their own eyes, until they must be blind if they do not see themselves in the mirror, and repent, and return to what is right. Peter also saw these people through the spirit of prophecy. He sees their story correctly in 2 Peter ii, 1, — “But there were false prophets also among the people [of old], even as there shall be false teachers among you [in time to come], who privily shall bring in damnable heresies [such as changing some, and denying others, of the ordinances of Christ’s church, namely, the gifts, &c.], even denying the Lord that brought them,” &c. Our accusers will shout victory at this, perhaps, because they do not deny the Lord, but shout Lord, Lord, all the time. But let us put this fruit again on the scales, in order to see if it is on their thistle, or on our fig tree, that it grows. Men can deny the Lord, in fact, contrary to their profession, which is the worst and most hypocritical sort of denial, because it includes deceit and lies. “He that saith, I love God, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” Christ proves how even those who shout, “Lord, Lord,” and who expect to be commended for their

many words and their illusion of long prayers, deny the Lord, Mat. x, 40—“He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.” And on the other hand, those that reject his appointed servants, calling them “false prophets,” reject, or deny him who sent them, which is to “deny the Lord.” That is how the scribes and the Pharisees, and all the sects of that age, denied and crucified the Lord of life, as a “false prophet,” and a murderer was shown mercy instead of him, despite all their boasting of their religion and their profession of piety! And that is how all traditional believers of every age who reject God’s emissaries, “deny the Lord,” although there is no age more like that than our age, we should think.

But Peter describes them further by their fruits in verse 2—“And *many* shall follow their pernicious ways [here again the Saints have enough weight, because our persecutors shout that we are “few,” “dregs,” and a very small number, and diminishing all the time, they say, but they boast that there are a host with them. “Have any of the leaders believed the Saints?” they say. “Oh no, they are the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things.” Very well, then; admit that you are the men that Peter calls false teachers here]; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” Who causes the way of truth to be evil spoken of? Is it the Saints, by walking in it, or the hundreds who profess to walk in it, and yet are opposed to one another? No, certainly not the Saints, but the sects of the age; for every sensible man reasons from their admission that there was only one right way before, only one Savior, one Bible, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God; that therefore only one of all of them is right now. And yet, it is such an endless task for the man of honest principle to find out that even one of them is right, and according to the scriptures, that thousands are giving up the effort in despair. And I do not doubt that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of our blood brothers in Wales now, who have become disgusted, and have been forced to look within Deism and Atheism for consistency and reason, qualities that are not found in all the fragmentary and contradictory systems of the age. It is certain that men cause the Bible, and the divine religion it contains, to be blasphemed by professing it in word, and denying it in their actions. Let no one deceive you; no one gathers figs from thorns, or grapes from thistles. But on the other hand, there are dozens of those men who were too reasonable to be able to be sectarians, but who have been deists for years, who now, after hearing the Saints preaching the way of truth according to the scriptures, believe, obey it, have received knowledge of the truth, and rejoice in the God of their salvation; and although the religious believers of the age at that time spoke well of them, they now shout “false prophets” after them. Thus, it is seen that it is not because of the Saints, but the sectarians, that “the way of truth is evil spoken of.” Again, in the next verse, Peter describes our accusers as skilfully as if he had spent his life among them. Verse 3. “And through covetousness shall they [that is, the false teachers,] with *feigned words* [their creeds, and their own rules] make *merchandise* of you.” Who makes merchandise of the gospel? Is it the Saints who preach it free, without money, and without cost, but go “without purse or scrip for the journey,” as those fishermen went with the very same gospel earlier? Or is it the bishops, archbishops, vicars, curates, doctors of the large salaries, and the paid ministers of the denominations at

six, eight, or ten pounds a month, previously secured under surety; and other itinerant preachers who preach three sermons a day for between half a crown and a crown each, and their costs?

Come forward, friends, the Saints are in the balance! Is it we, or our accusers, that make merchandise of the souls of our listeners, and a craft of Christ's religion, which he commanded to be preached free to the poor? Oh no, this accusation is as inappropriate to the Saints as is the accusation of 'false prophets,' and it will be seen that those who are deepest in the ditch are accusing the innocent again, in case they get some of the pennies that are attracting them. If the *tokens* were to end, the sermons would soon end in many a place, and if anyone doubts it, let them send out their 'teachers,' as the Saints go out, at their own expense, and facts would soon be found to prove who the 'false teachers' really are! In the following verses, the Apostle notes that the fruits of the false teachers of the latter days are similar to those of the false teachers of the old world, crying 'false prophet,' &c., after righteous Noah. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah speak evil to Lot of the things "which they know not." "And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you." "Beguiling unstable souls." "Which have forsaken the right way [namely, Christ's gospel], and are gone astray, [all following their own creed] following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." What is more unrighteous than charging their listeners for speaking ill of and distorting God's ordinances, the workings of his Holy Spirit, and calling his servants 'false prophets,' deceivers, "satanists," &c., and warning the people not to listen to Christ's gospel, which is preached by them? Is this not unjust to the souls and to the property of men, for the sake of profit? I wonder if Balaam ever received as unrighteous a reward as this? Even that evil man refused to sell himself to do as they do. "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error," (namely, the sectarians). Not infrequently they visit those who escaped from them to the right way, proclaiming all the false accusations they heard from here and there, and all the corrupt newspapers of the age against the Saints, instead of *proving* (if they have proof) heresy contrary to the Bible. And then they pour down all their accursed *anathemas* on their heads in their weakness, to try to frighten them. And more than once letters were written to the Saints many times worse than the Pope's *bulls*, saying that they had sinned unforgivably, by 'proving all things, and holding fast that which is good,' as the scripture says everyone should do. But these shepherds say that such people would be in the "*fire and brimstone, boiling under Lucifer's tail, whatever they might do!*" &c. How clearly Peter saw their tricks, "trying to allure back those who had escaped," once from their destructive heresies. It would be good for them to remember the words of Jesus Christ, "It were better for them that a millstone were hanged about their necks, and they cast into the sea, than that they should offend one of these little ones."

Now, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, having found out to what time

period the spirit of prophecy through Christ and his servants was referring, as well as what marks, signs, and fruits, the false prophets and the false teachers of whose coming they warn us would bear, we thank God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that not one of those marks, in any way, denotes "Latter-day Saints." But we, more than anyone, can glory in the examination which shows that we continue in that doctrine which was given to us by God, that we have obeyed with all our heart the conditions of the adoption, and have received the Spirit of the adoption, through which we cry, Abba Father. Let us endeavor, then, to be found worthy to enter into his resting place. As we have received such an indescribable honor as obeying the eternal gospel, which brings life and purity to light, and are able to be worthy of receiving the gifts of the Holy Ghost, in order to perfect us and fit us for the glory of our Lord, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But we expect a new heaven, and a new earth, according to his promise, wherein righteousness dwells.

Let us do our best to walk worthily to this heavenly call to which we are called. Let us be unblemished by the world, lest we turn the lame from the road; and let us pray for those who do us harm, and call us *false prophets*, taking pity on them while it is possible, and excusing them under the mantle of ignorance. When they shout "false prophets" at you, if you can get them to the touchstone, namely, the Bible, and weigh them in the correct scales, which is according to their fruits, try to show them in a gentle spirit that they are like David before them, issuing the verdict on themselves in their ignorance. While taking care that you do not conform to those who profess an appearance of godliness, and deny its power, remember Jude's counsel, "There should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves [not unbelievers, but *separate* themselves into various sects], sensual, having not *the Spirit*." Not being without *spirit*, but without *the Holy Spirit* in its divine influences, and its spiritual gifts; for the Holy Spirit does not lead anyone to *separate* from Christ's church, or from that faith which was once given to the saints; for there is one Spirit of God, and that leads to a *unity* of the faith, and not to *separating* or *dividing*. Keep away from such things. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God," and in the bond of peace, holding fast to the hope which was set before you, that you may receive the incorruptible crown which was given to you who suffer with our Lord Jesus Christ, when he comes to be glorified in his saints, because our testimony, [rather than the false prophets,] has been believed in your midst." And may the eternal God, your heavenly Father, keep you safe from all wolves, false teachers, false prophets, and from all evil, until he comes, is our fervent prayer for all his Saints. Amen.