

Samuel Lutz, a preacher of the Protestant Swiss Reformed Church. The name Lutius Gratianus never appears on any of the works written by Samuel Lutz but seems to be a combination of Lutz's latinized name (Samuel *Lucius*) and his pseudonym (Christophilus *Gatianus*). For some unknown reason, this person was further transfigured into "Lutius Gratus," the Catholic priest.²¹

The information presented in Spori's 1893 *Juvenile Instructor* article seems to be the product of a faulty memory. When Oskar K. Winters (secretary of the Swiss-German mission in 1922) read through the 1732 edition of *Hope of Zion*, he noted that it was "rich in prophecies concerning the restoration of the gospel and is remarkable in that it mentions a church with prophets and patriarchs and that the Urim and Thummim would be restored, etc." But he failed to find the elements of the "prophecy" as remembered by Spori. Winters surmised that perhaps the Spori prophecy represents his own synopsis or summary of elements that were scattered throughout the book.

Rulon S. Wells of the First Quorum of the Seventy concluded after reading the volume under discussion in 1897 that the "prophecy" was bogus. He even wrote an article called "A Fraudulent Prophecy Exposed" for the *Improvement Era*. And he said that he hoped that this 'prophecy' would not be used either at home or in the mission field as a means of support for "the great work of the Master."²²

QUESTION 11

Hasn't it been prophesied that all of the mountains of the earth will be melted or vanish away when the Second Coming occurs?

Answer:

A portion of Doctrine and Covenants 133 reads as follows:

[The prayer will be uttered:] "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence."

And it shall be answered upon their heads; for the presence of the Lord shall be as the melting fire that burneth, and as the fire which causeth the waters to boil.

O Lord, thou shalt come down to make Thy name known to Thine adversaries, and all nations shall tremble at Thy presence—

When thou doest terrible things, things they look not for;

Yea, when thou comest down, and the mountains flow down at Thy presence, Thou shalt meet him who rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, who remembereth Thee in Thy ways. (v. 40–44)

A comparison of this modern canonical text with Isaiah 64:1–5 shows that the Doctrine and Covenants text is a definite parallel. The prophet Isaiah says:

Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence,

As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make Thy name known to Thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Thy presence!

When Thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, Thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at Thy presence.

For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him.

Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways.

Clearly, the Lord is citing the Isaiah passage in the Doctrine and Covenants, but the key to understanding the remark about the mountains is found in the Hebrew words that underlie Isaiah's text. In Isaiah 64:1 the phrase "flow down" is translated from the single Hebrew word *zalal*, which means "shake" or "quake." The same applies to the phrase "flowed down" in verse 3. If this is taken into consideration, and if the passage is reread with the objective of comparing the imagery of verses 1 and 2, then it becomes apparent that the mountains quake at the presence of Jehovah, and His adversaries do the same. The mention of fire that melts and causes water to boil, in verse 2, may simply be a reference to ancient Israelite imagery that describes God as "a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24; 9:3; Heb. 12:29).

Doctrine and Covenants 133:22 also speaks of the voice of the Lord breaking down the mountains. If the text of this entire verse and the preceding verse is taken into account, however, it becomes clear that this is not a reference to the literal destruction of mountains but is rather a description of the power of the Lord's voice. It is as the voice of many waters and as the voice of great thunder; it is strong enough to break down mountains and to make valleys vanish away.

Section 109 of the Doctrine and Covenants also contains a reference to the mountains "flow[ing] down" at the presence of the Lord (v. 74). This section of modern canonical writings is the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple. Since historical documents reveal that this prayer was written by a committee—which drew heavily upon Old Testament scriptures²³—the reference to the mountains flowing down can probably best be understood as representing the heartfelt desire of the prayer's authors to have the prophecies of the last days fulfilled.

In another scriptural text, the Lord admonishes His Saints to "continue in steadfastness, looking forth for the heavens to be shaken, and the earth to tremble and to reel to and fro as a

drunken man, and for the valleys to be exalted, and for the mountains to be made low, and for the rough places to become smooth—and all this when the angel shall sound his trumpet” (D&C 49:23). In this passage it appears that the Lord has stitched together imagery from three separate verses found in the book of Isaiah. First is Isaiah 13:13. “Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger.” Following that is Isaiah 24:20: “The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard.” And the final reference mentions the mountains: “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain” (Isa. 40:4).

Notice that even though Isaiah 40:4 says that “every” mountain and hill will be made low, the corresponding text in the Doctrine and Covenants does not; it says only that “the mountains” will be made low. A related text in the book of Revelation says that “the mountains” will not be found (16:20; cf. Hel. 14:23). The context of this passage is critical to understanding the whole issue of the disappearing mountains. The text of Revelation 16:16–20 teaches that during the battle of Armageddon there will be an earthquake of colossal magnitude, mightier than any earthquake that has occurred since man has inhabited the earth. Ezekiel, in chapters 38 and 39 of his book, discusses the battle of Gog/Magog (the battle of Armageddon); he says, “There shall be *a great shaking in the land of Israel*” so that the fish, birds, beasts, and humans will shake at the Lord’s presence and the mountains will be broken in pieces (emphasis added; see Appendix 3). The prophet Zechariah adds the final bit of clarification regarding this issue, saying that when the Lord touches His feet on the Mount of Olives, the mountain will break in two pieces, and from Geba to Rimmon (south of Jerusalem), all the land shall be turned into a plain and lifted up (see Appendix 3). In other words, the “disappearing mountains” will be a local event, not a worldwide cataclysm.