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Letter to the Queen of England

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Abstract: This article is a missionary proclamation including an account of the origin of the Book of Mormon and its purpose. It quotes from 1 Nephi, concerning the “great and abominable Church.”

LETTER TO THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND.

TOUCHING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES AND THE POLITICAL
DESTINY OF THE WORLD.

BY ELDER PARLEY P. PRATT.

[The following letter was written by Elder Parley P. Pratt while on his first mission to Great Britain, and presented as a message to Queen Victoria. As far as we are able to learn, it was afterwards printed in pamphlet form, in a limited edition. Doubtless one of these pamphlets came into the possession of Elder Richard Ballantyne, who, thirteen years after its first publication, reprinted the letter in the July, 1854, number of *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star and Monthly Visitor*, an eight-page magazine, of which he was founder and editor, and which was then issued as the organ of The Church in Madras, India, of which Elder Ballantyne was the presiding elder. The *Star and Visitor* was published in four numbers, April, May, June and July, 1854. These numbers were bound thereafter with five other tracts, also issued by him, the whole making a pamphlet of seventy-four pages, circulated by the missionaries among the people of Madras. One of these rare pamphlets, greatly dilapidated, fell into the hands of Elder Robert Sherwood when on his mission to England in 1900. It was in the home of Elder William Maytom of London, who had purchased it at a book stall. The letter of Elder Pratt was copied from the *Star and Visitor* by Elder Sherwood, who, returning to Utah, submitted his copy to Elder John Nicholson, to whom, by the by, the editors of the ERA are greatly indebted for many good writings, ideas and suggestions. He considered it of much interest at the present time—because of the recent death of the Queen, its splendid doctrinal contents, its age, (it being about the sixtieth anniversary of its writing,) and because of its being a product of one of the most famous early writers of The Church—and so suggested that it be submitted to the ERA for publication.

In order to be absolutely certain of its authenticity, the editors wrote to President George Q. Morris of the London Conference, requesting him to obtain, if possible, the old pamphlet from Elder Maytom, and forward it to the ERA. The owner readily consented, and through the courtesy of these brethren and Elder D. W. Parratt of Salt Lake City, it has been received, and the copied letter carefully compared with the printed page and found correct.

We take great pleasure in presenting the rare document to our readers, feeling sure they will enjoy its perusal. Any reader of the works of Parley P. Pratt will readily recognize the style as that of the famous author of the "Voice of Warning."—EDITORS.]

To Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, Sovereign of Britain:

It has fallen to the lot of your Majesty not only to live in a most eventful period of the world, but to occupy a station the most conspicuous of that of any individual of the present age.

It has pleased the Almighty disposer of events, who governs and rules among the kingdoms of the earth, to raise your Majesty, while in the morning of life, to a throne of power, at the head of an empire, which, in many respects, stands foremost among the nations and kingdoms of the world. It is with feelings of that profound respect which is justly due to so high an office that I offer this address. The importance of the subject and the obligation which I am under to the God whom I serve, and to the people of the age in which I live, are the only apologies which I offer for thus intruding upon the attention of your Majesty.

Know assuredly that the world in which we live is on the eve of a revolution, more wonderful in its beginning—more rapid in its progress—more powerful in its operations—more extensive in its effects—more lasting in its influence—and more important in its consequences, than any which man has yet witnessed upon the earth; a revolution in which all the inhabitants of the earth are vitally interested, both religiously and politically, temporally and spiritually; one on which the fate of all nations is suspended, and upon which the future destiny of all the affairs of the earth is made to depend. Nay, the angels have desired to look into it, and heaven itself has waited with longing expectation for its consummation.

I will now proceed to show from the scriptures, first, what

this revolution is—second, that the present is the time of its fulfillment.

The first great and universal monarchy after the deluge was the kingdom of Babel, or Babylon. This was founded by Nimrod, on the plains of Euphrates, and continued to strengthen itself until the time of Nebuchadnezzar, whom the Lord raised up to be his servant, to execute his vengeance upon the nations. By a series of the most striking prophetic declarations of Jeremiah the prophet and others, and their no less striking fulfillment, this monarch marched forth, conquering and to conquer, till Tyre, Egypt, and Judea, and all the surrounding nations were subdued and brought into captivity for seventy years. This was so extensive, that Daniel the prophet exclaimed to the king of Babylon: "The God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the fields and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all."

This monarch standing at the head of nations, and swaying his scepter over all the kingdoms of the world, was the favored instrument to whom the Almighty made known his purposes touching the government of the world in all succeeding ages. While resting upon his bed in the deep silence of midnight, when the busy world was lost in slumbers, and wearied nature hushed to silence and repose, an anxious inquiry arose in his mind in regard to the things which should "come to pass hereafter." His mind roamed down through the dark vista of future and distant periods, and would fain have understood and contemplated the events of the "latter day." Thus lost in contemplation, and overwhelmed in deep sleep, his mind was suddenly caught from the subject of his meditation, and the visions of heaven were opened to his view. A great image stood before him. His head was of fine gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, and his feet and toes part of iron and part of clay. He beheld till a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands which smote the image upon the toes; then was the whole image broken to pieces and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the winds blew it away: but the stone became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

When the king awoke from this vision he sent for his wise men, but none of them could unfold unto him his dream and the meaning thereof, till Daniel was forthcoming with this striking declaration, "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets." This man of God then proceeded to tell the dream and the interpretation thereof. The head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar and the kingdoms over which he reigned; the breast and arms of silver represented the Medes and Persians, who next succeeded in the government of the world; the belly and thighs of brass, represented the empire of Alexander and his successors—this being the next in succession—the legs of iron represented the Roman empire, which was the fourth great monarchy of the world; and the feet and toes part of iron and part of clay, represented the dissolution of the Roman empire and its subdivision into the kingdoms of modern Europe, as they now exist in their divided state partly Roman and partly Protestant, and not cleaving one to another, even as iron and clay will not adhere or unite in mutual strength.

Of course, then, the government of England is one of the toes of this image.

Now, in the days of these kings (or kingdoms) represented by the feet and toes, the God of heaven should set up a kingdom which should not be left to other people but should break in pieces all these kingdoms and stand for ever, as represented by the little stone.

This is the interpretation which the God of heaven himself gave to Daniel, and which Daniel has given in the scriptures; and England has given the scriptures to the world, thus actually revealing to the world, its destiny and her own.

But before we proceed further, we shall go back and take another view of the same subject, as revealed to Daniel on another occasion and under a different figure. He saw, (Daniel 7,) these same four kingdoms, viz., the Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Greeks and Romans, rise and reign in succession under the figure of four beasts. Out of the fourth beast he saw, under the figure of ten horns, ten kingdoms arise, which are the same that the feet and toes represented, viz.: the kingdoms of modern Europe. And he beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, and judgment was given to the saints, and the time came

that the saints possessed the kingdom. Again he said, "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever."

Again, the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Again he says, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." The kingdom so often spoken of in this seventh chapter of Daniel, is evidently the same that is represented by the stone which smote the image, as recorded in the second chapter.

From this it appears that this new kingdom will be established over the whole earth to the destruction of all other kingdoms, by nothing less than the personal advent of the Messiah in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, but preceded by a personage called the "Ancient of Days." The fourteenth chapter of Zechariah confirms this testimony by predicting that the Lord will stand with his feet on the Mount of Olives; that he shall come and all the saints with him, and that in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one, and he shall be king over all the earth.

The revelation of John bears the same testimony, saying, "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ."

There are many other scripture illustrations of the same subject, which would be extremely interesting to your Majesty and to the world, but these must suffice.

From all these facts so clearly set forth in the scriptures, I feel warranted in saying that, as sure as all these events have succeeded each other from the days of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, until the days of Victoria I, on the throne of Great Britain, so sure will that portion be fulfilled which is yet future, and which relates to the casting down of thrones, the termination of the political

and religious establishments of the earth, and the setting up of a new and universal kingdom, under the immediate administration of the Messiah and his saints.

Connected with the ushering in of this new era will be the restoration of Judah and Israel from their long dispersion. They will come home to their own land, and rebuild Jerusalem and the cities of Judea, and rear up the temple of their God. This city will be the seat of empire for the eastern world and all the surrounding nations for the next thousand years, at least. (See Zechariah 14.)

This restoration will take place by a series of miracles, signs, wonders, revelations, judgments, etc., which will far exceed the dispensation of Moses and the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. (Jeremiah 16; Ezekiel 20; Isaiah 11; Ezekiel 36 to 39 inclusive.) With this revolution will be connected the resurrection of the saints that have slept. (See Daniel 12, 2; Job 19, 25, 27, 29; Revelation 20.)

A physical change also awaits the earth at this time. The mountains will be thrown down, the valleys exalted, the rough places will become smooth and the crooked places straight, the barren deserts fruitful, and the parched ground well watered, and even the beasts of prey will be wrought upon by the Spirit of God, will lose their thirst for blood, and become perfectly harmless; feeding only upon vegetable food.

Isaiah and others have written upon all these things so extensively that it would be needless for me to give the quotations. Connected with this restoration will be judgments and signs in heaven above and earth beneath, which will distress the nations by famine, pestilence, sword, tempests, hail, earthquakes, floods, and whirlwinds, which will finally terminate in a fire, as fatal to all the proud and them that do wickedly, as the flood in the days of Noah and the fire that fell upon Sodom.

Then, as Noah was a survivor of a world destroyed, and himself and family the sole proprietors of the earth, so will the saints of the Most High possess the earth and its whole dominion, and tread upon the ashes of the wicked. (See Isaiah 24: 1-6; Malachi 4; Luke 21, 25 to 36; Joel 2.)

Having laid before your Majesty a faint description of that

great revolution which awaits the world, I now come to the second part of my subject, viz: The time of its fulfillment.

The apostles were in expectation of its immediate fulfillment, while Jesus was yet with them, until he taught them better. They inquired of him, saying, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?" But he answered them, saying, "It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." As much as to say, that it was no part of their mission, and was not to be fulfilled in their day. So, being corrected in this thing, the Apostle Peter afterwards informs us, (Acts 3,) that the heavens must receive Jesus Christ until the times of restoration of all things spoken of by the Lord, by the holy prophets, and that at the times of restitution God would send him again. Jesus himself speaks of this same time when he says, (Luke 21,) "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

Paul also comes to the same point of time (Romans 11,) "Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles is come in."

These texts all have an allusion to one and the same time, viz., the revolution of which we have spoken.

The Lord (Luke 21,) after speaking of the signs of his coming says, "When ye see these things begin to come to pass then know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand," and then says that the generation who are witnesses of these signs beginning to come to pass will not pass away till all shall be fulfilled, including his second coming and kingdom.

Now, the kingdom of God here spoken of cannot possibly allude to the kingdom which was set up in the days of the apostles, for that kingdom was already at hand when the Savior predicted these things, and was set up immediately after his resurrection and without the signs, spoken of in the 21st of Luke having come to pass. Therefore, he must have alluded to the kingdom of which Daniel and others spoke which was to be set up in the days of these kings, as represented by the feet and toes of the image; and it is well known to your majesty and to all Christendom that these ten kingdoms out of the ruins of the Roman empire did not arise until many hundred years after the days of the apostles.

Let us here enumerate the signs spoken of which are to precede the Messiah's second coming and the setting up of his kingdom, "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth; distress of nations with perplexity—the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

I beg leave barely to remind your majesty that these signs have for the last ten years been fulfilling in the eyes of all people. I need not here particularize or point out their fulfillment, for passing events are too notorious to be hidden.

I now beg leave to call the attention of your majesty to an important discovery which has poured a flood of light upon these subjects, and which has actually revealed and demonstrated that the present age is the time of their fulfillment. I allude to the discovery of an ancient record among the antiquities of America, a copy of the translation of which was lately presented to your Majesty and another to his Royal Highness, Prince Albert, by Mr. Brigham Young. The discovery of this record and the things connected with it, as they are now ushering in upon the world, are of more importance than any single event which has transpired in modern times. The discovery of America by Columbus three hundred years since opened a new era upon the world, and poured a flood of light upon the nations. They awoke from the slumber of ages, and gazed with astonishment and wonder. As the first transports of admiration subsided, a spirit of enterprise seized the people, and a new impulse was given to the minds of men, which has resulted in mighty changes in the scientific, commercial and political departments, and which has mainly contributed in forming all the great outlines of modern character.

But it remained for the nineteenth century to open a treasure of knowledge, and to present to the world a discovery more extensive in its information, more glorious in its intelligence, and of greater magnitude in its final bearing upon men and things, than all the discoveries of Columbus and his contemporaries. I allude to this ancient American record. By this means the history of the

past in relation to half the world, has been opened as far back as the confusion of languages at Babel. A nation whose "bones are dried" and whose ruined temples and monuments have reposed for ages in silent, solemn and awful grandeur, has now spoken from the dust and revealed to the world their history, and with it their prophecies and their testimony of Jesus as the risen Messiah and the Savior of the world, not of Asia only, but of America also. From this record we learn the astonishing fact that the gospel was revealed among the ancient inhabitants of that continent, and the risen Jesus ministered in person to them, setting in order all the offices and ordinances of his kingdom, and opening all the great outlines of his doctrine, together with a knowledge of the future, down to the time of restoration, of which we have spoken.

By this means we are enabled to come to a knowledge of these points of doctrine and prophecy, and to understand clearly that which has been rendered obscure by coming down to us through the dark ages, robbed of its plainness by priestcraft and superstition, and mingled with the traditions of men.

By this means we are enabled to understand definitely the signs of the times and how and when the prophecies are to be fulfilled in relation to the great revolution so clearly set forth in this letter.

And by this means we understand the fate of the world and the destiny to which the nations are hastening.

This ancient record was discovered in 1827, in Western New York, in the bowels of the earth, where it had been concealed for fourteen hundred years.

It was there deposited by a holy prophet whose name was Moroni, in order to preserve it, at a time when a great nation was overthrown.

It was translated and published in English in 1830. Since that time it has been a principal means in the hands of God of working a greater revolution among men than was ever known in so short a time. It has given rise to the Church of Christ of Latter-day Saints, which was first organized with six members on the sixth of April, 1830, but which now numbers many thousands, both in America and Europe.

This church professes to hold to the ancient order of the gospel, as revealed both in the Bible and in this American record.

They discard infant baptism, as an invention of priestcraft, and hold to the baptism of penitent believers for remission of sins, and to the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands in the name of Jesus; and to the gifts of healing, prophecy, miracles, etc., as Jesus promised in his word.

The Church of the Saints thus organized upon the ancient order and faith once delivered to the Saints, must grow and flourish, and spread among all nations, and must increase in faith, and power and might and glory, until as a bride adorned for her husband she is prepared for her coming Lord, and for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Perhaps a few words of one of the prophets as contained in this ancient record, will serve to show what is at hand to be fulfilled, in plainer terms than any modern style of language can express. From the fifty-seventh page of the first book of Nephi, (Nephi 22, 11-25) as contained in this ancient record, I extract the following:

The Lord God will proceed to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations, in bringing about his covenants and his gospel, unto those who are of the house of Israel.

Wherefore, he will bring them again out of captivity, and they shall be gathered together to the lands of their inheritance; and they shall be brought out of obscurity, and out of darkness; and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the mighty one of Israel. And the blood of that great and abominable church, which is the whore of all the earth, shall turn upon their own heads; for they shall war among themselves, and the sword of their own hands shall fall upon their own heads, and they shall be drunken with their own blood. And every nation shall war against thee, O house of Israel, shall be turned one against another, and they shall fall into the pit which they digged to ensnare the people of the Lord. And all that fight against Zion shall be destroyed, and that great whore, who hath perverted the ways of the Lord, yea, that great and abominable church shall tumble to the dust, and great shall be the fall of it. For behold, saith the prophet, the time cometh speedily, that Satan shall have no more power over the hearts of the children of men; for the day soon cometh that all the proud and they who do wickedly, shall be as stubble; and the day cometh that they must be burned.

For the time soon cometh that the fullness of the wrath of God

shall be poured out upon all the children of men; for he will not suffer that the wicked shall destroy the righteous. Wherefore, he will preserve the righteous by his power, even if it so be that the fullness of his wrath must come, and the righteous be preserved, even unto the destruction of their enemies by fire. Wherefore, the righteous need not fear, for thus saith the prophet, they shall be saved, even if it so be as by fire. Behold, my brethren, I say unto you, that these things must shortly come; yea, even blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke must come and it must needs be upon the face of this earth; and it cometh unto men according to the flesh, if it so be that they harden their hearts against the Holy One of Israel; for behold, the righteous shall not perish; for the time surely must come, that all who fight against Zion shall be cut off. And the Lord will surely prepare a way for his people unto the fulfilling of the words of Moses, which he spake, saying: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

And it shall come to pass that all those who will not hear that prophet, shall be cut off from among the people. And now I, Nephi, declare unto you, that this prophet of whom Moses spake was the Holy One of Israel: wherefore, he shall execute judgment in righteousness; and the righteous need not fear, for they are those who shall not be confounded. But it is the kingdom of the devil which shall be built up among the children of men, which kingdom is established among them which are in the flesh; for the time speedily shall come, that all churches which are built up to get gain, and all those which are built up to get power over the flesh, and those which are built up to become popular in the eyes of the world, and those who seek the lusts of the flesh and the things of the world, and to do all manner of iniquity; yea, in fine, all those who belong to the kingdom of the devil, are they who need fear, and tremble, and quake; they are those who must be brought low in the dust; they are those who must be consumed as stubble; and this is according to the words of the prophet.

And the time cometh speedily that the righteous must be led up as calves of the stall, and the Holy One of Israel must reign in dominion, and might, and power, and great glory. And he gathereth his children from the four quarters of the earth; and he numbereth his sheep and they know him; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd; and he shall feed his sheep, and in him they shall find pasture.

I have given the above extract from this ancient prophecy, in order that your Majesty and the people of your dominion, may be aware of future events which are nigh even at the door.

I must close this letter by forewarning the sovereign and people of England in the most affectionate manner, to repent and turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart.

When I say repent, I mean my message for the lords, nobles, clergy and gentry, as well as sovereign and people. Let them deal their bread to the hungry, their clothing to the naked; let them be merciful to the poor, the needy, the sick and the afflicted, the widow and the fatherless; let them set the oppressed free, and break every yoke. In order to be able the more effectually to do this, let them dispense with their pride, extravagance, their luxury and excesses, for the cries of the poor have ascended to heaven; their groans and tears have ascended before the Lord; his anger is kindled and he will not always permit their sufferings to go unnoticed.

In short, let them bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and come and be baptized in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins, and then shall they receive the Holy Spirit, and become the Saints of the Most High, the children of light; and signs shall follow them that believe, the sick shall be healed in the name of Jesus; devils shall be cast out, the deaf shall hear and the dumb shall speak, and the poor shall have the gospel preached unto them.

Now if the rulers, clergy and people of England hearken to this message, they shall have part in this glorious kingdom so clearly set forth in this letter, but if they will not hearken to the words of the prophets and the apostles, they will be overthrown with the wicked, and perish from the earth.

The Lord God of Israel hath sent his angel with this message to the children of men, "to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

With sentiments of profound respect, and with the most anxious desire for the welfare and prosperity of the sovereign and people of England. I have the honor to subscribe myself,

Your Majesty's humble servant,

PARLEY P. PRATT.

Manchester, May 28, 1841.