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A Letter to the Queen, Touching the Signs of the Times, and the Political Destiny of the World

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Abstract: This is a letter written to Queen Victoria by Elder Parley P. Pratt during his first mission to Britain in 1841. It was meant to accompany a copy of the Book of Mormon which Brigham Young had directed Lorenzo Snow to deliver to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. However, Elder Pratt sent the letter to press and published and printed 10,000 copies before the presentation. It saw multiple reprintings after that time, both in the *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* and *Monthly Visitor*, a short-lived church publication in Madras, India. Following the queen's death in 1901, it would be republished in the *Improvement Era*.

Elder Pratt's presentation of the gospel to his royal reader is fascinating, beginning with biblical prophecy and the signs of the times, to their fulfillment in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon in the latter days. He balances between boldness and overbearance in his call for the monarch to repent. As Pratt's biographers put it, "[i]t was a brash proclamation, even provocative."

A
LETTER TO THE QUEEN,
TOUCHING THE
SIGNS OF THE TIMES,
AND
THE POLITICAL
DESTINY OF THE WORLD.

“There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets.”

DANIEL.

MANCHESTER:
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1841.

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 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 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—secondly, that the present is the time of its fulfilment.

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 fulfilment, 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 field, 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 sceptre over all the kingdoms of the world, was the favoured 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 days.” Thus lost in contemplation, and overwhelmed with 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, whose 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 feet and toes; then was the whole image broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer thrashing floors, and the wind 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 which 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 (Dan. vii.) 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 rise, 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 judgement 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 for ever, even for ever 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 7th of Daniel, is evidently the same that is represented by the stone which smote the image, as recorded in the 2nd chap.

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 14th chap. 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 First on the throne of 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 present 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, &c., which will far exceed the dispensation of Moses and the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. (Jeremiah 16th.; Ezekiel 20th; Isaiah 11th; Ezekiel 36th to 39th inclusive.) With this revolution will be connected the resurrection of the saints that have slept. See Daniel xii. 2.; Job xix., 25, 26, 27; Rev. xx.

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 on vegetable food only.

Isaiah and others have written upon all these things so extensively that it would be needless for me to give the quotations in this place. Connected with this restitution will be judgments and signs in heaven above and earth beneath, which will distress the nations, and destroy millions by famine, pestilence, sword, tempests, hail, earthquakes, floods, and whirlwinds, and which will finally terminate in a fire, as fatal to all the proud and them that do wickedly as the flood 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 xxiv., 1st to 6th; Malachi last; Luke xxi., 25 to 36; Joel ii.)

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 FULFILMENT.

The Apostles were in expectation of its immediate fulfilment, 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 iii.) 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 xxi) "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles UNTIL THE TIMES of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Paul also comes to the same point of time, (Romans xi.)—"Blindness in part is happened to Israel UNTIL THE FULNESS 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 xxi.) 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 of God which was set up in the days of the Apostles, for that kingdom was already at hand when the Saviour 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 fulfilment, 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 fulfilment. 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 transpired in modern times. The discovery of America by Columbus 300 years since opened a new era upon the world, and poured a flood of light upon the startling 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 Saviour 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 times 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 1400 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 principle 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, who were first organized with six members on the sixth of April, 1830, but who now number 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, &c., as Jesus has 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 shew what is at hand to be fulfilled, in plainer terms than any modern style of language can express. From the 57th page of the first Book of Nephi, as contained in this ancient record, I extract the following:—

“The Lord will proceed to make bear 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 Saviour 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, and they shall be drunk with their own blood. And every nation which 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, 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 fulness 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; therefore he will preserve the righteous by his power, even if it so be that the fulness 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 they shall be saved, even if it so be as by fire. Behold, I say unto you, that these things must shortly come, yea, even blood, and fire, and vapour 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 you hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." And it shall come to pass, that all those who shall 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, where-

fore, 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 the 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 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 and 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; and in order to be able the more effectually to do this, let them dispense with their pride and extravagance, their luxury and excess; for the cries of the poor have ascended up to Heaven, and their groans and tears have ascended up before the Lord, and his anger is kindled; and he will no longer suffer their sufferings to go unnoticed.

In short, let them bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and come and be baptised in the name of Jesus, for 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 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 dwelt upon 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 judgments 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 honour to subscribe myself,

Your Majesty's humble Servant

And Loyal Subject,

PARLEY P. PRATT.

Manchester, May 28, 1841.