



Type: Book Chapter

Chapter XLII

Author(s): Orson F. Whitney

Source: *Life of Heber C. Kimball, An Apostle; The Father and Founder of the British Mission*

Published: Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888

Pages: 303–312

Abstract: Father Corner Baptized—The Apostles Visit The Reverend Robert Aitken—Heber Attacked With Cholera—The Work In Other Parts—Second Conference At Manchester—Brigham Accompanies Heber To London— Conversion Of The Rev. James Albion.

CHAPTER XLII.

FATHER CORNER BAPTIZED—THE APOSTLES VISIT THE REV-
EREND ROBERT AITKEN—HEBER ATTACKED WITH
CHOLERA—THE WORK IN OTHER PARTS—SECOND CON-
FERENCE AT MANCHESTER—BRIGHAM ACCOMPANIES
HEBER TO LONDON—CONVERSION OF THE REV. JAMES
ALBION.

THE first baptism in London took place on Monday the 31st of August, the day following the events related in the last chapter. It was "Father Corner" who offered himself as a convert to the Elders, and it was Heber C. Kimball who baptized him. The ceremony was performed at the Public Baths, after which the new member was confirmed under the hands of the three Apostles at his own house.

Thus was laid the foundation of the London Conference.

Leaving Elder Woodruff for several days, Heber and George A. went to Deptford, for the purpose of establishing a branch there. While they were gone, Brother Woodruff made the second convert—a woman. He also obtained from the directors of a Methodist chapel permission to preach in a school-house at Bowl Court, Shoreditch.

Sunday morning, September 6th, the Apostles filled the appointment made by Elder Woodruff, who preached first, followed by Elders Kimball and Smith. These were the first gospel sermons delivered by the Elders in a meeting house in London, though they had each

addressed an audience briefly, at Temperance Hall, on the subject of temperance.

In the afternoon they preached again out of doors in Tabernacle square; and in the evening returned to preach in the Methodist school house. When they arrived, however, they discovered that a plan had been formed by several preachers of that denomination for one of their own number to occupy the evening, fearing lest some should receive the testimony of these "dangerous men" from America. Already had the Methodists of London taken the alarm.

Discovering this ministerial intrigue against them the three Apostles went their way, but that evening they found four persons who received their testimony and offered themselves for baptism.

On the Monday following, Heber and George A. visited the celebrated Robert Aitken. He received them courteously, and acknowledged that their doctrines were scriptural, but said he was fearful of deception. At this period he was in a very disturbed state of mind concerning Mormonism, for the mission which the Apostles brought from America seemed so much like a surprise-fulfillment to him of the glowing sermons of his own ministry. Probably Mormonism troubled Robert Aitken more than it did any other man in England, and it is not a little singular that soon afterwards he returned to the Orthodox Established Church from which he had dissented, and became again one of its ministers.

On the evening of the day they visited the Rev. Mr. Aitken the Elders opened their course of sermons in Temperance Hall, St. George's Road, but they had no audience worthy the occasion. About thirty only were said to be present; but Apostle Woodruff preached to them for over an hour, and then Heber followed. At the close

they paid "seven and sixpence" for the hall for the evening—a large sum from the pockets of these Evangelists at that time, yet they trusted in the Lord for future results.

Thus having made an opening in London, Wilford Woodruff returned a while to superintend his former field of labor; but Heber C. Kimball and George A. Smith remained to hold the situation.

On the 19th of September Heber was stricken down with cholera. The attack was so severe that it seemed as if he could not live till morning. He rallied, however, and by the blessing of God was raised up to continue his labors. The next morning, being the Sabbath, he went into the water and baptized four persons.

Meanwhile the work in other parts had been making rapid headway. After much labor it had at length been firmly established in Scotland, under the presidency of Orson Pratt; and had been carried into Ireland and the Isle of Man by Apostle John Taylor. Several of the native Elders had also penetrated Wales. President Brigham Young, in the absence of Parley P. Pratt, who had gone to America to bring his family to England, had been busy publishing the *Millennial Star*, the hymn book and Book of Mormon, in which labors he was assisted by Willard Richards. The emigration of the Saints to America had also commenced. Thus was the good work rolling on.

On the 6th of October, 1840, was held the second general conference at Manchester. There were present of the Twelve, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, Orson Pratt, George A. Smith, and Wilford Woodruff. Orson Pratt presided.

It was found that twenty-seven conferences had been

organized at this period, besides many branches not then incorporated. The representation showed an increase since the last general conference of one thousand one hundred and thirteen members; twenty-five Elders; ninety-six Priests; fifteen Teachers, and thirteen Deacons. Several places of special interest may be noted as represented: London, by Heber C. Kimball; members, eleven, Priests, two; Birmingham, four members; Glasgow, by Elder Mulliner, one hundred and ninety-three members, eight Elders, seven Priests, five teachers and three Deacons; Edinburgh, by Orson Pratt, forty-three members and two Priests; Manchester, by Brigham Young, members, three hundred and sixty-four; Elders, four; Priests, twenty-seven; Teachers, six; and one Deacon; Wilford Woodruff's Conferences, members, one thousand and seven; Elders, nineteen; Priests, seventy-eight; Teachers, fifteen, and one Deacon. Altogether three thousand, six hundred and twenty-six members of the Church were represented, more than double the number reported at the Conference six months before.

After this Conference Elders Woodruff and Smith returned to London, while Heber remained for a time with President Young in Manchester, waiting to accompany him to the metropolis; the latter having resolved to visit London and assist his co-laborers in the arduous work of building up that important conference.

The two Apostles set out upon their journey on the 25th of November, 1840. On their way they stopped at the Potteries in Staffordshire, where they met Elder George A. Smith, who was paying a visit to his former field of labor, having left Brother Woodruff in London. They also went to Birmingham, where Elder Lorenzo Snow was then laboring. On the 30th they took train for London, and arrived there the same evening.

They found Brother Woodruff "well and in good spirits," but with a tale to tell of his experience since he saw them last, "whose lightest word" was well calculated to "harrow up the soul."

It will be remembered that Heber C. Kimball and his confreres, who opened the British Mission in 1837, had a terrible encounter with evil spirits on the day of the first baptisms in Preston. A similar ordeal had been experienced by Apostle Woodruff on the night of the first Sabbath after his return from Manchester.

Himself and Elder Smith had held a sacrament meeting that day at Father Corner's, with a few Saints who had gathered there, during which "the Spirit bore testimony that there would be a great work done in London."

Satan, it seems, was also aware of this fact, and it displeased him mightily.

That night, while lying in his bed, meditating upon the mission in that city and determining to warn its inhabitants, and "overcome the powers of darkness," a personage appeared to the Apostle Wilford whom he took to be the "Prince of darkness." "He made war with me," says the Apostle, "and attempted to take my life. As he was about to overcome me I prayed to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ for help. I then had power over him, and he left me, though much wounded. Afterwards three persons, dressed in white, came to me and administered to me, when I was immediately healed and delivered of all my troubles."

Such, in brief, was the thrilling tale told by Apostle Woodruff to his fellow servants in Christ, on their arrival in the British capital.

The next evening, December 1st, President Young preached his first sermon in London at Barnett's Acad-

emy, 57 King's Square, Goswell Road. Heber C. Kimball followed him. The President remained about ten days in London, and then returned to Manchester.

In a letter to his wife, written about this time, Heber gives somewhat of a detailed account of the President's visit to the metropolis, and other events that were happening in different parts of the mission:

LONDON, December 3rd, 1840.

MY DEAR VILATE:—

"I feel to rejoice to hear from you once more. Elders Young and Woodruff and myself have been traveling all day to see some of the sights of this great city. We visited the Tower of London. We entered into one room 150 feet by 33; there, arranged in regular and chronological order, were no less in number than twenty-two equestrian figures, representing many of the most celebrated kings of England, accompanied by their favorite lords and men of rank, all of them, together with their horses, in the armor of the respective periods when they flourished,—many, indeed, in the identical suits in which they appeared while living. There were 500,000 stands of arms, and cannon, taken from all parts of the world, in their conflicts with other nations; and all the jewelry and crowns of the kings and queens. I wish you could see them, for we can see better than we can write about them. We went to see the Thames tunnel; from thence returned home to our lodgings. Mrs. Morgan presented me with a letter from you, dated Oct. the 11th. * * * I felt to rejoice at hearing from you, that you are still alive and in good spirits, and to hear of the good times that you have in Nauvoo, and the good tidings that President Smith is laying before the Saints; I should like to be there if it was right in the sight of God. But I feel no liberty as yet to come home, but I think I shall soon. I want to see you and my little children, and I want to see Brother Joseph, Brother Rigdon and Brother Hyrum, and all of my old friends

that have gained my affections, that have stood through thick and thin, through evil reports as well as good; they are the ones that I wish to live with on earth, and I believe I shall; for I have no desire for anything else but to press forward for the celestial world. I don't expect to find much rest this side of that, but I feel to prepare for the worst and hope for the better. I have strong sensations of what is coming on the earth. I shall not be disappointed if I get home about the time to have a little sport with my brethren. As you say, a hint to the wise is sufficient. I am sorry to hear that some of our brethren have denied the faith, that is, some of them that went from this country, but it is just what I expected, and told them so; they thought they were going to be fostered by the Church in that place; they might have known better, for they knew the Saints had been driven, and robbed of all their goods, and they could not expect help from them, but rather the reverse. I don't know but they think it will hinder the work of the Lord if they turn away; they are mistaken there, for it will advance the work just as much for them to turn away as it will for them to remain; so it is all the same with the Lord. The Savior says we cannot do anything against the truth, but for it. I have got so I feel perfectly easy about these things, for they are the work of God and not the work of man. I know no other way than to be subject to the powers that be. I pray my Father will give me this disposition, for I wish to be in the hand of God as the clay in the hands of the potter. The Lord has His own way of doing His own work, and we have got to submit to Him instead of His submitting to us. I feel well in mind—never felt better in my day—but I am afflicted in body with bad colds. The weather is cold and wet, and the smoke is so bad some of the time that they have to light up their lamps in the middle of the day, it is so dark. It is very unhealthy for me, and it is so for my brethren. Times grow worse and worse in this country; the people are driven almost to desperation; the times appear sad and gloomy. I had some conversation with a Frenchman the other evening; he says it is hard times in France; all

lands seem to share in the same fate; distress on all sides.

"I will begin where I left off at Liverpool on the 31st. I stated to you that Elder Young and myself were going to Wales. This was on Saturday,—the distance of twenty miles, seven miles by steamboat, and the rest by coach. Got there in the evening—at the town of Harder. On the Sabbath we preached twice; had as many as could hear us; it appeared that everyone believed our testimony. We were called to pray for the sick. One young man lay sick with the fever, and a Methodist preacher received a blessing, and one woman. They were healed, and began to proclaim it aloud to be the power of God. Sunday was the 1st day of November; on the 2nd we started back to Manchester by the way of Lynn; there were some baptized the day we left. I heard there were about thirty others ready to go forward the first opportunity. The six Methodist preachers that sent for us are going to be baptized if they have not been already. There has another work broke out in Wales, fourteen miles from the place where we went. The last news we had from them, there were fifty-two baptized. We received a line from Elder Pratt yesterday, stating that there were about ninety baptized in those two places. After we got to Manchester on the 5th, I took coach for Clithero in Yorkshire, thirty miles distant. I preached four times in Clithero, once in Waddington, once in Chatburn, once in Downham. I remained with them six days, and baptized several while there. In a few weeks' time there have been about forty baptized; these are some of them from the old churches; the excitement seems to be as great as it was when I first went into that place. There were scores that believed my testimony that had formerly been much opposed to this work. The opposition is great in that part. They collected in mobs to break up my meetings, but did not carry their designs into execution. The devil is mad, and the work spreads in all parts. They are publishing pamphlets in all directions, and the papers are full of all kinds of lies. If things continue as they

have for a short time past, we shall be driven from this country. In the places that I have mentioned the spirit has been poured out upon them; they speak in tongues, interpret, prophesy, dream dreams, see visions, and there seems to be great humility. There seems to be a revival through this land. * * * * *

“On the 25th of November Elder Young and myself started for London. I felt quite feeble when we started. I will continue my epistle from the 5th of December. The day we started we went twenty miles to Macklesfield, and stayed all night. There is a church of nearly one hundred members there. It is a silk manufacturing town of about 60,000 inhabitants. The next morning we went to the potteries; stayed two nights; preached to the Saints; the world’s people came in throngs; they acted more like devils than like men. There are many coming into the Church in this place. The gifts are among the Saints; this makes the devil mad. Many are turned out of their work because of their religion. Many go hungry and look pale for the want of a little food to eat. When I have a penny in my pocket it goes freely. I have taken pains to ask them; some tell me they have not half enough to eat—and have a little child to the breast at the same time. These things are hard. I will stop, for I cannot paint the scenes that are before me daily; these things grow worse and worse. From there we went to Birmingham; found Elder Snow; on Sunday evening heard him preach for the first time. After he got through Elder Young and myself bore testimony. The Saints felt to rejoice, and some believed. There are 300,000 inhabitants in that city and only eighteen Saints.

* * * * *

“Sunday, the 6th. I have been to St. Paul’s Church this forenoon with the brethren. It was so dark they had to light up the church with gas. A considerable part of this letter I have written in the day time, and have had to write by a candle. It is very disagreeable to me, and makes me feel bad and sick. Not one of us feels well. Brother Smith’s lungs are very bad; he will not be able

to stay in this country. He is at the potteries, where he will remain until he goes home. * * *

“December 12th. You will think I have been lazy since I commenced this. Elder Young left here yesterday for Herefordshire; it was thought best for me to remain here for a short time with Elder Woodruff. The prospect seems to be better than it has been. There was one man baptized this week, and several more are believing. I shall stay here about three weeks if all things go well. Now, my dear Vilate, be of good cheer, for all things will go well; and pray much, and hearken to counsel from those that are over you. * * * My love to all of the Saints in Christ. Remember me to my little children, and kiss them for me. Oh, how I want to see you all!

I am your husband forever,

H. C. KIMBALL.

About this time the Reverend James Albion, an independent minister, with his wife and daughter became favorably impressed with Mormonism. He offered his chapel to Elders Kimball and Woodruff for them to preach in, and told his congregation that he was a Latter-day Saint, and should be baptized, and that they were no longer to consider him their minister unless they followed his example and joined the Saints. This made a great stir among his committee and congregation.

On the evening of the closing Sunday of the year, the Elders preached by appointment of Mr. Albion in his chapel, to the largest congregation they had addressed in London. There were present priests and people of many denominations. While Elder Woodruff was speaking a Wesleyan minister arose and opposed him, “which had a good effect, for the congregation seeing the Spirit he was of, turned against him, and the committee refused him permission to speak there any more.” Thus ended the Apostolic labors of the year.