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Chapter XLIII

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Abstract: Opening Of The Year 1841 In London—Encouraging Success Of The Elders—Heber C. Kimball Blesses The Queen Of England—The Woolwich Branch Organized—Organization Of The London Conference—The Prospect Of War Between Great Britain And The United States Hastens The Return Of The Apostles To America.

CHAPTER XLIII.

OPENING OF THE YEAR 1841 IN LONDON—ENCOURAGING SUCCESS OF THE ELDERS—HEBER C. KIMBALL BLESSES THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND—THE WOOLWICH BRANCH ORGANIZED—ORGANIZATION OF THE LONDON CONFERENCE—THE PROSPECT OF WAR BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES HASTENS THE RETURN OF THE APOSTLES TO AMERICA.

THE new year opened auspiciously for the work of God in the great city of London. On the first of January, the Church there numbered twenty-one souls, and ere another day had dawned two more were added unto the fold of Christ.

As usual the converts were mostly of the poor and lowly classes, willing indeed to share their last crust with the Lord's servants, who had sacrificed so much to bring the Gospel to their doors, but unable, in their extreme poverty, to render much assistance in a pecuniary way. Everything was dear in London. While exercising the most rigid economy the Elders found it impossible to subsist upon much less than a pound per week, individually. They had hired lodgings at No 40, Ironmonger Row, near Father Corner's, and were keeping up a regular meeting house,—the Academy in Goswell Road. Never before were they so straitened financially.

But conversions and baptisms were becoming more frequent, and the clouds of discouragement which had so long hung over them, were beginning to clear away.

Apostle Woodruff baptized the daughter of the Reverend James Albion, who had been so friendly to

the Elders, and soon afterwards Heber C. Kimball baptized the minister himself.

Heber visited Woolwich, where he preached once and converted four persons, who immediately offered themselves for baptism. They wandered up and down the Thames until 9 o'clock at night, seeking for a suitable place to administer the ordinance, but were unsuccessful owing to the mud and ice on the banks of the river. Next day Heber brought his converts to London and baptized them at the public baths in Tabernacle Square. Dr. William Copeland was also baptized that day.

Concerning this time, Heber writes :

“The waters have begun to be troubled, and I pray that they may continue until the Lord gathers out His people from this city. I can say I never felt a greater desire for a place than I have for London ; it is the metropolis of the world and the depot of wickedness. All manner of debauchery that can be thought of is practiced here.

“But the ice is broken in London, and the Gospel has got such a hold that the devil can not root it out.”

Satan, however, continued to do all that he could in opposition to the Elders, by stirring up the wrath of sectarian priests and bigoted people against them.

It seems that prior to starting on this mission, Heber had been promised by the Prophet that he should see the Queen of England. The fulfillment occurred as follows: On the 26th of January Victoria opened the British Parliament. Apostles Kimball and Woodruff, with Dr. Copeland and several other friends, started out for the purpose of witnessing the royal pageant. Arriving at St. James' Park at 10 a. m., they beheld an immense concourse of people, extending in two

unbroken lines from Buckingham Palace to the House of Lords. It was estimated that from three to four hundred thousand people were assembled. Through the courtesy of one of the Queen's life-guards—and no small favor was it on that day—Heber and his party succeeded in getting a place in the front line, past which the grand procession was to move. The royal cortege passed within ten feet of where they stood, so that they obtained a fair view of Her Majesty, both going to and returning from the Houses of Parliament. The Queen sat in a gorgeous state carriage, drawn by eight cream colored horses, richly caparisoned. At her left hand sat Albert, the Prince Consort. Following were six carriages, each drawn by six horses, containing members of the royal family, lords and nobles.

Says Heber: "We saw her, as the Prophet Joseph had told us. She made a low bow to us, and we returned the compliment. She looked pleasant; small of stature; with blue eyes; an innocent looking woman. Prince Albert is a fine looking man. All things went on pleasantly. No accidents."

It was on this occasion that Heber C. Kimball blessed Queen Victoria, with the tradition of which so many of the Saints are familiar. Passing so close to them, and seemingly bowing directly and personally to the Apostles, Heber returned the royal salute with a hearty "God bless you," addressed to the Queen as she passed. Her Majesty of course is not aware of the fact that on that day she received an Apostle's benediction, but no one who has noted in faith the prophetic potency of Heber C. Kimball's words uttered on less occasions, will doubt the efficacy of such a blessing, even on the head of a queen of England.

Baptisms continued in London, and the Elders now

had good congregations. Heber organized a branch in Woolwich of those whom he had baptized there.

On the 8th of February a package of the Book of Mormon was received, when Elders Kimball and Woodruff went to Stationers' Hall and secured the copyright of the book in the name of Joseph Smith, Jun.

At this time there was a strong probability of war between Great Britain and the United States, and the Elders began to think of returning to their native land. President Young wrote to Heber and Wilford to prepare for an early departure.

The cause of the threatened war was the imprisonment of Mr. McLeod, a British officer, in Lockport jail, New York, which state was trying him for arson; and the Americans seemed resolved on executing him. The case at issue was the burning of the *Caroline* on Lake Erie, in 1837, during the troubles in Canada. Great Britain maintained that he was acting under British orders and demanded his release.

On the 11th of February, Elder Lorenzo Snow arrived in London to take charge of the Church there after the departure of Elders Kimball and Woodruff. Heber and Lorenzo together visited Woolwich, which was fast developing into an important branch, and on their return the first London conference was held in Barnett's Academy.

It was Sunday, February 14th, 1841. On this day the London Conference was organized. There were present at the organization Elders Heber C. Kimball, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, William Pitt and four Priests. The meeting was called to order by Elder Kimball, and after singing and prayer the President called upon the official members to represent their respective branches. They were as follows:

The Church at Ipswich, represented by Elder Pitt, consisting of twelve members, one Elder, one Priest and one Teacher.

The Church at Bedford, represented by Robert Williams, Priest, consisting of forty-two members and one Priest; seven had moved and two died.

The Church at Woolwich, represented by John Griffith, Priest, consisting of six members, one Priest.

The Church in London, represented by Elder Kimball, consisting of forty-six members, one Elder, two Priests; generally in good standing; excellent prospect of a continued increase.

James Albion was ordained an Elder; Thomas Barnes a Teacher; R. Williams an Elder to oversee the Church at Bedford; Richard Bates a Priest in the Church at Woolwich; John Sheffield a Teacher in the branch at Bedford and A. Painter a Teacher at Woolwich.

The above named persons were ordained under the hands of Elders Kimball, Woodruff and Snow.

It was then moved by Elder Kimball and seconded by Elder Woodruff, that Elder Lorenzo Snow be appointed President of the London Conference, and also to take the superintendency of the Church in London.

Much valuable instruction was given by Apostles Kimball and Woodruff in relation to the duties of the official members, and the conference then adjourned to Sunday, the 16th of May.

Immediately after the conference Heber started for Manchester to join President Young. He had just received a letter from his wife, Vilate, saying that the Prophet Joseph was very anxious for the return of the Twelve, as both countries were then in the greatest excitement over the prospect of war. As for the Apostles themselves, they could not but realize that their situation

as American missionaries was very precarious, and that their immigration of that year was in imminent danger of being interrupted by the British government.

CHAPTER XLIV.

HEBER ORGANIZES THE BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE—MEETING OF THE APOSTLES IN MANCHESTER PRIOR TO RETURNING TO AMERICA—ORSON HYDE PRESENT ON HIS WAY TO PALESTINE—THE EXTENSIVE WORK OF ONE YEAR.

ON his way to Manchester Heber tarried a few days at Bedford, strengthening the Saints in that place, and adding new members to the Church. He also visited Birmingham and there organized a conference. One hundred and seven members were represented, and nine persons ordained to the ministry. Elder Alfred Cordon was appointed president. The Birmingham Conference became one of the largest and most important conferences in the mission.

On the 6th day of April, 1841, the Apostles met as a quorum in Manchester, for the transaction of business prior to their departure for America. The meetings, which were open to the Saints, were held in Carpenter's Hall. The members of the quorum present were Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor, Willard Richards and George A. Smith. Orson Hyde had lately arrived from America on his way to Jerusalem,