
Gospel Preached in England

D&C 112: Introduction

In 1837 the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote, “It seemed as though all the powers of earth and hell were combining their influence in an especial manner to overthrow the Church at once, and make a final end.” He lamented, “No quorum in the Church was entirely exempt from the influence of those false spirits who are striving against me for the mastery; even some of the Twelve were so far lost to their high and responsible calling, as to begin to take sides.”¹

In what was truly a time of great hardship for the Prophet Joseph, the Lord revealed that something must be done for the salvation of the Church. It was then the prophet approached Heber C. Kimball in the Kirtland Temple, whispering to him, “Brother Heber, the Spirit of the Lord has whispered to me: ‘Let my servant Heber go to England and proclaim my Gospel, and open the door of salvation to that nation.’”² Heber later wrote, “The idea of such a mission was almost more than I could bear up under. I was almost ready to sink under the burden which was placed upon me.”³ Nevertheless, he was determined to go to England. He penned, “The moment I understood the will of my Heavenly Father, I felt a determination to go at all hazards.”⁴

When word spread that Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, and others were leaving Kirtland for England, Lyman Johnson chided Heber for being such a fool as to listen to “Joseph Smith, the fallen Prophet.” Yet he gave him a cloak for the journey. On or about the first

¹ Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:487–89.

² Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1967), 104.

³ Heber C. Kimball Diary, June 1837, Heber C. Kimball Papers. Church History Library.

⁴ Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 116.

of June 1837 Heber C. Kimball was “set apart by the spirit of prophecy and revelation, prayer and laying on of hands, of the First Presidency, to preside over a mission to England, to be the first foreign mission of the Church of Christ in the last days.”⁵

On June 13, 1837, Heber and six others left Kirtland to share the message of the Restoration in the British Isles. On July 19, 1837, the seafaring vessel arrived in the harbor at Liverpool, England. As a small boat carried the missionaries toward the dock, Elder Kimball leaped out of the boat before it reached shore. In that leap, he became the first Latter-day Saint missionary to arrive in Great Britain.

Shortly after arriving in Liverpool, the missionaries travelled north to Preston, where they saw the unfurling of a large election banner that read—“TRUTH WILL PREVAIL.” Elder Kimball recorded, “It being so seasonable and the sentiment being so appropriate to us in our situation, we were involuntarily led to exclaim, ‘Amen! So let it be.’”⁶ The missionaries shared the message of the Restoration with all who would listen. For almost nine months, they were thronged night and day with questions about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When Heber C. Kimball and his companions departed from Liverpool in April 1838, they left behind over fifteen hundred converts who had accepted the message of the Restoration and entered baptismal waters. Most of the converts attended branch meetings in the greater Preston area presided over by Joseph Fielding, Willard Richards, and William Clayton.

⁵ Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:489.

⁶ “President Heber C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Millennial Star* 44, no. 49 (December 4, 1882), 770.