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Letter VI

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Abstract: Further discussion on the gathering of Israel; biblical prophecies on the restoration of Israel; “rehearsal of what was communicated” to Joseph Smith by Moroni; summary of Book of Mormon teachings concerning the redemption of Israel in the latter days.

pend, in a measure, upon the liberality of the saints.

Where these elders are known, a recommend would be superfluous, but as they will probably visit many churches where they are unknown by face, it is proper to say that they are men of unblemished characters, and are duly authorized to make collections, as above, known to be strictly honest and responsible.

We drop these few remarks lest our worthy brethren might labor under embarrassments, where they are not known, and we cheerfully recommend them as men capable of giving every necessary information concerning their mission.

As it is expected that elder Smith and Carter will leave for the east the first of May, they will be able to visit many churches, but should they be unable to visit them all, we hope that we may not come under censure.

The churches will also receive much benefit from the instruction which they will receive in the gospel, from these brethren and withall we wish *them* success, and much grace upon the saints.

The last Conference at Freedom, we are informed, was an interesting one. There were 18 elders present, who gave cheering accounts of the prospects of the work in the different parts of the country where they reside, and where they have been laboring.—It was but a short time since the elders held a conference in that place, and we may conclude from the minutes of the last, that the work has taken effect since the former, to a considerable extent, when we see six branches represented which have never been represented in a conference before.

From all we can learn, we come to the conclusion, that there is a vast region anxious to receive instruction concerning the faith and belief of this church, being excited to enquiry by the few elders who have providentially preached in that country. We look with anxiety and delight to the time of the next conference to be held in that place (Freedom) when we hope the people may generally hear.

When we bring our mind to reflect how many there are kept back from hearing this gospel, because some unprincipled person has ran forward of

the elders with a foolish false report, and that those whose profession says to the world, that they are the friends and advocates of truth, not unfrequently bringing forward these reports as arguments against the gospel, we are filled with a deep feeling of sympathy for those who are under their influence.

If a former opinion of ours is incorrect, if we have, through the influence of those whom we thought possessed understanding, embraced a system which we afterward fear is incorrect, what do we lose, if, after investigation, it proves to be so? The answer is at hand—we lose a bad principle, are convinced of a false system, and are thus prepared to embrace the truth whenever it shall be presented: and to be able to make this exchange will rejoice the heart of every individual who rightly considers the value of eternal life. We often reflect upon this, most of all points important, and are not unfrequently left to wonder why men are unwilling to attend to it. If our future state were to be like the present, if a few days, measured by this present sun, were to terminate that existence, then perhaps an excuse might be urged for neglecting to inform ourselves concerning its consequences and ends; but as it is, beyond this vale of sorrow lies, to us, an unbounded ETERNITY, where, when we inherit it, we must remain, how important above all things, that we be prepared for its consequences! And that men may receive an assurance in this life, of a crown of glory, we humbly ask our God, the great Head of the church, to give his feeble instruments sufficient grace to present the beauties of the gospel to mankind, that they may be persuaded to embrace it.

LETTER VI.

TO W. W. PHELPS, ESQ.

Dear Sir:—

Yours of the 24th February is received and inserted in this No. of the Advocate. When reviewing my letter No. 3, I am lead to conclude, that some expressions contained in it are calculated to call up past scenes, and perhaps, paint them to the mind, in a manner differently than otherwise were it not that you can speak from experience of their correctness.

I have not space you know, to go into every particular item noticed in

yours, as that would call my attention too far, or too much, from the great object lying before me,—the history of this church;—but one expression, or quotation contained in your last strikes the mind, (and I may add—the *heart*,) with so much force, that I cannot pass without noticing it: It is a line or two from that little book contained in the Old Testament, called “RUTH.” It says: “Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”

There is a something breathed in this, not known to the world. The great, as many are called, may profess friendship, and covenant to share in each other's toils, for the honors and riches of this life, but it is not like the sacrifice offered by Ruth. She forsook her friends, she left her nation, she longed not for the altars of her former gods, and why? because Israel's God was God indeed? and by joining herself to HIM a reward was offered, and an inheritance promised with him when the earth was sanctified, and peoples, nations and tongues serve him acceptably? And the same covenant of Ruth's, whispers the same assurance in the same promises, and the same knowledge of the same God.

I gave, in my last, a few words, on the subject of a few items, as spoken by the angel at the time the knowledge of the record of the Nephites was communicated to our brother, and in consequence of the subject of the gospel and that of the gathering of Israel's being so connected, I found it difficult to speak of the one without mentioning the other; and this may not be improper, as it is evident, that the Lord has decreed to bring forth the fulness of the gospel in the last days, previous to gathering Jacob, but a preparatory work, and the other is to follow in quick succession.

This being of so much importance, and of so deep interest to the saints, I have thought best to give a farther detail of the heavenly message, and if I do not give it in the precise words, shall strictly confine myself to the facts in substance.

David said, (Ps. C.) make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands; that is, all the earth. Serve the Lord with

gladness: Come before his presence with singing. This he said in view of the glorious period for which he often prayed, and was anxious to behold, which he knew could not take place until the knowledge of the glory of God covered all lands, or all the earth. Again he says, [Ps. 107] O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: For his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered out of the lands from the east; and from the west; from the north and from the south.—They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out their distresses; and led them in the right way that they might go to the city of habitation.

Most clearly was it shown to the prophet, that the righteous should be gathered from all the earth: He knew that the children of Israel were led from Egypt, by the right hand of the Lord, and permitted to possess the land of Canaan, though they were rebellious in the desert, but he farther knew, that they were not gathered from the east, the west, the north and the south, at that time; for it was clearly manifested that the Lord himself would prepare a habitation, even as he said, when he would lead them to a city of refuge. In that, David saw a promise for the righteous, [see 144 Ps] when they should be delivered from those who oppressed them, and from the hand of strange children, or the enemies of the Lord; that their sons should be like plants grown up in their youth, and their daughters like corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a beautiful palace. It is then that the sons and daughters shall prophesy, old men dream dreams, and young men see visions. At that time the garners of the righteous will be full, affording all manner of store. It was while contemplating this time, and viewing this happy state of the righteous, that he further says: The Lord shall reign forever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations—Praise ye the Lord!

Isaiah who was on the earth at the time the ten tribes of Israel were led away captive from the land of Canaan, was shown, not only their calamity and

affliction, but the time when they were to be delivered. After reproving them for their corruption and blindness, he prophesies of their dispersion. He says, Your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire: Your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is thus made desolate, being overthrown by strangers. He further says, while speaking of the iniquity of that people. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loves gifts, and follows after rewards: They judge not the fatherless, neither does the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore, says the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries, and avenge me of my enemies. But after this calamity has befallen Israel, and the Lord has poured upon them his afflicting judgments, as he said by the mouth of Moses—I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend my arrows upon them.—They shall be afflicted with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the earth—he will also fulfill this further prediction uttered by the mouth of Isaiah. I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward you shall be called, the *city of righteousness, the faithful city*. Then will be fulfilled, also, the saying of David: And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

Isaiah continues his prophecy concerning Israel, and tells them what would be done for them in the last days; for thus it is written: The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills;—and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.—And he shall judge among the nations,

and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nations shall not lift up the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of his people in Zion, and upon their assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence, or above, shall be a covering and a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain. And his people shall dwell safely, they shall possess the land forever, even the land which was promised to their fathers for an everlasting inheritance: for behold, says the Lord by the mouth of the prophet: The day will come that I will sow the house of Israel with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build and to plant, says the Lord.

For this happy situation and blessed state of Israel, did the prophets look; and obtained a promise, that, though the house of Israel and Judah, should violate the covenant, the Lord, in the last days would make with them a new one: not according to the one which he made with their fathers in the day that he took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; which, said the Lord, my covenant they broke, although I was a husband and a father unto them: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, says the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

For thus says the Lord, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry:—and I will multiply them and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them and they shall not be small. Their

children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. Their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them.

At the same time, says the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people; I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth; I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, keep not back:—bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth. And in those days, and at that time, says the Lord, though Israel and Judah have been driven and scattered, they shall come together, they shall even come weeping: for with supplications will I lead them: they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, and say, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten; and watchmen upon Mount Ephraim shall say, Arise, and let us go up to Zion, unto the holy Mount of the Lord our God; for he will teach us of his ways, and instruct us to walk in his paths. That the way for this to be fully accomplished, may be prepared, the Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea, and with his mighty wind shake his hand over the river and smite it in its seven streams, and make men go over dry-shod. And there shall be a high way for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel when they came up out of the land of Egypt.

And thus shall Israel come: not a dark corner of the earth shall remain unexplored, nor an island of the seas be left without being visited; for as the Lord has removed them into all corners of the earth, he will cause his mercy to be as abundantly manifested in their gathering as his wrath in their dispersion, until they are gathered according to the covenant. He will, as he said by the prophet, send for many fishers and they shall fish them; and after send for many hunters, who shall hunt them; not as their enemies have to afflict, but with glad tidings of great joy, with a message of peace, and a call for their return.

And it will come to pass, that though

the house of Israel has forsaken the Lord, and bowed down and worshipping other gods, which were no gods, and been cast out before the face of the world, they will know the voice of the Shepherd when he calls upon them this time; for soon his day of power comes, and in it his people will be willing to harken to his counsel; and even now are they already beginning to be stirred up in their hearts to search for these things, and are daily reading the ancient prophets, and are marking the times, and seasons of their fulfilment, Thus God is preparing the way for their return.

But it is necessary that you should understand, that what is to be fulfilled in the last days, is not only for the benefit of Israel, but the Gentiles, if they will repent and embrace the gospel, for they are to be remembered also in the same covenant, and are to be fellow heirs with the seed of Abraham, inasmuch as they are so by faith—for God is no respecter of persons. This was shown to Moses, when he wrote—Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people!

In consequence of the transgression of the Jews at the coming of the Lord, the Gentiles were called into the kingdom, and for this obedience, are to be favored with the gospel in its fulness first, in the last days; for it is written. The first shall be last, and the last first. Therefore, when the fulness of the gospel, as was preached by the righteous, upon this land, shall come forth, it shall be declared to the Gentiles first, and whoso will repent shall be delivered, for they shall understand the plan of salvation and restoration for Israel, as the Lord manifested to the ancients.—They shall be baptized with water and with the Spirit—they shall lift up their hearts with joy and gladness, for the time of their redemption shall also roll on, and for their obedience to the faith they shall see the house of Jacob come with great glory, even with songs of everlasting joy, and with him partake of salvation.

Therefore, as the time draws near when the sun is to be darkened, the moon turn to blood, and the stars fall from heaven, the Lord will bring to the knowledge of his people his commandments and statutes, that they may be prepared to stand when the earth shall reel to and fro as a drunken man, earth-

quakes cause the nations to tremble, and the destroying angel goes forth to waste the inhabitants at noon-day: for so great are to be the calamities which are to come upon the inhabitants of the earth, before the coming of the Son of Man the second time, that whoso is not prepared cannot abide; but such as are found faithful, and remain, shall be gathered with his people and caught up to meet the Lord in the cloud, and so shall they inherit eternal life.

I have now given you a rehearsal of what was communicated to our brother, when he was directed to go and obtain the record of the Nephites. I may have missed in arrangement in some instances, but the principle is preserved, and you will be able to bring forward abundance of corroborating scripture upon the subject of the gospel and of the gathering. You are aware of the fact, that to give a minute rehearsal of a lengthy interview with a heavenly messenger, is very difficult, unless one is assisted immediately with the gift of inspiration. There is another item I wish to notice on the subject of visions. The Spirit you know, searches all things, even the deep things of God. When God manifests to his servants those things that are to come, or those which have been, he does it by unfolding them by the power of that Spirit which comprehends all things, always; and so much may be shown and made perfectly plain to the understanding in a short time, that to the world, who are occupied all their life to learn a little, look at the relation of it, and are disposed to call it false. You will understand then, by this, that while those glorious things were being rehearsed, the vision was also opened, so that our brother was permitted to see and understand much more full and perfect than I am able to communicate in writing. I know much may be conveyed to the understanding in writing, and many marvellous truths set forth with the pen, but after all it is but a shadow, compared to an open vision of seeing, hearing and realizing eternal things. And if the fact was known, it would be found, that of all the heavenly communications to the ancients, we have no more in comparison than the alphabet to a quarto vocabulary. It is said, and I believe the account, that the Lord showed the brother of Jared [Moriancumer] all things which were to

transpire from that day to the end of the earth, as well as those which had taken place. I believe that Moses was permitted to see the same, as the Lord caused them to pass, in vision before him as he stood upon the mount; I believe that the Lord Jesus told many things to his apostles which are now written, and after his ascension unfolded all things unto them; I believe that Nephi, the son of Lehi, whom the Lord brought out of Jerusalem, saw the same; I believe that the twelve upon this continent, whom the Lord chose to preach his gospel, when he came down to manifest to this branch of the house of Israel, that he had other sheep who should hear his voice, were also permitted to behold the same mighty things transpire in vision before their eyes; and I believe that the angel Moroni, whose words I have been rehearsing, who communicated the knowledge of the record of the Nephites, in this age, saw also, before he hid up the same unto the Lord, great and marvellous things, which were to transpire when the same should come forth; and I also believe, that God will give line upon line, precept upon precept, to his saints, until all these things will be unfolded to them, and they finally sanctified and brought into the Celestial glory, where tears will be wiped from all faces, and sighing and sorrowing flee away!

May the Lord preserve you from evil and reward you richly for all your afflictions, and crown you in his kingdom. Amen.

Accept, as ever, assurances of the fellowship and esteem of your unworthy brother in the gospel.

In consequence of the notices of the several Conferences to be holden in the east, this season, some may think that the one at New Portage, Ohio, is withdrawn—which is not the case. There are many elders and brethren in the south and west, who would not receive the benefits of a Conference were this to be discontinued: we hope, therefore, that they will attend.

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