

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BY

ELDER ORSON PRATT,

At the 18th Ward Meeting House,
on Sunday Afternoon, Feb. 25,
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REPORTED BY G. F. GIBBS.

I will read a few passages from the book of the prophet Daniel which he received from the Lord through vision, and which relate to the latter days—a prophecy which has not yet been fulfilled. It will be found in the 7th chapter commencing with the 9th verse—

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

"A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

"I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake, I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

"As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

"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."

This prophecy relates to a period of time in the history of our race, when thrones are to be cast down, when kingdoms and the various governments which exist upon the face of the earth are to be overthrown; to a period when only one kingdom or one government shall have dominion, and its dominion will extend to the ends of the earth; a kingdom too which we are told, in the 2nd chapter of Daniel's prophecy, is to be everlasting in its nature, and not like those other kingdoms which Daniel says are to be overthrown. This divine kingdom is to have a universal dominion, so far as this world is concerned. It is represented, in its beginning, as being very small, compared to a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, but which should roll forth gathering strength as it rolled, until all other kingdoms, of human invention and human authority, should cease to exist, should be broken to pieces and become, as is plainly declared, like the chaff of a summer's threshing floor, which the wind carried away and no place was found for it.

I presume there is no person in this congregation, but what will, with me, admit, that no such period has ever arrived, since that prophecy was uttered. But such a period will arrive in the history of our earth. The prophet Daniel clearly saw that the stone, which was to be cut out of the mountain without hands, which should smite upon the toes of the image—the great image which represented the kingdoms of this world—should be a divine work, a work that the Lord himself would accomplish among men. In other words, the Lord condescended to give to one of the most powerful kings who has ever dwelt upon the earth, so far as human power is concerned, a dream which represented to him all the kingdoms of this world; but when he awoke he could not even remember the dream. It however made a deep impression on his mind, and he knew there was something very important attached to the dream. So exercised was he, that he issued a proclamation to the inhabitants of the city of great Babylon, requesting all the wise men to tell him the dream, and then to give him the interpretation thereof. If they could tell him the dream, he, of course, would have confidence in the truth of the interpretation; but if he himself were to tell the dream, if it were possible to remember it, he would not know whether the interpretation would be correct or not. Being a monarch of absolute power, he threatened death to the wise men, if they failed to tell him the dream, and also to give him the interpretation. Daniel, with his three friends who were Jews, besought the Lord in the matter, and the Lord revealed

to Daniel the dream and the interpretation thereof. The dream as Daniel related it to king Nebuchadnezzar was as follows—

"Thou, O King, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

The prophet then interprets the dream, naming every particular of its meaning. "Thou art this head of gold." That is, his dominion, the Babylonish empire, and the kingdoms and nations round about, over which the Lord had made him ruler, represented this head of gold. "And after thee," continued the prophet, "shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee," represented by the breast and the arms of silver. A third kingdom was to arise after that, represented by the brass. Then a fourth kingdom was to follow, representing the iron kingdom, or a kingdom of great strength. But it divided, represented by the two legs of iron. This iron kingdom represents very closely the Roman empire, in all its strength and greatness. That empire was divided and it was known as the eastern and western empire, represented by the two legs of iron, one having its seat at Rome, the other at Constantinople. But the feet and toes were governments more modern to grow out of the iron kingdom, after it should lose its strength. These are represented by the ten toes or ten kingdoms which should be partly strong and partly broken. They should not have the strength of the legs of iron, but they should be mixed with miry clay, indicating both strength and weakness. These last kingdoms and governments (such as have existed, during the last few centuries, on the eastern and western hemispheres) complete the great image.

The head or gold kingdom, having lost its universal dominion, is still represented by its descendants, under various forms of governments in Asia.

The descendants of the silver kingdom are still existing in Persia, and in the western parts of Asia.

The brass kingdom has its present representatives in the east of Europe, extending into Asia.

The descendants of the once great iron kingdom are found mostly in Europe, extending in some measure into Asia, and in still greater measure into America.

The present existing nations represent two things—first, in a governmental capacity, they represent the feet and toes of the great image; second, in the capacity of lineal descent, they represent all the former kingdoms of this terrible image.

The image being now completed, another government of divine origin is to be set up, forming no part of this great image. Being entirely separate from and unconnected with this great image, it should not even represent a toe or finger of the image, nor any other part or portion thereof.

"Thou sawest till a stone was cut out without hands," etc. In other words, all these other governments have been formed by human wisdom and ingenuity; but, by and by, a separate and distinct government, represented by a little stone, should be cut out without hands. What I understand by this is something that man should have nothing to do with, so far as the divinity of its formation was concerned. For it is interpreted thus—"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." It is God, then, who organizes it; he confers the power and authority upon those who shall minister in its government; human wisdom does not enter as a constituent, either in the founding or government of the same.

The fifth kingdom is, therefore, to be peculiar from all the others in its organization. It is further said, that "it shall never be destroyed,

and the kingdom shall not be left to other people." The four kingdoms which preceded it were transferred, first to one nation, and then to another, until the image was complete, until human governments had nearly fulfilled their destiny; then a kingdom or government should be set up on the earth, that should never be destroyed. It should not be taken from one people and given to another, as Babylon was taken from the Babylonians and given to the Medes and Persians; and as the Medes and Persians had their kingdom transferred and given to the Greeks and Macedonians; and as the latter had their kingdom transferred from them and given to the Romans; and as the Romans, in turn, lost their universal dominion and great power, and were broken up into little petty kingdoms, such as now exist. But this latter kingdom was not to be thus transferred; it was to be permanent, it was to increase in greatness and strength, until it, or the little stone which represented it, became as a great mountain, filling the whole earth. Or, as the prophet Daniel says, that "the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and shall possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever." "And 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." This portion of the prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, only so far as the setting up of God's kingdom is concerned.

The four beasts, described in the first part of the 7th chapter, are those four kingdoms represented by the great metallic image of gold, silver, brass, etc. In this 7th chapter the Lord does not say anything about the stone to be cut out of the mountain without hands, and the rolling of that stone, and the breaking in pieces of the various kingdoms and governments; but he does represent in this chapter one great and important event that will transpire at a certain time in the history of our race, namely—"I beheld till the thrones were cast down," etc. He beheld too how this work of destruction should be done, for that is described in the 2nd chapter.

After the earthly thrones were cast down, Daniel says, "And the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before unto him."

How much is ten thousand times ten thousand? Only a hundred millions, but that would make quite a large congregation. All the inhabitants of the United States only number about forty millions, counting men, women and children. If they were assembled in one place, it would present a grand spectacle; but suppose we double that number, making it eighty millions, what a vast congregation that number of people would make, we can hardly grasp in our comprehension its extent; and still we will add to it another twenty millions so as to equal the size of the congregation which the prophet Daniel saw standing before the Ancient of Days. Such a body of people must extend over a great many miles of country, however closely they may be collected together. I doubt whether the extremities of such a congregation could be seen by the natural eyes of mortals; they would be lost in the distance.

Why will this vast assemblage of people stand there? What will be the object of the Ancient of Days, in coming with this vast multitude, and what is to be accomplished? We read that the four beasts, representing the powers of the earth, will exist at the time of the coming of the Ancient of Days. And that the fourth beast, represented by the Roman empire and the kingdoms that have grown out of it, will be "slain and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame." Here then we can read the destiny of that portion of the inhabitants of the earth constituting the fourth beast: or, in other words, the destiny of the kingdoms of Europe, who were to arise and grow out of that fourth power. We can read the final destiny of the kingdoms

of Europe, namely, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Scandinavia, and the great northern power, Russia, Austria and Prussia, and all those various nations, that more particularly pertain to this great iron power that once so cruelly oppressed the people; its "body shall be destroyed and given to the burning flame," which signifies the nature of the judgment that will befall them. According to other prophecies, contained in Daniel, a succession of judgments, great and terrible in their nature, will overtake them, before the fire spoken of comes. Nation will rise against nation in war, kingdom against kingdom: or in the language of Isaiah, "Behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many."

It seems then that the body of the fourth power is to be given to the burning flame, that signifies the utter extinction of that power from the face of the earth. The heathen nations representing the other three beasts, will not then be destroyed; but their lives are to be prolonged, and their dominion is to be taken away. Though their lives will be prolonged, yet they will not have power to rule and govern, only as they are permitted. If you will read from the beginning of the 36th to the end of the 39th chapters of Ezekiel, you find much said, in regard to the heathen nations. "And the heathen shall know that I am the Lord," etc. But the fourth power represents the nations of modern Christendom. They have not the privilege of the heathen, in having their lives prolonged. Why? Does the speaker mean to say that modern Christendom is more wicked than the heathen? Yes; the people of Christendom possess more light and knowledge than the heathen, and therefore, they are under the greater condemnation; for according to the light and knowledge they severally have, will they be judged. The more enlightened nations, so called, are rejecting the gospel message which is being sent to them by divine authority; and for that reason their utter destruction is inevitable, and, as has been decreed, they must pass away. Their lives will not be prolonged. Not only the kingdoms and governments of Europe, and the western portion of Asia are to be thus visited, but also those who have grown out of these kingdoms, that have emigrated to this western hemisphere, and elsewhere. For instance, this great republic must pass away in the manner indicated unless the people repent. There is only one condition by which they can be preserved as a nation, and the Lord himself has decreed it. We can read it in the various revelations which God has given, respecting this land. The Book of Mormon, for instance, speaks in many places, of the overthrow of the government that should exist on this land if they should reject the divine message contained therein. Inasmuch as they repent not, the Lord has said that he would visit them in his anger, and that he would throw down all their strong-holds. And he further says, that he will cut off their horses out of their midst. This will doubtless be done through some great calamity or disease. He also says that he will cut off the cities of our land, that all manner of lying, deceits, hypocrisy, murders, priestcrafts, whoredoms and secret abominations shall be done away, having reference particularly to this nation. He says, too, "I will execute vengeance and fury upon them, even as upon the heathen, such as they have not heard." We are told, too, that the nature of these judgments is to be swift and terrible, coming upon them like a fierce wind, when they expect it not; when they are crying peace and safety, behold sudden destruction is at their doors.

I might dwell still longer on the judgments to come upon this American nation, according to modern revelation. In 1832 the Lord foretold to the Prophet Joseph Smith that there should be a great war between the northern and southern states. This revelation is published in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, a standard work of the church, and also in many languages, many years before the war commenced. At that early period we were told that the southern states would rise against the northern states, and the northern against the southern states in war, terminating in the deaths and misery of many souls. We were told also that this war would begin with the rebellion of South Carolina.

When I was a boy, a little over 20 years of age, I had the privilege of taking a copy of that revelation, and I carried it around with me, oftentimes reading it to the congregations that I preached to. Its subject matter formed a text from which I many times preached, as well as a topic of conversation with strangers, whose acquaintance I would happen to make, in traveling from place to place.

How do you think such information was received by the people to whom it was imparted? They would not believe it; they had no idea of its being a revelation from God to them; they considered it one of the impositions that the "Mormons" had gotten up to delude the people. To tell them that this great government would be divided and go to war with each other, was something entirely foreign to their minds; it was something to which they paid heedless regard, oftentimes treating it with ridicule and laughter. I preached in the New England States and in various portions of the Union, and such was the way these things were received. The shedding of blood

was then one of the remotest feelings of the American people; yet it came to pass precisely as predicted, and we all know the results of that dreadful war. That war, we must remember, was only one solitary judgment, compared with what will come, and that too in the near future. It has been revealed that the time will come in the history of our nation, that one State will rise against another, one city against another, even every man's hand shall be against his neighbor, until the whole republic will be in general commotion and warfare. How and when this will take place, the Lord, in his wisdom, has not told us; but it is sufficient for us to say, that he has told us of the facts that such and such will be the case.

For aught we know the fulfillment of this prophecy may grow out of politics. If the people are very nearly equally divided in politics, this feeling may run so high, in years to come, as to be the direct cause of war. And if this should be the case, it would very naturally spread to every neighborhood in the Union. One class of political opponents would rise up against the other class in the same city and country, and thus would arise a war of mobocracy.

If a war of this description should take place, who could carry on his business in safety? Who would feel safe to put his crops in the ground, or to carry on any enterprise? There would be fleeing from one State to another, and general confusion would exist throughout the whole republic. Such eventually is to be the condition of this whole nation, if the people do not repent of their wickedness; and such a State of affairs means no more or less than the complete overthrow of the nation, and not only of this nation, but the nations of Europe, which form the feet and toes of that great image. They are the powers to be first broken; it is not the nation representing the head of gold, the remnant of the Babylonish Empire that still exists in Asia that will be attacked first, neither is it the Persians and Medes, whose descendants still live; but the Lord will first break up those kingdoms which represent the feet and toes of the image, of which I have been speaking. After that, he will proceed to break in pieces the kingdoms that represent the brass, the silver and the gold. Some are to be spared for a little season. The kingdom of God is to roll forth, and a certain person is to come, accompanied by a great host; the name of this person is the Ancient of Days. And who are they that compose the mighty host—are they immortal beings? Doubtless most of them will be immortal Saints, but there may be some mortals among them. The being called the Ancient of Days will not be a mortal person, his glory is too great, he has passed through his mortality, and he will have the oversight of this numerous host, at least a hundred million of people.

Who would be the most likely person to fill this important position? He is called the Ancient of Days. Can you tell me, who the most ancient person is that lived on the earth, during the most ancient days? All will acknowledge that it is Adam. Inasmuch as he has proven himself a righteous man, it is right and proper that he should, by divine appointment, have dominion over the righteous of his posterity, who should exist from his day, down to that period, when he comes in his glory; and this ten thousand times ten thousand spoken of will be the faithful of his own posterity. They shall stand before him, and certain books are then to be opened. If we understand the nature of those records, we should doubtless find much written concerning kingdoms, nations and individuals. They are the records which are kept in heaven, in which all things pertaining to the peoples of the earth are recorded. Or, as the Book of Mormon expresses it, giving the language of the Saviour when on this American continent, that "all things are written by the Father;" that is, by his authority, by his direction are all things written. The records of the nations—their rise and decadence, with everything pertaining to them, in a national capacity, will be written. Then there will be the records of families and of individuals, even of all people and tongues of the earth. The books will be opened, and the judgment will sit. What judgment? Not the final judgment, because that is to take place more than a thousand years after this. This judgment refers to the nations that will then exist, and it is out of these records and by this judgment will they be judged. The calamities spoken of will take place in fulfillment of the Scriptures, and of the great purposes of Jehovah.

It may be asked, Do you think this vast congregation will actually come, and if so, to what place will they come? I will read a new revelation upon the subject given May 18, 1838, almost thirty-nine years ago. It was given when the prophet Joseph Smith, and the Latter-day Saints, had gathered themselves together in Missouri, about forty or fifty miles north of Jackson county. They had assembled at a place that they called Spring Hill, and the Lord revealed to Joseph, on that occasion, things concerning this great event. This place, Spring Hill, is alluded to by the Lord, in this revelation, as being anciently called Adam-ondi-Ahman, because it is the place where Adam shall come to visit his children, or the place where the Ancient of Days shall sit, as spoken of by Daniel the prophet. Here, then, we have a key to the important personage, called the Ancient of Days, that he is our father Adam, and that he is to sit in judgment, among certain numbers of his children, in that certain region of country.

You may inquire why he should come to that particular place, on this western continent? The reason is, because he once dwelt there. You may say, I really thought that Adam lived in Asia, and if he did, we have no account of his leaving there. I will read another revelation, con-