

A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF A

SHAMEFUL OUTRAGE,

Committed by a Part of the Inhabitants

OF THE

TOWN OF MENTOR,

UPON THE PERSON

OF

Elder Parley P. Pratt,

WHILE DELIVERING A PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Upon the Subject

OF

THE GOSPEL;

April 7th, 1835.

SECTION I.

The township of Mentor is situated on the Western Reserve in Geauga County, Ohio, bordering on Lake Erie. The ridge road from Painesville to Cleveland runs through it, and the aspect to the eye of a traveller, in passing through, is of the most pleasing kind. For at once he beholds large farms, elegant buildings, flourishing orchards and delightful gardens, seemingly all things necessary to render a people happy and comfortable as to the enjoyment of the bounties of nature. In the midst of this flourishing settlement and variegated scenery, stands a commodious chapel or church, built of brick, having wooden steps the whole width of the building, and front of this is a small public square. Two public houses and a brick school-house compose the remainder of the buildings around the square.—Here in the fall of 1830, I had the privilege in company with Elder O. Cowdery, of addressing the people on the all important subject of their eternal welfare; and since that time I have passed through various states, having travelled in all, nearly fifteen thousand miles, devoting my time almost wholly to the ministry of the Gospel, coveting no man's silver, gold or apparel nor even counting my life dear to myself—if by any means I might be instrumental through the grace of God in bringing souls to repentance, having been called unto this holy ministry by the spirit of prophecy and revelation, and set apart by the laying on of the hands of the Elders of the church of the latter-day saints.

When four or five years had rolled away in thus devoting my time, and suffering many privations, I returned to Kirtland, where is a large church of my brethren, which is an adjoining town to Mentor, and I felt a great anxiety to visit the people in that vicinity once more, for the spirit of the Lord was upon me, manifesting that except they would repent of their sins and hearken to the voice of the servants of the Lord, whom he has sent forth to warn this generation, and to publish peace and salvation to all nations in his name, and yield obedience to the New and Everlasting covenant, that great calamities awaited them, and that the Lord God would speedily visit them by his sore calamities of pestilence and other great judgments. And not only them but all the inhabitants of the earth also, who reject the fulness of the everlasting Gospel, for when they do this they become ripened in iniquity and they must fall. Knowing these things, I felt weighed down in my spirit, and could not in conscience refrain from warning them lest their blood should be required at my hands. I therefore visited many of them from house to house and warned them faithfully, I was treated with personal respect by some, and hospitably entertained by others, and may the Lord reward and show great mercy unto such, but most of those whom I visited, treated the things belonging to their everlasting peace with indifference, and even with contempt, and none seemed willing to exert the least influence to give

me a public hearing. But not feeling entirely clear as yet, to give them up, and feeling anxious for their salvation, I went a few days after, from house to house, telling the people that I would deliver a public discourse at or near their brick meeting house on Tuesday, the 7th of April, at 3 o'clock, P. M. The day having arrived, I started to fill my appointment. While on the way the Spirit of God gave me such a realizing sense of their situation, the hardness of their hearts, and the blindness of their minds, that I could no longer refrain, and retiring alone to a grove, I there poured out strong crying and prayers, even mixed with tears, mourning over the depravity of human nature, and because of the power of Satan, which seemed to veil the whole face of the earth, and especially to shroud the minds of fallen religionists with darkness, so that they will not behold the things that are for their everlasting peace, but close their minds against the light as all former ages have done, when God has poured out his judgments and destroyed the wicked from off the face of the earth.

After I had done this, I continued my walk and having arrived at the place a little before the time of appointment, I went into one of the public houses, where a small number of men had already collected, as I supposed to attend the meeting. After setting a few minutes, Messrs. Grandison Newell and Elias Randal invited me into another room. I readily consented, and after we were seated, the conversation was as follows, as near as I can recollect. Said Mr. Randall, Sir, I understand you intend to preach near this place to day. I answered, I have an appointment and calculate to fulfill it. It is our request, said he, and the general voice of the people of Mentor also, that you should not preach here, for we do not wish to hear you. I answered by saying, I possessed no power to charm or draw any person to me, who is not within the sound of my voice, and it is very easy for those who do not wish to hear, to keep at a distance; but if any do wish to hear, they, under our government have the liberty of conscience, the suppression of which in past ages, has caused more innocent blood to be shed than ever the wars for conquest among the Greeks and Romans, or the various nations since the foundation of the world—and sirs, the sages of our government seeing the evil did by the blessings of God, establish the rights of man upon the broad basis of civil and religious liberty, which I hope in this civilized country, to enjoy undisturbed, and if none wish to hear, and all stay away, my discourse cannot possibly do any injury however absurd or erroneous my statements may be. And I feel bound to deliver my message, therefore I shall not desist. Mr. R. answered—If you are suffered to preach some will hear you and doubtless be led away into delusion as many have already been. Mr. Newell then commanded me not to attempt to preach in that place, or any where in the township, for said he, I have the voice of the people, and you had better not attempt it. I answered, I demand your authority, sir, for I will readily submit, if you will produce any legal authority of the town, county, state or U. S. for I am determined to be subject always to legal authority. He replied, We have no law to justify us, neither shall we attempt to reason with you on the subject, for I have a revelation,

from God that you shall not preach here to-day. I replied to him that I would obey God who had sent me, rather than man. He then said to me, as we were leaving the room, that if I preached I should do it at my own peril. Between one and two hundred men were collected, but I saw no women, only a few at the adjoining houses, and the time of my appointment having arrived, I walked across the square to the meeting house which was shut against me. Notwithstanding it belongs to an order of people calling themselves Disciples, but generally known by the name of Campbellites. They profess great light and liberality of sentiment, although it seems that they, like many others, are afraid to meet the truth in the field of fair investigation. Having become sensible that their system of a form denying the power would stand the test no better than the system of the great goddess Diana of the Ephesians. For you understand that the craftsmen around about her magnificent temple were under the necessity of maintaining, by noise and uproar, what argument and reason failed to do. But to return to the subject, having seated myself on the steps, some of the people soon collected around me, and some being seated, while others were standing in seeming amazement to see what would follow. I cast myself into the hands of him who had sent me, and arose & opened the services by reading a portion of the book of Mormon; but soon after I had closed the book and commenced to speak, I saw a band of men collected about 20 rods from me. Two Bugles, a Bass Drum, and several smaller ones, with their Fife, were put into lively motion, and the men in regular file came marching towards the place where I stood speaking, headed by Mr. G. Newell in front, the musicians and company following—some were prepared with whips, some with Pistols, and others armed with swords drawn from their sheaths, and glistening in the brightening sun beams. The scene was something truly novel in our great republic, but to me it was solemn beyond description—at least my language fails to describe it. They marched near the platform, on which I stood proclaiming to some twenty or more who seemed to be idle spectators of what passed. The music or noise for a moment drowned my voice, but when they had passed, I again resumed my discourse, feeling determined to deliver my message. They continued to march round and round the square, but I still continued to proclaim, only being interrupted at intervals, by the overwhelming noise of the music as they marched near me; but as I was about to close my address, they again marched within a few feet of where I stood, and they discharged a full volley of eggs at me, some of which struck me in the face and others besmearing me from head to foot. They passed on, and I then resumed my discourse by telling the people that I had discharged my duty, and I felt that my garments were clear of their blood, and I thanked and praised God who had given me strength to endure such persecution, and had counted me worthy to suffer all these things for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. I then closed by bidding those around me adieu and walking slowly across the square, meditating on the scene, for I had an uncommon composure of mind, considering the occasion. But I had not proceeded far before the mob began to pursue me with great haste and confusion, with their swords brandishing in

the air, their pistols firing, their trumpets sounding, their drums beating, their fifes thrilling, their men hollering, their dogs joining with a general howl, and their cattle running, so that the whole presented a scene of uproar and confusion seldom, if ever, witnessed in any land of arts and sciences, saying nothing of our boasted land of freedom, civilization and Christianity.

I walked slowly onward, being accompanied by two other brethren who had stood by me undaunted during the whole scene, even rejoicing that they had the privilege of living in a day when the Scriptures are so fast and plainly fulfilling. The riotors did not lay violent hands upon us, neither did they pursue us far before they halted & we saw no more of them. But we returned home rejoicing, remembering, that all inspired men before us had suffered shame, and many of them even death, for the same holy cause in which we are engaged.

SECTION 2.

But as I presume that it will be interesting to the readers of this little pamphlet, to see an outline of the discourse delivered on the occasion described above, I will proceed to notice as briefly as I can, a few of the most important items. I commenced the service by reading in the book of Mormon, commencing on the 512th page which reads as follows:

And now behold, I say unto you, that when the Lord shall see fit, in his wisdom, that these sayings shall come unto the Gentiles, according to his word, then ye may know that the covenant which the Father hath made with the children of Israel, concerning their restoration to the lands of their inheritance, is already beginning to be fulfilled; and ye may know that the words of the Lord, which have been spoken by the holy prophets, shall all be fulfilled: and ye need not say that the Lord delays his coming unto the children of Israel, and ye need not imagine in your hearts, that the words which have been spoken are vain, for behold, the Lord will remember his covenant which he hath made unto his people of the house of Israel. And when ye shall see these sayings coming forth among you, then ye need not any longer spurn at the doings of the Lord, for the sword of his justice is in his right hand, and behold at that day, if ye shall spurn at his doings, he will cause it that it shall soon overtake you. Wo unto him that spurneth at the doings of the Lord; yea, wo unto him that shall deny the Christ and his works; yea, wo unto him that shall deny the revelations of the Lord, and that shall say, the Lord no longer worketh by revelation, or by prophecy, or by gifts, or by tongues, or by healings, or by the power of the Holy Ghost; yea, and wo unto him that shall say at that day, that there can be no miracle wrought by Jesus Christ, for to get gain; for he that doeth this, shall become like unto the son of perdition, for whom there was no mercy, according to the word of Christ. Yea, and ye need not any longer hiss, nor spurn, nor make game of the Jews, nor of any of the remnant of the house of Israel, for behold the Lord remembereth his covenant unto them, and he will do unto them according to that which he hath sworn; therefore ye need not suppose that ye can turn the right hand of the Lord unto the left, that he may not execute judgment unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto the house of Israel.

Hearken, O ye Gentiles, & hear the words of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, which he hath commanded me that I should speak concerning you; for behold he commandeth me that I should write, saying, Turn, all ye Gentiles, from your wicked ways, and repent of your evil doings, of your lyings and deceivings, and of your whoredoms, and of your secret abominations, and your idolatries, and of your murders, and your priestcrafts, and your envyings, and your strifes, and from all your wickedness and abominations, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, that you may receive a remission of your sins, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, that ye may be numbered with my people, which are of the house of Israel.

I then closed the book and proceeded as ~~before~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~confidence~~ opportunity that I have this day of addressing some of the people of Mentor on the all important subject of their eternal welfare, and I shall endeavor to maintain the strictest regard for the personal feelings of all present, while at the same time, I shall strive to preach the truth as it is in plainness.

That which most immediately concerns this generation is the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And he is soon to make his personal appearance in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, taking vengeance on all those who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Eighteen hundred years have rolled away since his first advent into the world, and when he left it, being separated from his disciples by a bright cloud, angels declared that he should so come in like manner. But signs were to precede him, and these are the things for which we ought to look, in order that we might all be ready. And now I appeal to all present. Have you all obeyed the Gospel, and are you living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God? For if not you would do well to prepare quickly. For the Lord has in our day and generation opened the heavens, and spoken by his own voice, by the ministering of holy angels, and by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. And he has now sent me, one of his servants, to warn the people of this place to repent of all their wickedness, and be baptized for a remission of their sins in his name, that they might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, as in days of old, and be numbered with the house of Israel.

For all the mighty and tremendous judgments that are to precede his coming, spoken of in the Scriptures, are soon to take place or be poured out upon the heads of this generation, even those who reject his words and turn a deaf ear to the voice of his servants, whom he has sent to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to him.

Some of the things that are to precede his coming as foretold by the prophets, the Savior himself and by his inspired apostles, are pestilences, famines, wars, earthquakes in divers places and distress of nations with perplexity. Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth. The Savior also said that his angels should fly to the four quarters of the earth, to gather up his saints, or his elect, for Israel, the seed of Abraham will be gathered from their long dispersion to build up the waste places of Jerusalem, as Isaiah says, 'to rear up the desolations of many generations.' While all this is completing, the saints will be gathering to Zion with songs of everlasting joy. The trumpet of the archangel sounding, the graves of saints opening and they rising to meet their coming Lord. The Spirit of God will then be poured out upon all his servants and handmaids, so that they will prophesy and see visions. The burning of Babylon, the great, the same that has made all nations drunk with the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the great, the rich and the mighty men and the chief captains calling for the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the face of him who sits upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. The mountains flowing down at his

esence, the vallies being exalted and the earth reeling to and fro as a drunken man, while but few men, says Isa. will be saved. And all these are a few of the things that this generation must witness, as sure as the great Jehovah, his Son Jesus Christ, the holy angels or the holy apostles, prophets or servants have ever spoken the truth.— And now having warned those of you in this vicinity, who have been disposed to listen, to repent and prepare for that great day; and although many have been disposed to be angry, to mock at and even treat with contempt those sacred things. I therefore call Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men to witness that I am clear of your blood. And if these things come upon you while unprepared, then you will remember that an humble servant of God stood among you this day, in the midst of confusion, disregarding your rage and all your scoffing, and faithfully warned you to prepare for the day that is soon at hand. For doing which he was mocked and scoffed and shamefully treated. But I have borne it in the name and for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I now bid you adieu. Amen:

SECTION 3.

This, in short, is the outline of what I delivered on the occasion described above; but being often interrupted by the riot, it was of course, spoken in a broken and imperfect manner.

But well did the inspired apostle say, that in the last days perilous times should come, men should be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud blasphemers, false accusers, fierce despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof. I can say, that I am astonished that persons who profess so great light and so much religion as the people of Mentor, that they should condescend to conduct more worthy the heathen idolaters than enlightened, Christian republicans, but so it is. And I can only say with the deepest feeling of my heart, "O! that this people knew the things that belong to their peace! but now they are hid from their eyes, I only add may the Lord bear long with them, and grant unto them space for repentance, for they know not what they do.— And may he deal with them according to his justice, mercy and goodness, and may he cause righteousness and truth to spread and take deep root in the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands, yet in our beloved country, and among all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, bringing forth the fruits of salvation and eternal life. That all wickedness may be destroyed, and truth prevail until 'all the people shall become righteous'—'and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.' May each revolving year give accessions to the cause of the Redeemer & an increase to his kingdom—until the last trump shall sound and time be no more, when all the saints shall meet in Eternity in the celestial kingdom of our God to go no more out. Even so—amen.

PARLEY P. PRATT.

SECTION 4.

Being a native of New Hampshire, and passing through the country, on the 7th of April, approaching a public house, not far from the center of the township of Mentor, near which stood a very commodious house erected for public worship, which so frequently meets the eye of the traveller as he passes through the flourishing towns and villages on the Western Reserve, and indeed in almost all parts of this free and happy country, which bears such evident marks of liberality and of the idea of a Supreme Being, as well as the noble sentiments which animated the bosoms of those illustrious patriots, who framed the American constitution with respect to matters of religion and rights of conscience. While musing and meditating upon the pleasant scenery around me produced by nature, industry and art, and thinking how happily this neighborhood must live here, my attention on a sudden was caught by seeing several women collected at a spacious farm house near the chapel, and occasionally stepping out before the house, and looking with much earnestness towards the house of worship, where several men had collected near the door and others seemed to be gathering. I alighted at the tavern, and asked the landlord what occasioned such a collection? He said to me, there is preaching. My curiosity soon drew me to the spot, where I seated myself on the platform. Finding the preacher outside of the house, and the door closed, and as I understood by the by, against him.—The speaker was a tall, young looking man, well dressed, and seemed to be very intelligent. To see such a sight was indeed novel to me, in this land of religious freedom, which supports so many religious teachers with high and fat salaries, and which sends forth such a multitude of Missionaries among the heathen nations, to enlighten and civilize them, and to spread the benign influence of the light of the glorious Gospel among those who sit in the region and the shadow of death.

The people seemed to be very uneasy while the preacher was reading to them with great solemnity, a chapter out of a book that he called 'the book of Mormon.' But about the time he closed the book, to my astonishment, a well dressed man who stood near me, cried out with a Stentorian voice, "every man to his post." At this the most of the congregation (which by this time became quite numerous) repaired to the tavern. A bugle was sounded and a company soon formed, with drums and fifes playing and beating a martial air. And being headed by the man who had previously given them the watchword. During this time the man continued to preach, and the mob (for so I feel in justice to call them) commenced their march, with music in full sound, towards the man who was speaking, as if he was defiling their sacred house.

About this time I addressed myself to an aged, venerable looking man who had seated himself near me, and seemed very much pleased to witness the valor displayed on the occasion by this band of heroes, who looked quite brave, and numbered some fifty or sixty, being armed with clubs, whips, swords and pistols, and as they marched up near, I said to him, Is this the way people worship the Lord in this

country? He said, no. But observing my surprise, he continued— You would not be astonished, sir, if you only knew the circumstances concerning this whole matter. That man, said he, pointing to the preacher, belongs to a religious sect who has arisen up near us, and who are determined to take the whole country. I then asked him what they were called. He said they were called Mormons. I told him that I had frequently heard of that people. O! said he, you know nothing about them, they have got foothold in Kirtland, but we are determined to drive them out and not to have such a people among us. I asked him what doctrine they held to? O! said he, they have an illegitimate child in Kirtland whom they call Christ. And they have chosen his twelve apostles and seventy other disciples to preach him, as they say, in all the world. They are also building a great stone temple among them, and they say that when it is finished, these apostles are going to be endued with power to work miracles, such as healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, &c. &c. And that man, pointing to the speaker again, is one of their apostles, and he has been all through our neighborhood, from house to house, talking to us, but we are determined he shall not preach here in peace.

But if any other sect wishes to preach here, we will use them well. I asked him if these people made many converts? Yes, said he, they have preachers all over the country, and their converts are flocking into Kirtland from every direction, and are in a starving condition.— I told him that I was astonished that people should be led away with such strange stuff. Said he, I told you but little, but if you will get the anti-Mormon book, it will tell you all about them. I then asked him where I could obtain one. He said they were printed at Painesville, and ought to be spread all over the world to put a stop to Mormonism. I observed to him that the preacher seemed to be but little disturbed with the noise and confusion around him. O said he, he is used to it, he has been in such scrapes before, in Missouri. I asked if they had a church there. He replied, that they went there and threatened to take the whole country, and to destroy the inhabitants, and that blood should run down their streets like water. By this time the heroes who were marching round and round, occasionally passing near us, had obtained courage enough to discharge a whole shower of eggs at the preacher, who soon finished his discourse and deliberately walked off. But the scene of riot and confusion which ensued I cannot describe. Here my informant stopped his relation to join the general procession, who were pursuing the inoffensive looking speaker, and one or two more who started with him. I soon after mounted my horse again, leaving this troublous scene and pursued my journey, reflecting upon the consequences which result from such occurrences, if they were allowed to pass unnoticed, and were not stamped with the disapprobation of an enlightened public. My informant told me, however, that the Leader of this band of heroes, was one of the first men in their town, and was worth twenty thousand dollars. I think he called his name Newell. And I verily think that his modern Knight ought to have the honor of his name's being enrolled with Don Quixotte and Sancho Panza, and handed down to posterity as a reward of his valor displayed on this occasion.

I have since conversed with some of the heads of this strange people, and I am free to confess that I see nothing very strange in their doctrine, when I learned it from themselves without misrepresentation. Their principles seem to be based upon the Scriptures in their literal sense. However they have an addition of a record, called the book of Mormon, which they hold as sacred as the Old and New testaments. It gives an account of the forefathers of the natives whom we call Indians, which it seems by this record are a branch of the house of ancient Israel.

The little time I have had to examine this book, I found it very interesting, and I thought my time well employed. And I think upon the whole whether this people are true or false, the opposition shown them looks very much like the times through which the apostles of Jesus passed anciently, while preaching the gospel among the self-righteous Jews, and afterward among the idolatrous Gentiles, who were blinded by their superstitions. But alas! alas! when will the time come that peace and harmony will cover the earth, and all the hostile feelings of mankind cease forever, and all become of one heart and one mind, all see eye to eye. O that God would hasten that glorious day when all the jarrings, contentions and animosities which are now distracting the world, shall cease to exist forever.

A NEW ENGLANDER.

P. S. I have written these few lines and addressed them to you, and if you think they will be of any service to you, they are at your disposal.