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Chapter XL

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Abstract: Heber Visits The Branches Raised Up During His Former Mission—His Report Of Their Condition And Standing—First General Conference At Manchester.

CHAPTER XL.

HEBER VISITS THE BRANCHES RAISED UP DURING HIS FORMER MISSION—HIS REPORT OF THEIR CONDITION AND STANDING—FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE AT MANCHESTER.

PURSUANT to the appointment of his quorum at the conference, Heber visited the Saints whom he had brought into the Church during his former mission. Elder Willard Richards accompanied him, pending preparations for his mission to Herefordshire.

They first visited the branch in Walkerfold, the home of the Rev. John Richards, whose daughter Jennetta Willard had married, in fulfillment of Heber's prediction. They found Sister Richards in a very low state of health, but after they had anointed and laid hands upon her, according to the ordinance of the Church, she immediately began to amend.

The Reverend Mr. Richards, who was feeling very sorely the effects of the preaching of Mormonism in his pastorate, on seeing Elder Kimball in his house, ordered him to leave. Heber meekly complied, much to the grief of Sister Richards and her aged mother, who wept aloud at his departure. The Walkerfold branch, though small, had suffered more persecution in proportion to its numbers than any other, but its members, with scarcely an exception, had remained steadfast in the faith.

Heber's report continues :

“From thence we returned to Preston, where I left Brother Richards to prepare for his mission to Herefordshire, and proceeded from thence to Dauber's Lane and Eggleston. We found there two branches rejoicing in

the Lord. After a short visit with them, I returned to Preston; and after two days I started on a visit to the north. I went alone, by way of Walkerfold, on my way to Clithero, where I held meetings on the Sabbath, and administered the sacrament to nearly two hundred Saints. It was a time of refreshing to them and to myself, as I had not seen them for more than two years. It had been said there, as in other places, that I would never return to them again; but they now saw me again, and knew that myself and many of my fellow laborers had come; and that our message and our zeal were the same as formerly, and therefore I was received with greater joy than ever. I stayed at Elder T. Smith's, where on Monday I was joined by Elder Fielding from Preston.

“On Wednesday we went to Chatburn and held meeting in the evening. There was great joy in the place. The next day we went to Downham and held meeting that evening and many came to hear. We bore testimony to the Gospel, and of the work of the Lord in these last days. The people were very attentive. When we had closed, a certain man wished to ask a few questions; he appeared much agitated; in fact we were reminded of the prediction in the Book of Mormon, that ‘men would anger and tremble because of the truth.’ He demanded some evidence of the truth of the Gospel, or message, of which we testified; but would not tell us what evidence would satisfy him, so we could only repeat our testimony to him, and let him go, with no other evidence than what ourselves and tens of thousands of others had believed and were satisfied with. The Saints had a time of rejoicing. On Saturday we returned to Chatburn and held meeting, after which three persons were baptized and added to the Church. On the Sabbath the meeting was held in a large barn, no house

being sufficiently large to convene the people. There were many to hear, who were very attentive. We ordained two Priests. In the evening four others were baptized. Some who had left the society, wished they had been faithful, and some of them returned by humble repentance and being re-baptized. There appears to be something peculiar in the people of this place; others had tried in vain to enlist them into their folds; but on hearing the first preaching of the fullness of the Gospel they were overwhelmed in tears of repentance, and more than twenty were immediately baptized. It is a small village, but the number of members soon increased to about ninety. They have mostly stood fast. We have never received anything like an insult all the time we visited the place, and we feel bound to bless them.

“On Monday we returned to Clithero; after meeting five more were baptized. On Tuesday evening two were baptized in Waddington. Since then we have heard that eight more have been baptized, and others ready.

“The next day we started for Ribchester, calling at Walkerfold on our way, where we found Sister Richards in good health. We reached Ribchester on Friday, and held meeting in the evening; the Saints were comforted. The next day we returned to Preston. I consider that I have never seen the Saints in better spirits. They say it seems like old times; they can receive their patriarchal blessings under the hand of Brother Mellin, as he is ordained to the office of an Evangelist. Some speak in tongues and prophesy, and others have visions, etc., as was foretold by the Prophet Joel, concerning the last days. We can truly say the Lord has begun to restore all things, as spoken by the prophets.

“After this we went to Longton, and held meeting, and the next day started for Southport, many of the

brethren accompanying us as far as the river Astlam. There was no bridge, and to save us the trouble of going round, a brother carried us over on his shoulders. We held one meeting in Southport, and one in Churchtown. At Southport there was a sister sick and not expected to live. She was healed by administering the ordinance, and next day she went with us two miles on foot. We ordained one Elder and one Teacher, and on our way back preached to the Saints in Longton, exhorting them to have their lamps trimmed and burning, ready to go forth to meet the Bridegroom. We then returned to Preston. On Saturday we met the officers in council, and on the Sabbath met with the Church as usual.

“On Monday evening a number of the Saints met at Brother T. Moon’s, in Penwortham, to receive their patriarchal blessings. We were with them, and gave them such instruction as was necessary.

“Wednesday, I accompanied Elder Clayton to Manchester; found Elders Young, P. P. Pratt and J. Taylor there; tarried there with them till Saturday the 30th, when Elders Young, Taylor and myself took the train for Liverpool; met with the Church there on the Sabbath, and had a good time, the Saints rejoiced, and others believed.

“A number of the Saints had taken their passage for America on board the ship *Britannia*. We spent some time with them for several days. June 5th we took leave of them. They were in good spirits, expecting to move from the dock at 2 p. m. We blessed them, and commended them to the Lord. I then took leave of Elders Young and Taylor, and returned by train to Preston. I found Brother Fielding and the Saints rejoicing in the Lord. At this time I can truly say that I never felt more to rejoice than I have done in my late visits to

the churches. The Saints, in general, as they have been baptized into one body, are partakers of one spirit, whether they be Jew or Gentile, bond or free. I also take this opportunity to say, that I have lately received a letter from my wife, giving us good tidings from America. The work is moving steadily, but not slowly through that land, bearing on its way through the states and cities of that vast continent. The Saints are getting over their pains and sufferings, at least in a great measure, and are enjoying health. I would say to my brethren in the ministry that their families are well, and I feel to congratulate them on the hope and glorious prospect of one day not far remote when we shall rest from our labors in the kingdom of God. It is evident our labor is not in vain in the Lord. In almost every branch I have visited the numbers are increasing. The stone is actually growing into a mountain, and we know that it must soon fill the whole earth. May the Lord hasten the time. Amen."

Heber rejoined his quorum at Manchester, where a general conference convened on the sixth of July. The meetings were held in "Carpenter's Hall," a building almost as famous in the history of the British Mission as the celebrated "Cock Pit" in Preston.

The Apostles in the mission were all present excepting Orson Pratt, who was in Edinburgh, unable to attend on account of the great distance, and his arduous labors in opening the Scottish Mission. Parley P. Pratt was chosen to preside.

The new hymn-book was introduced and received the unanimous approbation of the meeting. A number of brethren were ordained to the ministry and then President Young called upon those officers whose circumstances would permit them to devote themselves entirely

to the work of the ministry, and who would volunteer to do so, to stand up, when the following names were taken: B. Young, H. C. Kimball, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Willard Richards, G. A. Smith, Wm. Clayton, Reuben Hedlock, H. Clark, Theodore Turley, Joseph Fielding, Thomas Richardson, Amos Fielding, John Parkinson, John Wytch, John Needham, H. Royle, John Blezard, D. Wilding, Charles Price, Joseph Knowles, William Kay, Samuel Heath, Wm. Parr, R. McBride and James Morgan.

President Fielding and his counselors were relieved of the charge of presiding over the mission, and several Elders were appointed to various fields of labor in England, Scotland and Ireland.

President Young gave administrative directions to the Elders previous to their separation. He then blessed the congregation and the conference adjourned.