

"Verily I say unto you who have assembled yourselves together that you may learn my will concerning the redemption of mine afflicted people: Behold, I say unto you, were it not for the transgressions of my people—speaking concerning the Church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed now. But behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh Saints, to the poor and afflicted among them." (D. & C. 105:1-3.)

"Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field." * * *

"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

"And lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

"Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it and received instructions.

"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep;

"So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man." (Prov. 24:27-34.)

God grant that we may receive and appreciate his blessings,
I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOHN WELLS

Of the Presiding Bishopric

I have enjoyed beyond measure the faith-promoting stories and testimonies concerning this great latter-day work, the manifestations of the power of God, and the testimonies concerning the Book of Mormon.

Eighteen hundred and ninety-four years ago—probably during the first week of April—our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ passed the last week of his mortal life. He had returned from a brief stay in Perca, and at the close of the Sabbath arrived in Bethany with his disciples. The following day, the first day of the week and known to us as Sunday, he entered the city of Jerusalem on an ass's colt.

There were great numbers who had heard of his coming and he was hailed: "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." That day he returned to the little village of Bethany and the next morning—known to us as Monday—he evidently again walked to Jerusalem. Entering the temple, he found the Court of the Gentiles crowded with those who sold animals, merchandise and who exchanged money. In the majesty of his power, he drove out all the people doing business, and said unto them, "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Again he returned to the little village of Bethany, and on the following day—according to those who have given deep thought and study to the life of the Master—he entered the temple once more for the last time, and here he delivered that remarkable series of reproofs to the scribes and Pharisees.

In the evening, in the quiet little home of Simon and his fam-

ily—Lazarus, Martha, and Mary—Mary anointed his feet, and it was then that he said that as long as his gospel shall be known the act of Mary will be remembered.

The following day, Wednesday, he spent quietly with his disciples on the Mount of Olives, gave them his last personal instructions, explained to them some things he had said in the temple concerning the great events that would occur in the future and others that would occur before his second coming.

On Thursday he asked his disciples to prepare for the Passover. Following the custom of the Galilean Jews, he met in an upper room with his disciples, where he comforted their souls, administered to them what is known as the Last Supper, prayed to his Father to preserve and protect his disciples, and departed to the Garden of Gethsemane, where he was arrested.

One of the outstanding features connected with the Church of Jesus Christ is that each person who has faith in God and who has sincerely repented of his sins and has been baptized for the remission of his sins, having had hands laid upon his head for the gift of the Holy Ghost, may know the doctrine, whether it is of God, or not. Thousands and tens of thousands of Latter-day Saints can testify that this is the truth, that by obedience to this gospel they have received an inward witness that Jesus is the Christ, that the gospel has been restored, and that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God. This promise of a testimony is accorded to all people, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Jesus had finished about two years of his ministry and was again laboring in his own province of Galilee, having been rejected in his own home of Nazareth. With his disciples he toured Galilee; then, calling the disciples together, he sent them out to preach the gospel, giving them special instructions to go not to the Gentiles nor to the Samaritans, but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. While they were away, the messengers came from John who was in prison, asking, "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" That day the Master healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, made the lame to walk, and when the day was over, he said to John's delegates, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached." They, no doubt, returned to John, and John was satisfied. A short time after, the Master heard that his forerunner had been beheaded, and he exclaimed, "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

His apostles returned and accompanied him to the east side of the lake of Galilee. He there labored and taught the people for three days, and his disciples suggested to him that the people would better be dismissed to get food in the neighboring villages. The Master said that he could not send them away for fear some would

faint, and asked how much bread and food they had. The disciples answered that they had a few loaves and fishes. Jesus told the disciples to seat the people in fifties and hundreds. Then he broke the bread and blessed it and passed it to his disciples, who distributed it. Five thousand men, as well as women and children, were fed. One can imagine the excitement that followed. Here was a man who could give not only spiritual food, but could also feed their bodies. Well might they want to make him a temporal king.

He sent the disciples across the lake and dismissed the multitude. In the night he walked across the water before his disciples had been able to land on the opposite side. They saw him but faintly in the early morning light and were sore afraid, but Jesus said unto them, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." Peter, impetuous, bold, and a leader, asked the Lord if he could come, and was told that he could. He started to walk on the water, but the waves were rough and he called to the Lord to save him.

Landing at Capernaum, he was met by people who had hurried around the end of the lake. There he tried to impress upon them that his kingdom was not of this world, that he had given them bread to feed their hunger, saying, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto thee," and the multitude said unto him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread."

The Master spoke so plainly that many of his disciples and followers discontinued following him. He then turned to his apostles and, addressing Peter, said: "Will ye also go away?" and that good man responded, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ the Son of the living God."

Jesus then moved away from Capernaum. The next we hear of him, he was on his way with his chosen disciples and probably a few of his close friends, in the direction of Caesarea Philippi. Perhaps he was dejected because of his inability to convince the people concerning his mission, and one of the gospel writers says that he went away to pray. No doubt the disciples stayed at a respectful distance. Then he returned and, addressing his disciples, said, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" No doubt, each one answered the question in turn, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." It was a common idea that Elijah would come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and they were looking for him to come before the Messiah. It was also understood among the Jews that Jeremiah had in his possession the Ark of the Covenant, that it was hidden in Mount Nebo, and would be placed back in the temple before the coming of the Messiah.

Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said, "But whom say

ye that I am?" and then Peter, to whom the role of leadership had fallen, spoke—doubtless with the approval and concurring voice of his brethren—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." I can imagine what a comfort that would be to his Master to know that his disciples at least knew that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. No doubt this testimony had been given by the Father to those twelve chosen men who were to be Christ's special witnesses and who were destined to carry his work and the message of the gospel to what was then known as the civilized world.

Addressing Peter, the Master answered, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

It is the desire and intent of our Master, Jesus Christ, that all those who accept his doctrines and live according to his precepts, shall know his doctrine. At one time he declared, "My doctrine is not mine but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

In Capernaum he said: "No man cometh unto me, except the father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day." To all who sincerely desire to find the truth and understand and accept it this is a promise, for they will know the truth, and he will draw them as he promised, and they will receive the testimony that is the outstanding feature of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is our duty to pray to the Father for this testimony. It is our privilege to receive it, and no Latter-day Saint of years of discretion need be without this testimony. In view of the great problems that are arising in the world, I appeal to my brethren and sisters to see that there is taught to their children in the homes the story of the life and mission of Jesus Christ; also the story of the Prophet Joseph, and the restoration of the gospel through his instrumentality, that there may grow into their hearts faith in the living God and a love for their fellow-men, that our young people will grow mighty in testimony and power to carry on this great work.

I am thankful indeed for the gospel of Jesus Christ, for that testimony which has come to me. I am thankful for the privilege of laboring in the ministry, for the association I have with my brethren and sisters. May the Lord bless and sanctify this great gathering of Latter-day Saints that the influence felt here may go into all the homes of Zion, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.