

fice of the Northern States Mission, then located at Council Bluffs Iowa. Upon arriving there I was sent to labor in Missouri and particularly in Otterbein and Holt. My traveling companion W. E. Criddle, of Morgan, was already there to meet me. We made our headquarters at a Brother Jacksons in Holt County and at Sister Lydia Lewis' home in Atchinson County. We were successful in holding a number of meetings in the immediate neighborhood of Sister Lewis' home during the winter. We were encouraged in our labors by a couple of honest souls requesting baptism which was administered later on by Elders Criddle and Bodi y officiating. While laboring there we were treated well being asked frequently by people of other denominations to come and take dinner with them, which of course, we did not fail to do. Knowing the Elders are not as a rule treated as well in other localities on account of prejudice, I began to look about to learn the cause, for the good feeling there, and I found there had been a missionary at work in that county for years in the person of Sister Lewis who, by the way is an aged lady and a sister of Erastus Snow, names that are well known and honored in Utah. While we were there we were known as Sister Lewis's preachers and treated with due respect by all; and this has shown me that although the lives of some may be spent away from the body of the Church yet they can be useful instruments in the hands of the Lord, and can set an example worthy of imitation by living consistent lives.

From there I returned home in the latter part of January on account of sickness in the family. On the 10th of February I again came to this state and met with the Elders at Independence, where we held conference which commenced on the 13th and lasted three days, three meetings being held each day. On the 16th we held a priesthood meeting which lasted all day. The time was spent in transacting such business as was necessary, after which we listened to President Clark. All in all it was a day long to be remembered.

My next field of labor was in Boone County, Iowa, my companion being David Robison of Morgan. We commenced to distribute tracts and hold meetings. As a rule we were treated well here, but did not succeed in awakening as much of an interest in the truths of the Gospel as we would have liked, but I am convinced there are many good honest souls there that will yet receive the Gospel.

The latter part of June I received a letter from the President of our Conference, Otto Johnson, to prepare to take a new companion and go into one of the adjoining counties and open up a new field of labor which I proceeded to do, my partner this time being James D. Coon of Riter, Salt Lake County, Utah. We made headquarters at Ames, Story County, Iowa, and commenced to travel among the people. We find here a great many that have heard all they want to about the Mormons, and I have asked some if they ever heard any good of them, which is generally answered in the negative. We then tell them we have come all the way from Utah to tell them something good, and where we can get into conversation with them we can generally remove a great deal of prejudice.

I am satisfied that in time many good honest souls will receive the truth and come out into the broad light of day. The people here as a rule are well to do, intelligent, peaceably inclined, and at the present time are trying, judging by appearances to solve the silver and gold question of the day. In the meantime we are going about our business quietly and although we have not seen much to encourage us yet we are not discouraged, as we can see it will take time to break down the prejudice here so that they will be enabled to see the beauty and consistency of the great plan of salvation as revealed anew in this the dispensation of the fulness of times.

We will soon be going to conference again an event looked forward to by the Elders with joy and satisfaction. There are at present eight Elders laboring here in Iowa and all enjoying good health at present. Your valuable paper comes to hand regularly and is appreciated by the Elders.

LEVI A. COLVIN.
JAMES D. COON.

IN THE CITY OF CHURCHES.

50 CONCORD, Street, Brooklyn,
September, 18, 1896.

Thus far my association with the people here has been limited owing to the fact that my labors have been mainly confined to office work. Still, I find enough in observation to cause reflection, and especially concerning the spiritual condition of the people.

Perhaps a few impressions on that subject may prove of some benefit and also be most appropriate. I find that indifference is quite general toward religion, and even those who take a passing interest, have relieved their minds of trouble concerning it, by placing the work and responsibility of being Christians upon their ministers, and praying them to look after their souls' salvation. Of course, there are an honorable few everywhere who are not afraid to study out the problem of salvation for themselves, instead of allowing their ministers to do it for them.

It really seems that a man who has been through a theological seminary for a few years, and has secured a title and diploma is considered as having obtained the divine right to lay aside the plain truths of the New Testament and teach any plan of salvation he pleases. In other words the authority to preach and expound the Gospel and the power to officiate in the name of the Lord, is gained now-a-days in the minds of many, by learning, while in ancient times it was given by the Priesthood through ordination. I have heard of one of our missionaries, who in conversing with a lady accidentally betrayed the fact that he did not understand Greek. "You cannot read Greek!" she exclaimed in surprise, "then I do not believe you can teach me anything about the Gospel;" and her investigation ended.

Religion is a business to-day—its advocates are paid to teach a beautiful system of morality, which will excite the emotions and dazzle the intellect while in church, but is not really believed in or followed by one tenth of its admirers. Truly Paul was a Prophet when he wrote of a time when men should have a "form of godliness but deny the power thereof."

In olden times, a servant of God dictated the holy will to the people with "Thus saith the Lord." Today how different! A minister has to be very careful that he pleases the people; he must cater to their desires and cautiously avoid coming in contact with their prejudices; otherwise he will lose his fine position and salary, and they will get another "divine" more in harmony with their views and feelings. The other day, a minister was discharged because he worked during the week at the fishing boats. The members of his congregation said they did not want a laboring-man for their minister—they wanted a gentleman. I mention this, because it is a common condition here, and is an index to the state of "religion."

I notice also that the field of clerical labor is permitted to be much more extensive here than in Utah. At home, for the last few years particularly if any of our people preached anything from the stand having the least bearing upon politics, it was heralded abroad as an evidence that the Church was trying to run the State. The other extreme is the condition here. For instance, only last Sunday, a minister of one of the leading churches in Brooklyn preached on the subject of politics and urged the people to vote for gold and McKinley, and his remarks were received with frequent bursts of applause. Ministers are doing the same all over the country here. A few weeks ago a minister had the temerity to preach silver, but his congregation took especial care that he did not do such a thing the second time. They discharged him at once.

I think infidelity is growing rapidly. It is freely admitted that three fourths of the people who regularly attend church do so merely for fashion's sake, and very many of these are as atheistic at heart as Paine and Voltaire ever were.

D. J. WATTS

LETTER FROM NORWAY.

CHRISTIANIA, Norway,
September 16th, 1896.

By request of Brother C. N. Lund, president of the Scandinavian mission I send you an account of our visit to Norway and the conference just held in this city.

Elder Andrew Jenson, the historian who is this far on his journey around the world, met his wife in England, and together they proceeded to Denmark where they arrived on the 9th inst.

Next morning President Wells came to Copenhagen from Berlin and the same day the above mentioned, also President Lund and I set sail for Christiania to attend the Norwegian Conference. The trip coming up Categat, Shagerack, and the fjord was indeed pleasant; and the welcome extended to us by President P. Anderson at the landing in this city most cordial. It is joyful to meet friends in a strange land. Our party were all strangers here. Hereby greetings from the missionaries assembled, and good reports from all made the situation pleasanter still. Now to see the town. That afternoon a party of Mormon missionaries might be seen wandering through the spacious and gaily decorated halls and corridors of King Oscar's Norwegian palace. A guide took us through and carefully explained every