

CORRESPONDENCE.

Written for this Paper

REPORT FROM WEST VIRGINIA.

RESIDENCE OF D. G. CARTER,
Phillippi, Barbour county, W. Va.,
February 15, 1895.

We, the undersigned missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, have been laboring in this field since October 24, 1894, with our headquarters at Mr. Philip G. Hill's in Preston county. Mr. Hill and family have been very kind friends to the Elders ever since the mission opened up in this part. They never turn a stranger away from their door. We have enjoyed good health and the blessings of the Lord in our labors, with few exceptions have received kind treatment among the people. We have held meetings wherever we could get a house, either private or public, and have explained the Gospel to the families we have visited that were willing to listen to us. We find a great deal of prejudice existing in the minds of the people against our Church. They have read and heard so many fables about the Mormons that it is hard to get them to believe the truth. But where we can get acquainted with them and they will listen to us, they seem to change their minds in regard to the Mormons. They cannot find any fault with our Bible doctrine, but when we bear our testimony to them that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God they cannot believe that. Quite a number have told us that if we would leave Joseph Smith out of our doctrine we would get lots of people to join the Church.

There are twelve members in this field that are firm in the faith and several others that are investigating that we believe will join in the near future. Brother D. G. Carter and his youngest son joined the Church in May, 1892, and emigrated to Utah in November the same year, leaving his wife and the other children here. He first located at Kanab, Kane Co. On his arrival there he met James L. Bunting, he being a stranger to him. Brother Bunting told him to come and make his home with him. Brother Carter accepted this kind offer and felt that he had got among kind friends. He stayed with Brother Bunting about two months and was treated very kindly. He also speaks very highly of Brothers Robinson and Cram and of all the Latter-day Saints that he met. He remained at Kanab four months, then went to Georgetown, Kane Co., and secured him a home and remained there till the 20th of November, 1894, when he returned to his home in West Virginia to visit his family and friends and to see if he could persuade any of them to emigrate to Utah. Brother Carter gives such a good report of Utah and the Saints that live there, that part of his family and two other families that belong to the Church say they will go back with him if they can sell their places here; and some of his friends that do not belong to the Church say they will go if they can sell out. Brother Carter is a man that is well known all over this county, and a great many of his old friends have

called on him to get some information in regard to Utah and her people. He tells them that all the fables that they have heard and read about Utah and the Mormons are false and are without foundation. He says the people of Utah are far better than he ever expected to find them when he went there, and that the Latter-day Saints have got something that the world have not got or knows anything about; he says he would rather live among them and be poor than to live here and be rich. He is strong in the faith of the Gospel and bears a faithful testimony to all that will listen to him. He has always been a kind friend to the Elders that have labored here. His wife also is very kind to the Elders; they never turn anybody away. Brother Carter has been the means of allaying a great deal of prejudice in this part of our field, for which we feel to thank the Lord.

This is a very rough, mountainous country, there being no level land except a little on the river bottoms. The mountains are covered with timber except where they have been cleared for farming and other purposes. The people live in a scattered condition except in the railroad towns and a few other places. Some live on top of the mountains, some on the sides and some in the hollows. Most all of them use sleds, winter and summer. Some of the mountains are so steep that they have to rough-hack a sled to get down. Very few of the farmers have any farming machinery. The harvesting is done by hand. When they clear their farms they pay no attention to the course of the compass but clear them in any and every shape and burn up the timber and waste it. Most of the timber is hard wood and would be valuable in Utah. They fence their farms with the old fashioned rail fence. When we are on top of some of the highest mountains we can see them dotted with farms that have been cleared in every shape for miles in every direction. The school houses are located somewhere about the center of the districts, and they have school in them four or five months in the year and that in the fall and winter when it is impossible for some of the children to attend regular that live a long way off from the building. The teachers are paid from \$18 to \$35 a month according to their quality. They have a free school system here a little different to that in Utah; the appropriation is divided up among the districts according to the taxes paid and not according to the number of children in the district. That is the reason they only have four or five months' school in some of the districts as that is as far as their appropriation will reach. We have met with whole families of children that could neither read nor write.

The people as a rule are kind-hearted and hospitable, especially the poorer class. The exceptions are among the rich. In one part of our field where all of the people are well off we could scarcely get a place to stay over night. One old night in December we were compelled to stay in an old deserted house that we found

beside the road, because we could find none that would keep us, either for love nor money. We were also unable to get a house to hold meeting in among them, so we concluded that the time had not yet arrived for the rich to receive the Gospel and made our way to other parts. One man told us that if we were preachers of any other denomination they would let us preach, but they had no use for us or our doctrine in that part of the country. Another told us to go back into the mountains where the people didn't know any better and maybe we could get them to listen to us. Another told us that they had enough religion now to save all of the people if they wanted to be saved, and had no use for our doctrine. These are some of the realities of missionary life. In traveling over these mountains we are often reminded of one of the predictions of Jeremiah where he says, "After I will send for many hunters and they shall hunt them off from every mountain and off from every hill and out of the holes of the rocks." We could not see at first how the last part of the prophecy was going to be fulfilled, but when we were hunting for a man one day that we wished to see and found him in a coal mine then we could see where "out of the holes of the rocks" came in.

The people say that this is the hardest winter they have had for years. Some of their cattle and horses are "on the lift" and a me of them have frozen to death. Two men that were out hunting froze to death a short time ago. We were out traveling in the same blizzard three hours; didn't freeze, but it was the worst storm that either of us was ever out in. The roads are lifted full to the top of the fences in many places which makes traveling very difficult.

Most of the school houses are closed against us and all of the churches except one in our field; that is what they call the Union church, we held one meeting in it, but very few came out to listen to us and most of them were school children. This field has been pretty well canvassed in the last two or three years by Brothers Johnson, Houston, Robinson, Critchlow, Roney and others. These brethren have a great many friends in this field who would be pleased to hear from them once in a while. The above named brethren did the harvesting in this field and they did it so well that we have not been able to glean any yet, but we trust that our labors will be like bread cast upon the waters—it will be seen after many days.

We have held eight meetings, visited seventy-five families, distributed eighty tracts and walked 500 miles. Some may think that the Elders do a great deal of walking for so little preaching and family visiting, but it can be very easily accounted for. We have the whole of Barbour and Tucker and a part of Preston and Taylor counties to travel over. The people live in a scattered condition, and we have to travel from one to ten miles to see the trustees of a school house, and then three times out of four we fail to get permission to preach in them. The families we visit are those we stay over night with. Sometimes we stay two or three days with one family when it is too stormy to travel.