

Correspondence.

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH THE EASTERN MAIL?

EDITOR NEWS:

On calling at the Post Office to-day we were informed "nothing for you"—the usual reply of late. Letters and other mail matter over forty days from New York not to hand yet! Persons just in from Bridger and elsewhere assert that large quantities of mail matter are strung all along—from Bridger here—mail sacks in big heaps were lying wet and smoking as they came along! It seems a disgrace to the fame of the noted Firm who now have the carrying. Why don't they hire a number of ox teams and haul in the back mail matter—letters—papers—and all? If they need help, we will cheerfully donate the use of one yoke of sturdy oxen, and could better afford that than that our mail matter should be much longer delayed.

May 8.

T. W. E.

[From the *Millennial Star*.]

MINUTES OF A DISTRICT CONFERENCE.

HELD IN THE ODD-FELLOWS' HALL, BIRMINGHAM, ON SUNDAY, FEB. 24, 1867.

(Reported by Elder Joseph Grainger.)

There were on the Stand—Of the Twelve Apostles, Orson Pratt, and Franklin D. Richards. Presidents of Districts, Abram Hatch, Birmingham; James McGaw, Norwich; Archibald N. Hill, Southampton; William Gibson, Nottingham; William S. Warren, Sheffield; Presidents of Conferences, Francis Platt, Birmingham; Moses Thatcher, Cheltenham; George Hunter Warwickshire; Anson V. Call, Sheffield; Richard Benson, Bedfordshire; Samuel Southwick, Staffordshire; R. N. Russell, Liverpool; E. Frost, Herefordshire. Traveling Elders, E. Taylor, J. Aldridge, and J. Stewart.

10½ a.m.

Singing by an excellent choir. Prayer by Elder Nicholas Groesbeck.

Elder A. Hatch, in a few introductory remarks, congratulated the Saints on the great blessings enjoyed in meeting in Conference with so many of the Elders from Zion, surrounded as they were with circumstances of so favorable a nature.

Elder Francis Platt said it was a source of pleasure to him, to be surrounded by God's ambassadors, engaged as they are in sowing the seeds of eternal truth in the hearts of the honest. He said, our meetings are well attended; and a good ingathering is shortly expected. His own feelings were good, and he could speak well of both Traveling Elders and Branch Presidents; he never wished to labor with better men, for they were always on hand to bear testimony to the world, or anything required of them by the servants of God.

Elder George Hunter said he thanked God for the privilege of meeting with the Saints and servants of God in that hall, and he desired to bear testimony that the Saints were a good people, striving to live according to the will of God.

Elder S. Southwick said it was with feelings of joy that he met with the Saints in that place. The people in Staffordshire, he said, are a good people striving to live their religion, and are longing to emigrate to Zion, so as to be able to do even better in the future.

Elder A. Hatch said, we had now heard from all the Conference Presidents composing this District. He then read the Financial and Statistical Report of the District, for the year ending Dec. 31, 1866, which was accepted, and may be found in STAR No. 10. He then called the attention of the Saints to the subject, "how to emigrate," and said there was a number of persons in the habit of drinking beer and smoking tobacco. Suppose one hundred persons, in the 1258 composing the district, drank one pint of sixpenny each day, and smoked two pennyworth of tobacco each week, they would expend the sum of nearly five hundred pounds a year, which sum, if wisely used, would emigrate a number of persons each year, or would go a great way in meeting the expenses of the Branches, and in blessing the poor.

The meeting adjourned, after singing by the choir, and benediction by Elder William Gibson.

2½ p.m.

Apostle Orson Pratt presented the

Authorities of the Church, who were unanimously sustained by the uplifted hands of the congregation. He then proceeded to say, that this being his last visit to this Conference for some time to come, he should take the liberty of saying a few words before sitting down. He thanked God for the privilege of meeting with the Saints, for he knew this to be the work of God; had it been otherwise, he could not have loved it, and the Saints connected with it, as fervently as he has done. This knowledge did not belong to him alone, but was shared by all that have been baptized into the family and covenant of our heavenly Father. He said, we should undoubtedly feel honored to be associated with the kings and queens of the earth, how much more glorious must it be, to be connected with the kingdom of God, as a son or daughter of the King of kings. He said, we all wish to, and believe we shall eventually become perfect in the kingdom of God, in heaven. What, then, is our duty, seeing that we cannot step from imperfection to perfection at one step? We must progress gradually in every thing that is good; if we would be perfect in heaven, we must learn to be perfect on earth; if we expect no strife in heaven, we must learn to live without it on the earth; and if we would be united in heaven, we must be so on earth, learning to be obedient to God's servants here below, so as to be entitled to a place among the sanctified of the hosts of heaven.

Elder William Gibson said he knew no greater honor than to teach mankind the truths of the Gospel, to help them to be better, and to escape the evils of sin, and to draw them to purity, and eventually to endless joy in the presence of God. He could bear testimony that God is our Father, the earth our country, and mankind our brethren, and in this work he desired to labor, until the prayer of our Savior be fulfilled, and the will of God be done on earth as it is done in heaven. He concluded with a few words to the strangers, exhorting them to carry out the principles of freedom, by thinking and acting for themselves in relation to the Gospel.

Elder W. B. Preston said he felt truly thankful for the knowledge he possessed relative to the work of God now preached by the Elders. He had often wished that he had lived in the days of the ancient Apostles and Prophets; but now he could bear testimony that Prophets and Apostles do live, and that we are associated with them in spreading the glorious truths of the Gospel to all the nations of the earth. He exhorted the Saints to be truly thankful, and to live according to the teachings of the servants of God.

After singing, and benediction by Apostle F. D. Richards, the meeting adjourned until 6 o'clock, p.m.

6 p.m.

After singing, and prayer by Elder James McGaw,

Apostle F. D. Richards, after referring to his former visits to this Conference, and to the rapid growth of the Church, said the servants of God are going into every nation, sowing the seeds of goodness and purity; and notwithstanding this, the people look upon us with aversion, simple because we are polygamists. In this they are laboring under a false notion, for was not Abraham a polygamist, and at the same time a friend of God? and have not good and wise men practiced polygamy? Yes, even Prophets, Patriarchs, and law-givers have done so, and that with the direct sanction of the God of Israel. He said he did not wish to hurt the feelings of any one, but he could not help referring them to what is called the "social evil," which is the effect of the monogamic system. He wished to throw off false delicacy, and inform them that the Saints practiced polygamy, which would put an end to the practice of those sinful indulgences that man is so prone to, and that the Saints have surrounded this divine institution with more rigid rules of virtue, than had been enforced in times gone past. In this and many other countries, the seducer leads away the innocent and unsuspecting from the homes of loving parents, to those of shame and infamy, and the wretch himself remains unpunished; while in Utah, virtue and honor are guarded as something too sacred to be tampered with, and the violator of female virtue finds a deserving punishment, even that of death. He then referred to Hepworth Dixon's work, wherein he states that not one house of ill-repute is to be found in all Utah,

with its population of over one hundred thousand. After referring to king Henry VIII. as the founder of the Anglican Church, he concluded, by bearing testimony that the work in which we are engaged is the work of God.

After which, Apostle Orson Pratt said—To our friends this work is a strange work, and even to ourselves it is a wonder, and when compared with other dispensations, it is truly a marvellous work. When God sent Moses to gather Israel, he found them all located in one land, and even the distance to the land of promise was only eleven days' journey, if taken in a direct course. Not so with this Latter-day Work, for the servants of God are sent into all the world, and they go and make converts in strange lands; from thence they take them over three thousand miles across the sea, and about three thousand miles over the country; this they have been doing for about twenty years, and have succeeded in settling a tract of barren country, some 400 miles in length, with about 105 towns and villages, with a population of a hundred thousand souls. He then prophesied to the strangers, that should they live a few years longer, they would see the Saints return to their former possessions in Missouri; and the nations and people who fight against Zion, would pass away as a dream or a night vision, and eventually the kingdoms of this world would be given into the hands of the Saints, for an everlasting possession.

Benediction by Elder A. Hatch.

Large and attentive audiences attended throughout the day, an excellent spirit prevailed, and all felt it had been a day of great blessings to them.

On Monday evening, in the same hall, a vocal and instrumental concert was held, which reflected much credit on the performers, and committee of arrangements; and thus ended one of the best religious and social gatherings of the Latter-day Saints in Birmingham.

Stockholm, Sweden, Feb. 6, 1867.

ELDER PRATT.

Dear Brother,—Since my last to you of January 25th, I have, in company with Elders Carl Widerborg and Neils Wilhelmson, visited and held meetings in each of the Conferences in the kingdom of Sweden. As the snow was of so great a depth in most parts of Denmark and Norway, being in places so as to cover the telegraph wires, it was concluded that the greatest good would be accomplished by our taking this course, as brother Widerborg had intended to visit the Swedish Saints if I did not accompany him, and the road in this direction was open for travel; besides, brother Widerborg thinks the work in this nation has not had the opportunities for extension and advancement which it has had in Denmark and Norway. True, there were a goodly number of Elders appointed to the Scandinavian Mission, but it happened that nearly all of them were Danish, and therefore not adapted to the peculiar mode by which the Gospel has to be introduced and promulgated in this kingdom.

In Denmark, the Elders stand forth with holy boldness, claiming and maintaining their rights, under their Constitution, to preach and worship according to the dictates of their own consciences. Not so here, in Sweden. A dissenter has no right in law, or by the constitution, to worship any hour when the State Church, which is Lutheran, shall be holding their service. A provision of the law grants to resident dissenters, members of other state churches, the privilege of holding meeting on Sundays, provided also that such meetings are not intended to make proselytes to such dissenting faiths; all religious denominations being deemed dissenters, except the Saints. Thus you see that instead of having Constitutional or legal guarantees or inducements for furthering our work, we are entirely on sufferance in our labor of love to this portion of the human family, and our Elders are liable at any time to be taken up and imprisoned at the instigation of the priests.

Our only safe and certain mode hitherto, has been for some Elder, a mechanic, to obtain employment in the place where it was designed to introduce the Gospel; and thus while employed at his work, disseminate the revealed truth among the hands until without let or hindrance from the enemy, a Branch was organized, and the fire once kindled soon won its widening way. In this manner, mostly, have the thirty-eight

Branches which compose the four Conferences in Sweden, been built up, and which, besides those who have migrated, now number about sixteen hundred members.

It is not by any means that our Swedish brethren lack the pluck to use bold means, but that this appears the only prudent method. Recently two of our Elders thinking it too slow a process for so important a work, concluded to call on the minister of a parish, offer him the truth, and if possible, get liberty to hold meetings among his flock. The result was, that after staying overnight with him, his reverence told them they must leave his parish, and not come into it again, to teach such heretical doctrines; if they did, he would send them to prison. Not content with this captious mode of closing up their way, they quietly visited in another parish, and succeeded in wakening an interest to hear more, and in view of a meeting, a gentleman offered his house for preaching, whereupon the minister was respectfully invited to attend. Demanding to know why they had presumed to such like in his parish, without his knowledge, he received for a reply, that they did not come to contend with him, but to inform him there was to be a meeting, and to invite him to attend if he pleased. Thus getting the truth before a part of his people, it took root in their hearts, and became impossible of extinction. In most places where the Gospel can be revealed to the people, it finds believers readily; but the law establishing the Lutheran Church in these northern countries, have given the priests almost unlimited authority to compel the adoption of that faith, making their mode the only legitimate form of marriage, &c. Indeed, in their constraint of religious opinion, as well as many of their rites and ceremonies, they are but one step removed from their ancient Catholic mother; for example, a brother went to a Lutheran priest to be married, but was refused the ceremony because he was a heretic, and applied to the President of the Mission, who advised him to get a writing from the priest stating the fact, which he did, when brother Widerborg married him, and gave him a certificate of the same, since which his neighbors consider him an honorably married man. Thus, while the priests are willing to exercise their power to an extent that bastardises or renders illegitimate forty-two per cent. of the population, as shown by the statistics of this city, there is an insatiable thirst on the part of the people, that is growing with the rulers and Sovereign also, for an extension of human rights, and freedom of thought, of speech, of the press, and of conscientious worship of Almighty God; as if the American eagle, becoming restive by the presence of innocent blood on that nation's escutcheon, had winged its way over these European nations, to see if there might be found some permanent resting place before taking up its final abode in the Rocky Mountains, dropping here and there a feather, which has inspired the nations where they fell with the spirit of progress, an ambition to extend the area of their liberty and freedom in every legitimate mode, and this spirit seems to have affected all classes, unless, I suppose I must except the clergy, with few honorable exceptions, and it is the general presence of this sentiment that permits and favors the Gospel in this country.

I had the happy privilege last Sunday evening, to meet with about one hundred Saints and fifty strangers, in a pleasant little hall in this city, and to address them with great freedom and pleasure, although through an interpreter. It seemed singularly strange to me, that I was nearly eight thousand miles from my home preaching the Gospel to the Goths and Vandals of Northern Europe—that in Sweden alone nearly two thousand persons had obeyed the Gospel, and accepted all the doctrines of the Church, not excepting tithing, consecrations, and polygamy in the faith, with the same right good will that you and I have, and call Utah their home with as heart-felt sincerity as do either of us. How can I help speaking to them by the Spirit, while its effects caused smiles and tears to alternate in their countenances. The strangers gave the best of attention, and we could see and feel that the truth was gaining place in their hearts.

Being out on a preaching tour among the churches, and in winter was not so favorable a time to see the country, but was a more favorable time to see the people, inasmuch as the royalty and