

ST. LOUIS CONFERENCE.

Minutes of the Conference of the St. Louis District, held in Canton, Ill., March 10th, 1877.

Present of the Elders from Utah, D. M. Stuart, C. F. Middleton, Jno. Ford, and Jos. R. Porter.

Elder Stuart presiding. Services commenced with singing and prayer.

J. R. Porter was chosen clerk, and David J. Williams assistant clerk of the conference.

President Stuart stated he had letters from Elders laboring in Indiana, Ohio, and Missouri, informing him that they could not be present with us in person, but were present in spirit and wished to be represented in the conference.

Elders Nicholas Smith and Zebadiah Coltrin had been traveling and laboring in Indiana the entire winter, with moderate success. Although baptizing none they felt that the Lord was with them.

Elder John Cooke reported that Elders John Fitzgerald, Chester Loveland, and Wm. Thurgood had been laboring with him in Ohio, preaching wherever they could get an opening. They had succeeded in breaking down prejudice and paving the way for the spread of the gospel.

Elders Thurgood and Loveland, having travelled and labored in several States, bearing their own expenses in common with all other elders, were now on their way home, feeling they had done their duty to the best of their ability.

Elder W. W. Jackson had been lecturing in St. Louis during the winter months to large congregations of intelligent people. He reported that Andrew Burman presided over the St. Louis branch, composed of thirty-eight members, including one seventy, six elders, one teacher and one deacon. Ten have been added and ten have emigrated during the year. Financially the branch was out of debt. It had a well attended Sunday school and was in the enjoyment of the spirit of the gospel.

Brother Jackson further reported Elders Marlow L. Cummings and Joel Ricks laboring with him in and around St. Louis with success.

Elders Maycock and George Hackett were laboring in the northwest of Missouri among the latter's relatives.

The Elders in Illinois were earnestly laboring among their relatives, who received and treated them kindly.

Elders N. V. Jones and Samuel R. Bennion were traveling together, and at present visiting and preaching among relatives in Ohio. They were feeling well in the work.

Elders Alonzo Winters and Dominicus Snow were laboring in Hancock County, Illinois. They had several openings to preach, and were generally kindly received.

Elders Samuel J. Wing and Philip Hurst were laboring together. Bro. Wing had favorably impressed his father's family, and they would all return with him to Utah this spring.

Elders Joel Parish, Joseph R. Porter, Milton Hammond, John Ford and C. F. Middleton were present and would report their labors.

Elder C. F. Middleton reported the Illinois conference as being in a healthful condition. Canton branch numbered 51 members, including seven elders, two priests, one teacher and three deacons. Three had emigrated and one had died during the year ending March 5th, 1877. Braidwood branch was organized January 28th, 1877, with seven members, by Elders D. M. Stuart and C. F. Middleton, had since increased to fourteen, including two elders, one priest, one teacher and one deacon. John A. Mason presided, with James Willison his counselor.

President Williams further reported the Canton branch as being very nearly out of debt. He gave a brief history of the sowing of the seed by Elder B. F. Cummings, Jr., the organization of the branch by Elder Stuart on the 5th of March, 1876, the general progress of the same, the successful operation of the Sunday school, Relief Society, and Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association.

Singing and benediction.

Conference adjourned till two o'clock p.m.

2 o'clock p.m.

Met pursuant to adjournment.

Opened with singing and prayer.

Elder John Ford spoke of his experience in the ministry. In traveling he had enjoyed himself well. His absence of two months from the Saints had caused him to better appreciate their company.

Elder Joel Parish had traveled most of the time alone, visiting and preaching among his relatives in Iowa and Illinois. In many places he found much prejudice existing. He had baptized three persons. He felt assured that in time some of his friends would receive the gospel, in accordance with expressions made to him. He had met and made many friends, but few were at present prepared for the gospel.

Elder Middleton had spent about three weeks among his relatives in Washington and Jackson counties, of this State. In company with Elder Stuart he had held a number of meetings, all of which were well attended. They went to Braidwood, Will County, preached and visited among the Saints, traveled some in Morgan, Scott and Sangamon counties, visited Springfield and Jacksonville. A very few expressed a desire to learn the truth.

Brother Stuart was suddenly attacked with the rheumatism and they were obliged to proceed to St. Louis. He met in meeting several times with the Saints, and arrived at this place in company with Bro. Stuart on the 28th ult., the latter being so lame that with difficulty he moved about the room, where he had been confined till to-day. Elder Middleton had devoted most of the time since his arrival in administering comfort to Elder Stuart in his affliction, and in meeting and associating with the Saints.

Elder J. R. Porter, in company with Elders O. H. Eggleston, J. Parrish and John Ford, had traveled and preached in Iowa, northern part of Illinois and Kentucky, the major part being in the latter, in vicinity of Big Boon Lick, Boone County. He had been very well received generally by his people. The different sects had almost invariably refused to open their churches for preaching, but otherwise had treated the Elders kindly. Very few felt an inclination to search after religion. A few had believed, and baptism they anticipated not far in the future. He had come to Canton via Cincinnati and St. Louis, talking and preaching by the way.

Singing and benediction.

Adjourned till 7 o'clock p. m.

7 o'clock p. m.

Met as per adjournment.

Opened by singing and prayer.

President Stuart occupied the entire time, speaking on the establishing of the kingdom and its continuation through the oracles of God up to the present time.

Closed by singing and benediction.

Adjourned till 10 o'clock a. m. 11th inst.

Sunday, 10 o'clock a. m.

Services commenced by singing and prayer.

Elder Middleton said his home had been and he wished it ever would be among the Saints. By associating together in their meetings, quorums and other organizations in the priesthood, they formed an affection that would continue while life and thought and being lasted. It was the duty of the Saints to be obedient, whether in preaching, gathering, laboring in Zion, or pioneering in isolated districts of country. A great testimony of the divinity of the Book of Mormon was the application of the vast numbers of the Lamanites to be baptized in fulfillment of the prophetic words therein contained. He most assuredly did know that the doctrine was true, and that there was scriptural proof for every principle taught or believed in by the Latter-day Saints.

Elder Joel Parish knew the gospel was true and faithful. He exhorted the Saints to faithfulness, warned the people to flee from Babylon, that they partook not of her sins and received not of her plagues, in fulfillment of the prophets, and closed by bearing a faithful testimony to the truth of the gospel.

Elder Stuart addressed the audience over an hour in his usual powerful manner. A practical discourse, full of judgment and doctrine, given to the entire satisfaction of all present.

Closed by singing and benediction.

Adjourned until 2 p. m.

2 o'clock p. m.

Opened by singing and prayer.

The sacrament was administered, Elders C. F. Middleton and Edward Vaughan officiating.

President Stuart spoke at length on the government of God, the ultimate dissolution of man-made systems, the reception of the government by Joseph Smith, the restoration of the gospel to the Indians, the order of the priesthood, and the authority of the high council.

He presented the authorities of the Church in their order, which were unanimously sustained.

D. M. Stuart was presented and sustained as president of the St. Louis District; C. F. Middleton of the Illinois, John Cooke of the Ohio, and W. W. Jackson of the Missouri conferences; David Williams of the Fulton, A. Burman of the St. Louis, and Jno. A. Mason of the Braidwood branches.

Closed by singing and benediction.

Adjourned till 7 o'clock p. m.

7 p. m.

Services commenced by singing and prayer.

Elder Milton Hammond, not being present at the beginning of the conference, reported his labors. He had travelled in Michigan, in company with Elder Joel Ricks. He found the people generally averse to religion, and particularly prejudiced against the Latter-day Saints. Of late he had been traveling and visiting among relatives in the State of Illinois, who treated him kindly, but cared very little about the principles he had taught them. He felt well in his labors.

President Stuart followed, treating upon the Godhead, in answer to request.

Singing and benediction.

Conference adjourned sine die.

A good spirit prevailed throughout the conference, the Elders manifesting a determination to pass through opposing elements to their honorable acquittal. Those returning home having worked zealously in the cause during their sojourn, feel that they have done a good work and prepared the way for a goodly harvest for those that may follow after.

The doctrine of plural marriage is being much agitated throughout the United States. Men and women in many circles talk freely on the subject. The prejudice that formerly existed in relation to it is fast giving way before conversations and the influence of the Elders, who are performing a good and valuable labor in this way.

Times are hard and the Saints are desirous to gather.

A good chance for the brethren and sisters to assist their friends is the writing of letters and the circulation of the News and other home papers among friends and relatives. This would be the means of doing much good.

Your brother in the gospel,

D. M. STUART, Pres.

JOS. R. PORTER,

Clerk of Conference.

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immediate relief when all other means

have failed.

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