

years, though it was here that the Elders of the true Church of Christ first commenced successful operations in Australia. It is generally known among the older members of the church that Elders John Murdock and Charles W. Wandell were the first Latter-day Saint Elders to preach the fulness of the Gospel to the inhabitants of eastern Australia. On October 30, 1851, these two Elders landed as strangers in a strange land in the city of Sydney, and soon afterwards began their preaching in the public parks. Some of the incidents connected with the first movements of these pioneer Elders are narrated briefly in the periodical called "Zion's Watchman" published in Sydney, Australia, in 1854, from which paper the following is culled: "After making the necessary arrangements for board and lodging Elders Murdock and Wandell turned their attention to the task before them—that of introducing the Gospel to the inhabitants of Sydney. On Sunday afternoon, Nov. 2, 1851, after the dismissal of the Primitive Methodist out door meeting, on the Old Race Course, at Sydney, Elder John Murdock with his hat in his hand, stepped forth and addressed the people in a manner something like the following:

"Gentlemen! I desire to say a few words to the people here assembled. I have been pleased with much that has been said on the present occasion, and being a missionary, sent to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ I would like to have the privilege of speaking to the people."

He was then asked from whence he came, and after telling that he hailed from America, some little feeling was manifested, which, however, soon subsided. Having asked for a place to preach in, the Primitive Methodists preacher, Mr. Moss, enquired to what denomination he belonged, and was answered, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints. "O, a Mormon, eh!" was the response, and the preacher looked rather aghast at the fact, and promptly informed Elder Murdock that he could not let him have a place to preach in, that he himself occupied the ground they were now standing on every Sunday, and that the place belonged to him for preaching purposes. The preacher then hastened away.

The assembly now called for a declaration of principles, when Elder Murdock briefly but very forcibly, laid down the first principles of the Gospel, explaining also the order of the organization of the Church of Christ, and the nature of the blessings enjoyed by Saints in ancient times.

He was listened to with considerable attention, with the exception of being asked once or twice as to whence he received his commission and authority. Among the assembly were several persons to whom the Lord had intimated, by vision or dream, that something important was on hand. One man had had a vision of the kingdom of God established in the centre of the world, continuing to increase until it overcame the world, and the spirit testified to him, when Elder Murdock was speaking, that the cause he represented was the work of God. John Jones, another of the assembly, who afterwards became a prominent Elder in the mission, received a similar manifestation, and was under the same influence.

At the close of the address, several questions were asked, such as, "Do you profess to be able to perform miracles? Have you ever seen the sick healed?" etc. Mr. Jones asked, "Does your Church profess to receive revelations suited to the present condition and character of man?" Elder Murdock answered boldly, "We do." An appointment was then made for preaching on the race course the next Sunday afternoon.

On Sunday, November 9th, Elder Murdock was on the ground at the time appointed, and preached an excellent discourse upon the principles of the Gospel and its restoration, the Millennial reign of Christ on the earth with His Saints, etc. Elder Wandell was with him, and an appointment was made to preach in the evening at the Old Assembly Room, when Elder Wandell delivered a discourse on the ministrations of angels to the Prophet Joseph Smith. At the close of the meeting, the proprietor said he should not let them have the room again.

After this a house was rented on Pitt street, where services were held every Sunday morning and evening, and public speaking on the race course every afternoon. The meetings continued for some time to excite an increasing interest, and hundreds, as a rule, attended the out-door meetings. The brethren also applied all the means they could muster for the printing of books and pamphlets. Thus two thousand copies of Parley P. Pratt's "Proclamation" were published, and two thousand copies of Orson Pratt's "Remarkable Visions." Soon afterwards five hundred hymn books and two thousand "History of the Persecution of the Saints" were published.

In the latter part of November Elder Murdock went to Parramatta, a town lying about twelve miles inland from Sydney. He went there by steamer and returned on foot down the road, distributing such tracts as had already been published.

December 3rd, 1851, the first person was baptized into the Church; an evening meeting, attended only by a few, was held and a goodly portion of the Holy Spirit was present; Elder Murdock spoke with great force and power, making plain the principles of truth.

On the following day, December 4th, Elder Murdock left Sydney for Melbourne, in the colony of Victoria, about six hundred miles south west of Sydney, but he found the people generally gone to the gold diggings and the whole country in perfect excitement. The people were gathering in from the neighboring cities and isles to dig gold, it being about the time that gold was first discovered in the colony of Victoria. Elder Murdock spent two days in the city of Melbourne, but could find no shelter for himself and what few articles he brought with him. Consequently, after spending about ten days in Melbourne and vicinity, under extreme difficulty, he found it advisable to leave that part of the country and return to Sydney, where he arrived January 5th, 1852.

On Sunday morning, January 4th, 1852, the day before Elder Murdock's return from Melbourne, the Sydney branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, consisting of twelve members, including two

Priests, one Teacher and one Deacon, who were ordained on the same occasion. These first members had all been baptized by Elder Wandell, who had been very unweariedly engaged in spreading the truth, both by spreading the printed word and by preaching on the race course and other places that could be obtained for the purpose, both out and in-doors. Elder Murdock's health was poor, and as his lungs were weak and his nerves trembling, he found it very difficult to preach out of doors. The principal part of his preaching was consequently done in-doors. By this time the Elders had come to the conclusion that the best way to plant the Gospel in any city or part of Australia was to procure a home for themselves, and from there go out preaching whenever they could get an opportunity; as a rule they could get no congregations on week days and only very few at nights. One of the newly-baptized families made a home for Elder Murdock.

In the beginning of 1852, places were obtained for preaching at Chippendale, Rushcutter's Bay, and at Kissing Point, but the labors of the Elders at these places were not crowned with much success. About the same time the Old Assembly Rooms at Sydney were rented again.

Saturday, March 27th, 1852, the first conference of the Church in Australia was commenced; it was organized with Elder John Murdock as President and Elders Charles W. Wandell and John Jones as counselors, and it was adjourned from time to time until the 6th of April following. The strength of the Church in Australia at this time consisted of thirty-six members, including one High Priest, one Seventy, three Priests, one Teacher and one Deacon; but during the conference two of the newly-baptized brethren were ordained Elders.

The next year (1853) other Elders from Zion arrived, and from Sydney the work spread into the surrounding country, as well as to Melbourne and Adelaide and many other towns in the colonies of Victoria and South Australia; from Sydney also the first missionaries went to New Zealand, and in due course of time a monthly paper called "Zion's Watchman" was published in Sydney in the interest of the mission. Thus the work made good progress, regular annual and quarterly conferences were held, several companies of Saints emigrated to Utah, and everything looked quite promising in many parts of the mission for a rich harvest of souls when the Elders were called home in 1857 and 1858, on account of the Utah war. From that time on the Sydney branch and other branches of the Church gradually died; most of the members who did not emigrate to Zion soon became lukewarm or lost the spirit of the Gospel altogether; hence when the field in New South Wales was re-opened about three years ago, the Elders had to break up new ground and had a new generation to deal with.

At present there are four Elders from Zion engaged in missionary labors in New South Wales; two of them, Elders Baker and Nelson, are temporarily located at Five, a suburb of Sydney, near the Parramatta river.

ANDREW JENSON.

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