The West Virginia Conference.

CHARLESTON, Kanawha Co., W. Va., Nov. 30, 1895.—We take pleasure in submitting the report of the West Virginia conference, which was held on the 16th and 17th of the present month, at Samuel R. Crouty's about four miles southwest of Concord church, Mercer county, West Virginia. Many busy days were spent by Brother Crouty and family in preparing to receive and entertain the Elders, which they did royally. Ever have the brethren been heartily welcomed by these Saints in Christ, and long will they be kindly remembered when our missionary life is an experience that is past. To show our appreciation of their hospitality we presented them with a gold chain of the laborers in this part of the Lord's vineyard.

Owing to the sudden death of Elder Hall in Texas, President Elias Bingham, of the Southern States mission, was unable to be with us at our conference in August, and desiring to meet us for the purpose of fully instructing us in our duties, before entering our new fields of labor, he made an appointment for the place and date given. He arrived Saturday, Nov. 9th. His health was not the best, but a ride of nine miles, across Brother Crouty's best earthly, through the freezing air, with Elder Brinton and Brother Crouty for his guides, brought back his spirits and he expressed himself as much improved.

The news of our meeting had been thoroughly circulated and the people for miles were prepared to attend, that they might hear the Mormons. Saturday night, though, rain commenced descending, continuing on Sunday and, as a consequence, many were kept away, who otherwise would have come.

Quite a good sized audience had gathered by 11 o'clock Sunday morning, Nov. 10th. In their respective places were president of the mission, Elias S. Kimball, President Samuel Brinton, of the West Virginia conference, and traveling Elders Orlando Bradley, William H. Hindley, George T. Taylor, Henry E. Taylor, Harvey H. Cluff, Judson Tolman, Jos. S. Campbell, Curtis E. Smith, John G. Pearl, Fred G. Warnick and W. E. Rydalch.

After the commencement of our meeting by the usual exercises, Elder Brinton gave the object of our conference and dwelt at length on the principles of the Gospel. Elder H. E. Taylor followed upon spiritual work. Elder Cluff showed that obedience to the Gospel was necessary. Elder Rydalch occupied a few moments on faith. Elder Kimball said it he could impress upon the minds of those present the fact that there is a real God, he would be satisfied. We, as Latter-day Saints, believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Lord being the same always, then His Gospel must necessarily be the same. The testimonies of these humble Elders will be binding upon the people, because we teach, by authority, the same Gospel that Christ proclaimed to the world. We bring the Gospel to you, as those apostles of the Most High did, without purse or scrip. Our Father has promised that an angel would restore the Gospel. That angel has come and we bear record to the fact. False prophets shall arise as Paul says, but they shall be put to shame by the servants of the Almighty. The incident of Elijah bringing to naught the prophets of Baal, for the glorification of God, was told, and the lesson applied to our day. In closing the speaker bore a strong testimony to the divinity of the Gospel.

Four priesthood meetings were held during the time we were together. Each Elder gave a brief report of the work being accomplished, and it was truly gratifying to note the manner in which the Lord had blessed our labors. After the report by the brethren, Elder Kimball gave us the following valuable instructions: If the Elders will live lives of purity and cultivate the companionship of the Holy Ghost, friends will be raised up on every hand, the scriptures will be open to their understanding, and they will do a great work while on their missions. Do not tear down the creeds of others, but preach the pure principles of truth in simplicity, for this is the commandment of the Lord, preach the first principles and leave the mysteries alone. Study the mode of presenting the principles to the people and much good will come of it. Do not tire the people with too long meetings, but be to the point. The Elders should be broad and charitable to others, so that the same spirit would be shown to them. We should not debate with ministers of religious because nothing good comes from such work. Our duties are not only preaching, but teaching as well those things that will lead the people to be better in their every day duties. Especially should we seek to show the benefits of the Word of Wisdom. The appearance of each one should be the very best that circumstances will allow. Since there has been more attention paid to this matter the Elders have been well treated in localities where before they were insulted. The Gospel should be preached without purse or scrip. It has been practically shown that this can be done and the blessings of God will attend those who will follow out this commandment. There are those in this conference who have been mightily blessed by going without money. Leave to unfulfilled promises. Much harm is done by returning Elders promising to write to the people and then not doing it.

All the Elders could not convene at Brother Crouty's, so to meet with them on November 24th, Elders Brinton and Rydalch made a pleasant little walk of about 120 miles to Richard W. Adkins at Jinks, Lincoln county. The brethren in attendance who were not at Concord were Hezar W. Beers, William J. Glass, William N. Casper, William B. Elder, Henry Bartholomew, Matthew Spurs, Isaac H. Longston and Charles A. Higgins; also Elders Tolman and Warnick who arrived from Mercer county on the 23rd. Owing to force of opposing circumstances, Elders William H. Harris and Sam'l O. Wilson were unable to be with us.

Two Priesthood meetings were held at which instructions suited to their conditions were given to brethren the same as given by E. S. Kimball.

At 2 p. m., Nov. 24, a public meeting was held with the saints in branch at Jinks. The church welcomed Elders Brinton and Rydalch to Kanawha county, and a public meeting was arranged. The time was occupied by Elders Brinton, Rydalch and Brinton on the atonement, faith and repentance. The same night there was received letters in Mercer county, and long could we reciprocate the hospitality of Brother Adkins and family, as Mr. Joseph R. Smith and family, Brinton's nearest legal kin, are living in S. W. Odell, of Salt Lake City, and W. H. Maxwell, of Kaysville, Davis, arrived and were assigned to Kentucky as their field of operations.

Samuel Brinton and W. E. Rydalch, Charleston, West Virginia.

Orlando Bradley and C. B. Smith, Union, Monroe Co., West Virginia.

H. E. Taylor and J. S. Campbell, Concord Church, Mercer Co., West Virginia.

Geo. T. Taylor and John G. Pearl, Greenup, Greenup Co., Ky.

H. H. Cluff and Elias S. Woodruff, Catlettsburg, Boyd Co., Ky.

H. H. Hindley and W. H. Maxwell, Louisa, Lawrence Co., Ky.

Judson Tolman and L. H. Longston, Sandy Hook, Elliott Co., Ky.

Hezekiah W. Beers and F. M. Warnick, Long, Macon Co., Ky.

W. J. Glass and Matthew Spurs, Paintsville, Johnson Co., Ky.

Chas. A. Higgins and W. D. Rose, Grays, Carter Co., Ky.

W. H. Harris and B. D. Wilson, Vanceburg, Lewis Co., Ky.

Henry Bartholomew and W. N. Casper, travelling and teaching the saints in the canyons country of Raleigh, Boone, Wyoming, Logan and Lincoln.

Nearly our entire force will begin canvassing Kentucky, but a sufficient number will be kept in this state to perform all necessary duties. The conference will be known as the West Virginia conference.

The following is a synopsis of the work accomplished from April 1 to Nov. 1, 1895: Farmers visited, 11,219; tracts distributed, 17,441; received testimonies of the Elders, 509; refused entertainment, 890; miles walked, 14,251; meetings held, 229; Voices of Warning given away, 144; Sunday schools organized, 1; baptisms, 93; children blessed, 19; number of Elders increased from 12 to 22; number of Saints emigrated, 19; new counties opened, 12; counties closed, 13; counties belonging to the Southern States mission yet to be closed, 2.

From the report it will be seen that the Elders are laboring with much zeal. There is a spirit of unusual obedience to counsel and a unity of purpose in spreading the glad tidings of great joy, that is very pleasing. Not only is this the case in our conference, but throughout the entire mission there is a determination among the brethren to do their whole duty as God gives them light.

It will surely give much satisfaction to the anxious authorities to know that the laborers in the Southern States mission are being very well received and entertained by the people. The most influential men in the neighborhoods where we have been working, have been our kindest friends and many of the best houses of worship have been opened to us. Bountifully has the Lord blessed us, and gratefully are we beginning to be looked upon as indeed his servants. The Saints go home from our general conference filled with a new determination to serve the Almighty in spirit and in truth, so I be better men and women therefrom. We our Elders to the missionary fields to their places of labor from our conference enlivened with the spirit of their calling, with renewed faith, and a resolve to press forward in the work of the ministry. 'Tis truly a privilege much appreciated to meet as a band of brethren and listen to the cheering words of counsel of our worthy president. The Elders in their testimonies expressed themselves fully sustaining the authorities both at home and abroad. The earnest labors of Elder Kimball are much valued by us, and we feel to work diligently, so that his brightest hopes for the future of the Southern States mission may be realized, and that truth may be sown broadcast upon the earth.

Ever praying for the welfare of Zion, we are,

Your brethren in the Gospel,
SAMUEL BRINTON, President,
W. E. RYDALCH, Clerk.

P. S.—The brethren of this conference appreciate your kindness in sending them the NEWS. Each week it is welcome, and through its instrumentality many are being enlightened in the plan of salvation.

Bannock Stake Conference.

The quarterly conference of the Bannock Stake of Zion was held in the music hall, Rexburg, Sunday and Monday, Dec. 8 and 9. Two meetings were held each day at the usual hours. There were present on the day Elder John Henry Smith, of the Quorum of Apostles; the Stake presidency, Patriarchs, High Councilors and Bishops.

After usual opening exercises President Thos. E. Ricks reported the travels of the Stake presidency for the first three months. All the wards had been visited since last conference and all our organizations are in good condition. Bishops reported their wards in satisfactory condition.

Elder John Henry Smith was the principal speaker on Sunday. He discoursed upon the duties of the Saints to take care of the poor, of the privileges attending the observance of fast days, particularly he dwelt upon the spiritual phase of the institution of fast day, it being a great sacrificial part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the afternoon he treated upon the evidences of the existence of Deity and the attributes of the Almighty and showed how it was in the power of all to obtain a testimony of these things.

Other speakers expounded on the same the principles of the Gospel and exhorted to lives of righteousness.

M. Inter President Joseph F. Smith and Elder Benjamin Cluff joined in conference. The latter was our first speaker. He had known for a long time that the Gospel was true; spoke of our mission to earth, of the agency and the grand philosophical character of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The systems of the greatest scientists are incomparable with the truths of the Gospel revealed through Joseph Smith. He encouraged young men to seek the path of success by shunning temptation.

President Joseph F. Smith was grateful for the opportunity of visiting the Saints, it being the first time he had been in this part of the country. Following the remarks of Elder Cluff, the speaker said the scientific people do not believe anything they cannot reason out. Such men err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. He bore a powerful testimony of the truth of the Gospel, and told how the humblest can obtain the same testimony.

The afternoon session of Monday was wholly taken up on the temporal situation of the Saints. Stake Counselors Thomas E. Bassett and Wm. F. Rigby spoke chiefly upon the opportunities of our community of young people. Elder John Henry Smith gave some hints as to building comfortable homes and how to make them attractable. President Joseph F. Smith showed the beneficial results of doing things right, how it paid to take good care of our property and gave some illustrations of the thrifty habits of the people in the early days of Utah and commended their practices as being wrong still of our consideration.

The General and Stake authorities were presented and unanimously sustained. President Thomas E. Ricks thanked the Saints for their attention and all who had aided in making the conference enjoyable. Conference adjourned for three months. Benediction by Patriarch A. E. Hinckley.

JAMES GILLESPIE,
Stake Recorder.

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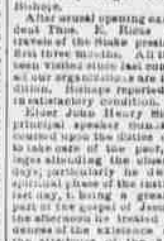

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