

stand constantly before the face of our Father in heaven, pleading their cause, watching over them, and having charge concerning them.

I have spoken about the evil spirits and the evil influences that fell with Satan; but I have not mentioned that glorious host of angels and pure spirits that are at the right hand of God our Eternal Father, who are His agents, who are carrying out His behests and who are watching over His elect at all times, lest they should strike their feet against a stone. God takes care of us and of all His children; and if we will be faithful unto Him, no matter how deep our afflictions may be, no matter how heavy our sorrows, no matter though it may seem to us we will be crushed to earth, God is still near unto us; His angels have charge concerning us, and we shall be saved and delivered, and eventually exalted, if we are faithful to our God, which I pray for you all and myself, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### AUSTRALASIAN MISSION.

I herewith forward you an account of the annual conference of the Australasian mission, which was held at Te Hauke, a Maori "pa," or village, situated twenty-seven miles southwest of the town of Napier, N. Z. During the past year the native Saints had been looking forward with great expectation to what they call the "hui tau," or general conference, as they are much given to gathering together in large assemblies whenever they can have good things to eat. However, other motives prompted them this time, namely, to worship the Lord.

On March 27th President Paxman arrived at the place of conference, having made a very successful visit to all the districts on the island, holding conferences and meetings among the Saints and outsiders.

The following week was fully spent in drawing up reports, etc., and making arrangements for the entertainment of the large number of people who would attend. The different branches of the Hawkes Bay district had each completed arrangements to supply certain quantities of food, etc. During the week they were engaged in hauling in loads of potatoes, flour, sweet potatoes, fish and firewood. The Saints belonging to the "pa" had also been busy, preparing houses in which to sleep, eat and cook. Of course the houses were not quite as modern as those in Salt Lake City. They had also prepared ovens in which to bake bread and cook other food by digging a large circular hole in the bank of a stream, the flooring being lined with brick. This they covered over, leaving only an aperture in order to place the fuel in position, and another in the roof to allow the smoke to escape. When it was sufficiently heated the fire was withdrawn, the bread, cakes, meat, etc., were placed in the heated bricks, and the apertures closed up until

the food was cooked. This arrangement produced excellent bread. It was quite a novel experience to us.

The younger members were likewise busy, but in another direction, practicing a series of dances and songs with which to welcome the visiting Saints. Each day small companies of Saints arrived until April 3rd, when the Elders from the North, accompanied by a large number of natives, came in sight. This was the sign for the young people to prepare to greet them.

They formed two companies of about fifty each and marched out for some distance from the "pa." When the visitors were within good hearing distance, the first company, which was principally composed of females, commenced to sing their "powhiri," or song of welcome, dancing and waving their arms in unison, keeping time to the measure of the song, and at each repetition of the song they would dance backwards towards the "pa," the visitors advancing. Having kept this up for some time the first company withdrew, and company No. 2 came to the front. They consisted entirely of men who had decorated their faces with red paint and provided themselves with imitation Maori weapons. They at once commenced a "haka." This partakes somewhat of a war dance. The one who can come nearest to making his tongue touch his ear, his eyes jump from their sockets and shout the loudest is considered the leading man. They also cause their bodies to twist and take peculiar shapes, evidently with the intention of frightening people away rather than bid them welcome. This was kept up for some time, when the two parties united and with another variety of dance led the strangers into the "pa." The same afternoon the Elders and Saints from the southern part of the island arrived. In the evening a general meeting was held at which a good spirit prevailed, making us feel that everything was prosperous for the conference.

The following day the Elders, in company with the Saints from the districts on the east coast, arrived and received a similar welcome. As one year had elapsed since the Elders met, you may imagine the good time we had and the brotherly love that was manifested. It was a joyous meeting. We had also to "hongi," or rub noses, with our kind Maori friends, and when it was over there was a general complaint about "sore noses"—as the greater the love the more severe is the ordeal.

On Saturday, April 6th, 1889, at 10 a.m., the fourth annual conference was called to order by President William Paxman, who offered the opening prayer, in which he dedicated all to the Lord, asking that influences foreign to the Gospel should be bound, so that peace, unity and harmony might prevail. He then addressed the large assembly, saying, "I greet you in the love of Jesus Christ, because you are the children of God. I rejoice because we have met in conference, and I thank God for His mercies and blessings to you. You all look brighter

and happier than those who are not in the Church—more like the children of God. Even as the Gospel makes the Elders look different from the white people in this land, so you are different in appearance from the other Maoris. The Prophet and Saints are transacting the business of the Church in Zion today, as we are. I am glad there are so many present in excess of last year. The Church was organized fifty-nine years ago with six members. Today it numbers hundreds of thousands. We are living in the days of the salvation and redemption of Zion. I know this is the Church of God; that the little stone is rolling and will fill the whole earth. Should we not rejoice that we are members of this Church? I know you do."

During the day the districts were reported. In the past year there has been an increase of 743, or 237 over last year's increase. The most noticeable additions have taken place in the north, where 327 have been added. It is a new field and a great interest has been manifested. The native population in that section is about eight thousand. In the middle and southern parts of the island it is different. When the Gospel was first presented, about five years ago, large numbers flocked to the Elders' call of repentance. As many as fifty or sixty were baptized at a time. Now they have gone back into their old, careless ways; and though the majority will admit they believe our principles, yet they put the Elders off by saying, "Wait a little; we will come into the church when we feel like it."

In the afternoon we were made happy by the arrival of a company of five new Elders direct from Zion. Their names are Jos. Groesbeck, J. H. Burton, Heber S. Cutler, H. D. Haight and E. Johnson. There were many questions put to them about things at home.

At a Priesthood meeting in the evening President Paxman said: "I take pleasure in welcoming those who have assembled together in the fear of the Lord. I can tell you that there has never been a gathering on this island similar to this, and I know that the angels of God are with us, for God has a great interest in us, having been ordained to His Priesthood. I also know that Brothers Joseph and Hyrum are laboring in the work of God; and although they are in the spirit world they are still interested in this great latter-day work. The least among you is greater in the sight of God than the greatest potentate. I am thankful to be able to present to you the Book of Mormon, so that you may read of the promises of God to your fathers at the time when they were a white and delightsome people. We are living in the days when those promises will be fulfilled. This book will be the means of bringing many to a knowledge of God, and I feel in my heart to praise and thank you for the work you have done."

A financial report of the printing of the Book of Mormon was then read and accepted. A number of the "Rangitiras" spoke, complimenting the Elders upon the honor-