

FROM THE MISSIONARY FIELDS.

In the Eastern States Mission.

Lindsey, Jefferson Co., Pa.,
July 13, 1898.

Twelve months ago, the 4th Inst., I left my mountain home in obedience to go forth in the world to proclaim the Gospel. To say that I was not looking for such a call would be wrong, for it had been said to me, by the Lord, through his servant, the Patriarch, that it would be required of me in due time.

On arrival of the message to me, my first thoughts were, was I prepared, competent, or qualified to go forth in the world? Had I made any preparations of myself that would qualify me to creditably represent the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints among men? This was my first thought, and it was a very important matter for me. Some said to me, prior to my departure, Would it not be wiser for you to go later in the season, as the weather is so dangerously hot? Terrible to leave this cool mountain atmosphere and risk one's life, all of a sudden, in suffocating regions, where scores are prostrated daily by the extreme heat! Others would say: It is near the Jubilee (24th of July); you had better wait another month or so and take in the Jubilee, as it will only come once in a lifetime. This last persuasion was, I confess, hard to overcome, and thus deny myself of its pleasures, for I had been looking ahead to this glorious event, but I had been called and the time set for my departure, with others (and I was no better than others).

Shortly after leaving Ogden (July 8th), a nice, cool, beautiful rain set in. This made our trip across the Rocky Mountains and great plains very pleasant indeed. Some 34 years prior to this time, I crossed these same endless prairies and mountains afoot (when only a lad of ten summers), that is, our ride came occasionally when on a down grade, but all this would not amount to over 50 miles in all.

Many an old landmark did I see and know. I knew every stream crossing without making any inquiries. Many a deserted farm could be seen from the car window, as we sped along western Kansas, all for the want of sufficient water to moisten the earth. There is no better soil found anywhere than is here seen. What a pity that the water is not to be had! The question that came to me was, Would the Lord cause a change to come over nature in order to favor this parched country? He had done this to the people of the Rocky Mountains, where little or no water was once found; here at this day is found water in plenty. Increase of water came according to the demand. "Let the water increase; and it was done according to their faith."

We remained over one day at Omaha and another at Chicago. Both of these cities are great, and they would today be most beautiful, had they been founded and laid out by the master hand as those cities have been that are found in the mountains. Their greatness would then enhance their beauty, but as they are seen today, one would believe that the streets were laid out after buildings were erected—at random. The weather still continued fine, which made travel very pleasant and agreeable. Our disappointment came when entering the train at Chicago for Pittsburg. We naturally looked for better train accommodations, as the farther east we came, but east is not in it alongside of the west. Western accommodations, from Chicago west, are far superior.

We arrived at Pittsburg in due time.

Much business is going on in and around this city. Shortly after our arrival at Pittsburg we made inquiries for a New England village, or post office, but no one seemed to know anything about such a village or post-office. We made inquiries of the Pittsburg Post city editor. This gentleman had heard of a branch of our Church out some fifteen miles or so in the hills, and directed us to a street car, going out that way; 15 cents carried us out to our destination. The little New England village where one of our branches is located, is composed of about twenty-five families. Most of its inhabitants obtain their living by extracting coal from mother earth. Brother George Barnes and the Salats received and treated us very kindly. Here we met Elder Joshua Selley, of Salt Lake City, who had been put in charge of the western part of Pennsylvania conference. After resting a few days from the effects of the trip, I was assigned to labor (in company with Elder Walter F. Rich of Paris, Idaho,) in Somerset county. Elder Rich and myself met, for the first time, in the city of Somerset. We went to and prepared our field of labor for the mission, by unitedly offering up a prayer unto the Lord that he might aid us in opening up this field, and prepare it for future work. From the date of our arrival until October 20th following, we traveled in this county some 2,000 miles or so, in our effort to visit the people and deliver the message of salvation to them. We met much opposition, but no persecution. The county papers did much to oppose us. Every old mountebank had something to say about us. Such characters usually resort to the press to give vent to the inner man (as from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh). The editors (some of them) are willing tools of such characters, who are generally either ministers or Sabbath school class leaders.

Brother Rich is a hard worker in the missionary field, and, as I also came out to do my duty, we did much to allay prejudice, as we gained many friends, warm friends, who are investigating the Gospel carefully.

During our travels in this county we have preached in churches that had been closed for from three to four years, all because the people could not afford to pay the preacher what he demanded of them as wages.

In preaching the Gospel and aiding the people to clearly understand the same, is a greater undertaking than many people think. Suppose you attempt to teach an individual to properly handle and perform on an instrument, say a violin; perhaps he can play some on the instrument; hence, the first thing you do with him is to find out how much he can perform and the way he does it. After you ascertain this you will find out that, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, you will have to start them entirely anew throughout. What makes it worse is, that they have acquired old habits (superstitions) that are hard for them to overcome. Just so is teaching the true Gospel to the world; what little has been taught them has only led them astray. Once in a great while we meet, here and there, one that is on the right track, as far as they have gone. Authority to preach, and administering the ordinances of the Gospel, the people understand little about.

Toward the close of Oct., 1897, we bade our friends in Somerset county goodbye, taking our course toward Emporium, Cameron county (where our conference was to be held). We

walked the whole distance, preaching and distributing tracts as we went along, held several interesting meetings and sold some books. The course we took must have made the distance nearly 150 miles. At this conference I was assigned to labor in Jefferson county (in connection with Elder A. B. Neff of South Mill Creek, Salt Lake county). This also was a new field, and proved to be very hard for us to make an opening, but by the help of the Lord, things by this date begin to look encouraging.

I am sorry to state that my companion, Elder Neff, had to return home on account of sickness in his family. This occurred about the last of February this year. Elder Samuel D. Winter succeeded Brother Neff as my companion and we continued together until our last April conference, which was held in Washington county. Elder Winter and myself took to the road and walked the distance, preaching, teaching and giving away tracts as we passed along. Sometimes we would be denied hospitality as much as fifteen times of an evening, before obtaining a place to lay our heads, but for all this we met some most excellent people. There is much prejudice found in the land, but am thankful to see that it is giving way. The truth is driving it out. A spirit of violence was in the hearts of the people, many of them, when we first came here; but we have withstood them. They insulted us on ever hand. We found and made friends notwithstanding all this opposition. Today many of them are ashamed of what they did. A gentleman said to me the other day: "I am astonished at the peaceable way you men have in going around among the people, when insults are hurled at you on the right and left." I said to him: "Do you know how the disciples and Apostles of old were able to put up with such treatment?" "Why, it was because they had the truth, and the Lord was with them," answered my friend.

"Just so," I said, "and this is the reason and the only reason why we go right ahead with our work. And we will continue doing so until the work is finished and the gates of hell will not prevail against it, for the Lord has spoken it."

We have many controversies with ministers. At the first they request us to confine ourselves to the Scriptures. This is just what we desire to do, but, soon we find out that our opponents are at work outside, with their opinions and ideas. Some of them go so far as to ask us if we think they have authority to preach the Gospel. We refer them to what the Apostle Paul has to say about this. (Heb. 6: 4.) They acknowledge that they were not called in this way, but "think" the Bible gives them authority. Latter-day Saint Elders must not feel at all put out on account of the acts of these ministers, for this is the way they have been brought up. I believe many of them to be sincere in the course they pursue. I do not question the honesty of their faith (many of them) but the trouble is, that this faith which they possess is founded upon false evidence.

After our spring conference Elder Marcus Taggart and myself were sent back to Jefferson and Indiana counties to continue the work. Elder Taggart came lately from Lewiston, Cache county. Since our return to these parts we have held meetings in nearly every village between the city of Punxatawny and Indiana and visited hundreds of families. In many of these we could be seen sitting in the family circle with the family Bible on our knees, setting forth the beautiful doctrine therein recorded, occasionally being kindly entertained by a minister