

Written for this Paper.

INDIAN TERRITORY MISSION.

LETTER II.

ST. JOHN, Kansas,
September 17, 1895.

The Saints and Elders were gathering to St. John prior to the arrival of Elder Andrew Kimball and party from Utah. Elders Wm. D. Bowring and Alvin A. Beesley have been released from their former field to travel in the new conference. They had been joined by Bro. P. H. Margette and A. N. Wallace, and all were on their way to our future field of labor. Arriving at Hutchinson, Kansas, we were struck with the similarity between this little city and home, for on each side of the streets a row of shade trees could be seen for miles. The streets are also wide and improved, presenting a pleasing appearance to visitors.

On entering the train at 10:10 p.m., bound for St. John, we were agreeably surprised to find our Utah party on the same car. After a year's separation from our friends it was a pleasure to shake hands with some one just from Zion. A ride of two hours brought us to our destination, where Bros. Lyon and Coolbear awaited our arrival. The party went immediately to our new house of worship, which stands as a monument to the untiring efforts of Elders Lyon, Coolbear, Davis and Anderson. It is on a beautiful spot of land overlooking all Stafford county.

For many days the hospitable people of St. John had been awaiting our arrival, so Brother Coolbear had no difficulty finding accommodations for thirty tired and weary missionaries. On the afternoon of Saturday, Sept. 7th, we held a Priesthood meeting. Many institutions were given, and reports made, and Elders A. N. Wallace, D. W. Coolbear and A. H. Davis released to return home. It was decided that hereafter there will be no presiding Elder here, but Elder W. D. Bowring will act as secretary and assistant president of the mission.

At 5 p.m. a general meeting of the Church members was held. There were on the stand eighteen Elders from Utah besides Elders Edward Stevenson and A. Kimball and four local Elders.

Sunday morning, Sept. 8th, the Elders, and friends of St. John numbering about 200 met, and under the direction of Brother Kimball, organized a Sabbath school, with officers and teachers. An informal meeting was gone through with, and service was closed till 2 p.m.

Long before the appointed hour the house was crowded to its utmost capacity. More chairs were brought from the adjoining building, so that by 2 p.m. it was estimated that fully 500 had come to witness the dedicatory services.

Elder Coolbear called the assembly to order and the choir, consisting of thirty-three voices, assisted by Prof. Kane, cornetist, Elder P. H. Margette, violinist, and Elder Henry Kirkman, organist, sang the hymn, "This house we dedicate to Thee."

The opening prayer was by J. C. Lyon. The choir rendered, "For the strength of the hills we bless Thee."

Brother Coolbear was the first speaker. He told of the erection of the

house and of his work in connection with Elders Lyon, Davis and Anderson. Also gave an account of money received and disbursed, which amounted to \$1,585. He closed by thanking the people of St. John for their many acts of kindness to himself and fellow laborers.

A mandolin and guitar selection followed by Brothers Byron Nebeker and Alvin Beesley.

Elder Andrew Kimball then arose and offered a dedicatory prayer.

Although the hall was packed almost to suffocation, perfect order was maintained throughout and a heartfelt "amen" was detected from many not of our faith.

"Oh my Father, Thou that dwellest," was sung by Elders Samuel and Henry Kirkman, P. H. Margette, J. M. Fullmer and Alvin A. Beesley.

Elder Stevenson then spoke and the citizens of St. John were promised rich blessings and that they would never regret the assistance rendered.

A violin solo by Elder P. H. Margette followed and was appreciated by all.

Elder Kimball spoke of the success achieved by Elders Lyon, Coolbear, Davis and Anderson, and the Saints and their friends in St. John, and said Kansas would yet grow to be a great Mormon commonwealth. If the citizens of Kansas would continue in their good work, prosperity would be showered upon them. The words of the Prophet would be fulfilled regarding this land.

The choir sang, "Praise to the man," etc., and benediction was pronounced by Elder A. H. Davis.

Although our beautiful little meeting house has the largest seating capacity of any in the city of St. John, it was found to be inadequate for the crowds that gathered at night to learn more of the Latter-day Saints. Owing to this, the enterprising citizens procured the large pavilion, which has a seating capacity of seven hundred people, for us to hold our evening session in.

At 8 p.m. Elder Geo. W. Baker, of St. John, welcomed the people previously to Brother Stevenson commencing his subject. Immediately after the musical exercises the valuable and interesting charts belonging to Elder Stevenson were produced and a more instructive lecture or interested audience would be hard to find anywhere. For fully two hours his hearers were held spellbound, drinking in every word he uttered regarding that important subject—the Book of Mormon. Many regretted his having to stop before finishing, but owing to the late hour, he announced he would finish the following evening in the same hall.

Once more the good people of St. John stepped forth and selected from one to four of our party to accompany them home where they could partake of a refreshing sleep before our next day's gathering.

At 9:30 a.m., Monday, the musical sound of the great bell warned all of the approaching hour for our morning session, by pealing forth its notes to the inhabitants of the city, numbering about one thousand souls.

Our morning services were devoted to the hearing of testimonies by the following Elders: J. M. Fullmer, J. M. Knight, P. H. Margette, Charles Solomon and Alvin A. Beesley.

Elder Kimball followed, giving an interesting account of his personal experiences in the Indian territory mission in 1884 and 1885.

After appropriate singing Elder John A. Eardley dismissed.

Immediately after the closing of the morning's session our party were happily thrown in contact with more of the liberalities of our friends. A sufficient number of vehicles were at our disposal with guides who drove us to all the principal points of interest, and through their immense fields of corn whose crops are second to none in the world. During the drive they were so impressed with the subject of irrigation, practiced so successfully in Utah, that Brothers Stevenson and Kimball were urged to remain a day longer than they expected, and devote an evening to "Emigration to Utah," and the "Advantages of Irrigation."

Promptly at 2 p.m. Brother J. C. Lyon, president of the Kansas conference, called the meeting to order, his wife, daughter of the pioneer Wm. H. Foster of the Seventh ward, Salt Lake City, presiding at the organ. Singing; prayer by Elder W. A. Braudon, of St. John; singing.

Elder Heber O. Anderson gave some of his experiences as traveling Elder in the Cherokee conference.

Elder A. H. Davis, who had been honorably released to return home immediately after conference, addressed the people on the apostasy.

Elder J. C. Lyon spoke briefly on the first principles of the Gospel, followed by Elder Evan Evanson, who was on his way for his second mission. He spoke very interestingly of his first mission.

Brother George Baker Sr. was pleased beyond expression for the opportunity of meeting with the Elders and Saints of his own faith. Brother Baker was formerly a member of the Bickertonite church, being led to this section of country by their leader many years ago, but has since united in connection with his family with our people.

Singing; prayer by Elder Alvin A. Beesley.

By 8 o'clock p.m. the large pavilion was comfortably seated with expectant listeners eager to hear more of our doctrine. After the usual exercises of singing and prayer, Brother A. H. Davis presiding, Elder Stevenson dwelt for a half hour on the subject of the previous night, viz., the divinity of the Book of Mormon and calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Elder Andrew Kimball followed on the origin of man, and his destiny.

At the close of the address our chorus sang "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning," and prayer was offered by William E. Newman.

Tuesday morning, Sept. 10, was selected as an appropriate time for a meeting to be held under the auspices of the Seventies. It was conducted by Elder Geo. W. Baker. After the musical exercises Brother Stevenson gave valuable advice to the Seventies just entering in their new avocation. Related the experience he had had with Wm. Bickerton while at St. John. Mr. Bickerton claimed to have the authority necessary to further God's work given him by the Lord through Sidney Rigdon.