

The Work in Tennessee—Evil Over-ruled for Good—Interest in the Gospel Increasing—A Model Epistle.

COOKVILLE, Putnam County, Tenn., April 4th 1887.

Editor Deseret News:

As it is now over fourteen months since we left our beloved mountain home we have decided to pen a few of our thoughts and experiences, trusting they may find a place in your valuable paper.

Missionary labor is not what an unsophisticated and inexperienced youth at home may think it is. Perhaps some may say, "we have heard that before." Well and good, it will not suffer by repeating. There is better satisfaction, greater joy and more real, genuine happiness in missionary life than we supposed there possibly could be, even though we had heard many returning missionaries express themselves as having spent the most enjoyable portion of their lives, not at home, but on their missions.

A young Elder comes out rather "green" in more ways than one, sees the country, mingles with the people, partakes of their hospitality, and in a month becomes acquainted with the "ins and outs" of everything pertaining to the "sunny south." The next thing he does is to impart the vast information thus received in a month's close study, in which nothing has the appearance of being as good as home, to his friends and relatives, often to the local papers of his place of residence, and sometimes to the DESERET NEWS, his epistle not being overburdened with charity.

Six months pass by. The same green Elder has ripened wonderfully and while perusing his first letters to the NEWS he becomes astonished at what he has written. Things do not appear to him now as they did then. Charity has exerted itself and is presenting matters before him in as far different light. Seeing his error he stops at the thought of writing again; reflects upon the extremely truthful (?) histories, letters and accounts published about the "Mormons" by having spent a month in Utah; trembles at the probability of having written on a subject he knew nothing of; wonders what his friends, the Saints of this land and the experienced Elders thought; resolves to wait six months longer in order to get better posted, and — what is the result? He is seldom, if ever, heard of again, except in private letters. Such should not be the case. If we have erred, let us acknowledge our error when we have learned better. At one in the same way the error was committed, namely, publicly, and thus give the credit due to the people wronged as far as it lies in our power. In the first place it is wisdom to be cautious and not too hasty in our conclusions. But the error once committed, by all means let it be rectified. For our part, though we prefer our mountains, we must give unbounded praise for the kindness and hospitality—a hospitality almost proverbial and worthy of imitation—shown us, as a rule, by the people of the South.

Many pleasant and laughable incidents it has been our lot to participate in, and, in fact, we have been the main object of them all. We have found the people very kind-hearted and sympathetic, their better feelings having ruled the day, or rather the evening, even to the shedding of tears while listening to our singing the songs of Zion, from time to time. What a power there is in those inspired hymns! Power for good that should in no wise be neglected or thrown aside by our Elders. Having compiled with the "Sing us a song or two" almost invariably asked at every stopping place, is a positive guarantee of receiving unlimited praise and applause from the appreciative listeners; and often when the Gospel principles would have been scornfully rejected had we sought to preach the same unto them, we have sung them in the hymns that so fully abound with doctrines of our hallowed faith. Good has thus been accomplished and a word now and then between each hymn has been accepted and at times fallen in fruitful ground.

We have sought for the spirit of our labors, and truly the Lord has blessed us in that respect, and though failures and disappointments have been numerous, we feel as undaunted as ever, and with the help of the Almighty will continue to do so.

Persecution is, of course, our portion, as well as the rest of God's people. For it we care but little, as the blessings of God and the joy often swelling our bosoms repays us tenfold for the trials endured. Yes, we prefer to endure them in order to enjoy the blessings. That, of course, is the sentiment of every true Latter-day Saint.

We find many friends, and the attempts at violence, threats, lies and falsehoods arrayed against us only serve to promote the welfare of the cause, as has been shown in innumerable instances. One will suffice. A Christian Baptist minister had been very active in publishing our "vile motives," our "horrible monstrosities" nacted at home," our "false doctrines," and exposing the "false prophet Joseph Smith—ah, who is now in hell—ah, where all false prophets go—ah," and as we found we were losing ground, the people believing his words to be true, as we did not answer his

charges, which were always made at public meetings when we were not present, we were forced to resort to something to counteract his influence. We therefore challenged him to prove his assertions and disprove our doctrines, at any time or place he felt disposed to name, the Bible to be used as the standard whereby to do so. To this we received the following reply, which is a true copy of the original:

"I sent myself to drop you a few lines in answer to the challenge you sent me. I am at a loss to know what you mean. Whether you have Chalene me for a site or gentleman DeBate. if you will take your faith in fall and what you say you believe to be write and the Book of mormon and every lye that you have aded to the Word of god and then make me no that you are not horse thieves or run from your homes for some other Crime I will meet you and Will sho yo that Jo Smith Was a lyer and that you also is a lyer and a survent of the devel. if it is mnsic you Want you are Pulling the right string. S. D. B—."

It is almost needless to comment on the above. It serves to show what class of men are fighting the truth. Fancy us "making him know" these things ere he would debate with us! It was impossible for us to accept anything so ludicrous. Nevertheless, it brought good results. Whenever asked about the debate, which had been widely circulated, we would read them the answer to our challenge. They would at once take sides with us, the Reverend (?) gradually lost influence, two were baptized and others seem ready to follow. The next step was to force us out by mobs led by the same follower (?) of the meek and lowly Jesus; but his attempt failing, he has now, according to his own words, "quit making a fool of himself."

While passing a crowd we often hear such remarks as these: "Who are they?" "Mormons?" "No—are they them cussed mormons?" "Yes, and they'd steal a horse in a minute." Then follows a loud guffaw. Our thoughts on such occasions are generally to this effect: "Laugh on. You remind us of the man who attempted to push the bull into the river. If he had not got his laugh beforehand he never would have had it. Your laugh will soon turn to the sickly whine 'give us of your oil for our lamps are gone out.'" "Not so; go ye and buy of those who sell." Soon we'll hear you crying, "Lord, open to us." "Depart, know ye not." When these thoughts occur to us, all resentment disappears and pity takes its place. This sympathy for their souls stimulates us to repeatedly offer them oil that they may replenish their lamps ere the coming of the Bridegroom.

In order to show how palatable our doctrines and principles are to the various sects and parties when not known to be "Mormonism," we relate the following: A Baptist minister who had devoted a great portion of his time and sullied his ministerial profession in slandering the "Mormons," succeeded in obtaining a dilapidated copy of a No. 2 tract, written by Elder John Morgan, the front and back being torn off. This he studied for some time and finally concluded he had found an invincible weapon which would be of great value to him in confounding the enemies of truth. To commence with, he first tried an experiment on one of our friends, a Mr. K—. After introducing the subject he produced his "valuable document" with the words, "There! read that and see what you think of it."

Looked at by Mr. K— who recognized in it one of our tracts. "Why, that is very good." "Yes, and it does away with your Mormon falsehoods." "You must be mistaken, for instead of doing away with the falsehoods, as you please to term them, it proves them as Mormon doctrines." "No sir—ee. Mormonism has no such doctrine as that. That is genuine, good, old Baptist doctrine." "I'll prove it to you," responded Mr. K—, and bringing a full copy he bade the minister compare the two. This he proceeded to do, but no sooner found himself sold than the once so "valuable document" was thrown to the ground, while he departed in haste, muttering something about "damnable, rotten, false doctrine."

This little incident fully demonstrates the nature of the crusade waged against us by the ministers of the day. The Mormons must perish for their belief; but if their doctrine was taught by one of the granddaughters of the mother of harlots, it would be esteemed as the Gospel of Christ—which of course it would be, minus the divine authority to preach it or administer in its ordinances.

There are many incidents of a like nature transpiring from day to day, but they all serve a good purpose; and today the work in this Conference is progressing favorably, some fifteen having been baptized the last two months, and prospects for doing good being brighter than at any time since our arrival in this state.

Much of it is due to the energetic labors of our Conference President, Brother H. K. Perkins, who has labored hard to set the Conference in order, cutting off the dead branches and trimming up the tree so that nothing will hinder its progress and growth.

The publication of certain derogatory statements about us from time to time by the Gospel Advocate and the Apostolic Guide, the two organs of the "Christian Order," better known as Campbellites, published in Tennessee and Kentucky, serve also to awaken interest and inquiry and help the work

along. So let our enemies add their mite in rolling onward the little stone, till it fills the whole earth.

As we have stated, the good results are already appearing and there seem to be a good harvest in store for us the coming season, considering it is generally conceded that the harvest is over.

Your co-laborers in the cause of truth.

JOHN V. BLUTH,

JESSE N. PERKINS.