

THE MISSIONARY FIELD:

News from Elders J. V. Bluth and Frank Stratford.

Through the courtesy of friends in this city we have been permitted to peruse letters from Elders J. V. Bluth and Frank Stratford, who are now laboring as missionaries in the Southern States, and from them we learn the following:

Elder Stratford, writing under May 29th, says that the feeling which up till recently he had supposed to be very good toward the elders in the section in which they are now laboring, has changed somewhat. A few days ago, by request, the elders called upon a young man at the house of his parents. They stayed all night, and during the evening they were treated very kindly. But in the morning the spirit towards the elders had changed. While eating breakfast the good man of the house asked them why they made his residence their stopping place. The elders replied that they came there at the request of his son. The father remarked that the doctrines the Elders are teaching are very unpopular, and, therefore, he could not permit them to call again. The servants of God thanked him very kindly and went their way rejoicing. Brother Stratford very quaintly remarks that they were glad they were not told to go before the morning repast had been partaken of.

The Elders then started in quest of a member of the Church who has not been visited for some time, and in their peregrinations came across an individual who claimed to be a Baptist minister. Our young friend describes him as he came towards them as carrying a large cane; his nose was bound up for some cause and tobacco juice was streaming down his chin. In answer to his inquiries as to where the missionaries came from, he was told they were from Utah. This seemed to scare him and he assailed the Elders with the most vituperative language. He asserted that they had the Bible and plenty of preachers, and that he would not give a dam for anybody who would teach aught besides "Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

After a lengthy conversation profusely punctured with threats and menaces from the minister, the Elders and the Baptist minister (?) separated.

Brother Stratford is well and a few closing words of his letter are characteristic of the experience of a traveling Elder. He says he is thankful for some stamps that were sent him. He had only two or three left and only ten cents in his pocket to purchase more and from that he was loathe to part.

The letter from Elder Bluth was written May 17th and withal is very interesting. So far, he says, he has made no converts, but then, as he very truthfully remarks, this is a day of gleaning and "converts are like angel's visits." However, there are many who are investigating the truth and there are prospects of bringing some into the fold of Christ in the near future.

The Elders, says Brother Bluth, are received in every imaginable manner. By some, kindly, by others coldly, some scornfully, some wrathfully, some with slander and some with abuse. Still, as a rule, the people are hospitable and the Lord has raised up friends to administer to the wants of the servants of God, and there are a very few times they go hungry. Persecution is raging, but instead of doing material harm it is doing much good and the Gospel is spreading.

Elder Bluth narrates a circumstance which occurred a few Sundays since, which is as follows: The Elders were holding a meeting in a certain place, and they were fortunate in securing the good attention of the audience throughout the services. As soon as they had dismissed, a Christian Baptist minister arose and commenced an attack upon, first, the character of Joseph Smith, and second, of the Mormons. He read from a pamphlet published in 1852. Before he concluded, several of the congregation became disgusted and went out. Finally, the whole congregation left and the minister was alone. He gained nothing, while the Elders made many friends.

Life among the Southern people is graphically described by Brother Bluth. The country is very hilly, which makes traveling very tiresome. Wages for farm laborers, at the highest, is 50 cents per day, or \$10 per month, while some have worked through the winter for 25 and 30 cents per day. Religiously the people are split up into many factions, and religious dissensions are numerous.

Brother Bluth is enjoying good health, and desires to be remembered to his numerous friends in this city.