

derstood the Gospel better, we would baptize them. Just as soon, however, as Brother Taylor and others of the brethren got far enough along that when they would come there and talk English, the brethren would talk back in Japanese they commenced dropping off one by one. Nearly all our converts are of that kind. They love us very dearly, they know we have the truth, and they want to be baptized right away; but when we quit talking English to them they lose their love of the Gospel. It was very amusing to me to have an intelligent, bright Japanese sit down and talk a whole evening with Brother Taylor, determined to talk English and never a word of Japanese, and Brother Taylor, just as determined, to never say a word of English, speaking to him in Japanese.

We have baptized only three people so far, and two of them I am afraid, are no good. The other one, I believe, is a converted man and a Latter-day Saint. The two who were baptized first were quite promising, and, when I came home before, I reported how good we felt over these two men. One of them could speak English, and had read the Bible. Oh! he believed it all—ready to give his life for it. I found out afterwards that he wanted to borrow some money from me to start a patent medicine establishment. The other man, a Shinto priest, I tried to persuade to wait awhile before being baptized, but he said he believed every word. I took Brother Kelsch's "Ready References," and went over it with him, through an interpreter, reference by reference, and he swallowed every one of them. Inside of a week after I first left Japan, he wanted some money from the brethren, and as soon as I got back there he wanted fifteen hundred dollars from me to start a job printing office, and when he didn't get it, his faith oozed out. The last convert just "went for us" in the beginning. He had been taught English by a Christian minister, and he knew all the arguments of our Christian friends. He used to come regularly and have battles with Brother Taylor, and Brother Taylor beat him

every time, until it began to dawn on his mind that we must have the truth, seeing that everything he advanced was overcome. He commenced studying our faith, and read the Book of Mormon. He was finally baptized, and has been true ever since, and we hope he will continue so.

Now, I have not half told my story; but the time is past. God bless you. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn which begins :

Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor
fear,
But with joy wend your way;
Though hard to you this journey may
appear,
Grace shall be as your day.

Benediction by Elder David McKenzie.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The choir sang the sacred hymn:

"Peace Be Still."

Prayer was offered by Elder Charles F. Middleton.

The anthem "Hosanna" was sung by the choir.

PRESIDENT ANTHON H. LUND.

Obedience to truth the basis of freedom—Sin productive of bondage—Preparatory work for the coming of Christ.

I sincerely ask an interest in your faith and prayers. I desire to speak to you under the influence of the Holy Spirit, for any other influence would not edify us. I rejoice in seeing this large attendance at our conference. It manifests to us that the Saints are desirous of coming together and receiving the word of the Lord.

I was very much interested this morning in the remarks of our brethren who spoke to us. President Smith told us to be free, and not to be the slaves of sin. On one occasion, our Savior, in addressing the Jews who believed on Him, said to them, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They said to Him, "We be

Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" Jesus answered them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." In other words, the slave of sin. The Lord has commanded us that we shall loose the bands of wickedness and break every yoke. Now, we want to enjoy the blessing embodied in the words of Jesus: "The truth shall make you free." The Lord wants us to be free. In fact, one of the objects of our coming upon the earth was to be made free, and to learn the right use of freedom, or free agency. The Lord does not want us to be slaves, or even servants, in the sense of being in bondage; but He wants us to be His free sons and daughters. He wants us to learn the right use of free agency. The man who abstains from sin and from indulgence in sinful pleasures is not a servant or slave; he is a free man. Too many there are who do not understand this, and who lack the moral courage to use their free agency and do that which they know to be right. Too many there are who are afraid of what others shall say. Latter-day Saints, be not afraid of what others may say; but be afraid of what He who knows the inmost thoughts of your hearts shall think and judge of you. The man who chooses to continue in the word of Christ, not only in the hearing but in the doing of it, though it may deprive him of the good opinion of many, shall know the truth, and the truth shall make him free indeed. We should examine ourselves, and find out whether the truth has made us free, or whether we be still slaves to those influences that we know are not of God. Are we doing the things which God has forbidden? If so, it is time for us to loose the bands of wickedness and break every yoke. It is time for us to get out of bondage, and feel within ourselves that we are free indeed.

When the Gospel was first preached to us we were full of doubt and darkness. By obeying the word of God we received an assurance that we had

made a covenant with Him, and that He had accepted us. Doubt and darkness left us. The light of the Holy Spirit filled our whole beings, and we felt that we were free. Have we continued to be free like this? Have we not, in too many instances, yielded to temptation and indulged in that from which we had covenanted to keep ourselves free? I am afraid that too many of us will find this in our history. My exhortation is, Let us learn to know ourselves, and to know how we stand with our Heavenly Father; and, knowing this, so shape our course that we can gain His favor.

We rejoice in the fact that the work of God is growing in the earth, and that He has been with His servants in their labors to promulgate the glad tidings of salvation unto men. Our missionaries have gone to nearly all lands, and are proclaiming the will of our Heavenly Father and telling men that the time is quickly approaching when Christ will come the second time. When He came the first time, He descended below all things that He might redeem mankind, but He will come in glory to the earth, with His holy angels, to meet His Saints. That time is approaching. Much will have to be done, no doubt, before Christ will come to reign upon the earth. How long it will be we do not know; but we know this: the work in which we are engaged is the preparatory work for His coming. We call upon the whole world to repent, to turn unto God, to have faith in Him, to keep His commandments, and do the things which He has ordained for salvation; then lead such lives that they can say in truth that they have taken upon them the name of Christ.

We, the Latter-day Saints, partake of the Sacrament Sunday after Sunday, and every time we do this we make a covenant with the Lord that we will take upon us the name of Christ, and always remember Him, and keep His commandments. This covenant should not be an idle one. We should not lightly partake of the holy emblems of the flesh and blood of Christ; but in par-

taking we should form a strong resolve in our minds that we will do these things which the one who blesses the bread and the contents of the cup pronounces. When we say amen to his words, we make them our own, and we should show in our lives that we mean to keep the covenant which we make.

The Gospel of Christ as revealed unto us is the same as formerly. When John was shown that an angel should come with the Gospel, he was not told that it should be a new Gospel, but it was the "everlasting" Gospel—always new, and yet everlasting; the same Gospel, with no change in it. How thankful we are, brethren and sisters, that the Lord has been so gracious unto us that we have heard the glad tidings of the Gospel and received a testimony of its truth—Let us show our gratefulness unto our Heavenly Father by keeping His commandments and performing every duty required of us. It is the surest way to happiness; in fact, there is no other way by which we can be happy than by keeping the commandments of God. Choose any other way; feel in your hearts that you can do as you please—you have your free agency—and it will not be long till you find that the words of the Master are true when He said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." There is nothing that grows quicker upon anyone than indulgence in sin. It shows a person how weak he is. Those who are sunk in degradation will at times remember when they were innocent and good, and then wish they were back in that state; but when they attempt to get there they feel how weak they are, for they have become the slaves of sin. This should not be the case with us. After we have made covenants with the Lord, we should show ourselves strong enough to carry them out.

The Lord, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, instructed His people to abstain from certain things in their diet, and if they would do it, certain blessings were promised. If I should ask you, Do you believe the Prophet

received that revelation from God? I know you would say, Yes; and yet, how many of us are there who do not keep it? I allude now to the Word of Wisdom. Is it hard to keep? Yes, to those who have indulged in the things forbidden. They have found that the bands have become so strong that they can hardly break them. But the Lord commands us to do this. Let us show that we have strength. If we have it not, let us pray our Heavenly Father for strength to withstand these things, so that we can feel in our hearts that we are trying to live according to the commandments of God. Science gives evidence that the counsels given in that revelation are true and for man's best good. Now, as we believe not only that it is a word of wisdom, but that it is the will of God, let us resolve that we will keep it. Abstain from the use of tobacco, which is so hurtful to the constitution of man. Abstain from strong drinks, and from the use of tea and coffee and the excessive use of meat. Whatever there is in that commandment, let us make it the rule of our lives. Will we regret doing this? I remember my uncle said to me when I would not take these things—and he happened to offer me nearly every one of them—"It may be the best not to use them, but you are losing many pleasures in life by abstaining from them." I do not feel that this is the case. If we have not accustomed ourselves to them, we will not miss them. Those who have accustomed themselves to the use of such things and abstain from them will feel a greater self-respect and more strength to overcome other weaknesses.

My counsel to the Latter-day Saints is to keep the Word of Wisdom, also to remember their covenants, lead holy and pure lives, and keep the commandments as contained in the law and given in the Gospel. Remember the poor, keep the Sabbath day holy, pay your fast offerings, and let not your donations to sustain the poor be forgotten. Remember your tithing, and every duty required at your hands; and if you do, you can approach our Heav-

enly Father in confidence and trust, like a child to its natural parent, and ask for the things you desire, and they will be yours. God bless you all. Amen.

ELDER LEWIS S. POND,

(President of Bannock Stake.)

My brethren and sisters, in reporting my labors and the condition of the Bannock stake of Zion, I sincerely trust I may be actuated by the Spirit of the Lord, that what I say may be directed thereby. In the stake of Zion where I preside, our numbers are not great. We have only 10 small wards, and about 2,200 souls. In a general way, the people have been prosperous; but for years past one portion of the stake has been laboring under adverse circumstances, on account of having to haul water from four to seven miles. Two or three years ago, however, the stake was called upon to assist the people to get a portion of the waters of Bear river, at a cost of about \$60,000. That has been accomplished, and many people are enjoying the benefits therefrom, though there is still a great indebtedness to meet. But that covers only a part of the arid lands in the stake, and the people in some instances have become discouraged. There has been a spirit of restlessness prevailing, and many in adverse circumstances, as well as some in better circumstances, have had this spirit. Some who have held stake and ward positions have felt they were at liberty to pull up and go to other lands just as they pleased, and the effects have been detrimental. Others have sought the counsel of those who presided over them, and have gone to seek better places, with the permission and blessing of the Priesthood.

The stake presidency have always been united in their labors, so far as the work of the stake is concerned; and the High Council have been assiduous workers in helping them carry the great responsibilities. They have been called to act also as home missionaries, and have done a good work in the midst of the people. The organizations in the Priesthood are complete, with the ex-

ception of one or two vacancies, which will soon be filled. One ward is at present without a Bishop, on account of that officer resigning and moving to another place. The auxiliary organizations are in a prosperous condition. Those who preside in them are energetic, and willing to do all that is possible. They travel a great deal amongst the young people, and their labors are productive of good. Most of these organizations hold sessions through the winter months only, as many of our young people go away from home during the summer season to earn a livelihood.

In a general way, there is a splendid feeling in the stake. Of course, as in other stakes, I suppose, we have a few that seem to think they do not have time to serve the Lord; they are more willing to give their time and attention to the things of this world. There is too much of a spirit of speculation prevalent in the stake; and those who visit the different wards complain that some of the people do not serve the Lord as they should do. Many have incurred great debt, and I am sorry indeed to report this condition. Many have been prosperous, and have sought to enlarge their possessions, the result is you can hear them say, "what shall I do to meet my obligations?" The implement men, and other agents who pass through our settlements, seem to have greater influence over some of the people, in a financial way, than do those who preside in the Priesthood. Many are buying far beyond their means, and in working to meet their obligations they are depriving themselves of privileges they might have in serving the Lord.

I believe our numbers are increasing a little. The water is being secured for arid lands, and people have begun to come in and enquire for homes among us. Some who moved there to be on the outskirts, still want to be on the outskirts, and are selling their homes and moving again. A number of very desirable brethren and sisters have joined us recently, and we invite more to come and make their homes with