



## CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN MANSFIELD.

### Elders Matthews and Armstrong Tell of the Meetings Held in Mansfield on Lord's Day, November 4, 1900.

THE victory which God gave His servants and Zion in Mansfield on Lord's Day, November 4, 1900, was briefly alluded to in this department, last week.

As the events of the day were remarkable, in that Elders of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion succeeded in holding Divine services and in administering the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, we give the detailed accounts of the visit, written by Elders Matthews and Armstrong, who conducted the services.

What a commentary upon Nineteenth Century civilization and the boasted breadth and tolerance of this great Nation, that the holding of two simple cottage meetings by godly Christian ministers should be considered a rare event!

What a flagrant, deliberate and open neglect of duty upon the part of police and civil authorities that a howling, jeering mob should follow and insult a Christian minister and his wife, concerning whom they knew absolutely nothing, save that the minister was an officer in a certain Church!

The following is Elder Matthews' report of his visit, written to Overseer Piper:

First, we thank God that we were able to carry out the plan arranged for us.

We see more and more how God's presence was with us.

Two meetings were held, according to directions given us, without either one being interfered with, although this was not from a willingness on the part of the mob to let us alone.

They simply failed to find out where the meetings were held until they were over.

We entered the city just at dawn, keeping watch lest the police interfere with us.

The providence of God, which permitted us to find friends at the first door where: we knocked, still followed us, and before it was fully light we found ourselves in the friendly

home of a faithful Zion family, where the morning service was to be held, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered to the faithful people who had for so long a time been deprived of that service.

We were kindly received, and it was a great relief to feel that we were again under a protecting shelter.

Soon the people began to come in one by one, avoiding observation as much as possible.

They came till the room was well filled.

There was a subdued hush over all, and a quiet peace and joy came into each heart and found expression in each face.

There was a consciousness of God's presence and guidance, and we went forward with the various parts of the service in regular order.

The endeavor was to encourage and strengthen this sorely-tried people who had been through so much and were still so bitterly persecuted.

Well did they respond to the effort, as with tearful faces and earnest purpose to suffer whatever was necessary they listened to the promises and the precious truths of Scripture.

The picture came to our minds of the early Christians worshipping underground in the Catacombs of Rome.

The Ordinance was administered "in remembrance" of Him, and the place seemed holy ground with the manifested presence of the Spirit.

All seemed strengthened and encouraged, and at the close of the communion service a little testimony meeting was held, at which nearly every one present bore witness to the power of God in healing or in spiritual blessing.

There was no expression of discouragement or desire to give up the fight. All were willing still to suffer and remain loyal to God a Zion.

So the little gathering dispersed one by one, as it had gathered, quietly and without attracting the attention of the enemy, although men were standing on the street corners and glared at our people as they passed, not imagining, however, that the hated Dowieites had held a meeting right under their eyes.

Now came the critical time.

According to directions, Mrs. Matthews and myself were, if possible, attend the meeting in the afternoon to be held by Elder Armstrong in a different part of the city.

We were to walk boldly through the streets, under the supposition that we would not be molested, or that if we were discovered might be marched between policemen to the station and forced up the train.

But even this kind of an escort was denied us. On our way to this second meeting we were discovered and followed by an ever-increasing mob of boys and men of all ages and appearance.

Knowing the uselessness of trying to reach the house where the meeting was to be held, we turned back toward the center of the city, hardly knowing, however, which way to turn.

Threats were made on every hand, and we were followed the entire distance to the depot by a raging, howling mob, all the time increasing number and in threats of violence.

But we passed on, and not an arm was raised to touch us. Finally reaching the depot, we entered the waiting room and sat down, as it was some time before the train was due.

The mob remained outside and did not follow us into the room.

Some came in, ostensibly to get a drink of water, but really to look at us, while occasionally some one would dart up to the door and opened widely enough to hurl some threat or some vile word at us.

“Come out of there, Dowie!”

“We’ll get you when you come out.”

“We’ve got a rope for you.”

“The bucket of tar is ready.”

Such were the words hurled at us as we sat there quietly resting in peace of God.

Then they would come up and gaze in through the window as though we were wild animals in a cage.

Finally, just before train time, Elder Armstrong appeared, and the crowd was furious.

We had thrown them off the track and they had not suspected another Elder to be in town.

We boarded the train, walking untouched through the mob, and from the rear platform of the car I had the privilege of making a little speech to the crowd.

As I closed what I had to say, a small stone struck my coat glanced off against the rear end of the car.

But not the slightest injury was received by any of our company, which protection of God we cannot feel too thankful.

Some of the mob were so angry and so much afraid that we would return that they followed us on the train to Galion and Marion.

This is a slight account of God’s wonderful dealings with us in most remarkable experience.

We are thankful to have been permitted to have this experience and to have suffered for Him.

It was something to hold two meetings there unmolested.

May the time soon come when Zion in Mansfield will secure her n to worship without fear of interference.

May God still guide and direct.

While Elder Matthews conducted the morning service, Elder Armstrong was held in reserve to hold the afternoon service.

He writes as follows to Overseer Piper concerning experience:

God’s guidance and protection was clearly marked in every move that was taken to carry out the plans given us before leaving Headquarters

What an inspiration it was to know that an army of tens of thousands, with its officers of the faithful children of God in Zion, were following us by their united believing prayers.

Truly, God was like a wall of fire about us.

We marched through the city without seeing hardly a living being.

Not knowing our way very well, we prayed quietly as we went that God should direct us to the house of one of the Zion members.

Although we were uncertain about the location of that house, we knocked at one that seemed to answer the description my fellow-worker had succeeded in getting a few hours before, and out through the screen door looked the

cheerful face of the brother we hunted for.

An inquiry at the wrong house would in all probability have upset our whole plan for the day.

We went in, thankful to God for His wonderful guidance.

Another mile’s walk brought me to my fort, which I held until about 2 o’clock in the afternoon.

At about 12:30 the members of Zion came together and we had a solid hour’s meeting without any disturbance or interruption whatever.

None of those present seemed discouraged. Determination marked the countenances of them all and a holy fire of love and courage burned in their eyes.

After closing our talk with the words of our Saviour, “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the Crown of Life,” we all heartily joined in singing the doxology.

After the benediction, we shook hands heartily, and having bid them farewell, I took my overcoat, intending to find my way all alone to the station.

But as it was about two miles to the depot, a brother offered to drive me down in his rig, which saved me a fast walk and brought me to the train in good time.

I found my fellow-workers in the ladies’ waiting room, where they for three hours had been subject to the threats and yells of a cowardly and furious mob. I secured my ticket, as we were directed from Headquarters to return to Chicago on the 2:20 train, if possible.

While we and all Zion in Mansfield greatly rejoiced that God had thus helped us to hold our meetings both in the morning and the afternoon, the mob, understanding the situation and their defeat, got furious above measure and the foam of their devilish hatred came forth in a flood of curses and filthy expressions.

This time I was the subject of their shameful language.

There was no attempt whatever to strike any of us until we boarded the train.

Having turned my back to the mob for a minute while stepping on the train, like cowards they rushed up and gave me several kicks. But not the slightest injury was received.

The reports in the Chicago morning papers, Monday, November 5th, were false. In the *Record* we counted at least a dozen deliberate lies in an article two inches long. One truth they told, that no police officer appeared on the scene, showing the indifference of the city authorities.

God gave us the victory, and we were wonderfully strengthened by this experience.

We are grateful for your prayers and confidence.

Leaves of Healing vol 8 p 112 Nov 17, 1900