

APOSTASY
&
RESTORATION

of
The Church of Jesus Christ

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Introduction

This pamphlet has been compiled with a few comments by the writer for the purpose of enlightenment to those who are unacquainted with Apostasy and Restoration.

Material used was taken principally from *A History of The Church of Jesus Christ* by W. H. Cadman and from the early history of the Church of 1830.

The Church of Jesus Christ believes that there was a complete apostasy from the New Testament church and from the fundamental principles of Christ which were taught by the Apostles and their immediate followers. The Apostasy consequently caused God to withdraw the power and authority of the Gospel from the earth. For about 200 years the Church was true to the Apostolic teaching, though Satan endeavored to thwart the plan of God from the beginning. In about the year of 560 A.D., a complete Apostasy was the result. Hundreds of years of ignorance and superstition, and eventually what is now called the Roman Catholic Church, usurped in place of The Church of Jesus Christ.

In the early part of the sixteenth century, Martin Luther, William Tyndall and others gave the world the open Bible and the result was Reformation and many denominations. The Reformation was a stepping stone to the Restoration.

Catholicism claims a succession, Protestantism a reformation, and The Church of Jesus Christ a restoration.

In spite of divers religions in the world today, we believe in the spirit of tolerance. Toleration does not mean that we believe one religion is as good as another. Every true religious man believes that his religion is the best religion in the world. A man who truly loves his own religion can have no animosity for a religion different from his, which someone else cherishes. Tolerance, then, until as St. Paul writes in the fourth chapter, thirteenth verse of the Ephesians, "Till we all come in the unity of faith¹ and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"

This church firmly believes that Joseph Smith, Jr., who was the principal character of the restoration, was inspired of God, and was used as an instrument in His hands, but we do not accept or endorse some of the things attributed to Joseph Smith, Jr., in the way of doctrine and revelation.

We also declare and affirm that William Bickerton, the first president of this church, was instrumentally used by the hand of God in bringing about The Church of Jesus Christ, organized July 7, 1862, at Greenock, Pennsylvania and incorporated June 18, 1865, at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

I shall endeavor to give sufficient evidence from the Holy Scriptures that there was an Apostasy and a Restoration. You who are seeking the truth I urge to investigate and examine these things that are written. The Apostle Paul said, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21).

APOSTASY IN THE SCRIPTURES

The Apostasy, according to Webster's dictionary, is "the forsaking or abandonment of what one has hitherto professed or adhered to as faith, principle or party."

It is apparent that all Christian denominations base their faith and doctrine upon the Holy Scriptures. Let us examine various prophecies in the Bible concerning Apostasy.

Jesus said, " ... from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12).

Paul said, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, watch and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:29-31).

And to Timothy, Paul writes, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lust shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:3-4).

The ancient saints of Thessalonia troubled about the second coming of the Lord Jesus, and Paul says, "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (II Thessalonians 2:3).

And John the Divine in the vision which he saw while banished on the Isle of Patmos writes, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Revelation 13:7).

Other Scriptures also foretold of the Apostasy and false teaching that would be introduced and specifically states that the laws and ordinances would be changed. As a result of the Apostasy many gospel truths were perverted, which led many into grievous errors of faith and practice. Some thought they could be saved by faith without works, others by introducing infant baptism, sprinkling and pouring in place of immersion, disregarding the imposition of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. In many instances, superstition arose, and various changes were made in doctrine and church organization. The apostolic and prophetic offices and also the spiritual gifts ceased. Against such changes Jesus and holy men of God warned the church. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (II John 1 :9).

I believe that I have given sufficient evidence that there was a falling away of the true church.

RESTORATION IN THE SCRIPTURES

As there are prophecies that foretold of the falling away so are there prophecies that foretold the restoration of the true church and the Lord's work in the latter days which is preparatory to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

When the disciples inquired of Jesus for a sign of His coming and the end of the world, He gave them this sign, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

The prophet Daniel, seeing the Apostasy, clearly prophesies of a restoration. In the book of Daniel, 2:44, he says, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever."

The Lord at work in the restoration is clearly evident in the last days.

The apostle John saw in vision the restoration. He writes, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come" (Revelation 14:6,7).

The coming of an angel to Joseph Smith, Jr., who was the principal character in the restoration, was therefore in fulfillment of the Scriptures.

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF JOSEPH SMITH, JR. 'S EXPERIENCES

Joseph Smith, Jr., was born in the year of 1805 on the 23rd day of December, at Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, USA. When he was about ten years old, his father and the family moved to Palmyra, New York, and later moved to Manchester, a town not far from Palmyra. Soon after this, he says there arose an unusual excitement on the subject of religion in the community and his father's family was mostly converted to the Presbyterian faith, while he himself was partial to the Methodist. He was young, but still his mind was capable of detecting the spirit of strife and confusion that existed with the various denominations of his day and being so young, he felt that it was impossible for him to decide which of the different churches was right, so he joined none of them.

His mind was naturally stirred and while reading his Bible one day, he read in the first chapter of the epistle of James, the fifth verse, "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him." He said that never did any passage of Scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to his. After much reflection on the matter, he went to the woods alone and bowed to his God in prayer, for he lacked wisdom and needed it badly. As he did so he had a terrible struggle with the enemy of his soul and the powers of darkness surrounded him. For a time, he thought he was doomed to destruction. Suddenly a light shone down upon him brighter than the sun and he found himself delivered from the enemy which had held him bound. As the light shone down on him, a personage appeared, whose glory was beyond expression and a voice spake unto him saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him." The young man's object in prayer was that he might be given wisdom to decide which of the churches he should join. The voice which spake told him not to join any of them for their creeds were an abomination in his sight. This was in the year 1820.

Joseph said, "I continued to pursue my common vocation in life until the 21st of September, 1823, all the time suffering severe persecution at the hands of all classes of men, both religious and irreligious, because I continued to affirm that I had seen a vision. During the space of time which intervened between the time I had the vision and the year 1823 having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day and being of more tender years and persecuted by those who ought to have been my friends and to have treated me kindly and if they supposed me to be deluded to have endeavored in a proper and affectionate manner to have reclaimed me, I was left to all kinds of temptations and mingling with all kinds of society. I frequently fell into many foolish errors and displayed the weakness of youth and the foibles of human nature which I am sorry to say, led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God. In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins, a disposition to commit such was never in my nature. But, I was guilty of levity and sometimes associated with jovial company, etc., not consistent with the character which ought to be maintained by one who was called of God as I had been. This will not seem

very strange to anyone who recollects my youth and is acquainted with my native cheery temperament.

"In consequence of these things, I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfection, when, on the evening of the above-mentioned 21st of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before Him for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation as I previously had one. While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noon day, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor. He had on a loose robe of exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked and his arms also, a little above the wrist, so also were his feet naked as were his legs, a little above his ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but his robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom. Not only was his robe exceedingly white but his whole person was glorious beyond description and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light but not so very bright as immediately around his person.

"When I first looked upon him, I was afraid, but the fear soon left me. He called me by name and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me and that his name was Moroni, that God had a work for me to do and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants, also, that there were two stones in silver bows and these stones fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urin and Thummim, deposited with the plates, and the possession and use of these stones was what constituted Seers in ancient or former times and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.

"After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles.

"In addition to these, he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled. He quoted also the third chapter of Acts, twenty-second and twenty-third verses, precisely as they stand in our New Testament. He said that that prophet was Christ, but the day had not come yet when they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people but soon would come. He also quoted the second

chapter of Joel from the twenty eighth verse to the last. He also said that this was not yet fulfilled but was soon to be. And he further stated that the fullness of the Gentiles was soon to come in. He quoted many other passages of Scripture and offered many explanations which cannot be mentioned here.

"Again, he told me that when I got those plates of which he had spoken for the time that they should be obtained was not yet fulfilled. I should not show them to any person - neither the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim - only to those to whom I should be commanded to show them. If I did, I should be destroyed. While he was conversing with me the vision was open to my mind that I should see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it. After this communication, the light gathered around him immediately and he appeared to ascend into heaven, the room becoming dark as it was before. But before the night was over, he returned for the second and third time repeating over again to me the same things as before and added caution to me, telling me that Satan would try to tempt me to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich. This he forbade me, saying that I must have no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building His Kingdom; otherwise, I could not get them. He informed me, too, that great judgments were coming upon the earth, with great desolations by famine, sword, and pestilence; and that these grievous judgments would come on the earth in this generation.

"I shortly after arose from my bed and, as usual, went to the necessary labors of the day; but in attempting to work as at other times I found my strength so exhausted as to render me entirely unable. My father, who was laboring along with me, discovered something to be wrong with me, and told me to go home. I started with the intention of going to the house; but in attempting to cross the fence out of the field where we were, my strength entirely failed me, and I fell helpless on the ground, and for a time was quite unconscious of anything. The first thing that I can recollect was a voice speaking unto me, calling me by name. I looked up, and beheld the same messenger standing over my head, surrounded by light as before. He then again related unto me all that he had related to me the previous night and commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and commandments which I had received. I obeyed; I returned to my father in the field and rehearsed the whole matter to him.

"He replied to me that it was of God and told me to go and do as commanded by the messenger. I left the field and went to the place where the messenger had told me the plates were deposited; and owing to the distinctness of the vision which I had concerning it, I knew the place the instant that I arrived there.

"Convenient to the Village of Manchester, Ontario County, New York, stands a hill of considerable size and the most elevated of any in the neighborhood. On the west side of this hill, not far from the top, under a stone of considerable size, lay the plates, deposited in a stone box. This stone was thick and rounding in the middle on the upper side then thinner towards the edges, so that the middle part of it was visible above the ground, but

the edge all around was covered by earth. Having removed the earth, I obtained a lever, which I got fixed under the edge of the stone, and with a little exertion raised it up. I looked in and there did I behold the plates, the Urin and Thummim, and the breastplate, as stated by the messenger. The box in which they lay was formed by laying stones together in some kind of cement. In the bottom of the box lay two stones crosswise of the box, and on these stones lay the plates and the other things with them.

"I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it, until four years from that time; but he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would be there to meet me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates. Accordingly, as I had been commanded, I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger there, and received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews, respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner His Kingdom was to be conducted in the last days.

"In September of 1827, the heavenly messenger delivered the plates to me, and by the gift and power of God they were translated into the English language. This was presented to the world in 1829-1830 as the Book of Mormon."

The Book of Mormon, sometimes referred to as the Nephite Records, was prophesied of in the Bible, found in Isaiah 29:4. The prophet speaks of a people who are to be brought down and speak out of the ground, and in the eleventh verse he speaks of the words of a book that is sealed, and is delivered to one that is not learned ... etc. The prophet Ezekiel, in 37:15, 16 speaks of the stick of Ephraim (Book of Mormon), stick of Judah (Holy Bible), in other words, two records, and says they are to become one in the hand of God. The foregoing Scriptures are given as evidence that a record should come forth including a restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to earth and that the aforementioned Joseph Smith, Jr., was used as an instrument in the hand of God in fulfillment of Scripture.

Oliver Cowdery was his principal scribe and along with a few other witnesses, they formed a church and effected an organization according to law, on April 6, 1830. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had already baptized each other, and along with others, they were commissioned from on high to preach the everlasting Gospel. They made many converts and in a short time they located at Kirtland, Ohio, where they built a Temple. Trouble arose for them at this place and in a few years, they emigrated to the state of Missouri and, like the people of God in all ages, persecution seemed to be their lot. They were eventually driven out of that state, and found a haven in Illinois, which was, however, of short duration. But through their industry they built a city there, known as Nauvoo, and in it constructed a Temple for the worship of God. Since the day that Joseph Smith declared he had had a vision, trouble seemed to follow him and his brethren in Christ. This finally culminated in the arrest of him and his brother, Hyrum, and they were put in jail at Carthage, Illinois, where they were killed by a mob of men on June 27, 1844.

The slaying of Joseph Smith seemed to throw wide open the door to those who had ambitions for leadership. However, since it is the purpose to chronicle the history of The Church of Jesus Christ which was organized in 1862 at Green Oak, PA, we will not go into unnecessary details of the many divisions that took place soon after June 27, 1844, the date of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. But it is expedient to name some of the most prominent leaders of that time. One writer presents Brigham Young as the ablest leader of the day, possessed with a cruel and remorseless ambition. He led a large body of the people to what is now known as the state of Utah. They have avowed and defended the doctrines of polygamy and celestial marriage, as well as other doctrines equally as absurd, which The Church of Jesus Christ absolutely rejects and denounces as false. Other leaders of factions were Strang, Cutler, Hedrick, Lyman Wright, and Sidney Rigdon, who had been first counsellor to Joseph Smith. There were others but to mention all would not aid in accomplishing my purpose in writing this account. Later, some factions merged and organized the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, with the younger Joseph Smith, son of the former Joseph Smith, at their head; this occurred in 1860. They withstood Brigham Young and his followers, especially on the doctrine of polygamy, but have absorbed other doctrines equally as false according to the word of God. They contend that Joseph was the legal successor to his father as the head of the church; consequently, this line of succession has resulted in the grandson of the martyred Joseph, Frederick M. Smith, to become the head of their organization.

The Church of Jesus Christ, present headquarters at Monongahela, PA, rejects this principle of authority descending from father to son and declares that there is nothing in the teachings of Christ to sustain it. The Reorganized Church also declares the doctrine of baptism for the dead, a tenet of their faith, but they do not practice it; hence, while they denounce the Utah people on the question of polygamy, they themselves are equally wrong on other matters.

The followers of Mr. Hedrick are known as the Church of Christ, with headquarters at Independence, MO. They have been but few in numbers but in late years they have increased considerably by dissenters from the aforesaid Reorganized Church, which also has headquarters at Independence, MO.

Sidney Rigdon, previously mentioned, was Joseph Smith's right-hand counselor, and as such the reins of government would fall upon him; at least, until one could have been lawfully elected to fill the vacancy caused by the tragedy at the Carthage jail.

The United States Government provides for the election of a president and a vice-president, and in case of the death of the former, we look to the latter. This, we believe, appeals to good reason, and as a nation we have passed through these experiences without being tom asunder.

Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon and their little band of converts, being commissioned from heaven, preached faith, repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. William Bickerton, the first president of this

church, was baptized by an elder of Rigdon 's following, and later was ordained into the priesthood. This organization of Rigdon 's must have been short-lived, for Brother Bickerton in his writings speaks of the Church becoming disorganized.

BICKERTON'S TESTIMONY

William Bickerton was a member of the Methodist Church, until he heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached, in the year of our Lord 1845. He says, "I was convinced of the doctrines of Christ, viz., faith, repentance and baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit and its affects is according to St. Paul's writing. There is but one Holy Spirit, and whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, we have been all made to drink of the same spirit, for to one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, by the same spirit, and so forth and Jesus says, 'signs shall follow them that believe, in my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.' And I was never taught such a gospel; so I left them as a member in good standing, and was baptized into Christ and put Him on. I received the gift of the Holy Spirit at the laying on of hands, and the signs have followed me. I have spoken with new tongues, and have had the interpretations, and I have seen the sick healed, and I have been healed myself, so that I know that the Gospel is the power of God. I entered the Church under Elder Rigdon 's organization, I was called by the Holy Spirit to be an Elder. I received ordination and the power of God came down and sealed that office upon me, I went forward preaching to all that would hear. I was afterwards called into the quorum of seventies. I received ordination the second time, but the Church became disorganized. Here I was left to myself. I paused to know what course to pursue. I knew my calling was from Heaven, and I also knew that a man cannot build up the Church of Christ without divine commandment from the Lord, for it would only be sectarianism, and man's authority.

"But the Lord did not leave me; no, He showed me a vision, and in the vision I was on the highest mountain on the earth; and He told me that if I did not preach the Gospel I would fall into a dreadful chasm below, the sight thereof was awful. I moved with fear, having the Holy Spirit with me. Here I was, none to assist me, and without learning, popular opinion against me, and the Salt Lake Mormons stood in the way. I could not turn back unto Methodism again. No, I knew they had not the Gospel. I stood in contemplation. The chasm was before me, no other alternative but to do my duty to God and man. I went ahead preaching repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some believed my testimony and were baptized, and we met together. The Lord met with us, and we could many times sing with the poet, 'The spirit of God, like a fire is burning, the latter-day glory begins to come forth. The visions and blessings of old are returning. The angels are coming to visit the earth.' We had not as yet partaken of the Lord's Supper, when the Lord appeared in vision, and told me to administer it. We met together from time to time, and I felt it to be the will of God to call and ordain other Elders. I did so and they

assisted me in helping forward the good work of God. We also met together in council, and the Lord revealed Himself unto us in divers ways.

"One evening after I had baptized three, I retired to rest, and a glorious vision appeared before me. I saw a beautiful table spread over, with everything that was desirable of the rich bounties of Heaven, and the Saints feasting themselves; there was no end to it, as far as I could see. I saw myself sitting at the head of it; and while in the vision the glory of God filled the room. No mortal man can tell what I felt on that occasion, while a cloud of divine glory rested upon me. To the world this might appear to be imagination, but to me a reality, a divine reality, that years cannot erase from my memory. I might fill up pages of what we have received, but we give our testimony to the world, that we know that there is a God in Heaven, and He changes not, and that He does reveal himself in this our day and generation, as He did in days of old. Yes, blessed be His high and Holy Name forever, for His unchangeableness; for as our Saviour said, while here on earth, if any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or I speak of myself. And again, the Prophet Joel says, speaking of the last days, 'And it shall come to pass afterwards, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions, and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit, and I will show wonders in the Heavens and in the earth; blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.' And while waiting before the Lord in a sacrament meeting, the word of the Lord came unto me saying, 'I accept of you this day as my Church to whom my servant John was commanded to write, while in the spirit, on the Lord's day, and to the angel of the Church of Philadelphia write; these things saith he that is Holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie, Behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet; and to know that I have loved thee, because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the Churches.' Again, shortly after, while we were assembled together, the word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, 'The Lord I am God, the Lord I am God; therefore you are of them that will not turn aside, therefore will I bless you.'

"We then began to increase in numbers and formed ourselves into conferences. Elders were called and ordained, and the Lord being with us, the signs followed the believers, the gifts of the Spirit being made manifest in tongues and interpretations of tongues,

prophecy, wisdom, knowledge, visions, dreams, faith, discerning of spirits, and the sick healed, and pains removed, so that we began to grow up into the knowledge of the Son of God, and the Lord our God made a covenant with us, that He would lay the ground work by us to perform a great work; and we are the stem, and every party that splits from us shall come to nothing. We now copy from the records of this Church the revelations and commandments that the Lord has given unto us as far as is requisite for this history and leave it with the reader. While waiting in conference before the Lord, the word of the Lord came unto us saying, 'Try me and prove me, and see if I will not open unto you the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing, so that there shall not be room enough to contain it.' And on the following Sabbath while we continued to wait before the Lord, the word of the Lord was fulfilled in our midst, for there were some completely overpowered by the power of God; and at this conference several of the brethren had visions, one of which we'll give.

"I saw in the vision the road that the Saints were traveling on; the foot of which road was in the waters and ascended gradually up to Heaven. It was as a straight and narrow road, so narrow that there was not room to turn either to the right or to the left; and on each side of the road was all manner of different kinds of beautiful flowers to tempt the Saints to pluck them, but under the flowers lay a great depth of mud, and the prettier the flowers the deeper the mud, so that if any one stepped aside to pluck any of the flowers, they were sure to stick fast in the mud; also, the road itself was so firm that many cannon balls that were fired at the road, could not even as much as make a mark upon it.

"Therefore, we must exclaim with the poet:

'How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word;
What more can He say, than to you He hath said,
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled.'

and

'Come see the road His hand has raised,
And made the pathway plain.
Nor need the travelers ever err,
Nor ask the track in vain.'

"And again, in conference, the word of the Lord as it was given, 'Hear O my people, this is the word of the Lord unto you today, the Church must be one, and my people one, for unto you is committed the work of God, in these last days, and you my servants feed the flock of God, over which I have made you overseers, for great is the responsibility that rests upon you; for unto you are given the keys of this last ministry, and to lift the last warning voice to the world; therefore, be faithful to the end of your calling, Amen.' Therefore, we went from place to place, as the Spirit directed us, and the Lord confirmed

our word, by the power of His Spirit with the signs following them who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and obeyed His commandments.

"Again, in conference on July 4, 1860, it was felt to be the will of God that we meet again tomorrow in fasting and prayer, that the will of God might be fully made known unto us. Therefore, on the 5th of July, we met according to the will of God, in prayer and fasting, and the power of God was made manifest in our midst, in various ways, and a vision was given to one, which we will relate. 'I saw in a vision a woman, dressed all in white, come into the house, with a crown in her hand. In the crown were twelve stars; and she laid the crown upon the stand and said, this crown belongs to this Church, and then disappeared.'

"And again, in conference on July 9, 1861, the power of God was made manifest in the gifts and callings, for there were twelve of our number, chosen and called by the Holy Spirit to be Apostles of Jesus Christ in this last dispensation, and the power and spirit of God accompanied their callings, for we were made to rejoice with that joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Hear also the word of the Lord given previous to the vision. 'Hear ye the word of the Lord God of Hosts today, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I sent forth my servant Joseph with a message of glad tidings to this generation; Him have they slain saith the Lord, my people have they persecuted, scattered and driven out, yet once again I have raised up another like unto Joseph, to lead forth my people; Him shall ye hear in all things. I decreed that I would set up an ensign, and raise up a standard; that ensign has been lifted, that standard raised, and now I have called forth my servant William Bickerton to lead forth my people and they shall go in and out and find pasture, and the world shall know that there is a God in Heaven; therefore touch not mine anointed, saith the Lord, Amen.' We wish it to be understood that this Church will only hearken unto the things that are presented by man, inasmuch as they are consistent with the teachings of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; as He is our great Law Giver.

"Yes, blessed be the Lord for His goodness towards us, in calling another like unto Joseph to carry on this glorious work, in these the latter days for as the Lord hath said, 'Behold I am God, and I am a God of miracles, and I will show unto the world that I am the same yesterday, today and forever; and I work not among the children of men save it be according to their faith.'

"Therefore, awake, awake, O ye people, and give heed to what is contained in these pages. As we are aware that some will startle at such ideas and be surprised that men should believe in revelation in these last days. But they cannot be more surprised at our principles on this point, than we are at theirs. We wish it to be understood distinctly, that the organization of this Church came by express commandment and revelation from the Almighty."

I have thus far given this history word for word as given by Brother Bickerton in the *Ensign*. He now gives the minutes of July Conference, 1862, and we will give from now on only what seems to us the most interesting events that are recorded in said *Ensign*. The

Twelve Apostles were ordained in this conference and a number of Evangelists, and the power of God was in their midst. At a later event the same calling of Apostleship was laid upon William Bickerton and his two counsellors.

Brother Bickerton says in some other writings of his, that at a conference held in 1861, the revelation of God was given that He (the Lord) accepted this Church as He did the Church of Alma, recorded in The Book of Mormon.