A Comparative Study of Mormon and Disciple Histories

Leslie H. Payne

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MORMON
AND DISCIPLE HISTORIES

by

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PREFACE

The subject of this study has been chosen because of the interesting histories and doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Disciples of Christ. Interest in this subject was aroused, not only by the interesting material, but also due to the fact that they both came out of the same historical period and that there were some Disciple leaders that joined the Latter-day Saints.

These facts could be coincidence or they could have a definite reason behind them. This is the study of this paper: to discover, through comparison, the similarities and the parallels of the two groups and to discover why these similarities and parallels exist. This must be done by first giving a discussion of the two groups so that the reader might know adequately the histories and the beliefs of the groups. It is regretted that this presentation of the histories is so lengthy, but without a fairly complete presentation the reader would be lost when the comparison was being made, not knowing enough of the histories to follow the discussion. In this approach, after the facts are presented it will be quite simple to make the comparison.

It should be noted that the writer is a Disciple of
Christ minister and therefore will naturally be prejudiced. The Mormon history and doctrines will be given with an effort at objectivity, but in places this objectivity will be put aside in favor of trying to evaluate the situation in the light of the study. For instance, the investigation of the effect of the Disciples upon the Latter-day Saints will be investigated from the Disciple point of view. We feel this is necessary for the purpose of the study. The reader should note that in the presentation of special revelation received by the Latter-day Saints, the facts according to Mormon history are presented. These are presented as a part of their history.

The material regarding the Latter-day Saints is much more extensive in this study than is the material for the Disciples. This is due to the fact that the Mormons have had a very turbulent history that must be at least partially understood and that many of their doctrines are so very different from the rest of Christianity. This will particularly be seen in the chapter dealing with the doctrine of revelation. Unless such a doctrine is understood the religion makes little sense to the outside observer. The Disciples do not have such a turbulent history and the doctrines are not too far distant from many of the Protestant groups. Therefore the Disciple material is shortened.

Even though this study is rather lengthy, an apology
is in order that many things of interest and some of importance have necessarily been omitted in the interest of space and the reader's time. Perhaps this will arouse the interest of someone else in this very absorbing subject and they can pursue the topic to a greater degree.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Most people in the United States have heard of the religious group called the "Mormons," more properly known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. However, the average person knows very little about their history or doctrines. He knows that the Mormons suffered considerable persecution in the early years of their history and that at one time they practiced polygamy rather extensively. Beyond this he knows little concerning this interesting group. The Mormons are a very good people and make very good citizens in this country. This writer has had considerable contact with them, having lived in Idaho, one of their strongest states.

For the sake of convenience this group will be referred to as Mormons. This is not meant in an unkind way but is used in the sense most historians use it: purely as a shorter name for the group.

The Disciples of Christ have gained considerable recognition in this country, having become one of the leading religious groups. They are considerably more well known than the Mormons, largely due to the fact that they
are spread through most sections of the United States and not grouped in a few states as the Mormons are. Perhaps another reason for this is that the Disciples have not had such a turbulent history as the Mormons and they fit in more perfectly with the majority of the religious groups, working closely with them.

The Disciples of Christ will be referred to simply as the Disciples in this study as a matter of convenience. This covers those groups known as the Church of Christ, in some cases, and also the Christian Churches. No offense is meant to those of this background who object to this terminology, but it is used in the historic sense of its early usage by some of the leaders. Again, as with the Mormons, the use of this term signifies accurately in most people's minds which exact group is being considered.

Taking these things into consideration we will study each group individually, striving to find the important things in their histories and doctrines that have a bearing on the subject at hand.
CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF MORMONISM

The Time and Place

It is very important to this study to examine the time and the place that brought Mormonism into being. This statement would be objected to by a member of the Mormon Church for they would say that it was God who brought it into being, and not any "time or place." We are using the statement with the idea that conditions were just right at a certain time and in a certain place for its founding.

William Warren Sweet stated that "Mormonism, the most completely indigenous of all the many religious movements which arose in the thirties and forties [of the nineteenth century], could have originated nowhere else than in central-western New York."¹ The following section will be an examination of this statement in the effort to discover its historic basis and reality.

This religion was definitely a product of the United States. It cannot be said that anything has been contributed in any major way by any other country. Jerald C.


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Brauer narrowed it down even more. "Mormonism was not an importation, not even a schism from another Protestant Church; it was the product of revivalism, the vast American frontier, the fertile imagination of Joseph Smith, and the dogged determination of the leaders and the Saints." It goes beyond the idea that Mormonism was something that just happened. It was not unusual for strange things to happen in the area of New York where Mormonism originated, or even in America itself, as we look at the attitudes held by the pioneers.

America is famous for its many strange and peculiar religious groups, yet it is not odd that they should have developed here. Under full religious liberty many kinds of religions could develop.²

Besides there being a sense of religious freedom there was the general feeling of religious unrest during the first half of the nineteenth century, more than at any other time. In the funeral sermon for SymondsRyder, B. A. Hinsdale made the following statement, referring to the period ca. 1831: "...it was a formative period in Religious history: new ideas were fermenting in the minds of men; and, considering the facts before stated, it is not inexplicable that so strong a nature should have given way

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² Ibid., p. 167.
to the fanaticism.″¹ Hinsdale had been explaining why Ryder was one of those who became very active in the Mormon Church and at this point was making an apology for what he thought was a great error on Ryder’s part.

Charles Francis Potter reported that in the first half of the nineteenth century western New York was a hotbed of "freak cults and crazy beliefs.″² This was a definite area that can be well defined geographically. It certainly had a special place in the minds of the people because of the mental and spiritual attitudes of the residents of that district.

Across the rolling hills of western New York and along the line of De Witt Clinton’s famed canal, there stretched in the second quarter of the nineteenth century a "psychic highway." Upon this broad belt of land congregated a people extraordinarily given to unusual religious beliefs, peculiarly devoted to crusade aimed at the perfection of mankind and the attainment of millennial happiness.³

This area apparently centered around the Palmyra district according to a statement and explanation made by Fawn M. Brodie.


Palmyra was the center of what the circuit riders later called the "burnt over" district. One revival after another was sweeping through the area, leaving behind a people scattered and peeled, for religious enthusiasm was literally being burnt out of them.1

Another quality was prevalent in this area that seemed to have considerable effect upon the doctrine of the Mormons. "Some folk called it the 'infected district,' thinking mainly of the antimasonic agitation which centered west of Cayuga Lake."2 This antimasonic feeling appeared in the doctrine of the Mormon Church in various places. The idea of legalism was predominant in that area according to Potter. "In later years Puritanism in England and America was a revival of the legalism of Moses and found its justification therein; and Mormonism, that well organized present-day Puritanism, is but a recent reverberation of the thundering prohibitions of the book of Exodus."3

This was the period of the great revivals that swept through the country. This had a great deal to do with the founding of the Mormon Church. Consequently we shall look carefully at the events and attitudes.

Here it was, chiefly, that the "Second Awakening" made thorough and permanent conquests, far beyond its effect on the rest of New England. Indeed, this was far more

2Cross, loc. cit. 3Potter, op. cit., p. 33.
significant, albeit less sensational, than the contemporary Kentucky revival of much greater renown. Wave upon wave of seasonal enthusiasm swept the Yankee hill country until long after 1825.\textsuperscript{1}

Cross reminded us that due to this condition the children were born and lived in the midst of a very emotional religion that involved their whole being.\textsuperscript{2} Following is an account by Joseph Smith of some of the religious feeling.

Sometime in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country; indeed the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying, "lo, here," and some, "lo, there;" some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptists. For, notwithstanding the great love which the converts for these different faiths expressed at the time of their conversion, and the great zeal manifested by the respective clergy, who were active in getting up and promoting this extraordinary scene of religious feeling, in order to have everybody 'converted,' as they were pleased to call it, let them join what sect they pleased; yet, when the converts began to file off, some to one party, and some to another, it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more pretended than real; for a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued, priest contending against priest, and convert against convert, so that all the good feelings, one for another, if they ever had any, were entirely lost in a strife of words, and a contest about opinions.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1}Cross, op. cit., p. 7. \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 4. \textsuperscript{3}Joseph Smith, quoted in Joseph Smith and Heman C. Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (8th ed.; Lamoni, Iowa: The Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1908), I, 7.
This verified the fact that although the preachers had great feeling about denominationalism, many of the people did not particularly care which denomination they joined. Cross indicated this also.

It mattered little whether he [any young man in that area] was nominally Congregational, Baptist, or Methodist. He might in the young country change affiliation several times as one sect or another held services nearby, or seemed to enjoy particular manifestation of heaven-born agitation.¹

This was shown by the fact that the new freedom the pioneers felt in this frontier country broke with the mores. This freedom created many new groups at the time.

Nowhere was lapse from the old codes more evident than in the churches, which were racked with schisms. The Methodists split four ways between 1814 and 1830. The Baptists split into Reformed Baptists, Hard-Shell Baptists, Free-Will Baptists, Seventh-Day Baptists, Footwashers, and other sects. Unfettered religious liberty began spawning a host of new religions.²

The new excitement running through the country brought an emphasis upon the millennium that had a pronounced effect upon Joseph Smith's generation.

The revivals by their very excesses deadened a normal antipathy toward religious eccentricity. And these pentecostal years, which coincided with Joseph Smith's adolescence and early manhood, were the most fertile in America's history for the sprouting of prophets. In the same decade that young Joseph announced his mission, William Miller proclaimed that Jesus would visit the earth in March 1843 and usher in the millennium. Thousands flocked to his ranks, auctioned off their property, and bought ascension robes. John Humphrey Noyes was converted to the theory that

the millennium had already begun, and laid plans for a community based on Bible communism, free love, and scientific propagation. Matthias strode about New York City brandishing a sword and a seven-foot ruler, shouting that he had come to redeem the world. And down in the south of Ohio, Dylks, the "Leatherwood God," proclaimed his divinity to a groveling congregation with shouts and snorts that shook the roof of his tabernacle.¹

In other words, it was not unusual that a religion such as Mormonism sprang to life at that time because many other religions were doing so constantly. There was a difference, however, as Gustive O. Larson pointed out.

Mormonism had its beginning in this national, millennial, and Utopian atmosphere. It had the stamp of each upon it. But it differed sufficiently to cut its own channel through the maze of contemporary isms and escape into the open west as a distinct product.²

The problem that we shall now investigate is the relationship of the establishing of Mormonism, with its particular peculiarities, to the burned-over district.

There was another quality of that district that helps explain why Joseph Smith's findings were accepted. Cross said "the wave of evangelistic fervor surging toward a peak in the mid-twenties probably constitutes the major explanation of the religious peculiarities which followed."³ Much of the credit went to that, but certainly the super-

¹Ibid., p. 15.
³Cross, op. cit., p. 55.
stition of the people had a great deal to do with Mormonism's gain of popularity. Brodie, in speaking of Smith, said "much about him can be explained only by the sterile soil, the folk magic of the midwives and scryers, and the sober discipline of the schoolmasters."¹ As this was true concerning Smith, so was it true of many of those rural people. Religious superstition was very strong in the burned-over area which was primarily rural.² Merrill E. Gaddis described the susceptibility of this people to such ideas as Smith presented.

The gullibility of frontier folk in religious matters can hardly be denied by the most sympathetic student. These people, with the exception of a relatively small element more recently from New England, Virginia or other more settled areas, were for the most part one or more generations removed in time and many miles removed in space from the world's higher Christian cultures. They were accordingly much given to acceptance of primitive notions and superstitions which the Indians had left behind, or which grew up in this reversed march of social life. Perhaps no better proof of frontier credulity need be offered than that of the ready appearance of, and considerable following attracted by, certain new and sometimes peculiar cults.³

This ready gullibility cannot be denied successfully even if we would want to. "If one discounts the eulogistic accounts of Mormons, and the equally prejudiced statements

¹Brodie, op. cit., p. 1. ²Cross, op. cit., p. 75.
by their adversaries, and seeks an unbiased history of Joseph Smith's antecedents and early youth, he is forced to recognize the fact that the boy was brought up in an environment of superstition and credulity."¹

The emphasis upon the superstitious was not an emphasis peculiar to the early nineteenth century; it was the accepted way of life with the people.

Joseph Smith's method of establishing his prophethood was by no means peculiar and quite naturally seemed authentic to ordinary folk among a generation whose sages would soon experiment with table tipping. Even more common, if less sensational, was a belief, respectable at least as early as William Penn's day, that the Indians or a previous race now extinct developed from the lost tribes of Israel. Educated European travelers and authorities in American anthropology alike called attention to pre-Indian remains in New York and Ohio. Neither Solomon Spaulding, for whom some have claimed authorship of a manuscript which became the basis of the Book of Mormon, nor Joseph Smith required any originality to speculate in this direction. Their writings would scarcely seem fanciful, possibly not even novel, to their contemporaries. Neither in any case need have borrowed from the other.²

This quality of believing superstition seems very strange to us, but it was not at all remarkable to them.

These Americans of the backwoods needed some emotional stimulant for their lives or they couldn't go on. And, for these uncritical folk of the eighteen thirties, what was emotionally pleasant was literally true. "I knew this religion was true," declared Brigham Young, "as well as I knew that I could see with my eyes, or feel by the touch of my fingers, or be sensible of the

¹Potter, op. cit., p. 528. ²Cross, op. cit., p. 81.
demonstration of any senses."¹

It was this faith that confronted Alexander Campbell and gave him some trouble. The following shows his attitude toward it. "Perhaps we were too sanguine when we thought that the fable was so barefaced that it could not stand upon its legs or palms in the face of day and the American people; but it appears that there are some great knaves, some as great as simpletons, and some as dark spots in the United States as in any land on earth;..."²

As Latourette wrote, the fact that the Mormon Church originated on the frontier accounted for many of the events and attitudes.³ The "frontier people were inclined to depreciate education and culture."⁴ With the presence of this attitude, combined with the religious frenzy of the yearly revivals in addition to the superstition, it was remarkable that many more religions did not appear.


⁴Gaddis, op. cit., p. 158.
The Life of Joseph Smith

The task of writing a short history of the life of Joseph Smith is a very difficult one. Almost any history of the religions of America has a few comments on this remarkable man, but many of the comments make a person wonder if they were founded upon fact or prejudice. It is not the design of this study to pass on any prejudice whatever. Thus this becomes a difficult task of "heresy-hunting" for the person who wants an accurate account. Perhaps the best way is to recognize that the enemies of Mormonism have painted a very black picture, and the adherents of Mormonism have tended to do a bit of whitewashing where it was possible. This is a very natural tendency, but we shall look at both sides and try to find a middle ground, hoping it is near the truth.

It is advisable to look into Smith's background with a brief study of his parents, thereby to better understand the attitude developed in his home when he was a child.

"Joseph Smith, son of...Asael Smith, and father of the Prophet, was born at Topsfield, Massachusetts, July 12, 1771."¹ He moved to Tunbridge, Vermont, where he married Lucy Mack, daughter of Solomon Mack of Gilsum, Cheshire

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County, New Hampshire; the marriage taking place January 24, 1796. After the marriage they lived at Tunbridge for six years, being in business for themselves. The people of this general area had a very hard life and it had a great effect on them, as was pointed out by Brodie.

In 1789 a Connecticut minister touring central Vermont wrote: "Words cannot describe the hardships I undergo. People Nasty—poor—low-lived—indelicate—and miserable cooks. All sadly parsimonious—many profane—yet cheerful and much more contented than in Hartford—and the women more contented than the men—turned tawney by the smoke of the log huts—dress coarse, and mean, and nasty, and ragged...yet the women quiet—serene, peaceable—contented, loving their husbands—their home—wanting never to return—nor any dressy clothes; I think how strange! I ask myself are these women of the same species with our fine ladies? Tough they are, brawny their limbs—their young girls unpolished—and will bear work as well as mules."

The Prophet's father married a woman that was apparently of this breed, but we do not know if all of the descriptions given above fit her or not.

The Smith family made a few more moves around that area and then moved to Sharon, Windsor County, where Joseph Smith, Jr. was born on December 23, 1805. For an accurate account of the family it is best to refer to the Prophet's own story as quoted by Le Grand Richards.

My father, Joseph Smith, Sen., left the State of Vermont, and moved to Palmyra, Ontario (now Wayne) county, in the State of New York, when I was in my

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1 Ibid., pp. 13-14.  
2 Brodie, op. cit., p. 2.  
3 Roberts, op. cit., I, 15-16.
tenth year, or thereabouts. In about four years after my father's arrival in Palmyra, he moved with his family into Manchester, in the same county of Ontario—His family consisting of eleven souls, namely, my father, Joseph Smith; my mother, Lucy Smith (whose name, previous to her marriage, was Mack, daughter of Solomon Mack); my brother, Alvin (who died November 19th, 1824, in the 27th year of his age), Hyrum, myself, Samuel Harrison, William, Don Carlos; and my sisters, Sophronia, Catherine, and Lucy.1

There were several aspects of the family and childhood of Joseph Smith, Jr. that should be investigated in order to better evaluate the religion he founded.

The first area is that of education. Latourette spoke of this: "Smith was of the old New England stock, and his family were of the floating, semi-illiterate, poverty-stricken type which frequently formed an element on the frontier or in communities not far removed from frontier conditions."2 J. H. Beadle said that "his parents, Joseph Smith, Sen., and Lucy Mack Smith, belonged to the lowest grade of society, and, by the testimony of all their neighbors, were illiterate and superstitious, as well as indolent and unreliable."3

Mrs. Horace Eaton, in the Hand-book on Mormonism,


2Latourette, op. cit., IV, 200-201.

simply stated that Joseph could read but could not write.\textsuperscript{1} Cross evaluated their education this way: "The entire family was at least barely literate. Hyrum had attended a Vermont seminary,..."\textsuperscript{2} We see that many of the authors claimed that the Smith family background was filled with people that were illiterate, or at best, barely literate. However, we shall now look at some evidence pointing to the fact that the family was not quite as illiterate as many of the enemies, or even believers, of Mormonism have claimed.

Solomon Mack, Joseph's grandfather, wrote a book at the age of seventy-eight. He titled the book \textit{A Narrative of the Life of Solomon Mack, Containing an Account of the Many Severe Accidents He Met with During a Long Series of Years, Together with the Extraordinary Manner in which He Was Converted to the Christian Faith. To which Is Added a Number of Hymns, Composed on the Death of Several of His Relations}. Brodie evaluated the book: "That the spelling was bad and the hymns unfortunate was quite overshadowed by the substantial accomplishment of the writing itself."\textsuperscript{3} He went on to point out that Solomon Mack was not the only


\textsuperscript{2}Cross, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 142.

\textsuperscript{3}Brodie, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 3.
member of the family to have some schooling or to do some writing.

The mantle of authorship was to rest not only upon Solomon, the grandfather, but upon Lucy, upon her son Joseph, and in fact upon his son and grandson—an unbroken tradition for five generations. Neither Solomon nor his daughter had much formal schooling, but the impulse to self-expression was strong with them, and the fact that both married schoolteachers compensated in part for the absence of slate and birchrod drilling.¹

Certainly we must be slow in accusing such a family of being illiterate. Roberts reminded us that Joseph Smith, Sen. taught school in Sharon,² and still some people have said he could not read at all.³ This was a case where the opponents of the man went to an extreme in trying to discredit him and his family. Peter Cartwright knew Smith personally from several meetings with him and he classed him as being illiterate as well as having possessed other questionable qualities. "I found him to be a very illiterate and impudent desperado in morals, but, at the same time, he had a vast fund of low cunning."⁴ Sweet grasped some real truth in an observation he made in commenting upon Smith's education. "Joseph's schooling seems to have been limited to a brief attendance at a school in Bainbridge, though his subsequent career would indicate that he

was possessed of real native ability. "¹ Cross believed that he had some schooling prior to this, as well as practical experience.

...Joseph had some part of a few years' schooling in Palmyra, possibly increased by brief attendance at Bainbridge in 1826. He had belonged to the young men's debating society in Palmyra. Though he read easily, his writing was at best halting and he attained only the rudiments of arithmetic.²

This is very interesting because it does not appear that Cross took any particular side, either for or against the Mormons. Therefore this was his honest opinion as one who had very intently studied the records of that area. He summed up the evidence as we believe it should be: "Despite testimonials to the contrary, it must be concluded that neither Joseph nor any of his family was especially ignorant according to the standards of the place and time."³ Some people might consider the residents of that area at that time as being illiterate according to modern standards. However, the Smith family was not illiterate for that day.

Another area that should be viewed very briefly is the general character of the family. Here, again, it is possible to find almost anything in various books. Charles A. Shook had a rather antagonistic view of the Smith family in regard to their real value in the community.

The early life of Joseph Smith was spent in an

¹Sweet, op. cit., p. 286. ²Cross, loc. cit. ³Ibid.
environment of superstition and deception that peculiarly fitted him for the part that he was afterwards to play as the prophet of "the new dispensation." His father before him was a man of questionable veracity and indolent habits, who spent a considerable part of his time in "witching" with a hazel rod, or practicing other ceremonies of a like mysterious nature, in order that he might discover lost mines and buried treasures; while his mother was a common fortune-teller, who turned many a penny by tracing in the lines of the open palm the fortune of the inquirer.¹

While the children were young the Smith family made several moves, but this was not too uncommon for that area. They were said to have had several financial set-backs because of sickness and crop failures.²

The Prophet's younger brother, William, was asked some questions in this regard when he was eighty-two years old, just about two weeks before his death. He was asked if it were true that Joseph and the rest of the family were lazy. This was his answer:

We never heard of such a thing until after Joseph told his vision, and not then, by our friends. Whenever the neighbors wanted a good day's work done they knew where they could get a good hand and they were not particular to take any of the other boys before Joseph either. We cleared sixty acres of the heaviest timber I ever saw. We had a good place. We also had on it from twelve to fifteen hundred sugar trees, and to gather the sap and make sugar molasses from that number of trees was no lazy job. We worked hard to clear our place and the neighbors were a little jealous. If you will figure up how much work it would take to

²Roberts, op. cit., I, 34.
clear sixty acres of heavy timber land, heavier than any here, trees you could not conveniently cut down, you can tell whether we were lazy or not, and Joseph did his share of the work with the rest of the boys. We never knew we were bad folks until Joseph told his vision. We were considered respectable till then, but at once people began to circulate falsehoods and stories in a wonderful way.¹

This sounds like a very convincing statement. The author went on to say that there was much evidence that the Smiths were a very respectable family, digging wells, etc., when they were not in business for themselves. However, there seemed to be just as much evidence that they were not quite this respectable in their dealings with their neighbors. Mrs. Eaton claimed to have her material from the Smiths' neighbors and she painted a very discouraging picture.

Mrs. Smith used to go to the houses of the village and do family washings. But if the articles were left to dry upon the lines, and not secured by their owners before midnight, the washer was often the winner—and in these nocturnal depredations she was assisted by her boys, who favored in like manner poultry yards and grain bins. Her son Joe never worked save at "chopping bees" and "raising," and then whiskey was the impetus and the reward.²

Joseph Smith, with a group of helpers, spent considerable time digging for buried treasure. This managed to get him into trouble at least once.

...a court record dated March 1826, when Joseph was

¹Ibid., p. 40, quoting William Smith.
²Eaton, loc. cit.
twenty-one, covers his trial in Bainbridge, New York, on a charge of being "a disorderly person and an impostor." On the basis of the testimony presented, including Joseph's own admissions of indulging in magic arts and organizing hunts for buried gold, the court ruled him guilty of disturbing the peace.¹

Ellen E. Dickinson pictures the family as being the "terror and torment of the neighborhood."² Many of the Mormons have admitted that in his youth Joseph Smith was a wild boy at best. Beadle gave the opinion of Brigham Young on the subject, and quoted the successor of the Prophet as having said this:

That the Prophet was of mean birth, that he was wild, intemperate, even dishonest and tricky in his youth, is nothing against his mission. God can, and does, make use of the vilest instruments. Joseph has brought forth a religion which will save us if we abide by it. Bring anything against that if you can. I care not if he gamble, lie, swear, and run horses every day, for I embrace no man in my faith. The religion is all in all.³

Even admitting that the man does not negate the religion if it can be proved that he is of doubtful character, it does throw considerable light on Mormonism for our purposes. It is the intent of this section to show how the life and attitudes of Smith affected Mormonism, and in turn compare this to the leaders of the Disciples for the

¹Brodie, op. cit., p. 16.
³Brigham Young, quoted in Beadle, op. cit., p. 23.
same analysis. Every religion takes on a little of the character of its leaders.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the Smith family in general, and Joseph in particular, was their interest in the superstitious and miraculous. This had a great bearing on Mormonism, for without visions Mormonism would never have come into existence.

Interest in things marvelous and supernatural they certainly had abundantly [ ], but even this made them differ only in degree from their neighbors. After all, Joseph's peeping stone attracted loyal followers. The rest of the family, though perhaps not the prophet himself, behaved like others in attending services in revival seasons.¹

Cross was right in saying that the whole area connected superstition, visions, and religion together causing the fanaticism at the revivals. It is difficult to tell where the religious and the superstitious divided in the family's life. William Earl La Rue recorded the fact that the family was superstitious, or at least they believed very strongly in visions.

That Joseph Smith was born and reared in an atmosphere of superstition is evident from the facts of his family history. His mother wrote a book in which she describes some experiences. She had dreams and her husband had visions, long before their son Joseph began to tell his.²

¹Cross, loc. cit.
This went beyond the ordinary superstitions that we think of, as Potter reminded us: "It is important to note that Joseph Smith senior anticipated his son in his firm belief in the Biblical doctrines of demon-possession and witchcraft."¹ Dickinson made an interesting statement that would be very valuable if we could be assured of its truth in all respects; nonetheless, it is worth looking at for it might have been true in the light of the belief of that day. "Before the family left Vermont the parents had agreed that one of their several children was to be or would be a prophet; and as Joseph resembled his mother more than the others in a certain mental quickness and in his powers of dissimulation, they settled upon him as the 'genius' of the household."² We do not like to be overly suspicious of such statements as this, but in some matters, even so simple as the date and manner of Smith's death, it is possible to find many contradictory stories. Therefore we must be careful in blindly accepting such statements as this.

Smith brought his visionary power, as he claimed it was, into play part of the time to find buried treasure. The following instance was an example of how it was used.

¹Potter, op. cit., p. 528.
²Dickinson, op. cit., p. 28.
William Stafford swore that Joseph told him there was buried money on his property, but that it could not be secured until a black sheep was taken to the spot, and "led around a circle" bleeding, with its throat cut. This ritual was necessary to appease the evil spirit guarding the treasure. "To gratify my curiosity," Stafford admitted, "I let them have a large fat sheep. They afterwards informed me that the sheep was killed pursuant to commandment; but as there was some mistake in the process, it did not have the desired effect. This, I believe, is the only time they ever made money-digging a profitable business."¹

There has been much written about what was called the peck, or peep, or seer stone that Smith had in his possession. A good method of examination is viewing the statement made by the man claiming to find the stone. This was the story given by Willard Chase in 1833:

I became acquainted with the Smith family, known as the authors of the Mormon Bible, in the year 1820. At that time, they were engaged in the money-digging business, which they followed until the latter part of the season of 1827. In the year 1822 I was engaged in digging a well. I employed Alvin and Joseph Smith to assist me; the latter of whom is now known as the Mormon Prophet. After digging about twenty feet below the surface of the earth, we discovered a singularly appearing stone, which excited my curiosity. I brought it to the top of the well, and as we were examining it, Joseph put it into his hat, and then his face into the top of his hat. It has been said by Smith, that he brought the stone from the well; but this is false. There was no one in the well but myself. The next morning he came to me and wished to obtain the stone, alleging that he could see in it; but I told him I did not wish to part with it, on account of its being a curiosity, but would lend it....²

Dickinson told how Smith used this stone.

¹Brodie, op. cit., p. 20.
²Willard Chase, quoted in Shook, op. cit., pp. 22-23.
...Joseph Smith fooled the credulous residents of the sparsely settled vicinity with the "peeker" in his white stove-pipe hat, which he held close to his face; he saw very remarkable sights—buried treasures of gold and silver, etc.; he could trace stolen property, tell where herds of cattle had strayed, and where water was to be found. With the "peek stone" he carried a rod of witch-hazel, to assist in the discovery of water; and between the stone and the rod he eked out a precarious subsistence.1

From this look at the way Joseph Smith was reared, it may be accurate to say, as Potter did, that "the boy was handicapped, not only by his inheritance of the physical and mental peculiarities of his forbear, but also by his environment."2 On the other hand, it would seem that without this background in superstition and the seeing of visions Smith might never have qualified for the role of prophet.

The remainder of Joseph Smith's life will be discussed in connection with the founding and the history of the Mormon Church. There are, however, some closing observations that should be made regarding his life. Potter said "the incredible thing about Mormonism is that such a respectable religion could have derived from such a disreputable person."3 E. E. Kellett mentioned the great ability shown by Smith in later years as a leader of men. "...Smith, like other men of his class, had the power

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1 Dickinson, op. cit., p. 30.  
2 Potter, loc. cit.  
3 Ibid., p. 527.
of winning over people of greater intellectual force than his own; and among the first associates was Samuel [sic] Rigdon, a man of considerable knowledge and literary skill."\(^1\) Undoubtedly Kellett was referring to Sidney Rigdon.

Anson Phelps Stokes picked out some of the good characteristics of Smith and listed them. "The founder was an extraordinary person, combining religious enthusiasm, an eye for business, capacity for leadership, imagination, and some dramatic instincts."\(^2\) Latourette pictured him as being slightly different:

Smith proved a forceful if somewhat erratic leader. He was self-confident, egoistic, witty, virile, athletic, tall, and of distinguished appearance, and although a poor business manager, he attracted and dominated followers.\(^3\)

It is interesting that Stokes thought Smith had a good eye for business and Latourette said he was a poor business man. H. T. Besse also picked out some of Smith's outstanding traits:

He was a man who displayed indomitable tenacity of purpose in the midst of fierce persecutions. A person who did not in some sense or other partly believe in


\(^2\)Anson Phelps Stokes, Church and State in the United States (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), II, 42.

\(^3\)Latourette, op. cit., IV, 201-202.
his own mission, would have broken down under such a tempest of opposition and hate as Smith's preaching excited.¹

More qualifications of Smith as a leader will be seen in the next sections as we study the actual work.

George H. Dryer presented a description of Smith's person and personality in the following statement.

Joseph Smith was a large man, six feet in height, and weighing nearly two hundred pounds. He had light complexion and hair, and blue eyes set far back in his head. He spoke in a loud voice, and his language and manners were coarse. But Smith had a strong will, a mastery of the wills of others, a faith in himself, and boundless self-conceit, with all the shrewdness and cunning credited to his Yankee ancestry and environment.²

As a matter of statistics we should note the date that Joseph Smith was killed. He died June 27, 1844, and his age was thirty-nine years, six months, and four days.³

It is not the desire of this writer to dwell on the unpleasant qualities of Smith, but these things that have been mentioned are necessary for the discussion because they had a great effect on the founding and history of the Mormon Church.

¹H. T. Besse, Church History (San Jose, California: By the author, 1908), p. 207.

²George H. Dryer, History of the Christian Church (Cincinnati: Jennings & Fye, 1903), V, 331.

The Actual Founding of the Church

The events that led to the actual founding of the church are numerous and stretch over a number of years. Most important of the events are the various visions Smith claimed to have seen and how he carried out the commands received concerning these visions.

It is not surprising to find a man such as Smith claiming to have seen visions, many of them having to do with heavenly messengers. He claimed to have seen God, Christ, and many others. "Among the heavenly messengers, who are supposed to have visited Joseph, the most important are Moroni, who appeared on September 21, 1823, and several times subsequently; John the Baptist, on May 15, 1829; Peter, James, and John, a short time later; Moses, Elias, and Elijah, at Kirtland Temple, on April 3, 1836."¹

During one of the revivals held in that area Joseph became very concerned as to which denomination was correct and which group he should join. The Methodist minister quoted James 1:5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and up-braideth not, and it shall be given him."² Some years later Smith made

²Roberts, op. cit., I, 53.
this comment:

Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God I did, for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.¹

After much thought he decided to put the matter to God and ask for wisdom. One morning in early spring Smith knelt in a grove on their farm and prayed. This was the first time in his life he had made a personal, direct, verbal appeal to God in prayer.² Roberts gave a very good account of what Smith said happened to him next.

And now something strange happened. The youth had just begun timidly to express the desires of his heart in words, when he was seized upon by an invisible power that overcame him; his tongue was bound so that he could not speak. Darkness gathered about him, and it seemed for a time that he was doomed to sudden destruction. He exerted all his powers to call upon God for deliverance from this enemy—not from a merely "imaginary ruin," as he assures us, "but from the power of some actual being from the unseen world," who possessed such strength as the youth had never before encountered. Despair seized upon him, and he felt that he must abandon himself to destruction. At this moment of dreadful alarm he saw a pillar of light exactly over his head which shone out above the brightness of the sun, and began gradually descending towards him, until he was enveloped within it. As soon as the light appeared, the youth found himself freed from the power

¹Ibid., quoting Joseph Smith. ²Ibid., p. 54.
of the enemy that had held him bound. As the light rested upon him, he beheld within it two personages, exactly resembling each other in form and features, standing above him in the air. One of these, calling Joseph by name, and pointing to the other, said: "This is My Beloved Son, hear Him."

It gives evidence of the intellectual tenacity of Joseph Smith that in the midst of all these bewildering occurrences he held clearly in his mind the purpose for which he had come to this secluded spot, the object he had in view in seeking the Lord. As soon, therefore, as he could get sufficient self-possession to speak, he asked the Personages in whose resplendent presence he stood, which of the sects was right, and which he should join. He was answered that he must join none of them; for they were all wrong. And the Personage who addressed him said, that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that they drew near to him with their lips, but their hearts were far from him; they taught for doctrine the commandments of men: they had a form of godliness, but denied the power thereof. Joseph was again forbidden to join any of these sects, at the same time receiving a promise that the fulness of the gospel would at some future time be made known unto him.

When the lad came entirely to himself he found that he was lying on his back, looking up into heaven. With the passing of the vision he was left without strength; but soon recovering from his weakness he returned home.1

Brodie has presented Smith's statement as to the attitude of the general public toward this vision.

I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequences in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common to all sects—all united

1 Ibid., pp. 54-55.
Brodie made this observation regarding the public knowledge of the vision: "Oddly, however, the Palmyra newspapers, which in later years gave him plenty of unpleasant publicity, took no notice of Joseph's vision either at the time it was supposed to have occurred or at any other time." This, of course, is certainly no proof that the story was not circulating soon after the time of the vision. Many things happen that are never printed in the local newspapers. The first vision took place in the spring of 1820. I. Woodbridge Riley recorded Smith's brief account of his thinking leading up to the second vision.

I continued to pursue my common avocations of life until the twenty-first of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three, 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 eighteen hundred and twenty-three, (having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day, and being of very 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 corruption of human nature, which

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1Brodie, op. cit., p. 23., quoting Joseph Smith.
2Ibid.
I am sorry to say led me into divers temptations, to the gratification of many appetites offensive in the sight of God. In consequence of these things I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections; when on the evening of the above mentioned twenty-first 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 had previously had one.

While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in the room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.1

Roberts gave a further account of the happenings during this visit of the angel to Smith, as Smith told the story.

The personage called the youth by name and announced himself to be the angel Moroni, sent from the presence of God with a message to the effect that God had a work for him (Joseph) to do; that his name would be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds and tongues; that it would be both good and evil spoken of among all people.

At this point in his message the angel told the Prophet that a book was deposited in a hill not far distant, written upon gold plates, giving an abridged history of the former inhabitants of the American continents, and an account of their origin. He also said that the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ was contained in this book as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants of America; that with this record were two stones held in silver bows and fastened to a breast-plate, constituting "Urim and Thummim," or "Interpreters." The possession and use of these stones constituted men "Seers" in ancient times, and God had prepared these for the purpose of translating the before

mentioned book. After communicating this information Moroni commenced quoting prophecies from the Old Testament, beginning with the third chapter of Malachi, most likely the first part of the chapter, as that deals with the coming of the messenger to prepare the way for the glorious coming of the Messiah, a theme a propos to the developing mission of the Prophet.  

After this, many more scriptures were quoted by the angel, and Smith was instructed not to show the book or the breast-plate to any persons except those indicated. Also, he was told that he must translate the book. Smith was given a vision of the hill in which the Nephite record was deposited, and the vision was so clear that he easily recognized the place when he visited it the next day. After this the angel disappeared but soon came back again and repeated the vision and the words completely before disappearing once again. The vision was repeated the third time from beginning to end before the sequence was finished.  

Joseph received a warning that he must not yield to the temptation of selling the plates for the money he could get out of them. "This,...he forbade me; saying that I must have no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God; and I must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building his (God's) kingdom...."  

Joseph had been commanded to tell his father about

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1Roberts, op. cit., I, 71-72.  
2Ibid., pp. 73-74.  
3Ibid., p. 74, quoting Joseph Smith.
the vision but he was afraid to for fear his father would not believe him. The next day Joseph was pale from the strain of the vision, causing his father to send him home from work. While on his way he fell unconscious and when he awakened he realized that the angel was over him. The complete vision of the night before was repeated and then he was asked why he had not told his father. He was assured that his father would believe him, so he returned and told Joseph, Sen. the story and found that he was believed. 1

That day Joseph went to the spot that had been described and searched for the tablets. "About four miles south of Palmyra is a hill of considerable size, rising abruptly on the north side and tapering to the south with a long slope." 2 He recognized this hill (Cumorah) as being the place to find the buried plates and went to a spot on the west slope near the top where he found what he was searching for. 3 Following is an account of the finding of the plates as recorded by Joseph Smith.

On the west side of this hill, not far from the top, under a stone of considerable size, lay the plates

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1 Ibid., p. 75.
3 Ibid.
deposited in a stone box. This stone was thick and rounding in the middle on the upper side, and thinner towards the edges, so that the middle part of it was visible above the ground, but the edge all round was covered with earth. Having removed the earth and 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 indeed did I behold the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the Breast-plate, 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 were laid two stones crossways of the box, and on these stones lay the plates and the other things with them.  

Hinckley reported the happenings from this point in a better way than the previous author. He stated:

Anxiously he reached down to take them when he felt a shock. He tried again and received another paralyzing shock. Yet again he reached, and this time the shock was so severe as to render him weak and powerless. In his frustration he called out, "why can I not obtain this book?"

"Because you have not kept the commandments of the Lord," answered a voice at his side. The boy turned, and there stood the same messenger with whom he had conversed during the night. Guilt overwhelmed him, and Moroni's solemn caution and charge flashed through the boy's mind that Satan would try to tempt him because of the indigent circumstances of his father's family, but that the plates of gold were for the glory of God, and he must have no other purpose in mind in relation to them.

Thus rebuked, he was told that he should not receive the plates at that time, but that he should undergo four years of probation, and that during that period he should come to the hill each year on this same day. "Accordingly," he writes, "I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger there, and received instructions 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

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1Joseph Smith, quoted in Smith & Smith, op. cit., I, 16.
last days.\textsuperscript{1}

This continued for a period of four years. On September 22, 1827, Joseph again went on his yearly pilgrimage to the site of the plates and there he again met the angel. The angel gave Joseph the plates along with some instructions: "...delivered them up to me, with this charge that I should be responsible for them; that if I should let them go carelessly or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off; but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, until he the messenger should call for them, they should be protected."\textsuperscript{2}

Smith soon found that this was no idle warning for he had difficulty keeping the plates hidden. At first he hid them in a hollow birch log in a woods two or three miles from his home.\textsuperscript{3} People soon heard of the plates and it became necessary to move them from the woods. In the process several men tried to overtake him but he reached home safely. The plates were put in a chest prepared by his brother Hyrum and were hidden.\textsuperscript{4} It was at this time that Joseph brought the breast-plate to the house and showed it to his mother. Following is a description of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}Hinckley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 69.
\item \textsuperscript{2}Joseph Smith, quoted in Smith & Smith, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 17-18.
\item \textsuperscript{3}Roberts, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 86.
\item \textsuperscript{4}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 91.
\end{itemize}
it according to her. At the time it was wrapped in a thin muslin handkerchief.

It was a concave on one side, and convex on the other, and extended from the neck downwards, as far as the center of the stomach of a man of extraordinary size. It had four straps of the same material, for the purpose of fastening it to the breast, two of which ran back to go over the shoulders, and the other two were designed to fasten to the hips. They were just the width of two of my fingers, (for I measured them,) and they had holes in the end of them, to be convenient in fastening.¹

According to the story, the plates were hidden in other places. Finally the local persecution became so great that with the financial help of Martin Harris, a farmer in the community, Joseph took his wife and possessions and moved to Susquehanna County in Pennsylvania.² Immediately after his arrival in Pennsylvania Smith started copying some of the characters from the plates onto a piece of paper. He also, with the aid of the Urim and Thummim, translated a few of the words. In February, 1828, Martin Harris visited Joseph Smith and took a copy of the characters and the translation to New York City. Following is an account of what happened as recorded by Harris.

I went to the city of New York, and presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Charles Anthon, a gentle-

¹ Ibid., pp. 92-93, quoting Lucy Smith, History of the Prophet Joseph, ch. XXIV.
² Richards, op. cit., p. 48.
man celebrated for his literary attainments. Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian. I then showed him those which were not yet translated, and he said that they were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic; and he said they were true characters. He gave me a certificate, certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated were also correct. I took the certificate and put into my pocket, and was just leaving the house, when Mr. Anthon called me back, and asked me how the young man found out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them. I answered that an angel of God had revealed it unto him.

He then said to me, "Let me see that certificate." I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces, saying that there was no such thing now as ministering of angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden to bring them. He replied, "I cannot read a sealed book." I left him and went to Dr. Mitchell, who sanctioned what Professor Anthon had said respecting both the characters and the translation.1

It is interesting to note that in 1834 Professor Anthon denied this, saying that the whole story about his pronouncing the inscription as being reformed Egyptian was false. He later stated that the plates were a very clumsy hoax.2 Be that as it may, it is not the purpose of this section to critically study the plates, but rather to describe the circumstances under which the Mormon Church came into being.

Martin Harris served as scribe while Smith translated

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1Ibid., pp. 48-49, quoting Martin Harris.

2Smith & Smith, op. cit., I, 21-22.
the plates but Harris lost part of the manuscript. As punishment the plates and the Urim and Thummim were taken from Smith for a period of time. Shortly after this, however, Oliver Cowdery spent some time with the Smiths. On April 15, 1829, they began to translate and record the message on the plates.\(^1\) David Whitmer gave the following account of how the translating was done.

I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear; and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man.\(^2\)

On May 15, 1829, "John the Baptist appeared and ordained Smith and Cowdery to the Aaronic priesthood, after which, by the Baptist's command, they baptized and reordained each other."\(^3\) After this they proceeded to finish the translation of the tablets and David Whitmer was on

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 29.

\(^2\)Shook, op. cit., pp. 5-6, quoting David Whitmer.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 6.
hand to witness part of it. Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris signed the following statement in regard to the plates.

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people unto whom this work shall come, that we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken; and we also know that they have been translated by the gift of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true.

And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God, the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true; and it is marvelous in our eyes, nevertheless the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it: wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things.

And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

Just prior to this Smith had taken the three men into the woods for prayer. An angel appeared to them and told them that they would be the three witnesses to the actuality of the plates. In addition to these three there were

1Hinckley, op. cit., p. 83, quoting Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris.
eight more men who saw the plates, not through any miraculous experience, but rather through being permitted to see them by Smith. The following is the statement they signed.

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people unto whom this work shall come, that Joseph Smith, Jr., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated, we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship.

And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen; and we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

This statement was signed by Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jr., John Whitmer, Hyrum Page, Joseph Smith, Sen., Hyrum Smith, and Samuel H. Smith.

At a later date Harris said that he did not see the plates as definitely as a "pencil-case" (then at hand) but that he saw them through eyes of faith, for at the time they were covered by a cloth.

When the tablets were completely translated the manuscript was turned over to Egbert B. Grandin of Palmyra,

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2 Brodie, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
New York, for printing; Martin Harris taking care of the expenses. He printed 5,000 copies for $3,000, the job being finished in the spring of 1830. The resultant book was called the Book of Mormon from the name of the ancient editor, and it contained more than 500 pages.¹

Both the content and the critical study of the Book of Mormon will be dealt with in the section pertaining to revelation.

The publishing of the Book of Mormon was a tremendous step in the process of the founding of the Mormon Church. Therefore, we have spent considerable time showing the events leading to the publishing time. If the Book of Mormon was an accurate record, then Mormonism is the true religion; if the Book of Mormon was a false record, then Mormonism is a fraud. Robert Baird considered the publication of the Book of Mormon to be the starting point of the Mormon Church.² Whether or not it was actually started at that point is very doubtful, but certainly it was close to that time.

It had been but a short time before this that the apostles Peter, James, and John appeared and conferred

¹Hinckley, op. cit., p. 88.
upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery the higher powers of the priesthood. This gave them the same power that the original apostles had in the primitive church.¹

The reader will please note that in narrating all such visions, miracles, instructions, etc., the writer is merely trying to relate events as the Mormons claimed they happened.

Joseph Smith and some of his friends met together in the home of Peter Whitmer in Fayette Township, Seneca County, New York, in the spring of 1830. The following events took place as recorded by Mormon historians.

On Tuesday, April 6, 1830 six men gathered in the Whitmer home. There were others present, but these six participated in the actual organization proceedings. Their names were Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Samuel H. Smith, and David Whitmer. They were all young men, their average age being twenty-four. All had been baptized previously.

The meeting was opened with "solemn prayer." After that Joseph asked those present if they were willing to accept him and Oliver Cowdery as their spiritual leaders. All agree. Then Joseph ordained Oliver to the office of Elder in the Priesthood, and Oliver in turn ordained Joseph. They then laid hands on the heads of the others present and confirmed them members of the Church and bestowed upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was next administered, after which others were ordained to the office of Elder.

While the meeting was in session Joseph received a revelation in which he was designated "a seer, a prophet and apostle of Jesus Christ." Since that time he has been referred to in Church parlance as "the

¹ Hinckley, op. cit., p. 81.
Prophet." The Church was also instructed at this time—to keep a record of all of its proceedings, a practice since carefully adhered to.¹

The official name of the church was originally the Church of Jesus Christ and later it was changed to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They felt this was the Church of Jesus Christ restored to earth in the latter-day.²

We have seen how the church was established, but this was by no means all of the story. Many churches have been established only to fade out of existence. In the next section we will see what happened to the Mormon Church as they faced the rest of the world with this new revelation and the conviction that God was leading them through the leadership of Joseph Smith and the others that were to follow him.

The History of the Church

It is interesting to note that it is not possible to find complete agreement on the time of the origin of the Mormon Church. Charles Samuel Braden wrote: "Mormonism was founded by the prophet Joseph Smith in 1832 in New York State."³

The Mormon Church had a very fast growth, considering the type of religion it is, but William Kirby had an explanation for this, no matter which side an individual chooses. "If it is of the Evil One, it is reasonable, nevertheless, that it would be active; for it is said of Satan that he 'goeth to and fro on the earth, seeking whom he may devour.'" The opposite view was that the rapid growth was due to God's favor. The question naturally comes as to why there was such an acceptance of it. Cross gave this as a partial answer: "The fundamental condition leading to the new faith was the credulity and spiritual yearning which made people anxious to follow a prophet, whoever he might be." Alexander Campbell made the following observation in 1831.

So far gone are some of his adherents that nothing but starvation can cure them. Even Sidney Rigdon told me that 'were Joseph to be proved a liar, or say himself that he never found the Book of Mormon as he has reported, still he would believe it, and believe that all who do not believe it shall be damned.' But a very few, however, have attained to this faith of assurance; and it is more than probable that none of the late converts ever will.

Dryer believed some of the credit should go to the


2Cross, op. cit., p. 143.

leaders. "The early Mormon leaders were ignorant, shrewd, and unscrupulous." However, as will be seen later in this study, the early leaders were not all ignorant in any sense of the word.

As we look at the actual history of the church, it will have to be a very brief study, leaving out many interesting and some very important facts. However, if a complete history were written it would run into several thousand pages. This is, therefore, a very general history to show the trend of events in order to make an accurate comparison of the Mormon and Disciple histories.

Hinckley gave this report on the first days of the new church:

A meeting was called for the following Sunday and on this occasion Oliver Cowdery delivered the first public discourse in the ministry of the Church. Six more were baptized at the close of this meeting, and a week later seven more were added to the rolls. When the first general conference was held the following June the membership totaled twenty-seven souls, and at the close of the conference eleven more were baptized in Seneca Lake.

Samuel Smith went on a missionary journey with a sack full of copies of the Book of Mormon and gave one of them to Parley P. Pratt, a Disciple minister. After reading it Pratt left the ministry in the Disciple Church and joined the Mormons. His brother, Orson Pratt, also

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1Dryer, op. cit., p. 238. 2Hinckley, loc. cit.
joined the movement and both became very prominent leaders.  

Parley Pratt was born in Burlington, New York, in 1807, and died in 1857. He was made one of the twelve apostles of the Mormon Church in 1835 and spent much time as a missionary in England. Parley Pratt was one of the great preachers with his words carrying much authority. Thus, his audiences listened intently to what he had to say.

In the following statement J. B. Turner described the growth of the new movement.

Twenty were added to the churches in Manchester and Fayette in the month of April, and on the 28th of June following, thirteen were added in Colesville. In October, 1830, the number had increased to between seventy and eighty, when four of the elders, P. P. Pratt, O. Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, and Ziba Peterson, started for the west, on a mission to the Indians; and in passing, founded a branch of the church in Kirtland, in the northeast part of Ohio. Here they baptized 130 disciples in less than four weeks, and before the next spring, the number was increased to about 1000.

While they were at Kirtland Sidney Rigdon, later to figure very prominently in the church affairs, was con-
verted and baptized. He also was a Disciple minister.¹

One of the converts, Dr. Frederick G. Williams, accompanied the missionaries as they moved on to Independence, Missouri. However, the opportunities to preach were limited and the Government agents ordered them off the Indian land. Four missionaries remained in Missouri but Pratt went back.²

When Pratt arrived at Kirtland he was surprised to find Joseph Smith there and that the Mormons in New York planned a move to Kirtland, hoping to escape persecution. By June, 1831, most of the members had assembled at Kirtland and when the conference was held those present numbered two thousand.³ At the conference more missionaries were ordained and sent out. Joseph Smith went with some of them as they left for Missouri to establish a community there.

Alexander Campbell presented his opinion along with that of many religious leaders in an article written in 1831:

> On a recent tour through the Western Reserve, Ohio, of twenty-two days, in which we travelled, out and in, 350 miles, and delivered eighteen discourses; after which 27 persons were immersed, we learned that the delusion for 1830 had lost its charms; that a good many of those bewitched by the false prophets had begun to recover their reason, and desert the ranks of the

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¹Sergeant, *op. cit.*, p. 796.
²Hinckley, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.
new apostle. The lying spirit, which has always been the spirit of false prophets, had so generally inspired the worshippers of Joseph Smith, that it alone, through the extravagant stories told of miracles, prophecies, and visits of angels, by the witnesses of the golden plates of Nephi, has well nigh inscribed the epitaph upon the tomb of Mormon. Had it not been for the conversion of a Mr. Booth, a Methodist preacher of very considerable standing, many years on the circuit, to the New Bible, the cause had been at this time with the fugitive Smith in pursuit of a city of refuge among the Indians of the remote wilds of the West. 1

In the same article he made the following statement concerning the converts.

The accession of Mr. Booth and a number of his Methodist friends and relations, some two or three months since, prolonged the existence of this new religion a few weeks. The New York converts who migrated after Smith to Ohio, began to have their eyes opened to discern both good and evil, and some of them, too, have concluded "to follow Smith no farther." The representations given them of the site of the holy city at Kirtland they have now proved to be as unfounded as the religion of their master, and are therefore trying to improve their misfortunes by securing to themselves what remains in their hands of their little plunder brought from their homes. Smith and his inferior prophets are gone to the West to find the site for the New Jerusalem, carrying with them a little of the stuff contributed by those who have sold their possessions and laid their money at his feet, with which no doubt he will purchase some new lands in the name of Smith and Co. and then it will be commanded by the Lord that all who do not help to build and inhabit the new city on said lands, shall be utterly destroyed in the impending vengeance. 2

Actually, the missionaries did establish another base near what is now Kansas City, Missouri. For the next seven years the activities of the church were divided be-

1Campbell, "Mormonism,"..., p. 331. 2Ibid., p. 332.
tween the new station and Kirtland.¹

It was probably Rigdon’s influence that brought the idea of having all things in common to the Mormons.² Hayden spoke of such a case at Kirtland.

In the neighborhood, lived a Mr. Morley, a member of the church in Kirtland, who, acting on the community principles, had established a "family." The new doctrine of having "all things in common," and of restoring miracles to the world as a fruit and proof of true faith, found a ready welcome by this incipient "community." They were all, seventeen in number, re-immersed in one night into this new dispensation.³

In 1831 Rigdon and Smith, with their families, moved to Hiram, Ohio. The Mormons said this was to work on a revision of the Bible, but others thought this was probably due to the infamy connected with Kirtland.⁴ While at Hiram the work was rather successful and Symonds Ryder, the minister of the Hiram Church, was converted to Mormonism. Smith would have farms deeded to him according to revelations from God. One of these revelations was received in connection with Ryder’s call to the eldership and Ryder insisted on seeing the manuscript upon which Smith had copied the message from God. He discovered his name was spelled S-i-m-o-n R-i-d-e-r and decided that if the message

¹Hinckley, op. cit., p. 98.
³Hayden, op. cit., p. 211. ⁴Shaw, op. cit., p. 84.
were really from God his name would have been spelled right. Therefore he withdrew from the movement and took most of his congregation with him.¹

This, along with other things such as the acquiring of farms, made many of the residents antagonistic toward the Mormons. Smith and Rigdon were tarred and feathered while they were at Hiram. Because of this pressure they soon moved their headquarters to Kirtland.²

Jesse J. Moss told of certain methods used by some Mormons in the area that made a man appear as if he were an angel who gave blessings to the converts being baptized. Such methods as this were soon exposed, however.³ Joseph Smith received word of these exhibitions and told the Mormons that such a performance was of the devil and that it must cease.⁴ These cases show some of the unrest that was connected with the movement.

One of the accomplishments at Kirtland was the building of the temple, which still stands. It was completed and ready for dedication March 27, 1836.⁵ In 1837

¹Ibid. ²Roberts, op. cit., I, 281-282.
⁵Hinckley, op. cit., p. 108.
a bank was formed in Kirtland and the officers were also the authorities of the church. The bank went broke, bringing trouble upon the leaders of the church which they could not handle.\(^1\) Hinckley told the eventual outcome of this situation.

Meanwhile in Kirtland mobbings and the destruction of property by bands of bigoted religionists increased. The Prophet could find no peace, and on January 12, 1838, accompanied by Sidney Rigdon, he left for Missouri, never again to return to Kirtland where so large and important a part of his work had been done.\(^2\)

The town of Independence, Missouri, is the place that was described in a revelation as being the City of Zion for the Mormons. A well planned city was built and even a newspaper published. The settlers that were living at Independence, or Zion, in Jackson County, persecuted the Mormons severely for real or imagined reasons. The trouble became so intense that Smith went to Ohio, and some went other places, to raise an army and money to defend the Mormons at Zion. Smith was able to get only about 200 soldiers and with these he returned to Zion. They were never used because they were so greatly outnumbered by the settlers who lived in fear of the Mormons.\(^3\)

The population at Zion was growing constantly from

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 110.  
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 111.  
\(^3\)Brodie, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 143-158.
new converts. "The Mormon missionaries in England had, by this time, baptized about two thousand converts, most of whom came to America and joined their co-religionists in Missouri."¹

Matters grew worse in Missouri and still the Mormons had no legal protection. They organized their own militia for defense but it became aggressive. Governor Lillburn W. Boggs on October 27, 1838 signed what is now known as the Boggs Exterminating Order which said that the Mormons were enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state.

A few days later the massacre of Hann's Mill occurred with seventeen Mormons being killed.² Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, and Lyman Wight were put in jail and they were sentenced to be shot at sunrise, but General A. W. Doniphan, then in charge, refused to carry out the sentence.³ The men were left in jail for five months.

This persecution brought about the Mormon exodus from Missouri, as recorded by Hinckley.

Greatly outnumbered and denied any semblance of legal protection, fifteen thousand members of the Church fled their Missouri homes and property valued at a million and a half dollars. Through the winter of 1838-39 they painfully made their way eastward toward Illinois, not knowing where else to go. Many died

from exposure, or illness which was aggravated by it. Joseph Smith was in prison, and Brigham Young, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, directed this sorrowful migration which was to prove to be the forerunner to a yet more tragic movement a scant eight years later, and of which he was to serve as leader. 1

The migration stopped at Quincy, Illinois, and soon Joseph Smith was back with them. They made preparation for a new city, called Nauvoo, about forty-five miles north of Quincy. The history of Nauvoo is a long and involved one, too long to discuss at any length at this time. This was an eight years of both doctrine-making and history-making.

Cartwright told of a meeting he had with Smith while at Nauvoo, during which he placed Smith in an awkward position by telling of catching some Mormons in a lie. The following account was given by Cartwright.

My friend, Joe Smith, became very restive before I got through with my narrative; and when I closed, his wrath boiled over, and he cursed me in the name of his God, and said, "I will show you, sir, that I will raise up a government in these United States which will overturn the present government, and I will raise up a new religion that will overturn every other form of religion in this country!" 2

Smith almost carried out this plan while at Nauvoo. He was able to establish a strong community and church that caused considerable trouble among the non-Mormons in the community. In the interest of space, the following

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1 Ibid., p. 122.  
2 Cartwright, op. cit., p. 345.
statement given by Shook is used, presenting a description
of the Nauvoo situation.

It was here that Smith made his most lavish display. Between the years 1839 and 1844, he passed from a hunted fugitive, fleeing from the vengeance of Missouri, to an earthly potentate courted and flattered by the politicians of Illinois. He had been a prophet, he now became mayor of Nauvoo, a king to reign over the house of Israel forever, lieutenant-general of the Nauvoo Legion, and, to cap the climax of his absurd pretensions, candidate for President of the United States on an independent ticket!

But, like many another impostor, his career came to an abrupt end. He had been accused of both immoral and illegal conduct in New York, Ohio and Missouri, but in all these States he had escaped justice. This made him bolder in his arrogant and lawless conduct and he carried things with a high hand at Nauvoo. He was accused of aiding and abetting a secret society, called "Danites," in their depredations upon apostates and Gentiles; of sheltering criminals fleeing from justice; of attempting to bring about the assassination of his old enemy, Governor Boggs; of counterfeiting the current coin of the United States; of speculating in Government lands, and of the practice of immorality.

So strong were the evidences sustaining these and other charges, that a respectable party broke off from the church and attempted to made a public exposure of the sins of the Prophet and his colleagues. These recusants started to publish a paper, called the Nauvoo Expositor, but it was short-lived, for immediately after its first issue of June 7, 1844, the press was broken and the type pied by order of the city council and without a trial, and the publishers were forced to flee for their lives.

The leaders of the schism took refuge in the Gentile town of Carthage, where, after some difficulty, they secured the arrest of Smith and others of the Mormon leaders, and he and his brother Hyrum were put in Carthage jail, under a guard of State militia, to await trial on the charge of treason. Here, on June 27, 1844, at about five o'clock in the afternoon, a mob of infuriated Gentiles stormed the jail, overpowered the
guard and shot Joseph and Hyrum dead.¹

Shook did not appreciate Mormonism and there is the possibility that some of the comments were strictly his own opinion, but the historical facts were true. It is impossible to tell how many, if any, of the accusations made were true, but certainly all of the accusations were made at that time.

A temple was built at Nauvoo but it was destroyed by fire in 1848.² It was while at Nauvoo that the doctrine of polygamy was introduced by Smith. One group of Mormons denied that Smith introduced this doctrine, as will be seen later in the discussion dealing with the church splitting into various groups.

The actual facts concerning the death of Joseph Smith were very confused, even by people that should have been able to obtain accurate information. J. Creath wrote a letter under the date June 28, 1844, and related the events as follows, writing from Quincy, Illinois:

I have just seen four military companies paraded and put on board the steam-boat Boreas, to be transported to Nauvoo to fight the Mormons. Yesterday Joe Smith, and Hiram [sic] his brother, and Richards their Secretary, were killed. Joe Smith had fifty balls shot through him. They had been committed to

Carthage jail, and the Mormons fired upon the guard and wounded them, and the Smith's [sic] fired from the windows upon them; and then the citizens broke into the jail and shot them. They are certainly dead. I have never witnessed such excitement and such a cry of war and bloodshed, and such a noise of drums and implements of war, since the war of 1812. It is supposed the Mormons have murdered the Governor of Illinois before this time. My meetings have been interrupted all the time I have been here by military companies parading.¹

J. W. Davidson corrected some of the items as he stated it was Mr. Taylor that was wounded instead of Mr. Richards being killed along with the Smiths. He also stated that the prisoners did not fire from the jail.²

This is not too important, except that it showed the confusion that was present and also the fear of the Mormons that was evident in Illinois.

J. W. Peterson recorded several authors that said Smith was killed in 1845, some who claimed people talked to Smith as late as 1857, and an eye-witness account of Smith being killed as he was riding a horse.³ These are mentioned to illustrate the fact that in some ways it is


² J. W. Davidson, "The Murder of the Smiths," The Millennial Harbinger, ed. Alexander Campbell (Bethany, Va.: By the editor, 1844), pp. 519-520.

very hard to tell what happened, even as late as one-
hundred fifteen years ago. Therefore we can only assume
that all that has been said in this study concerning Smith
is something close to the truth.

The country waited to see what would happen to the
Mormon Church after the death of Smith. Many thought that
Mormonism could last only a few years anyway, as we have
seen. Kellett felt that Smith's death helped the cause
tremendously: "They [the Mormons] would probably have soon
died out but for the atrocious murder of Smith in 1844,
which, as so often happens, gave him the halo of martyr-
dom."¹ Winfred Ernest Garrison reminded us that it did not
only survive, but advanced after Smith's death: "It has
not only greatly increased in numbers, wealth, and prestige,
but it has to a very considerable extent become assimilated
to the society which environs it."²

After the death of Joseph and Hyrum there was a great
struggle for power in the Mormon Church. The leader was
unexpectedly removed from the scene and the followers had
to have a new leader very quickly. With the persecution
around them they might fall apart as a group without
someone to hold them together.

¹Kellett, loc. cit.
²Winfred Ernest Garrison, The March of Faith (New
Sidney Rigdon claimed the leadership. This was very natural because he had been with Smith from the first. He had helped in revising the Bible and in the doctrinal questions, as we shall see later. However, Brigham Young managed to gain control and have Rigdon's authority taken from him.\(^1\) Hinckley stated very simply that "Joseph had bestowed the keys of authority upon the apostles, with Brigham Young at their head, and the people sustained them in this capacity, although there was some confusion for a time."\(^2\)

Not everyone agreed that Young should be the head of the church and many divisions came into being. It is advisable that we look briefly at each.

The Church of Christ, Temple Lot, was established when Joseph Smith died. This was done at Bloomington, Illinois. The group disagreed with the teaching of baptism for the dead, the elevation of men to the estate of gods after death, the doctrine of lineal right to office in the church, and the practice of polygamy. They were going to build a temple in Independence, Missouri, for the return of the Lord at which time he would gather the ten lost tribes. This building lot was lost to the Reorganized


\(^2\)Hinckley, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
Church in 1891-95 but the Temple Lot group still feel that they are commissioned to build a temple there and that it must be done in this generation.\(^1\) The *Yearbook of American Churches-1958*, listed the Temple Lot as having twelve churches and 3,000 members.\(^2\)

One of the strong contenders for the leadership was James J. Strang. He had been a native of west central New York and became a Mormon in 1843, receiving instruction from the leaders of Mormonism. When Smith was killed Strang was in southern Wisconsin establishing a Mormon community. At the news of Smith's death Strang announced that he had received a divine call to be leader of the church. The next year he announced a vision revealing the location of buried plates (the Voree plates) covered with inscriptions which he translated with the help of miraculous spectacles. These plates, he claimed, confirmed his appointment as successor to Smith. He was so successful in his claim that some of the leaders of the Brighamites were won over to him. The first Strangite center was Voree, Wisconsin, but in 1846 Strang received a divine command to move the body of Saints to the Beaver Islands in northern Lake Michigan. By


the winter of 1848-49 twelve Mormon families were located there. The next year Strang received a revelation concerning more metallic plates revealing that the Kingdom of God would be established upon earth and "His servant James" was to occupy the throne. Strang was then known as the Prophet and King, and ruled over the Beaver Islands as an independent kingdom. He often denounced the United States as being cruel and blood-thirsty.

At first Strang opposed polygamy and said it was born of hell and begotten of the devil. However, it was but a short time until he had taken an attractive school-mistress as his second wife, declaring that he had received another revelation which proclaimed plural marriages to be acceptable.

By 1856 there were in excess of 2,500 Mormons on the Beaver Islands and the adjoining mainland. There were soon battles between the "gentiles" and the Mormons and Strang was killed. Upon his death many of his followers joined the Utah Mormons and others joined the Reorganized group. Others gave up Mormonism altogether.\(^1\) In 1958 there were still five churches and 225 members in the Strangite group.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Sweet, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-291.

The second largest group of Mormons to come from the division was the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This group was organized at Beloit, Wisconsin, in 1852. Joseph Smith, son of the Prophet, became its president in 1860, thereby following the belief that the leadership of the church should go to one of Joseph Smith's descendants. Besides this, they denied the doctrine of blood-atonement, that is, if an apostate's blood is shed, the sin of his apostasy is wiped out; they denied that after death good Mormons become gods; they denied that Smith said they should gather in the Rocky Mountains because they felt that Zion was to be in Missouri; and they denied the doctrine of polygamy, saying that Joseph Smith never taught or practiced it. In 1958 the Reorganized Church had 850 churches and 142,480 members.

The temple at Independence, Missouri, will be finished soon after this writing (1959). This will mark another milestone in the life of the church because they feel that is the true Zion.

Another branch was the Church of Jesus Christ (Cutler-

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1Mead, op. cit., p. 126.
2Shook, The True Origin of Mormon..., pp. 9-11.
3Landis, op. cit., p. 63.
4The Courier-Times (New Castle, Ind.), May 16, 1959, p. 4.
This church was organized in 1853 by Alpheus Cutler, who was the seventh in line of the original 7 elders of the church under Joseph Smith. He and his followers believed that they were commissioned to build the Lord's temple at Nauvoo, Illinois. Cutler ordained new elders "to act in the lesser offices of the church." Community of property is practiced in this church, which consists of 2 congregations, one at Independence, Missouri, and the other at Clitherall, Minnesota—the headquarters. There are 16 members in 1 church.1

Another group of Mormons refused to follow the leadership of Young and denounced the twelve elders for general wickedness, mainly referring to polygamy and baptism for the dead. They were organized under the leadership of Sidney Rigdon in 1862 at Green Oak, Pennsylvania, under the name of the Church of Jesus Christ. The actual organizing work was done by William Bickerton who claimed he had a clear, divine call to the succession of priesthood and authority. The headquarters was established at Monongahela, Pennsylvania, where the general conference has met once a year. Missionary work has been conducted among the Indians in the United States and Canada.2 In 1958 there were forty churches with a membership of 2,350.3

These various groups left the main body of the Mormon Church which was led by Brigham Young. The large body established its headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah, with

1Mead, op. cit., pp. 127-128.  
2Ibid., p. 127.  
3Landis, op. cit., p. 62.
the official name of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Cowles said that the largest membership was to be found in Utah, Idaho, Arizona, and California, although they have spread through every state in the union.\footnote{Cowles, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 289.}

The \textit{Yearbook of American Churches-1958}, listed this group as having 2,869 churches with 1,289,581 members.\footnote{Landis, \textit{loc. cit.}} Mead listed them as having 3,300 congregations.\footnote{Mead, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 126.} The church itself just released the following information (1959):


The fact that they had over 33,000 converts in 1958 is very interesting, particularly in the light of a statement made by Everard Bierer in 1906: "While it \footnote{Everard Bierer, \textit{The Evolution of Religions} (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1906), p. 21.} has a million or more of votaries, it can never become a great religion. The day for the wide prevalence of such delusions has gone by."\footnote{Everard Bierer, \textit{The Evolution of Religions} (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1906), p. 21.}

From this point we shall be interested only in the
main group of Mormons, led by Brigham Young.

Kellett gave a brief description of Young and his early leadership in the following statement.

Brigham Young, who succeeded him [Joseph Smith], was a man of practical sense, indomitable energy, and iron will: he was, in fact, a statesman. Under him, the warring factions which had torn the sect to pieces were reconciled—hopeless recalcitrants were driven out, and the submissive were ruled for their own good. ¹

Thomas and Thomas stated that Young had gone to school only eleven days in his life. ² Even so, he made a remarkable leader. It was largely through the force of his personality that he was able to obtain and maintain the leadership of the group.

There was considerable trouble at Nauvoo after the death of Joseph Smith. The "gentiles" found they could give open opposition to the Mormons without much interference, although there was some retaliation on the part of the Mormons.

The Mormons were in legal trouble in 1845, as was indicated by a letter from Springfield, Illinois, dated December 17, 1845.

The Grand Jury of the U. S. District Court, now in session here, have, for the present week, been investigating the state of affairs at Nauvoo. The result is, they have found twelve indictments, (mostly against

¹Kellett, op. cit., p. 540.

²Thomas & Thomas, op. cit., p. 254.
the head men of the Mormon Church,) for counterfeiting the coin of the United States. Among the number indicted are Brigham Young, President of "The Twelve," and Orson Pratt, a prominent leader. I learn that the developments are most startling. It appears that counterfeiting has been the principal part of the business there for some years, and that it has been carried on by the heads of the Church. The amount counterfeited has been immense, and the execution has been so nice, as in many cases to prevent its being detected. The Prophet, Joe Smith, used to work at the business with his own hands.1

The governor of the State of Illinois contacted Young and told him that they should prepare to move out of the state for their own protection and gain their right of peace somewhere else.2 However, true to the prophecy of Smith, they were already preparing to go to the West.

Susa Young Gates, a daughter of Brigham Young, gave the account of the Mormons leaving Nauvoo for the West in the following statement.

The first companies of saints left Nauvoo in early February, 1846, crossing the river in boats and other river craft carrying wagons and freight. Brigham Young, Willard Richards, George A. Smith and families left about two weeks later. It was bitterly cold. The snow fell heavily on the 16th, while the river was frozen over underneath the soft blanket. For some time the saints crossed on the ice.3

The caravan traveled with hardship and death and on

3Ibid., p. 54.
July 21, 1847, Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow entered the Salt Lake valley. These were only advance scouts; the main body of Mormons arrived July 24.\textsuperscript{1} Up to this time there were no permanent residents in Utah.

The first group was made up of 143 persons, including three women.\textsuperscript{2} The remaining large portion of the members had stayed in Iowa and had established a church there. Young went back, met them, and was appointed President of the church.\textsuperscript{3}

Young traveled back to Utah, leading the caravan of Mormons that had wintered in Iowa. In the party were 1,229 people, arriving on October 20, 1848.\textsuperscript{4}

Joseph B. Clark reminded us that even though we might not agree with the Mormons theologically, they still accomplished more in thirty days in Utah than any equal number of men in history.\textsuperscript{5} They immediately set up an irrigation project which was the first such project in America. The first newspaper and the first university west of the Missouri were established by the Mormons after they were

\textsuperscript{1}Hinckley, op. cit., p. 171.


\textsuperscript{4}Hinckley, op. cit., p. 179.  \textsuperscript{5}Clark, loc. cit.
forced to flee to Utah. By 1850 the Mormons had opened stores in Utah and were doing a brisk business with emigrants moving to the gold fields of California.

In 1849 they drew up a constitution for the provisional government of "Deseret," the chosen name for the territory. Following the constitution is a statement about the tolerance found in the document. It provided that there should be no preference to one sect or denomination over another according to law, and that there would be no religious test made of any officer of trust under the state. "This reflects the strong conviction of the people that schools should be secular and not religious institutions."

However, all was not perfect with the new community.

The government sent a military expedition to Utah in 1857-58 to bring the Mormons and their leaders to terms, as they were believed to be interfering with the administration of the Federal court and were exercising power arbitrarily. In the background was the fact that their practice of polygamy was distasteful to most Americans, and that they were in frequent friction with non-Mormon Western pioneers and settlers. Of this the most important instance was the Mountain Meadows Massacre in September, 1857.

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1 Potter, op. cit., p. 527.
3 Cowles, op. cit., p. 294.
4 Stokes, op. cit., II, 275.
This massacre was a particularly unfortunate affair in which certain Mormons hired Indians to help them wipe out a wagon train, killing all of the people except the smaller children. The Mormon leaders denied having anything to do with the event, and the leader of the massacre, John Lee, was executed by the government for his part in the plot.¹

There was considerable difficulty with the government. The Mormons felt that although they were Americans, they should not be forced to have the Federal government directly over them all of the time.² Kurtz presented the general story of the events and the feeling in the following.

But all the more energetically did the central government at the close of the wars in 1865 resolve upon the complete subjugation of the rebel saints, having learnt that since 1852 numerous murders had taken place in the territory, and that the disappearance of whole caravans of colonists was not due to attacks of Indians, who would have scalped their victims, but to a secret Mormon fraternity called Danites (Judges xviii.), brothers of Gideon (Judges vi.ff.) or Angels of Destruction, which, obedient to the slightest hint from the prophet, had undertaken to avenge by bloody terrorism any sign of resistance to his authority, to arrest any tendency to apostasy, and to guard against the introduction of any foreign element.³

¹Roberts, op. cit., V, 607.
³Kurtz, op. cit., III, 445-446.
In the next few years the difficulties were ironed out. Polygamy had been set aside as a practice according to a ruling of the Mormon Church, and on January 4, 1896, Utah was made a state. This concluded a long and hard section of their history, finally giving them a relatively peaceful life for the first time since the founding of the religion in New York. Even with the relative peace that settled over the area, there was much distrust shown on the part of the "gentiles." The following statement was made in 1909.

The able handling of an emigration fund, and the dextrous combination of appeals to many passions and interests at once, have availed to draw together in the State of Utah and neighboring regions a body of fanatics formidable to the Republic, not by their number, for they count only about one hundred and fifty thousand, but by the solidity with which they are compacted into a political, economical, religious, and, at need, military community, handled at will by unscrupulous chiefs.

We now need to take a brief look at the composition of the Mormon population. The Mormons were on the mission field soon after the group came into existence, thereby being slightly different than many groups. Combined with this was the fact that many of the mission converts came to

1 Hinckley, op. cit., p. 209.

America. The Mormons have continued to be very active in missionary work and many converts have been gained in this way. Thousands were converted in England as well as in other parts of the world. Mormon missionaries arrived in England in 1837. "An emigration agency was established in Liverpool, and it is said that from 1840 to 1851 between thirteen and fourteen thousand left the British Isles for Utah."¹ T. L. Nichols gave his opinion of why this happened: "This appears to have been gained by the warmth and apparent sincerity of the Mormon preachers, and especially by their real or pretended miracles."² In England most of the converts were from the middle classes—mechanics, artisans, and people having considerable property.³ Latourette expressed the opinion that they were attracted as much by the economic opportunities in this country as by the Mormon religious beliefs.⁴

In 1850 the first Mormon missionaries went to Sweden and the next year the Book of Mormon was translated into the Swedish language. Latourette said the converts made in Sweden were chiefly from the poverty-stricken and ignorant. The number of Swedish converts between 1850 and

¹Latourette, op. cit., IV, 138.
³Ibid., p. 101. ⁴Latourette, loc. cit.
1909 was said to have been 17,259.¹ Some of the converts came to America but as many as 50 per cent were disillusioned and therefore abandoned the faith after arriving in Utah.²

The Mormons drew a great many converts from the Scandanavian countries. By 1900 almost sixty thousand Scandanavians in the United States belonged to the Mormon Church.³

Besides the great number of converts from other lands, many converts were being made in the United States, thus constantly increasing the population of Utah. With their high birth-rate, they swelled their own ranks.

Mormonism was very successful in its spread. It was definitely different than the average American religion and certainly than the average christian religion. In 1842 Alexander Campbell gave the following as partial reason for its success. "Mormonism, indeed, owes its success to the speciosity of its appeals to primitive christianity and the prophecies concerning the Jews; both of which it professes to take from the Bible alone: consequently it would most likely prepossess in its favor those who exclusively appeal to the book without under-

¹Ibid., p. 135. ²Ibid., p. 292. ³Ibid.
standing what is in the book."

Bierer presented the following reason for its success. Knowing its utter negation of any evidence upon which to build up such a structure of faith, Mormonism requires, and, amazing as it is, has found incredible superstition, enthusiasm, and belief in the supernatural and credulity to propagate it. Its history illustrates the truth that in some, nay, very many human beings, even in the educated and intelligent, their religious beliefs or infatuations may under certain circumstances eclipse the wildest vagaries of the imagination.

Potter recognized that America had no better citizens than the Mormons but said it was "difficult to account for the evolution of present-day Mormonism from the teachings of such an erratic person as Joseph Smith." He went on to say that there were some reasons for this. It would seem worth our time to look at them as listed by him.

There are several factors of importance, however, in the situation. In the first place, in spite of his visions and vagaries, Smith was undoubtedly a commanding and attracting personality. That fact has been testified to by both friend and enemy.

In the second place there were elements of power and worth in Smith's message.

In the third place the absurdities and abnormalities in early Mormonism were gradually sloughed off when they were found to be contrary to enlightened public opinion. Mormonism has been changed for the better by the common sense of its later leaders.


2 Bierer, loc. cit.

3 Potter, op. cit., p. 537.

4 Ibid.
In one way this has been a rather long summary of the background of Mormonism and its history up to the present time; yet in another way it has been all too short, for there are many areas that have of a necessity been left out. This much has been necessary so that we might have sufficient ground for an adequate comparison of the histories of the Mormons and the Disciples.

So religious movements come out of the earth or come down from above regardless of past or present conditions. Simple ideas, subtly in themselves developed, either hidden or apparent, and concentrated then into a historic movement. It takes then a discipline and irreducible course and receives a distinguishing name.

William Thomas Moore also carried out this idea as he stated that great religious movements are symptomatic of causes which lie behind them and "the forces which produce these movements are often numerous and are not infrequently operating through many years."

It is the purpose of this chapter to investigate

1Great Cause. The Story Relation and Generation of Sects and Churches (Boston: N. E. N. Company, 1901), 32.

CHAPTER III

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

The Time and Place

It has been shown in the previous chapter that the Mormon Church came out of a particular background of time and place that made it possible. This was also true of the Disciples of Christ. Errett Gates stated that it is always true that a group has a definite course to be traced.

No religious movement arises out of the earth or comes down from heaven regardless of past or present conditions. Single lives combine in themselves scattered tendencies, either hidden or apparent, and concentrate them into a historic movement. It takes then a distinct and traceable course and receives a distinguishing name.\(^1\)

William Thomas Moore also carried out this idea as he stated that great religious movements are symptomatic of causes which lie behind them and "the forces which produce these movements are often numerous, and are not unfrequently operating through many years."\(^2\)

It is the purpose of this chapter to investigate


and see what causes lie behind the establishing of this movement.

First we should look at the religious condition of the country at the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The religious condition of that time was largely caused by the earlier periods in the history of this country. Latourette said the christianity of today is also largely the logical outgrowth of the colonial period.¹ This was true also for the period of time in which we are interested in this chapter. Peter Oliver said that "by 1800 the Puritan experiment in theocracy was over."² Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot declared that even though the system of religious establishment was not completely done away with until 1833 in Massachusetts, it was still plainly on the way out at an earlier date.³ This, along with other developments, caused a religious fermentation that reached a long way in the church life of the country.

The moral life of the American people had a great

¹Latourette, op. cit., IV, 424.
deal to do with the church life. Bacon gave some indication of the causes of this condition.

The closing years of the eighteenth century show the lowest low-water mark of the lowest ebb-tide of spiritual life in the history of the American church. The demoralization of army life, the fury of political factions, the catch-penny materialist morality of Franklin, the philosophic deism of men like Jefferson, and the popular ribaldry of Tom Paine, had wrought, together with other untoward influences, to bring about a condition of things which to the eye of little faith seemed almost desperate.¹

William Speer stated that another factor which destroyed the moral values of the returning soldiers, other than that which ordinarily transpires, was that they "carried home with them the vices they had contracted and the infidelity which they had imbibed from their French allies."² It was the custom for even the ministers to be lax in their morals, by our standards. "A pastor in New York City, as late as 1820, has left on record the statement that it was difficult to make pastoral visits for a day without becoming, in a measure, intoxicated."³ This lack of spiritual depth was noticeable also in the educational circles. B. B. Tyler said that at the close of the eight-

¹Bacon, op. cit., p. 230.
teenth century the universities were filled with skeptics; Yale having only four or five church members enrolled in 1795. Many people thought the christian religion would soon be thrown to one side as being obsolete.  

These conditions were present on the frontier also as Lester G. McAllister pointed out.

Frontier conditions both opposed and favored the spread of Christianity. On the one hand, many persons, removed from the influence of more stable communities, tended to leave behind all religious and moral practices taught by Christianity. On the other hand, the very fact of the newness of the country and the feeling that men could have a fresh start gave opportunity for building the church into the emerging frontier community.

We will investigate the frontier situation further as we discuss the revivals that swept the frontier.

Some of the religious feeling of the day was brought about as a reaction to the preaching of Edwards. The Universalists replied to the threats of damnation by assuring everyone that they would be saved. Also affecting the religious feeling was the fact that at that time there had been a great deal said about liberty and freedom, and the people were no longer willing to be restricted in any way. It would seem this feeling carried over in a reaction

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1Ibid., p. 2.
3Oliver, op. cit., p. 227.
4Tyler, op. cit., p. 5.
against the Calvinism of the time, and the people endeavored to show that they had freedom in their relationship to God.

M. M. Davis believed all of these problems in the religious world, along with the divisions, caused a renewed interest in religion on the part of some.

About the time of the dawning of the nineteenth century all could see that the religious world was sadly troubled. The Church had well-nigh lost her power, and her progress had been arrested. Dark clouds overhung the heavens, and hope fled from the hearts of many. Good men saw there was something terribly wrong, but they knew not what it was. Moved by a single impulse, a desire to discover and remedy the wrong, they began their investigations. In many cases they were far removed from each other, ignorant of the feelings, purposes and labors of the others. But one by one they located the trouble in the divided condition of Christendom, with its attendant evils, and they began the work of its removal.¹

Winfred Ernest Garrison stated that the removal of the hand of the government made it easier for new movements to spring up, and the problem of christian union became a religious problem instead of a political problem. They knew it must be solved by religious means.²

East of the mountains the old-world patterns hung on for a while, but west of the mountains the people turned


to new patterns to a great extent. Sweet believed that the religious groups which were able to adapt themselves to the new methods and thinking of the frontier became the most typical of the American churches. 1 As the population of the country moved west, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio became the strategic battleground of religion in the westward march of the nation. 2

Ronald E. Osborn pointed out that the American frontiersmen were accustomed to doing things for themselves and this had an effect upon the religion along the frontier.

The tendency toward direct action expresses itself in our religious life. It has been a factor in the rise of new denominations. A situation arose, needing to be remedied. What did our fathers do? They did not discuss the theory of the matter. They did not wait long for higher authorities to deal with the problem, especially if there was official reluctance. They started a movement. Perhaps it resulted in a new denomination, but the need was met. 3

The religious life of Kentucky figured prominently in the founding of the Disciples and should be examined briefly. George Godwin described the condition in 1800 as being this: "Because of the geographical situation of

1 Sweet, op. cit., p. 97.


the State, ramparted by the Appalachian ranges, the inhabitants remained in isolation from the rest of the country, an isolation which produced social and economical evils....Kentucky was probably the most backward State in the Union."

Many of the settlers in Kentucky were antagonistic toward the church in Virginia and therefore tended to be antagonistic toward all religion. Rev. John Lyle closed his female seminary in Paris, Kentucky, in 1810, because the parents of some of the girls objected to the Bible being read in the school.

Latourette said that one of the remarkable features of christianity in the United States was the fact that it was spread by means of the revival. The remarkable thing about it was that it spread rapidly among the residents of Kentucky, where there was much feeling against religion. Frederick Morgan Davenport spoke of their philosophy of living in the following.

These people were in a new, wild country, where neither conventionality nor law held its accustomed sway. The rational restraints of religion were many and strong

3Latourette, op. cit., IV, 429.
in their native land, but were largely absent in the wilderness. They came to live more and more in what they knew to be open violation of the law of their own consciences, and of that stern but strongly ethical religion in which they and their forefathers who followed Knox and Calvin had been reared.¹

It would seem that the frontiersmen were particularly susceptible to the revivals held around the 1800 "Second Awakening" period.² This was apparently true due to the presence of a relatively large number of the criminal and degenerate type found in the area at that time.³ Davenport explained this action upon the frontiersmen:

...and when at last there was brought to bear upon them in the course of events that most powerful species of psychological "crowd," a protracted religious camp-meeting, and they were suddenly halted and aroused by the most fervid, imaginative and reiterative appeals to a sense of their apostasy and their everlasting doom if they should not repent, there resulted as perfect a combination of conditions for the propagation of influence by imitation and the production of nervous and mental infection as the world has ever seen.⁴

The revivalism which centered in the Kentucky area was somewhat different than its counterpart in the East. "The second or frontier phase of the Second Awakening was radically different from the eastern phase since of necessity the appeal to the common man was largely on an emotional basis, and also because of necessity the great

²Latourette, op. cit., IV, 430.
³Davenport, op. cit., pp. 64-65. ⁴Ibid., p. 64.
meetings were held out of doors since there were no buildings large enough to accommodate the great numbers of interested people."¹

The revivals started in Logan County, Kentucky, in 1800 and continued for several years. It was out of these camp meetings that one branch of what finally became the Disciples originated. This revivalism had a reason for coming into existence. "It is quite clear that the camp-meeting arose in answer to a need; it was one of the new ways which emerged to deal with the appalling spiritual poverty of the pioneer."²

During the revivals people felt they were actually visited by celestial beings. This was felt to be the direct working of God in leading the people into a better understanding of religion. Gardiner Spring was quoted by Frank Grenville Beardsley in the following.

From the year 1800 down to the year 1825 there was an uninterrupted series of these celestial visitations spreading over different parts of the land. During the whole of these twenty-five years there was not a month in which we could not point to some village, some city, some seminary of learning, and say, "Behold, what hath God wrought!"³

¹Sweet, Religion in the Development..., pp. 148-149.
²Ibid., p. 150.
Revivalism definitely served a purpose in the life of the church. Brauer explained the total good accomplished as being the instrument that defeated deism and indifference, and gave a type of worship to the pioneers who had drifted away from the church. However, he explained that it was not all good. "In revivals the Churches found an answer to the question of how to present the judgement and redemption of God, yet in so doing they also limited their message and bound it to emotionalism." Thus we see that along with the good there was some that might be bad. We know that the Presbyterian Church spoke out in disapproval of the revivals in Kentucky.

However, good or bad, it was out of this religious background that Barton W. Stone was able to lead a group which figured very strongly in Disciple history.

The time and place for the origin of the Disciples of Christ was perfect. The religious attitude of the people was so lax that the leaders were concerned with finding something to give the people new spiritual life. There was a reaction against legalism in religion even as there was a reaction in favor of political and personal freedom. There was a great feeling against divisions in the church and the desire was getting very strong with

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1Brauer, op. cit., p. 116.
some leaders to have a form of unity. Combined with this was the great movement toward the West. Frederick Jackson Turner spoke of the importance of this factor. "...the advance of the frontier has meant a steady movement away from the influence of Europe, a steady growth of independence on American lines."¹

It is difficult to determine if the Disciples movement would have had such a growth without these factors being present, but their presence certainly helped tremendously. Moore wrote that "...the time was propitious for the inauguration of this great movement."² It would truly seem that from the rumblings of restoration in Europe, which will be mentioned later, Moore was right when he said "the world was waiting for it."³

However, it always takes more than the conditions being "just right" for any movement to come into being. There must be the proper leadership to give action to the people's thoughts. The next section of this paper will deal with a few of these men and the history of the work they started.

The Men and Movements

The group known as the Disciples of Christ had many origins. This was true due to the fact that it was the result of union between several groups. We shall look at each group by studying the men that were largely responsible for its founding.

The first group we shall look at was started by Barton Warren Stone and was known as the Christian Church. Stone was born near Port-Tobaccoe, in the State of Maryland, December 24, 1772.¹ He was of the fifth generation of native American blood.² His family line traced back to Captain William Stone, the first protestant governor of the Catholic Province of Maryland, serving from 1648 to 1653.³ It is clear that he had a fair background as far as ancestry was concerned.

Stone decided to become a lawyer, and with this in mind started training at the Academy in Guilford, North Carolina, on February 1, 1790.⁴ As he studied law he was faced time and again with the problem of God. After intensive struggling he found God in his own life and soon

²Charles Crossfield Ware, Barton Warren Stone (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1932), p. 4.
decided that he would enter the ministry. In 1796 he served as an itinerate preacher and was soon installed as regular supply preacher at the Cane Ridge and Concord Churches near Paris, Kentucky.\(^1\) Stone was at that time connected with the Presbyterians and was ordained into the Presbyterian ministry October 4, 1798.\(^2\)

About that time the revivalist McGready was holding great meetings throughout the area around the Cumberland. Great revivals were held at Gasper River and Muddy River with tremendous results.\(^3\) We have previously mentioned some of the reasons for the great results. Stone was present at some of these meetings and after studying them was greatly impressed. He returned to Cane Ridge and very soon great numbers were coming to hear him. In August of 1801, a camp-meeting was held at Cane Ridge, being called by the Presbyterians, with eighteen ministers being present. However, ministers from other denominations participated.\(^4\)

There were many revivals that swept the country at that time, giving the name of the Second Awakening to the period. Cartwright made the following statement concern-

\(^1\)Garrison & DeGroot, op. cit., p. 97. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 98.


\(^4\)Ibid., p. 32.
ing the Cane Ridge Revival and the following meetings.

From this camp meeting, for so it ought to be called, the news spread through all the Churches, and through all the land, and it excited great wonder and surprise; but it kindled a religious flame that spread all over Kentucky and through many other states. And I may here be permitted to say, that this was the first camp meeting ever held in the United States, and here our camp meetings took their rise.¹

During the camp meetings many of the people had what were known as "exercises." Apparently they lost complete control of their bodies and emotions. Often an individual would have the "jerks" which would jerk the persons head violently from side to side. Others would fall as if they were dead and remain in such a condition for several hours. Others would bark like dogs at the base of a tree, with the idea that they had chased the devil up the tree. Stone considered many of the exercises to be works of God, although he thought some of them were fanaticism or the works of the devil.² For a further description of these exercises the interested person can find a good discussion in almost any book dealing with Stone or with the Second Awakening. Not everyone was in favor of the exercises. Many ministers denied that they had any good in them at all. Catherine C. Cleveland made this observation: "Yet on the whole the bodily exercise tended

¹Cartwright, op. cit., p. 31.
²Beardsley, op. cit., p. 93.
to bring religion into disrepute, and were merely condoned, when not actually discouraged, by the better educated in all denominations."¹

The Presbyterians seriously objected to the revivals because of the doctrinal implications involved. There were three major objections given: 1) The opportunity it afforded to preachers without education or proper ordination; 2) the disorderly and uncouth scenes occasioned by the exercises; and 3) the implication that all men were candidates for salvation, thus getting away from the Calvinistic concept of the doctrine of election.² Five of the revival ministers, all Presbyterians, were in trouble with the synod. They were Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard McNemar, Barton W. Stone, and John Thompson. These men were rebuked by the synod but were not actually brought to trial. On September 10, 1803, the five signed a document declaring they were removing themselves from the jurisdiction of the synod. They felt they had the right to place their interpretation of the Scripture ahead of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith.³

²Garrison & DeGroot, op. cit., p. 102.
³Ibid., pp. 102-104.
The five formed the Springfield Presbytery, not having in mind to cease being Presbyterians. However, on June 28, 1804, they drew up a document called *The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* which totally dissolved the organization.\(^1\) The document was signed by a sixth minister, David Purviance, as well as the original five. As they signed the document they gave up all ideas of being Presbyterians and so took the name Christian. They put considerable stress on the concept of the complete freedom of the local congregation and upon the freedom of the individual to believe as he understood the Scriptures. Sweet spoke of what this accomplished.

The name *Christian* which they now adopted was well calculated to win the allegiance of frontier people as was also the substitution of the Bible for man-made creeds. Thus was launched a new denomination which arose directly out of the soil of the west.\(^2\)

This had a tremendous effect on the other churches in that general area. Tyler quoted John Allen Gano as saying: "The first churches planted and organized since the grand apostasy, with the Bible as the only creed, or church book, and the name 'Christian' as the only family name, were organized in Kentucky in the year 1804."\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Ibid., p. 108.


\(^3\) Tyler, *op. cit.*, p. 29, quoting John Allen Gano.
Many of the churches in Kentucky and Ohio dropped their denominational ties and took the name Christian.¹ Brauer evaluated the total picture to that time:

Rather than unity, dissension arose even out of this move. Two of the original five ministers went back to the Presbyterian Church, two of them joined the Shakers, and only Barton W. Stone remained faithful to their original ideal. Indeed, the revivals produced many bad things as well as good things.²

However, much of Stone's effort was spent promoting unity and he actually did see the union of some groups. Many people knew the Christians as New Lights, because of their adherence to the new revival methods.³ Cartwright referred to the New Lights under Stone as being a "trash trap."⁴

The Stone movement grew until there were about 13,000 members by 1827.⁵ In 1832 a great number of the Christian Churches united with the Disciples, forming the present Disciples of Christ. Frederick D. Kershner gave the following summary of Stone's later years.

After uniting with the Campbells, Barton Stone continued his work. In 1834 he removed to Jacksonville, Ills. [sic]. For seventeen years he published a periodical known as the Christian Messenger, a part of the

¹ Garrison & DeGroot, op. cit., p. 112.
² Brauer, op. cit., p. 119.
³ Ibid., p. 118.
⁴ Cartwright, op. cit., p. 32.
⁵ Garrison & DeGroot, op. cit., p. 115.
time with John T. Johnson as co-editor. In August, 1841, he was stricken with paralysis, and remained a cripple until his death in 1844.¹

Most outstanding of all the leaders were the two Campbells, Thomas and his son Alexander. They had a very interesting background, but for the sake of space it will not be investigated deeply. Thomas' father, Archibald Campbell, was converted from Romanism and became a strict member of the Church of England, dying in its communion.²

The Campbells were of Scotch ancestry, but moved to Ireland. "Thomas, the first child of Archibald and his wife, was born on February 1, 1763, and was probably named for his grandfather."³ Thomas was well educated and taught school. He was of a deeply religious nature and when he found the Church of England was not to his liking he sought the fellowship of a group of Seceder Presbyterians.⁴ Eventually Thomas decided to become a minister in the Seceder Presbyterian Church and started his seminary education at the University of Glasgow in 1783.⁵

There was a great division in the Seceder Church: The


³McAllister, op. cit., pp. 21-22. ⁴Ibid., p. 22.

⁵Ibid., p. 24.
Burghers and Anti-burghers. This was over the question of whether or not it was permissible to take a certain oath of office in Scotland. Even though this had no meaning outside of Scotland, it still existed in Ireland and the United States. Thomas Campbell regretted this division and worked for union. Largely through his efforts a report with propositions for union was prepared and presented in October of 1804, to the Synod at Belfast. However, even though this received some favorable feeling, the proposition was turned down by the General Associate Synod in Scotland.¹

Thomas Campbell was serving as a minister and school teacher, which apparently was too great a strain on his health, so he was advised to take a trip to America. He decided to take such a trip and examine the country.² On April 8, 1807, he set out for America, leaving his family behind to join him later.³

Within three months he was appointed as minister in Pennsylvania. However, he was soon to have trouble with the other ministers. "At the meeting of the presbytery on October 27, 1807, a minister brought informal charges against Thomas Campbell for heretical teaching and for

²McAllister, op. cit., pp. 56-57. ³Ibid., p. 58.
procedures not in harmony with the rules of the church."¹ Campbell was in trouble, according to Richardson, over the matter of inviting all christians to participate in the Lord's Supper.² However, there would seem to be other difficulties because over the next two years he was always in trouble with the synod and eventually found it necessary to withdraw. Alexander Campbell gave the basic reason for this withdrawal: "He objected not so much to the doctrines of the Secession creed and platform, as a doctrinal basis, but to the assumption of any formula of religious theories or opinions, as the foundation of the Church of Christ;..."³

The major points of difference were his emphasis upon the evils of division, the right of appeal to the Scriptures instead of to a creed, the rejection of creeds as tests of fellowship, New Testament teaching as a bond of fellowship, a reasonable view of the nature of faith, and freedom for ministers and laymen, as against the conventional restrictions imposed in the interest of clerical prestige and ecclesiastical usage.⁴ As a result of his feelings, he completely dissolved relationship with the Presbyterians,

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¹ Garrison & DeGroot, op. cit., p. 130.
² Richardson, op. cit., I, 224.
³ Campbell, Memoirs of Elder Thomas..., p. 11.
⁴ Garrison & DeGroot, op. cit., pp. 139-140.
and in 1808 they cut off their fellowship with him.

Thomas spent the next year preaching in homes and various churches in the area. He joined a group of people that were like-minded and formed the "Christian Association of Washington" August 17, 1809. It was about this time that Campbell prepared the Declaration and Address. Alexander stated that Thomas drew it up at the request of a number of his friends, although he had had the idea in mind himself.¹

The document is too lengthy to insert in this study and too involved to describe completely. The Declaration portion stated the reason for the Christian Association of Washington and explained its organization and purposes.² The Address was involved in arguing for unity and explaining the total document. There was also a postscript added, making suggestions as to how the proposals could be carried out.³

Two congregations were established on this new basis. "Father Campbell [Thomas] succeeded in forming and constituting two congregations on the principles indicated in his Declaration and Address, one at Cross-roads, in Wash-

¹Campbell, Memoirs of Elder Thomas..., p. 69.
³Ibid., pp. 27-107.
ington county, some six miles northwest; another on Brush Run, some eight miles southwest of Washington, Pennsylvania.\(^1\)

At this point the lives of Thomas and his son, Alexander, ran very close together, so it is best that we go back and trace a few important events in the life of the younger Campbell.

Alexander Campbell was born near Shane's Castle, September 12, 1788.\(^2\) When Thomas left for America the school was placed in Alexander's charge. However, Thomas soon sent for his family, wanting them to join him in America. They left Ireland but had difficulty with the passage and were forced to spend some time in Glasgow. This period of time was only of a few months duration, but it had a tremendous effect on Alexander because while there he came in contact with some of the restorationists in the area. Campbell stated that during the shipwreck he definitely decided to dedicate his life to the ministry.\(^3\)

Alexander attended the University of Glasgow where he came in contact with Greville Ewing. Ewing was teaching the doctrines of the Haldane brothers, Robert and James.

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This was a group promoting the idea of restoration, even though it was not a very popular movement in that country. Also greatly involved in the teaching were the books of Glas and Sandeman, early teachers of restoration. Garrison and DeGroot gave a good summation of the general beliefs of this group.

...the independence of each local congregation; the rejection of all clerical privileges and dignities, without rejecting the ministry itself; the right and duty of laymen to have a part in edifying as well as ruling the church; a plurality of elders; a conception of faith as the belief of testimony, an act that any man is capable of by applying his natural intelligence to the evidence supplied by Scripture; weekly observance of the Lord's Supper. The Haldanes, as well as some of Sandeman's followers, had recently adopted the practice of immersion, but Ewing still adhered to the belief that infant baptism and sprinkling had the sanction of Scripture.¹

It is very easy to see why William H. Whitsitt said "the Disciples of Christ—commonly called Campbellites, from the name of their founder, Mr. Alexander Campbell of Bethany, West Virginia—are an offshoot of the Sandemanian sect of Scotland."² Alexander Campbell studied this doctrine and it influenced his thinking to a great degree. When he reached his father in America it was certainly no great change in thinking to accept Thomas' statements in the Declaration and Address.

¹Ibid., pp. 142-143.

There is much interesting history in this period but as it is not essential to this study, it will be skipped over with reference only to the main events that show the major trend in the history of the Disciples.

Thomas Campbell again applied for admission to a Presbyterian group but was rejected. On May 4, 1811, the Christian Association of Washington was formally made into a church.\(^1\) It was about this time that Alexander began to take more leadership than Thomas. Smith explained this in the following passage.

They worked side by side at first; Thomas laying down the theories, Alexander studying them and preparing himself to put them into practice. Thomas Campbell was the author of the plea, and took the normal leadership while it was developed. But thereafter he was eclipsed. With his first sermon Alexander assumed larger proportions, and by the time the Brush Run Church was organized, in 1811, he overruled his father on a question of practice. Thomas Campbell was like the dreamer who conceives a new principle of locomotion. Alexander was like the practical-minded man who makes the principle commercially applicable. Thomas Campbell was content to formulate his Declaration and Address and let those accept who would. Alexander was consumed with the desire to gain the assent of other minds to it: he was a proselytist. Thomas Campbell was the man of talent. Alexander was the genius, and the genius soon took leadership.\(^2\)

Thomas Campbell still had great influence, but from this point on we will be primarily concerned with Alexander.

Arthur B. Strickland, in speaking of the total move-

\(^1\)Garrison & DeGroot, op. cit., p. 155.
\(^2\)Benjamin Lyon Smith, op. cit., p. 57.
ment of trying to get back to the Scriptures as a basis for the church, made the following statement about Alexander's place: "This remarkably spontaneous and widespread movement waited for a Moses. He came in the person of Alexander Campbell,..."¹

It was about this time that baptism by immersion for believers was accepted by the Campbells as being the New Testament method. More will be said concerning this principle when we study the Disciple concept of baptism. The change of practice put them very close to the Baptist doctrine and so discussions were taken up with the Redstone Baptist Association. In the autumn of 1813 the Brush Run Church was officially admitted to the Redstone Association.²

The Disciples, or Reformers, as they were then called, stayed with the Baptists for a period of seventeen years. It was not always a happy union because of differences in doctrine, but gave the Reformers an opportunity to really get their roots established and, as it eventually turned out, to make great inroads into the Baptist Churches.³ Campbell published a periodical known as The Christian Baptist for seven years, thus giving him a voice to reach

³Errett Gates, op. cit., p. 63.
many of the Baptist people.

The Mahoning Baptist Association had been formed, but in 1830 it was dissolved due to the feeling that the New Testament Church did not have ecclesiastical organization, and therefore they did not want to have such an organization as the Mahoning Baptist Association.¹

Soon there was an actual separation between the Reformers and the Baptists. "The separation from the Baptists had begun before 1830, and it was not completed until at least three years later."² Gates said the division was largely instituted by the Baptists.

In almost every instance of local division the Baptist element was the active aggressor. The Reformers were content to abide with the Regular Baptists provided they were given perfect freedom of testimony against what they regarded as errors of doctrine and practice. In no instance do the Reformers seem to have started an action for the exclusion of the Regular Baptists whether in the majority or minority. They were at liberty to remain in full fellowship in churches where the Reformers were in the majority. But the strictly Baptist element, whether in the majority or minority, would not tolerate the presence of the Reformers. In many instances the excluded party was the larger.³

As the Reformers left the Baptists, particularly those involved in the Mahoning Association, they faced the problem of fellowship. They solved the problem by having an annual meeting, held for the purpose of hearing

¹Garrison & DeGroot, op. cit., p. 192.
reports and having worship. Sweet stated that this made them very similar to the "New Lights of Kentucky and Ohio."¹

By the year 1833 the separation was virtually complete between the Baptists and the Reformers, or as they were soon called, the Disciples.²

Now we shall look very briefly at another man that influenced the Disciples considerably. Walter Scott became the outstanding evangelist among the Disciples, doing much while they were still united with the Baptists.

Scott was born October 31, 1796, at Moffat, Dumfriesshire, Scotland. He was of the same ancestry as the Sir Walter Scott of literary fame.³ His parents were strict members of the Presbyterian Church and therefore Scott himself had been reared in it. He studied at the University of Edinburgh, as well as studying music at various times.⁴ In 1818 he came to America and spent a year as instructor of Latin in Long Island Academy. In 1819 he went to Pittsburgh where he became an instructor in a school con-

¹Sweet, Religion in the..., p. 223.
⁴Ibid., pp. 33-34.
ducted by George Forrester, who was a leader in a church established along the lines of the Sandeman and Haldane doctrine.¹ This, then, threw him in contact with the same influences which Alexander Campbell had encountered. The local congregation practiced immersion and also the customs of foot washing and the holy kiss, which gave them the name of "Kissing Baptists."²

Forrester soon withdrew from the school and then accidentally drowned, so this left Scott in charge of the school and the church. Scott made an intensive study of the doctrine and became convinced that all churches should return to New Testament Christianity.³ During the winter of 1821-22 Scott met Alexander Campbell and they found they had much in common. Scott wrote a series of articles for The Christian Baptist even though he stayed with the "Kissing Baptists" for a number of years after this. In 1827 Scott was hired by the Mahoning Baptist Association as an evangelist.⁴

Scott had what was sometimes listed as five, and sometimes six, steps which must take place in the process of receiving salvation. Man must believe in Christ, repent

²Ibid., pp. 180-181.
³Ibid., p. 181.
⁴Ibid., p. 187.
of his sin, and be baptized. God in turn will forgive, bestow the gift of the Holy Spirit, and grant him eternal life.¹ Scott went around the country preaching this message and had remarkable results in bringing people to Christ.

After the separation of the Baptists and the Disciples, Scott continued with the Disciples and still did a great work in spreading the Gospel and helping the Disciples grow.

 Scott was considered to be one of the four great men in Disciple history because of his contribution to the thinking in the formative period and also in his presentation of this evangelistic method. Kershner gave his estimate of the place of Scott in the movement as this:

> The Campbells, Stone, and their contemporaries, were the pioneers who set in motion the great tide of the Restoration. It was left to Walter Scott, however, to completely and adequately formulate the principles of the movement.²

Dwight E. Stevenson stated that Scott made a contribution to the movement that the others did not.

Thomas Campbell had pleaded for union on the Bible alone. Alexander Campbell had disclosed the order of the primitive church within that Bible, and he, Walter Scott, had discovered the ancient gospel, or the

¹Ibid., pp. 187-188.
good news of how to enter the church.¹

There were other men that were important in the movement but these were the main leaders. Before these men there were others besides the Haldanes, Glas, etc. There were several men in this country that had been moving away from the existing churches in preference of something more closely connected with the New Testament. Latourette said that Elias Smith, Abner Jones, and James O'Kelley had quite an influence on this total feeling in establishing the Christian Church.² We do not have space to discuss them, but the interested reader can find information on these men in books concerned with the Restoration Movement, or in books dealing with church history in this country.

After the separation of the Baptists and Reformers there was a union between the Reformers, or Disciples, and the Christians under Stone. This was a confusing period because of the various names attached to the groups.

Robert E. Chaddock referred to the union as being between the Christians and the Stoneites.³ The union


²Latourette, op. cit., IV, 196-198.

actually started in 1831 and various congregations united for a period of years after that.¹ Both groups had complete freedom for the local congregation and therefore the union had to come from each local congregation. Many of the Stone Christians never united with the Disciples.

There was considerable discussion regarding the name of the movement. The name Christian was generally accepted by the churches, even though in later years the name Disciples of Christ became the legal name of the group.

The Disciples were not always appreciated, as shown by a letter from T. Eustace.

I have no hesitation in saying that in my opinion Campbellism is the great curse of the West—more destructive and more injurious to the cause of religion than avowed Infidelity itself. There is evidence of wonderful cunning in the system, and in those who seek to carry it out. It presents something like the form of godliness, which may answer temporal purposes, and serve for those who cannot silence conscience without something in the semblance of religion.²

Brauer evaluated the movement as being anything but unifying:

Their [Disciples] battle cry was, "Back to Bible Christianity and unite all the Churches of Christ on the basis of that Christianity." While they sincerely preached and stood for these principles, they became, unfortunately, not a rallying point for unity, but one

¹Garrison & DeGroot, op. cit., p. 212.
more denomination competing on the American scene.¹

We shall not spend a great deal of time on the history of the Disciples as there was very little that would contribute to this study. The mid-western part of the United States has remained the strong area of this group, largely because of the early evangelistic efforts. The group made a steady growth, and was not hampered greatly by the eventual deaths of all of the major leaders that had started the movement.

The great black portion of the history was culminated in 1906 when the Church of Christ was officially listed in the United States Census report as being a separate group instead of one with the Disciples of Christ. There were many reasons for this, but the main difficulty arose over the question of the acceptance of missionary organizations and the use of musical instruments in the church. The Church of Christ felt that anything like this which was not established in the New Testament was wrong and should not be allowed in the church.²

Needless to say, there have been many other major controversies in the group, but these need not be dealt with in the light of the discussion and purpose before us.

¹Brauer, op. cit., p. 131.
The 1958 Year Book of the Christian Churches gave the total membership of the Disciples as being 1,921,899.¹

The Disciples of Christ Church has become one of the major religious groups in this country and has carved a place in history for itself.

It is not known what the future history of this group will be. Many foresee another division in the group, and that in the near future. At this time it looks almost unavoidable, but that will be a problem for historical discussions of the future years.

CHAPTER IV

THE DISCIPLES' INFLUENCE ON MORMONISM

Sidney Rigdon

Sidney Rigdon, a Disciple minister, had a great deal to do with the Mormon Church and therefore his background as a Disciple carried many elements into the Mormon doctrine and practices. We shall deal with him first in this discussion of the Disciples' influence on Mormonism because he, more than any other Disciple, had such an influence.

Rigdon was born in St. Clair township, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, on the 19th of February, 1793.\(^1\)

When he was twenty-five years old he joined what was known as the Regular Baptist Church. In 1819 he took up residence with a Baptist minister and became a minister.\(^2\)

In February of 1822, Rigdon was called as the minister of the church at Pittsburgh. Shaw said Campbell was instrumental in placing Rigdon in that position.\(^3\) This would indicate Campbell knew of Rigdon as early as 1822. In 1824 Rigdon resigned the pastorate and left the ministry, taking

\(^1\)Roberts, op. cit., I, 227.  
\(^2\)Ibid.  
\(^3\)Shaw, op. cit., p. 80.
up the business of a tannery. It was during this time that Rigdon was meeting quite often with Campbell and Walter Scott for the purpose of discussing religion, and many of their ideas must have been compared and exchanged.

In 1826 Rigdon moved to Bainbridge, Geauga County, Ohio, and there he preached typical Disciple doctrine. It was about this time that he was preaching at Mentor, Ohio, and at Mantua Center: "Regular preaching once a month by Sidney Rigdon at Mantua Center led to the formal organization of a church at this place January 27, 1827," This gave him a large number of congregations with whom he had considerable influence when he formally went into the Mormon Church.

In 1830 there was a meeting at Austintown, Ohio, of the Baptist Churches, with which Campbell and Rigdon were in association at the time. During the meeting Campbell and Rigdon had a verbal battle in which Rigdon proclaimed that if the Disciples were to follow the apostles in all things they should follow the model of the Jerusalem Church and have all things in common. Campbell opposed his proposition and the matter didn't come up in the meeting again. Rigdon had been in contact with Joseph Smith by this time,

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1Roberts, op. cit., I, 228. 2Ibid. 3Ibid. 4Dickinson, op. cit., p. 48. 5Shaw, op. cit., p. 23.
but it was not commonly known.\(^1\) Shaw pointed out this possibility: "...subsequent events indicate Rigdon may have been in touch with Joseph Smith and the Mormons for many months. Some believe this connection went back to 1827."\(^2\)

This defeat at Austintown in 1830 had a remarkable effect on Rigdon, according to the following incident related by Hayden.

Rigdon finding himself foiled in his cherished purpose of ingrafting on the reformation his new community scheme, went away from the meeting at its close, chafed and chagrined, and never met with the Disciples in a general meeting afterward. On his way he stopped at Bro. Austin's, in Warren, to whom he vented his spleen, saying; "I have done as much in this reformation as Campbell or Scott, and yet they get all the honor of it."\(^3\)

This brings before us the problem of what the exact relationship, if any, was between Rigdon and the Book of Mormon and Smith's basic plans for Mormonism. This is a problem that can not be settled one way or the other for certain, but we can examine the evidence. The Mormons have claimed that Rigdon and Smith did not meet until after Rigdon's conversion. Others have said they met long before that.

Many believed Rigdon was the real author of the Book of Mormon.\(^4\) Shook has taken this proposition a little

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 60-61.  
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 80.  
\(^3\)Hayden, op. cit., p. 299.  
\(^4\)Shaw, op. cit., p. 82.
further in the following statement. "It is the conviction of nearly all of the opponents of Mormonism, who have paid particular attention to the history of its origin, that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was not an emanation from the mind of Joseph Smith, but that it was first conceived of by Sidney Rigdon, and that Smith was merely his tool in giving the movement publicity while he played his part behind the scenes until his pretended conversion in the year 1830."¹ Charles Samuel Braden also raised this possibility: "Did it all happen as reported, or was Joseph Smith made the tool of more designing persons, who were able, through him, to launch a movement that alone they were unable to bring to birth?"² He went on to say that many believed the man behind Smith was Rigdon.³

Much evidence hinges on the possibility that Rigdon took a manuscript of Solomon Spaulding's which was the main source for the Book of Mormon. This theory, as such, will be dealt with in the chapter concerned with revelation, but at this time we must refer to it as a basis for the probability that Rigdon had a great deal to do with Smith prior to 1830. Campbell definitely believed that Rigdon

³Ibid., p. 424.
had obtained the manuscript and that it was the basis for the Book of Mormon.

Since reading "Mormonism Unveiled" we have had but little doubt that Sidney Rigdon is the leading conjuror in this diabolical affair, and that the widow of Solomon Spaulding, if found, could give some authentic and satisfactory information on the subject of the Book of Mormon—so far at least as the romance of Mr. Spaulding, the real basis of the fraud, was concerned. It would seem that she has been found in the wife of a second husband, Mrs. Davison, and that the whole affair is now at length fairly divulged.¹

More will be said about the evidence here referred to in a later chapter. The Mormons denied that Rigdon could have had access to the manuscript.

The widow of Spaulding made the following statement concerning the matter.

From New Salem we removed to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Here Mr. S. found an acquaintance and friend in the person of Mr. Patterson, an editor of a newspaper. He exhibited his manuscript to Mr. P., who was very much pleased with it, and borrowed it for perusal. He retained it a long time, and informed Mr. S. that if he would make out a title-page and preface, he would publish it, and it might be a source of profit. This Mr. S. refused to do, for reasons which I cannot now state. Sidney Rigdon, who has figured so largely in the history of the Mormons, was at this time connected with the printing office of Mr. Patterson, as is well known in that region, and as Rigdon himself has frequently stated. Here he had ample opportunity to become acquainted with Mr. Spaulding's manuscript, and

to copy it if he chose.¹

A Mr. Lambdin worked in the printing office of Mr. Patterson's. The postmaster's daughter testified in 1879 that during the period in question she (Mrs. R. J. Eichbaum) remembered seeing Rigdon and Lambdin together quite a bit and that Rigdon "was always hanging around" the printing office.²

Mrs. Eaton wrote the following in 1881, in regard to Rigdon being in contact with Joseph Smith prior to his conversion in 1830.

Early in the summer of 1827, a "mysterious stranger" seeks admittance to Joe Smith's cabin. The conferences of the two are most private. This person, whose coming immediately preceded a new departure in the faith, was Sidney Rigdon, a backsliding clergyman, at this time a Campellite preacher in Mentor, Ohio.³

Mrs. Eaton was a resident for thirty-two years prior to the statement, meaning that she received this information from the knowledge of her neighbors instead of from first-hand knowledge. Abel Chase, a close neighbor of the Smith's at Palmyra, testified: "I saw Rigdon at Smith's at different times with considerable intervals between

¹Matilda Davison, "The Mormon Bible," The Millennial Harbinger, ed. Alexander Campbell (Bethany, Va.: By the editor, 1839), p. 266.


³Eaton, op. cit., p. 3.
Lorenzo Saunders, another neighbor testified: "I saw Rigdon at Smith's several times, and the first visit was more than two years before the Book appeared." On October 14, 1879, Mr. Gilbert wrote to Mr. James T. Cobb, of Salt Lake City, Utah, and gave the following information on this subject of whether or not Rigdon was at the Smith residence prior to 1830.

Last evening I had about fifteen minutes' conversation with Mr. Lorenzo Saunders, of Reading, Hillsdale County, Michigan. He has been gone about thirty years. He was born south of our village in 1811, and was a near neighbor of the Smith family—knew them all well; was in the habit of visiting the Smith boys; says he knows that Rigdon was hanging around Smith's for eighteen months prior to the publishing of the Mormon Bible.

This reference was used for two reasons; to verify that this story wasn't the imagination of some author, and also to point out that the same man (assuming that this Lorenzo Saunders mentioned in both instances is the same individual) had somewhat changed the story in regard to the time element: "More than two years before...." and "for eighteen months prior...."

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1 E. L. Kelley, and Clark Braden, Public Discussion of the Issues Between the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Church of Christ (Disciples) (Rosemead, Calif.: The Old Paths Book Club, 1955), p. 46, quoting Abel Chase.

2 Ibid., quoting Lorenzo Saunders.

3 Shook, Cumorah..., p. 37, quoting Mr. Gilbert.
In 1844 Campbell verified that Adamson Bentley and himself both heard Rigdon, in 1826 or 1827, say that there was a book coming out (from gold plates found in New York) concerning the history of the Aborigines of this country and also "it was stated that the Christian religion had been preached in this country during the first century just as we were preaching it on the Western Reserve."¹

As far as this writer is concerned, there seems to be sufficient evidence to point to the fact that Rigdon knew Smith several years before 1830 and knew what was about to happen. This cannot be proved to the extent that the Mormons will ever believe it, but it has been proved to this writer's satisfaction.

Rigdon was baptized in 1830 and took up active work with the Mormons. Mormon historians claimed it required seven weeks for Rigdon to determine that this was the right decision, and he was baptized on the night of November 14, 1830.² Some said he was baptized two weeks after he saw the Book of Mormon; others said two days after; and still others said only thirty-six hours.³ If Hayden was right

²Shaw, loc. cit.
in saying that Pratt and Cowdery visited Rigdon in the middle of November, 1830, and the date of baptism was accurate, then he certainly didn't deliberate very long.¹ This is significant in that some said he already was aware of all of the teachings of the Mormons and was just waiting for the formality of being asked. This group believed Rigdon had already helped plan the Book of Mormon.

It is worthwhile to see what Campbell had to say about Rigdon in order to find out more about his character.

His instability I was induced to ascribe to a peculiar mental and corporal malady, to which he has been subject for some years. Fits of melancholy succeeded by fits of enthusiasm accompanied by some kind of nervous spasms and swooning which he has, since his defection, interpreted into the agency of the Holy Spirit, or the recovery of spiritual gifts, produced a versatility in his genius and deportment which has been increasing for some time. I was willing to have ascribed his apostacy to this cause, and to a conceit which he cherished that within a few years, by some marvellous interposition, the long lost tribes of Israel were to be collected, had he not declared that he was hypocritical in his profession of the faith which he has for some time proclaimed. Perhaps his profession of hypocrisy may be attributed to the same cause. This is the only hope I have in his case.²

Campbell went on to give his reasoning as to why Mormonism had such an attraction for Rigdon:

He who sets out to find signs and omens will soon find enough of them. He that expects visits from


angels will find them as abundant as he who in the age of witchcraft found a witch in every unseemly old woman. I doubt not but that the irreverence and levity in speaking of the things of God, which have been too apparent in Sidney's public exhibitions for some time past, and which he has lately confessed, may yet be found to have been the cause of this abandonment to delusion.¹

Sidney Rigdon brought with him into Mormonism a great background of religion. In this way the Disciples had a tremendous effect on the doctrine and practices of the Mormons. Shaw pointed this out in the following statement.

Rigdon's knowledge of the Bible was a big help to Smith in formulating the principles of Mormon theology. Six of the thirteen statements in the Mormon Articles of Faith are identical with the principles taught by Walter Scott in his evangelistic crusade, 1827-1830, among the churches of the Mahoning Baptist Association. Article four, which states, "We believe the first principles and ordinances of the gospel are: (1) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, (2) Repentance, (3) Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, (4) Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost," is a clear indication of a direct appropriation of Scott's vocabulary. Article six could have been written by Alexander Campbell himself: "We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive church; viz., apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc."²

Rigdon was a tremendous help to Smith as he became his scribe and helper while working at the revision of the Scriptures according to what was revealed to him.³ Joseph and Sidney were together and both received a revelation in December, 1830, that they claimed came directly from

¹Ibid., p. 101. ²Shaw, loc. cit. ³Roberts, op. cit., I, 238-239.
More of this will be discussed in the chapter dealing directly with revelation.

This close relationship with Smith, even being tarred and feathered at the same time, caused Rigdon to influence the Mormon doctrine. Besides the Disciple doctrines, Rigdon added a few of his own.

In the formation of the new sect Smith was assisted by Sidney Rigdon, ...who had been associated with Alexander Campbell. To the latter's distinctive features Rigdon added many others, such as the gift of tongues, prophecy, healing, anointing with oil, laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, the washing of feet, a community of goods, and the restoration in the church of the office of apostles, together with the Aaronic and Melchisedekian priesthoods.

The early Mormon emphasis upon communism apparently was Rigdon's idea. Smith used Rigdon to a good advantage in having him by his side, because Rigdon had experience as a church organizer and he was very well known on the Western Reserve. Sweet said Rigdon was the most influential of the early converts and that was why the Mormon doctrine resembled Campbell's doctrines.

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1 Book of Doctrine and Covenants (Lamoni, Iowa: The Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1917), Sec. 34.


3 Shaw, op. cit., p. 61.

4 Ibid., p. 82.

Rigdon, as has been seen in a previous chapter, did not accept the leadership of Young and returned to Pennsylvania, there helping organize a group of people into another church. He died July 14, 1876, at Allegheny City, New York, at the age of eighty-four. Shaw gave the following summary of his life:

He had been a colorful figure of great talent and ability; yet nevertheless, the slave of an unsatisfiable desire for recognition. His ambition to be a religious leader, coupled with a jealous attitude toward those who had already succeeded, prevented him from attaining the very thing he desired most; first from the Baptists, next from the Disciples, and finally from the Mormons.¹

Hayden had this to say about him:

Sidney Rigdon was an orator of no inconsiderable abilities. In person, he was full medium height, rotund in form; of countenance, while speaking, open and winning, with a little cast of melancholy. His action was graceful, his language copious, fluent in utterance, with articulation clear and musical. Yet he was an enthusiast, and unstable. His personal influence with an audience was very great; but many, with talents far inferior, surpassed him in judgement and permanent power with the people. He was just the man for an awakening.²

It is impossible to say exactly what the Mormon faith would be today if it were not for Rigdon, but as this writer sees it, it would be far different from the present day belief. It is very true that "had it not been for Sidney Rigdon, Mormonism would probably have never been

¹Shaw, op. cit., p. 246.
²Hayden, op. cit., pp. 191-192.
introduced so directly to the Disciples."\(^1\) Certainly we have not exhausted all that Rigdon did for Mormonism, but as we go on in the study of the doctrines of Mormonism we shall see over and over again where it was Rigdon that left the marks of the Disciples in the doctrines.

**Other Leaders**

It should be mentioned that Rigdon was not the only Disciple that joined the Mormon ranks. It so happened that he was the most prominent, but there were others. Larson listed the main leaders that came from the Disciple ranks as being Sidney Rigdon, Edward Partridge, Orson Hyde, and Parley P. Pratt.\(^2\)

Edward Partridge was born in Pittsfield, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, August 27, 1793. In 1828 he heard the preaching of Sidney Rigdon and left the Universal Restoration Church and joined the Disciples.\(^3\) Later, Partridge was called to the work of the ministry of the Mormon Church and Smith was very favorably impressed with him.\(^4\) He received the following revelation in February, 1831:

\[\ldots \text{I have called my servant Edward Partridge, and give a commandment, that he should be appointed by the voice of the church, and ordained a bishop unto the church,} \]

to leave his merchandise and to spend all his time in the labors of the church; to see to all things as it shall be appointed unto him in my law in the day that I shall give them. And this because his heart is pure before me, for he is like unto Nathaniel of old, in whom there is no guile. These words are given unto you, and they are pure before me; wherefore, beware how you hold them, for they are to be answered upon your souls in the day of judgment. Even so. Amen.¹

"This appointment of Edward Partridge to be a bishop is called an unlooked for development in organization, because there was nothing in preceding revelations that intimated that bishops would constitute any part of the church organization and government."²

Partridge had a major part in the early years of Mormonism. He, through instructions by revelation, purchased the lot in Independence that has since been known as the Temple Lot.³ "He died at Nauvoo, Illinois, May 27, 1840."⁴ Certainly it must be said that he carried considerable influence in the Mormon Church all of the days he was a member. It is difficult to say if he actually brought any Disciple practices into the Mormon Church with him.

Orson Hyde is the next person we should consider. He was born January 8, 1805, at Oxford, Connecticut.⁵

¹Book of Doctrine and Covenants, op. cit., Sec. 41:3.
²Roberts, op. cit., I, 244.
³Smith & Smith, op. cit., I, 660. ⁴Ibid., 664.
⁵Roberts, op. cit., I, 269.
"Orson Hyde, another young Disciple preacher who had formed Disciple churches in Lorain and Huron Counties, and a 'Timothy' of Rigdon and the Kirtland church, embraced Mormonism about this time \[1831\]."\(^1\) Hyde was persuaded to oppose the Book of Mormon in a public address, but later felt reproved by the Spirit and was converted to Mormonism.\(^2\)

In 1838 Hyde and Thomas B. Marsh withdrew from the Mormon Church, signing an affidavit saying that there existed a group of Mormons called the Danites, under the command of the leaders of the church. They went on to say that twelve of them were under orders to go about burning and destroying.\(^3\) However, this withdrawal from the church was short-lived. Hyde was taken back and entrusted with the task of going to Palestine as a missionary. "Elder Hyde, to whom principally this mission to the Jews was entrusted, had found his way back to the church after his defection in Missouri; he had been forgiven by the church and restored to his standing in the quorum of the apostles at a conference of that body in June, 1839."\(^4\)

In 1847 it was Hyde who moved that Brigham Young be made president of the church.\(^5\)

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\(^1\)Shaw, op. cit., p. 83.  
\(^2\)Roberts, op. cit., I, 269.  
\(^3\)Ibid., 472-473, quoting Documents, etc. (Missouri Legislature), pp. 57-59.  
\(^4\)Ibid., II, 44-45.  
\(^5\)Ibid., III, 315.
Orson Hyde died at Spring City, Utah, November 28, 1878.\(^1\) Again we have a man that was active in the Mormon Church until his death.

Parley P. Pratt was born April 12, 1807, in Burlington, Otsego County, New York.\(^2\) Sidney Rigdon apparently won Pratt over to the Disciple position while he was preaching in Lorain County from 1827 to 1829.\(^3\) Pratt saw the Book of Mormon in August of 1830, and on September 1, 1830, was baptized in Seneca Lake, New York, by Oliver Cowdery, and was ordained as elder the same evening.\(^4\)

He was one of the four previously mentioned that went on a mission to the West to establish Zion in 1830. In February, 1835, he was ordained an apostle at Kirtland, but soon after this he slipped away from the church, but soon returned. In 1838 he was jailed with Joseph Smith and some others and was placed on trial. The others were freed but Pratt was held in custody and eventually escaped on July 4, 1839, and fled to Illinois.\(^5\)

In 1840 he went on a mission to Europe, returning in 1842. "He was killed about twelve miles north of Van Buren,

\(^1\)Smith & Smith, op. cit., I, 648.  \(^2\)Ibid., 657.  
\(^3\)Shaw, op. cit., p. 81.  
\(^5\)Ibid., pp. 658-659.
Arkansas, May 14, 1857, by an enraged man by the name of Hector H. McLean, who was jealous of his wife and Elder Pratt."1

These men were not outstanding in their contribution of Disciple characteristics to the doctrine of the Mormon Church, but still the fact that they had been working in the Disciple Church for a while would give them the proper background to work well with the doctrine that Rigdon had helped instill in the Mormon Church. Certainly they must have felt much at home with such things as the sacraments, as we shall see in a later chapter.

The background of the Disciple movement apparently put some of the people in such a frame of mind that it was just a step to go into Mormonism. That is, they had already broken with the old line denominations that had controlled religious circles, and in this new-found, creedless, free condition it was very easy to go a little further into the freedom and accept the revelation, etc., that goes with Mormonism. This, also, will be seen more clearly after this study has been completed.

**The Total Effect on Mormonism**

Essentially all of the Disciple's effect on Mormonism came through the work of these individuals mentioned above.

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1Ibid., p. 659.
as they worked within the Mormon Church.

This effect has shown up largely in the Mormon doctrines as we shall find in the later chapters. Many of the doctrines are very similar to those of the Disciples. This writer believes that this is more than coincidental; these men had been indoctrinated with some of the basic beliefs of the Disciples and they carried them with them into Mormonism, where they left their mark.

Most of the credit for Disciple influence can go to Rigdon, and if we give him credit for helping formulate the Book of Mormon, we can say that the very basis of the religion felt Disciple influence. Certainly some of the doctrines in the Book of Mormon sound like Disciple doctrines. Some of the basic doctrines will be compared to bring this out. Besides these, we must remember that it was Rigdon who introduced the idea of communism into Mormonism. This was not a Disciple belief, but as a Disciple Rigdon believed it, and he must receive the credit for its gaining recognition for a short time under the leadership of Smith.

We feel justified in stating that if the Disciples had not preceded the Mormons by a number of years, the Mormon Church would be radically different today. It was the Disciple influence that guided it in the path it took to a very great extent.
CHAPTER V

COMPARISON OF THE HISTORIES

Through the discussion of the histories the reader will have noticed many things that were very similar and many things that were very different. This chapter will point out some of these and sum up the net result by a general comparison of the various phases of backgrounds, as well as actual events.

The first obvious similarity is the fact that both groups were founded in the same general period of American history. It is true that the Disciples can trace their history back to Stone and the Campbells toward the first of the eighteenth century, but the Disciples did not reach "adult-hood" until they separated from the Baptists and joined the Christians under Stone. This occurred around the year 1830, if a definite date were to be picked. It was in the year 1830 that the Book of Mormon was circulated for the first time, giving rise to the Mormon religion. This places the origins about the same year, if we understand the implication made above, that this is the approximate date of the Disciples "coming into their own."

Because of this element, we find another feature of
similarity in the religious backgrounds. This was discussed at some length in the histories of the groups. The religious unrest of that time made conditions right for the forming of religious groups.

In the soil stirred up by The Great Revival, weeds as well as wheat appeared. Mormonism, Spiritualism and certain communistic movements arose. They were not a result or fruit of the Great Revival.¹

In spite of Strickland's statement, we still must realize that the religious unrest and emphasis of that day made the people more aware and susceptible to any new religion that might come along, offering people a new hope.

Gaddis stated that the Disciples grew because they emphasized the individual.²

Suffice it to say that the same religious unrest, in the same period of time, gave rise to the movements.

In the leadership of the two groups we have seen a great contrast and some similarity. The contrast was largely in the lives of the main leaders.

Smith was poorly educated, not having much contact with educated people. Alexander Campbell was well educated and had many acquaintances among educated people. The later lives of the men showed what the people of the various regions thought of them. Smith was continually

¹Strickland, op. cit., p. 196.
²Gaddis, op. cit., II, 160.
plagued by stories of dishonesty and superstition. Campbell was essentially free of this kind of opposition. This is not meant to convey the idea that Campbell did not have opposition, for he certainly did. The opposition did not take the form of accusing him of being dishonest, as in the case of Smith.

The similarity in leadership came from the fact that at least four leaders in the Mormon Church came from the Disciples. One of them was Rigdon, who really had a pronounced effect on Mormonism.

The similarity held also because the leadership of the Mormon Church was better educated, on the whole, than Joseph Smith, thus being nearly equal in education with the Disciple leaders. Cross made the following observation about the quality of the Mormons:

...interest in Mormonism was no necessary indication either of extraordinary ignorance or of unusual febrile imagination. Converts like Brigham Young, Heber Kimball, J. J. Strang, William Phelps, Sidney Rigdon, Orson Pratt, and Lorenzo Snow, to name only a few, had on the whole superior education for their times, and most of them proved to be as vigorously realistic pillars of the church as anyone might desire. The man who exercised primacy over these individuals approached some kind of genius, however it may have been inspired.1

There was a difference in leadership, but not so much as the first glance might seem to indicate. Gaddis

1Cross, op. cit., p. 143.
spoke of the fact that many of the religions of that day were similar in regard to the education of the leadership on the frontier. "The Methodists, Baptists, Cumberland Presbyterians, Disciples and other typically frontier sects achieved marked success with men of great enthusiasm and little academic preparation."¹ The Mormons would naturally fall into this group.

There was considerable similarity in the way both groups followed the frontier in their early years. It is true that Mormonism and the Disciples both started in the East, but neither of them ever gained any real strength until they started their westward movement. Moore made this observation concerning the Disciples, and we are sure he would have said the same thing about the Mormons:

Light always comes from the East, but action, movement, and progress are toward the West. The Campbellian movement has developed toward the West. It has made little progress in the Eastern states, or even in the Middle states.²

Cross argued that Mormonism was not a frontier religion at any time but gained most of its converts from the East.³ Even if this is admitted, which this writer is not willing to do at this time, it would still hold true that Mormonism had its stronghold always on the

¹Gaddis, op. cit., II, 158.
²Moore, op. cit., p. 34. ³Cross, op. cit., p. 146.
frontier. Cross did say "to be sure the church existed generally on the frontier and kept moving westward with the tide of settlement."¹ We do not wish to make a major contention out of this point, however, so let it be said that Mormonism and the Disciples had their great periods of growth while on the frontier.

Both groups are similar in that they are of American origin. It is true that there were some groups promoting restoration in Europe which helped Alexander Campbell in his thinking, but the actual originating of the Disciples and the Mormons took place in America.

Both groups, in this way, were helped by the thinking of others; because the Disciples helped the thinking of the Mormons.

There was a contrast in the formation of the churches. The Disciple Church was formed by a union of a number of groups which had been thinking along the same lines, each contributing something. The Mormon Church had nothing like this in its origin. It is true that they borrowed from the Disciples, but still it cannot be said that they came into being because of a union with another religious group.

Another contrast can be seen in the basic theology behind the formation of the groups. The Disciples came

¹Ibid., p. 150.
into being because of the desire to follow the teaching of the New Testament. Thus, it might be said that it was founded upon the principle of reason. The Mormon Church was established on the principle of revelation, not an attempt to understand the New Testament in its application to life today.

Along this same line, the Mormons placed much emphasis upon revelation, visions, and miracles in the modern day, particularly during the period of the forming of the Mormon Church. The Disciples did not emphasize miracles, visions, etc., in their doctrine. However, it is interesting to note that Stone, during the revivals around Cane Ridge, did feel that some of the "exercises" were from God, and some of them from the Devil.

The Mormons have been much more mission-minded than the Disciples. Within a decade after the founding of the Mormon Church missionaries had been sent to England, as well as over this country. The Disciples sent out few missionaries in any sense of the word until about 1849, when a missionary society was formed. Of course, there had been home missionary work done prior to this time, but no official action had been taken.

The Mormons gained much strength from missionary converts from other countries. The Disciples received very little help in this way because when converts were gained
on the mission fields, they rarely came to this country to live. The Mormons persuaded many of their converts to move to the United States.

Another of the contrasts of the groups was the action taken at the time of the death of the principal leaders. When Joseph Smith died there was a tremendous struggle for the leadership of the church. When Alexander Campbell died, there was no such struggle, but things went on pretty much as they had been. No doubt the reason for this lies in the fact that the leader of the Mormon Church had a great amount of authority and it was a position that was greatly desired. Campbell had no particular power except as a personality, so when he died there was nothing to be passed on in the way of authority. His influence had been due to his personal character and not any office he held.

Both groups have experienced splits, and both have come largely from a misunderstanding of the will of God for the church. The Mormons were in difficulty over the question of what had actually been received in the way of revelation, as in the case of polygamy. The Disciple controversy came over the question of what the Scriptures permitted and what was an innovation in church practice.

There were many contacts between the Disciples and the Mormons in the early years of the movements. However, Shaw stated that the only real problem in the contact came
in Ohio and caused considerable concern in the Western Reserve. Campbell quoted the Western State Journal as saying: "Mormonism has got into Fredericksburg, Va. A distinguished Lawyer and many others have become proselytes. It prevails most among the Campbellite Baptists." Campbell denied that this was true: "...the recent efforts to propagate Mormonism amongst the Disciples of Christ have been singularly unsuccessful."

This has not been an extensive chapter because in the discussion of the histories certain similarities stand out, just as obvious differences stand out. For instance, the Disciples have never suffered persecution as have the Mormons. Facts such as this have not been pointed out because they were obvious and they would make the reading much more tedious.

The histories of the two groups have an amazing number of similarities for groups that stand so far apart in the Christian world of today. We will find that this holds true for many of the doctrines, also.

In the following chapters we shall discuss some of the basic doctrines and make a comparison of them.

1Shaw, op. cit., p. 79.
3Ibid., p. 190.
CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

The Mormon Concept

The major difference in Mormonism and the main stream of Christianity is in the doctrine of revelation. As Braden observed, "they [Mormons] differ from orthodox Christianity in accepting other sacred books, notably the Book of Mormon, in addition to the Bible,..."¹ This is very basic because by the very nature of the Mormon faith, if it could be proved that there has been no revelation in the past century and a half, then the religion is false. On the other hand, if they are granted that their revelation is true, then all churches other than the Mormon are indeed in a sad condition, for they have ignored the word of God.

It is essential to the understanding of Mormonism that we spend some time trying to understand their view of revelation. The Mormon belief and the Disciple belief are not in the least similar, and it is doubtful, at least to this writer, if the Disciples have had any effect on the Mormon doctrine of revelation.

Franklin D. Richards summed up the total doctrine: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."¹ This was the basic statement, and they went almost all directions from that point.

Davis H. Bays, a non-Mormon, definitely said there was no further need of revelation.

No new revelation is necessary, then, in order to minister in Gospel ordinances. A reformation, not a restoration by means of new revelation, is what the church needed, and the reformation came, and came to stay.²

The Mormons said this was not true:

Christians and Jews generally maintain that God revealed himself and directed chosen men in ancient times. Mormonism maintains that the need for divine guidance is as great in our modern, complex world as it was in the comparatively simple times of the Hebrew. It is true that fundamental truths set forth in the Old and New Testaments are as binding in our day as in the day they were pronounced. Yet our daily life poses problems unknown centuries ago. Moreover, some of the teachings of the Bible have been interpreted in so many different ways because the record is not clear, that many thoughtful people know not what to believe.

If God spoke anciently, is it unreasonable to believe that he can speak in our time? What man would think to deny God the right to express himself?

In essence, Mormonism claims to be a modern rev-


elation of old principles divinely pronounced with new emphasis and completeness in our day.¹

The Mormons recognize two sources of doctrine:

1. The Scriptures, consisting of:
   (a) The Bible, Old and New Testaments, "correctly translated."
   (b) The Book of Mormon.
   (c) The Doctrine and Covenants—a collection of revelation given the present day.
   (d) The Pearl of Great Price—a collection of fragments from the writings of Moses and Abraham, translated to Joseph Smith.

2. Direct revelation from God. This may come by voice or through angel messengers, or by impressions on the mind by God's spirit. Only one man on earth at any time may receive revelation to guide the church—the president of the church.²

As Cowles said, the Mormons believe that the gospel was revealed to man by the Book of Mormon as well as by the Bible, and that the supplemental revelation received in modern times helps to clarify the ancient word.³ The thing that seemed to have happened was what Winston L. King described: "The sects that emphasize the continuing revelation come in time to depend more and more heavily on their original and once-new revelation—the Saints on the Book of Mormon...."⁴

³Cowles, op. cit., p. 289.
It is not difficult for the Mormons to accept the new revelation. As Marvin S. Hill said, they believe that God arbitrarily "changed the course of events to bring the book into being,..."\(^1\)

Kenneth E. Farnsworth stated that as God moved upon men in giving the Bible, so He can and will move among men in this way again.\(^2\) He spoke of Isaiah 11:6-16 and said:

> Now, my dear friends, if such marvelous things are about to transpire, if the almighty God is to work such a miraculous work, can you conceive, can you conceive for one moment that that work will be carried on without any revelation from the almighty God? Such would be absurd.\(^3\)

Farnsworth pointed out that in Mormon belief this became quite simple. "Now, my friends, if holy men of God are moved upon by the Spirit of God today, their words are just as much scripture as the Bible."\(^4\) James E. Talmage explained further how God's revelation works:

> It is at once unreasonable, and directly contrary to our conception of the unchangeable justice of God, to believe that He will bless the Church in one dispensation with a present living revelation of His will and in another leave the Church, to which He gives His name, to live as best it may according to the laws of


\(^2\)Otis Gatewood and Kenneth E. Farnsworth, Gatewood-Farnsworth Debate on "Mormonism" (Salt Lake City: Otis Gatewood, [1942]), pp. 48-49.

\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 50-51.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 91.
a bygone age. True, through apostasy the authority of the Priesthood may have been taken from the earth for a season, leaving the people in a condition of darkness with the windows of heaven shut against them; but at such times God has recognized no earthly Church as His own, nor any prophet to declare with authority "Thus saith the Lord."\(^1\)

He later told why such revelation was so vital to the church: "Revelation is essential to the Church, not only for the proper calling and ordination of its ministers but also that the officers so chosen may be guided in their administrations—to teach with authority the doctrines of salvation, to admonish, to encourage, and if necessary to reprove the people, and to declare unto them by prophecy the purposes and will of God respecting the Church, present and future."\(^2\)

Roberts pointed out that revelation was one of the most important first acts of the church: "No sooner was the church organized, however, than a prophet, seer, and translator is appointed in the person of the presiding elder, Joseph Smith, Jun., and the church is commanded to give heed to his word, as unto the word of the Lord himself."\(^3\)

In a revelation given to Oliver Cowdery in September, 1830, the following information was given: "But, Behold,

\(^1\)James E. Talmage, A Study of the Articles of Faith (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1952), p. 303.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 304.

\(^3\)Roberts, op. cit., I, 198.
verily, verily I say unto thee, No one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, jr., for he receiveth them even as Moses; and thou shalt be obedient unto the things which I shall give unto him, even as Aaron, to declare faithfully the commandments and revelations, with power and authority unto the church. ¹ This carried through the history of the Mormon Church to the presidents, as Charles Samuel Braden recorded: "The channel through which continuing revelation reaches the church is the First Presidency which is the head of the church, very much in the same sense as the Pope in Roman Catholicism."²

Joseph Smith, the prophet, gave the following information in regard to receiving a revelation. "A person may profit by noticing the first intimations of the Spirit of revelation: for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing unto you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas, that by noticing it, you may find it fulfilled the same day or soon; i.e., those things that were presented unto your minds by the Spirit of God, will come to pass; and thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you

¹Book of Doctrine and Covenants, op. cit., Sec. 27:2.
become perfect in Christ Jesus."¹ This is very interesting in that it gives us his description of how it felt to receive such a revelation.

It will be worth our while to look also at his son's description. This was written by Joseph Smith, son of the prophet, and for several years president of the Reorganized Church.

Revelations, as I understand it, are received in different ways, sometimes by impression, sometimes by the person becoming conscious of it, and sometimes by audible voice heard by the individual by whom the revelation is received, and sometimes by a direct messenger, and sometimes by what we understand to be the direct intervention of the spirit.

A man may be mistaken even though he be the President of the Church, as to the genuineness or authenticity of revelations claimed to have been received.²

Revelation played a large part in the life of Smith, for he claimed to have visions when a child and he was still a young man when he claimed to have been shown the golden plates by the angel. After that he received visions and revelations at least once a year, and usually much more often as he established the church.

The revelations received by Smith took various forms and gave varied information. One of the outstanding, revealed doctrines of the church was the revelation concern-

¹Joseph Smith, Millennial Star, XVII, 29, quoted by Smith & Smith, op. cit., II, 368.

²Joseph Smith, Evidence in Temple Lot Suit, pp. 75-76, quoted by La Rue, op. cit., p. 96.
ing plural marriages. The Deseret News gave the following information in regard to it.

The revelation on celestial marriage [plural marriage], published in the Doctrine and Covenants, was given July 12, 1843. The principles it contains, with further intelligence on the same subject, were revealed to the Prophet many years before, but not formulated in writing for the church. Acting under instructions from the Lord, the Prophet had several wives sealed to him before the date of that revelation. There are other matters spoken of in the revelation that pertained to the time when it was written, showing that the statement in the reading, as it appears in the book, is correct; namely, that the revelation was given on that date, although the doctrines it contains were known and had been acted upon under special instructions previous to that date.1

Another example of revelation, and the information received in such revelation, is found in the fact that Senator Smoot was chosen as a candidate through revelation. "It was the voice of the Lord to Lorenzo Snow" that gave the information.2 This portrayed that according to the Mormon belief, revelation dealt with other areas than just the doctrine of the church.

The greatest problem in studying Mormon revelation is the evaluation of the Book of Mormon. Since its first publication in 1830 it has been under fire from all directions.

1Shook, The True Origin of Mormon..., p. 79, quoting the Deseret News.

One of the major theories as to the source of the Book of Mormon, by its opponents, has been that it came from the Spaulding manuscript. David Utter definitely did not appreciate the theory.

It was a very shallow and foolish story at the first, and it had no adequate support, that the substance of the Book of Mormon was taken from a manuscript romance written by a crack-brained preacher named Spaulding. No one who ever carefully read the Book of Mormon could fail to see that it was never in any part written for a romance, or to tell a story, but was written as a supplement to the Bible. Now, at last, the Spaulding manuscript has been found, and it rests secure in the library of Oberlin College, and all controversy is at an end.¹

Cross also disagreed with the story and gave his reasons.

Such myths [as Spaulding's manuscript theory] not only distort Joseph's character but also breed serious misconceptions of how any religious novelty is likely to arise. All the spiritual experiments of western New York were alike genuine growths, rooted in a heritage of moral intensity and blossoming in the heat of evangelistic fervor.²

It would seem, however, that we must admit to the validity of the Book of Mormon, or chalk it up to someone's imagination; if not Spaulding's, then Smith's. Let us look at it and make our own evaluation.

George B. Arbaugh tied it in with the Disciples.

²Cross, op. cit., p. 144.
"...the most probable origin of the Book of Mormon was twofold: first the borrowing of an Indian novel written by Solomon Spaulding, a Congregational [sic] minister, and second the revision of this so as to incorporate the theology of the Disciples of Christ, this revision being made by Sidney Rigdon who left the Disciples to become the great theologian of early Mormonism."¹

As far as this writer is concerned it has been shown that it is probable that Rigdon had contact with the Spaulding manuscript at the time in question, and also that Rigdon was in contact with Smith by 1827. The question remaining is whether or not the Spaulding manuscript was the basis of the Book of Mormon. This will be impossible to decide definitely, but we can find enough evidence to draw our own conclusions.

Aaron Wright wrote the following letter from Conneaut, in August, 1833.

I first became acquainted with Solomon Spalding in 1808 or 1809, when he commenced building a forge on Conneaut Creek. When at his home, one day, he showed and read to me a history he was writing on the lost tribes of Israel, purporting that they were the first settlers of America, and that the Indians were their descendants. Upon this subject we had frequent conversations. He traced their journey from Jerusalem to America, as it is given in the Book of Mormon,

excepting the religious matter. The historical part of the Book of Mormon I know to be the same as I read from the writings of Spalding, more than twenty years ago; the names, more especially, are the same, without any alteration. He told me his object was to account for all the fortification, etc., to be found in this country, and said that in time it would be fully believed by all, except learned men and historians... Spalding had many other manuscripts, which I expect to see when Smith translates his other plates... If it is not Spalding's writing, it is the same as he wrote,..."1

Nahum Howard had a similar story to tell:

I first became acquainted with Solomon Spalding in December, 1810. After that time I frequently saw him at his house, and also at my house. I once, in conversation with him, expressed my surprise at not having any account of the former inhabitants of this country, who erected the old forts and mounds, etc. He then told me he was writing a history of that race of people, and afterward frequently showed me his writing, which I read. I have lately read the Book of Mormon, and believe it to be the same as Spalding wrote, except the religious part. He told me he intended to get his writings published in Pittsburgh, and he thought that in one century from that time it would be believed as much as any other history.2

Shook gave us some information from a Dr. Winter that shed some light on the later years of the manuscript.

In 1822 or 1823 Rigdon took out of his desk in his study a large manuscript, stating that it was a Bible romance purporting to be a history of the American Indians. That it was written by one Spaulding, a Presbyterian preacher, whose health had failed and who had taken it to the printers to see if it would pay to publish it. And that he had borrowed it from the

1Kirby, op. cit., pp. 420-421, quoting Aaron Wright.
2Ibid., pp. 423-424, quoting Nahum Howard.
printer as a curiosity.  

Shook also related the testimony of Joseph Miller in regard to Rigdon's connection with the manuscript.

My recollection is that Spaulding left a transcript of the manuscript with Patterson for publication. The publication was delayed until Spaulding could write a preface. In the meantime the manuscript was spirited away, and could not be found. Spaulding told me that Sidney Rigdon had taken it, or was suspected of taking it. I recollect distinctly that Rigdon's name was mentioned in connection with it.  

There were many other people that swore to having seen the manuscript, or having heard it read, and they said many of the names were the same as contained in the Book of Mormon.

The basic argument against the Spaulding manuscript theory is the fact that the Spaulding manuscript is now available for anyone to read and that it obviously has no relation to the Book of Mormon. This is a convincing argument, if we concede that this is the manuscript that the witnesses, mentioned above, were referring to when they identified it as similar to the Book of Mormon. Shook stated that for years he believed this manuscript's existence proved the theory to be wrong. However, he had changed his mind, giving the following as his reason. Although lengthy, it will be highly valuable to our discussion.

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1Shook, *Cumorah...*, pp. 31-32, quoting Dr. Winter.

2Ibid., p. 28, quoting Joseph Miller.
His [Spaulding's] first story proves to be a fictitious history of a company of Romans who, in a voyage to Britain in the time of Constantine, were driven from their course by contrary winds and were carried to our shores. They found their way inland, and one of them wrote a history of two Indian tribes, the Scotians and Kentucks, who were said to have lived on the Ohio River. Spaulding pretended to have found this history, written in the Latin language on twenty-eight rolls of parchment, in a stone box in a cave on Conneaut Creek. It is evident that this story was never finished, for it ends abruptly. Spaulding gave as his reason for throwing it aside that he wished to go further back in his dates and write in the old Scriptural style, that his story might appear more ancient. In 1834 this manuscript was loaned by Spaulding's widow to one Dr. D. P. Hurlburt, who was then gathering evidence against the Mormons, and was turned over by him to a Mr. E. D. Howe, editor of the Painesville (O.) Telegraph, who was writing a book, Mormonism Unveiled. Howe subsequently sold it to one L. L. Rice, who started an antislavery newspaper, and among other things transferred to him this manuscript of Spaulding's. The Spaulding family, losing track of the manuscript, charged Hurlburt with having sold it to the Mormons, but this was subsequently proved untrue, for Mr. Rice, who in the meantime had removed to Honolulu, Sandwich Islands, discovered it among old papers in his possession in 1884, and afterwards deposited it in the library of Oberlin College, where it still remains. Both of the Mormon churches have published copies of this manuscript, and insist that it forever settles the question of the Book of Mormon originating in the writings of Solomon Spaulding.

But that Spaulding wrote at least one other romance, the historical outline of which was identical, or nearly so, with the historical outline of the Book of Mormon, is proved by the testimony of a number of his relatives and acquaintances, to whom he was in the habit of reading his stories. This manuscript was placed in the printing establishment of one Robert Patterson, of Pittsburgh, for publication, from which it mysteriously disappeared, and everything points to its having been stolen by Sidney Rigdon, who afterwards figured conspicuously as Smith's first counselor, and who at that time was an intimate acquaintance of one of Patterson's employes, J. Harrison Lambdin.1

1 Ibid., pp. 25-27.
This by no means settles the argument. It is possible, and this writer thinks probable, that this is the true story of the origin of the Book of Mormon. There is not enough proof on either side of the question to accurately determine which is right, but in our mind the presence of a Spaulding manuscript at Oberlin does not negate the theory of there being still another manuscript, the origin of the Book of Mormon. Also, the great number of people that testified to seeing and hearing the same story in the manuscript that they read in the Book of Mormon must be considered.

We shall now consider the contents of the Book of Mormon. The book is the history of two races of people over twenty-six centuries. The Jaredites left the Tower of Babel under the leadership of Jared and his brother and they landed on the east coast of Central America. They finally moved northward to what is now the United States. The Jaredites lived in the area for about sixteen centuries before coming to their end in a civil war dated about 600 B.C. This took place at Hill Ramah or Cumorah in New York, with only two escaping. These two met the other race, the people of Zarahemla, and there wrote a record of what had happened.

In the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, Lehi and four sons, Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi,
left the land by God's orders and landed on the coast of Chili. When Lehi died the group broke into two factions, the Nephites and Lamanites. The Lamanites degenerated into savages and were the ancestors of our Indians, but the Nephites advanced in culture. The Nephites moved northward and found a people known as the Zarahemlaites (mentioned above), who had come over from Jerusalem about the time of its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. From that time on the Nephites and the Zarahemlaites were one people.

There were many wars with the Lamenites, but the Nephites spread into North America and built a good civilization across North America as far north as the Great Lakes. In about 400 A.D. they fell prey to the Lamenites and only one Nephite escaped and remained free of the Lamenites. This was Moroni, who finished the record of his people and buried them at Cumorah for Smith to find in 1823.¹

Following are maps showing the approximate location of events and places regarding the two races.

It was the claim in the Book of Mormon that Christ visited the people in America as he did in Palestine, and that he gave them the same doctrines and much the same teachings as he gave the people that followed him in

MAP OF JAREDITE LANDS

1Shook, Cumorah..., p. 48.
MAP OF NETHITE LANDS

Land of Many Rivers

Shem
Antum

Joshon
Joshua

Desolation

David

Bountiful

City of Zarahemla

City of Zarahemla

City of Nephi

Nephite Landing

Zarahemla

1 Ibid., p. 52.
Palestine.\textsuperscript{1}
In regard to the criticism that has been heaped upon the Book of Mormon, this has been prophesied in the book itself:

\begin{quote}
Thou fool, that shall say, A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible, save it were by the Jews? Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth?\textsuperscript{2}
\end{quote}

There have been many books written in criticism of the Book of Mormon, all of them trying to show why it cannot be revelation from God. We should look at a few of the comments to better understand the situation. This will not directly affect the major theme of comparison between the Mormons and the Disciples, but it is something that should be considered in any study of the Book of Mormon. Sweet commented: "When the author of the Book of Mormon departs from the Biblical style it becomes ungrammatical, awkward, repetitious. Many of these defects, however, have since been corrected."\textsuperscript{3}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[2] Ibid., II Nephi 29:6-7.
\end{footnotes}
Alexander Campbell stated that even though the book professed to be written at intervals over a period of several centuries and by several individuals, it still had a uniformity of style which testified that it came from just one man.¹

Latourette saw in it a portrayal of the frontier thinking of the day. "The sources of the Book of Mormon became a subject of violent and chronic controversy, but the work reflected many of the ideas of the popular reviv­alistic Protestantism then current on the frontier, includ­ing the impatience with existing churches and the ambition to build something new and better, and contained stories and views which may have issued from the mind of Smith."²

Cross pointed out that the book must have been created at the time of Joseph Smith. "Walter F. Prince proved bey­ond dispute thirty years ago, by a rigorous examination of the proper names and other language in the volume, that even if no other evidence existed, it could have been com­posed only in western New York between 1826 and 1834, so markedly did it reflect antimasonry and other issues of the day."³

²Latourette, op. cit., IV, 201.
³Cross, loc. cit.
Walter Scott made an observation concerning the teaching of certain Christian doctrines: "But what we wish our reader to observe by the quotations made from the profane Book of Mormon, is this, that the name of Christ, the peculiar principles and doctrines of the gospel, baptism, and all other matters recorded there as having been taught in America before, long before they had any existence on the other continent, and hundreds of years before Christ came upon earth."\(^1\)

Campbell pointed out that the author of the Book of Mormon discussed other general topics of the day besides just antimasonry, such as "infant baptism, ordination, the trinity, regeneration, repentance, justification, the fall of man, the atonement, transubstantiation, fasting, penance, church government, religious experience, the call to the ministry, the general resurrection, eternal punishment, who may baptize, and even the question of free masonry, republican government, and the rights of men."\(^2\) Campbell also remarked that the Nephites were believers in the doctrines of the Methodists and the Calvinists long before Christ was born.\(^3\)


\(^2\)Campbell, loc. cit.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 87.
Alexander Campbell went further and stated that the author of the Book of Mormon was not very skilled in the geography of Judea: "He makes John baptize in the village of Bethabara, (page 22) and says Jesus was born in Jerusalem, p. 240."¹

This does not give opportunity for the Mormons to defend the principle of revelation in relation to the Book of Mormon, but they have many volumes written on the subject and they have given answers to all of these problems.

The Mormons accept another book as revelation from God, that is, the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. This was not given all at one time, as with the Book of Mormon, but was a compilation of the revelations received during the life-time of Joseph Smith, giving the message of the revelation and the date it was delivered. This book is basic to the Mormons as it gave the various instructions concerning organization, etc., as we have seen in some instances.

The Utah Church and the Reorganized Church were not in agreement as to exactly what should be contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. Each group edited their own edition, the Reorganized leaving out some of the problems.

¹Ibid., p. 93.
revelations which the Utah group incorporate into the book.\textsuperscript{1}

The third "sacred book" of the Mormon Church is the Pearl of Great Price. "The Pearl of Great Price is composed of the books of Moses and Abraham, an inspired (?) translation of a small part of the book of Matthew, a portion of Smith's autobiography and the Articles of Faith of the Mormon Church."\textsuperscript{2} It is not necessary to get too involved in an explanation of what is contained in the book. However, some explanation must be made.

The Book of Moses was given to Joseph Smith through revelation and gave the story of God's message to Moses, according to the Mormons.\textsuperscript{3}

The Book of Abraham has a lengthy background. It was found in the form of a manuscript rolled and placed between two mummies being shipped from Egypt to the United States. It was written in ancient Egyptian and the man who owned it (Mr. Chandler) showed it to Joseph Smith for translation. Along with the Book of Abraham was found another scroll containing some writings of Joseph, one of the sons of Jacob. Smith translated the Book of Abraham in part. It told, according to Smith, the partial story

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}La Rue, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 93.
  \item \textsuperscript{2}Kinney, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 68-69.
  \item \textsuperscript{3}Roberts, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 213-214.
\end{itemize}
of Abraham, and also of the creation of the world and of the spirits before creation. Also contained in it were facts concerning astronomy as understood by Abraham. The scroll containing the writings of Joseph was never translated. The mummies and the scrolls were destroyed in a museum in Chicago by the Chicago Fire.¹

One of the outstanding works of Joseph Smith in regard to revelation was his inspired revision of the Bible. This definitely coincided with their understanding of the will of God regarding revelation.

Article 9 of the Articles of Faith stated: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."² (See Appendix).

This statement definitely left room for more revelation, as we have seen. Article 8 gave room for further revelation regarding the Bible: "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God."³

Joseph Smith, with the help of Sidney Rigdon, started a revision of the Bible in 1830, and continued working on

¹Le Grand Richards, op. cit., pp. 428-430.
²Talmage, op. cit., p. 296.
³Ibid., p. 2.
it until 1833.¹ This was a revealed command and it was commanded that the revision should not be made public, or used, until it was finished completely. This revelation was given February 9, 1831.

Thou shalt ask, and my scriptures shall be given as I have appointed, and they shall be preserved in safety; and it is expedient that thou shouldst hold thy peace concerning them, and not teach them until ye have received them in full. And I give unto you a commandment, that then ye shall teach them unto all men; for they shall be taught unto all nations, kinds, tongues, and people.²

Smith did not have an opportunity to finish the revision of the scriptures prior to his death, according to the group that followed Young. There were at least two reasons for Young's followers believing this. Smith told Young, before his death, that he had not yet finished it.³

The second reason was given by Merrill Y. Van Wagoner:

The second body of evidence which disputes the complete revision of the Bible by the Prophet can be found by comparing the King James version and the Inspired Revision. This readily shows that he did not make a thorough revision or correct all the errors in the Bible. For, [sic] instance, in some books such as Hosea, which modern scholarship declares to have a highly corrupt text, the Prophet has made little or no change.⁴

The Reorganized Church printed a copy of the revised

²Book of Doctrine and Covenants, op. cit., 42:15.
³Van Wagoner, op. cit., p. 47.
⁴Ibid., p. 47.
Bible, feeling that the revision was complete and that it was their duty to publicize it. The Utah group did not print the revised Bible because they felt it was never finished. Smith himself said that he must be the one to publish the Bible. "For this reason the Church has not authorized the publishing of his revision of the Old and New Testaments, except for the portions found in the Pearl of Great Price."\(^1\) In regard to their acceptance of what had been done, this statement gave their feelings:

We can accept the changes which the Prophet made in the Bible. Many "plain and most precious" facts have been restored for the benefit of man. But we cannot accept fully every passage which Joseph Smith did not change, for his discourses disclose the fact that there are yet many mistranslations in and words missing from the Bible. Perhaps most of the unchanged passages are all right as they are now, but we do not have a positive commitment to that affect from the Prophet Joseph Smith.\(^2\)

Because of the conviction that the revision was never finished, "the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, nicknamed 'Mormons,' with headquarters at Salt Lake City, uses the King James Version of the Bible."\(^3\)

Following is a chart showing the approximate number of changes in the revision, based on major changes in

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\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 13-14.

\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 58-59.

verses.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Testament:</th>
<th>Verses Added</th>
<th>Verses Changed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>249</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prophets:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Major</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writings</td>
<td></td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Old Testament</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| New Testament:       |              |                |
| Gospels              | 76           | 1036           |
| Epistles, etc.       | 3            | 417            |
| Total New Testament  | 79           | 1457           |
| Total Bible          | 281          | 2146           |

Following are two examples of the changes made.

An example of abbreviated text may be found in Genesis 14:18 [sic]. It reads:

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the Most High God."

The Inspired Revision renders it:

"And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine: and he break bread and blest it; and he blest the wine, he being the priest of the most high God." (I. R., Genesis 14:17.)

An example of meaningless text is found in Philippians 1:21:

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

This verse (I. R. 1:22) is given by the Prophet Joseph Smith as follows:

"For me to live is to do the will of Christ; and to die, is my gain."

Most of the revisions were such that they felt a few words were left out in the process of copying the text. However, there were certain places where the Mormons believed

1 Van Wagoner, op. cit., p. 21.  
2 Ibid., p. 23.  
3 Ibid., p. 24.
the text was deliberately corrupted in order to hide the true events. They felt that the Gospel was preached in the Old Testament, and that all mention of it was carefully deleted by someone, and the revelation to Smith gave us the true information. Following are the last two verses in the fifth chapter of Genesis, as revised by Smith.

And thus the gospel began to be preached from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God; and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost.

And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam by an holy ordinance; and the gospel preached; and a decree sent forth that it should be in the world until the end thereof; and thus it was. Amen. (I. R., Genesis 5:44-45).

Van Wagoner gave further information on the subject:

Repentance, baptism by immersion, receiving of the Holy Ghost, and necessity of belief in the Son were taught from the beginning by the early patriarchs. Before the Flood it was the Gospel that Noah preached for the many years of his ministry.

The Mormon view of revelation was what really set them apart from the rest of christendom. This was the means by which they obtained their doctrines that vary so much from the other doctrines of the leading denominations. If a person grants them that any part of their revelation was true, then all must have been true, and we that have not accepted it are in considerable trouble in our faith.

1 Ibid., p. 28, quoting I. R. Genesis 5:44-45.
2 Ibid., p. 28.
The Disciple Concept

The Disciple concept of revelation is not nearly so involved as the Mormon concept. The Disciple view would be largely accepted by the various streams of protestantism with but a few exceptions.

The idea of revelation seems to have remained about the same throughout the years of the history of the Disciples. The basic beliefs of the Campbells seem to still be in vogue at this time with very few variations.

The Disciples definitely believe in divine revelation as coming from God. Hayden recorded what Alexander Campbell believed concerning divine revelation, that is, that it unfolded under four successive periods of development.

"...1st, The Starlight Age; 2d, The Moonlight Age; 3d, The Twilight Age; 4th, The Sunlight Age; and employed these respectively to explain, 1st, The Patriarchal; 2d, The Jewish Dispensation; 3d, The ministry of John the Baptist, with the personal ministry of the Lord on the earth; and 4th, The full glory of the perfect system of salvation under the apostles when the Holy Spirit was poured out on them, after the ascension and coronation of Jesus as Lord of all."

Alexander Campbell believed that divine revelation must be something that exhibits supernatural things; that

1 Alexander Campbell, quoted in Hayden, op. cit., pp. 35-36.
which can be detected through any of our five senses would not be classed as divine revelation. Therefore divine revelation, to him, was a disclosure of things otherwise unknowable to man.¹ He said "now, the grand proposition is, that God has spoken to man in the Bible."² However, in The Christian Baptist he clarified his meaning: "I do not believe, then, that the book commonly called the Bible, is properly denominated a Divine Revelation, or communication from the Deity to the human race."³ The reason he took this stand was that such stories as the beheading of John the Baptist are known through our natural senses and do not demand revelation.⁴ Cecil K. Thomas said that to Campbell "the Bible is the source of all true religious ideas."⁵

Again Campbell wrote that "we have only to remind the reader that there is but one infallible standard of the

³Alexander Campbell, "The Social System and Deism—No. II.,"... p. 344.
⁴Ibid.
Christian religion, and this is the New Testament."¹ He pointed out in *The Christian Baptist* that not only was this the infallible standard, but the only standard.

...be admonished, my friends, to open your Bibles and to hearken to the voice of God, which is the voice of reason. God now speaks to us only by his word. By his Son, in the New Testament, he has fully revealed himself and his will. This is the only revelation of his Spirit which we are to regard.²

J. A. Dearborn, in *The Millennial Harbinger*, voiced his view on the Bible being sufficient.

I state to you again, that we [Disciples], as a religious body, have planted ourselves upon this divine platform [that the Bible is sufficient]. To the advocacy of the unrivaled claims of this complete and perfect revelation of Heaven's will and wisdom to the children of men,...³

W. J. Russell stated that "no one at all conversant with the Bible will for a moment allow any other book to come into competition with it."⁴ Alexander Campbell summed up the Disciple feeling as to the closing of revelation

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in the following statement.

It is a canon of Protestantism, worthy of a golden tablet, that to the Bible's last amen nothing is to be added by any new revelation or commandment of demon, angel or man. Between the last voice of the Apocalypse and the final trumpet of man's drama, no new oracle, dream or vision is promised by God or expected by any intelligent man.¹

Thomas Campbell held the view that the New Testament was a perfect book of rules for the church. In the Declaration and Address he wrote that "the New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament Church, and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members, as the Old Testament was for the worship, discipline, and government of the Old Testament Church, and the particular duties of its members."²

This idea of revelation also left room for everyone to interpret the revelation as they felt it should be. So many differences of interpretation actually appeared, among men who respected each other's honesty and intelligence, that the theory of "one unmistakable meaning" for every passage lost its plausibility. The tendency was toward a return to that right of individual interpretation without the assumption of which the Protestant movement could never have started.³

This was referring to the total view held by protestants,

² Thomas Campbell, op. cit., p. 45.
but it also applied to the Disciples. "In the earlier years, Disciples took the views on this subject [revelation] that were then current in the Christian world."\(^1\)

The feeling that the New Testament gave the complete plan for the church and that each person had the right of interpretation caused the division in the ranks of the Disciples, becoming apparent in 1906. A large group felt that because missionary societies were not mentioned in the New Testament, and musical instruments were apparently not used, that these things were innovations and therefore were wrong.\(^2\)

This has been a very brief discussion of the Disciple concept, due to the fact that it is not complicated, as is the Mormon concept.

**A Comparison of the Two Concepts**

There is a vast difference in the Mormon concept of revelation and the Disciple concept. Basically, it is this difference that has made the Mormons so very different from the rest of Christianity. We will now look at some of the similarities, as well as the differences.

The basic concept of what constitutes revelation seems to be very similar. Both groups recognize revelation as being given by God. Both groups recognize the Bible,

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 538. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 405.
the Old and New Testaments, as containing the revelation of God for man.

The Mormons believe that the Bible is not accurate and therefore they have at least a portion of it revised by Joseph Smith. They contend, as has been seen, that there are still many imperfections in it and that the "original" Hebrew and Greek texts of today are not accurate at all in many places of importance. The Disciples contend that the Hebrew and Greek texts of today no doubt have minor errors in them but that these are essentially of no consequence to us. Alexander Campbell, with the help of others, put out a revised edition of the New Testament, but this was done by going back to the existing texts and translating the Greek into modern English of that day. Smith depended upon information he claimed to have received by special revelation from God.

As we have seen, the Mormons contend that they still receive revelation from God through the President of the Church, as well as claiming several other groups of writings as being of divine authority. The Disciples believe that revelation ceased after the writing of the New Testament and that there will be no more revelation until the end of time.

Both groups have had trouble, however, in deciding what was actually revelation from God and what it meant.
By this we refer to the fact that the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints denies that Smith received any revelation regarding plural marriage. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints insists that he did. The Disciples had trouble, and still do, deciding just how far the revelation contained in the New Testament was intended to be binding and how much of it was incidental and characteristic to the New Testament days and customs.

If anyone grants the Mormons that their view of revelation is accurate, then all others are wrong. If the Disciple view is right, then the Mormon view is wrong.
CHAPTER VII

THE DOCTRINE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Mormon Concept

The Mormons have the Lord's Supper as one of their sacraments.¹ Brigham H. Roberts described this service as to meaning and custom: "To arouse this consciousness of the Spirit of the Christ in them, and to induce it to abide with them, my own people meet once each week in a service memorial of the Christ, partaking of broken bread in token of their remembrance of His body broken for them, and a sip of water as emblem of His blood shed in sacrifice for them; and they covenant to always remember Him and keep His commandments, that 'they may always have His spirit to be with them.'"²

The Mormons usually celebrate the Lord's Supper with water instead of wine.³ This came about from a time in September of 1830, when Joseph Smith was going to buy some wine for the observance of the Lord's Supper. As he was

¹Church, op. cit., p. 176.
³Kellett, op. cit., p. 541.
walking down the road to get it he received a revelation telling him it was not necessary.

Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Lord, your God, and your Redeemer, whose word is quick and powerful. For, behold, I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory; remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins; wherefore a commandment I give unto you, that you shall not purchase wine, neither strong drink of your enemies; wherefore ye shall partake of none except it is made new among you; yea, in this my Father's kingdom which shall be built up on the earth.¹

Since this time the Mormons have, as a rule, used water instead of wine. According to Talmage, they have not only used it for the convenience involved, but in preference to wine.²

The Lord's Supper has much importance because of "the observance of this ordinance being required of all who have become members of the Church of Christ through compliance with the requirements of faith, repentance, and baptism by water and of the Holy Ghost."³ They turned to the New Testament where Christ was recorded as instituting the Lord's Supper while with His disciples. They said that Christ also appeared to the Nephites soon after His ascension and established the Lord's Supper among His flock in

¹Book of Doctrine and Covenants, op. cit., 26:1.
²Talmage, op. cit., p. 176.
³Ibid., p. 171.
this country. This was according to the story in the
Book of Mormon.¹

In regard to partaking, they are very strict:

The direct word of the Lord unto the saints in
this dispensation instructs them to permit no one in
transgression to partake of the sacrament until recon-
ciliation has been made; nevertheless the saints are
commanded to exercise abundant charity toward their
erring fellows, not casting them out from the assemblies
yet withholding the sacrament from them. In our system
of Church organization the local ecclesiastical officers
are charged with the responsibility of administering
the sacrament, and the people are required to keep
themselves worthy to partake of the sacred emblems.²

The Mormons do not permit anyone but members of the
church to partake of the sacrament, on the ground that no
one was present at the time of the instituting of it but
those who had assumed the name of Christ.³

The purpose of the sacrament is only for remembrance
of Christ. It has no sense of securing remission of sins.⁴

The Mormons have definite prayers they use in the
service. Following is the prayer used for blessing the
bread at the Lord's Supper. "O God, the Eternal Father,
we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless
and sanctify this bread (broken) to the souls of all those
who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the
body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the eternal

¹The Nephite Records..., III Nephi 18:6-7.
²Talmage, op. cit., p. 174. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., p. 175.
Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and willing always to remember Him, and keep His commandments, which He has given them, that They May Always have His Spirit To Be With Them." ¹

After the bread has been distributed the wine or water is blessed with the following prayer. "0 God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this wine (or water) to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, 0 God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen." ²

They feel that this ordinance came into the Articles of Faith under Article 4, which stated "we believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost." ³ They feel that the Lord's Supper is essential after faith, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Therefore this is a very important part of their doctrine.

¹Roberts, loc. cit. ²Talmage, op. cit., p. 177. ³Ibid., p. 1.
The Disciples have always, it would seem, observed the Lord's Supper. Williston Walker stated that in regard to Disciple practice, "the Lord's Supper was observed each Sunday from the beginning."¹ On such practices as this it is therefore rather difficult to trace beginnings. Alexander Campbell assumed its presence as being accepted by nearly all. "That the breaking of bread in commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ, is a part, or an act of Christian worship, is generally admitted by professors of Christianity."²

Stephen J. England wrote that "the ceremony now called 'communion,' or sometimes 'Lord's Supper' is the oldest to be observed in the church without a break."³ Besides this precedence, B. A. Abbott said that according to Disciple view it is an ordinance.

Only Baptism and the Lord's Supper were appointed by Christ himself for perpetual and everlasting observance as ordinances or rites and they alone have any obligatory claims as such in the New Testament Church. Hence the Disciples practice these alone as true Church


ordinances and not the least of their contributions has been to help fix them in their proper places in Christian experience and worship, and to exalt them again in the honor and appreciation of Christians.¹

J. Z. Tyler spoke of the importance of this ordinance as he wrote "an ordinance is an observance established by authority, and to despise it and trample it under foot is to despise and trample under foot that authority."²

The Disciples place great emphasis upon this ordinance. William Robinson pointed out that "the chief service on every Lord's Day is the Lord's Supper; and in such services the Lord's Table is centrally placed."³ As Jesse R. Kellems said, it is for this purpose that the Disciples come together.⁴

There are several ideas portrayed by this observance according to the Disciples. Kershner listed four: Memorial, ordinance, communion, and confession.⁵ Abbott said there are five major ideas: Memorial, communion, fellowship,

⁵Kershner, op. cit., Part IV, 57.
covenant, and prophetic.  

The next question to be examined is that of who can be involved in the service. Anyone can administer the Lord's Supper: "In Disciple churches the Communion can be administered to the congregation by lay leaders or other lay members." However, "in most churches of Disciples of Christ the elders officiate at the Lord's Supper, this is a part of their duty, or privilege, as spiritual leaders of the congregation."  

There was some question as to who could partake of the Lord's Supper at the beginning of the movement. Thomas Campbell was rebuked by the Presbyterians for inviting others to partake of the Lord's Supper. Alexander Campbell at first felt that it should be open to all that were immersed, but not to those not immersed. It wasn't until much later that the Disciples practiced "open communion." The general practice now is that anyone who so wishes can partake. "The New Testament allows each individual to partake."  

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1Abbott, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-139.


decide this for himself."¹

A Comparison of the Two Concepts

The Mormon concept of the Lord's Supper and the Disciple concept are very similar. They have the same basic belief as to the purpose and the value of a person partaking. As we have seen, both groups observe the Lord's Supper every Sunday, feeling this is the will of the Lord. On these two main issues there seems to be agreement.

There is a difference of opinion as to who can partake, however. The Mormons practice close communion and the Disciples practice open communion. It is interesting to note that both groups started out believing the same on this matter, but the Disciples changed in later years.

In the Mormon Church, only a member of the priesthood can administer the Lord's Supper, whereas among the Disciples any layman can administer the ordinance, as well as the ministers. Much of the cause of this difference would seem to lie in the whole concept of the priesthood.

Another difference is that the Mormon belief allows water to be substituted for the wine, whereas the Disciples use grape-juice, primarily.

Despite these differences, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper is remarkably similar in both cases. This leads

¹Abbott, op. cit., p. 142.
one to speculate again as to how much influence Sidney Rigdon had in establishing some of the doctrines of the Mormons. Certainly, in this case, the Mormons followed much the same line of thinking as the Disciples had a few years before.
CHAPTER VIII

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

The Mormon Concept

One of the most prominent of the ordinances of the Mormons is the sacrament of baptism. The Mormons believe in baptism by immersion for remission of sins for all believers eight years old or older.

According to the Book of Mormon baptism was established soon after the creation of man. God told Adam that if he would believe, repent, and be baptized he would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ¹

The Mormons quote the New Testament writers to the effect that through baptism we receive admission to the church with remission of sins. ² The revelation received by the Mormons bore out practically the same testimony in this matter, showing that these things were revealed to the people in America long before the birth of Christ.

A commandment from God to Joseph Smith in April, 1830, stated the condition under which people may be baptized. "All those who humble themselves before God and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts

¹Talmage, op. cit., p. 121. ²Ibid., p. 122.
and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church.\(^1\)

This made it necessary that the candidate for baptism know exactly what he is doing. Revelation told them that the child must be at least eight years old to be accountable for his actions.\(^2\) This ruled out infant baptism entirely because they believe that every infant is completely without any sin and therefore infant baptism would be meaningless.\(^3\)

The church teaches that insomuch as no soul can be forgiven of sins without baptism, there can be no salvation without baptism.\(^4\)

All baptizing in the Mormon Church is done by the priesthood. They have the power and authority to act on behalf of God in such matters.\(^5\)

To the Mormons there is no problem in regard to the

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\(^1\) Book of Doctrine and Covenants, op. cit., 17:7.
\(^2\) Ibid., 68:4.
\(^3\) Talmage, op. cit., p. 125.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 128.
\(^5\) Le Grand Richards, op. cit., p. 87.
method of baptism as they take the Greek word for baptize, *baptizo*, and insist upon its actual meaning, which is literally to dip or immerse.¹ They follow the New Testament in regard to its symbolism, pointing out that it is a burial and a new birth.²

This first portion of their doctrine concerning baptism presents no real problem as it is rather familiar to christendom, except where they referred to revelation for special instructions in regard to age limitations and the information as to who is able to baptize. The next portion of their doctrine is difficult for a non-Mormon to understand due to a lack of encounter with the concept outside of Mormonism. This is the practice of baptism for the dead.

The basis for this doctrine is the conviction that there can be no salvation without baptism. "Christ's atoning sacrifice was offered, not alone for the few who lived upon the earth while He was in the flesh, nor for those who were to be born in mortality after His death, but for all inhabitants of earth then past, present, and future."³ Farnsworth pointed out that there was no saving grace in the law of Moses so it could not save.⁴ He pointed

¹Talmage, *op. cit.*, p. 137. ²Ibid., p. 140.
³Ibid., p. 145.
out that John 14:6 stated that no man can go to the Father except by Christ and asked "now brothers and sisters, if no man cometh unto the Father but by Christ, then I want to say, what's going to happen to those millions of people including the prophets, that did not have a chance to hear Christ and his gospel in their time?" He also pointed to the New Testament and said that I Peter 3:18-20 stated that Christ preached to the dead and that I Corinthians 15:29 showed that baptism for the dead was practiced.

This leaves the question of whether someone being baptized for the dead would be true baptism if the dead person were not a repentant believer. This also is taken into consideration in that the Mormons say the dead will be ministered unto and shown the error of their ways and then will be given the chance to obey God.

It is not to be supposed that by these ordinances the departed are in any way compelled to accept the obligation, nor that they are in the least hindered in the exercise of their free agency. They will accept or reject according to their condition of humility or hostility in respect to the Gospel; but the work so done for them on earth will be of avail when wholesome teaching and real penitence have shown them their true position.

The authority for baptism for the dead was found in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants as being a command and

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1 Ibid., pp. 7-8.  
2 Ibid., pp. 13-14.  
3 Talmage, op. cit., p. 153.
being the only way the various dead can be saved.¹ This is a very important thing to the Mormons, as even Abraham is lost unless someone is baptized for him.²

The Disciple Concept

The Disciple concept of baptism is not very difficult and therefore we shall not spend much time on it or turn to many authorities for discussion of the problem.

The Campbells came out of a Presbyterian background so they were believers in infant baptism, and that by sprinkling. Alexander Campbell said he read the proof sheets of the Declaration and Address as they came from the press in 1809 and he told Thomas Campbell that the third proposition meant he would have to deny infant baptism.³ He further stated this:

On reading this, I asked him in what passage or portion of the inspired oracles could we find a precept or an express precedent for the baptism or sprinkling of infants in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? His response, in substance, was, "it was merely inferential."⁴

Soon after this a child was born to Alexander and once again he was faced with the sprinkling question. He

¹Book of Doctrine and Covenants, op. cit., 17:10-11.
²Gatewood & Farnsworth, op. cit., p. 27.
³Alexander Campbell, Memoirs of Elder... , p. 23.
⁴Ibid., p. 24.
stated that in 1810 he still thought he should be immersed but his father couldn't see it. "My great respect and even reverence for his judgement alone held me in abeyance for some months."\(^1\) Even so, due to his renewed consideration of the problem, he decided to be baptized anyway: "Accordingly, on June 2d, 1812, my father, mother, my sister Bryant, my wife, myself, James and Sarah Henon, in all seven persons, were baptized into the Christian faith."\(^2\)

Soon after this the Campbells joined the Baptists and therefore immersion became the accepted method of baptism. However, there was never complete agreement with the Baptists on this doctrine due to the difference of opinion in regard to the purpose of baptism.

Much has been written on the Disciple view of baptism. Alexander Campbell debated the question several times. In 1820 a debate was held with John Walker, a Presbyterian minister.\(^3\) In 1823 a debate was held with W. L. MacCalla, a Presbyterian.\(^4\) In 1843 a debate was held with N. L. Rice,

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 113.  
\(^2\)Ibid.  
\(^3\)John Walker and Alexander Campbell, *Infant Sprinkling Proved to Be a Human Tradition; Being the Substance of a Debate on Christian Baptism, Between Mr. John Walker, a Minister of the Secession and Alexander Campbell, V.D.M. a Regular Baptist Minister* (Steubenville, Ohio: James Wilson, 1820).  
also a Presbyterian.¹ These, besides the wealth of articles in periodicals, give ample material for anyone interested in pursuing the subject further than this discussion.

According to the Disciples the Greek use of the word for baptize and the New Testament method must mean that baptism was by immersion. "This shows at once that only immersion can be considered the Scriptural form of Baptism,..."² Kellems pushed this a little further and said that "the action is immersion in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."³

The Disciples consider baptism to be an ordinance, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Kellems stated this about the design of the ordinance: "The design of the ordinance or the change which it is intended to effect, is 'the remission of past sins.'"⁴ This concept was gained from the example of Jesus' teaching as well as other scriptures: "...Jesus' baptism was for repentance, for remission of sins, for the confession of his lordship, and

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²Abbott, op. cit., p. 123.

³Kellems, op. cit., p. 260.

⁴Ibid.
for receiving the Holy Spirit."

As to the question of who is a fit candidate for baptism, Alexander Campbell stated that "a believer is the only subject of baptism." Abbott had a good statement on this:

Baptism is, therefore, for all who understandingly, intentionally and sacrificially accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ and want to declare that fact to the world. It is for those who feel broken, crushed and disgraced by sin, and are determined to throw it off; it is for such as are of a broken heart and a contrite spirit;

He went on to remind us that "baptism cannot be received by proxy; the soul receiving it must have part in it."

There doesn't seem to be any set age that the child can be baptized. It is usually felt that by the time the child reaches the age of eleven or twelve he is able to understand the purpose and intent of baptism enough to be baptized.

The Disciple belief allows a layman to baptize, not just the minister.

It has been customary for any people transferring their church membership into a Disciple Church to be

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1Abbott, op. cit., p. 119.
2Alexander Campbell, A Debate on Christian Baptism..., p. 145.
3Abbott, op. cit., p. 120.
4Ibid., p. 121.
immersed if they haven't been already. However, as Adams pointed out, many churches are now becoming "open-membership," that is, they will accept individuals that have only been sprinkled into the fellowship of the church.\textsuperscript{1} Still, the great majority insist upon immersion.

A Comparison of the Two Concepts

Again we have seen great similarity in the concepts of the Mormons and the Disciples in regard to this doctrine. Basically they agree on the purpose of baptism, in that it is for the remission of sin. Also, there is general agreement as to the method of baptism: by immersion. Also, both groups believe in "believer's baptism." Because of this, both have rejected any concept of infant baptism, feeling that a person must be old enough to understand the act. The Mormons claimed to have a revelation designating that age to be eight years old, whereas the Disciples usually prefer that the child be somewhat older than that.

The basic difference in the concepts of the two groups lies in the doctrine of the Mormon Church concerning baptism for the dead. The Disciples completely reject this doctrine on the grounds that it was not advocated in the New Testament, and also because they do not believe in conversion after death. The Disciples feel each person

\textsuperscript{1}Adams, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 46-47.
must be baptized for himself and no one else can do it for him.

The Mormon concept of baptism is so similar to that of the Disciples (except for the special revelation concerning baptism for the dead and the age specification for baptism of children) that again we might suspect that Rigdon had a great deal to do with the establishing of Disciple doctrine in the Mormon Church.
CHAPTER IX

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CLERGY AND ORGANIZATION

The Mormon Concept

The problem of the ministry in the Mormon Church is not overly complicated. Article 5 of the Articles of Faith said "we believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof."¹

They feel that the authority to minister in the name of God lies with the Mormon Church. The authority died out after the death of the apostles in the early centuries of the church and was not re-established until May 15, 1829, while Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were engaged in prayer. John the Baptist appeared and told the two young men that they were to have this authority and they received it through the laying on of hands by John the Baptist.² A short time later Peter, James, and John appeared to Smith and Cowdery and ordained them to the Melchizedek Priesthood, bestowing upon them the keys of the apostleship. This order of priesthood holds authority over the rest of

¹Talmage, op. cit., p. 2. ²Ibid., pp. 187-188.
the church, and therefore all of the authority to re-establish the church upon earth was restored to earth.¹ A statement of this passing on of authority was made by Talmage.

No one may officiate in any ordinance of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints unless he has been ordained to the particular order or office of Priesthood, by those possessing the requisite authority. Thus, no man receives the Priesthood except under the hands of one who holds that Priesthood himself; that one must have obtained it from other previously commissioned; and so every bearer of the Priesthood today can trace his authority to the hands of Joseph Smith the Prophet, who received his ordination under the hands of the apostles Peter, James, and John; and they had been ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ. That men who are called of God, to the authority of the ministry on earth, may have been selected for such appointment even before they took mortal bodies, is evident from the scriptures.²

They refer to Jeremiah 1:4-5 and Romans 8:29-30 as instances of men being foreordained.³

As to the ministry, Church said there is no paid ministry in the Mormon Church. "Every faithful man is ordained to the priesthood and is then subject to 'orders,' which may send him anywhere to preach or proselytize."⁴ Not all men in the church actually are ordained to the priesthood, but all of them have the opportunity and most of them take advantage of it. There are two main divisions of priesthood they can be ordained into: the Aaronic or

¹Ibid., p. 188. ²Ibid., p. 189. ³Ibid., p. 190. ⁴Church, op. cit., p. 173.
lesser priesthood, and the Melchizedek or higher priesthood.\(^1\)

The first [Aaronic\(\)] has the function of preaching and blessing; the second [Melchizedek\(\)], of healing and prophesying. The officers of the 'Aaronitic' are: deacon, teacher, priest; of the 'Melchizedek': elder, seventy, high priest and bishop, patriarch, apostle, presiding high priest.\(^2\)

The basic statement of officers was given in Article 6 of the Articles of Faith: "We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, viz., apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc."\(^3\) Basically, as Horace L. Friess and Herbert W. Schneider stated, "the Church is governed by a hierarchy of presidents, apostles and elders and maintains a priesthood."\(^4\) However, it will be best if we take a look at each position and see exactly what the duties are.

The deacon's duties are temporal in nature, care of the houses of worship, the comfort of the worshipers, and ministrations to the members according to the direction of the bishop.

The teacher's duties are to mingle with the members,

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\(^1\)Cowles, *op. cit.*, p. 295.


\(^3\)Talmage, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

exhorting them and guarding against sinful actions and attitudes. They can teach and preach when so directed but cannot independently officiate in any spiritual ordinances, such as baptizing, administering the sacrament (Lord's Supper), or the laying on of hands.

The duty of the priest is to preach, teach, expound the scripture, baptize, administer the sacrament, visitation, and when properly instructed can ordain deacons, teachers, and other priests, and may be called upon to assist the elder in his work.

The elders can officiate at any of the functions of the lower callings and in addition may ordain other elders, confirm as members of the church baptized candidates, and confer upon them the Holy Ghost. They can bless children in the church and conduct meetings of the church. They can officiate in the place of the high priest when he is not present.

Seventies are primarily traveling elders, evangelizing, and being under the direction of the apostles.

High priests can officiate at all ordinances and blessings of the church when so directed. They may travel and evangelize, but are not expressly charged with this duty.

Patriarchs or evangelists have the duty of blessing the members of the church, officiating at the services.
Apostles are called to be special witnesses of Christ, and are empowered to build up and organize branches of the church and may officiate at all ordinances. They are under the direction of the First Presidency of the church.

The First Presidency constitutes the presiding quorum of the church. The president is appointed from among the members of the high priesthood to preside over the entire church.

These basic members of the organization and their duties were listed and enlarged upon by Talmage.¹

"The First Presidency is assisted by the Council of the Twelve and by the first Council of Seventy (seven men) and a Presiding Bishopric consisting of a presiding bishop and his two counselors."² As before mentioned, all new revelation must come through the president of the church.

The church has certain divisions within it. Cowles presented a good description of the total division.

For administrative purposes the church is divided into territorial units somewhat analogous to our state, county, town, and precinct organization. The primary unit is the ward, presided over by a bishop and two counselors. The normal population of a ward is from 500 to 1,000 people, varying much with the density of population. Every ward is subdivided into districts or blocks. Two teachers are assigned to help the bishop in each block. The wards are grouped together into stakes, analogous to counties. Every stake is

¹Talmage, op. cit., pp. 206-210. ²Cowles, loc. cit.
presided over by a president and two counsellors, assisted by a group of twelve men known as the stake high council. There are at present about 1,200 wards and 155 stakes in the entire church besides 121 "branches" and 38 missions.\footnote{Tbid.}

It is interesting to note that they stay by this division system faithfully even though at times they would rather change to another ward in their church work because of personal reasons. Friess and Schneider gave the reason the church membership is divided into stakes and wards as being that "the theory of the Church is that its members constitute a society which is economically, socially and religiously independent of others."\footnote{Friess & Schneider, loc. cit.}

Even though the church has a relatively simple statement of its belief in officers and organization, it gets rather involved in the working out of the various duties in actual practice. Yet it is simple in that each officer knows exactly what he is expected to do.

**The Disciple Concept**

The Disciple concept of the ministry and organization has been somewhat of a problem through the years. This is one area that has seen considerable change. It is not advisable to go extensively into the various reasons for that change in attitude so this section will consist largely of a statement of beliefs that have been predominant.
Alexander Campbell was originally opposed to a paid clergy. However, Campbell later reversed this opinion: "In later life he advocated the church's support of the ministry and denied that he had ever stood for anything else." This would indicate that the ministry is a definite office in the church. This becomes a problem in itself because even though there is a paid ministry, complete with special education, the Disciples tend to consider the clergy and laity as being the same. Campbell helped explain this attitude in the following statement.

While, then, the Christian system allows every man "as he has received a gift to minister as a good steward of the manifold grace of God," it makes provision for choosing and setting apart qualified persons for all its peculiar services, necessary to its own edification and comfort, as well as to its usefulness in the world.

Walter Wilson Jennings said that Campbell rather insisted the two were not separate: "...they believed lay preaching authorized, and denied a Scriptural distinction


between clergy and laity. "¹ This feeling is still predominant in Disciple thinking, but there seems to be the indication that in years to come the Disciples will rethink their position, and possibly place more stress on the place of the minister in the church.

The Disciples also have officers in the local church known as "elders" and "deacons." There are usually several in each congregation and they are given the task of looking after the various matters in the congregation.

The next question to discuss is the problem of the organization of the Disciples. Again we find some change through the years, but the essential attitude still stands. "As regards the government of the church, Campbell always considered it an absolute monarchy. It is a kingdom of which Christ is the King."²

As regards the polity of the church, the Disciples follow the direction of the New Testament. Kershner described what this was: "...we may say that the polity known to the churches of the New Testament was essentially congregational, but that this polity is not made a matter of binding authority, so far as the New Testament records

show."¹ Because of complete autonomy of the local congregation there has been considerable difficulty with the question of several congregations working together through one organization. Many have felt that in this area we are given freedom by the New Testament. "It is a strange perversion of the principle of loyalty to the Scriptures as our rule of faith and practice, to oppose such methods of co-operation as those mentioned above [various missionary societies], because they are not specifically authorized in the Word of God."²

This idea of polity has made for a poorly related effort of working in the congregations as a whole. Adams analyzed the situation as being this:

By its very nature, a congregationally governed church, like the Disciples of Christ, does not have and cannot have a strong central organization. Sometimes it is said that every Disciple church is a law unto itself, but this could not be absolutely true while these churches voluntarily associate themselves in a "brotherhood" or denomination.³

The Disciples have some organization on the district, state, and national level. However, this organization is of a voluntary nature and any recommendations that are handed out are just that, and no more. In many of the

¹Kershner, op. cit., Part IV, 13.
³Adams, op. cit., p. 74.
congregations there is a growing sense of co-operation that one day might lead to a stronger organization. "All of this [organization] indicates that the Disciples of Christ are modifying the extreme position of local church autonomy that they have held in the past."¹

In the area of church polity it is anyone's guess as to what will happen in the next fifty years. Many are hoping that a strong central organization will develop while at the same time many are working diligently for local autonomy.

A Comparison of the Two Concepts

There are some ways in which the Mormon concept and the Disciple concept of the clergy and the polity are very similar. Still there are other ways that they are very far apart. First, let us find the similarities.

Basically, the concept of the ministry is similar in that the Disciples believe that all Christians should be preachers, but that only a few enter the ministry. The Mormons believe that the minister must be set aside as a priest, but still almost any man can become a priest. In this way it can be said that both reject the idea of the separation of the clergy and laity.

The Mormons do not have a paid ministry, but the

¹Ibid., p. 86.
ministry is carried on by the people that take time from their other duties. Originally, as we have seen, this was the method promoted by some of the leaders of the Disciples. Since that time the Disciples have shifted their emphasis but both groups started out at about the same place.

There are more differences than similarities. The Mormons claim that their leaders received special ordination from God and that this is passed on to all members of the priesthood. The Disciples do not have anything to compare with this idea of succession.

One of the great differences is that the Mormon leaders are definitely limited as to what functions they can perform in the work and worship of the church. Each knows his own limitations, as has been noticed. The Disciples do not limit the tasks of anyone in the church. Any layman can, in case of necessity, administer baptism, preside at the Lord's Supper, teach, preach, or anything else he feels personally capable of doing.

One of the obvious differences lies in the area of polity. The Mormons have a very strict organization, but the Disciples have a purely voluntary organization. The Mormons have a territorial organization, determining how many people will work together, etc. The Disciples have nothing to compare with this.

Taken as a whole, some of the basic concepts regard-
ing this teaching concerning the ministry and organization might be similar, but when it comes to the actual application, there is not much similarity.

What is salvation? It is the condition that results when a person is in harmony with truth. Man may ever be at the door to salvation, but in its fulness, salvation is the eternal goal. The joy of salvation is as if all life is eternal progression. One must grow daily and forever in righteousness and good works. Those who are in a state of salvation are in a constant state of progression; those who are not in the state of progression are "in the grave." Even for the latter, the tender mercy of God provides a fitting place in His kingdom, and the opportunity for continuous repentance. However, he who pleases himself by obedience to little law beyond the power of evil, is that excepted, is saved.

How may salvation be attained? By accepting the principles and precepts of truth issuing from God.
CHAPTER X

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN AND ETERNITY

The Mormon Concept

There is one more major field of doctrine that should be discussed in this comparison. This is the belief in man and eternity. This is very interesting and even though we will find very little in common in the beliefs of the two groups, this area should be discussed because of the rather strange doctrine held by the Mormon Church.

We shall not cover the whole subject of sin, salvation, reward, punishment, etc., but rather we shall get a general view of the peculiar doctrines held by the Mormons.

John A. Widstoe, a Mormon, gave a good statement of their belief in regard to salvation:

What is salvation? It is the condition that results when a person is in harmony with truth. Man may ever be on the way to salvation, but in its fullness, salvation is the eternal goal. The law of salvation as of all life is eternal progression. One must grow daily and forever in righteousness and good works. Those who are in a state of salvation are in a constant state of progression; those who are static or who retrograde are "the lost." Even for the latter, the tender mercy of God provides a fitting place in his kingdom, and the opportunity for continuous repentance. Whoever has placed himself by obedience to divine law beyond the power of evil, to that extent is saved.

How may salvation be attained? By accepting the principles and practices of truth issuing from God
and constituting the plan of salvation; by the resolute use of the will to obey at any cost the requirements of the Gospel; and by constant appeal in prayer to God for assistance.¹

Church also gave a brief statement of belief in the hereafter that is worth quoting.

The Mormons believe that there are many worlds and world spheres inhabited by spirits in different stages of development. There is in the hereafter a celestial glory for those who have accepted and lived God's message in all particulars. There is a terrestrial glory for those who believed in Jesus and His mission but failed to abide by the terms of the Gospel. The telestial glory is for those who are also heirs of salvation, but their glory is that of the stars, contrasted with that of the moon and sun. But so marvelous is the afterlife that even in the telestial glory the joy will be greater than mortal man can imagine.²

One of the many revelations dealing with the separate degrees of glory is in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 85, but it is much too long to include in this discussion. Widstoe put the promise of even the evil man in a much stronger statement: "The lowest of these rewards, reserved for the vilest sinner, will be glorious beyond the understanding of man, though infinitely less than that of the highest."³

Article 10 of the Articles of Faith stated "we be-


²Church, op. cit., p. 175.

³Widstoe, op. cit., p. 132.
lieve in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this (the American) continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.\(^1\) It is generally thought that the gathering to the city of Zion will take place at Salt Lake City, but this is not certain.

Some time must be taken to look at the Mormon belief in regard to the nature of man. This is an involved belief and will not be covered completely in this discussion. It will be sufficient to point to the basic tendencies and depend upon interested parties to look deeper into the doctrine of the church.

Widstoe stated, concerning man, that "not only shall he endure after death; he lived as a spiritual, pre-existent being before he came upon earth. He was in the beginning with God.\(^2\) A special revelation stated that men were in the beginning with God.\(^3\)

In the same revelation a teaching was given that told the Mormons they must have a body to reach full joy.\(^4\)

\(^1\)Talmage, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 2.
\(^2\)Widstoe, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 128.
\(^3\)Book of Doctrine and Covenants, \textit{op. cit.}, 90:4-5.
\(^4\)Ibid., 90:5.
Richards said of this verse: "Thus, the first purpose of earth life is to obtain a body, without which, 'man cannot receive a fulness of joy.'"\(^1\) He also reminded us that a spirit must have a body to reach the celestial glory.\(^2\)

This doctrine of the pre-existence of the spirits, and that the spirits must have a body in order to prove themselves to enter the highest degree of glory, was part of the reason for the emphasis upon polygamy in the early days of Mormonism. They taught that it was the duty of every man to have as many children as he could because there were millions of spirits waiting for life on earth.\(^3\)

Now that polygamy is not practiced, the emphasis is often placed on having large families, therefore still carrying out the basic purpose of freeing spirits for greater things.

As before stated, this is a very brief statement of the Mormon belief in this area, but this is enough to give the reader a general picture of the doctrine.

**The Disciple Concept**

There is very little basis for comparison of the two concepts of this belief because little has been said about it among the Disciples. The Disciples have always taught the doctrine of an actual Heaven and Hell. They

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\(^1\) Le Grand Richards, *op. cit.*, p. 307.


\(^3\) Thomas & Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 259.
followed the usual treatment given this subject by the mainstream of protestantism. Alexander Campbell pointed to a hell that is everlasting punishment.

This view of hell, as the ultimate prison of wicked men, in which they are to be "tormented day and night forever," is corroborated by another saying of our Lord, which we must place as a seventh argument in confirmation of everlasting punishment. He says to them on his left hand, "Depart, ye cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." The eternal vengeance into which wicked men are driven from the presence of the Lord, was originally, it seems, a place prepared for fallen angels. Now as angels "cannot die," according to the words of the Messiah; and as wicked men are doomed to the same punishment with them, follows it not that the continuance of their torment is the same?1

There is no mention in Disciple doctrine of stages of glory, and it is assumed that there is no such thing as a pre-existent spirit of man before birth as in the Mormon sense.

A Comparison of the Two Concepts

As stated previously, there is little room for comparison of the Mormons and the Disciples in this area. The Mormons arrived at their doctrine through what they claimed was special revelation and therefore it is completely different from anything the Disciples have. Beyond this, they have been led into areas of thinking that most

of the protestant groups have not even discussed, such as the belief in pre-existence of spirits that must have a body and the concept that God and Christ each married, etc., as the Mormons believe.

There is a major disagreement in the area of reward and punishment. The Mormons believe that hell will be a glorious place. The Disciples believe it will be a terrible place.

There are no similarities in the doctrines of man and eternity, in the major concept. The two groups stand about as far apart in this area as it is possible to get.
CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

These have been some of the major doctrines of the Mormons and the Disciples. In some of them we have seen a very marked similarity. Also, we have seen that there are some great differences.

The Disciples have only two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Mormons have four, according to Richards:

We believe that through the atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

We believe that these ordinances are: First, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the Gift of the Holy Ghost.¹

Even though the Disciples do not agree with applying the name of ordinances to all of these, still there is agreement in all of the principles with the exception of the necessity of laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit. The Disciples contend that this comes through obedience at baptism.

Utter spoke of this great similarity and drew an interesting inference that is often made:

¹Franklin D. Richards, op. cit., p. 602.
The rigid insistence upon these saving ordinances makes the Mormon faith something very different from Universalism, and allies it closely with the teaching of Alexander Campbell and the Church of the Disciples. Indeed, it has often been surmised that this part of the Mormon doctrine may have been derived, through Sidney Rigdon or otherwise, from the early preaching of those reformers, then called Campbellites. They insisted upon a return to primitive Christian teaching and to the original form of church organization, and they interpreted the Bible in the same literal way that is characteristic of Latter Day Saints.\(^1\)

This possibility of Rigdon having influenced the Mormon doctrine in the direction of Campbell's teaching has already been mentioned and it is not necessary to labor the subject further at this time.

Shaw pointed out that "Mormon sermons even to this day retain characteristic 'Disciple' marks."\(^2\) This is only an indication of the remarkable similarity of the two groups. This would not be strange in many of the protestant groups but it becomes remarkable as we see the tremendous differences in the Mormons and Disciples and then see the strange similarities in other areas.

From where this writer stands, the answer seems to be obvious: We cannot accept any of the Mormon revelation as it established Mormon doctrine, therefore it becomes this writer's conviction that their doctrine had to come from some other source, such as another religious group. Thus it seems only logical that the two groups are similar.

\(^1\)Utter, op. cit., p. 18.  \(^2\)Shaw, op. cit., p. 82.
in some areas because through various methods, mostly Disciple leaders turning to Mormonism, the Mormons picked up parts of the Disciple doctrine. This is a prejudiced view, but the one that has been reached through considerable study of the matter.

We have covered a vast area in this discussion. Still this has been essential, this writer feels, in order to obtain a clear view of the histories and the doctrines, to make an accurate comparison.

At the risk of becoming trite, it is accurate to say that the Mormons and the Disciples are so near and yet so far apart in both history and doctrine. We have seen many of the reasons for this, stemming out of the backgrounds, the men involved in the movements, and the general religious situations, as well as the scriptures. Still, even as we recognize these, the similarity is indeed remarkable.
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**Articles and Periodicals**


Other Material


APPENDIX

The Articles of Faith of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

1. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.

3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.
6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, viz., apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc.

7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.

8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this (the American) continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

11. We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.
12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.