

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHURCH  
OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-  
DAY SAINTS: FROM THE BIRTH OF  
THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH TO  
THE PRESENT TIME**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760573782

A brief history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: from the birth of the prophet Joseph Smith to the present time by Edward H. Anderson

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**EDWARD H. ANDERSON**

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to the Present Time.

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By EDWARD H. ANDERSON, 1857  
Author of the "Life of Brigham Young," "Spiritual Growth," "The Apostles of Jesus  
Christ," "Conduct, Courage and Success," etc.

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"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a  
kingdom which shall never be destroyed."—Daniel 2:44.

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Published by the Missions of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
in the United States

CENTRAL STATES MISSION—302 S. Pleasant St., Independence, Mo.  
WESTERN STATES MISSION 638 East 7th Ave., Denver, Colo.  
SOUTHERN STATES MISSION—350 Woodward Ave., Atlanta, Ga.  
EASTERN STATES MISSION—273 Gates Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.  
NORTHERN STATES MISSION—2555 N. Sawyer Ave., Chicago, Ill.  
NORTHWESTERN STATES MISSION—810 E. Madison St., Portland, Ore.  
CALIFORNIA MISSION—153 W. Adams St., Los Angeles, Calif.  
MEXICAN MISSION—3531 Fort Blvd., El Paso, Texas, U. S. A.  
CANADIAN MISSION—36 Ferndale Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.  
HAWAIIAN MISSION—P. O. Box 410, Honolulu, T. H.  
BUREAU OF INFORMATION—Temple Block, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Press of Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., Independence, Jackson Co., Mo.

A 31  
1920

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

This little volume, containing a brief outline of the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was first printed in September, 1893, being written, as was its companion volume, "The Life of Brigham Young," at the request of the late Apostle Abraham H. Cannon, to whom, as publisher and patron, local literature must ever remain largely indebted.

To aid the reader in obtaining a clear understanding of the principles of the Gospel, in connection with the history of the people who were instrumental in establishing it, references were freely made to the Doctrine and Covenants containing the revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith for the building up of the Kingdom of God in the last days.

In conjunction with his own experience, the author, disclaiming originality save in the weaving, gathered his facts, in sketching these main outlines of the faith, work, travels and persecutions of the Saints, from a large number of reliable authorities on the subject. Accuracy was aimed at, as well as completeness as far as the limited space would allow.

Two leading aims were kept in view in its compilation, viz.: first, to create an interest in the hearts of the youth of the Church in the marvelous faith, work, toils and sacrifices of the founders of this great, latter-day religious fabric; secondly, to provide a handy medium from which that large class of visitors and other persons, who have neither time nor inclination to read the more ponderous books on the subject, might obtain, from an authentic source, desired information on "Mormonism."

That the design has proved successful is shown by the favor with which the work has been received by the public, to whom this second and revised edition, with six added chapters covering the past decade, is now respectfully presented.

THE AUTHOR.

Salt Lake City, January, 1902.

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## PREFACE TO THE 1920 EDITION.

Many reprints have been made of the 1902 edition of this little book. This, the third edition, has been subject to such revisions as recent events demanded.

A short and very inadequate chapter has been added, covering the wonderful period of growth and development during the seventeen-year administration of President Joseph F. Smith; whereas, the larger treatment which the subject should receive, would merit a volume in itself, to say nothing of the auspicious beginning of the incumbency of President Heber J. Grant.

THE AUTHOR.

Salt Lake City, December, 1920.

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# A Brief History of the Church

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## I.

### FROM THE PROPHET'S BIRTH TO ITS ORGANIZATION, 1805-1830.

#### I. "A Marvelous Work and a Wonder."

With the age of freedom in religion, that followed the flight of Luther from the debauched court of Pope Leo X, came also the age of skepticism—not alone skepticism, but hypocrisy. While the revolution in theology, inaugurated by the reformers, shattered the thought-monopoly which had been concentrated in the pope, it likewise created such diversities of opinion, and so many leaders in religion, that the world of mankind were literally "children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

There was no universally acknowledged head of the Christian Church. It is true that, since the death or martyrdom of the apostles of Christ, God had acknowledged no authority on the earth. All had apostatized from the true gospel, and the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, which Christ had acknowledged or commissioned, were no more to be found, the Christian bishops had departed from the simple ordinances of the Christian religion, and instead had introduced Jewish and Pagan observances, ceremonies and mysteries, for the purpose of gaining friends. For centuries, all Christians—often through compulsion, however—had acknowledged the pope as the vicegerent of God, and had recognized his authority. But the sweep of the reformation broke this power over men. Following Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Cranmer,

arose a hundred leaders in religion, who, disregarding the injunction, "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron," set themselves up as officers in the Church of Christ. The reformation broke the power of popedom, and gave to men the blessed right to private judgment; but, going one step further, the Protestants, like the Catholics, from whom they had emancipated themselves, usurped authority, for nowhere is there a record nor even a profession made, that authority was conferred by revelation from God or the ministration of angels, the only known methods by which it could be done, upon anyone to act in His name.\*

This disregard of authority brought with it a train of many evils, chief among which were hypocrisy, and a service of form instead of a worship from the heart. So continued the condition of the people almost three hundred years, from the reformation to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The Prophet Isaiah foresaw this period and declared of the people of the earth at this time: "Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."\*\*

This "marvelous work and a wonder" which the Lord was to accomplish, was the restoration of his authority unto men, and the establishment and organization of his authorized Church upon the earth, as predicted anciently by the Prophet Daniel, and by John the Revelator:

"As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. . . . And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed:

\*It is said that Roger Williams refused to continue as pastor over the largest Baptist church in this country, because there was "no regularly constituted church on earth, nor any person authorized to administer any church ordinance; nor can there be, until new apostles are sent by the Great Head of the Church, for whose coming I am seeking."—See "Picturesque America," page 502.

\*\*Isaiah 29:13, 14.

and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”\*

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”\*\*

The words of John the Revelator explain how the gospel was to be restored. It was to be done in the same way that God adopted in ancient times, as recorded in the holy scripture, by the visitation of angels and by revelation. Save through these channels, how could Jehovah make known his will to men? As in the days of the apostles, so in modern times—the household of God was to be “built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” Its officers were to be in possession of the gifts and of “the spirit of wisdom and revelation.”

In the midst of all the uncertainty and chaos of opinion, God was to reveal himself, and out of conflict establish peace, out of disorder, union and oneness of purpose, so that, as formerly, there might be “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,” etc.

The beginning of this “marvelous work” was inaugurated in the dawn of the nineteenth century, when God revealed himself personally and by the visitation of angels, to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and chose him to be the leader of the dispensation of the fulness of times, and to be the instrument to introduce the gospel of Christ by authority—to establish and organize the true Church of God in the latter days.

Through that prophet was brought forth the wonderful record called the Book of Mormon—a book which contains a fulness of the gospel as taught by our beloved Savior. More than forty editions of this work have been printed—many thousands of volumes—and scattered broadcast to the English speaking world, while its precious truths have been read by

\*Daniel 2:29, 44.

\*\*Revelation' 14:6, 7.