

Mark H. Forscutt's edition of Jason W. Briggs' manuscript on the early history of the Reorganized Church. "A Condensed Account of the Rise and Progress of the Reorganization of the Church of Latter Day Saints."

Source: The M. H. Forscutt-H. A. Stebbins Letter press book, 1870-1880, pp. 143-173.

Also included are two related letters from M. H. Forscutt, dated January 12, 1872:

1. To Mr. T. B. H. Stenhouse, Esq. p. 174.
2. To Bro. Jason W. Briggs, Cottage, Hardin Co., Iowa. p. 175.

The present whereabouts of the Jason Briggs manuscript is not known.

As to the pagination, please note the following:

1. Forscutt numbered each page consecutively from 1 through 28, in the upper left corner.
2. The letter press book contained page numbers, stamped by machine, in the upper right corner of each sheet.
3. Missing numbers: 144, 150, 151
4. The letter book numbers 143-173 therefore correspond to pp. 1-28 in Forscutt's pagination.

THE HISTORY COMMISSION
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A condensed account of the Rise and Progress of the
Reorganization of the Church of Latter Day Saints.

In order to give an intelligible account of the rise and progress of the Reorganized Church, it will be necessary to glance at the events which transpired subsequent to the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the First President and Patriarch of the church, embracing those which led to the Reorganization.

The death of the President and Patriarch occurred on the 27 day of June, 1844, and wrapped the whole church in deep mourning. When the sorrow occasioned by this sad event had ^{been} so far mitigated as to permit thoughts of a successor to the President to be entertained, it was found that a great diversity of opinion existed upon the question, notwithstanding the great ~~diversity of opinions~~ plainness which seemed to characterize the constitution and order of the church.

The proof of this is found in the fact of many rising up claiming leadership under various pretexts of authority, and all drawing away disciples after them. The Twelve made this claim, by virtue of their being, as a quorum, equal to the First Presidency.--Sidney Rigdon, by virtue of a vision to himself, of which himself was the only witness.--James J. Strang, by virtue of an alleged appointment.--Lyman Wight, one of the Twelve; Gladden Bishop; Charles Thompson, (Baneemy,); James Collin Brewster;

Alpheus Cutler, come into the second rank; while some of still

lesser note arose whose claims were all based upon less tangible grounds, if not altogether fanciful, and in some instances nonsensical ones.

All these contributed to dismember and scatter the church; but not one of them, nor in fact all of them combined were able to induce a majority of the saints to follow them.

According to a statement made by Joseph Smith in 1844, and which may be found in "Ruff's History of Religious Denominations in the United States, page 409, the estimated membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was set down at that time at one hundred and fifty thousand, (150,000.). The Census of 1860 gives Utah 40,125 inhabitants. Deduct from this the number of children under eight years of age, the number of residents not belonging to the church, ~~and~~ the new converts ~~not~~ made in the sixteen years previous, and the probable proportion of this number born in Utah during ^e ~~that time~~ ^{thirteen years} residence of the Utah Mormons there, and the remainder, ~~will~~ embracing all of the original members from the United States and Europe, will not be more than Twenty five thousand. This number comprises by far the greatest number that followed any sect of Mormons, and is more than followed all the others combined. Yet this is not more than about one sixth of the numerical strength of the church at the time of the death of its First President and Patriarch.

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[It follows then, if we would find the great ^{number} ~~body~~ of believers in the latter day work, we must look elsewhere than in any organized body, or faction of the church. And to the inquiry, where are or what became of the upwards of one hundred thousand members who

did not affiliate ~~it~~ with any then existing body of Mormons, there is but this answer; they remained in a scattered or unorganized condition in every land where the faith had been received, accepting as a general rule no leader, but silently, and many of them prayerfully, waiting for some undefined event ~~of~~ which, they had a vague hope, ~~that it~~ would restore the original unity and faith of the church; for both had been sadly marred.

~~Great~~ Numbers ^{of these however,} led by their zeal to promote the faith, joined subsequently with one or other of the several sects of Mormons, and frequently and in many cases, one after another of these sects, but failing to recognize the church in the sect, or "the faith" in their theories, found themselves sooner or later drifted again to find companionship with the silent and waiting multitude.

It is proverbially said that whoever embraces the faith of the Latter Day Saints is spoiled for any other faith. If we accept this proverb as a truthful one, ~~then~~ we have therein a guarantee against the influences of all other proselyting systems, in a general sense at least, and the reasonable inference is that these waiting ones would as a class remain

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among other sects, so far as the peculiarities of these sects are concerned, unsectarianized, seeking, waiting for the church, the faith, to be reestablished by a proper successor of Joseph Smith. Thus isolate in the midst of the multitudes, like the mariner in the fog, they cast anchor and waited for light.

A vague hope was entertained by many of these, and indeed by many affiliated with then existing Mormon factions, and by nearly the entire Utah church, that some great good awaited the saints, to come through the instrumentality of "the seed of Joseph."

/ This hope was rendered active and permanent by what is regarded by members of the Reorganized Church as a Divine impulse in a.d., 1851. On the 18th day of November, of that year, in answer to earnest and long continued supplication to Almighty God, the spirit, calling itself "The Holy Spirit," testified,--"Behold, I, the Lord, have not cast off my people, neither have I changed in regard to Zion; nay, verily, my people shall be redeemed, and my law shall be kept which I revealed unto my servant Joseph Smith Junior, for I am God and not man; and who is he that shall turn one from my purpose, or destroy whom I would preserve? And in mine own due time, I will call upon the seed of Joseph Smith, and will bring one forth, and he shall be mighty and strong, and he shall preside over the high priesthood of my church; and then shall

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the quorums assemble, and the pure in heart shall gather, and Zion shall be re-inhabited, as I said unto my servant Joseph. After many days shall all these things be accomplished."

This manifestation and revelation from which the above is extracted, was received by Jason W. Briggs, then presiding elder in the Beloit (Newark) Branch of the church in Rock County, Wisconsin, and was communicated to the Branch on the ensuing Sunday. ^{in a.d. 1843,} This branch had been raised up originally, ~~by~~ by its then presiding Elder, and though it had tried the claims of several would-be leaders, it now stood in the attitude of waiting, ~~but~~ recognizing William Smith, one of the ~~original~~ original Twelve Apostles, as President, pro-tem., or representative of the rightful heir to the Presidency of the church.

Though William Smith was thus acknowledged president, pro. tem.,

~~He was subsequently~~ owing to the introduction by him of some novelties in doctrine and practise strongly repugnant to the moral sense of the membership, and contradictory to the sacred books, he was ^{subsequently} disfellowshipped by the branch. This was soon followed by similar acts on the part of all the branches in Southern Wisconsin and Northern Ills. which had received and sustained Mr. Smith as representative ^{president}. All these branches had received copies of the above named revelation, and an account of the action of

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the branch at Beloit:. This branch at first stood alone, in hope of the restoration of all that had disappeared in the past seven years; and this hope they expected to realize through the instrumentality of the promised successor from the family of Joseph the Martyr.

The trite saying, "Tall oaks from little acorns grow," will apply in principle here. The humble instrumentalities through which, and the obscure corners in which these agencies for restoration operated; the almost imperceptible effects at first produced; the subsequent deepening and widening sphere in which the reorganizing element moved, laying first and firmly its foundation upon the rock long since formed for the church structure, must all be considered in forming a just estimate of its progress; and how the Reorganization since developed is thus received, it will take its place in history among those events which bear upon their face ^{impress and} the evidences of a Divine supervision.

The first objection of a serious nature urged ~~at~~ against the Beloit Branch to invalidate the foundation for which it stood, was made to its presiding elder, and his answer then has been,

since the answer of the Reorganized Church to the same objection.

It was claimed that, according to Section 51, old edition of Book of Doctrine and Covenants, (Sec 27, new edition,) no one except the First President of the church, who is Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, has a right to receive a

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revelation for the church, and that all others are expressly forbidden by way of commandment.

The answer was that this prohibition was qualified by the following sentence, occurring in the same paragraph as that where the prohibition is found, "and thou shalt not command him who is at thy head and at the head of the church, for I have given him the keys of the mysteries." And as no such "head", as no person holding such authority then existed, it was therefore not in conflict with his own law for the Lord to speak to whom He would; on the contrary, it was in perfect keeping with the history of his dealings with his people in the times of their captivity or disorganized state.

The manifestations of the Spirit in the various gifts, such as prophecy, tongues &c, interpretations of tongues, and visions, more at this time enjoyed in a manner unknown before, and great unanimity prevailed among the brethren.

In the early part of the winter of 1851-2, a council was held by appointment, consisting of Elders J. W. Briggs, John Harrington, and David Powell, ~~and~~ to consider ~~the~~ measures for the spread of the good news. At this council the faith of the brethren was confirmed by the spiritual gifts, and a line of duty and action determined upon. John Harrington and Henry Lowe took a mission

for the winter in the eastern and northern counties of Wisconsin; J. W. Briggs went eastward, visiting the

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branches and the scattered saints within reach, through Walworth, Racine and Waukesha Counties, and David Powell went westward as far as Grant County. Many in these various localities greeted the message borne to them with joy and gladness.

Such was the result of these efforts that, in April, 1852, a Conference was appointed to convene in June. This conference ~~was~~ ^{was} held June 12 and 13. It was apparent that the wished-for light had dawned, for on comparing views upon the vital questions of doctrine, order, faith, and practise, it was clearly manifested that this little band possessed a light and a Spirit unknown to any other of the organizations bearing the name of Latter Day Saints. The following resolution, which was unanimously adopted, will indicate this:--

Resolved, That this conference regard the pretensions of Brigham Young, James J. Strang, James Collin Brewster and Wm. Smith, and Joseph Wood's joint claim to the leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, as an assumption of power in ^{law} violation of the ~~word~~ ^{word} of God; and consequently, we disclaim all connection and fellowship with them."

In naming the principal ones of the various leaders, all others were included in this declaration, and it was intended to define the position at present occupied by

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with the exception that they the Reorganized Church, [^] ~~They~~ looked for a leader rejecting all since the First President, that had then been [^] while the Reorganized Church accepts the ~~Last~~ eldest son of the First President as the one looked for.

also adopted at that conference,
The following resolution, ^ will place this view held by
them in a still clearer light.

"Resolved, That the successor of Joseph Smith Junior,
as presiding high priest ~~of~~ in the Melchisedec
priesthood must, of necessity, be the seed of Joseph
Smith Junior, in fulfillment of the law and promises
of God."

The question of successorship being thus settled, the question
of doctrine was next determined by the following Resolutions:--

"Resolved, That the whole law of the church of Jesus
Christ is contained in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and
Book of Doctrine and Covenants.

"Resolved, That **this** conference believe it to be the
duty of the elders of this church, who have been
legally ordained, to cry repentance and remission
of sins to this generation, through obedience to the
gospel as revealed in the ~~gospel~~ record of the Jews,
the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Book of Doctrine and
Covenants, and not to faint in the discharge of duty."

This re-affirming the doctrine, and going back to the old
landmarks, precluded the acceptance then, and still precludes
the Reorganized Church, ^ ^{from accepting} now ~~from~~ any of the new dogmas, whether
publicly or covertly taught by the various leaders either as new
revelations, or as "Joseph's measures," including polygamy, which

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at that time, as now, was one of the most prominent of the heresies
taught by the various factions--not one of whom at that time but
taught this; however much they might differ on other points, they
agreed on this. The stand thus taken at the first Conference of
the Reorganized Church was an augury for redemption that no other
order could or did claim.

At this Conference a committee of three, consisting of Jason
W. Briggs, Zenos H. Gurley, and John Harrington, was appointed to
write a pamphlet setting forth the views contained in a series of
resolutions passed at the Conference, of which the foregoing are

a part.

This conference must be regarded as the first embodiment of the elements of the Reorganization of the church; yet it had not entered the heart or head of any of those then made instrumental in laying the foundation for the future work of redemption that anything further than mere branch organizations, and a district organizations, could be effected, until the successor should make his appearance. And this event, though confidently expected because of the promise given by revelation, and believed, was still in the future--how far distant none could tell. It was however the expectancy of all, and they resolved to await the good time promised, and meanwhile keep awake to the promise, and try to awaken others.

After considerable labor in the effort to remove the rubbish of seven years accumulation, and ~~it~~ reestablished the old landmarks, the three sacred books, the conference adjourned to meet at Yellowstone Branch, Lafayette Co., Wis., on October 6th; 1852.

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The interval between these two conferences was employed in visiting various localities, and enlisting the sympathies and co-operation of many brethren who had been connected with the various organizations before referred to. By this means quite a large attendance at the October Conference was secured.

The reports of the Elders showed that the interest awakened in the Beloit Branch the November previous, had spread over a wide field, and was becoming more and more intense. This was due to the zeal displayed by the Elders, and to the co-operating influences of the Spirit in giving spiritual manifestations in great power.

At the Oct. Conference, it was established, after considerable discussion of the question, that the one holding the highest priesthood, or the highest office therein, should preside and represent the ~~the~~ true successor as a presiding authority. This step taken, the next consideration was on whom this duty would devolve. The range taken in this discussion reached every office ~~in the office~~ in the church; for it appeared that various ordinations had been received under the different organizations, clearly, some of them, in violation of the law of the church. Some had been ordained Apostles in this way, and such ordinations were declared null and void of authority. Presidents of Seventies, and seventies ordained into quorums higher than seven were declared unauthorized, the law only providing for seven quorums. Bishops not ordained under the hands of the First Presidency were declared illegally ordained. ~~They~~ere were some officers present whose ordinations were declared legal, among them were, High Priests, some Seventies, and some Elders.

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Elder Jason W. Briggs, one of the High Priests, was appointed to preside over the Conference.

The committee appointed by the June Conference to prepare a pamphlet for publication, presented the manuscript, which was read and adopted, and steps were taken to print it under the title of "A Word of Consolation to the Scattered Saints."

[During this session of the Conference, a periodical called "The Seer" published ^{on Aug. 29, 1851} in the interest of the people at ~~SALT LAKE~~, Utah, under the leadership of Brigham Young, made its appearance, containing what purported to be a revelation to Joseph Smith, dated

July 12th, 1843, authorizing him to teach and practice ~~it~~ and establish polygamy, together with elaborate arguments in favor of the new doctrine. This was the first public defense of this new doctrine ever made by any of the Mormon sects, though it is known that nearly all of them held to it under some name or ~~other~~ form.] The followers of Mr. Brewster should, I believe, be excepted only.

This bold step on the part of the Salt Lake Authorities to penetrate the citadel and sanctum of social life, by presenting and printing this revelation claimed to have been given to the martyred Joseph. The polygamists presented this "revelation" in the front, like the late Lexington beseigers pushed the ^{invulnerable} cotton bales before them; they exhibited tact in ensconcing themselves behind it, to say the least of it. But all the efforts to make the principle appear plausible failed to convert, or even to stagger the brethren on whom rested the responsibility, humanly speaking, of bringing forth the future Reorganization of the Church.

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in the winter following

In the pamphlet published ^{by these} Brethren appointed, I* find three pages devoted to an exposure and argument against polygamy. And I quote from page 21, the following:--

"We cannot ~~forget~~ forgo this opportunity to raise our voice against an evil which hath well nigh completed the overthrow of the church, which Sampson-like, hath laid hold of the very pillars of society; ~~and~~ instead of order, it has produced anarchy; instead of union, division; in short, instead of confidence and love, distrust, and hatred. We refer to the system of Spiritual-wifery, taught by Brigham Young; to the plurality doctrines of James J. Strang; and the fouler system taught by Wm. Smith, and his joint occupant called spokesman. These systems, though unlike each other in several respects, are all known as ~~a~~ systems of polygamy, under which they

*originally "we"

themselves take shelter; hence we will not read of them under their proper names, but under the less offensive or semi-legal one of polygamy."

Then follows a condensed statement of the different writers in the Bible and Book of Mormon, and testimonies from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, touching this matter.

I again extract from page 22 of the same pamphlet:--

"We demand of all who have been called Latter Day Saints, Do you believe these things? (The quotations.) If you do not, you ought at once to renounce the name; but if you acknowledge the Book of Mormon and Book of Doctrine and Covenants, or either of them, then know that polygamy is forbidden of God. And this interdict is directed to us."

This outspoken sentiment on this subject at that time,

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indicated clearly what has since proven true in fact, that in the restoration of the church, with its original doctrines, no place ~~will~~ would be found for polygamy.

During the winter of 1852-3, on several occasions, instructions were given by the Spirit in the gift of tongues, and prophecy, and by visions, relative to organizing; but the instructions were not sufficiently well understood. In March, 1853, in answer to the prayers of the church, ^{for instruction in relation to this matter} a revelation was given. This revelation was written at the time, and when the conference met, April 6th, 1853. The question of organization ^{occupied} the attention of the Conference from the first. All were satisfied that something in that direction was required, but what, or how, or when it would be received, was obscure. It had been no part of the expectation of the brethren from the first to organize other ^{than} branches, ~~and~~ advise the branches to meet together in Conference capacity for mutual instruction, and await the coming of the successor; in consequence

of this they had been reproached as "a body without a head." They had canvassed the subject and decided that they had not the authority to organize any further; but when in the course of the conference it was established that the Lord had spoken, and commanded them to organize, giving them the pattern, and ~~not~~ showing them when and how to organize, the commandment was accepted by the conference.

In accordance with the instructions in the revelation, three persons were appointed by the conference, ~~in accordance with~~ viz: William Cline, Ethan Griffith, and Cyrus Newkirk, to select

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seven to constitute a majority of the quorum of Apostles. The following names are the names of those who were chosen:-- Zenos H. Gurley, Jason W. Briggs, H. H. Deam, John Cunningham, Daniel B. Razy, George White, and Reuben Newkirk. On presenting the names to the conference they were all sustained, and ordained by the President of the Conference, a High Priest, and two others. Several ^{were ordained to be} High Priests, and about twenty were ordained and received into the quorum of Seventy.

These transactions awakened considerable interest among the brethren, and gave rise to considerable comment, and in some ~~cases~~ quarters to severe criticism. The re-establishment of the quorums involved several grave consequences which had to be met at every turn, the chief of which were,

Firstly: Authority for such reorganization;
Secondly: Rejection of the original quorums.

The idea of several quorums on the same level, of which but one of an ~~kind~~ order was contemplated by the law, was preposterous. All might be invalid; but all could not be valid. The issue was

involved in the new appointments and had to be met. If the re-organized quorums were valid, then the old quorums were no longer so.

In respect to the question of authority, this was urged strenuously by the members of the Reorganized Church. There had never been any authority for the first organization had not God appointed them, and He who appointed for a specific purpose, could revoke such appointment when the parties appointed failed to fulfil the purpose; and his authority for a new appointment had been given-- his commandment to reorganize being such authority. The logical sequence of this was

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the rejection of the former quorums, for on no other principle could a reorganization of this kind be admissable.

This reorganization affected, the Reorganized Church entered upon its mission, which it understood to be to reassert the faith and doctrines contained in the sacred books, to reclaim the backslider, and to vindicate the character of the Latter Day Work, which had become odious through the evil deeds of its professed advocates. In pursuance of this object, an energetic effort was made to communicate the knowledge of the foregoing ~~eff~~ events to the scattered saints, and considerable additions to the church were the results.

The conference of April, 1854, authorized the publication of a pamphlet entitled "The voice of the Captives." To show the growth of ~~the~~ faith ^{among the members} of the church in the unchangeable character of the law of God, I ~~copy~~ ^{make} the following extract from pages 3 and 4 of this pamphlet:--

"We are told that all Kingdoms have a law. A Kingdom of man has the laws of man; but the Kingdom of God has the laws of God. Where are these laws? In Sections 13 & 18, D. & C. 'Hearken and hear and obey

unto
the law which I shall give you. Ye shall observe the laws which ye have received and be faithful. Behold, the laws which ye have received from my hand are the laws of the church. For verily I say unto you that my law shall be kept on this land! That there may be no doubt as to where these laws may be found, see Sec. 1 par. 2. 'Behold, this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants, and my preface unto the book of my commandments;-which I have given them to publish unto you, O inhabitants of the earth; wherefore fear and tremble, O ye people, for what I, the Lord, have decreed in them shall be fulfilled.'

Then gathered

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together the people: the Prophet, and his counsellors; the Apostles, High Priests, Elders, Bishops, and all the congregation, and covenanted before the Lord to receive these laws and commandments as the doctrine and covenant of their faith; and avouched the Lord to be their God, and to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, commandments and judgments, and to hearken unto his voice. And that the virtue of obedience may fully appear, we are told in Doc. & Cov. par. 8, sec. 7., that 'that which is governed by law, is also preserved by law.'

"Have we been preserved by the law of God or man? Let the vacant court of one Temple and the ruined courts of another answer. Listen to the widow's wail and the orphan's moan, made so in the trackless plains of the west, in disordered flight from the place where their God had said if they would be governed by law, they should ~~be preserved~~ not be moved. We have proven Him by obedience in blessing, and we have proven Him by disobedience in cursing. Well may we put our hand upon our lips and say, "Oh Lord! we have sinned. To us belongeth confusion of face--to our fathers and

princes, and all the congregation, for we have sinned by departing from thy law. We have grown heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than of God. We have grown wiser than our Teacher." We have said 'The law of God sufficeth for our infancy, but with our age we have out-grown it, like all our infantile garments.' This have we done, O Lord, in the midst of thine house, and have not been ashamed, neither could we blush. Other Lord's beside thee have ruled over us, and we have called flesh and blood 'The Lord, our Righteousness.' We have called the doctrine of Balaam thy 'celestial law.' Yea, we have called good, evil; and evil, good; and woe has come upon us, for we have been the victims of blind guides whom thou hast cursed.' "

Though in the organization of the quorums of Apostles, the president of that quorum was ^{then and} thenceforward recognized as the representative only of the expected successor in a presiding capacity, still the temporary character of his presiding authority did not remove the grounds of reproach. Some as in all such cases would charge the representative as ambitious of and designing to, arrogate perpetual authority, while others who believed that he acted only as representative, charged the church still as being a body without a head.

In this year, 1854, some confusion arose, and some departed on the question of re-baptism; some wishing to make it a test of fellowship, a door into the church. After considerable discussion, it was declared a matter of conscience with those coming into the church who had once received a valid baptism. This question has been raised since, and again ~~so~~ decided that re-baptism is a

matter of conscience--it is neither required nor forbidden.

During this and the next year, 1855, the Elders confined their labors mainly to Wisconsin and Illinois; but through pamphlets and letters, their movements thus far were made known, and the expectation they indulged in became wide-spread.

The central locality of the Reorganized Church had been, since 1853, in Lafayette County, Wisconsin, at a place named by the conference of April in that year, Zarahemla--a preparatory stake where the conferences were held. There and in its vicinity, several of the principal Elders resided, and there was the largest branch membership in the church. In was here, in 1856, that the church was instructed by the Spirit to appoint a day of fasting and prayer. In compliance with this instruction, the church assembled in November of that year, and sought to

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know the will of the Lord. The out-pouring of the Spirit was abundant, and the gifts were ~~expt~~ exercised in an extraordinary manner, and in great power. The church was instructed by the Spirit to appoint a Scribe to write a message in behalf of the church to Joseph Smith, son of Joseph the Martyr, and to send the same by the hand of two faithful brethren. Jason W. Briggs was appointed to write the message, and E. C. Briggs and Samuel Gurley were appointed to carry the same to Joseph Smith, who resided near Nauvoo, Ills.

Since Mr. Smith connected himself with the Reorganized Church, parties interested in other factions and fearful of his influence, have asserted that he was induced to join the church by fraudulent measures, bribery, &c. The truth upon this point will be less difficult to ~~describe~~ understand, when it is known^{firstly,}

that the message referred to was the only communication sent to him from the Reorganized Church, and this by direction of the Spirit, and secondly, that this communication remained unanswered by him until in 1860 he attended the conference held at Amboy, Ills, in person, and voluntarily offered himself to the church. The communication, however, will speak best for itself. The following is a copy:--

"The Church in Zarahemla, Wisconsin,

"To Joseph Smith:

"Our faith is not unknown to you, neither our hope in the regathering of the pure in heart enthralled in darkness, together with the means to the accomplishment of the same; viz., that the seed of him to whom the word was first committed should stand forth, and bear the responsibility as well as ~~we~~ wear the crown of a

wise master builder; to close up the break, and combine in one a host, who though in captivity and sorely tried, still refused to strengthen the hand of usurpers. As that seed to whom pertains this right and heaven-appointed duty, you cannot be unmindful nor indifferent. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob covenanted with them and their seed; so the God of Joseph covenanted with him and his seed, that his word should not depart out of his mouth, nor out of the mouth of his seed, nor out of his seed's seed until the end come. A zerubbabel in Israel art thou. As the nail fastened in a sure place, so are the promises of God unto thee, to make thee a restorer of Zion, to set in order the house of God. And the Holy Spirit that searcheth the deep things of God, hath signified to us that the time has come, for through fasting and prayer hath the answer ~~come~~ from God come unto us, saying, 'Communicate with my servant Joseph Smith, son of Joseph the Prophet.' Arise! Call upon God, and be strong, for a deliverer art thou unto the Latter Day Saints; and the Holy Spirit is thy prompter. The Apostles, Elders, and saints who have assembled with us, have beheld the vacant seat, and the seed that is wanting. And like Ezra of old with his brethren, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, have we sent faithful messengers to bear this our message to you, trusting that you

will by their hands, notify us of your readiness to occupy that seat, and answer to the name and duties of that seed. For this our prayers have been offered up without ceasing for the last five years. We are assured by the same Spirit that that it has testified to us has ~~testified~~ signified the same things to you. Many have arisen, perverting the work of the Lord. But the good

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and the true are, throughout the land, waiting the true successor of Joseph the Prophet, President of the church and of the High Priesthood. In our publication sent to you, we have shown the right of successorship to rest in the literal descendants of the chosen seed, to whom the promise was made, and also the manner of ordination thereto. We cannot forbear reminding you that the commandments as well as the promises given to Joseph, your father, were given to him and to his seed. And in the name of our master, even Jesus Christ, as moved upon by the Holy Spirit, we say to you, Arise in the strength of the Lord, and realize these promises in executing these commandments.

"And we, by the grace of God, are thy helpers in restoring the exiled sons and daughters of Zion to their inheritances in the Kingdom of God, and to the faith once delivered to the saints. Holding fast that which is good, and resisting ~~that which is~~ evil, we invoke the blessings of the God of Israel upon thee, and upon all saints, for whom we will ever pray."

"Zarahemla, Wis., Nov. 18th, 1856."

The two brethren charged with the delivery of the above message set out immediately, as instructed, and performed that duty. It was expected by many, that the response to the message would be the immediate appearance of Joseph, the eldest son, to take the place of his father; for until now, it had not been fully determined in the minds of the brethren which of the four sons would be called forth to that dignity.

Five years had elapsed since the testimony had gone

forth, that "in mine own due time will I, the Lord, call upon the seed of Joseph Smith, and bring one forth."

It was believed that the Lord had now called upon that seed through this means and it was hoped that He would at once bring him forth; but whether this would follow, or there should be further delay, it was generally believed that the preparation for this had been accomplished on the part of the church, and that it was relieved in a measure from any responsibility on that point, for all had been done to this end that had been required, according to the light and ability given, and nothing remained but to wait the full period of that "due time." Some however could not wait, but became discouraged and turned away. Others fell into inactivity from the same cause; but the body of the church continued to labor for the emancipation of those who had fallen under the influence of the different organizations, now regarded as factions.

The three following years were devoted to this work, chiefly in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa. In Western Iowa, there resided a large number of the old saints who had fallen off from the Utah migration, and this region opened up an extensive field of labor. Elders Wm. W. Blair and E. C. Briggs were sent thither in 1859, by the conference held at Amboy in June of that year, and were successful beyond a precedent in convincing those who had stood still for years, as well as those who attached themselves to some Mormon sect, that the position of the Reorganized Church, imperfect as that Reorganization was, was a tenable one, and that the reproach of being a headless body was rather a compliment than otherwise. To say the least of it, it exonerated

the leading men in the Reorganized Church from the charge of being heady, which the leaders of all the factions might have more successfully fastened upon them.

Many branches of the church were organized, and a large number were thoroughly aroused to the subject of the restoration of the church in its original order and purity. The scales which had before prevented their seeing the real character and consequences of the new tenets, taught by the Utah authorities, fell off, and they were again clothed in their right minds. Thus prepared, together with the brethren in Wisconsin and Illinois, they felt a great anxiety for the more complete organization anticipated from the beginning of the movement.

This feeling proved to be a precursor of the long=looked=for event; for at the conference of April, 1860, held at Amboy, Lee Co., Ills., Joseph Smith, eldest son of Joseph Smith the Martyr, presented himself to the church, accompanied by his mother, now Mrs Bidamon, and they were both received into fellowship with the church by the voice of the General Conference. Joseph was ordained under the hands of the rightful authorities, by direction of the General Conference, to the Presidency of the High Priesthood, and was received as President of the Church.--Thus was filled the vacancy caused by the death of the Martyr in 1844.

A High Council was organized. Israel L Rogers was ordained Bishop of the Church, and numbers were added to the different quorums of the church.

These events gave the greatest satisfaction to the church, and to the scattered saints in sympathy with the church in all

quarters, and a new impetus was given to the work.

A monthly periodical had been established, and the first number was issued the January previously, under a committee of publication consisting of William Marks, Zenos H Gurley, and Wm. W. Blair. Isaac Sheen had been appointed Editor of this periodical, called "The True Latter Day Saints' Herald."

It had been hoped by some, and feared by others, that when the legitimate successor should ~~have~~ taken his place ~~that~~ at the head of the church, ~~that~~ some changes might occur in reference to some of the positions which had been taken. Some, but half=converted, had hoped that the social=religious tenet, Polygamy, would receive favor in some form; but no such changeful or temporizing spirit showed itself. On the contrary, the feeling against polygamy became intensified by the speech and action of the President, and all that had been affirmed against it by the Reorganized Church was fully endorsed by him.

In the month of June following, a conference was held at Council Bluffs, Iowa, where the very large attendance showed the success of the previous year in that region, and the increasing interest felt for the work.

From this time those who had before sneered at "the headless body," were compelled to change their tactics, and invent new modes of assault. One of these was that Joseph,

being young and inexperienced, had been deceived, over=persuaded, bribed &c. This method of accounting for his connection with the Reorganized Church was and still remains a favorite one with many of the Utah people. Brigham Young assured his followers that "Joseph was under the influence of his mother, and she was led

by the devil; but that in due time the Lord would feel after him". How long he was to be led by the devil in order to be prepared for the Lord's purpose was left to conjecture.

It soon became apparent to the various factions that still remained, for many of them had ceased to exist, that there was a system and a power in the Reorganization that they had no means of withstanding; and from this period it was insisted that debate and discussion were unprofitable, and that the chief duty should be what had long been taught by them to obey counsel unquestioningly.

The work now extended rapidly in all directions, and in 1862, missions were appointed to the British Isles, Utah and California, which were entered upon the following year. Jason W. Briggs, Charles Derry, and Jeremiah Jeremiah, were associated in the mission to Great Britain, E. C. Briggs and Alexander McCord to Utah and California.

It was the first duty of these missionaries to approach the old saints, then under the influence of the Utah leader, and the performance of this duty was made as difficult as those in the interest of that faction could make it.

The two brethren sent west, on their arrival in Utah, waited upon Brigham Young, informed him of the object of their presence, and requested the use of the Tabernacle, or some hall or public place in which to deliver their message to the people. It was on this occasion that Brigham Young said "Neither in this city, nor throughout the Territory, where I have influence, shall a house be opened," following his remark with a minace of personal danger.

Means were however found to communicate their message, and

soon meetings were openly and regularly held in the city, and throughout the settlements. The presence of U. S. Troops at Camp Douglas close to the city, contributed to the personal safety of the missionaries, backed by the bold and outspoken promise of protection promised by General P. Edward Corner. Notwithstanding therefore that every impediment possible and politic was thrown in the way of the missionaries by the Utah ecclesiastics, their labors were eminently successful; and in the city and many of the settlements converts were made, and branches formed under the authority of the Reorganized Church.

The same difficulties of access were met in the British Isles, though, thanks to the better government of England than that of Utah, Church and State though both were in fact no personal danger to life was experienced in Great Britain. Thirteen branches were organized in the latter country in 1863-4, mainly in the midland counties of England and in South Wales.

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In 1864, E. C. Briggs, pursuant to his appointment, went to California, and there established the work which has since spread over the Pacific slope.

In the year 1863, Wm. Marks, was called by revelation and ordained a ^{coun} counsellor to Joseph and) a) member of the quorum of the First Presidency.

The present numerical strength of the Reorganized Church is probably about eight thousand, and its official members are

First Presidency: Joseph Smith, William Marks,
Apostles, Jason ^W Briggs, Wm. W. Blair, Samuel
Powers, Reuben NewKirk, E. C. Briggs,

and Josiah Ellis.

Bishops. Israel L. Rogers, James Anderson, &
David M. Gamet.

High Priests, Isaac Sheen, Joseph Parsons, Presidents,
with a quorum of 44 members.

Seventies. Archibald W. Wilsey, C. G. Lanphear, Wm.
D. Morton, George Rarick, Presidents, with
a quorum of 49 members.

Elders. 1st Quorum, Elijah Banta, John S. Patterson,
Presidents, with a quorum of 95 members.

Elders, 2nd Quorum. David H. Smith & Phineas Cadwell,
Presidents, with a quorum of 96 members.

*

There is also connected with the church, but not under its control, an order for the purchase of land, and locating of the poor thereon, called the

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"First United Order of Enoch." This is in the hands of the Stockholders, who annually elect their officers. The capital stock of the Order is \$44,000 held in shares of \$100 each, each share entitling the holder to one vote. The present officers of the Society are Elijah Banta, (President,) David Dancer, (Vice-President,) I. L. Rogers, (Treasurer,) Alex. McCord, D. M. Gamet, Calvin Beebe, & Phineas Cadwell^{who} constitutes the seven members of the Board of Directors for the present year.

*Mark H. Forscutt is General Church Secretary. Isaac Sheen General Church Recorder. Jason W. Briggs, General Church Historian. [the above appeared in the left margin in the original manuscript]

The real character of the Reorganization has not been understood by those who reproach it as a sectarian church because of the few new revelations promulgated by it. Its work so far has conformed strictly to its name. No new doctrines have been taught, nor have any new practices subversive of the first and primary object of the organization of the Church of Christ on earth been indulged in. A steady and unchanging purpose to restore to the church its original order, to assert the primitive faith, to gather the fragments of a scattered people--in short, to reorganize the Latter Day Work, recognizing the measure of progress justified by experience, sound morality, and a Christ-like walk. It seeks to avoid alike the errors of the enthusiast and the follies of the innovator. It is decidedly conservative without being anti-progressive. It is based upon the Law of God, and justified by the law of the land.

Jany 12th [187]2

T. B. H. Stenhouse, Esqr.

Dear Sir:

I forward you this day twenty eight pages of Manuscript, embracing a condensed account of the Rise and Progress of the Reorganized Church.

I trust it will not have arrived too late for your use. It is based on and chiefly given in the language of our Church Historian, Elder Jason W. Briggs. I shall be happy to hear from you and learn of the progress of your work.

Things in Utah seem to be assuming strange garbs; what the ultimatum will be, it is hard to foresee, but that the voice of the Great American people will not be heard in vain, we may safely hope. That no evil will come to the innocent, and that only the guilty may suffer, is my earnest wish.

Kind regards,
Your friend

Mark H. Forscutt.

Jany 12th [187]2

Bro Jason W Briggs

Cottage, Hardin Co., Iowa

I have copied your Condensed history of the Reorganized Church, and made some few grammattical changes, and some additions on points that Mr. Stenhouse desired to be informed upon. I did not sign your name at the bottom; but told Mr. Stenhouse in a letter of transmittal that the history was based on an account by you, and was chiefly in your language. If you desire your name to be signed to it for his use, I will so advise him on receipt of a letter from you. My reason for withholding it was the conspicuous part you play ~~it~~ in the history, would, I feared, give to him, and to others, if it be published, an idea concerning your writing it that I am certain would be incorrect. If am blameable for withholding your name, give me the blame, and I will supply the omission.

Your Brother,

Mark H. Forscutt