

eighty years, cost our church tens of thousands of members. Let us be careful lest in any part of the church a similar calamity be brought again upon us.

### The Mormon Delusion.\*

It is an old story now, yet I have a distinct recollection of my first introduction to a "Latter Day Saint." It was in the autumn of 1845. We were on the Mississippi. The water was low. Several times in the course of our voyage, although our steamer drew only twenty-seven inches, it became necessary to discharge her cargo of lead into lighters to enable her to pass the rapids. At one of these shallow points, we were detained over a Sunday. It was immediately *opposite Nauvoo*, which was at that time, the rendezvous of the Mormons. In the boat that ferried us across the river there was a Mormon lady of pleasant address, from whom we obtained a history of the sect and an account of their then circumstances, in terms that left no doubt that she was a devout disciple of the late Joe Smith—the founder, prophet, Priest—and President of the new sect, who had paid the last debt of nature just a year before this time. He had been arrested on charges of sedition, forgery, swindling, and grossest immorality. Fearing that he might escape the gallows, an indignant mob broke into the prison and murdered him. In the estimation, however, of our informant, Joe had been enrolled in the noble army of martyrs. She related the persecutions her co-religionists had endured for conscience sake at the hands of the Gentiles—their meek submission, and their unshaken trust in God. The whole community were under the ban. They had received notice to leave the country. They had prepared parched corn and dried beef in abundance to support the colony of 50,000 souls in their westward march through the wilderness to parts unknown, where they hoped to find a happy resting place.

The city of Nauvoo was planned upon a grand scale, with broad avenues and spacious squares, but the only buildings worth men-

tioning were the Temple and the prophet's palatial mansion. The temple was an imposing structure of hewn stone, 128 feet long, 88 feet wide, and 168 feet to the top of the tower. It had been built entirely by voluntary labour, was valued at \$300,000, and it would require \$250,000 more to finish it according to the plans: and although they were going away, they were working hard to complete it. "that it might be ready for their Lord's occupation when he should come to reign in His glory on earth," and that they expected would be very soon. Of the internal fittings, the most noticeable was the baptismal font—a mammoth stone basin of oval shape, supported on the backs of twelve white kine. We were in time for the morning service and listened to a number of addresses from the elders. Much that was said would have passed for sound doctrine in a Presbyterian or Methodist church, so guarded and plausible were their words in public it was difficult to realize that they were the dupes of a system of unparalleled turpitude.

The Mormon delusion, it may be remembered, was hatched in the State of Vermont about sixty years since. Joe Smith was born there in 1845. The family were by occupation, "diggers of hidden treasures," and skilled in the use of "divining rods." At the age of fifteen, Joe was already notorious as a wild, unscrupulous rascal. In 1827, when he would be twenty-two years of age, he gave out that he had a revelation from heaven which led to the discovery, he averred, of some golden plates concealed under ground and covered with mysterious characters. A so-called translation of the hieroglyphics was incorporated into "The Book of Mormon," which contained, besides scraps of history, some peculiar doctrines borrowed from a semi-religious romance, and extracts from the Holy Scriptures. The glaring imposture "took," and gave rise to the new religion, which was formally organized 6th April, 1830, in Kirtland, Ohio, where a temple was erected, a store opened, and a bank established. The bank failed. Joseph and Company were pronounced swindlers and treated by the indignant creditors to coats of tar and feathers. They removed to the State of Missouri, where an extensive settlement was made. For a time they carried every thing before them, but, eventually, in 1839, they were driven out,

\* A full account of Mormonism and its Delusions is given in the May number of *The Gospel in All Lands*.