

The Restoration of the Gospel—Its First Principles—Accumulating Evidences of the Truth of the Book of Mormon

Discourse by Elder Orson Pratt, delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, November 27, 1870.

We have assembled ourselves together this afternoon to partake of bread, and also the contents of the cup, to witness before the heavens that we remember the crucifixion, death and sufferings of our Savior; that we are willing to keep his commandments and determined to be his followers and obey him to the end of our lives. We have also assembled to speak and to listen concerning those things that pertain to our peace and welfare, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.

We, as a people, called Latter-day Saints, are a very peculiar people, not only in the eyes of one another, but in the eyes of the world and also in the eyes of God and all the heavenly host. We are a peculiar people in some respects—namely, we believe that God has spoken and sent an angel from the heavens, as we heard this forenoon, and, by new revelation has established his kingdom or Church upon the earth, according to the predictions of the ancient prophets. In this respect we are very peculiar.

We are also peculiar in another respect. Instead of remaining where we embraced this Gospel among the various nations, we have left our native lands and have emigrated to the interior of North America, and have founded settlements in the Rocky Mountains under the most unfavorable circumstances. In this respect, again, we are peculiar.

There is another respect wherein this people are very peculiar. We not only believe in the Jewish Bible—the Old and New Testament—but we also believe in the ancient American Bible, called the Book of Mormon; which no other people do believe in, and hence, on this latter point, we are regarded as very peculiar.

We might point out a great many peculiarities relating to this people; but I do not know that it is necessary to mention all the differences between this people and the religious Christian denominations of the age. I think those already named are sufficient to render us a distinct people from the rest of mankind. We believe that God has fulfilled that which was spoken of this forenoon, that was predicted by the mouth of the revelator John: that he has sent an angel from heaven, and by the ministration of this angel he has revealed the everlasting Gospel in all its ancient purity and fulness to be proclaimed to every nation under heaven. And let me dwell on this subject a little while—the restoration of the everlasting Gospel by an angel, for this is a peculiar doctrine and the Latter-day Saints are the only people on earth who believe in it.

Let us now inquire, for a few moments, in what manner this Gospel was restored by an angel. Did it come to us verbally—from his mouth, or was there a revelation communicated and written containing this everlasting gospel? We testify that by the ministration of this angel, sent from heaven, in fulfillment of John, an ancient Bible, kept by ancient prophets, was brought to light—the Bible of ancient America. Of course it has a little different name—we call it the Book of Mormon. This Bible contains the everlasting Gospel. But in order to know whether it does contain this everlasting Gospel, it may not be amiss for me to state, in a very few words, what the everlasting Gospel is.

I would state that the everlasting Gospel must be the same that was published in the Eastern Continent some eighteen centuries ago, as recorded in the New Testament. We and our forefathers have had a record of that Gospel from ancient times unto the present; but a record is one thing and the power and authority to administer it is another. They are entirely distinct, as much so as the history of a good dinner enjoyed in ancient days is distinct from the partaking of that dinner in our day. The history of such an event will not satisfy a man's hunger, any more than the mere record of what the everlasting Gospel is will confer the authority to administer its ordinances. We may read, when we are very hungry, about the three or five thousand eating the loaves and fishes; but our appetite would still remain unsatisfied. It is very good to think that somebody else was fed and had their hunger satisfied; but it does us no good, so far as satisfying the cravings of our own appetites is concerned. So with regard to the New Testament containing the everlasting Gospel. None could embrace that Gospel, from the simple fact that none were authorized to administer its ordinances. After the Apostles and righteous men of ancient days, who

held this authority, were killed off, you might read the Gospel and relate over to one another its various principles and ordinances, but you could not embrace them.

That everlasting Gospel required a man to be baptized for the remission of his sins. That is very important; and everybody who believes in God, and in Jesus Christ will acknowledge that the sins of men and women should be forgiven. God ordained in the everlasting Gospel that his creatures should be baptized for the remission of their sins; but how could I or any other person be baptized for the remission of sins if no man on the earth had the authority to administer the ordinance of baptism? Would God forgive my sins through my faith and repentance, without being legally baptized in water? Is there any promise in this everlasting Gospel that we can receive forgiveness of sins unless we connect with our faith, baptism by immersion in water? No, the everlasting Gospel, as preached in ancient times, contained no such promise. Read the record of it in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where it was first promulgated after the commission was given to the ancient apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature. They were commanded to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they received power to preach that Gospel and administer its ordinances to the people. They did so, and on the Day of Pentecost they received this power. The Holy Ghost came upon them; the whole house, where they were sitting was filled with cloven tongues, like fire, and sat on each of them; and they rose up before a large multitude of people, many thousands in number, and proclaimed the everlasting Gospel. They informed the people that that despised being, called Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, was both Lord and Christ. They proved it effectually by appealing to the prophetic writings. After having proved this fact and having convinced the people, by sufficient testimony exhibited before their minds, that he was really the Lord and Savior, that he was the Great Redeemer, and had come in fulfillment of the law of Moses to be offered as a sacrifice, the people were pricked to their hearts; they were convicted, or in other words, faith had come by hearing the evidence presented before them, and they were convinced that Jesus was really and truly both Lord and Christ; and seeing the importance and necessity of repenting of their sins, they cried out in the anguish of their hearts: "Men and brethren what shall we do?" As much as to say: "We see, by the testimony which you have presented before us that we have crucified the Savior, that he was that being that the law of Moses typified; we see that we have committed a great sin, that our nation has transgressed, and that we are under great condemnation. Now, how shall we be saved, can you inform us how we can receive the remission of our sins?" The answer was ready. Peter said unto them: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the Holy Ghost; for the promise is to you, and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." These were the first principles of the Gospel of the Son of God; these constituted in part, so far as its elements were concerned, the everlasting Gospel that was to be brought by the angel in the latter days and committed to the inhabitants of the earth.

You will notice that, on the Day of Pentecost, faith was not sufficient for the remission of sins; neither were faith and repentance; neither were faith, repentance and prayer sufficient to obtain the great blessing of the remission of sins. There was a sacred ordinance connected with these principles by which only the remission of sins was promised—namely, baptism by immersion in water.

After having been born of the water and justified from all their sins they had the promise of the Holy Ghost—that is, the birth of the spirit, as well as the birth of the water. And this baptism of the Holy Ghost, like all other blessings that the Lord has promised unto the people, came through the administration of an holy ordinance. What was that ordinance? The hands of the servants of God had to be laid on the baptized believer—the penitent soul who had received the first principles of the Gospel; for God committed to his servants whom he called to preach in ancient days, the power not only to administer the Gospel in word, but also its ordinances and spirit.

I know that there are many at the present day, in Christendom, who will ask "What is the use of these outward ordinances? What particular benefit is it for me to go and be immersed in water, or to have hands laid upon me for the gift of the Holy Ghost? They are only outward ordinances." In explanation, let me say to the congregation that the blessings which God has promised in his word, generally come through some act required of the creature. When the man with the withered hand was healed, the Lord did not say I command you to be healed, without any act on his part; but he commanded him to stretch forth his hand. That, apparently, was an impossibility, for his arm

was withered, powerless; and he might have thought that it was impossible for him to perform the act required of him. But an exercise of faith was required on the part of that man—something connected with the mental faculties, by which the blessing of healing might be secured.

So it is in regard to the blessing of the remission of sins. God, in order to prove that we have faith, requires us to be baptized for the remission of our sins. If we do this he stands ready to impart forgiveness to us. So in regard to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He is willing to grant this spirit to those who are willing to be obedient; but if they are unwilling to receive this simple act of the laying on of hands, considering it nonessential, God will not be willing to pour out his spirit; if they will not obey so simple an ordinance he will withhold his spirit. This, then, was the everlasting Gospel, so far as its first principles are concerned, as preached in ancient days.

Now, then, let us consider this Gospel, so far as the power of it is concerned. We have shown you how to obtain the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now, what are the powers of this Holy Ghost, as promised to the believer? For we have seen that the promise is not a limited one. When the apostle made the promise on the Day of Pentecost he said, "the promise is to you,"—a large multitude; and it is not only to you, but "to your children," meaning the then rising generation; and not only to "you and your children" but "to all afar off"—meaning the distant nations of the earth, and to all that "the Lord our God shall call," every human creature on the face of the earth that has the Gospel preached to him has the promise of the Holy Ghost, if he or she will yield obedience.

Now what are the powers of the Holy Ghost? What are its gifts and blessings? How are we to know when we receive the Holy Ghost? I will mention the Scriptural account of the blessings and gifts that pertain to the Holy Spirit. You read the 12th chapter of 1st Corinthians and you will have a description of the various powers and gifts of the Holy Ghost. We there learn that God gave to every man, that is, every man in the Church, the demonstration of the Holy Spirit to profit withal. Says Paul, "We are all baptized into the same body by the same spirit." That is, they were not baptized into half a dozen or a hundred different bodies, or denominations of people, called Christians; but they were all baptized into the same body by the same spirit, and all made partakers of the gifts of that spirit, enjoying the blessings and powers of the same. The members constituting the body of Christ are diversified: and being filled with the Holy Ghost it operates in various ways. "To one," says Paul, "is given through the spirit the word of wisdom; to another is given by the same spirit, the word of knowledge; to another is given faith by the same spirit; to another the gift of healing; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy, to another the discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these work after the one and the selfsame spirit, severally as he will."

Here then we see what it is that constitutes the body of Christ, or in other words his Church. First, those principles that I have named—faith, repentance and baptism for the remission of sins; then the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost; then, when the spirit falls upon the Church, it diversifies all these gifts that are named throughout the whole body of the Church. This agrees with the promise that Jesus made when he gave the great, last commission to his apostles to preach the Gospel in all the world to every creature. On that occasion he made certain promises to every creature that should dwell on the earth. Said he, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned; and these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out devils." Now, notice, this promise was not exclusively made to the apostles, they were the ones who received the commission to go and preach the Gospel; but the promises that I am now repeating were made to all persons in the world that should believe that Gospel they preached. They who believed should not only have the gift of salvation conferred upon them, but, "these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues; and if they take up serpents, or drink any deadly thing they shall not hurt them, and they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

These are the gifts of that ancient Gospel—the powers that pertain to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, promised to every believer in the world. These were the powers that were remarkable in the Church of the living God, and which constituted that Church the body of Christ.

Now, we will inquire where has this body of Christ been during the last seventeen hundred years? Has it existed among the Greeks or Roman Catholics? Or has it existed among the Protestant denominations for the past two or

three centuries? No; these gifts have been banished from the earth for several centuries and the universal cry in the religious world of Christendom is, that "These gifts were only intended for the first age of Christianity." But if these gifts are part of the Gospel, you do them away and you do away with the Gospel. Let me quote a passage to prove that these gifts were to remain among the true believers so long as true believers should be on the earth. We have already quoted one passage to prove this, which is to be found in the last chapter of Mark, where all believers in the four quarters of the earth are promised that certain signs should follow them. Another passage you will find in the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, which says that when Jesus ascended up on high he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, pastors and teachers. All these various gifts that I have quoted were given unto men when Jesus ascended up on high.

What was the purpose for which they were given? Were they given, as the Christian world say, merely for the sake of establishing the Gospel, and when that was thoroughly established they were no longer necessary? Is this the language of the ancient apostle? Hear what he says—They were given for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ—the Church. Now, if they were given for these three special purposes, let us inquire whether they are needed for these purposes at the present day? Is the work of the ministry needed now? "O, yes," all denominations will tell you that the work of the ministry is needed now. Well, recollect that, according to the words of the apostle Paul, these gifts were given for the work of the ministry. You take away these gifts, and how can there be a ministry? There can only be a false ministry—only those who have no power of God with them—a ministry that God has nothing to do with. They may go and preach, but their preaching is as powerless as the preaching of the heathen priests.

Another purpose for which these gifts were given was for the perfecting of the Saints. Can Saints be perfected now, any more than in the days of Paul, without the gifts of prophecy, revelation, visions, the ministrations of angels, tongues, the interpretation of tongues, healing, wisdom and knowledge by the power and spirit of God? If they can be perfected without these gifts then we have a new Gospel, and not the everlasting Gospel spoken of by the ancient apostle. But it seems that mankind, at the present day, have so fallen into tradition, and have preached a Gospel without its gifts so long, that I have no doubt there are thousands of them who really believe it, and believe that God will acknowledge their Gospels to be divine, and acknowledge their Churches to be his Church. It is the greatest piece of foolishness that could possibly be conjured up in the minds of men to suppose that the Church of the living God could be here without inspired prophets and apostles in it! How could Saints be perfected? Has God altered the Gospel or changed the pattern of things that is recorded in the New Testament? Has he predicted that the time should come when the Saints should no longer need the gifts to perfect them, or that they should be perfected by the learning and wisdom of man? If he has introduced, or designs to introduce, any such order of things he has not told us anything about it, but has left us entirely in ignorance on the subject. If his people are to be perfected by learning, or by men studying years and years, pouring over the theology of the day, if anything of this kind is intended to perfect the children of men, then I don't read the Scriptures aright; for I am told in the Scriptures that God gave these gifts specially, because we cannot be perfected without them. They were given, says Paul, for the edifying of the body of Christ. O, how much the Christian world seem to be edified at the present day! If they can hear a minister use very flowery language, a great deal of oratory, and bring into his subject, as it were, all the various parts and points of logic and rhetoric, their ears are tickled, and they feel that they are wonderfully edified, but it is a false edification. The edification the Scriptures speak of are those miraculous gifts that Jesus gave when he ascended up on high. Without them the world is liable to be deceived and carried away by every wind of doctrine that is incorrect; and Paul tells us that they were given for the edifying of the body of Christ until we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That is, they were never to cease, they were never to be done away until the Church arrived at that period when they should no longer look through a glass darkly, but see face to face, and become immortal and be exalted to his presence; then these gifts would no longer be necessary. The gift of healing will no longer be needed when we are all immortal; there will be no need of the gift of tongues or interpretation when all have one language.

Besides being designed to bring the Saints to this state of perfection these gifts were also intended to prevent the

Church from being carried about by every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and their cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive. You take a people who have not these gifts, and you will see them carried about by every wind of doctrine. One leaning to the Methodist, another after the Baptists, another after the Presbyterians, and another after this sect and another after that. They have not the gifts necessary to keep them in the unity of the faith; and not being kept in the unity of the faith, not having the power to call upon God and receive revelations from him to guide and direct them in regard to doctrine and principle, they are overcome by the power and persuasion of the children of men, by their sleight and cunning craftiness until they are overpowered and dragged away, as it were, into every species of wild enthusiasm, the doctrines of men. So much for the Gospel as taught by holy and inspired men in former days. Now for another part of my subject.

I told you that God had revealed an ancient Bible—the Bible of ancient America, by the ministration of an angel, sent forth from heaven. What does it contain? A record of this same Gospel that I have already named. “But,” says one, “we have a record of that already, in the New Testament: what is the use of another record of it?” In answering that question, I will ask another. When Matthew had written his Gospel, what was the use of Mark writing one afterwards; and when Matthew and Mark had each written the Gospel what was the use of Luke writing it; and when these three had written it what was the use of John the Revelator writing another record of it? And so we might go on and say, after Matthew, Mark, Luke and John had written, why should God reveal to us another Bible containing the same Gospel? I will tell you—It is because God intends to give just as many witnesses to the children of men as seems him good. If we have the testimony and witness of the Jewish nation on the eastern continent to that everlasting Gospel, is it not reasonable that God should also give us the testimony of the inhabitants who formerly lived on the great western world. Let us reason together on this subject. The infidel says, “Why was the Lord so narrow in his feelings that he confined his operations to that little spot of ground called Palestine? Why didn’t he reveal his will, requirements and laws to other nations?” This is one of the arguments of the infidel, and it is very good so far as it goes. The infidel sometimes happens to hit upon some truth. I would say the same. God had a people here in ancient America, there is no mistake about this, and all who want to know for certain in regard to this Continent being settled, just read the history of its antiquities—read the works of Stevens and Catherwood and many others, on the great and mighty ancient cities whose ruins are seen on various parts of this Continent, especially in Central America and the northern part of South America. Ruins, too, that not only speak of a former civilization of the inhabitants who dwelt there, but which show that they were a people who understood the arts—understood building magnificent cities, temples and great palaces. They were a very different people from the present aboriginal inhabitants of the Continent.

Now if God had a people living on this Continent ages and ages ago, would it not be reasonable that he should speak to them as well as to the people of Asia? Reflect upon it for a few moments! Why should God leave the great western world out of the plan of salvation? Has he not declared himself to be an impartial being? And if he is impartial would he not remember those who are of the same blood? We are all created by the same Creator; the inhabitants of the four quarters of the earth descended from the same parentage; they are all of the same blood, and consequently they are immortal beings, and have souls to be saved. Then was it not needful, in order to be saved, that the fulness of the Gospel should be revealed to the people of the West as well as to the people of the East? Now, reason, independent of anything else, would say that it would be perfectly Godlike for him to reveal himself to the people of ancient America as well as to the people of the eastern world; that they might know about Jesus, and the atonement that he wrought out, and be made partakers of the same gifts and blessings as the children of God in the eastern lands. This is a reasonable conclusion to come to.

And, again, if God did reveal to the people of this continent the plan of salvation, showing that he is an impartial being, why should it be thought incredible by the learned or by any reflecting person that he should bring these revelations to light, especially when he had promised, according to what you heard this forenoon, to send an angel with the everlasting Gospel to be preached to every people, nation and kindred under the whole heaven? Why not bring to light, by the ministration of an angel, the record of the Gospel that was preached here on this western hemisphere?

Perhaps some may say that we have neither witness nor testimony, save it be the Book of Mormon, and the living

witnesses whose names are attached to that book, that the people of this continent know anything about God or about revelation. But let me inform such persons that they are mistaken. Only a few years ago—in 1835, thirty-eight years after the plates of the Book of Mormon were taken out of the earth by Joseph Smith, one of the great mounds in the State of Ohio was opened, near Newark, in Licking County. It was a very large mound: it measured, before they began to cart away the stones and dirt, 580 feet in circumference, and was from forty to fifty feet in height. After they had carted away from this mound several thousand loads of dirt and stones, for the purpose of canalling or fixing a canal, they found on the outer edge near the circumference of the base of this mound, just within the circle, several smaller mounds, built entirely of fire clay, that had the appearance of putty. When digging into one of these smaller mounds they came to something that had the appearance of wood, and after having removed the upper surface of it, they found a trough, and in that trough several metallic rings, probably the ancient coins of the country. They also found that the interior trough had been lined with some kind of cloth, but it was in such a state of decomposition that only the least bit of it would hold together, not even a piece as large as your thumb nail. There was also some human bones in this trough and a lock of fine black hair. Underneath this trough, still further down in the fire clay, they found a stone, and when it was taken out they found that it was hollow and that there was something inside of it. They found by inspection that it had been cemented together with hard cement. With considerable exertion they broke the stone in two. It was oval, or elliptical in form. They separated it where it was cemented together, and in the inside they found another kind of stone on which was engraven the Ten Commandments in the ancient Hebrew. This stone was immediately sent to Cincinnati, where many learned men saw it and they declared the inscriptions were in ancient Hebrew, and translated the Ten Commandments. The stone was nearly seven inches long, nearly three inches wide, and almost two in thickness. On one side of it there was a depression, and in this depression was a raised profile, the likeness of a man clothed with a robe—that is, carved out of the stone, with his left side partly facing the beholder, and the robe and girdle upon his left shoulder; he had also a turban on. Over his head was written in Hebrew, Moshe, which is the Hebrew name for Moses. They therefore represented this person, thus carved out, as Moses. Around about him, that is on the various sides of the stone, were written the Ten Commandments in ancient Hebrew.

Now what does this prove? It proves that the inhabitants of this country were acquainted with the revelations of heaven—those given to Moses; and if they understood these would they not naturally look forward to the coming of the Messiah? Would they not look for the Lord to raise up such a being, which their law indicated by types? And when that being came is it to be supposed that he would leave the inhabitants of America ignorant concerning that event? By no means. He would not forget them. And this record—the Book of Mormon, gives us an account of that very people.

Let me here state that I have seen this stone; with my own eyes I have seen the Hebrew engravings upon it; and though many of the characters were altered in shape from the present Hebrew, yet I had sufficient knowledge of them to understand and know how to translate the inscription. This stone was sent to the New York Ethnological Society, and while there, by the politeness of the Secretary of the Society, I had the pleasure of seeing it. Another mound was opened in the same county, in Ohio, and out of it were taken stones with other Hebrew inscriptions; and in 1860 and 1865 there were several of these antiquities exhumed with Hebrew characters on, and one with characters that were not Hebrew, and which the learned could not translate, showing that the people of this continent not only understood the Hebrew, but some other kind of an alphabet. This book—the Book of Mormon, informs us that the Lord brought the colony to this country six hundred years before Christ, and that he brought them from Jerusalem. Was there anything connected with these ancient characters that would indicate such a great antiquity? Yes. The Hebrew, since six hundred years before Christ, every learned scholar knows, has been greatly altered in the shape of its characters. It now has square characters, with vowel points; that is, the form of the Hebrew characters now is entirely different in many respects from the ancient characters, such as are found on coins and engravings lately exhumed in Palestine. Moreover since the period that colony was brought to America, not only have the forms of the Hebrew characters been changed, but some fourteen different new characters have been introduced. Now, the stones taken from these mounds, on which the Ten Commandments were engraved, had none of these new characters, which shows that the inscriptions were of a more ancient date than the modern Hebrew. Still further. The Hebrew as it now stands, has a great many of what are termed final characters that it did not have six hundred years before Christ. You do not find these characters on these stones that were taken out of

the Ohio mounds. All these circumstances prove, pointedly, the great antiquity of the people who formed these mounds and wrote the characters on these stones.

The Book of Mormon informs us that they understood the Egyptian as well as the Hebrew. They kept many of their records in the Egyptian character as well as the Hebrew character. That book also informs us that Jesus, after he was crucified in Jerusalem, appeared on this American continent, and commanded the people to do away with the law of Moses which their fathers were in possession of and kept; and he introduced the everlasting Gospel in their midst; and he commanded them to write it on the plates, from which this book was translated. Thus you see that this is a record of the everlasting Gospel, as Jesus, himself, administered it to the people of this continent eighteen hundred years ago, that is, after his resurrection from the dead, and after he had finished his ministry in Jerusalem.

On what part of this continent did Jesus appear? He appeared in what is now termed the northern part of South America, where they had a temple built, at which place the people were gathered together, some twenty-five hundred in number, marveling and wondering at the great earthquake that had taken place on this land, which had destroyed so many cities, &c., and the great darkness that had overshadowed the land, which was a sign given them by prophecy concerning the crucifixion of Christ. They were marveling and wondering about it, and while they were talking over it, nearly a year after the resurrection of Jesus, they heard a voice in the heavens, and casting their eyes heavenward they saw a man descend out of heaven, clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them, and told them he was Christ, about whom their prophets had written; and that he had been crucified for the sins of the world. He then choose twelve disciples from amongst them, and administered his Gospel unto them.

Thus you see that when we testify that God has fulfilled that saying in the 14th chapter of Revelation, that he would send an angel having the everlasting Gospel to preach to all people, nations and tongues on the earth, we have something tangible, something contained in the form of a revelation; it is not a mere verbal message by the voice of an angel, but an entire record, a sacred history of the western world, of one half of our globe, detailing the wars of the people of this continent, the same as the Jewish record contains the history of the wars and doings of the Jews on the eastern continent. God has brought this forth and confirmed it to others by the ministration of holy angels. Joseph Smith was not the only one, but there were three men besides him to whom the Lord sent his angel, clothed in glory, who exhibited the plates before their eyes after they had been translated, and commanded them to bear record of it to all people, nations and tongues. They have given their testimony in this book. These witnesses I am well acquainted with, as well as with Joseph Smith. He also exhibited the plates to eight other men. Thus we have twelve witnesses in all, four of whom saw the angel, and the others saw the plates and the engravings thereon and handled them; and their testimony is also recorded in the book to go to all people, nations and tongues under the whole heavens.

And having revealed this book, and it having been translated by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost—the same gift and spirit which enabled Joseph Smith to interpret the language of this record by the use of the Urim and Thummim; I say, having done this, the Lord commanded his servants to organize his Church, and in obedience to this commandment they gathered together on the 6th of April, 1830; and while thus gathered together the Lord God spake unto them, and commanded them after what order his Church and kingdom should be organized. It was then organized, and it has continued to receive acquisitions from that day until this, and has rolled forth among many nations and kingdoms; and the people have been gathered out from those nations here into the midst of these mountains in fulfillment of ancient prophecy.

God Almighty has spoken, he has given commandment in relation to the organization of this kingdom. He has sent his angel and restored the Gospel; he has given commandment for his servants to gather out his elect from the four quarters of the earth unto one place. He has given commandment to prepare his people for the great day of the coming of the Son of God in the clouds of heaven. And we have gone forth and labored diligently from that day to this to establish the kingdom of our God. We have succeeded, so far as time will permit, in gathering up a great people to these mountains. Here they must become acquainted with the Lord more fully; here they must become sanctified before the Lord of Hosts; here they must learn to be more obedient in keeping the commands and counsels of God, or he may withhold from them the sacred blessings and gifts which he heretofore bestowed so

bountifully upon them. Here the Saints must become acquainted with those celestial laws which are calculated to exalt them into the presence of God, and into the fulness of his glory. Here, you Latter-day Saints must be prepared to carry out and fulfill his purposes in the last days pertaining to the redemption of the desert, that joy and thanksgiving may be offered up in all parts of it in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, which has often been sung by the Christian world—"The Lord shall comfort Zion, he shall comfort all her waste places, make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." You here see the beginning of the fulfillment of this ancient prophecy. Isaiah in his 40th chapter also says, "Zion shall go up into the high mountains." Zion in the high mountains! Zion in the midst of the great American desert is beginning to redeem it and make it blossom as the rose, making it like the garden of Eden, that joy and thanksgiving and songs of praise and prayer and gladness may ascend up from all her habitations and settlements throughout the length and breadth of this desert, and thus the prophecies will be fulfilled. Amen.