

The Latter-Day Kingdom of God—Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon—External Testimony

Discourse by Elder Orson Pratt, delivered in The Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, April 10, 1870.

It has fallen to my lot to speak to the congregation this afternoon, and I humbly hope and trust that, through your faith and prayers, I may be assisted by the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, in speaking to your edification; and I ask my Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, that He will pour out upon me that Spirit which giveth utterance and enlighteneth the understanding, that I may be able to edify all who hear me.

Forty years have passed away since the Church was organized. We held Conference here on Wednesday last, in commemoration of that eventful period in the history of our race, for it is a period that we consider very eventful in our history and in the history of the world; and we have no doubt in our own minds that the Lord looks upon it in the same light, for He is interested more than any other person possibly can be in the salvation of the human family. And as He has set times in His own mind for the performance of His own purposes, He no doubt chose the 6th day of April, 1830, as the set time for the organization, or the beginning of an organization or kingdom that should have no end.

All the governments which have hitherto had a place on our earth, excepting those now in existence, have had an end. Human governments have been very changeable in their nature. The Lord has raised up a nation here and a nation there, a kingdom here and a kingdom there, and He has suffered them to live and flourish for a few centuries, and some, perhaps, even for one or two thousand years; then He has caused them to pass away. But He spoke to His ancient servant, who is called Daniel, whose prophecy is written in this book (the Bible), and said that in the latter days He would set up a government or kingdom which should have no end. This government will differ from all preceding governments set up from the Creation down to the period of its establishment. Daniel says it shall become universal and shall cover the whole earth. He calls the citizens of that government Saints. He beheld that the stone cut out of the mountain without hands should roll forth and become a great mountain and fill the whole earth, and that all earthly governments, kingdoms and empires should become like the chaff of the summer threshingfloor, and no place should be found for them; while the stone that was cut out of the mountains should have dominion over the whole earth, and the Saints of the Most High should have dominion under the whole heaven.

Now there will have to be a beginning to that work. The Lord will not make such a wonderful revolution as the one I have named, all in one day, or in one year. Jesus made his appearance on the earth in the meridian of time, and he established his kingdom on the earth. But to fulfill ancient prophecies the Lord suffered that kingdom to be uprooted; in other words, the kingdoms of this world made war against the kingdom of God, established eighteen centuries ago, and they prevailed against it, and the kingdom ceased to exist. The great beast that John saw made war with it and prevailed against it, and human institutions, without prophets or inspired men, usurped the place of the ancient kingdom of God. But God has promised that the latter-day kingdom shall stand forever. Though the heavens and earth be wrapped together as a scroll and pass away, yet the kingdom that was to be set up in the latter days will have no end, but will prevail among all people under the heavens and will have dominion for one thousand years. After that, when the earth passes away, the kingdom will be caught up; it will not perish, be annihilated or overcome, but be caught up into the heavens while the earth is undergoing its last change; and when the Lord shall resurrect the earth, the same as He will our bodies, and make it a new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness, He will then bring down out of Heaven to the new earth this latter-day kingdom, with all the former kingdoms that He has built up in other dispensations, and they will stand forever, for the new earth will never pass away.

The destiny of all governments established by human wisdom is to pass away. The great nation of the United States, one of the best governments ever organized by human authority on the earth, so far as our knowledge goes, must pass away in many of its features. The only way for safety to the people of the government of the United States is to repent of their sins, turn away from all their iniquities, receive the Gospel of the Son of God and

become citizens of that kingdom which is to endure forever; then all the great and glorious principles incorporated in this great republic will be incorporated in the kingdom of God and be preserved. I mean the principles of civil and religious liberty, especially, and all other good principles that are contained in that great instrument framed by our forefathers will be incorporated in the kingdom of God; and only in this manner can all that is good in this and in foreign governments be preserved.

The time will shortly come when thrones will be cast down and empires will fall; and all republics and empires will eventually fall and become like the dream of a night vision—they will vanish away; but the kingdom of God will grow, flourish, spread abroad and become stronger and more powerful, until its King shall come in the clouds of Heaven, crowned in all the glory and power of his Father, bringing the celestial hosts with him, to sit upon his throne in Jerusalem and also in Zion, to reign over his people here on the earth for the space of a thousand years, before the destruction of the earth.

This is what we believe; and it is the sincere belief and faith of the Latter-day Saints that we are in that kingdom. It is true that our King is now absent: he is in the heavens. But we expect him again; we look for him and he will come in his own due time. The day when he will come he has not revealed to any of the inhabitants of the earth, neither will he do so, for the Lord has told us in a certain revelation, recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, that no one should have it revealed to them; but this much God has revealed—that this kingdom which He has organized on the earth has been organized preparatory to the day of the coming of our Lord from the heavens. Hence in organizing this kingdom He has restored all the essential characteristics of His kingdom in its embryo, or its beginning: such as inspired men, inspired prophets, inspired leaders, called by revelation to act in different positions.

Now there is something very peculiar indeed in setting up the kingdom of God in regard to the time. I told you in the commencement of my remarks that the Lord generally had set times to accomplish His purposes. It can be reasonably inferred, according to the revelations that we have in the Book of Mormon, that God organized His kingdom, precisely to a day, 1,800 years after the crucifixion. Of course we do not learn this directly from the Book of Mormon; but we learn enough there of data on which to found a calculation. We learn not only from this book, but also from the antiquities of the Jews, from the New Testament, from historians and from some of the Mosaic rites that Jesus was crucified about the time of the Passover, and that happened some time after the vernal equinox; and that 1833 years had passed from the time of the birth of our Savior before the organization of this latter-day kingdom.

The way we come at this is by the account given in the Book of Mormon. We find that the ancient Israelites on this continent had a sign given of the exact time of the crucifixion and a revelation of the exact time of the Savior's birth, and according to their reckoning, they made him thirty-three years and a little over three days old from the time of his birth to the time that he hung upon the cross. There is no doubt that the year of the ancient Israelites, who inhabited this continent, differed a little in length from our years; for they probably reckoned their's somewhat after the manner of the Jews, at Jerusalem, and the Jews had formed their reckoning from the Egyptians, among whom they dwelt some four hundred years. The Egyptians reckoned three hundred and sixty-five days to the year; but the ancient Israelites on this continent, according to the records of the early Spanish historians, did not consider that three hundred and sixty-five days made up a full year, and hence at the end of every fifty-two years they added thirteen days, which is equivalent to adding one day every four years, the same as we do. If such were the reckoning of the ancient Nephites, then thirty-three years and three days of their time had passed away between the time of the Savior's birth and crucifixion. Now these thirty-three years and three days would, according to our reckoning, lack five days of thirty-three years. When we come to trace back all these authorities, we find that this very day, on which I am speaking, would be the close of the year, and that tomorrow, the 11th day of April, would be the anniversary of the very day on which Jesus was born; and the 6th day of April the very day on which he was crucified precisely eighteen hundred years prior to the organization of this Church.

I have made mention of this, not bringing all the evidences and proofs that might be advanced, but merely to show, in a very brief manner, that God has a set time to perform and accomplish His work, and that the commencement of the organization of His kingdom took place eighteen centuries after the time that the Savior

groaned and suffered on the cross.

There are a great many, of course, in the world, who disbelieve this record which is received as divine by the Latter-day Saints. A great many do not believe that the Book of Mormon is true, and the reason they do not believe it is because they never have examined the evidences. I consider that there are some evidences, that never have been sufficiently put forth before the public, to prove the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, quite as strong as those which have been adduced. We have often referred to the Old Testament to prove that a work of this nature was to come forth in the latter days. The ancient prophets have spoken of it in many places, sometimes under the term of a book. Speaking of the manner in which it should be translated, you will find it referred to in the twenty-ninth chapter of Isaiah. It is referred to in other places as sticks, written upon, one for Judah and one for Joseph, that should be united together by the power of the Lord in the latter days preparatory to His coming. In other places it is referred to as truth which, in the latter days, should come out of the ground, and that, at the same time, righteousness should come down out of Heaven, and that this should be a preparatory work for the salvation of Israel and for the coming of the Lord.

But we will pass over all these Scriptural evidences, and name one which, perhaps, our Elders themselves have not dwelt upon to any very great extent to prove the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

This book, the Book of Mormon, informs us that the time of day at which Jesus was crucified, I mean the time of day here in America, was in the morning; the New Testament tells us that Jesus was crucified in Asia in the afternoon, between the sixth and ninth hour according to the Jews' reckoning. They commenced their reckoning at six o'clock in the morning, and consequently the sixth hour would be twelve o'clock at noon, and the ninth hour three o'clock in the afternoon. Jesus, from the sixth to the ninth hour, in other words from twelve o'clock to three, was hanging on the cross. Now the Book of Mormon, or the historians whose records it contains, when relating the incidents that transpired at the time of the crucifixion—the darkness that was spread over the face of the land, the earthquakes, the rending of rocks, the sinking of cities and the whirlwinds—say these events occurred in the morning; they also say that darkness was spread over the face of the land for the space of three days. In Jerusalem it was only three hours. But the Lord gave them a special sign in this country, and the darkness lasted three days, and at the expiration of three days and three nights of darkness, it cleared off, and it was in the morning. That shows that, according to the time in this country, the crucifixion must have taken place in the morning.

Says one, "Is not this a contradiction between the Book of Mormon and the New Testament?" To an unlearned person it would really be a contradiction, for the four Evangelists place it from twelve to three in the afternoon, while the Book of Mormon says in the morning. An unlearned person, seeing this discrepancy, would say, of course, that both books cannot be true. If the Book of Mormon be true the Bible cannot be; and if the Bible be true the Book of Mormon cannot be.

I do not know that anybody ever brought up this objection, for I do not think they ever thought of it. I do not think that the Prophet Joseph, who translated the book, ever thought of this apparent discrepancy. "But," says one, "how do you account for it being in the morning in America and in the afternoon in Jerusalem?" Simply by the difference in longitude. This would make a difference of time of several hours; for when it would be twelve at noon in Jerusalem it would only be half-past four in the morning in the northwest part of South America, where the Book of Mormon was then being written. Seven and a half hours difference in longitude would account for this apparent discrepancy; and if the Book of Mormon had said the crucifixion took place in the afternoon we should have known at once that it could not be true. This is incidental proof to learned or scientific men that they cannot very well reason away, and especially when the instrument who brought forth the Book of Mormon is considered. It must be remembered that he was but a youth, and unlearned; and, when he translated this work, I presume that he was unaware that there was any difference in the time of day, according to the longitude, in different parts of the earth. I do not suppose that Joseph ever thought about it to the day of his death. I never heard him or any other person bring forth this as confirmatory evidence of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon; I never thought of it myself until years after Joseph's death; but when I did reflect upon it, I could see the reason why the Lord, through His servants, has said in the Book of Mormon, that the crucifixion took place in the morning.

But we will pass over this and will say a few words in regard to the object of this great work. The Lord has brought forth the Book of Mormon in order that all the nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples on the face of the earth may be warned of the great events which are about to take place. This book contains prophecies which affect every nation under Heaven, prophecies that will be fulfilled on their heads. Can we read the future of this great American nation—or great republic? Yes, we can learn a great many features within its pages concerning this nation and government that we never should have learned without its aid or the spirit of revelation. From it we learn that two great and powerful nations formerly dwelt on this continent. One nation, or rather the colony which founded it, came from the Tower of Babel soon after the days of the Flood. They colonized what we call North America, landing on the western coast, a little south of the Gulf of California, in the southwestern part of this north wing of our continent. They flourished some sixteen hundred years. When they first colonized this continent from the Tower of Babel, the Lord told them if they would not serve Him faithfully, but became ripe in iniquity, they should be cut off from the face of the land. That was fulfilled about six hundred years before Christ, when they were entirely swept off, and in their stead the Lord brought a remnant of Israel, a few families, not the ten tribes, but a small portion of the tribe of Joseph. He brought them from Jerusalem first down to the Red Sea. They traveled along the eastern borders of the Red Sea for many days, and then bore off in an eastern direction which brought them to the Arabian Gulf. There they were commanded of the Lord to build a vessel. They went aboard of this vessel and were brought by the special providence of God across the great Indian and Pacific Oceans, and landed on the western coast of South America. This was about five hundred and eighty years before the coming of Christ. Eleven years after the Lord brought this first colony of Israelites from Jerusalem, He brought another small colony, headed by one of the sons of Zedekiah, a descendant of King David. They left Jerusalem the same year that the Jews were carried away captive into Babylon, were brought forth to this continent and landed somewhere north of the Isthmus. They wended their way into the northern part of South America. About four hundred years after this the two colonies amalgamated in the northern part of South America and they became one nation.

The first colony brought with them the Jewish Scriptures, on plates of brass, containing an account of the Creation and the history of their nation down to eleven years before the Captivity, or six hundred years before Christ. These brass plates were kept among them during the period of their righteousness, and were preserved by the hand of the Lord. The second colony that came from Jerusalem came without the Scriptures, and having no copy of the sacred writings they soon fell into wickedness. In four hundred years time they disbelieved in the being of a God, but uniting with the other branch of Israelites they were converted. Their language had become much corrupted, but through their conversion their language was restored in a partial measure by means of the records which were possessed by the other colony.

About forty-five years before Christ a very large colony of five thousand four hundred men, with wives and children, united themselves together in the northern part of South America, and came forth by land into North America, and traveled an exceedingly great distance until they came to large bodies of water and many rivers, very probably in the great Mississippi Valley. In the next ten years numerous other colonies came forth and spread themselves on the northern portion of the continent and became exceedingly numerous.

You may inquire, "Did all these different colonies have the Scriptures?" Yes. "How did they get them?" They had a great many scribes in their midst. The Book of Mormon informs us that they had not only the Scriptures which they brought from Jerusalem, but those given by the living prophets among them; and that a great many copies were written and sent forth into all of these colonies, so that the people in all their colonies were well acquainted with the law of Moses and with the prophecies of the prophets in relation to the first coming of our Savior Jesus Christ.

"But," some may inquire, "have you any external evidence to prove what you are now saying?" I think we have. Thirty years after the Book of Mormon was put in print, giving the history of the settlement of this country, one of the great mounds south of the great lakes near Newark, in Ohio, was opened. What was found in it? A great many curiosities, among which were some copper pieces, supposed to be money. After digging down many feet, and carrying off many thousand loads of stone, they at length found a coffin in the midst of a hard kind of fire clay. Underneath this they found a large stone that appeared to be hollow; something seemed to rattle inside of it. The stone was cemented together in the middle, but with some little exertion they broke it open, when another stone

was found inside of it, of a different nature entirely from its covering. On the stone taken from the inside was carved the figure of a man with a priestly robe flowing from his shoulders; and over the head of this man were the Hebrew characters for Moshe, the ancient name of Moses; while on each side of this likeness, and on different sides of the stone, above, beneath, and around about were the Ten Commandments that were received on Mount Sinai, written in the ancient Hebrew characters. Now recollect that the Book of Mormon had been in print thirty years before this discovery. And what does this discovery prove? It proves that the builders of these mounds, south of the great lakes in the great Mississippi Valley in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, New York, etc., must have understood the Hebrew characters; and not only that, but they must also have understood the law of Moses. Otherwise how happened it that they should write on this stone the Ten Commandments almost verbatim as they are now contained in King James' translation of the Bible. It proves that the builders of these mounds were Israelites, and that their illustrious dead, buried in these mounds, had these commandments buried with them, in accordance with the custom of many of the ancient nations, especially the Egyptians, who were in the habit of consigning their written sacred papyrus to their great tombs. In Egypt many of these ancient manuscripts have been exhumed and, in many instances, pretended to be translated. So the Israelites followed the customs of these Eastern nations, and buried that which they considered most sacred, namely, the Ten Commandments, thundered by the voice of the Almighty in the midst of flaming fire on Mount Sinai in the ears of all the congregation of Israel.

I have seen that sacred stone. It is not a hatched up story. I heard tell of it as being in the Antiquarian Society, or rather, as it is now called, the Ethnological Society, in the City of New York. I went to the Secretary of that Society, and he kindly showed me this stone, of which I have been speaking, and being acquainted with modern Hebrew, I could form some kind of an estimate of the ancient Hebrew, for some of the modern Hebrew characters do not vary much in form from the ancient Hebrew. At any rate we have enough of ancient Hebrew, that has been dug up in Palestine and taken from among the ruins of the Israelites east of the Mediterranean Sea, to form some kind of an estimate of the characters that were in use among them; and having these characters and comparing them, I could see and understand the nature of the writing upon these records. They were also taken to the most learned men of our country, who, as soon as they looked at them, were able to pronounce them to be not only ancient Hebrew, but they were also able to translate them and pronounced them to be the Ten Commandments. This, then, is external proof, independent of the Scriptural proofs to which I have alluded, in testimony of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

Now, our modern Hebrew has many points; it has also many additional characters not found in the ancient Hebrew. These additional characters have been made since these colonies left Jerusalem. Do you find on these ancient writings any of these modern characters that have been introduced during the last two thousand four hundred years? Not one. Do you find any Hebrew points representing vowels? Not one; and all the new consonants that have been introduced during the last two thousand four hundred years were not found upon this stone to which I have referred, showing plainly that it must have been of very ancient date.

Five years after the discovery of this remarkable memento of the ancient Israelites on the American continent, and thirty-five years after the Book of Mormon was in print, several other mounds in the same vicinity of Newark were opened, in several of which Hebrew characters were found. Among them was this beautiful expression, buried with one of their ancient dead, "May the Lord have mercy on me a Nephite." It was translated a little different—"Nephel." Now we well know that Nephi, who came out of Jerusalem six hundred years before Christ, was the leader of the first Jewish colony across to this land, and the people, ever afterwards, were called "Nephites," after their inspired prophet and leader. The Nephites were a righteous people and had many prophets among them; and when they were burying one of their brethren in these ancient mounds, they introduced the Hebrew characters signifying "May the Lord have mercy on me a Nephite." This is another direct evidence of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, which was brought forth and translated by inspiration some thirty-five years before this inscription was found.

But I said I would tell you some of the objects that the Lord had in view in bringing forth this sacred record. It is in order to prepare the people for the day of His coming, in order to establish the true Church and kingdom of God upon the earth, with all its ordinances, gifts, powers and blessings, that the people might have the old, ancient

religion, even the fulness of the blessings of that Gospel that was preached eighteen hundred years ago.

Another object that the Lord had in view was to gather His people out from all nations before the coming of the great and terrible judgments which are pronounced in this ancient record of the Nephites. God has said, concerning the nation which should inherit this land in the latter days, when this work should be brought forth, if they would not repent of their sins and hearken to the servants of God who should be sent forth among them, if they would reject this divine record which He should bring forth by His power, if they would fight against His Church and His Zion, that when they were fully ripened in iniquity they should be cut off from the face of this land. And for this reason He would gather out from their midst His people and assemble them in one.

This is all predicted in the Book of Mormon. And remember this was in print before the organization of the Church took place. The Church was organized on the 6th of April, 1830, and consisted of six members only; but the Book of Mormon was in print before that. How did Joseph Smith, if an impostor, as he is represented to be by a great many of the world, foretell events that have been taking place during the past forty years? How could he know that this book would be received beyond his own neighborhood, or ever extend beyond the limits of the State of New York? How did he know it would go beyond the limits of this continent and across the ocean and spread forth among many nations? "Well," says one, "he might have guessed it." Yes, but guesses are very uncertain indeed. Many people may conjecture, and think that such and such things will be the case; but when it comes to enumerating particulars in regard to the future, if a man is not inspired of God, how liable he is to fall into ten thousand errors!

Now this book predicted, not only the spread of this work among this people or nation, but also that it would go forth to all people, nations and tongues under the whole heavens. Forty years only have passed away, and how much of this has been fulfilled already! This book has been translated into eight different languages and spread forth upon the islands of the sea—the Sandwich Islands, the Society Islands, Australia, New Zealand, Hindostan, and has gone forth to the nations of Europe and has penetrated to almost every nation under heaven in the course, only, of forty years.

Has there been any gathering, according to the predictions of this book? For it not only predicts the organization and rising up of the kingdom of God in the latter days when it should go forth, but it also speaks of the great gathering together of His people. Has this been fulfilled? What do I now see before me? Several thousand people listening to me in the midst of one of the most frightful deserts of the North American continent; that is, it was frightful, so much so that Fremont and others could not traverse it, with any degree of safety, unless a large company was with them; and even, with all the means he had at his command, Fremont could not travel through these deserts without losing a great many of his men. It was a parched up, dry and sterile country, and it looked as though an agricultural people never could possess it with any degree of advantage. This was the description given by those who explored a small portion of this country before the Latter-day Saints settled it. But what do I now see? Not only this large congregation now before me, but as I travel to and fro in the Territory I see four hundred miles of desert reclaimed, and over one hundred towns, cities and villages incorporated and organized, cultivating the earth, and numerous flocks and herds being raised by peaceable settlers. Who are these settlers? Those who believe in the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon; those who believe that Joseph Smith was a true prophet, and thus have fulfilled his predictions. Is it not another testimony in favor of the divine authenticity of this record when we see things transpiring that, to all natural appearance, never could have transpired? What did our enemies say when this book was first printed? "O, it is only destined for a year or two; two years at longest will see the end of 'Mormonism.'" By and by, when two years had passed away, and they began to see that their prophecies were failing, they concluded to extend the time for the extinction of "Mormonism," and they would say, "Watch five years more, and 'Mormonism' will have an end." Why it was so inconsistent in their opinion that God should again speak from the heavens, and have inspired men on the earth; that He should restore all the gifts of the ancient Gospel; that He should send an angel with the everlasting Gospel in fulfillment of the predictions of John the Revelator and the testimony of many of the ancient prophets. It was so foreign to their minds that any such prophecies should be fulfilled in their day, that they predicted that this work would have an end in five years. That was the way the natural man viewed the matter.

But God, who can foresee all events among the children of men, had His eye fixed on the gathering of His children before the Church was organized, and He predicted that they should come out of every nation under Heaven. Not only from the settled portions of the Gentile nation, but they should be brought forth out of the midst of that Gentile nation, just as we have been.

If you want to learn particularly concerning that prophecy, read the saying of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon, when he descended in the northern part of South America, soon after his resurrection, and ascension to heaven. He descended in the sight of a large congregation of two thousand five hundred men, women and children, a little south of the Isthmus, at a place where they had built a temple. After making his appearance in their midst, he taught them many things, and showed them the wounds in his hands, in his feet and in his side. In his instructions on that occasion he commanded them to do away with the law of Moses, so far as the ordinances, sacrifices and burnt offerings were concerned, and he commanded them to receive the Gospel which he taught them. After he had done all this, he commenced to prophesy to them, and his prophecies are in this record; and one of them has been fulfilled during the last forty years. He said he would bring forth their gold plates, which they then had in their midst. He declared that the Father should bring them forth unto the Gentiles in the latter days. The prophecy says, "If the Gentiles will not receive the fulness of my Gospel which shall be contained in that book, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fulness of my Gospel from among them." These are the words of Jesus, as recorded in this book.

Has this prophecy been fulfilled? How could the Lord have brought the Saints from among the inhabitants of the great nation of Gentiles, called the United States, any more effectually than He did twenty-three years ago when He located us in these mountains? Was there any other part of this continent on which this prophecy could have been so effectually fulfilled? Nowhere. We did not come here altogether of our own accord, that is, all of us did not; some few did, because they understood the mind and will of the Lord in regard to the gathering of the Saints from among the Gentiles; but a great many were so attached to their farms and homes in the East that they had to be driven away before they would come. It was not indeed a pleasurable thing to any of us, only to these who understood the mind and will of God in relation to the matter. The Lord brought us some twelve hundred miles from the settled portions of the United States, and planted us in one of the most wild and isolated regions on the face of the whole continent.

How completely were the words of Jesus fulfilled! "If the Gentiles in that day do not receive the fulness of my Gospel, which shall be translated from the Record, beheld, saith the Father, I will bring my people, my Priesthood, my Gospel, and my Saints from their midst." Twenty-three years that prophecy has been fulfilling, and I think it has been accomplished to the very letter.

What next has the Lord predicted? He has predicted that if the Gentiles do not repent in that day, "Behold, saith the Father, I will sweep them from the face of the land, as I did the nation that I brought from the Tower of Babel. So shall they be swept off from the face of the land, when they are fully ripened in iniquity."

I do not know when this will be fulfilled; but we are all the time in expectation. The Lord does not generally do things in a hurry. He gives the people plenty of time to ripen themselves in iniquity, if they will not repent. It does not take some people a very great time to ripen, for you know this is a fast age, and things are done in a great hurry now-a-days, and when they get on the downward course, into all manner of wickedness, they seem to rush with lightning speed into all the corruption that can be named. What a difference between our fathers, who lived forty years ago, and the present generation! Everyone can see it. The rising generation are proud, haughty, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; fighting against His people; given to whoredom and prostitution and all manner of iniquity and abominations; guilty of all the abominations named by the apostle that should characterize the false churches of the latter days, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. That is, denying the gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy, revelation, the ministering and discerning of spirits. All these things were denied when the Book of Mormon came forth. Of course the devil saw that it was not policy, with all the Scriptures staring them in the face, and all the Latter-day Saint Elders quoting these Scriptures

to show the necessity of the gifts, to keep them denying these gifts; hence he introduced them under the name of Spiritualism. As soon as the Book of Mormon came forth, the counterfeit then spread like the counterfeit gifts exercised by the old magicians of Egypt. When Moses went down with the power and authority of Heaven, the counterfeit sprang up in order to delude the Egyptians, and make them think the power of Moses was the same in character as that exercised by the magicians. When Moses threw down his rod it became a serpent; the rods of the magicians did the same. When Moses brought up frogs on the land, they did the same; when he turned the rivers of water into blood, they did the same; and thus they deluded the Egyptian nation, and made them believe that if the power of Moses was superior to theirs, it was only because he had learned the magic art more thoroughly than they had.

Well, it seems as if the Lord our God is giving the nation a pretty thorough warning. He told this nation by revelation, twenty-eight years before it commenced, of the great American war. He told all about how the Southern States should be divided against the Northern States, and that in the course of the war many souls should be cut off. This has been fulfilled.

I went forth before my beard was gray, before my hair began to turn white, when I was a youth of nineteen, now I am fifty-eight, and from that time on I published these tidings among the inhabitants of the earth. I carried forth the written revelation, foretelling this great contest, some twenty-eight years before the war commenced. This prophecy has been printed and circulated extensively in this and other nations and languages. It pointed out the place where it should commence in South Carolina. That which I declared over the New England States, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and many other parts in the East, when but a boy, came to pass twenty-eight years after the revelation was given.

When they were talking about a war commencing down here in Kansas, I told them that was not the place; I also told them that the revelation had designated South Carolina, "and," said I, "you have no need to think that the Kansas war is going to be the war that is to be so terribly destructive in its character and nature. No, it must commence at the place the Lord has designated by revelation."

What did they have to say to me? They thought it was a Mormon humbug, and laughed me to scorn, and they looked upon that revelation as they do upon all others that God has given in these latter days—as without divine authority. But behold and lo! In process of time it came to pass, again establishing the divinity of this work, and giving another proof that God is in this work, and is performing that which He spoke by the mouths of the ancient prophets, as recorded in the Book of Mormon before any Church of Latter-day Saints was in existence.

This same book says, "In that day the blood of the Saints shall cry from the ground for vengeance on the heads of the wicked." What! In a free and enlightened nation and government like the United States, which holds forth, in the first amendment to the Constitution, liberty, and freedom of conscience! A Constitution that protects religious societies in their belief! A Constitution that guarantees to all the right of having whatever kind of religion they choose! A Constitution that guarantees liberty of the press, and liberty to all to serve God according to the dictates of their own consciences! Can it be that such a prophecy will be fulfilled in the midst of such an enlightened nation? The Book of Mormon declared it, and that, too, before the existence of the Latter-day Saints' Church. It has been printed and sent to all the world, that in that day, when that book should come forth, the blood of the Saints should cry to the Lord from the ground of these United States for vengeance upon the heads of their persecutors and murderers. Has this been fulfilled? In the history of this people and Church during the last forty years I read concerning our drivings from Jackson County, Missouri; from Kirtland, Ohio; of our drivings from Clay County, Missouri, and from Caldwell County to Ray, and out of many counties in the western part of Missouri into Illinois.

The word concerning the driving of the people from Illinois, westward to the Rocky Mountains, in the article of the treaty got up by the mobocrats, was that "we must not stop short of the Rocky Mountains, but that we must go beyond them." Were any lives lost in those terrible persecutions, or was it merely property taken away from the Saints, without paying them a cent, in the shape of thousands of acres of land which they had paid the Government for, and comfortable houses? If it had been only our houses and lands it would have been bad enough; but lives were taken—innocent men, women and children were shot down. I might go on and relate some of the

circumstances, but I dislike to dwell on the subject; it is apt to kindle up old nature in one's heart, therefore I will leave that topic. Suffice it to say that the blood of hundreds, and I might almost say thousands, will be required at the hands of this nation unless the people repent.

Where is our prophet who translated this book, that noble youth whom God raised up when only between fourteen and fifteen years of age? Where is that noble boy to whom God sent His angel, and to whom He gave the Urim and Thummim, and to whom He entrusted the original golden plates from which this book was translated? He fell a martyr to his religion under this free Government of the United States. Where is the Patriarch of our Church, the brother of our Prophet? He, too, was shot down at the same time. By whom? By people who were painted black for the occasion, and who boasted of their bloody deeds in Hancock County, Illinois. Some of them are still alive in that county, and to this day boast of their bloody deeds in persecuting the Latter-day Saints.

Many scores of our people were wasted away, and their blood soaks the soil of this great government, crying aloud to the heavens for vengeance on those who shed the blood of the martyrs, and who persecuted God's people and sent them forth, as they supposed, to perish in the heart of the Great American Desert.

Not only will they who committed these deeds be brought to judgment, but those also who stood back behind the screen and said, "How glad I am, Joe Smith is now dead, the Mormon Patriarch Hyrum Smith is shot down, and we have killed many of their followers, men, women and children. They have been driven five times from their locations and settlements and been robbed of millions of dollars' worth of property and we are enjoying it, and it is all right. Joe Smith ought to have been killed before, long ago."

This seemed to be the feeling of a great many people in the American nation. They sanctioned the shedding of innocent blood, if they did not actually shed it themselves and God will require it at their hands. Will He require anything at the hands of our nation, in a national capacity, in regard to this matter? Was it not within their power to protect us on the lands which we purchased from the General Government? We did not purchase, to any extent, land from the Missourians, but we took up land that belonged to the General Government. We paid our money into that Government Land Office. Did they protect us in the possession of that land which they guaranteed by their deeds to us and our seed or heirs forever? They did not. Did they protect us in our citizenship? No, they did not. Did we appeal to them for protection? Yes, we laid our case before them. What was their reply? Martin Van Buren, who sat at the head of the Government at that time, said, "Gentlemen, your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you." He saw the testimony; there was no getting away from it. His reply indicated that he thought we had been persecuted so many years that they had the right to persecute us; and when we asked, "Can you protect us according to the Constitution, in our just rights? Can you not restore us our property—our houses and lands?" The reply was, "No, we can do nothing for you."

Then, according to our ideas of the justice that dwells in the bosom of the Almighty, who is the Judge of all the earth, we must suppose that He will not only hold the actual murderers of the Saints responsible, but all who sanctioned the deed, and the nation for not punishing those murderers and for not protecting us in our rights, and suffering us to be exiled unjustly to a foreign territory, for Utah then belonged to Mexico. When we could not find safety in the United States we fled to Mexico for protection; but we ultimately assisted in redeeming the land we now occupy from the Mexican Government and securing it to the United States Government. After sending five hundred of our men to redeem this country, the United States formed a treaty with Mexico, and this became United States territory.

By and by, after having secured this soil to our Government by the Mormon Battalion, and having redeemed it from its sterility, and built upwards of a hundred towns and settlements, it was sold to us. Did we find fault at having to pay for it? No. When the land office was opened in this Territory two or three years ago, we considered it all right, and we were willing to pay our money for it. But what now? A bill is before Congress the object of which is to deprive us of the lands which we have paid for. The Government has got our money in its Treasury for lands we have bought and paid for, and for which it bargained to give us a deed and entered into a compact that we and our children after us should possess this land forever, and now Congress has got up a law to deprive every man in this Territory, whose religious faith happens to differ from Congress, of these lands. Because we happen to differ on

certain religious points with the General Government, we are to be deprived of our homestead rights, guaranteed to us and to the people of all the Territories of the United States, by the laws of Congress.

Does this look like justice? Is this evenhanded justice? It does not seem to agree with my ideas of justice any more than the proceedings of the mobocrats in Missouri, Ohio or Illinois. When, therefore, the American nation, as a nation, by the voice of her Representatives, Senators and President, sanctions a law to deprive American citizens of their citizenship, to rob them of their houses and lands, and then deprive them of their liberty, because of a difference of religious belief and practice, I think the nation is pretty well ripened, and that it will not take much more to prepare them for the fulfillment of the prophecies which I have been repeating. I do not know how long-suffering the Lord is. It is a good thing that He has wisdom, knowledge and understanding, that He is not a human being, or He would get wrathful and swallow up the people in a moment. It is a good thing that you and I do not have people to deal with according to our feelings. God is a long-suffering being. He has fulfilled a great many things pertaining to this people during forty years past. There are a great many more to be fulfilled in relation to us, and in relation to the nation which is persecuting us; but whatever the final result may be, whether the American Congress pass laws to persecute us or not; whether they rob us of our houses and lands or not; whether they imprison us and send us for five years to a Penitentiary or a military camp or not, there is one thing sure—as sure as the sun shines forth in yonder heavens, so sure will the Lord fulfil one thing with regard to this people. What is that? He will return them to Jackson County, and in the western part of the State of Missouri they will build up a city which shall be called Zion, which will be the headquarters of this Latter-day Saint Church; and that will be the place where the prophets, apostles and inspired men of God will have their headquarters. It will be the place where the Lord God will manifest Himself to His people, as He has promised in the Scriptures, as well as in modern revelation.

“Do you believe that?” says one. Just as much as we believed, long before it came to pass, what has taken place. The world can believe what has taken place, because it has been fulfilled. The Latter-day Saints believe in prophecies before they take place. We have just as much confidence in returning to Jackson County and the building of a great central city that will remain there a thousand years before the earth passes away, as the Jews have in returning to Jerusalem and rebuilding the waste places of Palestine. In fact we have more faith than they have; for they have been so many generations cast out of their land that their descendants have almost lost their faith in returning. But the Latter-day Saints are fresh, as it were. There are many of the old stock, who passed through all those tribulations I have named, still living, whose faith in returning to Jackson County, and the things that are coming, is as firm and fixed as the throne of the Almighty. We know the future destiny of this kingdom as well as we know its past history, that is concerning the general events which are to transpire.

I am taking up too much of your time. May the Lord bless us as a people; bless us with wisdom, with understanding, with power with the heavens, with union, with peace among ourselves; bless us with righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost; bless us with the spiritual gifts of His kingdom, multiply His favors upon us and upon our generations after us, forever and ever, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.