

claimed to be the history of the aborigines of our country, and to contain the will of God to the people formerly, and that the Lord Jesus appeared to the inhabitants of this continent and revealed to them the Gospel; that the kingdom of God was built up here; that the Lamanites were a remnant of the house of Israel; and that the set time had come for the Lord to favor Zion and gather Israel; at that very time, on that very day, the powers of darkness were arrayed against the Prophet, against the Book of Mormon, and those who believed it to be what it purported to be.

Has this spirit of persecution ceased? No, not in the least, but it has steadily increased. I was somewhat acquainted with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, not only through what I read in the newspapers, but I also heard a great many stories and reports which were circulated as quick as the Book of Mormon was printed, and began to be scattered abroad. Then the spirit of persecution, the spirit of death, the spirit of destruction immediately seemed to enter the hearts of the pious priests more particularly than any other portion of the people; they could not bear it. Among those who professed great faith and great piety, and believed in the blessings of sanctification, and professedly believed in the ministering of angels, and in the gift of the Holy Ghost, and that it was the privilege of Christians to enjoy the gifts and graces of the Spirit now, as well as in ancient times, as quick as the Book of Mormon was introduced into conversation, a spirit would rise in them causing them to wish to destroy that book and every person who believed in it. They would say, "It is from hell, it is from the bottomless pit, it is of the devil; and those who believe in it ought to go to hell; it is a pity that such a delusion should be permitted to rise in our Christian

country." Such expressions came from the mouths of religious priests, from the mouths of leading characters in society, from those who professed to hold the keys of salvation, and to teach the people the way of life. Has this spirit ceased? No, it has not, but it has constantly increased. And to my certain knowledge, through the visions of the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, I did know, I did see, I did understand, before I went into the waters of baptism, that this spirit of persecution would increase. As the kingdom of God increased upon the earth, so would the power of the enemy increase in like manner, to keep pace with it; and there never would be a time, except for a short period, that this people would have rest, until Israel was fully gathered, was redeemed and built up, and the Lord had drawn the dividing line between the righteous and the wicked.

This Church has lived twenty-five years and is not dead yet, although a great many of its members have gone behind the veil. Those who were first baptized into the Church have almost entirely left this stage of action. I presume there is not a single person in this congregation who embraced the Book of Mormon in the fall of 1829, or in the fore part of the year 1830. The Prophet, his father, and his brothers, except one, are gone behind the veil. I suppose that Martin Harris and Joseph's mother are living, but Oliver Cowdery has gone to his long home, and most of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon have died; and I know of but very few in these valleys who embraced the faith of the Gospel in the early days of the rise of this Church. When I call to mind the multitudes with whom I have been acquainted in this kingdom, and reflect how few there are who have stood firm, and how many have apostatized, I often at first think it is strange, but again, it is no mar-