

sought the destruction of the righteous portion. The righteous portion of these families left the first settlement and traveled several hundred miles to the north, and formed settlements, and became a powerful nation. The others—the wicked portion—became a powerful nation. About fifty years before Christ the Nephites, as the righteous portion was called, sent forth numerous colonies into North America. Among these colonies there was one that came and settled on the southern borders of our great lakes. Both nations became very wicked, notwithstanding their prophets foretold great destruction if they would not repent. They predicted that at the time of the crucifixion darkness, earthquakes and great destruction of cities should transpire. While they were standing near their temple, conversing about this sign which had been given them of the crucifixion, they heard a voice in the heavens, and they looked up and beheld their Messiah descending. He came down and stood in their midst, and showed them the scars in his hands and feet, and in his side; and after visiting them for several days successively, he told them that he was going to the ten tribes of Israel. He also chose twelve disciples to administer his Gospel on this land and for the ministration of the Holy Ghost. The twelve disciples went forth and preached the Gospel, commencing in South America, and then went into North America, until all the people both in North and South America were converted, receiving the principles of the Gospel—namely, baptism, and the laying on of hands, and all the other principles as preached in our day. About two centuries after this, the Nephites fell into wickedness: the Lamanites, who dwelt in the southern portion of South America, also apostatized; and

they began to wage war with the Nephites, who were their enemies; and being exceedingly strong they drove all the Nephites out of South America and followed them with their armies up into the north country, and finally overpowered them. They were gathered together south of the great lakes in the country which we term New York. The Lord ordered that the plates on which the records were kept should be hid, and one of the prophets knowing that it was the last struggle of his nation, hid them in the hill Cumorah, in Ontario County, in the State of New York, with the exception of those which his son Moroni, who was also a prophet, had. The last account that we have is furnished to us by Moroni, who states that, after keeping himself hid for several years, and being commanded of the Lord, he hid away the records, about 420 years after Christ. Thus, I have given you a very brief history of the settlement of our country.

In the year 1827, Joseph Smith, then a young man, took these records from their place of concealment, and, by the aid of the Urim and Thummim, translated them. In the presence of three witnesses, the angel took the plates and turned them over, leaf after leaf, showing them the characters thereon, and told them that they had been translated correctly. They were also seen by eight other men, making twelve men in all, including himself. Joseph Smith being inspired from on high, was commanded to organize a Church, which he did on the 6th day of April, 1830. It was composed at first of six members. Witnesses and preachers went forth into the States of this Union to preach the Gospel, and many were led to join the Church. It has steadily progressed since the time of its first organization until the present. The