

and have set forth many evidences in support of the divine authenticity of this book, still it may not be amiss to repeat some of these evidences and give some reasons to those who are present why this people receive this book as a part and portion of the revelations of the Most High. Our traditions, which we received from our fathers, have naturally inclined us to reject all revelations, or all pretended Scripture except that which happened to be compiled in the Old and New Testament. I had this tradition in common with the rest of mankind who profess to believe the Bible; but when I came to examine this tradition which I, as well as millions, had imbibed, I found it to be only tradition and without any substantial foundation. I cannot possibly imagine how to reconcile the supreme goodness, wisdom and mercy of the Almighty with the idea that a few of the inhabitants of our globe, dwelling in one small region called Palestine, should be the favored few to whom revelation should be vouchsafed. I cannot reconcile this idea with the view that we take of the character of the great Being whom we worship and serve. When I contemplate the vast number of millions that must have swarmed over this great western hemisphere in times of old, building large cities, towns and villages, and spreading themselves forth from shore to shore from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the frozen regions of the north to the uttermost extremity of South America—when I contemplate all these people as human beings, beings that have immortal souls and form part of the brotherhood of all nations, descending from the same parents, created by the same Creator, I cannot believe that all these nations have been left in darkness, deprived of the light of revela-

tion from Heaven, and having no knowledge concerning God; but I must believe that God, who is an impartial Being and presiding over all the inhabitants of the earth, would have respect to the people of ancient America as well as of ancient Asia. Consequently, in accordance with the views that we would naturally entertain concerning the attributes of the Great Jehovah, we believe that he has in these latter times, in the generation in which we are permitted to live, condescended to bring to the knowledge of the people another book, another divine revelation containing the history of his dealings with the generations that are past and gone on this western hemisphere. The book which I hold in my hand (the Book of Mormon) contains nearly as much information as the Old Testament. It is a book of five or six hundred closely printed pages. This book, the Latter-day Saints believe to be the Bible of the western hemisphere; a compilation of sacred books, books delivered by divine inspiration in ancient times to prophets, revelators and inspired men who dwelt upon this continent, both in North and South America. We believe that it was written, mostly by a branch of the house of Israel, a part and portion of the chosen seed, the descendants of Abraham who were led forth to this continent some six hundred years before Christ from the city of Jerusalem, brought by the special providence, miracles and goodness of the Almighty. A colony with whom there were several prophets; a colony of Israelites who believed in the law of Moses, and to whom the Lord manifested himself in a peculiar manner. They were brought forth from the land of Jerusalem in the first year of Zedekiah, King of Judah, six hundred years before the birth of our Lord and