

branch of Israel who came out from the city of Jerusalem five hundred and eighty-nine years before the coming of Christ, in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, at the time he was taken captive, and the Jews were carried into Babylon. One of the sons of Zedekiah, King of Judah, being commanded of the Lord, left the city of Jerusalem with a colony, who were brought forth and landed north of the Isthmus and journeyed southward, passed through the narrow neck of land which we term the Isthmus into the United States of Columbia, and formed their settlements there, and when discovered by the Nephites had dwelt there near four hundred years.

The Nephites and the people of Zarahemla united together and formed a great and powerful nation, occupying the lands south of the Isthmus for many hundreds of miles, and also from the Pacific on the west to the Atlantic on the east, spreading all through the country. The Lamanites about this time also occupied South America, the middle or southern portion of it, and were exceedingly numerous. I will here observe, that from the time the Nephites consolidated themselves with the people of Zarahemla, they had numerous wars with the great nation of the Lamanites, in which many hundreds of thousands perished on both sides.

About fifty-four years before Christ, five thousand four hundred men, with their wives and children, left the northern portion of South America, passed through the Isthmus, came into this north country, the north wing of the continent, and began to settle up North America, and from that time a great emigration of the Nephites and the people of Zarahemla took place year by year. I will here mention one thing which perhaps may be startling to indivi-

duals who are unacquainted with the antiquities of this country, that the Nephite nation about this time commenced the art of shipbuilding. They built many ships, launching them forth into the western ocean. The place of the building of these ships was near the Isthmus of Darien. Scores of thousands entered these ships year after year, and passed along on the western coast northward, and began to settle the western coast on the north wing of the continent. I will observe another thing—when they came into North America they found all this country covered with the ruins of cities, villages and towns, the inhabitants having been cut off and destroyed. The timber had also been cut off, inasmuch that in many places there was no timber by which they could construct their dwellings, hence the Nephites and the people of Zarahemla had to build their houses of cement, others had to dwell in tents. Vast quantities of timber were shipped from the south to the people on the western coast, enabling them to build many towns, cities and villages. The latter also planted groves of timber, and in process of time they raised great quantities, which furnished them with sufficient for building and other purposes. Forty-five years before the coming of Christ there was a vast colony came out of South America, and it is said in the Book of Mormon that they went an exceeding great distance, until they came to large bodies of water and to many rivers and fountains, and when we come to read more fully the description of the country it answers to the great Mississippi Valley. There they formed a colony. We know that to be the region of country from the fact that these plates were taken from a hill in the interior of the State of New York, being the descendants of those