

to break up those associations, and sever those attachments, leaving the lands of our nativity, and going forth with our wives and children to a distant land, of which we had but little knowledge. But a similar requisition was made upon the House of Israel, in the land of Egypt; also upon Noah and his family, and upon Abraham and the family of Lot, in the City of Sodom; and upon the families of Lehi and Ishmael, as mentioned in the Book of Mormon. But in the provisions of the Gospel which was offered to us, there were fairness and safety; it proposed to give us, through obedience to its requirements, a perfect knowledge of its Divine authenticity, so that in leaving our kindred, breaking up our social relations, and going forth from our native land, we should first become perfectly assured that it was no human contrivance, something gotten up to effect some political purpose, or satisfy some worldly ambition, to achieve some private end through human cunning and craftiness. The Gospel was plain and simple in its requirements; and there could be no mistaking the precise nature and character of its blessings and promises, nor the manner and time in which they were to be reached. The first feature in this system, which struck us with surprise, and arrested our attention, was its perfect similarity, in all its parts, with the Gospel as recorded in the New Testament. It required repentance, and a forsaking of sins, immersion in water for the remission of sins, with a promise that, through the laying on of hands by those having authority, people should receive the Holy Ghost, by which should come a knowledge of the truth of the doctrine. Another remarkable feature which called forth our most serious consideration, was the solemn testimony of the Elders, that they

possessed the right to administer these sacred ordinances, by virtue of the holy priesthood committed to Joseph Smith, through the ministration of the Apostles, Peter, James and John. And furthermore, that the solemn and most important facts should be revealed to every man upon his faithful obedience to the Gospel requirements. In these propositions, though at first seemingly strange, we saw everything was plain, fair and honorable. In doing what they required, we should only do, in fact, what as true-hearted believers in the ancient Gospel, we *ought to do*, and if we failed to receive the promised blessings, and thereby proved the Elders' testimony false, our religious condition would nevertheless be then as good as any other Christian's, and a little better, perhaps, because we should have approached a little nearer to the doctrines of the Scripture, inasmuch as their true forms and ceremonies were concerned. Of course, in this case, having proved to our satisfaction that there was no Holy Ghost, no supernatural manifestations, no knowledge, no revelations accompanying the Elders' administrations of the Gospel, no human persuasion, no cunning sophistry could have induced us to leave our homes and friends to embark in a scheme which our common sense taught us would eventuate in bitter disappointment and inevitable ruin; but like other Christians, continued in the enjoyment of friends and home, groping our way through religious darkness, expecting nothing, hoping nothing, and receiving nothing. But the fact that I am now speaking to assembled thousands of intelligent and enlightened people, who received this Gospel with the aforementioned fond considerations and lively expectations, gathered here by their own free will and choice, out of almost