

the people, let those who are on the Lord's side come forth; put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. On this occasion great destruction came on them, because of their transgression. It was among a people that had been enlightened only by miracles, signs and wonders. We find this to be the case throughout all the sojourn of the children of Israel in the wilderness. They would become rebellious; and the Lord had to send forth judgments, miraculous judgments upon them from time to time. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness. Sometimes a terrible plague would break out, and the only way that Aaron could stay the plague was to get between them and the plague, and offer up sacrifices. The flying serpents that infested that great wilderness would destroy them, and the only way there was to be healed, was to look upon a brazen serpent. And, after all, what was their information? What was their knowledge concerning the things of the kingdom of God? The very knowledge that they had when they came forth out of Egypt, the knowledge of the Gospel, of its first principles—even that knowledge seems to have been taken from them, and a law of carnal commandments given to them instead.

The Lord, in this dispensation, is beginning to operate a little differently from what he has done in former ages. In the first place he performs some small miracles, such as unstopping the ears of the deaf, and causing the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, some fevers to be rebuked, some plagues to be stayed, and devils and unclean spirits to be

cast out. Instead of coming down upon a mountain, and causing the earth to shake by his power; and instead of showing forth a pillar of fire by night, and a cloud by day, he has taken a different course: "First, give the people knowledge, give them understanding, show unto them the principles of my Gospel, the principles of my law, make them strong in the knowledge of God, and show forth but very little power in their midst." This seems to be wisdom, that we may have knowledge proportionate to the power that is made manifest, that when he does show forth his power, we may turn not our hearts away from him. In the beginning of this work it seemed to be necessary that certain persons should be raised up to bear witness to the Book of Mormon—of its divinity, that the work might be commenced. But did the Lord continue to send forth his angels? Oh, no. After he had raised up three witnesses in 1829, angels' visits became more scarce, because the people were not prepared for them. Even these three witnesses were not prepared for a day of trial; for they turned from the Lord, and fell into transgression, and did not keep the commandments of God. What was the matter with them? They had greater power made manifest in their midst, than they had knowledge to keep them in the faith. If they had had more knowledge, it would not have overthrown them. We find that Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris beheld the plates that were translated, and heard the voice of the Lord out of heaven, proclaiming in their ears that the translation had been performed by the gift and power of God. And they put their testimony in writing, and it went forth. But this was too great a power for the little