

only all converted upon the face of this whole land, but they were all organized upon a common stock principle, and there were no poor among them, and they dealt justly one with another.

Says one, "They did the same thing in the land of Jerusalem." Yes, but they did not keep it up in the land of Palestine—they seem to have failed, for we have no account that this common stock principle, as at first organized, continued among the Saints on the Asiatic Continent. Churches were built up in various parts of Asia and Europe, one in one place, another in another, and they all seem to have had property of their own; and I believe, myself, that they were unprepared, in their scattered condition, to enter into this order of things. There was too much wickedness at Ephesus, in Galatia, at Corinth, and in the various places where small branches were organized, to enter into this common stock principle, and carry it out successfully. But on this continent there was a fine opportunity, for all the people, millions and millions of them were in the same faith. How easily, then, could they be guided and directed, and put in their property, and organize it as a common stock fund; and they did so, and were exceedingly blessed and prospered in their operation. And I will tell you how long it existed—about one-hundred and sixty-five years. But in the year two hundred and one after the birth of Christ, the people began to be lifted up, on this continent, in pride and popularity, and began to withdraw their funds from this common stock, and take them into their own hands, and call them their own, and they continued to do this, until the great majority of the people had corrupted themselves and withdrawn from this order. Then,

after having broken up this common fund in a great measure, only a few individuals here and there still holding on to it, they became proud and highminded, and lifted up in their hearts, and looked down upon those who were not so prosperous as themselves, and in this way a distinction of classes was again introduced, and the rich began to persecute the poor; and thus they continued to apostatize, until, about three hundred and thirty-four years after Christ, they began to have great and terrible wars among themselves, which lasted about fifty years, during which millions of them were destroyed. Finally, they became so utterly wicked, so fully ripened for destruction, that one branch of the nation, called the Nephites, gathered their entire people around the hill Cumorah, in the State of New York, in Ontario County; and the Lamanites, the opposite army, gathered by millions in the same region. The two nations were four years in gathering their forces, during which no fighting took place; but at the end of that time, having marshalled all their hosts, the fighting commenced, the Lamanites coming upon the Nephites, and destroying all of them, except a very few, who had previously deserted over to the Lamanites.

Before this decisive battle the Nephites, who had kept records of their nation, written on gold plates, hid them up in the hill Cumorah, where they have lain from that day to this. Mormon committed a few plates to his son Moroni, who was a Prophet and who survived the nation of the Nephites about thirty-six years, and he kept these few plates, while all the balance of them were hid up in that hill; and then, Moroni, being commanded of God, hid up the few plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated.