

from the religion of their fathers, and many of them having become exceedingly wicked, the Lord threatened them with an overthrow. And he commanded one of the last Prophets, named Mormon, to make an abridgment of all the records of former Prophets who had been raised up on this land, an abridgment of the history of the nation from the time that they left Jerusalem until that time. He did so, and committed the abridged record, written on plates of gold, into the hands of another Prophet, his son Moroni. The original records, from which the abridgment was made, were hid up by Mormon in a hill called Cumorah, in the interior of what is now called the State of New York, but the abridgment was still in possession of the Prophet Moroni. About this time, or a little before this time, there had been a fifty years war between the inhabitants of North and South America; and finally the Lamanites of South America drove the Nephites from the Isthmus, and continued to burn their towns, cities and villages, and they destroyed hundreds and thousands of the Nephites; and ultimately they were driven into what we now call the State of New York. Three hundred and eighty years after the birth of Christ they entered into terms of peace, or, in other words, an armistice, for the space of four years, during which time the two nations gathered together all their forces into one vicinity, near the hill Cumorah. And when the four years of peace, or armistice, had expired, they came together in battle, in which the Nephites were overpowered, and hundreds of thousands of them killed, including women and children. Moroni, who was among the few Nephites who were spared, and in whose possession was the abridgment

which had been made by his father, Mormon, was commanded to hide up that abridgment in the hill Cumorah, near the town of Manchester, Ontario County, State of New York. The Lord commanded him not only to hide up the record, but also to deposit with it the Urim and Thummim, an instrument used by the ancient seers who dwelt on this Continent. The Lord promised Moroni that, in the latter days, he would bring forth that book out of the ground, that it should whisper out of the dust; that it should speak unto the living as if it were from the dead, and when he should bring it forth this Urim and Thummim, deposited with it, should enable the finder to translate it into the language of the people who should then inherit the land.

I have now given you a brief statement of these things, in substance, as they were taught by the angel of God who administered to Joseph Smith in September, 1823. After giving this instruction the angel disappeared; and as Mr. Smith continued to pray and call upon the name of the Lord, the angel appeared the second time, and made the same narration in relation to the Lamanites and Nephites as he made on his first visit. When conversing with Mr. Smith about these records, the vision of his mind was opened so that he was enabled to see where the records were deposited, and he was told by the angel that, if he would be faithful and do according to the commandments of the Lord his God, he, in due time, should have the privilege of bringing the records forth, and that he should translate them for the benefit of the people.

The angel again departed, and Mr. Smith, being unable to go to sleep, continued to pray, and the vision was renewed again; the angel,