

ney. He had not gone far, before he was overtaken by an officer with a search-warrant, who flattered himself with the idea, that he should surely obtain the plates; after searching very diligently, he was sadly disappointed at not finding them. Mr Smith then drove on; but before he got to his journey's end, he was again overtaken by an officer on the same business, and after ransacking the waggon very carefully, he went his way, as much chagrined as the first, at not being able to discover the object of his research. Without any further molestation, he pursued his journey until he came into the northern part of Pennsylvania, near the Susquehannah river, in which part his father-in-law resided.

Having provided himself with a home, he commenced translating the record, by the gift and power of God, through the means of the Urim and Thummim; and being a poor writer, he was under the necessity of employing a scribe, to write the translation as it came from his mouth.

In the mean time, a few of the original characters were accurately transcribed and translated by Mr Smith, which, with the translation, were taken by a gentleman by the name of Martin Harris, to the city of New York, where they were presented to a learned gentleman by the name of Anthon, who professed to be extensively acquainted with many languages, both ancient and modern. He examined them; but was unable to decipher them correctly; but he presumed, that if the original records could be brought, he could assist in translating them.

But to return. Mr Smith continued the work of translation, as his pecuniary circumstances would permit, until he finished the unsealed part of the records. The part translated is entitled the "Book of Mormon," which contains nearly as much reading as the Old Testament.

In this important and most interesting book, we can read the history of ancient America, from its early settlement by a colony who came from the tower of Babel, at the confusion of languages, to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era. By these Records we are informed, that America, in ancient times, has been inhabited by two distinct races of people. The first, or more ancient race, came directly from the great tower, being called Jaredites. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem, about six hundred years before Christ, being Israelites,

principally the descendants of Joseph. The first nation, or Jaredites, were destroyed about the time that the Israelites came from Jerusalem, who succeeded them in the inheritance of the country. The principal nation of the second race, fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century. The remaining remnant, having dwindled into an uncivilized state, still continue to inhabit the land, although divided into a "multitude of nations," and are called by Europeans the "American Indians."

We learn from this very ancient history, that at the confusion of languages, when the Lord scattered the people upon all the face of the earth, the Jaredites, being a righteous people, obtained favour in the sight of the Lord, and were not confounded. And because of their righteousness, the Lord miraculously led them from the tower to the great ocean, where they were commanded to build vessels, in which they were marvellously brought across the great deep to the shores of North America.

And the Lord God promised to give them America, which was a very choice land in his sight, for an inheritance. And He swore unto them in his wrath, that whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them, and they were fully ripened in iniquity. Moreover, he promised to make them a great and powerful nation, so that there should be no greater nation upon all the face of the earth.

Accordingly, in process of time, they became a very numerous and powerful people, occupying principally North America; building large cities in all quarters of the land; being a civilized and enlightened nation. Agriculture and machinery were carried on to a great extent. Commercial and manufacturing business flourished on every hand; yet, in consequence of wickedness, they were often visited with terrible judgments. Many prophets were raised up among them from generation to generation, who testified against the wickedness of the people, and prophesied of judgments and calamities which awaited them, if they did not repent, &c. Sometimes they were visited by pestilence and plagues, and sometimes by famine and war, until at length (having occupied the land some fifteen or

sixteen hundred years) their wickedness became so great, that the Lord threatened, by the mouth of his prophets, to utterly destroy them from the face of the land. But they gave no heed to these warnings; therefore the word of the Lord was fulfilled; and they were entirely destroyed; leaving their houses, their cities, and their land desolate; and their sacred records also, which were kept on gold plates, were left by one of their last prophets whose name was Ether, in such a situation, that they were discovered by the remnant of Joseph, who soon afterwards were brought from Jerusalem to inherit the land.

This remnant of Joseph were also led in a miraculous manner from Jerusalem, in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah. They were first led to the eastern borders of the Red Sea; then they journeyed for some time along the borders thereof, nearly in a south-east direction; after which, they altered their course nearly eastward, until they came to the great waters, where, by the commandment of God, they built a vessel, in which they were safely brought across the great Pacific ocean, and landed upon the western coast of South America.

In the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, at the time the Jews were carried away captive into Babylon, another remnant were brought out of Jerusalem; some of whom were descendants of Judah. They landed in North America; soon after which they emigrated into the northern parts of South America, at which place they were discovered by the remnant of Joseph, something like four hundred years after.

From these ancient records, we learn, that this remnant of Joseph, soon after they landed, separated themselves into two distinct nations. This division was caused by a certain portion of them being greatly persecuted, because of their righteousness, by the remainder. The persecuted nation emigrated towards the northern parts of South America, leaving the wicked nation in possession of the middle and southern parts of the same. The former were called Nephites, being led by a prophet whose name was Nephi. The latter were called Lamanites, being led by a very wicked man whose name was Laman. The Nephites had in their possession a copy of the Holy Scriptures, viz. the five books of Moses, and the prophecies of the holy

prophets, down to Jeremiah, in whose days they left Jerusalem. These Scriptures were engraved on plates of brass, in the Egyptian language. They themselves also made plates, soon after their landing, on which they began to engrave their own history, prophecies, visions, and revelations. All these sacred records were kept by holy and righteous men, who were inspired by the Holy Ghost; and were carefully preserved and handed down from generation to generation.

And the Lord gave unto them the whole continent, for a land of promise, and he promised, that they, and their children after them, should inherit it, on condition of their obedience to his commandments; but if they were disobedient, they should be cut off from his presence. And the Nephites began to prosper in the land, according to their righteousness, and they multiplied and spread forth to the east, and west, and north; building large villages, and cities, and synagogues, and temples, together with forts, and towers, and fortifications, to defend themselves against their enemies. And they cultivated the earth, and raised various kinds of grain in abundance. They also raised numerous flocks of domestic animals, and became a very wealthy people; having in abundance gold, silver, copper, tin, iron, &c. Arts and sciences flourished to a great extent. Various kinds of machinery were in use. Cloths, of various kinds, were manufactured. Swords, cimeters, axes, and various implements of war were made, together with head-shields, arm-shields, and breastplates, to defend themselves in battle with their enemies. And in the days of their righteousness, they were a civilized, enlightened, and happy people.

But, on the other hand, the Lamanites, because of the hardness of their hearts, brought down many judgments upon their own heads; nevertheless, they were not destroyed as a nation; but the Lord God sent forth a curse upon them, and they became a dark, loathsome, and filthy people. Before their rebellion, they were white and exceedingly fair, like the Nephites; but the Lord God cursed them in their complexions, and they were changed to a dark colour; and they became a wild, savage, and ferocious people; being great enemies to the Nephites, whom they sought, by every means, to destroy, and many times came

against them, with their numerous hosts to battle, but were repulsed by the Nephites, and driven back to their own possessions, not, however, generally speaking, without great loss on both sides; for tens of thousands were very frequently slain, after which they were piled together in great heaps upon the face of the ground, and covered with a shallow covering of earth, which will satisfactorily account for those ancient mounds, filled with human bones, so numerous at the present day, both in North and South America.

The second colony, which left Jerusalem eleven years after the remnant of Joseph left that city, landed in North America, and emigrated from thence, to the northern parts of South America; and about four hundred years after, they were discovered by the Nephites, as we stated in the foregoing.

They were called the people of Zarahemla. They had been perplexed with many wars among themselves; and having brought no records with them, their language had become corrupted, and they denied the being of God; and at the time they were discovered by the Nephites they were very numerous, and only in a partial state of civilization; but the Nephites united with them, and taught them the Holy Scriptures, and they were restored to civilization, and became one nation with them. And in process of time, the Nephites began to build ships near the Isthmus of Darien, and launch them forth into the western ocean, in which great numbers sailed a great distance to the northward, and began to colonize North America. Other colonies emigrated by land, and in a few centuries the whole continent became peopled. North America, at that time, was almost entirely destitute of timber, it having been cut off by the more ancient race, who came from the great tower, at the confusion of languages; but the Nephites became very skilful in building houses of cement; also, much timber was carried by the way of shipping from South to North America. They also planted groves and began to raise timber, that in time their wants might be supplied. Large cities were built in various parts of the continent, both among the Lamanites and Nephites. The law of Moses was observed by the latter. Numerous prophets were raised up from time to time throughout their generations.

Many records, both historical and prophetic, which were of great size, were kept among them; some on plates of gold and other metals, and some on other materials. The sacred records, also, of the more ancient race who had been destroyed, were found by them. These were engraved on plates of gold. They translated them into their own language by the gift and power of God, through the means of the Urim and Thummim. They contained an historical account from the creation down to the Tower of Babel, and from that time down until they were destroyed, comprising a period of about thirty-four hundred, or thirty-five hundred years. They also contained many prophecies, great and marvellous, reaching forward to the final end and consummation of all things, and the creation of the new heaven and new earth.

The prophets also among the Nephites prophesied of great things. They opened the secrets of futurity, and saw the coming of Messiah in the flesh, and prophesied of the blessings to come upon their descendants in the latter times, and made known the history of unborn generations, and unfolded the grand events of ages to come, and viewed the power, and glory, and majesty of Messiah's second advent, and beheld the establishment of the kingdom of peace, and gazed upon the glories of the day of righteousness, and saw creation redeemed from the curse, and all the righteous filled with songs of everlasting joy.

The Nephites knew of the birth and crucifixion of Christ, by certain celestial and terrestrial phenomena, which, at those times, were shown forth in fulfilment of the predictions of many of their prophets. Notwithstanding the many blessings with which they had been blessed, they had fallen into great wickedness, and had cast out the saints and the prophets, and stoned and killed them. Therefore, at the time of the crucifixion of Christ, they were visited in great judgment. Thick darkness covered the whole continent. The earth was terribly convulsed. The rocks were rent into broken fragments, and afterwards found in seams and cracks upon all the face of the land. Mountains were sunk into valleys, and valleys raised into mountains. The highways and level roads were broken up and spoiled. Many cities were laid in ruins. Others were buried up in the depths of the earth, and mountains occupied their place.

While others were sunk, and waters came up in their stead, and others still were burned by fire from heaven.

Thus, the predictions of their prophets were fulfilled upon their heads. Thus, the more wicked part, both of the Nephites and Lamanites, were destroyed. Thus, the Almighty executed vengeance and fury upon them, that the blood of the saints and prophets might no longer cry from the ground against them.

Those who survived these terrible judgments, were favoured with the personal ministry of Christ. For after He arose from the dead, and finished his ministry at Jerusalem, and ascended to heaven, he descended in the presence of the Nephites, who were assembled round about their temple in the northern parts of South America. He exhibited to them his wounded hands, and side, and feet; and commanded the law of Moses to be abolished; and introduced and established the Gospel in its stead; and chose twelve disciples from among them to administer the same; and instituted the sacrament; and prayed for and blessed their little children; and healed their sick, and blind, and lame, and deaf, and those who were afflicted in any way, and raised a man from the dead, and showed forth his power in their midst; and expounded the Scriptures, which had been given from the beginning down to that time; and made known unto them all things which should take place down until He should come in his glory, and from that time down to the end, when all people, nations, and languages should stand before God to be judged, and the heaven and the earth should pass away, and there should be a new heaven and new earth. These teachings of Jesus were engraved upon plates, some of which are contained in the book of Mormon; but the more part are not revealed in that book, but are hereafter to be made manifest to the saints.

After Jesus had finished ministering unto them, he ascended into heaven; and the twelve disciples, whom he had chosen, went forth upon all the face of the land, preaching the gospel; baptizing those who repented for the remission of sins, after which they laid their hands upon them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Mighty miracles were wrought by them, and also by many of the church. The Nephites and Lamanites were all converted unto the Lord, both in South and North America: and they dwelt

in righteousness above three hundred years; but towards the close of the fourth century of the Christian era, they had so far apostatized from God, that he suffered great judgments to fall upon them. The Lamanites, at that time, dwelt in South America, and the Nephites in North America.

A great and terrible war commenced between them, which lasted for many years, and resulted in the complete overthrow and destruction of the Nephites. This war commenced at the Isthmus of Darien, and was very destructive to both nations for many years. At length, the Nephites were driven before their enemies, a great distance to the north, and north-east; and having gathered their whole nation together, both men, women, and children, they encamped on, and round about the hill Cumorah, where the records were found, which is in the State of New York, about two hundred miles west of the city of Albany. Here they were met by the numerous hosts of the Lamanites, and were slain, and hewn down, and slaughtered, both male and female—the aged, middle aged, and children. Hundreds of thousands were slain on both sides; and the nation of the Nephites were destroyed, excepting a few who had deserted over to the Lamanites, and a few who escaped into the south country, and a few who fell wounded, and were left by the Lamanites on the field of battle for dead, among whom were Mormon and his son Moroni, who were righteous men.

Mormon had made an abridgement, from the records of his forefathers, upon plates, which abridgement he entitled the “Book of Mormon;” and, (being commanded of God,) he hid up in the hill Cumorah, all the sacred records of his forefathers which were in his possession, except the abridgement called the “Book of Mormon,” which he gave to his son Moroni to finish. Moroni survived his nation a few years, and continued the writings, in which he informs us, that the Lamanites hunted those few Nephites who escaped the great and tremendous battle of Cumorah, until they were all destroyed, excepting those who were mingled with the Lamanites, and that he was left alone, and kept himself hid, for they sought to destroy every Nephite who would not deny the Christ. He furthermore states, that the Lamanites were at war one with another, and that the