

heavens in the presence of these four men, and took the plates and exhibited the pages and engravings of that portion that was unsealed—for the whole of them were not permitted to be translated; and thus the engravings were shown to three other witnesses. The angel at the same time placed his hands upon the head of David Whitmer and said, "Blessed be the Lord and they that keep his commandments." At the time that the angel was showing the records, they heard a voice out of the heavens saying, that the records had been translated correctly by the gift and power of God, and they were commanded to bear witness of the same to all people to whom the work should be sent. They have therefore given their solemn testimony in this book in connection with Joseph Smith, concerning the appearing of the angel, and the exhibition of the plates; their testimony has gone forth wherever this book has been published. Mr. Smith was also permitted to show the plates to eight other witnesses whose names are also given in testimony of these things, that they saw the plates and handled them.

Thus you have the testimony of twelve men, eleven witnesses besides the one who found the plates, three of whom saw the angel of God; and all this before there was any latter-day church in existence. There was a circumstance, however, that took place, before the organization of this Church, on the 15th day of May, 1829. Two men, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, being exercised before the Lord in regard to the ordinance of baptism; how and in what way they should receive this ordinance acceptably before him they did not know. They understood the mode of baptism, for in the translation of this record they found that the ancient inhabitants of Israel baptized by im-

mersion, and that the words used in connection with it were also given. The question arose, Who could baptize them? The Lord had already told them that there was no true church on the earth, and that there was no authorized minister to administer baptism; and, of course, this was a question that would arise in the mind of any individuals under similar circumstances; they would naturally want to know how they could be baptized, so as to have their baptism recognized in the heavens. They understood that they might just as well jump into the water themselves, as to be baptized by a man having no authority on him. They did not understand how it could be done, and they therefore were troubled in their minds with regard to it, and went and humbled themselves before the Lord, who, on the 15th day of May, 1829, sent an angel to them. This angel informed them that he was John the Baptist, who was beheaded, and who baptized their Savior, and that he held the priesthood of his fathers, the priesthood of Levi. He laid his hands upon their heads and ordained them unto the priesthood that he himself had, which priesthood had authority to baptize for the remission of sins, but had no authority to lay hands upon the people for the gift of the Holy Ghost. John, who baptized our Savior, himself declared:

I can baptize you with water, and that is the extent of my authority, but there cometh one after me who is mightier than I, he has greater authority, he can baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost; but I have the right to baptize you with water. This was in substance what John said to the Jews in his day. He conferred this same priesthood upon these two men, and commanded them to baptize one another, giving them a promise that that priesthood