

are very imperfect in their present state, and that they have been translated from manuscripts that cannot be depended upon—that there are no original copies in this day with which the world are acquainted—having established these facts, now let us turn to the Book of Mormon, and see if it rests upon evidences of the nature of these I have already presented to this congregation.

The Book of Mormon professes to be translated not from manuscripts containing 130,000 different readings, nor by the learning of men who can render a translation as they please; neither does it profess to be translated from altered, mutilated manuscripts manufactured by monks or impostors upon Mount Athos to impose upon Christian credulity; but it was translated from the original plates themselves—the very plates on which the inspired writers themselves wrote: and they were also translated, not by the learning of men, but by the power of God and the inspiration of the Almighty.

We are told, in the beginning of the Book of Mormon, that three men—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris, saw the plates, or the original from which this book was translated by Joseph Smith, Jun.; he having obtained the plates in the western part of New York through the ministration of an holy angel, as he testifies, from where they were deposited by an ancient Prophet that inhabited America some 1,400 years ago. He testifies that he was sent by an angel of God to bring these gold plates to light—that he obtained with them the Urim and Thummim, and translated the book. But, before the Lord would permit the book to go to the nations, he was determined that they should have more than one witness. Joseph Smith's testimony was not to go forth alone. Therefore, in 1829, about one year before the

rise of this Church, or before this book was offered to the world, three other names were called upon by an angel from heaven.

"Perhaps," you may say, "they were deceived." Let us examine whether there was any possibility of their being deceived. They had learned, by reading the manuscript from which this book was printed, that the Lord, when he should bring this book to light in the latter days, would bear testimony of it in a miraculous and wonderful manner to three witnesses, besides the translator. These three men, after having learned this fact, met together, and went and saw Mr. Smith, and inquired of him whether it would be their privilege to behold these plates and know from heaven that this book was true. Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord concerning the matter; and the Lord gave them a promise that, if they would sufficiently humble themselves, they should have this privilege.

They, in no connection with Mr. Smith, who made the fourth individual, went out into the open field, near a grove of timber, a little distance from the house of Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca County, New York. They bowed down before the Lord in broad daylight—not in the night; so there could be no deception: they humbled themselves before him, called upon his holy name with all their hearts; and while they were thus engaged in calling upon the name of the Lord, they saw in the heavens above a glorious light, and a personage descending. This personage came down and stood before them: he laid his hands upon the head of David Whitmer as one of the three witnesses, and said, "Blessed be the Lord and they that keep his commandments;" and then he took the plates and turned them over, leaf after leaf, excepting a certain portion of the leaves that were sealed up, which Mr.