

sible for the Christian world to bring.

But we will not stop here. After the Book of Mormon was printed, in the spring of 1830, of what use would it have been to this generation if God had not sent down from heaven authority to administer in His ordinances as taught within its pages and in the scriptures? None, whatever. We could have read, it is true, a great many good principles, and we might have understood the doctrine of Christ more fully and plainly by reading the testimony of the prophets and apostles who lived on the American continent 1,800 years ago, and of those who lived here before Christ; we might also have learned a great many things, but what would all this have availed us without authority sent from Heaven to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel? It would have availed us nothing; it would have been like spreading a good, substantial meal before a hungry man and depriving him of the power to partake thereof; it would only have aggravated his appetite. This would have been the position of the people in regard to the Book of Mormon if it had been merely translated and left there. But the Lord our God, who had determined in His eternal purposes, and had revealed and foretold by the mouths of His ancient prophets that in the latter days He would establish His Kingdom on the earth, did condescend to send from heaven, angels to confer the authority to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel of His Son.

Who were sent from heaven for this purpose? Peter, James, and John, some of the principal of Christ's ancient apostles; men who held the apostleship themselves; men who were able to give the authority, because they held it themselves; and

by them this authority was again restored and conferred upon men here on the earth. But I must mention that the Lord had commenced by restoring the lesser authority or priesthood. On the 15th day of May, 1829, nearly a year before the organization of this Church, while Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were engaged in translating and writing the record contained on these plates of which I have been speaking, they read that the people on the American continent, anciently, were baptized by immersion, and how important it was for every person who had come to years of accountability to be born of the water as well as of the spirit; and having learned that no man in all the Christian churches was possessed of authority to administer any ordinances of the Gospel of Christ, they were at a loss, just as Joseph was, when fourteen years old, about which church to join. Consequently, they stopped the work of translation (their anxiety to attend to the ordinance being so great), and they went out into the wilderness and inquired of God what they should do in relation to their baptism. When they had prayed a while behold a messenger was sent from the heavens, and he came and stood before them clothed in brightness and glory. What was his object in coming? Was it to teach them the mode or order of baptism? No, but it was to restore to the earth the authority to administer the ordinance. This messenger laid his hands upon the heads of these two individuals, and gave unto them the lesser or Levitical priesthood, the priesthood of Aaron, the same that was held by John the Baptist—a regular priest of the lineage of Aaron—when he baptized for the remission of sins. Who was the angel that thus restored this priesthood to the earth?