

that had authority to baptize them. They were anxious to know how they might be baptized, and how the authority might be restored. They went out into a grove, and joined in secret prayer, and the Lord sent a holy angel to them, a man who once dwelt on the earth, and held the Priesthood of his fathers, according to the promise of God to the lineage of Aaron. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who was beheaded by Herod—John who preached repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, came to Joseph and Oliver Cowdery, as a ministering angel.

Perhaps you may inquire here: Was John without a tabernacle? Was he a spirit or was he a personage of tabernacle, of flesh and bones? We all know that he was beheaded before the crucifixion of Christ; and if you wish to know the condition of John when he came to Joseph and Oliver, read the appendix to the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and you will find that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and many others, who are named there, among whom was John the Baptist, were with Christ in his resurrection; that is, they came forth in the first resurrection, at the time that Jesus received his body. About that period the graves of the Saints were opened and many of them came forth. John was amongst them; and he held, legally, the power, keys, and Priesthood, bestowed upon the lineage of his father, Aaron.

What did John do, when he appeared to brothers Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery? He did not go forth into the water to baptize them, as he did anciently in the Jordan; but he gave the authority to them to baptize—he laid his hands upon their heads and ordained them. Thus the hands of an immortal being—a

man sent from Heaven—were laid upon their heads! They were ordained to that same Priesthood that John himself held, with the promise and prediction that that Priesthood should not be taken from the earth while the earth should stand.

They were commanded to be baptized, and having received the authority to administer the ordinance, they went forth and baptized each other, on the 15th of May, 1829, nearly one year before the rise of this Church, which took place on the 6th of April, 1830. Prior to the last mentioned date the Lord bestowed authority upon His servants to officiate in still higher ordinances than those pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood. That Priesthood could administer baptism for the remission of sins, but it had no power or authority to administer the Spirit. But there was a Priesthood that had that power and authority. John speaks of another Priesthood greater than that which he held. Said he, "There is one coming after me mightier than I. He holds a Priesthood greater than that which has been bestowed upon me, namely, the Priesthood of Melchizedek. He shall baptize you with fire and the Holy Ghost. I can only administer in the outward ordinance; I have not the right to administer to you this higher ordinance." It was so with Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery: they could only baptize with water until they received a Priesthood greater than that which John the Baptist held. And when the Lord was about to organize His Church, He prepared them by sending men who had once been here on the earth—namely, Peter, James, and John, to bestow upon them this higher Priesthood.

How did these celestial personages come? Did they come manifesting themselves by a mere voice, or behind