

We are not indebted to man for the various authorities in this Church; this is our testimony. Man did not commence this work, man is not the originator of this work, neither is he the origin of the authority by which we administer. The Lord did not see proper to organize the authority of this Church all at once in all the various councils and authorities that, from time to time, have been ordained among this people; it was a gradual work. Authority was bestowed before there was any Church. First (not the authority of the Priesthood) but the authority to bring forth the plates of the Book of Mormon, and to translate them by the Urim and Thummim, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This was the first authority conferred upon the one whom the Lord chose to commence this great work. The authority of the Priesthood was not conferred upon him at that time, but He revealed unto him concerning the everlasting Gospel contained in the ancient records kept by the Nephites, or Israelites, upon this great Western Continent.

Joseph Smith, when he translated these records by the aid of the Urim and Thummim, had not yet received any Priesthood, so far as his temporal existence was concerned. But now, do not misunderstand me in regard to this position. He did hold the Priesthood before he came here upon the earth. I remarked that Joseph, so far as any ordination here in the flesh was concerned, held no Priesthood at the time that he brought forth the plates of the Book of Mormon and translated them; but he did hold the Priesthood, which was conferred upon him in the councils of eternity, before this world was formed. You will find this recorded in a sermon delivered by the Prophet Joseph, showing that not only he,

but also all of the faithful that have received the Priesthood here in this life, were ordained before the foundation of the world. Consequently, they had the ordination; that ordination was after the order of Him who is from all eternity to all eternity, an everlasting Priesthood, without father, without mother, without beginning, without end; having been handed down from all eternity. That Priesthood was conferred upon Joseph Smith before he came here; he was among those that are spoken of in the Pearl of Great Price, whom the ancient Prophets saw in heaven. Moses saw them, and Abraham saw them, namely, the spirits that existed before the world was made; and they saw that among that vast number of spirits there were some choice ones, some that were noble in the sight of God, probably because of their integrity and steadfastness in upholding truth; among those noble ones were those whom the Lord chose before the foundation of the world to come forth upon the earth in their second estate, and to hold authority and power in the various dispensations, and to administer the plan of salvation to the human family. Abraham was among that number. The High Priests that lived from the days of Adam down to the flood were among that number, who were then chosen and then ordained, according to the foreknowledge of God. It is recorded in the Book of Alma regarding the Priesthood, that the ordinances of the Priesthood and the calling to the Priesthood were without beginning or end. There may be a beginning to the person who is called, but that Priesthood existed before that person was called, and there was no beginning to the calling, no beginning to the ordinances of the Priesthood,