

because of differences that they had with members of the Church, and because fellowship was withdrawn from them, in consequence of acts of rebellion—yet all three men maintained their testimony unflinchingly—two of them being now dead—when they came back to the Church as they had done before, and as they did during their alienation from the Church, that the Book of Mormon was true; that they had seen an angel, and that that angel had testified to them that this was the work of God. One of these witnesses is still living, and though not connected with the Church, he still bears testimony, and publishes it—we see it frequently in the newspapers—confirming that which he had written, constantly bearing testimony unto all with whom he is brought in contact, and who make inquiry of him concerning this matter. When I was a boy I heard it stated concerning Oliver Cowdery, that after he left the Church he practiced law, and upon one occasion, in a court in Ohio, the opposing counsel thought he would say something that would overwhelm Oliver Cowdery, and in reply to him in his argument he alluded to him as the man that had testified and had written that he had beheld an angel of God, and that angel had shown unto him the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. He supposed, of course, that it would cover him with confusion, because Oliver Cowdery then made no profession of being a “Mormon,” or a Latter-day Saint; but instead of being affected by it in this manner, he arose in the court, and in his reply stated that, whatever his faults and weaknesses might be, the testimony which he had written, and which he had given to the world, was literally true.

Besides the three witnesses who saw an angel and handled the plates, there were eight others who testified also in the most solemn manner that, though not shown the plates by an angel, they were shown the plates by Joseph Smith; that they hefted the plates, that they handled them, that they examined them, that they appeared to be of ancient workmanship, that they saw the characters upon them, which were curious; and these eight men have testified to this, making in all twelve witnesses, many of whom we have known. But if this were the only testimony concerning this work, I myself would have, I might say, comparatively slight faith in it. It would have weight, of course. The testimony of men of character, men who testify solemnly to any fact, always did have weight with me. I suppose such testimony has weight with all, more or less, according to the credibility of the witnesses. But there are evidences in this work itself of its divinity. It is the internal evidence which the Book of Mormon contains that bears testimony of it. If Joseph Smith’s claims as a Prophet of God had no other foundation than that which this book furnishes, then there is foundation enough for him to rank as one of the greatest prophets that has ever lived upon the face of the earth. There were predictions recorded in this book and published to the world in the winter of 1829 and 1830, which are being fulfilled today, and which have been fulfilled, or have been in process of fulfillment since the day that the work was issued from the press. There is scarcely a thing connected with the movement of the Latter-day Saints that has not been foreshadowed in the Book of Mormon. The way in which the work should be received,