

CHAPTER XI.

OLIVER COWDERY.

OLIVER COWDERY is the first of the three witnesses. He was severed from the Church for immoral conduct during the time that the Saints were in Missouri. Often after his separation from the Church efforts were made to prevail upon him to deny his testimony, but always without effect. At all times, in all places, before all people he continually bore record when the subject of the Book of Mormon was introduced, "Gentlemen, I saw an angel, and I know who that angel was." No amount of cross-questioning could weaken his testimony or confuse his statements on this point. We now copy, from the *Deseret News*, a very interesting episode that occurred during the last few months of his life:

"At a special conference at Council Bluffs, Iowa, held on the 21st of October, in the year 1848, Brother Oliver Cowdery, one of the three important witnesses to the truth of the Book of Mormon, and who had been absent from the Church, through disaffection, for a number of years, and had been engaged in the practice of law, was present and made the remarks here annexed. Brother Orson Hyde presided at the said conference. Brother Reuben Miller, now Bishop of Mill Creek Ward [since deceased] was also present at the time and noted what he said, and has furnished us, what he believes to be a verbatim report of his remarks, which we take pleasure in laying before our readers:

"Friends and brethren, my name is Cowdery—Oliver Cowdery. In the early history of this Church I stood identified with her, and one in her councils. True it is that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. Not because I was better than the rest of mankind was I called; but, to fulfill the purposes of God, He called me to a high and holy calling. I wrote, with my own pen, the entire Book of Mormon (save a few pages), as it fell from the lips of the Prophet Joseph Smith, as he translated it by the gift and power of God, by the means of the Urim and Thummim, or, as it is called by that book, 'holy interpreters.' *I beheld with my*

eyes and handled with my hands the gold plates from which it was translated. I also saw with my eyes and handled with my hands the 'holy interpreters.' That book is *true*. Sidney Rigdon did not write it. Mr. Spaulding did not write it. I wrote it myself as it fell from the lips of the Prophet. It contains the everlasting gospel, and came forth to the children of men in fulfillment of the revelation of John, where he says he saw an angel come with the everlasting gospel to preach to every nation, kindred, and people. It contains principles of salvation; and if you, my hearers, will walk by its light and obey its precepts, you will be saved with an everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God on high. Brother Hyde has just said that it is very important that we keep and walk in the true channel, in order to avoid sand-bars. This is true. The channel is here. The holy Priesthood is here. I was present with Joseph when an holy angel from God came down from heaven and conferred on us or restored the lesser or Aaronic Priesthood, and said to us, at the same time, that it should remain upon the earth while the earth stands. I was also present with Joseph when the higher or Melchisedek Priesthood was conferred by the holy angel from on high. This Priesthood was then conferred on each other, by the will and commandment of God. This Priesthood, as was then declared, is also to remain upon the earth until the last remnant of time. This holy Priesthood or authority we then conferred upon many, and is just as good and valid as though God had done it in person. I laid my hands upon that man—yes, I laid my right hand upon his head (pointing to Brother Hyde), and I conferred upon him this Priesthood, and he holds that Priesthood now. He was also called through me, by the prayer of faith, an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.'"