

The following is a reconstruction of the November 9, 1829 letter of Oliver H. P. Cowdery to Cornelius C. Blatchly:

“Palmyra, Wayne, co., N. Y., Nov. 9th, 1829.

Sir;— You wrote to Mr. Harris, some time since, respecting the book of Mormon, of which he was concerned in the publication.”—

“Your first inquiry was, whether it was proper to say, that Joseph Smith Jr., was the author? If I rightly understand the meaning of the word author, it is, the first beginner, or mover of any thing, or a writer. Now Joseph Smith Jr., certainly was the writer of the work, called the book of Mormon, which was written in ancient Egyptian characters,— which was a dead record to us until translated. And he, by a gift from God, has translated it into our language. Certainly he was the writer of it, and could be no less than the author.”

“This record which gives an account of the first inhabitants of this continent, is engraved on plates, which have the appearance of gold; and they are of very curious workmanship.”

“The reason stated in a prophecy written before the coming of Christ in the flesh, why the record should not be shown to all the world, at the time of its coming forth to the children of men is that the book should be sealed, by the power of God.”

“The prophecy also states there shall also be a revelation sealed in the book, which will reveal all things from the foundation of the world to the end thereof.” And because of the iniquity of the world, at the time of its coming forth; it shall be hid from the eyes of the world; that the eyes of none shall behold it, (save it be that three witnesses shall behold it by the power of God) besides him, to whom the book should be delivered. And none other should see it, only a few,—if it should be wisdom in God.”

“And after that which was not sealed, was translated, the book should again be hid-up, unto the Lord, that it might not be destroyed; and come forth again, in the own due time of him, who knows all things unto the children of men.”

“You also wished Mr. Harris to inform you respecting his seeing this book, whether there could not possibly have been some juggling at the bottom of it. A few words on that point may suffice.—

“It was a clear, open beautiful day, far from any inhabitants, in a remote field, at the time we saw the record, of which it has been spoken, brought and laid before us, by an angel, arrayed in glorious light, ascend out of the midst of heaven.”

“Now if this is human juggling—judge ye.”

Yours with much esteem,

OLIVER H. P. COWDERY.

“P. S. I write this at the request of Messrs. Harris and others. The edition of this work now printing will not possibly be finished before the first of next February 1830.[”]

(*Gospel Luminary*, Vol. II, No. 49, Thursday, December 10, 1829, page 194, New York City, emphasis omitted.)