

keys should be held, and the manner in which the authority should be exercised. Men have pretended that angels have visited them, and that, in consequence they must have authority. This was the pretence made by James J. Strang. But he did not understand that the oracles had been given through Joseph, according to the revelation given in March, 1833, to the Church. Others had also had the keys given unto them to enable them to exercise the power and authority which Joseph held. Now we may come to this conclusion; that God, having once bestowed the keys of the holy Priesthood on man here on the earth for the upbuilding of His Church, will never take them from the man or men who hold them and authorize others to bestow them. If you will read the history of the Church from the beginning, you will find that Joseph was visited by various angelic beings, but not one of them professed to give him the keys until John the Baptist came to him. Moroni, who held the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim, visited Joseph; he had doubtless, also, visits from Nephi and it may be from Alma and others, but though they came and had authority, holding the authority of the Priesthood, we have no account of their ordaining him, neither did Joseph ever profess, because of the ministration of these angels, to have authority to administer in any of the ordinances of the Kingdom of God. He never baptized anybody, nor attempted to lay on hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost; and, in fact, he never attempted, that we have any account of, to exercise any of the functions of the holy Priesthood. He was a prophet, it is true, but a man may be a prophet and yet not have authority to administer in the Priesthood. The

prophetic gift, to some extent, is distinct from the Priesthood. Joseph had received the prophetic gift and he exercised it and he acted as such prior to his ordination. But when the time came for him to be baptized, then a man who held the keys of that Priesthood came to him and laid his hands upon Joseph's head, and upon Oliver Cowdery, and set them apart, and gave them authority to officiate in the Aaronic Priesthood, which Priesthood held the keys of baptism and so forth.

John had the right to baptize when he was upon the earth; he held the keys of that Priesthood. He baptized Jesus by virtue of the Priesthood which he held; and those keys had not been taken from him. At the time when Joseph Smith was ordained, there was no man on the face of the earth that held the keys of the Priesthood and the authority to ordain him. If there had been a man in the Greek, Roman, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal or any other church extant upon the face of the earth, who had the keys of the Priesthood, Joseph Smith would not have been ordained by an angel, because the keys would have been here and been bestowed by the man who held them. But you might have searched from pole to pole and traversed the wide expanse of the earth from continent to continent, and visited all the nations of the earth and enquired of them if there was a man in their midst who had the keys of the holy Priesthood and who claimed the authority which was exercised in olden times by Peter, James and John, and the rest of the servants of God; but you would have heard no response in the affirmative. None would have stood up and said, "I have this authority." Throughout Christendom, throughout the entire Mahomedan and Pagan world, you could not have