

held those keys. What wonderful consistency on the part of the Lord, that He should descend from Heaven and confer those keys on men here on the earth!

There are men who say that Joseph was an unlearned impostor; but how strange it is that, if an impostor, he should take the exact course, established in the economy of Heaven for the salvation of mankind; and that he should claim the authority, through the administration—first of John the Baptist, and then of Peter, James, and John, the apostles.

The keys of this Priesthood were bestowed never more to be taken from the earth; hence, in the revelation I have read, provision was made by the Lord that Joseph, in case he should fall, should ordain another in his stead, and he should have authority only to lay hands on and set apart someone to act in his place, in case he should prove unworthy. Thus, even from the beginning, the Lord seems to have held constantly before him the possibility of his falling away. He was a young man, and like every man, he was apt to get lifted up in the pride of his heart; therefore, God reminded him that he only held the keys as long as he should be faithful to the truth. But in a subsequent revelation, the Lord informed him that he should hold the keys in this life and in the life to come, and they should never be taken from him.

By virtue of the ordination he received, Joseph had the right and the authority to confer this Priesthood upon others. He called twelve Apostles, and they were ordained under his authority by the direction of the Lord, and those twelve were endowed with the keys. Previous to his death, the Prophet Joseph manifested great anxiety to see the temple completed, as most of you who were with the Church during his day, well know.

“Hurry up the work, brethren,” he used to say, “let us finish the temple; the Lord has a great endowment in store for you, and I am anxious that the brethren should have their endowments and receive the fullness of the Priesthood.” He urged the Saints forward continually, preaching unto them the importance of completing that building, so that therein the ordinances of life and salvation might be administered to the whole people, but especially to the quorums of the holy Priesthood; “then,” said he, “the Kingdom will be established, and I do not care what shall become of me.”

These were his expressions oft repeated in the congregations of the Saints, telling the brethren and sisters of the Church, and the world that he rolled the Kingdom on to the Twelve, and they would have to round up their shoulders and bear it off, as he was going to rest for awhile, and many other expressions of a like nature, the full meaning of which the Saints did not realize at the time.

Prior to the completion of the Temple, he took the Twelve and certain other men, who were chosen, and bestowed upon them a holy anointing, similar to that which was received on the day of Pentecost by the Twelve, who had been told to tarry at Jerusalem. This endowment was bestowed upon the chosen few whom Joseph anointed and ordained, giving unto them the keys of the holy Priesthood, the power and authority which he himself held, to build up the Kingdom of God in all the earth and accomplish the great purposes of our Heavenly Father; and it was by virtue of this authority, on the death of Joseph, that President Young, as President of the quorum of the Twelve, presided over the Church.

The enemies of the work of God had done their worst in murdering