

cients; and, therefore, it is our calling to complete the work that was inaugurated in former dispensations of God to man. At first Joseph Smith received the gift of seeing visions and the gift of translating dead languages by the Urim and Thummim, and when he had exercised himself in these gifts for a season, he received the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, together with his Brother Oliver, under the hands of John the Baptist, who was a resurrected being, and who was the last of the Jewish High Priests under the dispensation of the law, the only son of Zacharias the High Priest, and a child of promise, who was beheaded by order of Herod, having first performed his mission in preparing the way of the Lord, and having preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, testifying of Jesus that was to come, and baptizing those who received him, including the Savior himself. John having finished his mission, seals his testimony with his blood, rose again from the dead and continued to hold those keys of the Priesthood which he inherited from his fathers and which were confirmed upon him by the angel of the Lord when he was eight days old. And he was a fit and proper person to send to confer those keys of Priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver. In due course of time, as we read in the history which he has left, Peter, James and John appeared to him—it was at a period when they were being pursued by their enemies and they had to travel all night, and in the dawn of the coming day when they were weary and worn who should appear to them but Peter, James and John, for the purpose of conferring upon them the Apostleship, the keys of which they themselves had held while upon

the earth, which had been bestowed upon them by the Savior. This Priesthood conferred upon them by those three messengers embraces within it all offices of the Priesthood from the highest to the lowest. As has been often taught us that the keys of the presidency of this Apostleship represent the highest authority conferred upon man in the flesh. And by virtue of these keys of Priesthood the Prophet Joseph from time to time proceeded to ordain and set in order the Priesthood in its various quorums as we see it today in the Church. And if the question be asked why, and for what purpose, the answer would be the idea conveyed in the language I have quoted: In accordance with the design of the Lord to raise up a peculiar people to himself, a holy nation, a royal Priesthood—a kingdom of Priests, that shall be saviors upon Mount Zion, not only to preach the Gospel to the scattered remnants of Israel, but to save to the uttermost the nations of the Gentiles, inasmuch as they will listen and can be saved by the plan which God has provided.

The first important labor of this ministry is to go abroad and preach the Gospel to the nations. The Gospel of the kingdom must be preached to all people and nations and tongues before the end can come; and by the preaching of the word and the administering of the ordinances of the Gospel, is Israel sought out from among the nations among which they are scattered, especially the seed of Ephraim unto whom the first promises appertain, the promise of the keys of the Priesthood. For it must be remembered that of all the seed of Abraham whom the Lord chose to bear the keys pertaining to this holy order of Priesthood, the seed of Ephraim, the son of Joseph, were the first and