

the instrument to baptize His Son Jesus Christ in the waters of Jordan. He was a unique character in this respect. John was beheaded, as we know, to satisfy the priests and the murderous disposition of a wicked woman. When he died he held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood—that Priesthood, as I have said, which he derived from his great ancestor Aaron, the brother of Moses. He carried with him that authority, and there having been no bestowal of it from his day until the day of Joseph Smith, it became his legitimate right, when the authority was once more to be restored to the earth, to come and confer it. He did so. He laid his hands upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and ordained them to the authority which he himself held. He bestowed upon them the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, that he had exercised while in the flesh. When these men were thus ordained, they then had the right, which they exercised by the command of God, to baptize each other, and to baptize others, who might be willing to repent of their sins, for the remission of sins.

But this was not all. Something more was needed. This higher Priesthood of which I have read—this greater Priesthood, which holds the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, the keys of the knowledge of God—this greater Priesthood was still reserved. John did not possess it. “I indeed,” says he, “baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” John did not have that authority. But Jesus held it. And Jesus had bestowed it upon His Apostles, three of whom were prominent among the Apostles—one as

President, and the other two as Counselors associated with him—Peter, James and John. These three held the keys of this greater Priesthood, which they had received from the Son of God Himself. They came, as Joseph Smith testified, and laid their hands upon his head, and bestowed upon him the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the higher Priesthood, the Priesthood which is after the order of the Son of God. This authority was bestowed once more upon men by the administration of these heavenly beings who had been sent from God, the Eternal Father, to restore it once more to the earth.

Hence this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands alone. It stands disconnected entirely with every other organization on the face of the earth. It draws its power from no existing organization. It derives its authority, it derives its Priesthood from nothing that exists among men; but claiming that the Church had fallen, that the authority of the Holy Priesthood had been taken from the earth and withdrawn to God in heaven, because of the wickedness of men in slaying those who held this Priesthood, it was eminently proper and consistent that when it was once more restored to the earth it should be restored from heaven by the administration of holy angels.

Time will not permit me to dwell at any length upon the results of what has occurred since then. But I may say this, that a new order of things commenced on the earth from the day that Joseph Smith was ordained, and the day this Church was organized. Once more the Church was organized, having within it all the old authority—the Apostleship, the Priesthood, the gifts, the graces, the blessings that