

found a man who professed to have this authority. No; it had been driven from the midst of mankind by the violence of wicked men, who shed the blood of those who held those keys and that authority; and it had gone back to God who gave it, and dwelt there; for the men who held it dwelt in the presence of the Almighty.

Hence, when Joseph Smith desired baptism, though angels had visited him and had ministered unto him, though he had heard the voice of God and Jesus Christ, though he had been called to be a prophet, he had not the right and the authority to go forth and administer the ordinances of baptism, neither had any living soul, to do it legitimately. It was necessary that he should be ordained; it was necessary that those keys should be restored; and hence how proper it was that John, who held the keys and had been beheaded by a wicked king, should come and restore them? Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery testified that John came and laid his hands upon their heads and bestowed upon them the power and authority to administer in the holy ordinances of the Gospel.

When they were baptized, and had received the authority to administer in that ordinance they did not attempt to lay on hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost; that was a separate and distinct power from the Aaronic Priesthood. John says, in the 3rd chapter of Matthew, 11th verse, "I indeed 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 profess to have the authority to lay on hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. We read in no part of the Scriptures of his

exercising any such authority. He had the authority to baptize, the power which pertained unto his Priesthood, being a descendant of Aaron, and baptism was one of the ordinances which pertained to the Aaronic Priesthood; but he had not the right to lay on hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. It was necessary that that authority should be conferred; but who held that power in ancient days? Why, Peter, James, and John, who had been ordained by Jesus to the Melchizedek Priesthood, or the Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, and having exercised that authority while on the earth in the flesh, they came bearing the keys of that Melchizedek Priesthood, and laid their hands upon Joseph Smith and ordained him to the power which he subsequently held, as the President or head of this great and last dispensation of the fullness of times. By virtue of those keys he was empowered to lay hands on those who were baptized in the name of Jesus, by legal authority, and to confirm upon their heads—upon the heads of the honest in heart—the blessings of the Gospel, and by virtue of these keys they had the right to build up the Church of God in all its ancient purity and glory, and to preach the Gospel in its fullness, with its gifts and blessings, and to send men abroad as ministers of life and salvation to the nations of the world, the same as Peter and those associated with him. Said Jesus, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Peter therefore