

William Smith, two of the Twelve Apostles, some of whom are still living, and many others, both living and dead. Do you think you could convince those of this class that they had apostatized from the Church? No; these men are firmly convinced in their own minds that they never apostatized. They stoutly and indignantly deny that they ever apostatized or turned away from the Church, but say that Joseph Smith and the Twelve Apostles apostatized, and all the Church had apostatized and become very wicked, and that God has cut the Church off, but that Brother David Whitmer and Brother Wm. E. McClellan, William Smith, and others are the only members of the Church in good standing, and they are all at variance with each other. If I were to raise my hand against my Bishop, against the Twelve or the First Presidency, because I did not like them, that moment I should place myself in the position that these men now occupy, and that scores of others who have passed away have occupied, and say: "The Church has apostatized, Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, and John Taylor, have apostatized, but I am firm in the faith; all the people have gone astray because they will not acknowledge me." There is where the man who rebels against the authority of the Priesthood, and at the same time endeavors to hold on to the faith. Never is there but one appointed at a time to hold the keys of the kingdom of God pertaining to the earth. While Christ remained on the earth He held them; but when He departed He committed them to Peter, he being the President or Chief of the Apostles; and it was his right to direct and to receive revelation for the Church, and to give counsel to all the brethren.

After Satan and wicked men had prevailed against the Church, crucified the Savior and killed the Apostles, the keys of the kingdom were taken from the earth. John the Revelator describes it most clearly. And from that time until Joseph Smith was called by the voice of the Almighty, and ordained to hold those keys, no man held them upon the earth that we know of. It is true the Lord did appoint other Twelve upon this continent, and His Church flourished and prospered in this land for many years, but the Lord declared that Peter, James and John, and the Twelve that walked with Him at Jerusalem, held the Presidency over them. God may reveal himself to different nations, and establish among them the same Gospel and ordinances as He did anciently, if necessity require, but if these nations should be joined together there would be one head, and all the rest would be subordinate. So that from the time that the keys of this Priesthood were taken from the earth until they were received by Joseph Smith, no man ever possessed that Priesthood, nor the keys thereof, with authority to build up the Zion of God, and prepare a church or people for the second coming of Christ, "as a bride is adorned for the bridegroom;" unless it may have been among the lost tribes, yet of this we have no knowledge, but if so they would receive those keys necessary to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel for their salvation. We know not of their existence or the condition in which they are placed. The Gospel that is given to them is suited to their needs and condition, and is for their salvation, not ours, and yet it will be the same Gospel. And God will not call one from them to give to us the Priesthood, or to give