

scended in a certain lineage from father to son. But when Jesus came on the earth, He received the Melchizedek Priesthood, and that He might receive it in its fullness, Moses and Elias appeared to Him upon the mount of transfiguration. Jesus conferred that same Priesthood upon the Apostles. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." The same authority that Jesus had, He conferred upon His Apostles, and they conferred it upon others, as they were led by the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, which Christ sent to them after His departure.

Now, this Priesthood and Apostleship was held in the early Christian Church. But the people put the Apostles to death. They put to death other men who had been called to hold a position of this same authority and Priesthood, and darkness came into the world, and the people have gone down deeper and deeper into darkness, and further and further away from God as generations have rolled on. They have heaped to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they have turned away their ears from the truth, and turned unto fables. The consequence is that this Christian generation have departed from the power of God, from the authority of God, and from the Priesthood of God, and as they confess, "like sheep have gone astray."

But in our day God has restored the old church back again. He has restored the ancient Priesthood, the Priesthood that Moses had, that Abraham had, that Jesus had, that the Apostles had, and that of which Peter, James and John held the keys. God has restored it in the way that I have mentioned—by the ministration of angels from the heavens. The last named persons came down from on high and ordained

men to the Priesthood upon the earth, to wit, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and they, inspired by the Almighty, dictated by the Holy Ghost, the spirit of revelation, have called and ordained other men to the same authority—to go out into the world and preach the everlasting Gospel, and administer in the ordinances thereof. That is the power of this Priesthood.

Does this authority give men any power to bind the souls of men? Not in the least. Does it give men authority to coerce anybody in any shape, form or manner? Not in the least. On the contrary, we are told in the revelations of God, that the power of this Priesthood must not be used to coerce, not to bind the souls of men. It must be by persuasion, by declaration of the truth, by love unfeigned, by the inspiration that attends it, by the manifestation of the power of God that goes with it; it must be used in that way to convince those who hear and who are instructed and directed. They who have this authority and influence really have it in the power of God, and for the good and blessing and benefit of their fellows, and not to coerce them. There is no coercion or bondage in it. But some people will say, "Is there not some kind of coercion in your political affairs? You seem to be united in your voting, not only in your Church matters, but in your politics. How is it that, when your people go to the polls, nearly all of them—you may say all of them, for there are very few exceptions—vote the same ticket?" Well, we hold conference twice a year, in April and October, and upon these occasions the authorities of the Church—the President of the Church, his Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and all the general authorities—are placed before the