

reply to this, and say a few words in relation to the object and purposes that our Father in Heaven has had in view in revealing the gospel afresh to the children of men.

If it had not been for the great apostasy after the apostles had preached the gospel, during which the last vestige of the Church of Jesus Christ was rooted out of the earth by the wickedness of the children of men; if it had not been that the priesthood was taken from the earth and the power to preach the everlasting gospel in its fullness had ceased among the nations, I do not know that there would have been any necessity whatever for another revelation of the gospel, and its gifts, blessings, and powers, and the priesthood and apostleship in the latter days. But I think it can be proved beyond the power of controversy or reasonable contradiction that the gospel of the Son of God, as it was preached in the days of the apostles, has been entirely rooted out from among men. I do not mean the letter of it; we have that in part; but I mean the power to preach it and to administer its ordinances; the power to build up the church and kingdom of God; the power to speak in the name of the Lord; the power which characterized the ancient servants of the living God; the power which rested on the inspired apostles by which they could call upon God and receive revelation from heaven. That power has been rooted out from the earth. A form has been left it is true—in fact a great many forms; but what is the form without the power? What, for instance, is the use of preaching baptism for the remission of sins to the human family, if there is no person authorized and ordained from God to administer baptism to those who believe and repent? None at all. People might go forth and preach

baptism from age to age and from generation to generation, but who could be baptized, or what would be the use of it, unless there were authority to administer the ordinance?

What use would be the Lord's Supper, of which we are now partaking, if we should go and preach it all the days of our lives, provided there were no persons authorized to administer the ordinance? None at all. They could not partake of the ordinance acceptably before God. We could not receive the ordinance of baptism for the remission of sins, unless there were some person sent by new revelation to administer this ordinance to us.

Again, what use would be the ordinance of the laying on of hands in confirmation, as it was performed in the days of the ancient apostles? This is a part of the gospel, as well as faith and repentance. What use is it unless there is a man called of God to lay on hands and confirm the gift of the Holy Ghost upon the heads of baptized believers, as was done anciently?

Here is the great question between the Latter-day Saints, and the whole Christian world. It is one of the great fundamental principles at issue between us and the whole world. And it is something of the greatest importance. It is not one of the nonessentials; but it is something that concerns the whole human family, no matter whether they are religious people or irreligious; whether believers in the Bible or unbelievers, or whether they are of this, that or the other sect. This is not the question; but the great question is, has God authority among the nations to preach, to baptize, to administer the sacrament, to confirm by the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, to lay hands on the sick and command them in the name of Jesus