

This power and authority has not been on the earth for a long time. It is true that in a certain sense the church of Rome—the Catholic church as it is called—assumes to hold it. It claims that the pope of Rome is the successor of St. Peter. Yet, strange to say, the pope of Rome is not an Apostle, and does not claim to be an Apostle. He is the bishop of the church of Rome. He is recognized as the father of the church, so to speak. He is so sustained by the people. He does not claim to be an Apostle. Neither does he claim this power of revelation that Peter had. Peter was able to say, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." How did Peter know that? He knew it because it had been revealed to him from heaven. God had revealed that to Peter. He did not obtain it merely by reflection, by study, by searching the old Scriptures and learning about the Messiah that was to come. He may have done all that, but he could not know that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, except it had been revealed to him. Jesus laid that down as a principle of the faith. "No man knoweth the Son," said He, "but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." (Matthew xi: 27.) This principle of revelation, of communication direct from God to man, was the very life of the Church that Jesus Christ established when He was on earth. It was by it that Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ. It was by that revealing spirit that the members of the Church obtained the same testimony. As the Apostle Paul wrote concerning it, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." And the Holy Ghost is a spirit of revelation. It manifests the things of the Father and of the Son. It shows them unto men and women, if they are prepared to receive those impressions. This is that spirit of truth that Christ promised He would send after He left. He says: "If I -- not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." He told His Apostles not to go out to preach the Gospel to every creature until they had been endowed with power from on high. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem," said He, "until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke xxiv: 49.) They did so, and they received that glorious blessing and gift on the day of Pentecost, as we read in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. This spirit is the spirit of revelation. It communicates the things of God to men; and no man knoweth the things of God, but by the influence of that spirit. The light that comes down to us, or, at any rate appears to do so, from the sun; is that which illuminates our natural vision, that reveals to us the visible objects of creation, and without which we could see nothing, no matter how well our eyes might be organized or how strong our powers of vision might be, even so only by the Spirit of God, which is the light of God, which is the spirit of truth which is the spirit of revelation, can we fully comprehend the things of God.

This Spirit is the great need of all humanity—the Holy Ghost, the Spirit that comes from the presence of God to enlighten the souls of men. By that Spirit the things of God may be perceived as clearly as the visible objects of the physical creation are perceived by the natural eye with the aid of natural light. Without the natural light we cannot see natural things; without divine light, the Spirit of God, we cannot discern and comprehend spiritual things. Peter had received this Spirit in a sufficient outpouring that he was able to know that Jesus was the Christ. God had revealed it to him.

He knew it. He was not in doubt. It was not a mere matter of faith with him. He did not say, "I believe, I think, I hope, that thou art the Christ," but "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona," was the answer; "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." And Jesus went on to say: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

There has been a great deal of discussion in the Christian world in regard to the meaning of this remark of Jesus Christ. The Roman Catholics believe that the "rock" meant Peter. Peter, or Cephas, means a stone; and therefore, they say that on Peter the Church was to be built. Now, looking at that logically, reasonably, rationally, it seems a very poor conclusion, that Jesus would build His Church on a man—a weak, fallible man, who only a very short time afterwards denied that he knew Christ and cursed and swore that he "knew not the man!" Then, Peter only lived a short time on earth. He was crucified, we are told in history, with his head downward. If, therefore, the Church was built on a man, when the man was gone, the foundation on which the Church was built would go too, it would appear. But this idea is not prevalent in the Protestant part of Christendom. The ideas of the ministers of the various churches differ somewhat as to the meaning of this scripture.

Now, the Latter-day Saints view it in this light: They believe that the principle of revelation by which Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ is the very foundation and rock on which Christ's Church is built—the revelation of God to man, the spirit of revelation. Without it there can be no real Church of Christ. It is the life of it, the light of it, the power of it. Take it away, and only the dead form will be left. This spirit of revelation by which Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ is the very foundation of the Church of Christ. It is true that another figure is used in the scriptures, where it says the Church is built on the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone, but the Church, as I have said, and its ministers would be nothing without this spirit of revelation—the light that comes from God to the soul of man. Every man who stands as a minister in the Church of Christ needs it. Every member of the Church needs it. Without a person is born of that Spirit, as well as of the water, he cannot enter the kingdom of God, so Jesus taught. It was by that spirit that the Church of old was "baptized into one body, whether they were Jew or Gentile, bond or free;" they were all made to "drink into that one Spirit." It was the spirit of revelation. It was the same Spirit by which the old Prophets were inspired, by which they wrote the books which are contained in the Bible, and many other books that have been lost and are not compiled in this volume.

It was by that Spirit that the Apostles preached. It was under the influence of that Spirit that they ministered. It was because they ministered under the inspiration and power of the Holy Ghost that their ministrations were effectual and were acknowledged in heaven. And without that Spirit and its guidance; without the ordinances were performed under its influences, none of these things would be acknowledged on high. It was because the Apostles of old were led by that Spirit, and ministered by it, and attended to the ordinances of the Gospel in that Spirit, that the peo-

ple were baptized into it and that their acts performed on earth in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost were acknowledged in the heavens. When they baptized a repentant sinner who believed in Christ, for the remission of sins, his sins were loosed on earth and were loosed in heaven. When they laid hands upon the baptized believer, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," and sealed that Holy Spirit of promise upon his head, the Holy Ghost came into the enlightened soul—that repentant, baptized believer, and sealed him a member of Christ's Church on earth, and that was sealed and acknowledged and recorded in heaven. What they did on earth by the power of that Priesthood and authority which Christ gave to them was acknowledged above. No man can confer the Holy Ghost of himself. He may lay his hands upon a person and say, "Receive the Holy Ghost;" but that Holy Ghost is not at the beck and call of any one, unless it be by the power of God conferred upon man, and then it is just the same as though the Father had performed or spoken it. So the authority that Christ gave to Peter and to the Apostles in former times was acknowledged in heaven; and when they baptized people they received the remission of their sins in baptism, through the blood of Christ which was shed for the remission of sins, and they were washed and made clean; they were regenerated; their souls were born anew—born first of the water, and then, by the laying on of the hands of the servants of God, the Holy Ghost came upon them and they were renewed in their spirits, baptized in the Spirit of God. The acts of the servants of God in loosing their sins by baptism, and in sealing the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, were acknowledged in the eternal worlds and the power of God accompanied their administrations.

But after the time of the ancient Apostles this power departed from the earth. The wicked put to death those men upon whom Christ bestowed this power and authority; and those whom they had called to their aid under the enlightening power of the Holy Ghost, were put to death, or banished, or put in dungeons, or cast to wild beasts. In this way the lights that God had placed in the earth to illuminate mankind were put out by the hand of wickedness; and darkness came upon the earth, and gross darkness upon the people. They went into idolatry and marlolatry, and into isms, and notions and ideas, by the vagaries of men, by the teachings of men, by the wisdom—or, rather, the folly of men; and for hundreds of years the people were groping like blind men for the wall, being taught for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness and denying the power thereof—this power that I have read to you in this chapter. The Apostles of old predicted that the time would come when they would have such forms, but they would deny the power.

You who are present in this congregation this afternoon know very well that the established theory in all the ranks of modern Christendom is that the voice of revelation has ceased; that there is no power on earth now to bind and it shall be bound in heaven; no power on earth now to loose and it shall be loosed in heaven; but mankind are taught by the wisdom of men, and they actually think that is a better state of things than the condition in which the Christian Church was, in the primitive times. "Why," they say, "this is an age of Gospel blaze; this is an age of learning; this is an age of man's wisdom. We have