

One of the powers of the Priesthood is that whatsoever you shall loose on the earth shall be loosed in the heavens. Now, if a spirit does sincerely receive a messenger in that prison—if he believes his testimony and hearkens to all things that are said—if he believes that Jesus Christ has tasted death for every man—for those who die in ignorance, as well as for those who hear the Gospel in the flesh, he will be informed that in yonder world, or in the world he came from, there is authority given for men and women to be baptized for such.

Those messengers sent to preach in prison will most likely interrogate the prisoners in language something like this—Will you receive our testimony? Do you believe that Jesus Christ has tasted death for every man? Do you believe that through your repentance and faith, and through the ordinance of baptism in your behalf, by those that are living in yonder world, you may have a remission of your sins? If they believe it, and actually do repent, the ordinance of baptism administered here in their behalf will benefit them there. But, says one, this being baptized for another looks rather inconsistent to me. Why does it? Suppose a man is placed in a situation that he could not be baptized for himself, must his sins be retained unto him? Must he remain in prison throughout all ages of eternity, because he has lost his body, and has not the privilege of being baptized? Does that look inconsistent with the justice of God? Then why not another person administer in his behalf? How could you have atoned for yourselves? If it had not been for the agency of another being that acted for you and in your behalf, you must have perished eternally. You had forfeited every right and title to the blessings of the kingdom of God: all mankind were

shut out from the presence of God, and became dead as to things pertaining to righteousness: the sentence of the first death was placed upon father Adam and his children, which was irrevocable, if there had been no atonement.

We would have had to lay down these bodies, never to rise from the tomb, if there had been no atonement: our spirits would have been forever subject to that being that tempted our first parents, and we could not have helped ourselves. Hence, the Son of God came forth and made an atonement, not for himself, but for and in behalf and in the name of his younger brethren, that they, through his blood, and through certain conditions of the Gospel, might receive forgiveness of their sins. One of these conditions is baptism: but spirits are placed in a condition where they cannot receive this ordinance. And now, why not somebody have authority to go and administer for them and in their behalf? Not only Jesus has acted in behalf of the children of men, but it pertains to the same Priesthood and Apostleship, wherever it is placed, to act for and in behalf of the children of men: hence, Paul says, We beseech you, not in our own name, but in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. They came forth to officiate, for the children of men, that could not help themselves without authorized ministers.

Just so, the dead could not help themselves without messengers being sent to them in their prison houses, and without persons in the flesh being authorized to receive Gospel ordinances for them and in their behalf. How are we to know the individuals for whom we should be baptized? We know nothing about our ancestors very far back. We can, perhaps, go back to our grandfathers, and some of you may possibly trace your genealogies back seven or eight generations,