

Teachings Concerning
The Spirit World

Spirit World - The Next Phase of Existence

Joseph Smith

The righteous and the wicked [upon death] all go to the same world of spirits until the resurrection. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.310)

Brigham Young

- When you lay down this tabernacle, where are you going? Into the spiritual world. Are you going into Abraham's bosom. No, not any where nigh there, but into the spirit world. Where is the spirit world? It is right here. Do the good and evil spirits go together? Yes, they do. Do they both inhabit one kingdom? Yes, they do. Do they go to the sun? No. Do they go beyond the boundaries of this organized earth? No, they do not. They are brought forth upon this earth, for the express purpose of inhabiting it to all eternity. Where else are you going? No where else, only as you may be permitted. (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:369)
- Spirits, when they leave their bodies, do not dwell with the Father and the Son, but live in the Spirit world, where there are places prepared for them. Those who do honor to their tabernacles, and love and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, must put off this mortality, or they cannot put on immortality. This body must be changed, else it cannot be prepared to dwell in the glory of the Father. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.372)

Ezra Taft Benson

Another of the purposes of man's mortal probation is to pass through the experience we call death. This experience is necessary "to fulfill the merciful plan of the great Creator" (2 Nephi 9:6). In death, the body

returns to the earth or the elements from which it was created, and the spirit goes into the world of spirits -- there to wait the day of resurrection. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.30)

Orson F. Whitney

- That there is a Spirit World, and that it is closely connected with the material world—the one we now inhabit—has been a tenet in the religious philosophy of wise and good men all down the ages. In the minds of many people, the Spirit World and Heaven are synonymous terms, indicating one and the same place. But in reality there is a wide difference between them. A State of rest, such as the spirit life is understood to be for the righteous—though "rest" should not be interpreted as idleness or want of occupation—might easily pass for heaven, when contrasted with this life of pain, sorrow and trouble. But that is only relative. It is not saying too much—indeed it may be saying too little—to affirm that there is just as much difference between the spirit world and heaven, as between the mortal and the spiritual phases of man's existence. (*Cowley & Whitney on Doctrine*, p 483)
- Thus we see that the Spirit World is not Heaven, except in a relative sense, and then only in part. It is a temporary abode for God's children, while undergoing processes of purification and development, as a preparation for better things beyond. Heaven, on the other hand—heaven in the highest degree—is the permanent home of the perfected and glorified. (*Cowley & Whitney on Doctrine*, p 489)

Spirit World Part of the Second Estate

Neal A. Maxwell

We tend to overlook the reality that the spirit world and paradise are part, really, of the second estate. The work of the Lord, so far as the second estate is concerned, is completed before the Judgment and the

Resurrection.

Since those who go to the celestial kingdom include, as revealed, those who "overcome by faith" (D&C 76:53), the same efforts and triumph would need to occur in the spirit world before they receive resurrection and

the entitlement to enter the celestial kingdom. . . .

He gave us our spirit birth, bringing the first estate to all. He gave the gift to us of mortality, or the second estate, where all might be “added upon,” leaving one-

third of the host free to be rebels! (Abraham 3:26; Revelation 12:4). He provides in the spirit world a continuum of mortality’s probation, the great opportunity for all. (*The Promise of Discipleship*, p. 111)

We Ought To Learn What Has Been Revealed About the Spirit World

Neal A. Maxwell

Of course, we still lack many details [about the spirit world] and would like to know more. Even so, we ought to pay closer attention to what has been given about the

spirit world so that we can truly “cite [our] minds forward” in appropriate ways (Alma 13:1). [*The Promise of Discipleship*, p. 105]

Where is the Spirit World?

Brigham Young

- Is the spirit world here? It is not beyond the sun, but is on this earth that was organized for the people that have lived and that do and will live upon it. No other people can have it, and we can have no other kingdom until we are prepared to inhabit this eternally. (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:372)
- When you lay down this tabernacle, where are you going? Into the spiritual world. Are you going into Abraham’s bosom? No, not anywhere nigh there but into the spirit world. Where is the spirit world? It is right here. Do the good and evil spirits go together? Yes, they do. Do they both inhabit one kingdom? Yes, they do. Do they go to the sun? No. Do they go beyond the boundaries of the organized earth? No, they do not. They are brought forth upon this earth, for the express purpose of inhabiting it to all eternity. Where else are you going? Nowhere else, only as you may be permitted. (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:369)
- Here the inquiry will naturally arise, when our spirits leave our bodies where do they go to? I will tell you. Will I locate them? Yes, if you wish me to. They do not pass out of the organization of this earth on which we live. You read in the Bible that when the spirit leaves the body it goes to God who gave it. . . . It reads that the spirit goes to God who gave it. Let me render this Scripture a little plainer; when the spirits leave their bodies they are in the presence of our Father and God, they are prepared then to see, hear and understand spiritual things. But where is the spirit world? It is incorporated within this celestial system. Can you see it with your natural eyes? No. Can you see spirits in this room? No. Suppose the Lord should touch your eyes that you might see,

could you then see the spirits? Yes, as plainly as you now see bodies, as did the servant of Elijah. If the Lord would permit it, and it was His will that it should be done, you could see the spirits that have departed from this world, as plainly as you now see bodies with your natural eyes. (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:368)

Parley P. Pratt

As to its [the spirit world] location, it is here on the very planet where we were born; or, in other words, the earth and other planets of a like sphere, have their inward or spiritual spheres, as well as their outward, or temporal. The one is peopled by temporal tabernacles, and the other by spirits. A vail is drawn between the one sphere and the other, whereby all the objects in the spiritual sphere are rendered invisible to those in the temporal. (*Key to the Science of Theology*, pp.129-130)

Harold B. Lee

Where is the spirit world? Is it away up in the heavens? That isn’t what the scriptures and our brethren explain. They have told us the spirit world is right here round about us, and the only spirits who can live here are those who are assigned to fill their missions here on earth. This is the spirit world. And if our eyes could be opened we could see those who have departed from us—a father, mother, brother, a sister, a child. We could see them, and sometimes when our physical senses are asleep, sometimes our spiritual self—and we have ears, spiritual ears, and spiritual eyes—sometimes they will be very keen and awake, and a departed one may come while we are lying asleep and come into our consciousness. We’ll feel an impression. We’ll wake up.

Where does it come from? It comes from the spirits of those whom we are sealed to. (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 58)

Meaning of the Phrase, “Spirits Return to God who gave it”

Alma 40 :11

Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection--Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.

Harold B. Lee

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). What does it mean to return to that God who gave us life? I had a call from someone who was disturbed about that question. He said, “Now, does that mean all the wicked will return back into the presence of God? How shall they be worthy to stand in the presence of the Lord? Now, how could that be possible?” Well, that started me on a bit of thinking, and then I found the prophet Alma explaining to his son Corianton this same matter. You will find in the fortieth chapter of Alma how Alma explained this matter to his son Corianton. He said: “Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life” (Alma 40:11). Now you note the difference? In one place it suggests that we shall enter into the very presence of; In the next place it says that we shall go home to *that* God who gave *us* life.

In discussing this matter I have found the quotation from President Brigham Young contained in his *Discourses*, which says: “[The scripture] reads that the spirit goes to God who gave it. Let me render this scripture a little plainer; when the spirits leave their bodies they are in the presence of our Father and God, they are prepared then to see, hear and understand spiritual things. But where is the spirit world?” He answers by saying this:

“If we go back to our mother country, the States, we there find the righteous, and we there find the wicked; if we go to California, we there find the righteous and the wicked, all dwelling together; and when we go beyond this veil, and leave our bodies which were taken from

mother earth, and which must return, our spirits will pass beyond the veil; we go where both Saints and sinners go; they all go to one place.

“If the wicked wish to escape from his presence, they must go where he is not, where he does not live, where his influence does not preside. To find such a place is impossible, except they go beyond the bounds of time and space.” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], pp. 376-77.)

As I understand what President Young is saying, when we go home to God, it is just like going back to our home country. We may not go into the presence of the governor of the state where we live, but we will go to the home country, and there we shall find our level among the people with whom we are most accustomed to associate. (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, pp. 57-58)

Joseph Fielding Smith

These words of Alma as I understand them, do not intend to convey the thought that all spirits go back into the presence of God for an assignment to a place of peace or a place of punishment and before him receive their individual sentence. “Taken home to God,” (Compare Ecclesiastics 12:7.) simply means that their mortal existence has come to an end, and they have returned to the world of spirits, where they are assigned to a place according to their works with the just or with the unjust, there to await the resurrection. “Back to God” is a phrase which finds an equivalent in many other well known conditions. For instance: a man spends a stated time in some foreign mission field. When he is released and returns to the United States, he may say, “It is wonderful to be back home”; yet his home may be somewhere in Utah or Idaho or some other part of the West. (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 2: 84)

George Q. Cannon

Alma, when he says that “the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body . . . are taken home to that God who gave them life,” has the idea doubtless, in his mind that our God is omnipresent—not in His own personality but through His minister, the Holy Spirit. He does not intend to convey the idea that they are immediately ushered into the personal presence

of God. He evidently uses that phrase in a qualified sense. . . . Solomon, makes such a similar statement: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the

spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The same idea is frequently expressed by the Latter-day Saints. (*Gospel Truths*, p. 73.)

Separation of Spirits in Spirit World

Alma 40:12-14

12 And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow.

13 And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil--for behold, they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good; therefore the spirit of the devil did enter into them, and take possession of their house--and these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity, being led captive by the will of the devil.

14 Now this is the state of the souls of the wicked, yea, in darkness, and a state of awful, fearful looking for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God upon them; thus they remain in this state, as well as the righteous in paradise, until the time of their resurrection.

Joseph F. Smith (D&C 138)

12 And there were gathered together in one place an innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality;

13 And who had offered sacrifice in the similitude of the great sacrifice of the Son of God, and had suffered tribulation in their Redeemer's name.

14 All these had departed the mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection, through the grace of God the Father and his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

15 I beheld that they were filled with joy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of their deliverance was at hand.

16 They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world, to declare their redemption from the bands of death.

17 Their sleeping dust was to be restored unto its perfect frame, bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh upon them, the spirit and the body to be united never again to be divided, that they might receive a fulness of joy.

18 While this vast multitude waited and conversed, rejoicing in the hour of their deliverance from the chains

of death, the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful;

19 And there he preached to them the everlasting gospel, the doctrine of the resurrection and the redemption of mankind from the fall, and from individual sins on conditions of repentance.

20 But unto the wicked he did not go, and among the ungodly and the unrepentant who had defiled themselves while in the flesh, his voice was not raised;

21 Neither did the rebellious who rejected the testimonies and the warnings of the ancient prophets behold his presence, nor look upon his face.

22 Where these were, darkness reigned, but among the righteous there was peace;

Separation of Righteous and Wicked Upon Death

Joseph F. Smith

The spirits of all men, as soon as they depart from this mortal body, whether they are good or evil, we are told in the Book of Mormon, are taken home to that God who gave them life, where there is a separation, a partial judgment, and the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they expand in wisdom, where they have respite from all their troubles, and where care and sorrow do not annoy. The wicked, on the contrary, have no part nor portion in the Spirit of the Lord, and they are cast into outer darkness, being led captive, because of their own iniquity, by the evil one. And in this space between death and the resurrection of the body, the two classes of souls remain, in happiness or in misery, until the time which is appointed of God that the dead shall come forth and be reunited both spirit and body, and be brought to stand before God, and be judged according to their works. This is the final judgment. (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 448)

Ezra Taft Benson

Even before the fall of Adam, which ushered death into this world, our Heavenly Father had prepared a place for the spirits who would eventually depart this mortal life. At the time of Jesus' death, the spirit world was occupied by hosts of our Father's children who had

died – from Adam’s posterity to the death of Jesus – both the righteous and the wicked. There were two grand divisions in the world of spirits. Spirits of the righteous (the just) had gone to paradise, a state of happiness, peace, and restful work. The spirits of the wicked (the unjust) had gone to prison, a state of darkness and misery. (See Alma 40: 12-15.) Jesus went only to the righteous – to paradise. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.37)

Joseph Fielding Smith

All spirits of men after death return to the spirit world. There, as I understand it, *the righteous -- meaning those who have been baptized and who have been faithful --* are gathered in one part and all the others in another part of the spirit world. This seems to be true from the vision given to President Joseph F. Smith and found in *Gospel Doctrine*. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:230; emphasis original)

A State of Rest for the Righteous

Neal A. Maxwell

Some derive from these words that *rest* means no work and merely languid passivity. In fact, the *rest* described is from the troubles, cares, and sorrows of this world.

To begin with, a certain peacefulness and restfulness will occur in paradise, because the faithful will see things with a more complete, restful, and reassuring perspective. Nonetheless, the faithful will soon be caught up fully and be “anxiously engaged” in the vast work underway in all the spirit world (D&C 58:27). So many of the cares and demands of the world which press upon us here and now, including doing the chores of this world, will not dominate us there. Hence, paradise will be, comparatively, “a state of peace.” Furthermore, the spirit body will not suffer certain of the ills and constraints which now beset the mortal body. The result will be added sexfulness there, as described by Elder John Taylor: “[Death] this dark shadow and valley is so trifling . . . [one is] passed from a state of sorrow [and] grief, . . . into a state of existence where I can enjoy life to the fullest extent as far as that can be done without a body. . . . I thirst no more, I want to sleep no more, I hunger no more, I tire no more, I run, I walk, I labor, . . . nothing like pain or weariness, I am full of life, full of vigor” (“Discourse by Elder John Taylor.” *Deseret News*, 28 July 1874, p. 1). [*The Promise of Discipleship*, p. 106]

Wicked Suffer in Prison

Joseph Fielding Smith

There is an expression that the Lord made to Enoch in regard to those who should be destroyed in the flood, in the days of Noah.

He said he had prepared a prison for them, because of their disobedience, and would shut them in it. There they would remain until the time when they should be visited by the Son of God, when he should again carry to them that message which they rejected from Noah.

We read in the scriptures that the Son of God, after his death, went to the spirits in prison and taught them the principles of the gospel, that they might live according to God in the spirit and be judged according to men in the flesh. Those very same spirits, who were disobedient in the days of Noah, heard the voice of the Son of God when he went to them, while his body was in the tomb, and all who were willing to receive his testimony and obey his commandments received relief from their torment.

But from the time of their death in the flood until the time of the crucifixion of the Savior, they were shut up in the prison house in torment, suffering the penalty of their transgressions, because they refused to hear a prophet of the Lord – and so it will be with every man who rejects the gospel, whether he lived anciently or whether he lives now; it makes no difference. *Every man who rejects the testimony of Jesus, who denies the truth, who refuses to receive the testimony as it is declared unto him by the elders of Israel, shall be punished and shall be placed in the prison house, and there he shall stay until he has paid the penalty of his transgressions.* (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:228-229; emphasis original)

Righteous Free From Earthly Troubles in Paradise

Joseph Fielding Smith

It is the righteous who go to paradise. It is the righteous who cease from those things that trouble. Not so with the wicked. They remain in torment. They have their anguish of soul intensified, if you please, when they get on the other side, because they are constantly recalling to mind their evil deeds. They are aware of their neglected opportunities, privileges in which they might have served the Lord and received a reward of restfulness instead of a reward of punishment. And so they remain in torment until the time comes for their deliverance. . . .

The righteous, those who have kept the commandments of the Lord, are not shut up in any such

place, but are in happiness in paradise. They cease from all this trouble, and trial, and tribulation, and anguish of soul. They are free from all these torments, because they have been true and faithful to their covenants. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:229-230)

The Gulf Bridged Between Paradise and Prison

Joseph Fielding Smith

- We hear the objection made, from time to time, that Jesus did not come to save the dead, for he most emphatically declared himself that there was an impassable gulf that separated the righteous spirits from the wicked. In defense of their position they quote the words in Luke: "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

These words, according to the story, were spoken by Abraham's spirit to the rich man who raised his eyes and asked that Lazarus might go touch his lips and relieve his torment. Abraham replied that it could not be for there was a gulf fixed between them that the spirit of no man could pass. Therefore, say the objectors to the doctrine of universal salvation, "It is quite evident that the righteous and the wicked who are dead cannot visit each other, hence there is no salvation for the dead."

This was true before the days that Jesus atoned for sin, which is plainly shown in the passage from the Book of Moses previously quoted. And it was at this period this event occurred. However, Christ came and through his death bridged that gulf, proclaimed liberty to the captives, and the opening of this prison door to those who sat in darkness and captivity.

From that time forth this gulf is bridged so that the captives, after they have paid the full penalty of their misdeeds, satisfied justice, and have accepted the gospel of Christ, having the ordinances attended to in their behalf by their living relatives or friends, receive the passport that entitles them to cross the gulf. (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:158; emphasis original)

- Paradise is not heaven, or the place where God dwells, but a place of departed spirits. Why the belief should be so general that the thief went to heaven with the Savior is rather strange, since Jesus did not go there until after his resurrection. This fact he disclosed to Mary at the tomb. From the time his

spirit left his body until he arose from the tomb, Jesus was with the thief in paradise, according to his promise. There the Savior opened the door for the salvation of the dead. Before that time the unworthy dead were shut up in prison and were not visited. (Moses 7:38-39; Isaiah 24:22.) We have good reason to believe that the righteous spirits in paradise did not mingle with the unrighteous spirits before the visit of our Lord to the spirit world. He declared that there was a gulf fixed that could not be crossed which separated the righteous from the unrighteous, therefore there was no sound of the voice of prophets and the Gospel was not declared among the wicked until Christ went into that world before his resurrection. He it was who opened the prison doors. – Isaiah 42:6-7; 61:1.

President Brigham Young declared that "Jesus was the first man that ever went to preach to the spirits in prison, holding the keys of the Gospel of salvation to them. Those keys were delivered to him in the day and hour that he went into the spirit world, and with them he opened the door of salvation to the spirits in prison." (J.D. 4:285.) This is in full accord with the scriptures. President Joseph F. Smith, in the vision he beheld of the spirit world, confirmed this view. (*Gos. Doc.*, pp. 596-601.) In that world Christ taught the righteous spirits and commissioned them to carry his message and sent them forth among the unbaptized dead. In this way he fulfilled his promise made to Isaiah that he would preach to the spirits of the dead and open their prison doors that they might go free. (*The Way to Perfection*, p.315-316)

Bruce R. McConkie

- The spirit prison is hell, that portion of the spirit world where the wicked dwell. (Moses 7:37-39.) Before Christ bridged the gulf between paradise and hell – so that the righteous could mingle with the wicked and preach them the gospel – the wicked in hell were confined to locations which precluded them from contact with the righteous in paradise. Abraham told the rich man in hell that between him and Lazarus (who was in paradise) there was a great gulf fixed so that none could go from paradise to hell or from hell to paradise. (Luke 16:19-31.) Now that the righteous spirits in paradise have been commissioned to carry the message of salvation to the wicked spirits in hell, there is a certain amount of mingling together of the good and bad spirits. Repentance opens the prison doors to the spirits in hell; it enables those bound with the chains of hell to free themselves from darkness, unbelief, ignorance, and sin. As rapidly as

they can overcome these obstacles – gain light, believe truth, acquire intelligence, cast off sin, and break the chains of hell – they can leave the hell that imprisons them and dwell with the righteous in the peace of paradise. (*Mormon Doctrine*, p.755)

- By spirit world is meant the abiding place of disembodied spirits, those who have passed from pre-existence to mortality and have also gone on from this temporal world to another sphere to await the day of their resurrection, final redemption, and judgment. This world is divided into two parts: paradise which is the abode of the righteous, and hell which is the abode of the wicked. (Alma 40:11-14.) Until the death of Christ these two spirit abodes were separated by a great gulf, with the intermingling of their respective inhabitants strictly forbidden. (Luke

16:19-31.) After our Lord bridged the gulf between the two (1 Pet. 3:18-21; Moses 7:37-39), the affairs of his kingdom in the spirit world were so arranged that righteous spirits began teaching the gospel to wicked ones. (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., pp. 473-476.) Thus, although there are two spheres within the one spirit world, there is now some intermingling of the righteous and the wicked who inhabit those spheres; and when the wicked spirits repent, they leave their prison-hell and join the righteous in paradise. Hence, we find Joseph Smith saying: “Hades, sheol, paradise, spirits in prison, are all one: it is a world of spirits. The righteous and the wicked all go to the same world of spirits until the resurrection.” (*Teachings*, p. 310.) [*Mormon Doctrine*, p.762]

Conditions in the Spirit World

Description of the Spirit World

Heber C. Kimball

[*From a talk given at the funeral of Jedediah M. Grant*] I went to see him one day last week . . . I laid my hands upon him and blessed him . . . he raised himself up and talked for about an hour as busily as he could, telling me what he had seen and what he understood . . . He said to me, brother Heber, I have been into the spirit world two nights in succession, and, of all the dreads that ever came across me, the worst was to have to again return to my body, through I had to do it. But O, says he, the order and government that were there! When in the spirit world, I saw the order of righteous men and women; beheld them organized in their several grades, and there appeared to be no obstruction to my vision; I could see every man and woman in their grade and order. I looked to see whether there was any disorder there, but there was none; neither could I see any death nor any darkness, disorder or confusion. He said that the people he there saw were organized in family capacities; and when he looked at them he saw grade after grade, and all were organized and in perfect harmony. He would mention one item after another and say, “Why, it is just as brother Brigham says it is; it is just as he has told us many a time.”

That is a testimony as to the truth of what brother Brigham teaches us, and I know it is true, from what little light I have.

He saw the righteous gathered together in the spirit world, and there were no wicked spirits among them. He saw his wife; she was the first person that came to him.

He saw many that he knew, but did not have conversation with any except his wife Caroline. She came to him, and he said that she looked beautiful and had their little child, that died on the Plains, in her arms, and said, “Mr. Grant, here is little Margaret; you know that the wolves ate her up, but it did not hurt her; here she is all right.”

“To my astonishment,” he said, “when I looked at families there was a deficiency in some, there was a lack, for I saw families that would not be permitted to come and dwell together, because they had not honored their calling here.”

He asked his wife Caroline where Joseph and Hyrum and Father Smith and others were; she replied, “they have gone away ahead, to perform and transact business for us.” The same as when brother Brigham and his brethren left Winter Quarters and came here to search out a home; they came to find a location for their brethren.

He also spoke of the buildings he saw there, remarking that the Lord gave Solomon wisdom and poured gold and silver into his hands that he might display his skill and ability, and said that the temple erected by Solomon was much inferior to the most ordinary buildings he saw in the spirit world.

In regard to gardens, says brother Grant, “I have seen good gardens on this earth, but I never saw any to compare with those that were there. I saw flowers of numerous kinds, and some with from fifty to a hundred different colored flowers growing upon one stalk.” We have many kinds of flowers on the earth, and I suppose those very articles came from heaven, or they would not

be here.

After mentioning the things that he had seen, he spoke of how much he disliked to return and resume his body, after having seen the beauty and glory of the spirit world, where the righteous spirits are gathered together. (*Journal of Discourses*, 4:136)

Brigham Young

When the breath leaves the body, your life has not become extinct; your life is still in existence. And when you are in the spirit world, everything there will appear as natural as things now do. Spirits will be familiar with spirits in the spirit world -- will converse, behold, and exercise every variety of communication with one another as familiarly and naturally as while here in tabernacles. There, as here, all things will be natural, and you will understand them as you now understand natural things. You will there see that those spirits we are speaking of are active; they sleep not. And you will learn that they are striving with all their might -- laboring and toiling diligently as any individual would to accomplish an act in this world -- to destroy the children of men. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.380)

Veil of Forgetfulness

Neal A. Maxwell

- The veil of forgetfulness of the first estate apparently will not be suddenly, automatically, and totally removed at the time of our temporal death. This veil, a condition of our entire second estate, is associated with and is part of our time or mortal trial, testing, proving, and overcoming by faith--and thus will continue in some key respects into the spirit world. (*The Promise of Discipleship*, p. 111)
- We do not now know precisely how God handles things in the spirit world so that life there is an extension of walking by faith. Death does not suddenly bestow upon the disbeliever full awareness of all reality, thereby obviating the need for any faith. Instead, what follows death is a continuum of the basic structure in mortality--until the Judgment Day, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ (see Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10; D&C 76:110). Until then, we “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). How will God ensure this condition in the spirit world? We do not know. Yet He has certainly so handled the second estate in relation to the first estate, hasn’t He? The memories of the first estate are not accessible in the second estate. The spirit world will be so arranged that there will be no legitimate complaints

later over the justice and mercy of God (see Mosiah 27:31; Alma 12:15). Furthermore, the gospel, when preached in the spirit world, will bring the same responses as here: “some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not” (Acts 28:24). [*That Ye May Believe*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, pp. 93-94]

Growth and Progression in the Spirit World

Spencer W. Kimball

- The meaning of death has not changed. It releases a spirit for growth and development and places a body in the repair shop of Mother Earth, there to be recast, remolded into a perfect body, an immortal glorious temple, clean, whole, perfected, and ready for its occupant for eternity. (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p.45)
- As Jesus’ spirit left his body hanging on the cross and later lying in the tomb, so shall our spirits eventually leave our bodies lying lifeless. As Jesus preached to spirits in the spirit world in his spiritual state, so shall our spirits continue active and expand and develop. (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p.44)

Wilford Woodruff

Joseph Smith visited me a great deal after his death, and taught me many important principles. . . . Joseph Smith continued visiting myself and others up to a certain time, and then it stopped. . . . I have had many interviews with Brother Joseph until the last fifteen or twenty years of my life; I have not seen him for that length of time. . . . But what I was going to say is this: the thought came to me that Brother Joseph had left the work of watching over this Church and kingdom to others, and that he had gone ahead, and that he had left this work to men who have lived and labored with us since he left us. This idea manifested itself to me, that such men advance in the spirit world. And I believe myself that these men who have died and gone into the spirit world had this mission left with them; that is, a certain portion of them, to watch over the Latter-day Saints. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p.287-290)

Brigham Young

- We are in the school and keep learning, and we do not expect to cease learning while we live on earth; and when we pass through the veil, we expect still to continue to learn and increase our fund of information. That may appear a strange idea to some; but it is for the plain and simple reason that we are

not capacitated to receive all knowledge at once. We must therefore receive a little here and a little there. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.91)

- We have more friends behind the veil than on this side, and they will hail us more joyfully than you were ever welcomed by your parents and friends in this world; and you will rejoice more when you meet them than you ever rejoiced to see a friend in this life; and then we shall go on from step to step, from rejoicing to rejoicing, and from one intelligence and power to another, our happiness becoming more and more exquisite and sensible as we proceed in the words and powers of life. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, pp.379-380)

Ezra Taft Benson

On the other side of the veil, the righteous are taught their duties preparatory to the time when they will return with the Son of Man to earth when He comes again, this time to judge every man according to his works. These righteous spirits are close by us. They are organized according to priesthood order in family organizations as we are here; only there they exist in a more perfect order. This was revealed to the Prophet Joseph. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, pp.35-36)

Joseph F. Smith

Some people dream, you know, and think, and teach that all the glory they ever expect to have in the world to come is to sit in the light and glory of the Son of God, and sing praises and songs of joy and gratitude all their immortal lives. We do not believe in any such things. We believe that every man will have his work to do in the other world, just as surely as he had it to do here, and a greater work than he can do here. We believe that we are on the road of advancement, of development in knowledge, in understanding, and in every good thing, and that we will continue to grow, advance, and develop throughout the eternities that are before us. That is what we believe. (*Gospel Doctrine*, p.432)

Neal A. Maxwell

Much of our continuing to work out our own salvation in the spirit world consists of our further correcting our personal deficiencies. If, for instance, we fully accept Christ as our Savior, this includes accepting the fact that He asks us to become more like Him (see 3 Nephi 27:27). Clearly, in this rigorous process, not all gets done on this side of the veil of death. (*That Ye May Believe*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, p 93)

Orson Pratt

When I speak of the future state of man, and the situation of our spirits between death and the resurrection, I long for the experience and knowledge to be gained in that state, as well as this. We shall learn many more things there; we need not suppose our five senses connect us with all the things of heaven, and earth, and eternity, and space; we need not think that we are conversant with all the elements of nature, through the medium of the senses God has given us here. Suppose He should give us a sixth sense, a seventh, an eighth, a ninth, or a fiftieth. All these different senses would convey to us new ideas, as much so as the senses of tasting, smelling, or seeing communicate different ideas from that of hearing. (*Journal of Discourses*, 2:247)

Orson F. Whitney

Thus we see that the Spirit World is not Heaven, except in a relative sense, and then only in part. It is a temporary abode for God's children, while undergoing processes of purification and development, as a preparation for better things beyond. Heaven, on the other hand—heaven in the highest degree—is the permanent home of the perfected and glorified. (*Cowley & Whitney on Doctrine*, p 489)

Things will Appear Natural

Brigham Young

When the breath leaves the body, your life has not become extinct; your life is still in existence. And when you are in the spirit world, everything there will appear as natural as things now do. Spirits will be familiar with spirits in the spirit world—will converse, behold, and exercise every variety of communication one with another as familiarly and naturally as while here in tabernacles. There, as here, all things will be natural, and you will understand them as you now understand natural things. (*Journal of Discourses*, 7:239)

Ignorance Continues into Spirit World

Parley P. Pratt

Now, how are they situated in the spirit world? If we reason from analogy, we should at once conclude that things exist there after the same pattern. I have not the least doubt but there are spirits there who have dwelt there a thousand years, who, if we could converse with them face to face, would be found as ignorant of the truths, the ordinances, powers, keys, Priesthood, resurrection, and eternal life of the body, in short, as ignorant of the fulness of the Gospel, with its hopes and

consolations, as is the Pope of Rome, or the Bishop of Canterbury, or as are the Chiefs of the Indian tribes of Utah. (*Journal of Discourses*, 1:10-11)

Will Non-Believers Change Suddenly?

Neal A. Maxwell

- Yet, do people who have been wicked and agnostic, when they pass through the veil of death, suddenly and fully realize that there is, in spite of their earlier skepticism, life beyond the grave? Do they thus have an advantage over those who have had to develop faith in mortality concerning that prospect? If, for instance, the same attitudes with which we die persist, then there will be no automatic or immediate flip-flop into a totally different way of thinking. Such can occur there, just as it does here, upon our accepting the gospel and responding with both faith and repentance (Alma 34:34). Again, our existence in the spirit world is part of the mortal sector of our Father's plan which culminates with the Judgment and the Resurrection. (*The Promise of Discipleship*, p. 111)
- Death does not suddenly bestow upon the disbeliever full awareness of all reality, thereby obviating the need for any faith. Instead, what follows death is a continuum of the basic structure in mortality--until the Judgment Day, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ (see Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10; D&C 76:110). Until then, we "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). How will God ensure this condition in the spirit world? We do not know. Yet He has certainly so handled the second estate in relation to the first estate, hasn't He? The memories of the first estate are not accessible in the second estate. The spirit world will be so arranged that there will be no legitimate complaints later over the justice and mercy of God (see Mosiah 27:31; Alma 12:15). Furthermore, the gospel, when preached in the spirit world, will bring the same responses as here: "some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not" (Acts 28:24). [*That Ye May Believe*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, pp. 93-94]

Unencumbered by Physical Ailments in Spirit World

Brigham Young

- When we pass into the spirit world we shall possess a measure of his power. Here, we are continually troubled with ills and ailments of various kinds. In

the spirit world we are free from all this and enjoy life, glory, and intelligence; and we have the Father to speak to us, Jesus to speak to us, and angels to speak to us, and we shall enjoy the society of the just and the pure who are in the spirit world until the resurrection. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, pp. 380-381)

- The brightness and glory of the next apartment is inexpressible. It is not encumbered so that when we advance in years we have to be stubbing along and be careful lest we fall down. We see our youth, even, frequently stubbing their toes and falling down. But yonder, how different! They move with ease and like lightning. If we want to visit Jerusalem, or this, that, or the other place -- and I presume we will be permitted if we desire -- there we are, looking at its streets. If we want to behold Jerusalem as it was in the days of the Savior; or if we want to see the Garden of Eden as it was when created, there we are, and we see it as it existed spiritually, for it was created first spiritually and then temporally, and spiritually it still remains. And when there we may behold the earth as at the dawn of creation, or we may visit any city we please that exists upon its surface. If we wish to understand how they are living here on these western islands, or in China, we are there; in fact, we are like the light of the morning, or, I will not say the electric fluid but its operations on the wires. God has revealed some little things, with regard to his movements and power, and the operation and motion of the lightning furnish a fine illustration of the ability of the Almighty. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.380)

Spirits are of all Variety and Grades

Parley P. Pratt

In this spirit world there are all the varieties and grades of intellectual being which exist in the present world. For instance, Jesus Christ and the thief on the cross, both went to the same place, and found themselves associated in the spirit world.

But the one was there in all the intelligence, happiness, benevolence, and charity, which characterized a teacher, a messenger, anointed to teach glad tidings to the meek, to bind up the brokenhearted, to comfort those who mourned, to preach deliverance to the captive, and open the prison to those who were bound; or, in other words, to preach the Gospel to the spirits in prison, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh; while the other was there as a thief, who had expired on the cross for crime, and who was guilty, ignorant,

uncultivated, and unprepared for resurrection, having need of remission of sins, and to be instructed in the science of salvation. . . .

The times of sojourn of a spirit in the world of spirits, and also its privileges and degrees of enjoyment or suffering, while there, depend much on its preparations while in the flesh. (*Key to the Science of Theology*, p.130, 133)

Spirits Have Remembrances of Mortal Life – Both Good and Evil

Orson Pratt

Do you not suppose the spirits can have power to remember in that world as well as in this? Yes, they certainly can. Have you never read in the Book of Mormon, where it informs us, that every act of our lives will be fresh upon the memory, and we shall have a clear consciousness of all our doings in this life? Yes; we have read that in the Book of Mormon--“a clear consciousness.”

We read or learn a thing by observation yesterday, and to-day or to-morrow it is gone, unless it be something that impresses us distinctly, that makes a vivid impression upon the mind, that we can remember it perhaps for days, months, and years; but common information and knowledge are constantly coming into our minds, and as constantly being forgotten. And some of the knowledge we receive here at one time becomes so completely obliterated, through the weakness of the animal system, that we cannot call it to mind, no association of ideas will again suggest it to our minds; it is gone, erased, eradicated from the tablet of our memories. This is not owing to the want of capacity in the spirit; no, but the spirit has a full capacity to remember; for do you suppose that God in begetting spirits in the eternal world would beget an imperfect thing, that had no capacities? No. The Being, who is full of intelligence, knowledge, and wisdom, and acting upon the great principles that are ordained for the generation of living beings, spiritual beings, brings them forth with capacities capable of being enlarged or extended wider and wider; consequently it is not the want of capacity in the spirit of man that causes him to forget the knowledge he may have learned yesterday; but it is because of the imperfection of the tabernacle in which the spirit dwells; because there is imperfection in the organization of the flesh and bones, and in things pertaining to the tabernacle; it is this that erases from our memory many things that would be useful; we cannot retain them in our minds, they are gone into oblivion. It is not so with the spirit when it is released from this

tabernacle.

. . . Wait until these mortal bodies are laid in the tomb; when we return home to God who gave us life; then is the time we shall have the most vivid knowledge of all the past acts of our lives during our probationary state; then is the time that we will find that this being we call man--this spirit that dwells within the tabernacle, is a being that has capacity sufficient to retain all its past doings, whether they be good or bad.

It is, then, this memory that will produce the suffering and the pains upon that class of spirits whose works have been wicked and abominable in the sight of God. A spirit, then, will remember, that “at such a time in yonder world, and at such a place, I disobeyed the commandments of God; I did not hearken to the counsel of those whom God had appointed to be my counsellors; I did not give heed to the man of God; no: but I rejected his sayings; good counsel was imparted to me, but I did not heed it.” In this life, things that may have been erased from your memory for years will be presented before you with all the vividness as if they had just taken place. This will be like a worm upon the conscience; it will prey upon the spirit, and produce unhappiness, wretchedness, and misery. This will cause you to lament, and mourn, and weep after you are cast out from the presence of God--from the home to which you have returned.

I am speaking now of the wicked. What is it that produces the opposite principle? There is an opposition in all things; it is the reflection of the memory that produces joy; that is one of the elements by which joy and happiness are produced upon the spirit of man in the future state; we remember the acts of our past lives that they have been good; we perceive by our memories that we have been obedient to counsel; we perceive that when we have erred through our weakness we have repented of that error; when we have been told of a fault we have forsaken it. When we look back upon acquaintances and neighbors we perceive that we have observed the golden rule, to do unto others as we would that others should do unto us. We look back upon our past lives, and we perceive we have never spoken evil against a brother or sister, that we have never striven to stir up family broils, and that we have never desired to injure any of the children of men, male or female. What do these reflections produce? They produce joy, satisfaction, peace, consolation, and this joy is a hundred fold more intense that what the spirit is capable of perceiving or enjoying in this life. Why? Because just in proportion to the vividness of the conscience, or the memory, so will be the joy. This you may have knowledge of by every-day experience; just in proportion to the vividness

of your ideas, and of the truth set before your minds, and or the good things that are imparted to you, the more intense is your happiness here; how much more intense would it be hereafter, when this mortal clog with all its imperfections has been laid down in the gravel. The fact is, our spirits then will be happy, far more happy than what we are capable even of conceiving, or having the least idea of in this world. (*Journal of Discourses*, 2:239-240)

Satan Has No Power Over the Righteous in the Spirit World

Brigham Young

- The advantage of this Priesthood that Brother George A. Smith has been talking about is that when persons yield obedience to it, they secure to themselves the sanction of Him who is its author, and who has bestowed it upon the children of men. His power is around them and defends them; and when they pass into the spirit world they are out of the reach of the power of Satan, and they are not liable to be tempted, hunted, and chased as the wicked are, although the wicked may rest and enjoy far more there than here; but a person who obeys the Priesthood of the Son of God is entirely free from this. Where the pure in heart are the wicked cannot come. This is the state of the spirit world. (*Journal of Discourses*, 14:229)
- . . . when we go beyond this veil, and leave our bodies which were taken from mother earth, and which must return; our spirits will pass beyond the veil; we go where both Saints and sinners go; they all go to one place. Does the devil have power over the spirits of just men? No. When he gets through with this earth, he is at the length of his chain. (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:94)
- Is a Saint subject to the power of the Devil in the spirit world? No, because he has gained the victory through faith, and can command Satan, and he must obey. How is it with the wicked? The Devil has power over them to distress and afflict them: they are in hell. (*Journal of Discourses*, 7:174)

George Q. Cannon

And there is this promise given unto us, that after we have finished this probation and are faithful to God, then--lay it as a comfort to your hearts, and let it fill you with joy--Satan will have no more power over us. If you are faithful to the truth, if you keep the commandments of God all your days, when the time comes for you to pass away from this state of existence, Satan's power

will have ended. After that he can exercise no dominion over you. You are emancipated from his thralldom. You will then be ushered into the presence of the holy and the just. You will dwell in the paradise of God, waiting with delightful anticipations the time when your spirits and your bodies will be reunited, and when you shall dwell together with the holy, the just and exalted ones in the presence of God and the Lamb, nevermore, as the prophets have said, to depart or to go out thence. (*Collected Discourses*, Vol.2, November, 1890)

Righteous Have Power over Evil in Spirit World

Brigham Young

- When the faithful Elders, holding this Priesthood, go into the spirit world they carry with them the same power and Priesthood that they had while in the mortal tabernacle. They have got the victory over the power of the enemy here, consequently when they leave this world they have perfect control over those evil spirits, and they cannot be buffeted by Satan. But as long as they live in the flesh no being on this earth, of the posterity of Adam, can be free from the power of the devil.
When this portion of the school is out, the one in which we descend below all things and commence upon this earth to learn the first lessons for an eternal exaltation, if you have been a faithful scholar, and have overcome, if you have brought the flesh into subjection by the power of the Priesthood, if you have honored the body, when it crumbles to the earth and your spirit is freed from this home of clay, has the devil any power over it? Not one particle. This is an advantage which the faithful will gain; but while they live on earth they are subject to the buffetings of Satan. (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:371)
- If we are faithful to our religion, when we go into the spirit world, the fallen spirits -- Lucifer and the third part of the heavenly hosts that came with him, and the spirits of wicked men who have dwelt upon this earth, the whole of them combined will have no influence over our spirits. Is not that an advantage? Yes. All the rest of the children of men are more or less subject to them, and they are subject to them as they were while here in the flesh. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.379)

Those Who Die Without Gospel Still Subject to Evil Spirits

Brigham Young

Those who have died without the Gospel are continually afflicted by those evil spirits, who say to them--“Do not go to hear that man Joseph Smith preach, or David Patten, or any of their associates, for they are deceivers.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:371)

Heber C. Kimball

If men and women do not qualify themselves and become sanctified and purified in this life, they will go into a world of spirits where they will have a greater contest with the devils than ever you had with them here. (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:230)

The Wicked are Just as Wicked in the Spirit World

Brigham Young

The wicked spirits that leave here and go into the spirit world, are they wicked there? Yes.

The spirits of people that have lived upon the earth according to the best light they had, who were as honest and sincere as men and women could be, if they lived on the earth without the privilege of the Gospel and the Priesthood and the keys thereof are still under the power and control of evil spirits, to a certain extent. No matter where they lived on the face of the earth, all men and women that have died without the keys and power of the Priesthood, though they might have been honest and sincere and have done every thing they could, are under the influence of the devil, more or less. Are they as much so as others? No, no. Take those that were wicked designedly, who knowingly lived without the Gospel when it was within their reach, they are given up to the devil, they become tools to the devil and spirits of devils.

Go to the time when the Gospel came to the earth in the days of Joseph, take the wicked that have opposed this people and persecuted them to the death, and they are sent to hell. Where are they? They are in the spirit world, and are just as busy as they possibly can be to do every thing they can against the Prophet and the Apostles, against Jesus and his kingdom. They are just as wicked and malicious in their actions against the cause of truth, as they were while on the earth in their fleshly tabernacles. (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:370)

Wicked Spirits Still Oppose Lord's Work on Earth

Brigham Young

The spirits of the ancient Gadiantons are around us. You may see battle-field after battle-field, scattered over this American continent, where the wicked have slain the wicked. Their spirits are watching us continually for an opportunity to influence us to do evil, or to make us decline in the performance of our duties. And I will defy any man on earth to be more gentlemanly and bland in his manners than the master spirit of all evil. We call him the devil; a gentleman so smooth and so oily, that he can almost deceive the very elect. We have been baptized by men having the authority of the holy Priesthood of the Son of God, and consequently we have power over him which the rest of the world do not possess, and all who possess the power of the Priesthood have the power and right to rebuke those evil powers, and they obey not, it is because we do not live so as to have the power with God, which it is our privilege to have. If we do not live for this privilege and right we are under condemnation. (*Journal of Discourses*, 12:128)

Heber C. Kimball

It is written, “resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Some people do not believe that there are any devils. There are thousands of evil spirits that are just as ugly as evil can make them. The wicked die, and their spirits remain not far from where their tabernacles are. When I was in England, twenty-eight years ago next June, I saw more devils than there are persons here to-day; they came upon me with an intention to destroy me; they are the spirits of wicked men who, while in the flesh, were opposed to God and his purposes. I saw them with what we call the spiritual eyes, but what is in reality the natural eye. The atmosphere of many parts of these mountains is doubtless the abode of the spirits of Gadianton robbers, whose spirits are as wicked as hell, and who would kill Jesus Christ and every Apostle and righteous person that ever lived if they had the power. It is by the influence of such wicked spirits that men and women are all the time tempted to tell little lies, to steal a little, to take advantage of their neighbor a little, and they tell us there is no harm in it. It is by the influence and power of evil spirits that the minds of men are prejudiced against each other, until they are led to do each other an injury, and sometimes to kill each other. (*Journal of Discourses*, 11:84-85)

Those on the Other Side Concerned for their Posterity in this World

George Albert Smith

Think of the devotion and the faithfulness of those who day after day go into these temples and officiate for those who have passed to the other side; and know this, that those who are on the other side are just as anxious

about us. They are praying for us and for our success. They are pleading, in their own way, for their descendants, for their posterity who live upon the earth, many of whom, because they have been unwise, have been betrayed into fighting the Church and kingdom of God and opposing those who are its leaders. (Conference Reports, April 1937, pp. 34-35.)

The Veil is Thin Between this World and the Spirit World

Joseph Smith

- The spirits of the just are exalted to a greater and more glorious work; hence they are blessed in their departure to the world of spirits. Enveloped in flaming fire, they are not far from us, and know and understand our thoughts, feelings, and motions, and are often pained therewith. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.325)
- *Words of Benjamin F. Johnson:* Then with a deep-drawn breath, as a sigh of weariness, he sank down heavily in his chair, and said, "Oh! I am so tired—so tired that I often feel to long for my day of rest. For what has there been in this life but tribulation for me? From a boy I have been persecuted by my enemies, and now even my friends are beginning to join with them, to hate and persecute me! Why should I not wish for my time of rest?"

His words and tone thrilled and shocked me, and like an arrow pierced my hopes that he would long remain with us. I said, as with a heart full of tears, "Oh! Joseph, what could we, as a people, do without you and what would become of the great latter-day work if you should leave us?"

He was touched by my emotions, and in reply he said, "Benjamin, I would not be far away from you, and if on the other side of the veil I would still be working with you, and with a power greatly increased, to roll on this kingdom." (*The Teachings of Joseph Smith* [Larry E. Dahl, Danald Q. Cannon, eds.], p. 644).

Brigham Young

They are just as busy in the spirit world as you and I are here. They can see us, but we cannot see them unless our eyes were opened. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.378)

Harold B. Lee

- The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: "The spirits of the just are exalted to a greater and more glorious

work; hence they are blessed in their departure to the world of spirits." Now listen to this: "Enveloped in flaming fire, they are not far from us, and know and understand our thoughts, feelings, and motions, and are often pained therewith." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 326.) It may be that when the anxieties of the passing of this day shall have gone, in the quiet loneliness of your home, in a day not too intense because of the motherhood requirements, there will come times when you will say, "My, he seemed to be so close to me. I seem to have felt his nearness." And it will be real. It will be something you can't deny. (*The Teachings of the Harold B. Lee*, pp. 59-60)

- Where is the spirit world? Is it away up in the heavens? That isn't what the scriptures and our brethren explain. They have told us the spirit world is right here round about us, and the only spirits who can live here are those who are assigned to fill their missions here on earth. This is the spirit world. And if our eyes could be opened we could see those who have departed from us—a father, mother, brother, a sister, a child. We could see them, and sometimes when our physical senses are asleep, sometimes our spiritual self—and we have ears, spiritual ears, and spiritual eyes—sometimes they will be very keen and awake, and a departed one may come while we are lying asleep and come into our consciousness. We'll feel an impression. We'll wake up. Where does it come from? It comes from the spirits of those whom we are sealed to. (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 58)

Ezra Taft Benson

- The Prophet Joseph taught that oftentimes those who go before, our loved ones particularly, are permitted to look down and view the activities of this world, to view the activities of their own loved ones and often are pained because of our misdeeds and our mistakes

and our neglect. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.31)

- I am sure many of you know that the veil can be very thin -- that there are people over there who are pulling for us -- people who have faith in us and who have great hopes for us, who are hoping and praying that we will measure up -- our loved ones (parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, and friends) who have passed on. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.31)
- Visitors, seen and unseen, from the world beyond, are often close to us. This is part of eternity which we are living today -- part of God's plan. There is no veil to the Lord. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.35)
- Sometimes actions here, by the priesthood of God, the First Presidency and the Twelve, as we meet in the temple, have been planned and influenced by leaders of the priesthood on the other side. I am sure of that. We have evidence of it. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.35)
- On the other side of the veil, the righteous are taught their duties preparatory to the time when they will return with the Son of Man to earth when He comes again, this time to judge every man according to his works. These righteous spirits are close by us. They are organized according to priesthood order in family organizations as we are here; only there they exist in a more perfect order. This was revealed to the Prophet Joseph. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.35-36)

Joseph F. Smith

Sometimes the Lord expands our vision from this point of view and this side of the veil, that we feel and seem to realize that we can look beyond the thin veil which separates us from that other sphere. If we can see, by the enlightening influence of the Spirit of God and through the words that have been spoken by the holy prophets of God, beyond the veil that separates us from the spirit world, surely those who have passed beyond, can see more clearly through the veil back here to us

than it is possible for us to see to them from our sphere of action. I believe we move and have our being in the presence of heavenly messengers and of heavenly beings. We are not separated from them. We begin to realize more and more fully, as we become acquainted with the principles of the gospel, as they have been revealed anew in this dispensation, that we are closely related to our kindred, to our ancestors, to our friends and associates and co-laborers who have preceded us into the spirit world. We cannot forget them; we do not cease to love them; we always hold them in our hearts, in memory, and thus we are associated and united to them by ties that we cannot break, that we cannot dissolve or free ourselves from. If this is the case with us in our finite condition, surrounded by our mortal weaknesses, shortsightedness, lack of inspiration and wisdom, from time to time, how much more certain it is, and reasonable and consistent, to believe that those who have been faithful, who have gone beyond, are still engaged in the work for the salvation of the souls of men, in the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound and proclaiming liberty to the captives, who can see us better than we can see them -- that they know us better than we know them. They have advanced; we are advancing; we are growing as they have grown; we are reaching the goal that they have attained unto; and therefore, I claim that we live in their presence, they see us, they are solicitous for our welfare, they love us now more than ever. For now they see the dangers that beset us; they can comprehend better than ever before, the weaknesses that are liable to mislead us into dark and forbidden paths. They see the temptations and the evils that beset us in life, and the proneness of mortal beings to yield to temptation and to wrong doing; hence their solicitude for us and their love for us and their desire for our well being must be greater than that which we feel for ourselves. (*Gospel Doctrine*, p.430)

David O. McKay

The veil is thin between those who hold the priesthood and divine messengers on the other side of the veil. (Conference Report, April 1948, p. 172.)

Former Leaders Still Watch Over the Mortal Church

Wilford Woodruff

I believe the eyes of the heavenly hosts are over this people; I believe they are watching the elders of Israel, the prophets and apostles and men who are called to bear off this kingdom. I believe they watch over us all with great interest.... I have had many interviews with

Brother Joseph until the last fifteen or twenty years of my life; I have not seen him for that length of time. But during my travels in the southern country last winter I had many interviews with President Young, and with Heber C. Kimball, and George A. Smith, and Jedediah M. Grant, and many others who are dead. They attended

our conference, they attended our meetings. And on one occasion, I saw Brother Brigham and Brother Heber ride in carriage ahead of the carriage in which I rode when I was on my way to attend conference; and they were dressed in the most priestly robes. When we arrived at our destination I asked President Young if he would preach to us. He said, "No, I have finished my testimony in the flesh. I shall not talk to this people any more." "But, said he, "I have come to see you; I have come to watch over you, and to see what the people are doing." Then, said he, "I want you to teach the people—and I want you to follow this counsel yourself—that they must labor and so live as to obtain the Holy Spirit, for without this you cannot build up the kingdom; without the spirit of God you are in danger of walking in the dark, and in danger of failing to accomplish your calling as apostles and as elders in the church and kingdom of God." And, said he, "Brother Joseph taught me this principle."

And I will here say, I have heard him refer to that while he was living. But what I was going to say is this: the thought came to me that Brother Joseph had left the work of watching over this Church and kingdom to others, and that he had gone ahead, and that he had left this work to men who have lived and labored with us since he left us. This idea manifested itself to me, that such men advance in the spirit world. And I believe myself that these men who have died and gone into the spirit world had this mission left with them; that is, a certain portion of them, to watch over the Latter-day Saints. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p.290)

Joseph F. Smith

I feel sure that the Prophet Joseph Smith and his associates, who, under the guidance and inspiration of the Almighty, and by His power, began this latter-day work, would rejoice and do rejoice.--I was going to say if they were permitted to look down upon the scene that I behold in this tabernacle, but I believe they do have the privilege of looking down upon us just as the all-seeing eye of God beholds every part of His handiwork. For I believe that those who have been chosen in this dispensation and in former dispensations, to lay the foundation of God's work in the midst of the children of men, for their salvation and exaltation, will not be deprived in the spirit world from looking down upon the results of their own labors, efforts and mission assigned them by the wisdom and purpose of God, to help to redeem and to reclaim the children of the Father from their sins. So I feel quite confident that the eye of Joseph, the Prophet, and of the martyrs of this dispensation, and of Brigham and John and Wilford, and those faithful men who were associated with them in

their ministry upon the earth, are carefully guarding the interests of the Kingdom of God in which they labored and for which they strove during their mortal lives. I believe they are as deeply interested in our welfare today, if not with greater capacity, with far more interest behind the veil, than they were in the flesh. I believe they know more; I believe their minds have expanded beyond their comprehension in mortal life, and their interests are enlarged and expanded in the work of the Lord to which they gave their lives and their best service. Although some may feel and think that it is a little extreme to take this view, yet I believe that it is true; and I have a feeling in my heart that I stand in the presence not only of the Father and of the Son, but in the presence of those whom God commissioned, raised up and inspired to lay the foundations of the work in which we are engaged. Accompanying that sense or feeling, I am impressed with the thought that I would not this moment say or do one thing that would be taken as unwise or imprudent, or that would give offense to any of my former associates and co-laborers in the work of the Lord.

I would not like to say one thing, or express a thought that would grieve the heart of Joseph, or of Brigham, or of John, or of Wilford, or Lorenzo, or any of their faithful associates in the ministry. Sometimes the Lord expands our vision from this point of view and this side of the veil, that we feel and seem to realize that we can look beyond the thin veil which separates us from that other sphere. If we can see by the enlightening influence of the Spirit of God and through the words that have been spoken by the holy prophets of God, beyond the veil that separates us from the spirit world, surely those who have passed beyond, can see more clearly through the veil back here to us than it is possible for us to see to them from our sphere of action. I believe we move and have our being in the presence of heavenly messengers and of heavenly beings. We are not separate from them. We begin to realize more and more fully, as we become acquainted with the principles of the Gospel, as they have been revealed anew in this dispensation, that we are closely related to our kindred, to our ancestors, to our friends and associates and co-laborers who have preceded us into the spirit world. We cannot forget them; we do not cease to love them; we always hold them in our hearts, in memory, and thus we are associated and united to them by ties that we can not break, that we can not dissolve or free ourselves from. If this is the case with us in our finite condition, surrounded by our mortal weaknesses, shortsightedness, lack of inspiration and wisdom from time to time, how much more certain it is and reasonable and consistent to believe that those who have been faithful, who have gone

beyond and are still engaged in the work for the salvation of the souls of men, the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound and proclaiming liberty to the captives who can see us better than we can see them; that they know us better than we know them. They have advanced; we are advancing; we are growing as they have grown; we are reaching the goal that they have attained unto; and therefore, I claim that we live in their presence, they see us, they are solicitous for our welfare, they love us now more than ever. For now they see the dangers that beset us; they can comprehend better than ever before, the weaknesses that are liable to mislead us into dark and forbidden paths. They see the temptations and the evils that beset us in life and the proneness of mortal beings to yield to temptation and to wrong doing; hence their solicitude for us and their love for us and their desire for our well being must be greater than that which we feel for ourselves. I thank God for the feeling that I possess and enjoy and for the realization that I have, that I stand, not only in the presence of Almighty God, my Maker and Father, but in the presence of His Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Savior of the world; and I stand in the presence of Peter and James, (and perhaps the eyes of John are also upon us and we know it not); and that I stand also in the presence of Joseph and

Hyrum and Brigham and John, and those who have been valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ and faithful to their mission in the world, who have gone before. When I go I want to have the privilege of meeting them with the consciousness that I have followed their example, that I have carried out the mission in which they were engaged as they would have it carried out; that I have been as faithful in the discharge of duty committed to me and required at my hand as they were faithful in their time, and that when I meet them I shall meet them as I met them here, in love, in harmony, in unison and in perfect confidence that I have done my duty as they have done theirs. (Conference Report, April 1916, pp. 2-3)

Heber J. Grant

As I rode along alone, I seemed to see a council in heaven. The Savior was there; the Prophet Joseph was there; my father and others that I knew were there. In this council it seemed that they decided that a mistake had been made in not filling the vacancies in the Quorum of the Twelve, and conference had adjourned. The chances were the Brethren would wait another six months, and the way to remedy the situation was to send a revelation naming the men who should fill the vacancies. (Conference Report, October 1942, p.26)

Work Performed in the Spirit World

All Must Hear the Gospel Before Final Judgment

Joseph Smith

- The great Jehovah contemplated the whole of the events connected with the earth, pertaining to the plan of salvation, before it rolled into existence, or ever “the morning stars sang together” for joy; the past, the present, and the future were and are, with Him, one eternal “now;” He knew of the fall of Adam, the iniquities of the antediluvians, of the depth of iniquity that would be connected with the human family, their weakness and strength, their power and glory, apostasies, their crimes, their righteousness and iniquity; He comprehended the fall of man, and his redemption; He knew the plan of salvation and pointed it out; He was acquainted with the situation of all nations and with their destiny; He ordered all things according to the council of His own will; He knows the situation of both the living and the dead, and has made ample provision for their redemption, according to their several circumstances, and the laws of the kingdom of God,

whether in this world, or in the world to come. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.220)

- All those who have not had an opportunity of hearing the Gospel, and being administered unto by an inspired man in the flesh, must have it hereafter, before they can be finally judged. (*History of the Church*, 3:29)

Joseph Fielding Smith

The Lord has so arranged his plan of redemption that all who have died without this opportunity shall be given it in the spirit world. There the elders of the Church who have died are proclaiming the gospel to the dead. All those who did not have an opportunity here to receive it, who there repent and receive the gospel, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:132-133)

Christ Organized the Work in the Spirit World

Joseph F. Smith (D&C 138)

25 I marveled, for I understood that the Savior spent

about three years in his ministry among the Jews and those of the house of Israel, endeavoring to teach them the everlasting gospel and call them unto repentance;

26 And yet, notwithstanding his mighty works, and miracles, and proclamation of the truth, in great power and authority, there were but few who hearkened to his voice, and rejoiced in his presence, and received salvation at his hands.

27 But his ministry among those who were dead was limited to the brief time intervening between the crucifixion and his resurrection;

28 And I wondered at the words of Peter--wherein he said that the Son of God preached unto the spirits in prison, who sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah--and how it was possible for him to preach to those spirits and perform the necessary labor among them in so short a time.

29 And as I wondered, my eyes were opened, and my understanding quickened, and I perceived that the Lord went not in person among the wicked and the disobedient who had rejected the truth, to teach them;

30 But behold, from among the righteous, he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead.

31 And the chosen messengers went forth to declare the acceptable day of the Lord and proclaim liberty to the captives who were bound, even unto all who would repent of their sins and receive the gospel.

32 Thus was the gospel preached to those who had died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets.

36 Thus was it made known that our Redeemer spent his time during his sojourn in the world of spirits, instructing and preparing the faithful spirits of the prophets who had testified of him in the flesh;

37 That they might carry the message of redemption unto all the dead, unto whom he could not go personally, because of their rebellion and transgression, that they through the ministration of his servants might also hear his words.

What is Taught in Spirit Prison?

Joseph F. Smith (D&C 138)

33 These were taught faith in God, repentance from sin, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands,

34 And all other principles of the gospel that were

necessary for them to know in order to qualify themselves that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

35 And so it was made known among the dead, both small and great, the unrighteous as well as the faithful, that redemption had been wrought through the sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross.

Neal A. Maxwell

Understandably emphasized is vicarious baptism for the dead, because that ordinance is absolutely essential for their cleansing and salvation. Furthermore, the recipients can there by qualify to become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by developing sufficient faith and also by showing sufficient repentance in the spirit world.

Typically, in that connection, we here do not emphasize as much the other essential part of what can happen vicariously – confirming Church membership and the bestowal of the great gift of the Holy Ghost. Because the accompanying and essential ordinances remain to be accomplished vicariously on our side of the veil, it would be well if more of the intensity characteristic of the work in the spirit world were displayed by us in mortality. Indeed, the gifts of the Holy Ghost also help recipients there to lend a hand and to function more effectively in the spirit *after* they are empowered by the vicariously given gift of the Holy Ghost! (*The Promise of Discipleship*, p. 109)

The Vastness of the Work in the Spirit World

Neal A. Maxwell

- Often Church members suffer from a lack of perspective, perhaps understandably, as to the vastness and intensity of the Lord's work in the spirit world. The scope is enormous! Demographers estimate that some sixty to seventy billion people have lived on this planet thus far. Without diminishing in any way the importance of the absolutely vital and tandem work on this side of the veil, we do need a better grasp of "things as they really will be" (Jacob 4:13). Otherwise, we can so easily come to regard family history as a quaint hobby and its resulting temple work as something we will get around to later. Not only does the word *vastness* characterize the work there but so does *intensity*. (*The Promise of Discipleship*, p. 105)
- Is one reason we are not told more about the details of God's work in the spirit world perhaps the intimidating larger scale of things there? The scope of the work there is so large that it might embarrass

those of us here. Probably twelve times the earth's present population live there. For sure, twelve times as many Presidents of the Church in this dispensation alone are in residence and at work there! Perhaps God thus protects us in our present provinciality from feeling diminished by considerations of scale. (*That Ye May Believe*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, p 93)

Spirit Prison (or Hell) is a Place for Teaching, Disciplining, & Redemption

James E. Talmage

Hell is no place to which a vindictive judge sends prisoners to suffer and to be punished principally for his glory; but it is a place prepared for the teaching, the disciplining of those who failed to learn here upon the earth what they would have learned . . . No man will be kept in hell longer than is necessary to bring him to a fitness for something better. When he reaches that state, the prison doors will open and there will be rejoicing among the hosts who welcome him into a better state. (Conference Report, April 1930, p.97.)

Brigham Young

How long the damned remain in hell, I know not nor what degree of suffering they endure. If we could by any means compute how much wickedness they are guilty of, it might be possible to ascertain the amount of suffering they will receive. They will receive according as their deeds have been while in the body. God's punishment is eternal, but that does not prove that a wicked person will remain eternally in a state of punishment. (*Journal of Discourse*, 9:147-148.)

Harold B. Lee

To those who are righteous, it will be a paradise. There they will rest from all their earthly labors, and there shall be peace and harmony, joy and love, all described by a great Book of Mormon prophet. But to those who die in their wicked state, not having repented, the scriptures say the devil shall seal them as his own (see Alma 34:35), which means that until they have paid the uttermost farthing for what they have done, they shall not be redeemed from his grasp. When they shall have been subjected to the buffetings of Satan sufficient to have satisfied justice, then they shall be brought forth out of the grasp of Satan and shall be assigned to that place in our Father's celestial, terrestrial, or telestial world merited by their life here upon this earth. (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 59)

Joseph Fielding Smith

- *Paradise* is a term which means a place of departed spirits according to the Prophet Joseph Smith. "Hades, the Greek, or Sheol, the Hebrew, these two significations mean a world of spirits." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 310.) Before the resurrection of Christ, the wicked were shut up in darkness and were not visited. In this awful state they suffered the torment of their consciences not knowing what their fate would be, just as Alma has pictured it. We are given further light on the condition of the wicked in this spirit world from the words of the Lord to Enoch.

"But behold, their sins shall be upon the heads of their fathers; Satan shall be their father, and misery shall be their doom; and the whole heavens shall weep over them, even all the workmanship of mine hands; wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer?"

"But behold, these which thine eyes are upon shall perish in the floods; and behold, I will shut them up; a prison have I prepared for them.

"And That which I have chosen hath plead before my face. Wherefore, he suffereth for their sins; inasmuch as they will repent in the day that my Chosen shall return unto me, and until that day they shall be in torment. Wherefore, for this shall the heavens weep, yea, and all the workmanship of mine hands." (Moses 7:37-40.)

From these paragraphs we learn that the Lord does not delight in punishment, however there is the demand of justice which must be met, and therefore the wicked are forced to suffer, and this suffering helps to cleanse them from their sins. Before the visit of our Savior to the spirit world there was a gulf separating the righteous from the wicked, and the wicked were evidently without knowledge as to what fate awaited them. (Luke 16:19-31.) Savior after his crucifixion bridged this gulf and the gospel was carried to those who sat in this darkness and through the instruction of those who held the priesthood, these miserable spirits were taught the gospel. They were granted some measure of blessing according to their works on earth and according to their opportunity or lack of it, to hear the gospel when living on the earth, and accept the same in the spirit world. (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 2:84)

- Why did he preach to these disobedient spirits? Surely not to increase their torments, to taunt them for not accepting of his truth in the days of the prophets! Was it to tantalize them and make them more miserable because of the blessings they had

lost! Jesus was a merciful Redeemer, who suffered as no other man suffered that he might save the children of his Father. He would take no pleasure in the suffering of the wicked.

It was his nature to plead for them, to entreat his Father for mercy in their behalf. Therefore, whatever his mission was, it was one of mercy and comfort to those prisoners. Peter tells us that the object of his visit was that the gospel might be preached also to the dead, “that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

The visit of Christ to the spirits in prison was not made in vengeance, to show them that he had power to triumph over the grave, while they, who died without the remission of their sins, should remain in that condition of punishment forever. He took the glorious message of the gospel and proclaimed it to the dead with the promise that they, if they would obey it, should partake of its blessings.

What good reason can be given why the Lord should not forgive sins in the world to come? Why should man suffer throughout the countless ages of eternity for his sins committed here, if those sins are not unto death? There are many good, honorable men who have wilfully wronged no man, have lived to the best of their opportunities, righteously, yet have not received the gospel, for one reason or another. Where would be the justice in condemning them forever in hell, “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched?”

We learn from the Doctrine and Covenants that eternal punishment, or everlasting punishment, does not mean that a man condemned will endure this punishment forever, but it is everlasting and eternal because it is God’s punishment, and he is Everlasting and Eternal. Therefore, when a man pays the penalty of his misdeeds and humbly repents, receiving the gospel, he comes out of the prison house and is assigned to some degree of glory according to his worth and merit. . . .

That sins are forgiven in the world to come, we need only refer to the words of the Savior: “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

This shows that some sins will be forgiven in the world to come. We are also informed in First

Corinthians that, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But we have hope in Christ both in this life and in the life to come. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:159-161)

The Faithful in Mortality Preach to the Spirits in Prison

Joseph Smith

Now, all those [who] die in the faith go to the prison of spirits to preach to the dead in body, but they are alive in the spirit; and those spirits preach to the spirits that they may live according to God in the spirit, and men do minister for them in the flesh; and angels bear the glad tidings to the spirits, and they are made happy by these means. (*The Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 370)

Joseph F. Smith

I beheld that the faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel of repentance and redemption, through the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of God, among those who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin in the great world of the spirits of the dead. (D&C 138:57)

Wilford Woodruff

- When Joseph Smith had laid the foundation of this word he was taken away. There are good reasons why it was so. Jesus sealed his testimony with his blood. Joseph Smith did the same, and from the day he died his testimony has been in force upon the whole world. He has gone into the spirit world and organized this dispensation on that side of the veil; he is gathering together the elders of Israel and the Saints of God in the spirit world, for they have a work to do there as well as here. Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Father Smith, David Patten and the other elders who have been called to the other side of the veil have fifty times as many people to preach to as we have on the earth. There they have all the spirits who have lived on the earth in seventeen centuries – fifty generations, fifty thousand millions of persons who lived and died here without having seen a prophet or apostle, and without having the word of the Lord sent unto them. They are shut up in prison, awaiting the message of the elders of Israel. We have only about a thousand millions of people on the earth, but in the spirit world they have fifty thousand millions; and there is not a single revelation which gives us any reason to believe that any man who enters the spirit world preached the gospel there to

those who lived after him; but they all preach to men who were in the flesh before they were. Jesus himself preached to the antediluvian world, who had been in prison for thousands of years. So with Joseph Smith and the elders – they will have to preach to the inhabitants of the earth who have died during the last seventeen centuries; and when they hear the testimony of the elders and accept it there should be somebody on the earth, as we have been told, to attend to the ordinances of the house of God for them. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p.151)

- The same priesthood exists on the other side of the veil. Every man who is faithful is in his quorum there. When a man dies and his body is laid in the tomb, he does not lose his position. The prophet Joseph Smith held the keys of this dispensation on this side of the veil, and he will hold them throughout the countless ages of eternity. He went into the spirit world to unlock the prison doors and to preach the gospel to the millions of spirits who are in darkness, and every apostle, every seventy, every elder, etc., who has died in the faith, as soon as he passes to the other side of the veil, enters into the work of the ministry, and there is a thousand times more to preach there than there is here. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p.77)
- I have felt of late as if our brethren on the other side of the veil had held a council, and that they had said to this one, and that one, “Cease thy work on earth, come hence, we need help,” and they have called this man and that man. It has appeared so to me in seeing the many men who have been called from our midst lately. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p.77)
- And I will here say that every elder of Israel who lays down his life, whether he dies in his bed, or is put to death by the enemies of truth, when he goes into the spirit world his works follow him, and he rests in peace. The priesthood is not taken from him, and he has thousands more to preach to there than he ever had here in the flesh. But it depends upon the living here to erect temples, that the ordinances for the dead may be attended to, for by and by you will meet your progenitors in the spirit world who never heard the sound of the gospel. You who are here in Zion have power to be baptized for and to redeem your dead. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p.77)

Ezra Taft Benson

- The death of a righteous individual is both an

honorable release and a call to new labors. (President Nathan Eldon Tanner Funeral Service, Salt Lake City, Utah, 30 November 1982.) [*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.33]

- The work to be done on the other side of the veil is far more extensive than here. There, billions must hear the gospel preached. Joseph F. Smith, sixth President of the Church, received this revelation: “I beheld that the faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel of repentance and redemption, through the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of God, among those who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin in the great world of the spirits of the dead” (D&C 138:57). Bruce R. McConkie will continue his ministry there – only on a much more enlarged and expanded scale. Amelia and family members, I pray the benediction of our Heavenly Father’s Spirit on all of you that you may have the perfect peace and assurance that our Heavenly Father’s will was done in the calling of your husband and father to the other side of the veil. His ministry will carry forward as he now joins with other prophets of this dispensation in furthering the work of the Lord which he loves so much. (Bruce R. McConkie Funeral Service, Salt Lake City, Utah, 23 April 1985.) [*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.36]
- We preside over the great redemptive work for the dead. Before the Savior can present this kingdom to His Father, all the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth who have not received the gospel in the flesh must have the opportunity to hear the gospel. That work is going forward on the other side of the veil with greater acceleration than it is here. Our work is to officiate in the temples of God for them. We don’t build temples until the Church is well established in a country. Our predecessors have prophesied that temples will dot the landscape of North and South America, the isles of the Pacific, Europe, and elsewhere. If this redemptive work is to be done on the scale it must be, hundreds of temples will be needed. Our first step then is to see that nations are opened to receive the gospel so that stakes may be established. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.247)

Brigham Young

- The spirits that dwell in these tabernacles on this earth, when they leave them go directly into this world of spirits. What! A congregated mass of inhabitants there in spirit, mingling with each other, as they do here? Yes, brethren, they are there

together, and if they associate together, and collect together, in clans and in societies as they do here, it is their privilege. No doubt they yet, more or less, see, hear, converse and have to do with each other, both good and bad. If the Elders of Israel in these latter times go and preach to the spirits in prison, they associate with them, precisely as our Elders associate with the wicked in the flesh, when they go to preach to them. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.378)

- They are just as busy in the spirit world as you and I are here. They can see us, but we cannot see them unless our eyes were opened. What are they doing there? They are preaching, preaching all the time, and preparing the way for us to hasten our work in building temples here and elsewhere, and to go back to Jackson County and build the great temple of the Lord. They are hurrying to get ready by the time we are ready, and we are all hurrying to get ready by the time our Elder Brother is ready. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.378)
- Suppose, then, that a man is evil in his heart – wholly given up to wickedness, and in that condition dies, his spirit will enter into the spirit world intent upon evil. On the other hand, if we are striving with all the powers and faculties God has given us to improve upon our talents, to prepare ourselves to dwell in eternal life, and the grave receives our bodies while we are thus engaged, with what disposition will our spirits enter their next state? They will be still striving to do the things of God, only in a much greater degree -- learning, increasing, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.379)
- Spirits are just as familiar with spirits as bodies are with bodies, though spirits are composed of matter so refined as not to be tangible to this coarser organization. They walk, converse, and have their meetings; and the spirits of good men like Joseph and the Elders who have left this Church on earth for a season to operate in another sphere, are rallying all their powers and going from place to place preaching the Gospel, and Joseph is directing them, saying, go ahead my brethren, and if they hedge up your way, walk up and command them to disperse. You have the Priesthood and can disperse them, but if any of them wish to hear the Gospel, preach to them. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.379)

Those on the Other Side are in a Hurry Doing the Work

Wilford Woodruff

I will say here that in my dreams I have had a great many visits from the Prophet Joseph since his death. The last time I met him was in the spirit world. I met him at the Temple. He spoke to me. Calling me by name, he said, "I cannot stop to talk to you, for I am in a hurry." I met Father Smith. He, too, said to me, "I am in a hurry." I met a great many of the Apostles and others who are in the spirit world, and they all seemed to be in a hurry. I marveled at this, and wondered very greatly in my mind why anybody should be in a hurry in the Paradise of God.

I had an interview with the Prophet Joseph afterwards and asked him the question, "Why are you all in such a hurry here?" I said, "I have always been in a hurry in the world since I was born, but I thought there would be no occasion for it when I died and entered the spirit world." He replied, "Well, I will tell you: The Prophets and Apostles in this dispensation have had no time nor opportunity to prepare themselves to go to the earth with the great bridegroom when He goes to meet the bride, the Lamb's wife. We in this dispensation have not had time. We have first as much work to perform, to prepare ourselves, as in other dispensations."

. . . I have had a many interviews with President Young since he died, a great many teachings from him, and from others who held important positions here in the flesh, but who have gone into the spirit world, and seem, in a measure, to have an interest and watch-care over the Church and Kingdom of God though they have passed to the other side of the veil. (*Collected Discourses*, Vol.2, October 4, 1890)

Spirits Have Agency to Repent or Reject the Gospel

Orson Pratt

It is intended that, in these sacred and holy places, appointed, set apart and dedicated by the command of the Almighty, genealogies shall be revealed, and that the living shall officiate for the dead, that those who have not had the opportunity while in the flesh in past generations to obey the Gospel, might have their friends now living, officiate for them. This does not destroy their agency, for although they laid down their bodies and went to their graves in a day of darkness, and they are now mingled with the hosts of spirits in the eternal worlds, their agency still continues, and that agency gives them power to believe in Jesus Christ there, just as

well as we can who are here. Those spirits on the other side of the veil can repent just the same as we, in the flesh, can repent. Faith in God and in his son Jesus Christ, and repentance are acts of the mind--mental operations--but when it comes to baptism for the remission of sins they cannot perform that, we act for them, that having been ordained to be performed in the flesh. They can receive the benefit of whatever is done for them here, and whatever the Lord God commands his people here in the flesh to do for them will be published to them there by those holding the everlasting Priesthood of the Son of God. If, when the Gospel is preached to them there, they will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they will receive the benefits of the ordinances performed on their behalf here, and they will be partakers, with their kindred, of all the blessings of the fullness of the Gospel of the Son of God; but if they will not do this they will be bound over in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day, when they will be judged according to men in the flesh. We are here in the flesh, and the same Gospel that condemns the disobedient and the sinner here, will, by the same law, condemn those who are on the other side of the veil. (*Journal of Discourses*, 15:51)

Evil Spirits Hinder the Preaching of the Gospel

Brigham Young

Those who have died without the Gospel are continually afflicted by those evil spirits, who say to them--“Do not go to hear that man Joseph Smith preach, or David Patten, or any of their associates, for they are deceivers.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:371)

Our Progenitors will Most Likely Accept the Gospel

Wilford Woodruff

Another principle connected with this subject I want to talk about. A man has married a woman, and they have a family of children. The man lays down in death without ever hearing the Gospel. The wife afterwards hears the Gospel and embraces it. She comes to the temple and she wants to be sealed to her husband, who was a good man. The feeling has been to deny this and to say, “No, he is not in the Church, and you cannot be sealed to your husband.” Many a woman’s heart has ached because of this, and as a servant of God I have broken that chain a good while ago. I have laid before every woman this principle and let her have her choice. Why deprive a woman of being sealed to her husband

because he never heard the Gospel? What do any of us know with regard to him? Will he not hear the Gospel and embrace it in the spirit world? Look at Joseph Smith. Not one of Joseph Smith’s fathers or brothers or sisters were in the covenant when he received the keys of the kingdom of God and translated the Book of Mormon. They afterwards received it. Every brother and sister that he had, and his father and his father’s brothers, except Uncle Jesse Smith, embraced the Gospel. Now, suppose that any of these had died before they had the opportunity of entering into the covenant with the Lord through the Gospel, as his brother Alvin did; they would have been in the same position as Alvin, concerning whom the Lord, when Joseph saw him in the celestial kingdom, said: “All who have died without a knowledge of this Gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom, for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts.”

So it will be with your fathers. There will be very few, if any, who will not accept the Gospel. Jesus while His body lay in the tomb, went and preached to the spirits in prison, who were destroyed in the days of Noah. After so long an imprisonment, in torment, they doubtless gladly embraced the Gospel, and if so they will be saved in the kingdom of God. The fathers of this people will embrace the Gospel. It is my duty to honor my father who begot me in the flesh. It is your duty to do the same. When you do this, the Spirit of God will be with you. (*Messages of the First Presidency*, 3:257-258)

Joseph Fielding Smith

It is our opportunity, in this dispensation, and our privilege and duty to spend our time in searching out our dead. We are of the house of Israel. We learn that through revelation; and that being true, then we reach the conclusion, unless we have been adopted through the gospel and were gentiles, that our ancestors were also of the house of Israel. In other words, the promise made to Abraham, that through the scattering of his seed all nations would be blessed, has been fulfilled, and our lineage has come down generation after generation through the loins of Abraham and the loins of Israel.

Therefore our fathers are more likely to receive the gospel (if they did not hear it in this life, to receive it in the spirit world), than are those whose descendants are not in the Church and who refused to receive the gospel here. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:133)

Honorable Mortals Most Likely Will Accept the Gospel

Neal A. Maxwell

Surely those just and honorable mortals who have done so well here with the light they have received are the most likely to respond in paradise and the spirit world, when the fulness of the light of the gospel is given to them there. Consider the comments of the Prophet Joseph Smith about the important role of spiritual knowledge:

“Knowledge does away darkness, suspense and doubt, for where Knowledge is there is no doubt nor suspense nor darkness. There is no pain so awful as the pain of suspense. This is the condemnation of the wicked; their doubt and anxiety and suspense causes weeping and gnashing of teeth.” [Joseph Smith, *The Words of Joseph Smith*. A. Ehat, and L. Cook (Ed.s). Provo, UT: Grandin, 1991, p. 183]

The “pain of suspense” apparently will necessarily operate to some extent in the spirit prison because of uncertainty—along with a price to be paid as part of repentance for transgressions. The Prophet Joseph also said:

“A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. Hence the saying, They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a

lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man.” [Joseph Smith, *The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint, 1932-51, 6:314].

The word prison carries with it the connotation of “a state of confinement,” including a conceptual confinement. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, for instance, that God has “made ample provision for their redemption, according to their several circumstance, . . . Whether in this world, or in the world to come.” [Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938, p. 220]

The Prophet also consoled: “God has administrators in the eternal world to release those spirits from Prison. The ordinances being administered by proxy upon them, the law is fulfilled.” [Joseph Smith, *The Words of Joseph Smith*. A. Ehat, and L. Cook (Ed.s). Provo, UT: Grandin, 1991, p. 372]

Likewise, the Prophet, when speaking of us and our chance to become “saviors . . . on Mount Zion,” instructed as to how the merciful salvation for the dead “places the human family upon an equal footing, and harmonizes with every principle of righteousness, justice and truth.” [Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938, p. 223] (*The Promise of Discipleship*, pp. 111-113)

Called to the Other Side to Labor

Joseph F. Smith (D&C 138)

57 I beheld that the faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel of repentance and redemption, through the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of God, among those who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin in the great world of the spirits of the dead.

No Righteous Man is Never Taken Before his Time

Joseph Fielding Smith

No righteous man is ever taken before his time. In the case of the faithful Saints, they are simply transferred to other fields of labor. The Lord’s work goes on in this life, in the world of spirits, and in the kingdoms of glory where men go after their resurrection. (The funeral services of Elder Richard L. Evans, *Ensign*, Dec. 1971, p. 10)

Death May Come When the Lord Has a Calling for Us Beyond Mortality

Harold B. Lee

I know a father who lost his daughter, a mother of four or five children, and it was a long fight. I have never seen a father or mother who had greater devotion to a daughter, and as she sank into the shadows the father said, “I guess I failed. If I had faith, she would have gotten well.” The Lord said that “those who have faith in me shall be healed if they are not appointed unto death” (see D&C 42:48). That suggests that we are here filling a mission on earth. We can fail in our appointment, but if we live true, then we fulfill our mission. Now, if the Lord asks us, calls us to no greater calling, I ask you, Would any one of you want to remain here one hour more than the Lord wants you to live in mortality, if He had something else for you to do? Not if you are thinking right. You would want to answer the call of the Master,

wouldn't you? (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 48)

Righteous are Called to the Other Side

Wilford Woodruff

- Perhaps I may be permitted to relate a circumstance with which I am acquainted in relation to Bishop Roskelley, of Smithfield, Cache Valley:

On one occasion he was suddenly taken very sick -- near to death's door. While he lay in this condition, President Peter Maughan, who was dead, came to him and said: "Brother Roskelley, we held a council on the other side of the veil. I have had a great deal to do, and I have the privilege of coming here to appoint one man to come and help. I have had three names given to me in council, and you are one of them. I want to inquire into your circumstances.

The Bishop told him what he had to do, and they conversed together as one man would converse with another. President Maughan then said to him: "I think I will not call you. I think you are wanted here more than perhaps one of the others."

Bishop Roskelley got well from that hour. Very soon after, the second man was taken sick, but not being able to exercise sufficient faith, Brother Roskelley did not go to him. By and by this man recovered, and on meeting Brother Roskelley, he said: "brother Maughan came to me the other night and told me he was sent to call one man from the ward," and he named two men as had been done to Brother Roskelley. A few days afterwards the third man was taken sick and died.

Now, I name this to show a principle. They have work on the other side of the veil; and they want men, and they call them. And that was my view in regards to Brother George A. Smith. When he was almost at death's door, Brother Cannon administered to him, and in thirty minutes he was up and ate breakfast with his family. We labored with him in this way, but ultimately, as you know, he died. But it taught me a lesson. I felt that man was wanted behind the veil. We labored also with Brother Pratt; but he, too, was wanted behind the veil. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, pp.290-291)

- We lost one of our apostles a short time since. He was about the youngest man in the quorum of the apostles. He was suddenly called away from us. There is a meaning to this. Many times things take place with us that we do not comprehend, unless it is given to us by revelation. But there is a meaning in the loss of that young apostle. I had a manifestation of that while in San Francisco recently.

One evening, as I fell asleep, I was very much troubled with evil spirits that tried to afflict me; and while laboring to throw off these spirits and their influence, there was another spirit visited me that seemed to have power over the evil spirits, and they departed from me. Before he left me he told me not to grieve because of the departure of Abraham Hoagland Cannon; for the Lord had called him to fill another important mission in the spirit world, as a pure and holy apostle from Zion in the Rocky Mountains -- a labor which would not only prove a great benefit to his father's household, but to the Church and kingdom of God on the earth. I feel to name this, because it is true. I have become acquainted with many things in our history that I have marveled at. While in the St. George temple I had a son, who was in the north country, drowned. He had a warning of this. In a dream he was notified how he would die. We had testimony of that after his death. I asked the Lord why he was taken from me. The answer to me was, "You are doing a great deal for the redemption of your dead; but the law of redemption requires some of your own seed in the spirit world to attend to work connected with this." That was a new principle to me; but it satisfied me why he was taken away. I name this, because there are a great many instances like it among the Latter-day Saints. This was the case with Brother Abraham Cannon. He was taken away to fulfil that mission. And where we have anything of this kind, we should leave it in the hands of God to reconcile. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p.292)

Neal A. Maxwell

On the other side of the veil, there are perhaps seventy billion people. They need the same gospel, and releases occur here to aid the Lord's work there. Each release of a righteous individual from this life is also a call to new labors. Those who have true hope understand this.

Therefore, though we miss the departed righteous so much here, hundreds may feel their touch there. One day, those hundreds will thank the bereaved for gracefully forgoing the extended association with choice individuals here, in order that they could help hundreds there. In God's ecology, talent and love are never wasted. The hopeful understand this, too. (*Notwithstanding My Weakness*, p.55)

Vicarious Ordinances of Salvation for the Dead

Ordinances of Salvation are for Mortals

Joseph Fielding Smith

- Baptism, confirmation, ordination, endowment, and sealings all pertain to this mortal life and are ordinances required of those who are in mortality. Provision has been made for these ordinances to be performed vicariously for those who are worthy but who died without the opportunity in this life of receiving these ordinances in person.

You can readily see that it would be inconsistent for a resurrected being to come and be baptized for the dead. The resurrected person has passed to another sphere where the laws and blessings do not pertain to this mortal life. This is equally true of every other ordinance. If it were permissible for resurrected persons to come and do work in the temples, then there would be no reason for us in this mortal life to act vicariously for them, for they would do it for themselves. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:178)

- All of the ordinances of the gospel given to us here pertain to this mortal probation and must be attended to here by the contracting parties or by some one in their behalf after they are dead . . . but they must be performed here. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:72)
- Temple work is for the purpose of giving to every man and to every woman the blessings of the higher ordinances of the gospel that are essential to salvation in the kingdom of God. There is not an ordinance performed in the temple that does not pertain to this mortal life.

When we go into the temple and act for somebody else, we are treating that person as though we were that person living here, doing for him just what he would have to do if he were in mortal life. Thus we bring to pass his salvation, and we learn through these keys the knowledge of God which is made manifest through these ordinances, these blessings, these signs, all that is given to us in the temple of the Lord. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:143)

- So we are only presenting to the dead such ordinances and privileges as pertain to those who are living here and now. So far as faith is concerned, they exercise that where they are. So far as repentance is concerned, they repent where they are. We are baptized for them because they cannot be baptized there. We are confirmed and ordained for them. Why? Because they cannot receive those ordinances there. Why? Because these ordinances pertain to mortal life,

and all we are doing for the dead is to give them that which pertains to this mortal existence in which we find ourselves. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:142-143)

Vicarious Ordinances Redeem Spirits From Prison

Joseph Smith

Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that [baptism for the dead] which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free. (D&C 128:22; see the entire section)

Joseph F. Smith

- Thus was the gospel preached to those who had died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets. These were taught faith in God, repentance from sin, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and all other principles of the gospel that were necessary for them to know in order to qualify themselves that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. . . . I beheld that the faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel of repentance and redemption, through the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of God, among those who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin in the great world of the spirits of the dead. The dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God, and after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation. (D&C 138:32-34, 57-59)
- We have a mission to perform for and in their behalf; we have a certain work to do in order to liberate those who, because of their ignorance and the unfavorable circumstances in which they were placed while here, are unprepared for eternal life; we have to open the door for them, by performing ordinances which they cannot perform for themselves, and which are essential to their release from the "prison-house," to come forth and live according to God in the spirit, and be judged according to men in the flesh. (*Gospel*

Wilford Woodruff

- It is a great blessing that there can be saviors on Mount Zion. It is a glorious principle that we can go forth and erect temples and attend to ordinances for the living and the dead; that we can redeem our forefathers and progenitors from among the spirits in prison. They will be preached to in prison by those spirits on the other side of the veil who hold the keys of the Kingdom of God, and we will have the privilege of attending to ordinances in the flesh for them. (*Journal of Discourses*, 12:14)
- We have power to-day to go into four temples and attend to the ordinances of the house of God for the living and for the dead. Yes, we are opening the prison doors in the spirit world to thousands and thousands of our fathers' households. Thus we are saviors upon Zion, whom the Lord has raised up in these last days to redeem the dead and give them a place and a standing in their fathers' house. (*Collected Discourses*, Vol. 4, September 7, 1895)

Vicarious Ordinances is a Reasonable Doctrine

Joseph Fielding Smith

Since it is necessary for all who enter the kingdom of God to comply with the ordinances of the gospel, it must be necessary for the dead to conform to this plan. If a man cannot enter the kingdom of God without baptism, then the dead must be baptized. But how can they be baptized in water for the remission of their sins?

It is easy to understand how they in person could believe in Christ and even obtain the spirit of repentance; but water is an element of this world, and how could spirits be baptized in it, or receive the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost? The only way it can be done is vicariously, someone who is living acting as a substitute for the dead.

But, says one, this cannot be; it is impossible for one man to stand for another. The answer to this is: The whole system of Christianity is based on vicarious work. One without blemish and without sin standing for all as the Redeemer. You answer, "This is granted in the case of Jesus Christ, for he is God, but it cannot be granted in

the case of man for man."

What of the commandments given by the Lord to Moses in the case of the sin offerings and of the scapegoat for Israel? On the head of the goat Aaron placed his hands and confessed over it all the iniquity of the children of Israel, all their transgressions, and all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and then sent it away "by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness." And the goat bore upon him all their iniquities into the wilderness "unto a land not inhabited." If this was done then, is it beyond the power of the Lord to permit a man now to act as proxy for the man who is dead and unable to help himself in person?

That one man cannot stand or answer for another's sins, but that every man must stand for himself, is true so far as it is possible to be done. But occasions have arisen where the man guilty of transgressing the law was unable to redeem himself. And punishment for sin is for the propitiation of sin, and in such cases there is nothing in the scriptures forbidding one to stand vicariously for another when circumstances render it impossible for the first to comply with the law. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:141-142)

Ordinances Performed in Spirit World Make Mortal Ordinances Effective

Ezra Taft Benson

The work we are performing here has direct relationship to the work over there. Someday you will know that there are ordinances performed over there, too, in order to make the vicarious work which you do effective. It will all be done under the authority and power of the priesthood of God. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, pp.252-253)

Administrators Release Spirits From Prison to Paradise

Joseph Smith

God has administrators in the eternal world to release those spirits from Prison. The ordinances being administered by proxy upon them, the law is fulfilled. [Joseph Smith, *The Words of Joseph Smith*. A. Ehat, and L. Cook (Ed.s). Provo, UT: Grandin, 1991, p. 372]

Communication With the Spirit World

Heber C. Kimball

Bless my soul, look at the unbelieving world, that is a great many of them, they now believe in spiritual

knockings, spiritual communications, and spiritual rappings, and they will ask the same spirit for this, and for that; to know this, that, and the other; and, "Won't

you cause that table to kick up its legs, and that chair to dance, and cause a knocking here, and a knocking there?" They believe all this, still they do not believe that God can communicate. And at the same time those that they communicate with are corrupt spirits, and they might know it, and still they say they can speak from the heavens, and communicate this, that, and the other, and tell them where their friends are. If wicked spirits can do this, I want to know, on the same principle, if the righteous have not power to communicate to the children of men? And has not God power to do it? (*Journal of Discourses*, 2:222-223)

Parley P. Pratt

Who communicated with Jesus and his disciples on the holy mount? Moses and Elias, from the invisible world. Who bestowed upon the Apostles the commission to preach the Gospel to every creature in all the world? He that had passed the vale of death, and had dwelt in the spirit world, yea, he that had ascended far on high above the realms of death, and far beyond all the principalities and powers of the spirit world, and had entered, and been crowned, in the mansions of immortal flesh.

Who communicated with the beloved disciple on the Isle of Patmos, and revealed those sublime truths contained in his prophetic book? He that liveth and was dead, through his angel, who declared to John--Behold, I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the Prophets, that have the testimony of Jesus.

Who communicated with our great modern Prophet, and revealed through him as a medium, the ancient

history of a hemisphere, and the records of the ancient dead? Moroni, who had lived upon the earth fourteen hundred years before. Who ordained Joseph the Prophet, and his fellow-servant, to the preparatory Priesthood, to baptize for remission of sins? John the Baptist, who had been beheaded! Who ordained our first founders to the Apostleship, to hold the keys of the kingdom of God, in these the times of restoration? Peter, James, and John, from the eternal world. Who instructed him in the mysteries of the kingdom, and in all things pertaining to Priesthood, law, philosophy, sacred architecture, ordinances, sealings, anointings, baptisms for the dead, and in the mysteries of the first, second, and third heavens, many of which are unlawful to utter? Angels and spirits from the eternal worlds.

Who revealed to him the plan of redemption, and of exaltation for the dead who had died without the Gospel? and the keys and preparations necessary for holy and perpetual converse with Jesus Christ, and with the spirits of just men made perfect, and with the general assembly and Church of the first-born, in the holy of holies? Those from the dead!

Again--How do the Saints expect the necessary information by which to complete the ministrations for the salvation and exaltation of their friends who have died?

By one holding the keys of the oracles of God, as a medium through which the living can hear from the dead.

Shall we, then, deny the principle, the philosophy, the fact of communication between worlds? No! verily no! (*Journal of Discourses*, 2:44)