

Man a Mortal and An Immortal Being—Temporal and Spiritual Death—Redemption Through the Atonement and Gospel of Christ—Sons of Perdition—Man’s Pre-Existent, Disembodied and Resurrected States—Jesus Christ the Great Example—The Righteous to Be Conformed to His Image—His Similarity to the Father—His Mission not Completed at His Death—His Resurrection and the Redemption of Humanity

Discourse by President Joseph F. Smith, delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, June 18, 1882.

We are called mortal beings because in us are the seeds of death, but in reality we are immortal beings because there is also within us the germ of eternal life. Man is a dual being, composed of the spirit which gives life, force, intelligence and capacity to man, and the body which is the tenement of the spirit and is suited to its form, adapted to its necessities, and acts in harmony with and to its utmost capacity yields obedience to the will of the spirit. The two combined constitute the soul. The body is dependent upon the spirit, and the spirit during its natural occupancy of the body is subject to the laws which apply to and govern it in the mortal state. In this natural body are the seeds of weakness and decay, which, when fully ripened or untimely plucked up, in the language of scripture, is called “the temporal death.” The spirit is also subject to what is termed in the scriptures and revelations from God, “spiritual death.” The same as that which befell our first parents, when through disobedience and transgression, they be- came subject in the will of Satan, and were thrust out from the presence of the Lord and became spiritually dead, which the Lord says, “is the *first* death, even that same death which is the *last* death, which is spiritual, which shall be pronounced upon the wicked when I shall say: Depart, ye cursed!” And the Lord further says, “But, behold I say unto you that I, the Lord God, gave unto Adam and unto his seed, that they should not die as to the temporal death, until I, the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption (from the first death), through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son. And thus did I, the Lord God, appoint unto man the days of his probation—that by his natural death he might be raised in immortality unto eternal life, even as many as would believe; And they that believe not unto eternal damnation; for they cannot be redeemed from their spiritual fall, because they repent not.” From the natural death, that is the death of the body, and also from the first death, “which is spiritual” there is redemption through belief on the name of the “only Begotten Son,” in connection with repentance and obedience to the ordinances of the Gospel, declared by holy angels, for if one “*believes*,” he must also *obey*; but from the “second death,” even that same death which is the *first* death, “which is spiritual,” and from which man may be redeemed through faith and obedience, and which will again be pronounced upon the wicked when God shall say, “depart ye cursed,” there is no redemption, so far as light on this matter has been revealed. It is written that “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men who receive me and repent; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven unto men.” If men will not repent and come unto Christ, through the ordinances of His Gospel, they cannot be redeemed from their spiritual fall, but must remain forever subject to the will of Satan and the consequent spiritual darkness or death into which our first parents fell, subjecting all their posterity thereto, and from which none can be redeemed but by belief or faith on the name of the “Only Begotten Son” and obedience to the laws of God. But, thanks be to the Eternal Father, through the merciful provisions of the Gospel all mankind will have the opportunity of escape or deliverance from this spiritual death either in time or in eternity, for not until they are freed from the first can they become subject unto the *second* death, still if they repent not “they cannot be redeemed from their spiritual fall,” and will continue subject to the will of Satan, the first spiritual death, so long as “they repent not.” I have been speaking of those who repent not, and there- by reject Christ and His Gospel, but what of those who do believe, repent of their sins, obey the Gospel, enter into its covenants, receive the keys of the Priesthood and the knowledge of the truth by revelation and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and afterwards turn away wholly from that light and knowledge? They “become a law unto themselves,” and “will to abide in sin,” of such it is written, “Whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come.” And again—“Thus saith the Lord concerning all those who know my power,

and who have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome and to deny the truth and *defy* my power—They are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born; For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity; Concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come—Having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves and put him to an open shame.” Now, there is a difference between this class and those who simply repent not and reject the Gospel in the flesh. Of these latter it is written, “they shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb,” and “shall be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath.” But of the others it is said, “they shall not be redeemed,” for “they are the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power.” The others never having been redeemed from the first, cannot be doomed to the second death, or in other words, cannot be made to suffer eternally the wrath of God without hope of redemption through repentance, but must continue to suffer the first death until they repent, and are redeemed therefrom through the power of the atonement and the Gospel of salvation, thereby being brought to the possession of all the keys and blessings to which they will be capable of attaining or to which they may be entitled through the mercy, justice and power of the ever-living God, or on the other hand forever remain bound in the chains of spiritual darkness, bondage and banishment from his presence, kingdom and glory. The “temporal death” is one thing, and the “spiritual death” is another thing. The body may be dissolved and become extinct as an organism, although the elements of which it is composed are indestructible or eternal, but I hold it as self-evident that the spiritual organism is an eternal, immortal being, destined to enjoy eternal happiness and a fullness of joy, or suffer the wrath of God, and misery—a just condemnation, eternally. Adam became spiritually dead, yet he lived to endure it until freed therefrom by the power of the atonement, through repentance, etc. Those upon whom the second death shall fall, will live to suffer and endure it, but without hope of redemption. The death of the body or natural death is but a temporary circumstance to which all were subjected through the fall and from which all will be restored or resurrected by the power of God, through the atonement of Christ.

Man existed before he came to this earth, and he will exist after he passes from it; and will continue to live throughout the countless ages of eternity.

There are three classes of beings, or rather man exists in three separate conditions before and after his probation upon this earth—first in the spirit or pre-existent state, second in the disembodied state, the condition which exists after the dissolution of the body and spirit until the resurrection takes place, and third in the resurrected state. For instance, some fourteen hundred years before the coming of Christ into the world to sojourn in the flesh, he showed himself to the brother of Jared and said, “Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh.” He further declared, “Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ.” Here “Jesus showed himself unto this man in the spirit, even after the manner and in the likeness of the same body even as he showed himself unto the Nephites”—that is prior to his coming in the flesh. This I consider typical of the first condition of all spirits. Again it is written, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water,” etc. Thus we see that while the body of our Savior slept in the tomb, He went in the spirit, and preached His glorious Gospel to “the spirits in prison,” who were disobedient in the days of Noah, and were destroyed in the flesh by the flood. This was their second condition or state in the spirit awaiting the resurrection of their bodies which were slumbering in death. “Marvel not at this,” saith Jesus, “for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his (the Redeemer’s) voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” In reference to the third condition or state we will refer to the account given of the risen Redeemer before his ascension. John tells us that he appeared unto his disciples three times after his resurrection, on which occasions he ate bread, broiled fish and honeycomb, and opened the eyes of their

understanding, that they began to comprehend the Scriptures and the prophecies concerning Christ. But when he appeared unto them “they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see me; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” Here is presented the true type of the resurrected being. And after this manner are all those who have their resurrected bodies, and there are many of these, for we are told in the scriptures, that, “the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” This class of beings dwell in heaven, or in the paradise of the just, having been counted worthy to come forth in the first resurrection, even with Christ, to dwell with him and to be associates with and members of the kingdom of God and his Christ. These comprise the three conditions or estates of man in heaven. Not all, however, of the disembodied spirits enjoy the same privileges, exaltation and glory. The spirits of the wicked, disobedient, and unbelieving are denied the privileges, joy and glory of the spirits of the just and the good. The bodies of the Saints will come forth in the first resurrection, and those of the unbelieving, etc., in the second or last. In other words, the Saints will rise first, and those who are not Saints will not rise until afterwards, according to the wisdom, justice and mercy of God.

Christ is the great example for all mankind, and I believe that mankind were as much foreordained to become like him, as that he was foreordained to be the Redeemer of man. Whom God did foreknow—and whom did he not foreknow? “He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” It is very plain, that mankind are very far from being like Christ, as the world is today, only in form of person. In this we are like him, or in the form of his person, as he is the express image of His Father’s person. We are therefore in the form of God, physically, and may become like him spiritually, and like him in the possession of knowledge, intelligence, wisdom and power.

The grand object of our coming to this earth is that we may become like Christ, for if we are not like him, we cannot become the sons of God, and be joint heirs with Christ.

The man who passes through this probation, and is faithful, being redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ, through the ordinances of the Gospel, and attains to exaltation in the kingdom of God, is not less but greater than the angels, and if you doubt it read your Bible, for there it is written that the Saints shall “judge angels,” and also they shall “judge the world.” And why? Because the resurrected, righteous man has progressed beyond the pre-existent or disembodied spirits, and has risen above them, having both spirit and body as Christ has, having gained the victory over death and the grave, and having power over sin and Satan, in fact having passed from the condition of the angel to that of a God. He possesses keys of power, dominion and glory that the angel does not possess—and cannot possess without gaining them in the same way that he gained them, which will be by passing through the same ordeals and proving equally faithful. It was so ordained when the morning stars sang together, before the foundations of this earth were laid. Man in his pre-existent condition is not perfect, neither is he in the disembodied estate. There is no perfect estate but that of the risen Redeemer, which is God’s estate, and no man can become perfect except he becomes *like them*. And what are they like? I have shown what Christ is like, and he is like his Father, but I will refer to an undoubted authority to this people, on this point, “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.” Doc. and Cov., Sec. 130. There is not time to refer to the many scriptural passages which might be cited in proof of these important facts, enough already has been referred to, to place the matter beyond a doubt.

It is believed by many in the Christian world, that our Savior finished his mission when he expired upon the cross, and his last words on the cross, as given by the Apostle John—“*it is finished,*” are frequently quoted as evidence of the fact; but this is an error. Christ did not complete his mission upon the earth until after his body was raised from the dead. Had his mission been completed when he died, his disciples would have continued fishermen, carpenters, etc., for they returned to their several occupations soon after the crucifixion, not yet knowing the force of their holy calling, nor understanding the mission assigned them by their Master, whose name would soon have been buried with his body in the grave to perish and be forgotten, “For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he

must rise again from the dead." But the most glorious part of his mission had to be accomplished after the crucifixion and death of his body. When on the first day of the week some of the disciples went to the tomb with certain preparations for the body of their Lord, they were met there by two men clothed in "shining garments," who said unto them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." And not until then did the disciples remember these words of the Savior, or begin to understand their meaning. Why were they thus forgetful, and seemingly ignorant of all they had been taught by the Savior respecting the objects of his mission to the earth? Because they lacked one important qualification, they had not yet been "endowed with power from on high." They had not yet obtained the gift of the Holy Ghost. And the presumption is, they never would have received this important and essential endowment had Christ's mission been completed at the time of his death. It may seem strange to some who may not have reflected on this matter fully, that the disciples of Christ were without the gift of the Holy Ghost until after his resurrection. But so it is written, notwithstanding the Savior on one occasion declared, "Blessed art thou Simon, etc., for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." While Jesus was with them he was their light and their inspiration. They followed him by sight, and felt the majestic power of his presence, and when these were gone they returned to their nets and to their various occupations and to their homes saying, "we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel, but the chief priests and our rulers have delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him." No wonder that Jesus exclaimed unto some of them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

If the Disciples had been endowed with the "gift of the Holy Ghost," or "with power from on high," at this time, their course would have been altogether different from this as the sequel abundantly proved. If Peter, who was the chief Apostle, had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the power and testimony thereof prior to the terrible night on which he cursed and swore and denied his Lord, the result would have been very different with him, for then he would have sinned against "light and knowledge," and "against the Holy Ghost," for which there is no forgiveness. The fact, therefore, that he was forgiven, after bitter tears of repentance, is an evidence that he was without the witness of the Holy Ghost, never having received it. The other disciples or apostles of Christ were precisely in the same condition, and it was not until the evening of the day on which Jesus came out of the grave, that he bestowed upon them this inestimable gift. John gives a careful description of this important event which concludes as follows: "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them," etc. This was their glorious commission, and now were they prepared to receive the witness of the Spirit—even the testimony of Jesus Christ. Yet they were told to "tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high," which they did. Jesus further told them that if he went not away the "Comforter"—that is the Holy Ghost—would not come unto them, but if he went away he would "send him," and he it was who should testify of Christ, and of the Father, and bring to their remembrance "all things whatsoever" he had commanded or taught them, and it should "lead them into all truth." Thus we see that the resurrection from the dead, not only of Christ but of all mankind, in the due time of the Lord; the endowment of the Apostles with the Holy Ghost, and their glorious commission from Christ, being sent out by him as he was sent by the Father; the opening of the eyes of the disciples to understand the prophecies of the Scriptures, and many other things did Jesus after he cried out upon the cross, "it is finished." Further, the mission of Jesus will be unfinished until he redeems the whole human family, except the sons of perdition, and also this earth from the curse that is upon it, and both the earth and its inhabitants can be presented to the Father redeemed, sanctified and glorious.

Things upon the earth, so far as they have not been perverted by wickedness, are typical of things in heaven. Heaven was the prototype of this beautiful creation when it came from the hand of the Creator, and was pronounced "good."

Much might be said in continuation of this subject, but I see that my time has expired. Amen.