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Title: Salvation Universal

Author: Joseph Fielding Smith

Release date: August 18, 2016 [EBook #52840]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by the Mormon Texts Project  
(<http://mormontextsproject.org>), with thanks to Renah  
Holmes and Jake Hadley for proofreading

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# **SALVATION UNIVERSAL**

By JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

PUBLISHED BY THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF UTAH  
1920

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*THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF UTAH.*

Organized November 13, 1894.

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*The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine.*

Published by the Genealogical Society of Utah.

QUARTERLY, \$1.50 PER ANNUM

Anthon H. Lund, Editor; Nephi Anderson, Associate Editor

Subscription price to life and paid-up annual members of the Genealogical Society, \$1.00 a year. Address all communications to

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF UTAH  
47 East South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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# Salvation Universal.

BY ELDER JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

The greatest of all the gifts of God unto his children, is the gift of salvation.<sup>[A]</sup>

[Footnote A: Doc. & Cov. 6:13.]

The greatest of all his works, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man, which constitutes his glory.<sup>[B]</sup>

[Footnote B: Book of Moses 1:39.]

For this grand and glorious purpose, worlds are created by him and peopled with his children. He gives to them his commandments, granting the power to choose for themselves whether or not they will obey. Those who obey him in all things he has promised great blessings, they shall be added upon in his celestial kingdom for ever and ever, and shall be crowned with the fullness of his glory. But to those who reject laws, and become a law unto themselves in unrighteousness, shall punishment be meted out according to their evil deeds.

The plan of salvation, or code of laws, which is known as the gospel of Jesus Christ, was adopted in the heavens, before the foundation of the world was laid. It was appointed there that Adam our father should come to this earth and stand at the head of the whole human family. It was a part of this great plan, that he should partake of the forbidden fruit and fall, thus bringing suffering and death into the world, even for the ultimate good of his children. By many he has been severely criticized because of his fall, but Latter-day Saints, through modern revelation, have learned that such was necessary in order that man should have his agency and, through the various vicissitudes he has to pass, receive a knowledge of both good and evil, without which it would be impossible for him to gain the exaltation prepared for him.

It was also necessary because of Adam's transgression for the Only Begotten Son of the Father to come to redeem the world from Adam's fall. This also was a part of the plan chosen before the earth was made, for Jesus is called the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. He came and redeemed us from the fall—even all the inhabitants of the earth. Not only did he redeem us from Adam's transgression, but he also redeemed us from our own sins, on condition that we obey the laws and ordinances of the gospel.<sup>[D]</sup>

[Footnote D: Heb. 5:9; Matt. 7:21; John 1:3-6.]

"And now, behold," said the Prophet Lehi to his son Jacob, "if Adam had not transgressed, he would not have fallen; but he would have remained in the Garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were, after they were created; and they must have remained for ever, and had no end. And they would have had no children; wherefore, they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin. But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things. Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.

"And the Messiah cometh in the fullness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because they are redeemed from the fall, they have become free for ever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves, and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given.

"Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself."<sup>[C]</sup>

[Footnote C: II Nephi 2:22-27.]

The primary and fundamental principles of this plan of salvation are:

First: Faith in God the Father, in his Son Jesus Christ and in the Holy Ghost. We must accept them as the presiding authority in the heavens, who govern and control all things, who are omnipotent, just and true.

Second: We must accept the infinite atonement of Christ, believing that he is the Redeemer of the world, both from Adam's transgression and from our individual sins on condition of our repentance.

Third: We must repent of all our sins, giving our hearts to God, with the full intent of serving him.

Fourth: We must be baptized in water for the remission of our sins, by one who is called of God and clothed with divine authority to administer in the ordinances of the gospel.

Fifth: We must have the hands of those holding authority placed upon our heads, and through

their ministrations receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost,—the spirit of Truth and Prophecy that guides us in all truth.

Sixth: We must be willing to serve the Lord with all our heart, mind and strength, keeping his commandments even unto the end.

Upon these laws, salvation is based, and the promised blessings are unto all men. These conditions are not severe, nor grievous, and are within the power of the weakest of the weak, if they will only place their trust in their Redeemer.

All who repent and obey these laws, will be redeemed and saved from the sins of the world; but they who refuse and repent not, will have to suffer for their own sins. The Lord says: "He created man, male and female, after his own image and in his own likeness created he them, and gave unto them commandments that they should love and serve him, the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship. But by the transgression of these holy laws, man became sensual and devilish, and became fallen man. Wherefore the Almighty God gave his Only Begotten Son, as it is written in those scriptures which have been given of him. He suffered temptations, but gave no heed unto them; he was crucified, died and rose again the third day; and ascended into heaven, to sit down on the right hand of the Father, to reign with almighty power according to the will of the Father, that as many as would believe and be baptized in his holy name, and endure in faith to the end, should be saved: not only those who believed after he came in the meridian of time, in the flesh, but all those from the beginning, even as many as were before he came, who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who spake as [Transcriber's note: sentence leaves off here in the original.]

Moreover, he further says: "And surely every man must repent or suffer, for I God am endless: \* \* \* Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not! For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent, but if they would not repent, they must suffer even as I, which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both in body and spirit: and would that I might not drink the bitter cup and shrink—nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men."<sup>[G]</sup>

[Footnote G: Doc. & Cov. 19:4, 15-19.]

These principles were taught to Adam after he was driven from the Garden of Eden, who repented and was baptized in water for the remission of his sins, and received the Holy Ghost. And Eve, when she heard the gospel plan, rejoiced, saying: "Were it not for our transgression, we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient. And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known to their sons and daughters."<sup>[H]</sup>

[Footnote H: Book of Moses 5:11-12.]

Thus the principles of the gospel were taught from the beginning among the children of Adam. Some believed and accepted them, many others rejected them, bringing down upon their heads the wrath of God, for his anger was kindled against them because of their rebellion. In course of time, when the inhabitants of the earth were sufficiently corrupt, he caused the floods to come upon them, sweeping them off the earth. Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness, continued to preach these saving principles. The gospel was also taught to Abraham, and has always been among men when they were prepared to receive it.

Latter-day Saints have been severely criticised by many professing Christians for believing it necessary to comply with these first principles of the gospel. We are told that such views make us narrow and illiberal, for we reject and damn all who do not accept "Mormonism" and the ministration of our elders, while they on the other hand, give a broader interpretation of the scriptures, holding it but necessary to believe in Christ—to confess him with the mouth and to believe in the heart that Christ was raised from the dead.

Or, as it is expressed,

Nothing, either great or small,  
Remains for me to do;  
Nothing—Jesus paid it all,  
All the debt I owe.

Nevertheless, there is but one plan of salvation, and one door into the sheepfold, "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."<sup>[I]</sup>

[Footnote I: John 10:1.]

We have not made the way narrow nor the gate strait, that few there be that find it! Nor was ours the edict, "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of the father."<sup>[J]</sup>

[Footnote J: Matt. 7th chapter.]

The fact that certain laws must be observed, and ordinances complied with, is not the ruling of the Latter-day Saints, but the divine mandate of the Author of our salvation, who has said he will judge all men according to their works and opportunities. We are merely complying with the teachings of the Master which we have received, and which are requisite to salvation.

If belief alone were sufficient, then even the devils, who fear and tremble, would be saved. They recognized the Savior and declared on several occasions that he was the Son of God.<sup>[K]</sup> And the devils in the days of the sons of Sceva declared that they knew Jesus and Paul, yet they were far from the road to salvation.<sup>[L]</sup>

[Footnote K: Mark 5:2-9; Luke 4:33-34.]

[Footnote L: Acts 19:15.]

Notwithstanding the apparently narrow construction of the Latter-day Saints pertaining to the scriptures—and we most emphatically declare that all men must obey these laws if they would be saved, excepting those who die without law, and therefore are not judged by law<sup>[M]</sup>—we are broader and more liberal in our teachings than the believers in the faith-only theory of salvation, who would save all who profess a belief in the name of the Redeemer, but reject all others, consigning them to everlasting destruction without one ray of hope, simply because they did not confess that Jesus was the Christ. This view condemns all who lived at a time or place that the knowledge of the Redeemer of the world could not reach them. They would reject this vast majority of the human family, men women and children, to eternal damnation, without the fault being their own!

[Footnote M: Moroni 8:22.]

With the Latter-day Saints this is not so. While it is true we teach that a man must comply with these principles of the gospel in order to receive salvation and exaltation in the kingdom of heaven—which is proved by many passages of scripture—nevertheless, we hold out the hope that all may be saved, excepting the sons of perdition—a class that willfully rejects the atonement of the Savior: for the Lord intends to save all the workmanship of his hands, save these few who will not receive salvation. Our doctrine consigns none others to perdition, but holds forth the hope that all will eventually be saved in the kingdom of God at some time and in some degree of glory.

Little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world through the atonement, "Wherefore, they cannot sin," the Lord has said, "for power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children, until they begin to become accountable before me; for it is given unto them even as I will, according to mine own pleasure, that great things may be required at the hand of their fathers. And again, I say unto you, that whoso having knowledge, have I not commanded to repent?"<sup>[N]</sup>

[Footnote N: Doc. & Cov. 29:46-49.]

He that declares that little children are born in sin, and therefore require baptism, denies the mercy of the father and does not understand the nature and significance of the atonement. The Savior said: "Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The Prophet Mormon sums the whole matter up in the following words:

Little children cannot repent; wherefore it is awful wickedness to deny the pure mercies of God unto them, for they are all alive in him because of his mercy.

And he that saith, that little children need baptism, denieth the mercies of Christ, and setteth at naught the atonement of him and the power of his redemption.

Wo unto such, for they are in danger of death, hell, and endless torment. I speak it boldly, God hath commanded me. Listen unto them and give heed, or they stand against you at the judgment seat of Christ.

For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law. For the power of redemption cometh on all they that have no law; wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, cannot repent; and unto such baptism availeth nothing.

But it is mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of His Holy Spirit, and putting trust in dead works.

Behold, my son, this thing ought not to be; for repentance is unto them that are under condemnation and under the curse of a broken law.

And the first fruits of repentance is baptism, and baptism cometh by faith, unto the fulfilling of the commandments; and the fulfilling of commandments bringeth remission of sins.<sup>[O]</sup>

[Footnote O: Moroni 8:19-25.]

The question naturally arises, if all must accept the principles of the gospel and be baptized for the remission of their sins, what of the dead who died without receiving the remission of their sins, or accepting Christ while they were in the flesh? They cannot be baptized in water now and have hands laid on their heads for the gift of the Holy Ghost, for these things of necessity pertain to this mortal probation. Therefore, it would be impossible for them to be baptized now or even after the resurrection, for they would no longer be mortal, but subject to the laws and regulations of that life which is to come. These ordinances must be performed in this life, or, if for the dead, vicariously by some one who is in mortality, the living acting as proxy for the dead. Again we hear the objection raised, that this is impossible; that one man cannot stand, or answer for another's sins; but that every man must stand for himself. This 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. In ancient Israel they had the scapegoat. On the head of this goat, Aaron placed both his hands and confessed over him all the iniquity of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and then sent him 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."<sup>[P]</sup> This was but one instance. In various ways of vicarious offerings have been made and accepted. Then why should it be considered a strange thing for the Latter-day Saints to believe that the children have the privilege to stand vicariously for their dead fathers, and by proxy perform these ordinances, that belong to this life, in their behalf?

[Footnote P: Leviticus 16:20-22. See also Leviticus chapters 4 and 5.]

The fact is, the whole plan of redemption is based on vicarious salvation, One without sin standing for the whole human family, all of whom were under the curse. It is most natural and just that he who commits the wrong should pay the penalty—atone for his wrong doing. Therefore, when Adam was the transgressor of the law, justice demanded that he, and none else, should answer for the sin and pay the penalty with his life. But Adam, in breaking and law, himself became subject to the curse, and being under the curse could not atone, or undo what he had done. Neither could his children, for they also were under the curse, and it required one who was not subject to the curse to atone for that original sin. Moreover, since we were all under the curse, we were also powerless to atone for our individual sins. It therefore became necessary for the Father to send his Only Begotten Son, who was free from sin, to atone for our sins as well as for Adam's transgression, which justice demanded should be done. He accordingly offered himself a sacrifice for sins, and through his death upon the cross took upon himself both Adam's transgression and our individual sins, thereby redeeming us from the fall, and from our sins, on condition of repentance.

Let us illustrate: A man walking along the road happens to fall into a pit so deep and dark that he cannot climb to the surface and regain his freedom. How can he save himself from his predicament? Not by any exertions on his own part, for there is no means of escape in the pit. He calls for help and some kindly disposed soul, hearing his cries for relief, hastens to his assistance and by lowering a ladder, gives to him the means by which he may climb again to the surface of the earth. This was precisely the condition that Adam placed himself and his posterity in, when he partook of the forbidden fruit. All being together in the pit, none could gain the surface and relieve the others. The pit was banishment from the presence of the Lord and temporal death, the dissolution of the body. And all being subject to death, none could provide the means of escape. Therefore, in his infinite mercy, the Father heard the cries of his children and sent his Only Begotten Son, who was not subject to death nor to sin, to provide the means of escape. This he did through his infinite atonement and the everlasting gospel. The Savior voluntarily laid down his life and took it up again to satisfy the demands of justice, which required this infinite atonement. His Father accepted this offering in the stead of the blood of all those who were under the curse, and consequently helpless. The Savior said, "I lay down my life for the sheep. \* \* \* Therefore, doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it up again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."<sup>[Q]</sup>

[Footnote Q: John 10:15-18.]

From this we see that he had life in himself, which he received from the Father, being his Only Begotten Son in the flesh. And it was this principle that gave him power to atone for the sins of the world, both for Adam's transgression and for our individual sins, from which we could not of ourselves get free. Therefore, Christ died in our stead, because to punish us would not relieve the situation, for we would still be subject to the curse even if our blood had been shed, and through his death we receive life and "have it more abundantly."

The vicarious atonement was for all, both living and dead, for as extensive as was the fall, of necessity must be the atonement. There shall, therefore, be a resurrection of the dead, both of

the just and the unjust.<sup>[R]</sup> This is general salvation. Our individual salvation, which determines our standing, or glory, in the kingdom of God, besides depending on the atonement of Christ, also is on condition that the laws and ordinances of the gospel are accepted and lived by us, both by the living and the dead.

[Footnote R: Acts 24:15.]

This vicarious salvation for the dead is not a new doctrine. It is new and strange for this generation, it is true, but only because of a lack of comprehension of the revelations of the Lord. The Prophet Joseph Smith said it is the burden of the scriptures. It has been taught among the Lord's people from the earliest times. Enoch saw in vision the kingdoms of the world and all their inhabitants down even to the end of time. The Lord told him of Noah and the flood, and how he would destroy the people of the earth for their iniquity. Of these rebellious one who rejected the truth and paid no heed to the preachings of Noah and the ancient prophets, the Lord said: "I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made; and mine eyes can pierce them also, and among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so much wickedness as among thy brethren. 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."<sup>[S]</sup>

[Footnote S: Book of Moses 7:36-39.]

From this we learn that the Lord has prepared a prison for the souls of all those who rejected the testimony of the antediluvian prophets, where they were to remain in torment until the time when Jesus should atone for their sins and return to the Father. Isaiah also says: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited."

<sup>[T]</sup> This is spoken of those who keep not the law who live in latter-days. Again, he says: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."<sup>[U]</sup> This was spoken of as the mission of the Redeemer, both his work for the living and the dead who were prisoners that were bound. When the Savior commenced his ministry, he entered into the synagogue in the city of Nazareth—his home town—on the Sabbath day, the book of Isaiah was handed him, he turned to this passage and read, closed the book, handed it back to the minister, and while the eyes of all the congregation were riveted upon him, he said: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."<sup>[V]</sup> But the Jews rejected him and his testimony, and with violence drove him from the city. Nevertheless, he continued to proclaim liberty to the captives, declaring that he came not alone to save the living but also to save the dead.

[Footnote T: Isaiah 24:21, 22.]

[Footnote U: Isaiah 61:1 and 42:7.]

[Footnote V: Luke 4:16-21.]

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, 16th chapter and 26th verse, which are: "And besides 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.

The Lord speaks of this himself in the fifth chapter of John, beginning with the twenty-fourth verse: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

And the Jews marveled. Perhaps they thought he meant those who were "dead in trespasses and sins" should hear his voice. At any rate they marveled. He perceived it and said:

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His 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."

Peter tells us that Christ did this very thing:

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.<sup>[W]</sup>

[Footnote W: I Peter 3:18-20.]

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."<sup>[X]</sup>

[Footnote X: I Peter 4:6.]

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 the 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 in the kingdom of God, according to his worth and merit.

There are three degrees of glory in this kingdom, the celestial, into which those who keep the whole law shall enter; the terrestrial, in which are found the honorable men of the world, and those who were blinded by the craftiness of men, and were overcome by the things of the world, and also those who have accepted Christ but were not valiant in his cause, and those who died without law among the heathen: the third, or telestial, is that glory which contains the great majority of mankind who differ in their glory as the countless stars of heaven. These are the inhabitants of the earth who have been unworthy, unclean, unfit for an exaltation in the other kingdoms. And still there will be some who, because of their filthiness and abominations in the flesh, will be unworthy of a kingdom of glory at all. The sons of perdition, those who are lost, having rejected the atonement of Christ and crucified him afresh to themselves, these will be cast out of the kingdom into outer darkness. All the rest shall be saved in some degree of glory in one of the three grand divisions of the kingdom of God. A full discussion of this is found in Doctrine and Covenants, section 76.

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.<sup>[Y]</sup>

[Footnote Y: Matt. 12:32.]

This shows that some sins will be forgiven in the world to come. We are also informed in First Corinthians, fifteenth chapter, 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. Salvation does not come all at once; we are commanded to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. It will take us ages to accomplish this end, for there will be greater progress beyond the grave, and it will be there that the faithful will overcome all things, and receive all things, even the fullness of the Father's glory.<sup>[Z]</sup>

[Footnote Z: Doc. & Cov. 84:38.]

Salvation for the dead was understood in the days of the primitive Christian Church, and to some extent baptisms for the dead continued to be performed until A. D. 379, when the Council of Carthage forbade any longer the administration of this ordinance and "holy communion" for the dead. Paul uses baptism for the dead as an argument against the Corinthian Saints, who, even in that day, were falling away from the true gospel. These saints understood the doctrine of baptism for the dead, yet they doubted the general resurrection. Paul argues with them thus:

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die; even so in Christ shall all be made alive. \* \* \* Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? and why stand we in jeopardy every hour?<sup>[A]</sup>

[Footnote A: I Cor. 15:20-30.]

Joseph Smith, the prophet, informs us that salvation for the dead was introduced in the days of Christ who had reference to this subject when, in addressing the Jews, he said:

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of the righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, who ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.<sup>[B]</sup>

[Footnote B: Matt. 23:35-36.]

Commenting on this, the prophet said the reason that generation would have to answer for the blood of the righteous from Abel to Zacharias, was that in their day the privilege of performing the ordinances in behalf of the dead, was within their power, while it had been denied anciently.

Hence, as they possessed greater privileges than any other generation, not only pertaining to themselves, but to their dead, their sin was greater, as they not only neglected their own salvation, but that of their progenitors, and hence their blood was required at their hands.<sup>[C]</sup>

[Footnote C: Times and Seasons 3:761.]

In this same article the prophet declared that Obediah was speaking of salvation for the dead when he said, "And saviors shall come upon Mount Zion, to judge the Mount of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's."<sup>[D]</sup>

[Footnote D: Obediah 21.]

The work of saving the dead has practically been reserved for the dispensation of the fullness of times, when the Lord shall restore all things. It is, therefore, the duty of the Latter-day Saints to see that it is accomplished. We cannot do it all at once, but will have the thousand years of the Millennium to do it in. In that time the work must be done in behalf of the dead of the previous six thousand years for all who need it. Temples will be built for this purpose, and the labor in them will occupy most of the time of the Saints.

One of the most important prophecies, pertaining to the dead, is that of Malachi. He prophesied that the Lord would send Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, for the purpose of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest the earth be smitten with a curse, when the Lord should come. This prophecy, which is not understood by the world, has come to pass. When the Angel Moroni



appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith, September 21, 1823, among the passages of scripture he quoted that were about to be fulfilled, was this prophecy of Malachi's; but he quoted it with this variation: "Behold, I will reveal unto you the priesthood by the hand of Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promise made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming."<sup>[E]</sup>

[Footnote E: History of the Church, Vol. 1:12.]

From this, we see that Elijah's mission was to restore that priesthood which would turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, according to a promise that had been made to the fathers. That it was extremely important and necessary, is shown in the fact that the whole earth would be utterly wasted at the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, if this priesthood were not restored. This quotation deeply impressed the prophet at that time, although he could not understand it. Three times that night it was repeated, and again on the following day. Gradually, as link after link of the gospel chain was revealed, and the keys and powers were bestowed, the prophet increased in wisdom and knowledge. In time, a temple was built in Kirtland, but in it there was no baptismal font, or any other provision made for ordinance work for the dead. The reason is that the doctrine had not been fully revealed. This temple, however, served the purpose for which it was erected, a house of the Lord, where he could come, and send his angels to bestow keys and authority necessary in this dispensation. In this temple, April 3, 1836, the Savior and many of the ancient prophets appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and bestowed upon their heads the keys of the several dispensations. Among these heavenly visitors came Elijah, who placed his hands on the heads of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and gave them the priesthood spoken of by Malachi. "Therefore," said he, "the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands, and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors."<sup>[F]</sup>

[Footnote F: Doc. & Cov. 110:16.]

What was the promise made to the fathers that was to be fulfilled in the latter-days by the turning of the hearts of the children to their fathers? It was the promise of the Lord made through Enoch, Isaiah, and the prophets, to the nations of the earth, that the time should come when the dead should be redeemed. And the turning of the hearts of the children is fulfilled in the performing of the vicarious temple work and in the preparation of their genealogies. Up to the time of Elijah's visit, there had been nothing done for the dead. The doctrine was not understood by the Saints, and there was no temple built where the ordinances could be performed. But as soon as this priesthood was restored, the hearts of the children commenced turning toward their fathers.

The knowledge of temple building and temple work was made known to the prophet from time to time subsequently to the 3rd of April, 1836, and he commenced to reveal these things to the Saints. In Nauvoo they were commanded to build a temple to the Lord, for only in temples can these ordinances be performed, excepting in times of extreme poverty, when they cannot build temples for that purpose. "For this ordinance belongeth to my house," says the Lord, "and cannot be acceptable to me (i.e., outside of the house) only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me."<sup>[G]</sup> As the Latter-day Saints were in this poverty-stricken condition when they settled at Nauvoo, the Lord granted them the privilege of baptizing for the dead in the Mississippi river, until a place could be prepared for the ordinance in the temple. Just as soon as a font could be prepared in the temple, the Lord, by revelation, discontinued baptisms for the dead in any other place. It was October 3, 1841, when this revelation was given, and on the 8th of the following month, the font in the temple at Nauvoo was dedicated, and from that day, until the Saints were driven from Illinois, that ordinance continued to be performed by them in that house in behalf of their dead.<sup>[H]</sup> After arriving in Salt Lake valley, the first commandment President Young received from the Lord was to commence to build a temple where this work could be continued. The members of the Church responded, and temples have been built, where the living now go to officiate for the dead.

[Footnote G: Doc. & Cov. 124:30.]

[Footnote H: Some of those who would destroy the work of God, have declared that the Church was rejected, with its dead, because the temple at Nauvoo was not finished; and, say they, the Lord, in this revelation, declared that he would give the Saints sufficient time to build a house (temple) unto him, and if they failed to build it in the sufficient time, they would be rejected with their dead. The fact is, that the Nauvoo Temple was built, and many of the Saints received their endowments in it, and labored for their dead before they were finally driven from Nauvoo by their enemies. But the meaning of this revelation is perverted; the Lord did not say he would reject the Church, with its dead, if they failed to build the temple, but that they would be rejected *if they did not perform the ordinances for their dead in the temple when it was prepared for that purpose*. Here is the commandment in question (sec. 124:31-35):

"But I command you, all ye my Saints, to build a house unto me; and I grant unto you a sufficient time to build a house unto me, and during this time your baptisms [i.e. outside of a temple] shall be acceptable unto me.

"But, behold, at the end of this appointment [i.e. the sufficient time] your baptisms for your dead shall not be acceptable unto me [i. e. outside of a temple] *and if ye do not these things* [i. e. temple ordinances] *at the end of the appointment*, ye shall be rejected as a Church, with your

dead, saith the Lord your God.

"For verily I say unto you, that after you have had sufficient time to build a house to me, *wherein the ordinances of baptizing for the dead belongeth*, and for which the same was instituted from before the foundation of the world, your baptisms for your dead [i.e. in any other place than in a temple] cannot be acceptable unto me, for therein are the keys of the holy priesthood ordained that you may receive honor and glory.

"And after this time [when a house is prepared] your baptism for the dead, by those who art scattered abroad, are not acceptable unto me, saith the Lord." [Bold face and brackets are mine. J.F.S.]

*And if ye do not these things at the end of the appointment*, obviously does not mean "if ye do not build a temple at the *end* of the appointment," as our critics infer it does, but it refers to the *ordinances* that were to be performed in the temple, and the failure on the part of the Saints to perform these ordinances for their dead was the thing that would cause their rejection with their dead, and not the failure to build the temple, which was merely the edifice in which the saving principles were to be performed. This is in harmony with the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who said that if we neglect the salvation of our dead "*we do it at the peril of our own salvation!* Why? Because we without them cannot be made perfect." (Doc. & Cov. sec. 28:15.)

The virtue of salvation for the dead is not in the structure of the temple, but in the *ordinances* which are performed in the temple. The temple is to the ordinances just what the vessel is to the life-giving nourishment it contains. Those who would reject us on a technicality, because, as they say, "we did not finish the temple," neither build temples nor perform the ordinances for the dead, wherein they prove their rejection by the Lord, according to the revelations of Joseph Smith, the prophet.]

The restoration of Elijah's priesthood accomplished more than the turning of the hearts of the members of the Church to their fathers, for the spirit of his mission spread forth and took hold of the hearts of the honorable men and women in the world who have been directed, they know not why, to spend their time and means in preparing genealogies, vital records and various other genealogical data, which they are publishing at great labor and expense.

It is a curious and interesting fact that the year following the coming of Elijah, the British government passed laws requiring the proper recording of records, and the filing of them in one central place. In the year 1844, the New England Historical and Genealogical Society was organized in Boston; in 1869 the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society was incorporated in New York. Other societies have been organized from time to time in America, principally in the New England States, and they are publishing quarterly genealogical magazines and registers, family records, etc.; and are continually disseminating information regarding our ancestors, that is useful to the Latter-day Saints. The New England Society is publishing, as they express it in their magazine, "by a fund set apart from the bequest of Robert Henry Eddy," to the society, the vital records (births, marriages and deaths) of towns in Massachusetts, whose records are not already printed from the beginning to the year 1850. This is a tremendous work, many volumes of these records have been published, and others are in course of preparation.<sup>[1]</sup> Eventually they will be printed by this and other similar societies in Massachusetts, a state that has set the pace for her sister states to follow. There, and in other parts, these societies are protected and encouraged by legislative enactment. Besides these numerous societies engaged in this noble work, there are multitudes of individual laborers who are publishing at their own expense family genealogies and vital records that extend back for hundreds of years.

[Footnote I: Other societies in Massachusetts are also preparing vital records, among them are the Topsfield Historical Society, the Essex Antiquarian Society, the "Systematic History Fund," Franklin P. Rice, trustee. Of this work Mr. Rice, who is a pioneer in genealogical research, says:

"I hope sometime to give in detail an account of the various undertakings in the line of record preservation with which I have been connected since I began, in the early seventies, with the idea, crude and imperfect, of subjecting to classification, for easy reference, manuscript materials in public depositories, many of which were then hidden or unknown, and in many places practically inaccessible. \* \* \* \* Thirty-five years ago the interest in such matters was mainly antiquarian, and the few examples in print in this line had been inspired from that standpoint. Genealogical research was not the powerful factor it is today. As the idea expanded and developed, I came to regard the work chiefly in its practical and scientific aspects, and I applied the term "Systematic History" as the best explaining its purpose, to meet the necessities of all enquirers and investigators. \* \* \* I formulated a plan sometime before 1890 to require the towns in Massachusetts to print their records, but this met with little favor. Its substantial features are embodied in the Act of 1902. \* \* \* Pursuing the work since 1898 under the operation of the Systematic History Fund, I have been able to secure copies and to print the vital records of more than thirty towns in central Massachusetts."]

In Great Britain the work is carried on by the Harleian Society, the Genealogist Society, Phillimore & Company, the Lancashire Parish Register Society, the Yorkshire Parish Register Society, and similar societies in nearly all of the counties of Great Britain. These societies publish the parish registers of the several parishes in England, and to an extent in Scotland, Ireland and Wales. There is also in Great Britain Lodge's, Debrett's and Burkes' *Peerages and Visitations* which are invaluable to the searcher of genealogical information in those lands. These numerous societies and individuals in the world, upon whom the spirit of Elijah has fallen to this extent at least, are compiling, printing and distributing these records of the dead, faster than the Saints can, with their present facilities and understanding of the work, obtain them. In fact, they have

far outstripped us in the race, and while we sometimes are given to boasting of the great work we are doing for the dead, it is as nothing, a mere drop in the bucket. These people and societies are helping us, should we not take every advantage of their labors and stand in the forefront, magnifying our calling and proving our birthright as the children of Ephraim?

Thus the hearts of the children are gradually, but surely turning towards their fathers. The spirit of this work is now taking hold of the hearts of the people of Germany, Scandinavia and the continent of Europe. And why are they doing this? Because their hearts have been drawn out to their fathers, through the restoration of the keys of salvation for the dead, and they are energetically and faithfully laboring, but all the while unconscious of the full significance and worth of their labors, simply because the work appeals to them and they are fascinated by it. Surely they shall receive their reward.

While many honorable men and women in the world are accomplishing a great work in searching out and compiling genealogical data, their labors serve only as the means to the end. The greatest work, after all, devolves on the members of the Church who have the priesthood, power and privilege, to go into the temples, taking the names from these compiled records and from all other authentic sources and performing the ordinances in behalf of their dead. We live in the greatest dispensation of the world's history, that of the fulness of times, when all things are to be gathered and restored to their proper order, ushering in the millennial reign of the Redeemer and the righteous. Do we Latter-day Saints fully realize the importance of the mighty responsibility placed upon us in relation to the salvation of the world? We are doing a great deal in the attempt to convert and save a perverse and wicked generation; we are sending hundreds of missionaries into all parts of the earth, and are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in this very necessary labor, with results that are not so very startling. We are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in the building of meetinghouses, church schools and other buildings, and in the education of the youth of Israel, in developing and improving our lands, building cities and increasing our communities, publishing periodicals and magazines, and in every way diligently striving to improve our own people, and disseminate knowledge that will convert the world to the gospel; but what are we doing for the salvation of our dead? Many there are, it is true, who comprehend this greater work, and are faithfully discharging their duties in the temples of the Lord, but of others this cannot be said. The temple in Salt Lake City has for many months been so crowded with anxious, earnest workers, that it has been necessary many times to turn large numbers away because there was not sufficient room. This is a good sign, showing the willingness and activity of the Saints. But this condition does not relieve from responsibility the inactive, dilatory members, who are doing nothing for their dead. These persons cannot expect to receive credit for what others may be doing. The responsibility rests with equal force on all according to our individual ability and opportunities. It matters not what else we have been called to do, or what position we may occupy, or how faithfully in other ways we have labored in the Church, none are exempt from this great obligation. It is required of the apostle as well as the humblest elder. Place or distinction, or long service in the Church, in the mission field, the stakes of Zion, or where or how else it may have been, will not entitle one to disregard the salvation of one's dead. Some may feel that if they pay their tithing, attend their regular meetings and other duties, give of their substance to the poor, perchance spend one, two or more years preaching in the world, that they are absolved from further duty. But the greatest and grandest duty of all is to labor for the dead. We may and should derail these other things, for which reward will be given, but if we neglect the weightier privilege and commandment, notwithstanding all other good works, we shall find ourselves under severe condemnation. And why such condemnation? Because "the greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us, is to seek after our dead;"<sup>[J]</sup> Because we cannot be saved without them, "It is necessary that those who have gone before and those who come after us should have salvation in common with us, and thus hath God made it obligatory to man,"<sup>[K]</sup> says the Prophet Joseph Smith. From this, then, we see that while it is necessary to preach the gospel in the nations of the earth, and to do all other good works in the Church, yet the greatest commandment given us, and made obligatory, is the temple work in our own behalf and in behalf of our dead.

[Footnote J: Joseph Smith in Times and Seasons 6:616.]

[Footnote K: Ibid.]

Again the Prophet says:

Baptism for the dead is the only way that men can appear as saviors upon Mount Zion. The proclamation of the first principles of the gospel was a means of salvation to man individually, but men, by actively engaging in rites of salvation substitutionally, become instrumental in bringing multitudes of their kin into the kingdom of God. \* \* \* This doctrine appears glorious inasmuch as it exhibits the greatness of divine compassion and benevolence in the extent of the plan of human salvation. This glorious truth is well calculated to enlarge the understanding, and to sustain the soul under troubles, difficulties, and distresses. \* \* \* This doctrine presents in a clear light the wisdom and mercy of God, in preparing and ordinance for the salvation of the dead, being baptized by proxy, their names recorded in heaven, and they judged according to the deeds done

in the body. This doctrine was the burden of the scriptures. Those Saints who neglected it, in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation.<sup>[L]</sup>

[Footnote L: Times and Seasons 2:545-6.]

The reason our own salvation stands in jeopardy is because it is necessary that the parents and children not only receive the ordinance of baptism, but they must be joined together from generation to generation. It is necessary for us to go into the temples, be baptized, confirmed, and receive all the ordinances for our dead, just as we receive them for ourselves.<sup>[M]</sup>

[Footnote M: History of the Church, May 12, 1844.]

It is sufficient to know that the earth will be smitten with a curse, unless there is a welding link of some kind or other, between the fathers and the children upon some subject or other, and behold what is that subject? It is the baptism for the dead. For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect. Neither can they nor we be made perfect without those who have died in the gospel also; for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times, which dispensation is now beginning to usher in, that a whole and complete and perfect union and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed, from the days of Adam even to the present time and not only this but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this dispensation of the fulness of times.<sup>[N]</sup>

[Footnote N: Doc. & Cov. 128:18.]

Again, quoting from the prophet:

The Bible says, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Now, the word turn here should be translated bind or seal. But what is the object of this important mission? or how is it to be fulfilled? The keys are to be delivered, the spirit of Elijah is to come, the gospel to be established, the Saints of God to be gathered, Zion built up, and the Saints to come up as saviors on Mount Zion.

But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them, and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah. And I would that this temple were now done, that we might go into it, and go to work and improve our time, and make use of the seals while they are on earth.

The Saints have not too much time to save and redeem their dead, and gather together their living relatives, that they may be saved also, before the earth will be smitten, and the consummation decreed falls upon the world.<sup>[O]</sup>

[Footnote O: History of the Church, Jan. 20, 1844.]

These passages emphasize the importance of the work for the dead, for we cannot be saved without them, nor can they be saved without us. Our salvation cannot be accomplished unless the fathers and the children are joined together, bound, sealed in perfect family order. Husbands must be united by authority to their wives; children to their parents, until there is one grand family composed of all the faithful from the beginning to the end of time, with Adam, our progenitor standing in his calling as the father of us all.

How great is the responsibility of the Latter-day Saints! No wonder the theme occupied the prophet's mind so constantly, just before his death, for upon the Saints devolves the labor of this universal redemption! Is not this the greatest, most glorious duty in the world? How terrible

would be the consequences should we fail! The earth would be smitten with a curse, and utterly wasted. The work of all the dispensations would be lost, the dead as well as the living would be denied salvation. Anarchy, confusion, even chaos, would reign supreme: for this salvation must come by our endeavors, and we cannot fail. Individuals may fail to do their part, and be rejected for their failure, but the work of the Lord shall go on and increase from day to day, until redemption of the dead shall be accomplished.

If all the righteous blood from the days of Abel to the days of Zacharias, was required of the Jews in the days of Christ, because they neglected to do their duty in this regard, is it unreasonable to suppose that the blood of all the righteous from the beginning to the present day will be required of this generation? For our privileges are greater than those of the Jews in the meridian of time. Therefore it behooves each one of us to rid our garments of the blood of this generation by performing all our duties required in the gospel.

If this work must be performed for the dead from the beginning to the end of time, how is it to be done? It is an exceptional case when a family record can be traced beyond the fifteenth century with any degree of accuracy, and most all of those that can, merely give the name of the Father and first-born son, or the name of the one inheriting the estate. In extent of time three or four hundred years is but a moment. What, then, are we to do for the great multitudes of our kindred who antedate the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, whose records were never kept, and consequently we cannot obtain? Will the Lord hold us accountable for these dead, and punish us for not doing their work, when we are powerless to act? Not in the least. The Lord requires of us that we do all we can, no more than that. He will assist us if we will try, and the way will be opened before us, as has been the case in innumerable instances, so that we can accomplish a great deal more than we at first think we can. There is enough that we can do for the dead, from the records which can be obtained today, to fill a hundred temples daily, and then we would not be through, at the rate we are working, before Christ will come to reign.

We are expected to save as many as we possibly can with the knowledge we possess, and when the Redeemer comes to reign on earth, there will be a closer communication between the mortal and the resurrected Saints who will work hand in hand in the redemption of the dead. Those who have passed beyond will then be in a position to furnish to their mortal kin all necessary names for temple work; and thus the labor for their salvation will be facilitated and more accurately done than it possibly can be done today.

Even now hundreds of thousands of records have been prepared, the names of many millions of souls have been published and are accessible to the members of the Church. Each year new genealogical records are being prepared in vast numbers more rapidly than we can do the work. And the Saints with all their diligence, are not doing all that could be done. Comparatively, we are few in numbers, and the capacity of our temples, limited; but we should increase the work by increasing the number of workers. When the present temples will not accommodate all who desire to attend, the Lord will require that other temples be erected.

There are in the Church today (1910) over forty-one thousand seven hundred men holding the Melchizedek Priesthood, and every faithful elder has access to the temples. Suppose that each of the forty-one thousand seven hundred elders should go to one of the temples one day each month—and where they cannot go, they might send and have the work done for them—what would be the result? The work would be done for five hundred thousand each year. If an equal number of sisters would do the same, there would be one million souls endowed every year. If we spent one day each month in the temples saving our dead, just twelve days out of the three hundred and sixty-five of the year, brethren and sisters, would any of us be doing more than our share? Could we even feel that we were doing our full duty, when the responsibility given us is so great, and the Saints have not too much time to save and redeem their dead and gather together their living relatives, that they may be saved also before the earth will be smitten, and the consummation decreed falls upon the world? Suppose we did all this each year, in the course of a century we would have endowed one hundred million souls, which is about the present population of the United States, and a very small part of the work for those whose records we may now obtain. In the library of the Genealogical Society of Utah—which society was organized in 1894 as an aid to the Saints who desire to do temple work—situated in the Church Office Building, Salt Lake City, we have on file thousands of records, containing millions of names that have been collected from the parish registers and other records both in the United States and Europe. These are accessible, and many are obtaining from them the names of their dead and performing in the temples the work that will merit them a place in the Kingdom of God.

Again, suppose each one of us should fill out one baptismal blank of twenty names, and send it to the temple every month, it would mean that over twenty million, sixteen thousand baptisms would be performed each twelve months. Suppose we sent such a list but twice a year, we would then baptize three million, three hundred and thirty-six thousand souls each year. Is this more than we ought to do? Is it more than we are capable of doing? It certainly is a great deal more than we are doing; and, too, there are many individuals who are baptizing more than twenty every month. If a few can do it, why can not more? The fact is, this question has not appealed to many of us, we have been so busy in other pursuits, principally in the accumulation of worldly goods that we cannot carry with us, that we have had no time or inclination to do the work for our dead. If one hundredth part of the energy expended by the members of the Church in other ways were directed in the channels of temple work where it properly belongs, we could accomplish a great deal more work than we are now doing for the salvation of the dead.

But one will say: "I have done the work for all my ancestors of whom I have any knowledge. My genealogy can only be traced to my great grandfather, beyond that all is dark. How can I be baptized each year for twenty, forty, sixty, or more of my dead when we haven't their records?" To such a person I reply: If you have done the work for all your known dead, and your record cannot be traced but one or two generations, you still have the privilege of assisting your neighbor who lacks sufficient help and therefore cannot do the work for all his dead. Assist him and assist the temples with your financial as well as your moral support, and the way may be opened before you that you can obtain more knowledge of your own dead.

There is one thing of importance, however, we must keep in mind. No person has a right to select names promiscuously of any family, and go to the temple to perform the work for them. This cannot be tolerated, for it would lead to confusion and duplication of work. Let each family do the work for their own dead kindred, as they may have the right, and if they do work for others, it must be at the instance and with the consent of the living relatives who are immediately concerned. A few individuals have desired to do the work for men of renown, generals, presidents, magistrates, and others who have risen to prominent stations in the world. One object they apparently have in view is that they may say they have done the work for such and such persons. But there is an order in this work, as in all things pertaining to the gospel, and in no case should work be done in this manner, unless the circumstances are such that proper sanction of the temple authorities can be given.

We are also troubled at times by what are known as "link-men," individuals in the world who manufacture names so that they can complete unbroken a family line. This is done for the purpose of making money, and is, of course, knavery of the worst kind. Those who are guilty of this trickery do not understand salvation for the dead, and may not fully realize the wickedness of such a course.

Latter-day Saints should be accurate in their recording, and not depend entirely on the temple records for a history of their work. Temple record books are prepared for the use of the Saints so that each family may keep their own record of their dead. This should be done that the record may be handed down from generation to generation. Remember it is out of the records that the dead are to be judged. We should be orderly in all things, and strive to get the spirit of the work, live our religion and work out our own salvation by assisting in the salvation of our dead, for we without them cannot be made perfect.

In the words of the prophet, I shall conclude,

Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceeding glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free.<sup>[P]</sup>

[Footnote P: Doc. & Cov. 128:22.]

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