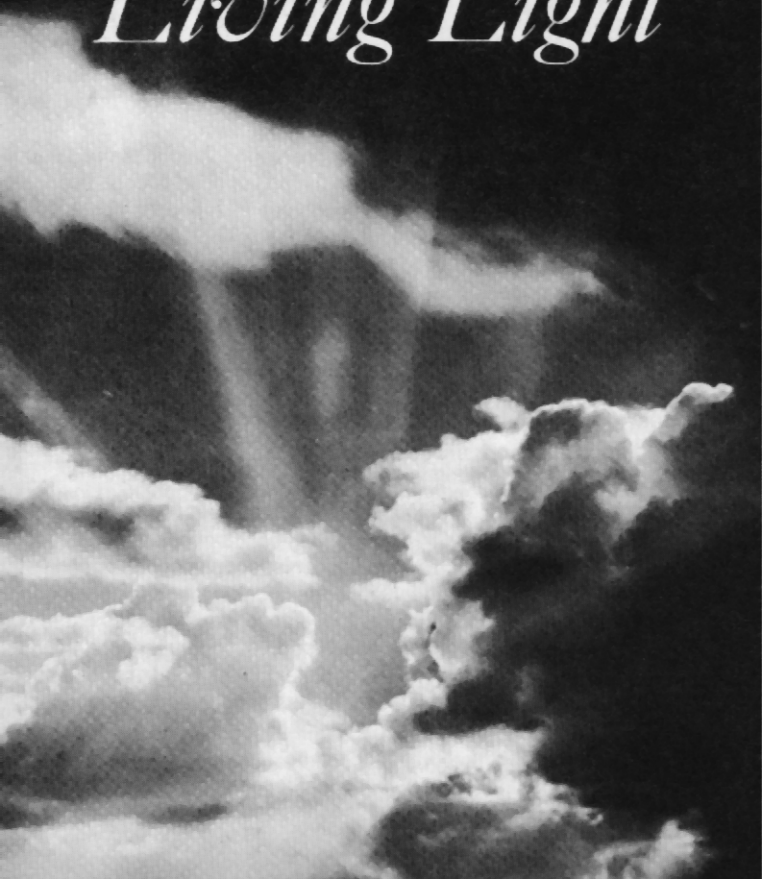


SALVATION FOR THE DEAD

*Rays of  
Living Light*



# SALVATION FOR THE DEAD

BY PRESIDENT CHARLES W. PENROSE

BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”<sup>1</sup> This sweeping declaration was made by Jesus Christ to Nicodemus, when the prominent Israelite visited the Savior at night. The Apostle Peter said concerning Jesus Christ: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”<sup>2</sup> The words of Peter were spoken when he was “filled with the Holy Ghost.” The words of Jesus came from him as the Son of God. They vitally affect the whole human family. They being true, not a soul can enter into the kingdom of God unless he or she is a true believer in Jesus Christ, and has been born of the water and of the Spirit. Even Christ himself had to comply with this law in order to “fulfill all righteousness.” He was born of the water in his burial by baptism in Jordan, and his coming forth from the womb of waters; he was then born of the Spirit by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Here is the example for all mankind, who are required to “follow in his steps.” This is the “straight and narrow way.”

## THE MANY WHO DIE WITHOUT HEARING THE GOSPEL

The question which naturally arises in the thoughtful mind on hearing these declarations is, “How could people believe in Jesus Christ when his name was not preached to them?” And coupled with that comes the query: “What has become of the many millions of earth’s inhabitants who died without the opportunity of being born of water and of

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<sup>1</sup>John 3:5.

<sup>2</sup>Acts 4:12.

the Spirit?" The heathen nations, worshiping false gods, knew nothing of Jesus as the Savior of mankind. Even the chosen people, Israel, who were under the Mosaic law, did not always walk in the way of full salvation. Since the days when the apostles and other authorized servants of Christ administered the ordinances of the Gospel, and during the times when "darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people," down to the present age when it is claimed by the Latter-day Saints that the Church of Christ, the Holy Apostleship, and the fulness of the Gospel have been restored, myriads of good people have passed away without receiving that new birth in the manner that Christ declared to be essential. Have they all perished? Is it possible that they are doomed to destruction? Will the Eternal Father reject all these his children because they did not obey a law which was not made known to them?

#### POPULAR ERRORS REGARDING GOD'S JUSTICE

Justice, mercy, reason, and common sense revolt at such an idea. As Paul has it: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?"<sup>3</sup> Yet the word of God must stand. It endureth forever, and he is no respecter of persons. And he is to "judge the secrets of all men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel." It is for that reason that the Gospel was to be preached to "every creature." According to the notion prevalent in modern Christendom, there will be many millions of people shut out of the kingdom of heaven, because they did not believe in a Savior about whom they knew nothing. And it is taught that there is no possible chance of salvation for those who died without faith in Christ. Sectarians sing: "There's no repentance in the grave, nor pardon offered to the dead." The preachers of

<sup>3</sup>Romans 10:14.

the sects limit the mercy of God to this probation. They teach that at death the soul goes either to heaven or to hell, and its state and condition is fixed forever. If this awful doctrine were true, Satan would gain the victory over Christ, claiming as his, a vast and overwhelming proportion of the human family, leaving to our Great Redeemer but a small and trifling troop out of the immense and countless hosts of the armies of humanity.

### “THE MERCY OF GOD ENDURETH FOREVER”

The solution of this, to many, puzzling problem is simple in the light of the true gospel of Christ restored in the latter days. “The mercy of God endureth forever.” It is not confined to the narrow boundaries of this little earth, nor tied up within the limits of time. The spirits of men and women are his sons and daughters, whether in the body or out of the body. “His tender mercies are over ALL HIS WORKS.” No one can be justly or mercifully judged by the Gospel without hearing that Gospel, and having the opportunity to receive or reject it. Why, then should not the Gospel of Jesus Christ be made known to those who have never heard it in the flesh, after they have left the body and dwell in another sphere? Do not all the sects of Christendom, almost without exception, believe that the spirit of man is immortal, and therefore living and sentient when the body is dead? And if that is true, are not the spirits of men and women able to receive instruction and information when out of the body? Is it not the spirit of man that receives and stores up intelligence conveyed through the bodily senses? Why should the change called death, which is the separation of the body and the spirit cut off all means of divine communication to the living, immortal, intelligent being that has simply “shuffled off this mortal coil”? There is no good reason why the spirit thus advanced one stage in its experience should not be capable of still further progress and of receiving light,

knowledge, wisdom and religious teaching, especially if information essential to its eternal welfare was withheld while it dwelt in the body. Revelation as well as reason bears testimony that the word of God can be preached to the departed as well in the sphere to which they have gone as on any part of this earthly globe.

THE DEAD TO BE PREACHED TO

“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.”<sup>4</sup> Here is a declaration which, like a ray from the sun of righteousness, puts to flight the fogs and mists of modern eschatology and opens up to view a vast field of understanding, wherein the justice, wisdom and mercy of God are displayed in glorious review. The spirits of these rebellious people who were destroyed by the flood, after suffering about 2,000 years in their prison house, were visited by the Son of God while his body was lying in the sepulchre. This was in fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah concerning him, for instance: “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 brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”<sup>5</sup> And further: “To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.”<sup>6</sup> And again: “That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>1 Peter 3:18-20.

<sup>5</sup>Isaiah 61:1.

<sup>6</sup>Isaiah 42:7.

<sup>7</sup>Isaiah 49:9.

## CHRIST'S MISSION TO THE SPIRIT WORLD

The common notion is that when Christ on the cross "bowed his head and gave up the ghost," he went direct to heaven, as it is supposed all good people do, but on the third day after this, when Christ appeared to Mary, he said to her: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father."<sup>8</sup> The time spent by the Savior between his death and his resurrection, instead of being in heaven was among the "spirits in prison," the "captives" whom he went to deliver. Thus Jesus could preach without his body, and the spirits whom he visited could hear also without their bodies. But what was the nature of his preaching to those who were held in captivity? Let Peter answer this question. "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."<sup>9</sup> Thus it appears that the same Gospel which was preached to men in the body was also preached to men out of the body, so that all might be judged by the same Gospel, which is to be preached to "every creature." That the message of deliverance to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that were bound was successful is evident from the scriptural statement concerning Christ: "He led captivity captive."<sup>10</sup>

## WORK OF REDEMPTION BEYOND THE VEIL

Jesus promised his disciples that the works which he did they should do also. The mission and Priesthood which his Father gave to him he gave also to them. It is therefore clear that the work of redemption commenced on earth will be carried on in the sphere beyond the veil. And that it will be performed in the latter times, may be learned without doubt from the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the end of the world, in which he foretells as one of the events

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<sup>8</sup>John 20:17.

<sup>9</sup>1 Peter 4:6.

<sup>10</sup>Ephesians 4:8.

of that period: "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>11</sup>

### TIME OF THE JUDGMENT DAY

The spirit of man when out of the body, being an intelligent entity, a thinking, progressive and responsible being, capable of hearing and believing or rejecting truth, must be also capable of repenting of evil and learning to do well. Thus the mercy of God can reach such a being independent of the mortal structure in which it was permitted to dwell on earth. The idea that the eternal future of man is fixed at death comes from a mistaken notion concerning "the judgment day." Both Christ and his Apostles taught that the time of judgment was set by the Father to take place "when the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him."<sup>12</sup> Paul declared that Christ would come to judge the quick and the dead "at his appearing and his kingdom."<sup>13</sup> It was at that day that Paul expected to obtain "a crown of righteousness." And the time of the judgment is fixed in the books of Revelation to be after the resurrection from the dead, when the small and the great shall stand before God, and the books shall be opened, and the dead shall be judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works.<sup>14</sup>

### ERRONEOUS IDEAS CONCERNING THE FINAL JUDGMENT

The popular notion that final judgment takes place at the death of each individual, and that he is then and there exalted to heaven or thrust down to hell, is utterly wrong

<sup>11</sup>Isaiah 24 :21-22.

<sup>12</sup>Matthew 25 :31-46.

<sup>13</sup>2 Timothy 4 :1.

<sup>14</sup>Revelation 20.

and unscriptural. Yet it has prevailed in Christendom for many centuries, and it remained for the Prophet of the 19th century, Joseph Smith, by divine inspiration to bring forth the glorious light in the midst of dense spiritual darkness, and show forth the mercy and goodness of Almighty God in providing means by which every soul of Adam's race, either in the body or out of the body, may learn the way of the Lord, the everlasting Gospel, the only plan of salvation. It is to be preached to all them that are dead who could not hear it while living in the flesh, and they can repent and turn unto God and be taught the things of his kingdom. The doctrine of purgatory, which is part of the Roman Catholic creed, is a perversion of this doctrine of Christ, but the idea of the former came from a misunderstanding of the latter. There is an intermediate state in which the spirits of the departed remain between death and the resurrection of the body, and, as will be pointed out in a succeeding tract, there are works which may be performed by the living in behalf of the dead, but only such as are impossible of performance in the spirit world.

### CHRIST A RANSOM FOR ALL

The Apostle Paul declared that Jesus Christ "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."<sup>15</sup> The time has now come. The testimony of this great truth is proclaimed by prophets and apostles raised up in these latter days, and by the voice of angels from heaven, and by the witness of the Holy Ghost, which bears record of the Father and the Son. Let all people rejoice and praise the Lord for this new revelation of his loving kindness and tender mercies extended over all his works, and let his light shine to the uttermost parts of the earth and penetrate to the darkest abode of the regions behind the veil, that truth may triumph everywhere and God be glorified in the obedience and salvation of his children!

<sup>151</sup> Timothy 2:6.