

every evil, because they are agents; for it is the spirit that can do good or evil. That same being, called the spirit, can repent in the eternal worlds as well as here; it can believe in Jesus Christ and in his atonement in the eternal worlds as well as here: and if the Gospel is preached to them there, they can receive it there, so far as the acts of the mind are concerned; but they could not receive baptism there, for that is an ordinance pertaining to the body: it is an outward ordinance—an ordinance instituted particularly for those that are in the flesh.

Baptism is for the remission of the sins of those who are in the body; and it is the same for the generations of the dead, if their sins are to be forgiven through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. The conditions of forgiveness are the same in the spirit world as here—namely, baptism for the remission of sins. But, inasmuch as they have not the opportunity of being baptized in that spirit world, some person else must officiate for them in their behalf. What power and authority do the servants of God justly receive who administer here on the earth? Do they administer as persons that have no authority? Do they officiate as having received authority from man? Do they assume authority? Is this the kind of authority with which the true servants of God administer in ordinances? No. The authority committed into the hands of the servants of God, in all dispensations of the Gospel, is the power to bind on the earth, and it is bound in heaven—to seal on the earth and it is sealed in heaven—to loose on the earth, and it is loosed in the heavens; and whosoever sins they remit here on the earth, they are to be remitted in the heavens; and whosoever sins they retain here upon the earth, they are retained against those individuals in the

heavens. This is the authority of the servants of God in all dispensations of the Gospel from the earliest ages of the world until the present time. Any authority which does not embrace this power in the ministration of ordinances is altogether useless and in vain. Baptism received at the hands of any unauthorized person is good for nothing.

When the children of men here in the flesh receive the Gospel for themselves, they are baptized for the remission of sins, and receive the fulness of the Gospel and the hope of eternal life in the kingdom of God for themselves: when they also have a dispensation committed to them for the benefit of their fathers who are dead, unless they exercise their agency in trying to benefit the fathers, they will, as Malachi predicts, be smitten with a curse: they will not be profited themselves by the Gospel which they have received. Why? Because they do not reach forward and try to reclaim others whose bodies are sleeping in the grave.

The Latter-day Saints have had this subject revealed to them; and the great God that sent his angel to Joseph Smith, to give him power and authority to translate the history of ancient America, with the Gospel and prophecies contained in it, has spoken to the same man, revealing to him the keys of Elijah, and power to seal on earth that which shall be sealed in the heavens: therefore, when by that authority the servants and handmaids of the Lord go forth and are baptized for those that are dead, it is recorded and sealed on the earth. The administrator who officiates for and in behalf of the dead does it by authority. He says—Having authority given me in the name of Jesus Christ, I baptize you for and in behalf of your father, of your mother, of your grandfather, or of any of your ancestors, as the case may be, that are dead; and I