

chapter of the first of Corinthians, Paul, in reasoning upon the resurrection of the dead, says, among other things, “Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why then are they baptized for the dead?” This is a little key given to a very important principle. Paul evidently understood a principle by which vicarious baptism could be performed, that is, one person could be baptized for another, the same as Jesus made a vicarious offering for us. He died on the cross for us—he was our Savior. Paul, substantiating the idea that there is a resurrection, referred to this ordinance, which seemed to exist in the Church and to be understood by the Saints in ancient days. There would have been no need to be baptized for the dead if the dead rise not at all. This is the gist of his argument; and there are other passages which go to prove that the Gospel of Jesus is all sufficient to reach and save those who have died without hearing and obeying it. Peter says, referring to Jesus, “He went to preach to the spirits in prison, who were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.” I will give you another passage to show that he did not go direct to his Father after his death on the cross. You Latter-day Saints understand, or ought to understand, that he did not go immediately to his Father, as many suppose, because, after his resurrection, when Mary had been seeking for the body of her Lord, and supposed that somebody had stolen it, she saw a personage in the garden who she imagined was the gardener.

She went to him and asked who had taken away the body of her Lord. This personage spoke to her, calling her by name. She immediately recognized the Lord Jesus, and in her eagerness, anxiety and love she rushed forward as if to grasp him. But he forbade her, told her not to do so, saying, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” This was on the Sunday, after his body had lain in the tomb from the preceding Friday—the third day, and he said he had not yet ascended to his Father. This is explained by Peter, in the passage I have already quoted, wherein the Apostle says, “By which also he went to preach to the spirits in prison, who were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.” There is another passage in Peter, which goes to prove the same thing, but I will not touch upon it. I have said sufficient to relieve, or it ought to relieve, us Latter-day Saints from any fears for those who have died in ignorance of the Gospel. But we can say, truly, that salvation can only be obtained in the way God has prescribed—by obeying the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; and this is the way that he marked and the way we must walk in to obtain it.

That God may help us to be faithful and to cleave to the truth all our days, regardless of all consequences, and eventually save us in his kingdom, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.