

Will the spirits of men, before they receive their resurrected body, return into the presence of God? Yes. Read what Alma said to his son Corianton on this subject, describing the state of the spirit between the time of death and the resurrection. He says—"It has been made known to me by an angel that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are dead, whether wicked or righteous, shall return home to that God who gave them life;" that is, they go back into his presence. The wicked, however, are again cast out into outer darkness, the light of the countenance of their Lord is again withdrawn from them, a veil is let down between them and their Father and God. But how is it with the righteous? When they go back and behold the face of their Father they will continue in the light of his countenance, and have the privilege of seeing him. They have returned to their ancient home, to that God who gave them life, to the mansions and familiar places where they dwelt ages and ages before they came here. They have gone back to meet with familiar acquaintances, and their memories will be so increased and perfected after they leave this body that the things of their former state and condition will be fresh to them, and they will look upon this little speck called time, in which they have dwelt seventy, eighty or ninety years, as but a dream or night vision during which the things of former ages were shut from their memories; but when they get back to their ancient home they will have a bright recollection of all these things, and of the familiar countenance of their Father, and the countenance of his only begotten Son, and the countenances of the millions on millions of their brother and sister spirits, with whom they once lived. And the memories of

the wicked, after they leave this body, will be so increased that they will have a bright recollection, Alma says, of all their guilt. Here they forget a good many things wherein they have displeased God; but in that condition, even before the resurrection, they will have a bright recollection of all their guilt, which will kindle in them a flame like that of an unquenchable fire, creating in their bosoms a feeling of torment, pain and misery, because they have sinned against their own Father and their own God, and rejected his counsels.

To go back then, into the presence of God, is to be placed in a condition wherein his presence can be seen. It does not mean, in all cases, that people who return into his presence are immediately placed within a few yards or rods, or within a short distance of his person. Is there any revelation to prove this? Yes. I have already quoted what the Lord said in relation to all these creations. He said that from the whole of them which he had made he had taken Zion to his own bosom. Now if he has taken Zion to his own bosom from all these numberless creations, can they all be concentrated in a little spot of a few rods in diameter in order to get into his presence? Why no. If each Zion did not occupy any more space than one particle of our globe, yet inasmuch as the worlds are more numberless than the particles of millions of earths like this, how could they all get into so small a space as to get near to the person of the Lord? They could not do it. But suffice it to say the veil is removed, and no matter how distant a redeemed world may be, it will be in the presence of God.

In order to make it familiar let me bring up an illustration well known among the children of mortality.