

Pornography, Sickness, Evil Spirits and the Priesthood

By Scott J. Gillespie

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For questions or comments regarding this work, or for help with additions write or email to:

P.O. Box 83
Newcastle, UT 84756-0083

unclean.evilspirits@gmail.com

Author's Note

The purpose of this work is to dispel the myths, inherited lies, and false traditions regarding evil spirits and their capabilities circulating throughout the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For some reason, the vast majority of Latter-day Saints have developed a myth that we should not discuss the capabilities of evil spirits and how to combat them, because if we do, “it will bring them about.” More than likely, this is a fear based response because of the unknown. This work brings the unknown out of the darkness and into the light.

This work is the result of more than three years and hundreds of hours of research. It contains an extensive selection of quotes regarding evil spirits, discernment, and false tradition gleaned from the writings of many of the prophets, apostles, general authorities, and church scholars taken from the Journal of Discourses, the History of the Church, the Deseret News, and the Conference Reports and magazines of the Church. It also contains selected quotes from the writings, journals, and biographies of many early and current LDS leaders, pioneers, and missionaries, as well as the author's story.

The included appendix contains the most extensive compilation of quotes ever assembled regarding evil spirits, tradition, and discernment by many past and current prophets, apostles, and general authorities of the Church, as well as quotes from early Church scholars, missionaries, and pioneers. Every effort has been made to include accurate citations.

What Causes Pornography Addiction?

Forty-eight Years of Addiction

I was first introduced to pornography at the age of six by my forty-something neighbor. As often as I possibly could, I went over to his barn where he had several books filled with the worst type of pornography imaginable. I looked at them every chance I got and was quickly addicted by the time I turned seven. As time passed, my addiction worsened and my view of women became horribly twisted and distorted. I grew up regarding women as less than objects. They had about the same utility as a toilet: something to relieve my physical urges; nothing more.

I could not get enough of pornography. I was as drawn to it as a man dying of thirst is to water. It felt like something inside me was urging me, driving me to it, almost like I was being forced to look at the filth. I was simply unable to control the compulsions that were the driving force behind my addiction. I needed different perversions to satisfy my compulsions and cravings. Just like a drug addict, I needed more to get the same effects and it had to be new and different to get those effects.

My neighbor eventually moved away, but my craving for pornography did not leave with him. I began looking for *anything* to satisfy this craving. As a pre-teen and teen I lusted after any woman who remotely fit the porn profile. Advertisements in store catalogs and flyers, newspapers, magazines, TV ads, literally *anything* with a photograph of an immodestly dressed woman, or one in the flesh I could lust after was fair game. Interestingly enough, I did not pay much attention to women who dressed and acted modestly. Eventually, I began experimenting by doing some of the things I had seen in my neighbor's books.

When I turned nineteen, I made the mistake of going on my mission without resolving my past sins. The next two years were the most miserable, depressing two years of my life up to that time. After I returned home, I got married the first time fifteen months later. I never said a thing to my wife about my addiction; after all, I only considered it to be a "problem." I fought my "problem" without success. I would go for long periods of time without looking at porn, but I always seemed to be drawn back to it. Four years later, that marriage ended in no small part due to my addiction. I then went on to be married two more times.

For the next twenty-nine years, I had an on again, off again relationship with porn. I knew it was wrong, I tried to stay away from it, but something inside me kept driving me back to it. It was like a bad horror movie where one of the characters knows there is a hideous beast lurking in the shadows waiting to catch its next victim. He knows that eventually the beast will come for him, and when it does, he will be dragged off, kicking and screaming, and there is nothing he can do to stop it.

It should be noted that I also suffered from depression during this time from my addiction along with several years of sexual abuse I suffered as a child. I had isolated myself from everyone. I built a wall around my emotions and gradually hardened my heart. My depression increased as I got older until I felt suicidal for the last eleven years of marriage to my third wife. During this time, I also became addicted to powerful prescription narcotics (morphine). I abused the drug to the point where I nearly killed myself from an overdose, but I simply did not care. I was addicted to the morphine for eleven years.

What I did not realize was that I kept sabotaging myself. I tried and tried to stay away from pornography, but I kept feeding my “evil desire.”¹ Because I grew up an addict, my view of women was horribly twisted. Consequently, this view of women was “normal” to me. I literally thought that all men looked at women the way I did. I never understood that what I was doing was lusting. It was simply “normal” to me. I figured that if I was not looking at photographs of pornography, I was not really lusting after women.

This was how I kept sabotaging myself. I kept “admiring” the beauty of women everywhere I went: shopping malls, grocery stores, church, you name it. I believed in the wisdom of the world that says that all men look at women and this was simply part of being a man. I kept my evil desire alive because I *could not* stop looking at women. I did not learn that this was wrong until I met and married my eternal companion.

Within a couple weeks, of our marriage, my wife knew something was drastically wrong with me. I had told her my usual lies about a “problem I used to have with pornography,” but she saw through this. She saw that I could not stop looking around at women. Then she looked at me through spiritual eyes and discerned the problem. You see, my wife has an uncommon spiritual gift. She has the ability to discern when a person is possessed by evil or unclean spirits.

About a month after we were married, she concluded that this was the case with me and told me so. I told her she was crazy. I knew possession happened, but I had been steeped in the wisdom of the world. I “knew” that possessed people were usually crazy and off their heads. They either had superhuman strength, levitated, projectile vomited, or some other such phenomenon. The wisdom of the world told me that if I had been possessed by an unclean spirit, it would have been glaringly obvious to anyone.

She continued to tell me that I was possessed for the next year. During this time, I began to understand just how much my wife did love me (she helped me through drug withdrawal) and how much I had come to love her. I also began to understand that I truly did have a problem looking at women, but my pride got in the way and I would not admit it to my wife. I tried to lie my way through our marriage, but she continued to see through those lies. I really did want to overcome my “problem” with pornography, but that beast in the bushes was coming for me.

Inside me, I knew it was inevitable that I would succumb to temptation. I tried everything I knew of to resist, but I was slowly being dragged into the lair of the beast, inch by inch. Finally, one year after we were married, I gave in and indulged in pornography. It was not very long, but I had reached a critical decision point. I knew that I had finally found my eternal companion and I had done the one thing to her that would cause her to leave me. I also knew that I had a choice: I could go on like this or get well.

I decided I would do whatever it took; I would *sacrifice* whatever it took to get well, even if it meant giving up my eternal companion. I went to my wife and told her every single thing I had ever done wrong in my life, things that I had never told another human being. I hurt her horribly, but my honesty kept her with me. I then went to my bishop and confessed to him every

1 From Weakness to Strength Apr 1970. 139

sin I had ever committed, including ones that I had previously confessed. I wanted a totally clean slate. Then I surprised him by telling him that my wife suspected I was possessed by an unclean spirit. I told him I wanted a blessing and for him to cast it out of me.

The bishop was a bit skeptical at first, but he anointed me and gave me a blessing. He rebuked any unclean spirits and commanded them to depart. When my bishop said, "In the name of Jesus Christ," I felt what I can only describe as an angry beehive inside me. It boiled up inside me for a moment then felt like it reluctantly stepped from my body. When he closed the blessing, I jumped up and told my bishop that I felt them leave me. He told me he heard them leave me. He heard a "whooshing sound" as they left.

From that point forward, I was a different person. In addition to the compulsions, I also had other objectionable character traits. One in particular was a homosexual tendency and interest in homosexuality. This trait, along with several other traits and the horrible compulsions were completely gone. When the unclean spirits were expelled, they took their compulsions and imposed character traits with them. What remained was some horrible conditioning (bad habits), but without the compulsions, I was able to change the conditioning. That process took about four months of difficult, concentrated effort, but I was successful. It felt like the Holy Spirit took me by the hand, guiding me and teaching me how to change my life.

I am now completely healed from my addiction and I have been spiritually reborn. I have no fear of the internet and the very thought of pornography fills me with dread and revulsion. I am even uncomfortable around an immodestly dressed woman. The old saying, "Once an addict, always an addict," is not always true. With enough faith, anyone can be healed of anything.²

2 D&C 42:48

Worldly Wisdom vs. God's Wisdom

Science and psychology have struggled to determine what causes addictions, but many scientists agree that “addiction may refer to a substance dependence...or behavioral addiction[s]”³ (e.g. pornography, gambling, video games) that do not involve drugs. Many of these scientists promote a genetic predisposition or disease theory^{4,5} in that something is wrong with our DNA or brain that causes addiction. The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) defines addiction principally as a “primary disease - not caused by something else, such as a psychiatric or emotional problem.”⁶ The chairman of the ASAM committee that wrote this definition of addiction stated that "addiction is not a choice.”⁷

According to this and similar theories, the addict is genetically predisposed to the addiction due to some defect in his DNA or brain that is not clearly understood. Essentially, the theory says that if it was not for the defective gene or brain disorder, a person would probably not become addicted in spite of using their drug of choice.⁸ Some researchers of addiction do assert that there also is psychological conditioning^{9,10} consisting of rewarding, repetitive behaviors.

Psychology is correct regarding the compulsions and conditioning aspect of this addiction and without question, there are physiological components to pornography addiction. The biochemicals released while looking at pornography make the addict feel incredibly good and contribute to addiction, though this is secondary to the actual driving force behind this addiction. However, there is a problem with this theory.

Calling pornography addiction a disease or that it is the result of a defective gene, or a brain disorder that eliminates free choice places the fault of the addiction totally on a person's body. The idea is that a “normal” person can stop looking at pornography at any time. The addict cannot do this because of physiological defects beyond his control. Therefore, because pornography addiction is a disease, it gives the “diseased person” a medical vindication for his behavior, thereby putting the blame on the “defective” body. Because the Church teaches that there is “no condemnation for our doing what we could not help,”¹¹ if the addict's body were defective, he would be blameless in the eyes of our Heavenly Father.

3 Nordqvist 2009

4 Melemis 2014

5 Nauert 2009

6 Nordqvist 2011

7 Live Science 2011

8 Tyler 2014

9 Horvath, et al. 2015 (Classical Conditioning)

10 Horvath, et al. 2015 (Operant Condition)

11 Cannon 1894

The main problem with this line of reasoning is that it eliminates the consequences of wrong choices by saying that the fault for the behavior is that of the body and not the spirit, because the behavior is not from freedom of choice. This would put us on the same level as animals, because they do not have moral agency.¹² When that line of reasoning is taken one-step further, the ultimate logical conclusion must be that the addiction is actually our *Heavenly Father's* fault, not the addict's, because *He* created the defective body, therefore the ultimate responsibility for the addiction would be *His*.

In the October 1970 general conference, Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., gave a talk regarding this line of reasoning.

Sometimes we make excuses for ourselves, when we do what we should not do or fall short of what we should have done. We use such expressions as, "Oh! the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." With such rationalizations we insinuate that it is completely our physical body's fault that we sin. In my opinion, this is not true.¹³

Early church leaders taught that there are "diseases of the spirit as of the body" and that "it is more difficult to understand and cure diseases of the spirit."¹⁴ This is the case with pornography addiction. It is not a disease of the body, but a disease of the spirit that has some physiological manifestations.

12 Packer Oct 1990. 108

13 Repentance Makes Us Free, Conference Report, Oct 1970. 73

14 How the Savior Taught by Miracles 1906

Pre-Existence and Mortality

We are taught to “rely...on the teachings of the living oracles of God, as of equal validity with the doctrines of the written word, the men in chief authority being acknowledged and accepted by the Church as prophets and revelators....”¹⁵ So, to understand the real reasons behind this addiction, it is necessary to reiterate certain principles taught by the early and current church leaders regarding the spirit and the body it inhabits. This is necessary to lay the groundwork for the reason why pornography addiction occurs.

In the premortal world, we were raised and nurtured by our Heavenly Parents. We developed “the capacity to recognize truth”¹⁶ and “were taught the Father’s plan of redemption and enjoyed moral agency.”¹⁷ We demonstrated “our worthiness and ability, or the lack of it....”¹⁸ As part of our premortal spirit personalities,¹⁹ we “developed aptitudes, talents, capacities, and abilities of every sort, kind, and degree.”²⁰ Our spirits also “developed varying appetites.”²¹

When we are born, our body and spirit are united and become a soul.²² We bring with us our premortal spirit personality and “the traits and talents there developed” along with “the capacities and abilities that then were ours [and] are yet resident within us.”²³ These traits included any weak areas that needed to be strengthened in mortality. The Lord counseled us on this.

And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.²⁴

As we grow, we learn to control that body. The real “us,” our spirit, controls our body, not the other way around. In the same general conference, Elder Rector continued his line of reasoning. “The body is very obedient; generally speaking, it will do exactly what the spirit tells it to do. So it is not the physical body that we are struggling with; it is the spirit we must bring

15 Talmage 1899

16 The Gospel and the Productive Life Student Manual, 2004. 46

17 Give Heed unto the Word of the Lord - Ensign June 2000

18 Op cit, The Gospel and the Productive Live Student Manual

19 First Presidency 1912

20 Op cit, The Gospel and the Productive Live Student Manual

21 Op cit, Give Heed unto the Word of the Lord

22 D&C 88:15

23 Op cit, The Gospel and the Productive Live Student Manual. 45

24 Ether 12:27

into subjection.”²⁵

Brigham Young taught this same thing. “. . .Our spirits are striving to bring our bodies into subjection, and to overcome the Devil and the evils in the world.”²⁶ An Ensign article by Terrence D. Olson also restated this same position:

[We] . . .need to know that the spirit controls the body. One of the false notions of our society is that we are victims of our appetites and passions. But the truth is that the body is controlled by the spirit which inhabits it. No one can claim that his spirit is controlled by his body. The spirit tells the body what to do—and barring defects in physiology, the body responds. The body has the capacity only to respond; the spirit directs.²⁷

Realizing that it is the spirit which controls the body is one of the keys to understanding pornography addiction.

The next key to understanding this addiction was also given by Elder Rector. In his conference address, he gave us a clue as to the causes of pornography addiction:

. . .It is primarily the spirit that sees, hears, feels, knows passion and desire; it is the spirit that becomes addicted to drugs, bad habits, and evil desires. It is not just the physical body that is addicted, but the spirit also, which, of course, is the real you and me. We are spirits just as God is a spirit.²⁸

Contrary to some scientific opinions,²⁹ our emotions are not necessarily caused by biochemicals within our body. Everything we think, everything we do, say, or feel; our emotions – anger, joy, frustration, love, lust and pride – are controlled by our spirit. It is our spirit controlling our emotions, thoughts and feelings that are the primary cause of those biochemical reactions, and because it is our spirit that controls our thoughts and feelings, it is our spirit that is responsible for the behaviors that lead to addiction.

Without the constant, on-going nurturing of our spiritual foundation, we are prone to letting go of the iron rod and wandering off the spiritual path. The Holy Spirit is grieved and then withdraws from us leaving a void in our soul. When this happens, our individual spirits unconsciously begin looking for something that will fill that spiritual void. Our problems remain the same, but they will seem to magnify or increase in intensity. Also, because of our wandering, our problems may increase anyway due to our own bad judgment. Our ability to cope with these problems has then decreased in proportion to how far away from the Spirit we have wandered and then we begin to rely on the arm of the flesh.

Elder David A. Bednar said, “An understanding of true doctrines and correct principles will improve behavior more effectively than the study of behavior will improve behavior.”³⁰ This is why the ARP, now HOPE program, is structured strictly around a spiritually based solution instead of the secular, philosophy-of-men-mingled-with-scripture solution used by many counselors. LDS counselors do have their place in addiction recovery *if* they base their treatment plan centered on the *true* Gospel foundation. The danger is that they may “‘mormonize’ their

25 Op cit, CR, Oct 1970. 73

26 Journal of Discourses 8:118

27 Olson 1981

28 Op cit, Repentance Makes Us Free. 73

29 Emotionology Institute 2014

30 Bednar 2011, Ch. 4

secular thinking...to justify their favorite secular theoretical and therapeutic models.”³¹

Keep an Open Mind

If you are steeped in the wisdom of the world, what you are about to read in the next section will go against what you have been taught. The wisdom of the world that most Latter-day Saints fall prey to, i.e. Satan’s wisdom, is very subtle, and its subtlety is what makes it so insidious. Even if you profess to not believe in the wisdom of the world, you will probably find that it has unknowingly influenced you a great deal and you may look at this problem partly with your natural eyes. Instead, you must look at this problem with “spiritual eyes.”³² The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “The best way to obtain truth and wisdom is not to ask it from books, but to go to God in prayer, and obtain divine teaching.”³³

In 1942, the First Presidency wrote that Satan “aims to have men adopt theories and practices which he induced their forefathers, over the ages, to adopt and try, only to be discarded by them when found unsound, impractical, and ruinous.”³⁴ Elder Ezra Taft Benson said, “The more we follow the word of God, the less we are deceived, while those who follow the wisdom of men are deceived the most. Increasingly the Latter-day Saints must choose between the reasoning of men and the revelations of God.”³⁵

What you are being asked to do is to set aside what you were taught about or think is the driving force behind pornography addiction and open your mind to other possibilities.

31 De Hoyos 1986

32 Orson Pratt 1946. 559-561

33 History of the Church 4:425, Oct 1841

34 Message of the First Presidency, CR, Oct 1942. 13

35 Trust Not in the Arm of the Flesh, CR, Oct 1967. 34

Study Evil

A question many Saints have debated is, "Should we learn about how evil spirits afflict, tempt, and influence mankind?" The most common answer is that we should not learn about the capabilities of Satan and his power to afflict. This answer is incorrect and it can be inferred from the context that we should avoid knowing anything about Satan, his angels, and subjugated unclean spirits. This answer is most likely a misinterpretation of an oft quoted statement made by President Joseph F. Smith in which he said, "...The knowledge of sin tempteth to its commission."³⁶ President Smith probably restated a quote he learned from his uncle, the Prophet Joseph Smith who said, "...While our hearts are filled with evil, and we are studying evil, there is no room in our hearts for good, or studying good."³⁷ These short quotes are misleading unless they are read in their entirety.

KNOWLEDGE OF SIN UNNECESSARY. It has been very wisely said that "the knowledge of sin tempteth to its commission." It has been said that now and then the morbid curiosity of a missionary leads him into questionable places, and the only excuse he has for visiting these dens of vice is that he would like to see the shady side of life in some of our great cities that he may know thereof for himself. He wants to see "Paris by night" in order that he may know something of the actual life of vast numbers of his fellowmen. Such knowledge can have no beneficial effect upon the thoughts or feelings of the missionary who seeks it. It does not strengthen him in the duties of his calling. It is a peculiar sort of knowledge that is enticing to the feelings and imaginations, and tends in some measure to degrade the soul.

It is not necessary that our young people should know of the wickedness carried on in any place. Such knowledge is not elevating, and it is quite likely that more than one young man can trace the first step of his downfall to a curiosity which led him into questionable places. Let the young men of Zion, whether they be on missions or whether they be at home, shun all dens of infamy. It is not necessary that they should know what is going on in such places. No man is better or stronger for such knowledge. Let them remember that "the knowledge of sin tempteth to its commission," and then avoid those temptations that in time to come may threaten their virtue and their standing in the Church of Christ. (Joseph F. Smith)³⁸

We have thieves among us, adulterers, liars, hypocrites. If God should speak from heaven, he would command you not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to covet, nor deceive, but be faithful over a few things. As far as we degenerate from God, we descend to the devil and lose knowledge, and without knowledge we cannot be saved, and while our hearts are filled with evil, and we are studying evil, there is no room in our hearts for good, or studying good. (Joseph Smith, Jr.)³⁹

36 Smith 1919. 467

37 HC 4:588

38 Op cit, Smith 1919. 467-468

39 Op cit, HC 4:588

Reading both these quotes in context obviously shows that both prophets were simply referring to those who studied *how* to commit sin *by* committing sin, and those whose lives were devoted to committing sin. It says nothing about not learning about how Satan afflicts, influences, and tempts mankind. The misinterpretation of these two quotes has been constantly repeated by many members to the point that it has become so-called “doctrine” within the Church.

There are two myths spread by many members. The first, “If you talk about evil spirits, you will bring them about,” is just that: a myth. No matter what you do or how righteous you may be, no matter your calling in the church, be it a simple member or a general authority, evil spirits attend us⁴⁰ and surround us⁴¹ every moment of every day of our lives. There is no avoiding it. Talking about them will not bring them suddenly to you because they already surround you. Each of us has several evil spirits assigned to us; they watch us constantly, waiting for an unguarded moment to tempt, torment, and afflict. You simply do not discern their presence.

President Wilford Woodruff taught,

That is what I want to say to the brethren and sisters here today. Every man and woman in this Church should labor to get that Spirit. We are surrounded by those evil spirits that are at war against God and against everything looking to the building up of the Kingdom of God; and we need this Holy Spirit to enable us to overcome these influences.⁴²

The second myth is that if you talk about evil spirits you give them power. There are a few things that give them power over a person, but talking about them is not one of them. The primary reason that evil spirits have power over anyone is sin. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “the moment we revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power.” Another way we give Satan power is when his “lies succeed in deceiving us, we become vulnerable to his power.”⁴³ Then there is fear. Fear is the opposite of faith⁴⁴ and when we lack faith, we open ourselves up to Satan's power. Finally, there is ignorance or lack of correct knowledge. Our lack of knowledge gives evil spirits a great deal of power. “Evil spirits...have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth.”⁴⁵ Talking about evil spirits does not give them power; if anything, it gives us power over them because that knowledge will allow us to understand how they work and thus be able to thwart their designs.

Instead, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “one great evil is, that men are ignorant of the nature of [evil] spirits; their power,...government, [and] intelligence...., the laws by which they are governed, and the signs by which they may be known...,”⁴⁶ and “that they possess a power that none but those who have the Priesthood can control....”⁴⁷ “To his declaration that ‘a man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge,’ he adds that if men do not get knowledge,

40 JD 3:372

41 Smith 2007, 214

42 Lundwall 1941. 322

43 Oaks 2004, 43

44 Packer 2004, 79

45 Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual 2002, 326

46 HC 4:572-573

47 Ibid, Pg. 576

*including the knowledge of how to control evil spirits, the latter will have more power than the former, and thus be able to dominate them.*⁴⁸ [Emphasis added]

Elder Orson F. Whitney continued along this line, saying that with evil spirits, “foreknowledge is power.”⁴⁹ He also said that we must be careful where and how we seek spiritual knowledge.

To those in quest of spiritual light, this word of counsel: Seek it only in the Lord's appointed way. Follow the advice of the Apostle James and the example of Joseph the Prophet. Never go upon the Devil's ground. Keep away from all deceptive influence. One may believe in hypnotism, without being a hypnotist, without surrendering one's will to the will of the person exercising that power—a very dangerous power when wielded by an unprincipled possessor. In like manner, one may believe spiritualism real, without becoming a spiritualist, without attending "seances," without consulting "mediums," without putting trust in planchettes, ouija boards, automatic pencils, false impersonations, or in any way encouraging the advances of designing spirits, who thus gain an ascendancy over their victims, leading them into mazes of delusion, and often into depths of despair.⁵⁰

This life is nothing more or less than a war; a war against the evil spirits that populate the spirit world. Because of this, the Prophet Joseph also counseled the saints to “search into and contemplate the darkest abyss.”⁵¹ Brigham Young told the Saints to “learn not only what is in heaven, but what is in hell...”⁵² He also told them they have a “duty” to “study...evil, and its consequences.”⁵³ Elder James E. Faust repeated Brigham Young’s statement to study evil⁵⁴ and explained further exactly what types of evil we should avoid. Notice the similarities to Elder Whitney's statement above.

It is not good practice to become intrigued by Satan and his mysteries. No good can come from getting close to evil. Like playing with fire, it is too easy to get burned.... The only safe course is to keep well distanced from him and any of his wicked activities or nefarious practices. *The mischief of devil worship, sorcery, casting spells, witchcraft, voodooism, black magic, and all other forms of demonism should be avoided like the plague.* [Emphasis added]⁵⁵

In any type of war, a good general on a battlefield will study his enemies. He will gather intelligence on them: their weapons, doctrine, supply and support, composition, communications, chain of command, etc. He will then formulate a plan to fight back based on this intelligence. Our enemy is Satan, his angels, and subjugated unclean spirits. We need to know what they are capable of, how they coordinate their activities, the extent and limits of their powers, and what weapons they use against us. Our battlefield intelligence comes from the scriptures, the teachings of the early and current church leaders, and personal revelation.

Devils vs. Unclean Spirits

48 Whitney 1921. 311

49 Whitney 1888. 263

50 Ibid, Pg. 312

51 HC 3:295

52 Young and Widtsoe 1925. 383

53 Ibid, Pg. 395

54 The Great Imitator, CR, Oct 1987. 40

55 Ibid

We know that devils and unclean spirits tempt and influence every living human being. We know that they are the source of all evil in this world.⁵⁶ We also know that their whole purpose in existing is to cause as much trial, pain, and sorrow in this world as they are capable of doing. But is this all they do? The answer to this question is best done by exploring what was taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith and many of the early Latter-day Saint apostles and prophets. This is necessary because so many Latter-day Saints are taken in by the traditional wisdom of the world that says that evil spirits really are nothing more than a symbol or the evil passions and desires of men.

First off, an understanding of the differences in evil spirits is needed. They fall into two categories: devils, and unclean and/or foul spirits. Devils are the one third of the hosts of heaven that were cast out for rebellion.⁵⁷ Unclean or foul spirits, while they are evil spirits, are different in origin from devils. Elder Parley P. Pratt taught that they are the disembodied spirits of wicked people.

Many spirits of the departed, who are unhappy, linger in lonely wretchedness about the earth, and in the air, and especially about their ancient homesteads, and the places rendered dear to them by the memory of former scenes. The more wicked of these are the kind spoken of in Scripture, as "foul spirits," [or] "unclean spirits...."⁵⁸

Within the category of evil spirits there are many degrees or "grades...of evil,"⁵⁹ all of whom have their own talents and abilities. They do things most people simply assume are the natural workings of this world. The following are several quotes from various early Church publications, and the writings of some of the early apostles and prophets, and LDS scholars regarding evil spirits. This is necessary for the reader to understand the extensive capabilities of these spirits.

Many Saints seem to think that the primary abilities of evil spirits are mostly limited to tempting and influencing us; however, evil spirits are capable of so much more. There are better descriptive words to use regarding what they do such as: afflict, assault, harass, annoy, torment, badger, stalk, hound, bully, pursue, haunt, menace, hazard, threaten, peril, and possess.

56 Ibid

57 Doctrine and Covenants 29:36-37

58 Pratt 1915. 110

59 Ibid. 109

Capabilities of Evil Spirits

As was stated earlier, evil spirits, both devils and unclean spirits, have a variety of talents and abilities. These evil spirits are our spirit brothers and sisters, and learned at our Father's and Mother's knee right along with us. They developed their own talents, abilities, appetites, and passions just as we did. Considering the untold billions of evil spirits infesting this earth, they have a multitude of talent to draw upon to afflict, tempt, and torment us.

Sickness and Disease

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that although not all diseases were caused by evil spirits,⁶⁰ unclean or foul spirits were often responsible for various sicknesses and diseases. Because our bodies are made from the elements of the earth, they are “subject to the power of the devil,”⁶¹ and Satan was given limited power over the elements that make up our bodies.⁶²

When the Saints were driven from Missouri to Nauvoo, they found several abandoned log cabins into which they moved. Soon after, the occupants became very sick and the Prophet looked into the matter.

...Sickness increased until Joseph began to be alarmed and saw something very unusual in the new affliction. He looked into the matter as only a Seer and Prophet could look. He saw the trouble and where it came from. Those houses had been dens of iniquity... [and] disembodied spirits of the same ilk stood around in highest glee and in various ways manifested to one another their enjoyment of the performance of the vilest of sins.

When the owners or occupants of the houses were dead, they enjoyed each other's society with their new pals in the spirit state, and when the righteous took possession of their old houses, all combined to kill the new inhabitants, and hence so much sickness—for all evil spirits, whether in the body or out of the body, are opposed to this work and this people, and the spirits in the spirit world have means by which they can affect people on earth....⁶³

According to Heber C. Kimball, Joseph Smith's own child was badly afflicted with an unexplainable illness by Satan.

I will relate one circumstance that took place at Far West, in a house that Joseph had purchased, which had been formerly occupied as a public house by some wicked people. A short time after he got into it, one of his children was taken very sick; he laid his hands upon the child, when it got better; as soon as he went out of doors, the child was taken sick again; he again laid

60 HC 2:147

61 JD 2:256

62 JD 3:277

63 Huntington 1894

his hands upon it, so that it again recovered. This occurred several times, when Joseph inquired of the Lord what it all meant; then he had an open vision, and saw the devil in person, who contended with Joseph, face to face, for some time. He said it was his house, it belonged to him, and Joseph had no right there. Then Joseph rebuked Satan in the name of the Lord, and he departed and touched the child no more.⁶⁴

Another incident involving the Prophet happened while he was traveling cross country with Bishop Newel K. Whitney. The bishop was badly injured in an accident and while Joseph was caring for the bishop, Joseph was badly afflicted.

At the end of this time the Prophet rose one day from the table, walked to the door and began vomiting frightfully. Blood and poison came up, and so violent was the retching that his jaw was thrown out of place, and the poison acted so powerfully on him that it loosened his hair. With his own hands he replaced his jaw and then hurried to Bishop Whitney's bed. Bishop Whitney laid his hands upon his head and rebuked the evil power that was afflicting him, and instantly he was completely healed.⁶⁵

Brigham Young also taught extensively on this subject.

You will learn that the wicked disembodied spirits have not left this people, though the most of those wicked persons who sought to destroy the Saints have left us. There are myriads of disembodied evil spirits—those who have long ago laid down their bodies here and in the regions round about, among and around us; and they are trying to make us and our children sick, and are trying to destroy us and to tempt us to evil.⁶⁶

He also taught that Satan “has power to cause affliction and sickness, pain and distress, sorrow, anguish, and disappointment...”⁶⁷ The Prophet Joseph, said that Satan has power “over death.”⁶⁸

Elder Parley P. Pratt went even further on the subject.

[Evil] spirits...afflict persons in the flesh, and engender various diseases in the human system. They...will distract them, throw them into fits, cast them into the water, into the fire, etc. They will trouble them with dreams, nightmare, hysterics, fever, etc. They will also deform them in body and in features, by convulsions, cramps, contortions, etc., and will sometimes compel them to utter blasphemies, horrible curses, and even words of other languages. If permitted, they will often cause death.

Some of these spirits cause deafness, others dumbness, etc.⁶⁹

The New Testament contains an incident of a woman possessed with a “spirit of infirmity,” that had bent and bowed her body for eighteen years.

11 ¶ And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself*.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called *her to him*, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

64 Op cit, Whitney 1888. 270

65 Cannon 1912. 65

66 JD 6:73, Nov 1857

67 JD 3:95, Aug 1852

68 Smith 1853

69 Op cit Pratt. 110-111

13 And he laid *his* hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, *Thou* hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or *his* ass from the stall, and lead *him* away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?⁷⁰

Lastly, there is the story of Job. Not only did Satan kill Job's family by causing a wind to knock down a building,⁷¹ Satan “smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.”⁷² All of this was done with the permission of Heavenly Father.

As was previously stated and taught by Joseph Smith, not all illnesses, physical or mental, are the result of evil spirits and it is important to understand when an illness is or is not the result of these spirits. The Savior knew this principle because the writers of the Four Gospels in the New Testament were careful to distinguish the difference.

In Matthew 12:22, a man was “possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb” and in 9:32, “a dumb man possessed with a devil,” had the evil spirits cast out and were subsequently healed by the Savior. Conversely, in Matthew 9:27–29, Mark 10:46–52, and John 9:1–8 are examples of men who were blind, yet there is no mention of them being possessed. In fact, the method of their healing was different. In Matthew 4:24 and 17:15–18 are two examples of people who were identified as “lunatic,” or in other words, mentally ill. The first example there is no mention of the person being possessed. However, in the second example that person was identified as being possessed by evil spirits.

Project Thoughts

Evil spirits can project thoughts and images into a person’s mind, suggesting things and influencing their victim. While on his knees in the Sacred Grove, the boy prophet Joseph was tempted severely by Satan⁷³ who also projected images into Joseph’s mind.

On one occasion, he (Joseph) went to a small grove of trees near his father’s home and knelt down before God in solemn prayer. The adversary then made several strenuous efforts to cool his ardent soul. *He filled his mind with doubts and brought to mind all manner of inappropriate images* to prevent him from obtaining the object of his endeavors.... [Emphasis added]⁷⁴

Elder Francis M. Gibbons taught that “while Satan can convey thoughts, he does not know whether these thoughts have taken root unless they are reflected either in words or in actions.”⁷⁵ President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote that Satan “has power to place thoughts in our

70 Luke 13:11-16

71 Job 1:18-19

72 Job 2:7

73 Pratt 1842. 5

74 Hyde 2014

75 The Dual Aspects of Prayer, CR, Oct 1991.109

minds and to whisper to us in unspoken impressions to entice us to satisfy our appetites or desires and in various other ways he plays upon our weaknesses and desires.”⁷⁶

Assault and Death

Evil spirits are capable of physical assault as attested to by several of the early apostles and missionaries. Elder Heber C. Kimball was giving Elder Orson Hyde a blessing to rebuke an evil spirit from about him when Heber was “struck with great force by some invisible power, and fell senseless on the floor.”⁷⁷ An early missionary, Benjamin Brown also related a similar experience while giving a possessed woman a blessing.

The evil spirit then came out full of fury, and as he passed by one of the brethren, seized him by both arms, and gripped them violently, and, passing towards me, something which by the feel appeared like a man's hand, grasped me by both sides of my face, and attempted to pull me sideways to the ground, but the hold appearing to slip I recovered my balance immediately. My face was sore for some days after this. The other brother that was seized was lame for a week afterwards.⁷⁸

Many Latter-day Saints think that death is just a matter of illness, accident, crime or it was simply a person's time to die. However, there are times when death is the result of the intervention of evil spirits, because Satan has limited power over the elements of our body. This was taught by Brigham Young.

I have formerly spoken about the spirits overcoming the flesh; the body or flesh, is what the devil has power over. God gave Lucifer power, influence, mastery, and rule, to a certain extent, to control the life pertaining to the elements composing the body, and the spirit which God places in the body becomes intimately connected with it, and is of course more or less affected by it.⁷⁹

This teaching is born out in an incident involving a returning missionary who accompanied some Saints emigrating from Europe.

During this time of trouble with the elements, and sea sickness, the powers of the evil one were manifested in the case of a lad named Mackenzie, about twelve years of age, who in the dead hour of night came leaping from his bunk, shouting at the top of his voice the name of John McNeil; it soon became apparent that he was possessed of an evil spirit, which was so enraged that for hours the brethren labored to exorcise him; but this proved effectual only for a short time, as the evil one returned bringing others of his companions with him and again entered into the lad. This was repeated several times, until there were seven of them who called themselves legion and bid defiance to all who were on the ship, declaring that they would be subject to no one but Brigham Young. They also threatened to follow the Saints until they should reach the mountains. During the administrations of the brethren, the spirit of the Lord was so visibly manifest, that the discernment of spirits was given to Elder Thomas Smith so plainly that he could see them, and he demanded of them in the name of Jesus Christ, that they should tell their names. With this request they complied very reluctantly, but finally yielded, and one by one obeyed and were exorcised. The seventh and last one was finally cast out. This left the poor boy in a very feeble state, and for several days his life was in jeopardy. At times, when the evil spirits were expelled from the boy,

76 Smith 1957

77 Op cit Whitney. 144

78 Brown 1853. 16

79 JD 3:277

they would afflict others, though not to such an extent as the main object of their power. On one occasion the writer and two of his immediate friends, were overcome by this power. True to their threats, as I afterwards learned, they followed in the wake of the Saints, their special object of hatred being Elder Smith, whom they finally overcame, and in the town of St. Joseph, Missouri, the poor man succumbed to their dreadful power, while he was calling for help from the Elders of the Church, of whom there were none to be reached in time to save his life. President William Howell also died in great distress at Council Bluffs the following year after our arrival in the United States.⁸⁰

Sleeplessness

Another overlooked capability of evil spirits is their ability to keep people from sleeping. This is often thought as nothing more than insomnia or a medical problem, but in a letter from Brigham Young to his wife, Mary Ann, dated June 12, 1844, he stated that while in Kirtland, he was so haunted by evil spirits that he could hardly “sleep a wink.”⁸¹

In 1857, Bishop Edwin D. Woolley (the grandfather of Elder J. Reuben Clark and President Spencer W. Kimball) gave a talk in the Bowery at Salt Lake City in which he described his sleep being afflicted by evil spirits.

There is something upon my mind that is rather singular, but still it has a bearing upon this subject; it is a matter that occurred no longer ago than last night, and I will mention it to illustrate this part of my subject.

I perceived there was an evil spirit about my habitation, but still it did not take possession of any member of my family, still I could not pray him out of the house before I went to bed, nor could I succeed after I had retired, and the consequence was he tormented me all night; I did not sleep good nor rest well, and there was not that peace of mind that there is at other times. I know that there was an influence there that was endeavoring to thwart me in my designs, and make inroads into my family.

Have any of you ever felt so? What is the reason that we sleep so much better sometimes than we do at others? It is because there is a spirit around that is contrary to our faith and doctrine, and that is opposed to that exaltation that we are aspiring to.⁸²

Evil Spirits Watch Us and Communicate With Other Spirits

While evil spirits cannot read our thoughts,⁸³ Brigham Young taught that anyone trying to be a decent Latter-day Saint is continually watched and hounded by devils and unclean spirits.

I know very well that, whether we are active or not, the invisible spirits are active. And every person who desires and strives to be a Saint is closely watched by fallen spirits that came here when Lucifer fell, and by the spirits of wicked persons who have been here in tabernacles and departed from them, but who are still under the control of the prince of the power of the air.

Those spirits are never idle; they are watching every person who wishes to do right, and are continually prompting them to do wrong. This makes it necessary for us to be continually on our guard....⁸⁴

80 Emigration 1892

81 Letter from Brigham Young to his Wife 1941

82 Discourse by Bishop Edwin D. Woolley 1857

83 D&C 6:16

84 Op cit, JD 7:239

While they watch us, evil spirits will listen if we pray vocally, which is one of the reasons why we have secret prayer.^{85,86} In this manner we inform them whether or not they are succeeding in tempting and influencing us. They also listen in during priesthood blessings. The Presiding Bishop of the Church, Elder Le Grand Richards, related an experience in the April 1940 general conference about how evil spirits listen in on patriarchal blessings.

One of the most interesting things that has occurred to me during this Conference was a visit at the Presiding Bishop's Office of one of my former associates in the Church who was recently appointed a Patriarch and set apart and ordained by Dr. Widtsoe. He told me of how he felt his inability to meet that wonderful calling until he was blessed by Brother Widtsoe, and then he told of the joy he had had in giving blessings to the young people in the Church and of the manifestations that had come to him. Among other things he said that while he was blessing one young man he saw an evil spirit standing by his side, and the impression came to him that the evil spirit was listening to what was being said so that he would know what his mission in life was, that he might try to destroy that mission.⁸⁷

Because we are watched, it is only logical to assume that the specific evil spirits watching us take notes so that they know our weaknesses and how to tempt and afflict us. They then share this information with other evil spirits. Brigham Young taught that evil spirits actually communicate information with one another.

When we commence again on the walls of the temple to be built on this Block, the news will fly from Maine to California. Who will tell them? Those little devils that are around here, that are around this earth in the spirit world; there will be millions of them ready to communicate the news to devils in Missouri, Illinois, California, Mexico, and in all the world. And the question will be, "What is the news? There is some devilish thing going on among the 'Mormons' and I know it. Those 'Mormons' ought to be killed."⁸⁸

An example of this is found in an autobiography from a brother who helped a missionary bless another brother in Sheffield, England.

...What transpired I never shall forget. When we entered the room where he was sitting, he looked around and saw Brother Rushton whom he had met before, and with a coarse voice said: "So you have come again in the name of Jesus have you? Well you may come if you have a mind to. I know you came from Nauvoo where you are building a temple to get your endowments and more power. Well, get your power, and the more power you get the more power we'll get." Just as soon as he was through speaking, Brother Rushton laid hands on him and rebuked the evil spirits that had possession of him....⁸⁹

85 D&C 19:28

86 Op cit, The Dual Aspects of Prayer

87 CR, Apr 1940. 131

88 JD 3:372, June 22, 1856

89 Autobiography of William C. Staines 2014

Possession

Evil spirits are capable of most anything, but probably one of the single most overlooked, and even discounted things they do is that they enter into and possess a person's body. President Harold B. Lee taught that Satan has three main purposes. His first purpose is to destroy the agency of man. *Second, he will enter into and possess the bodies of mankind.* Third, he plans to capture the souls of mankind.⁹⁰ Because their eternal punishment is to be without a body, an evil spirit wants one so desperately that it will enter the body of an animal rather than be without a human body.^{91,92}

For some reason this particular ability of evil spirits is almost never mentioned by Latter-day Saints, nor is it actively taught in church today. On the contrary, some bishops counsel the very few members who understand about evil spirits to be very careful what they say in church as it may upset sensitive members. However, it was taught extensively early in the church and in general conferences by many early church leaders.

It also seems that some Saints think if possession did occur it would be rather obvious if a person were possessed. The possessed person probably would have strange, bizarre or self-harming behavior, supernatural powers, talk in a deep, demonic voice, and have superhuman strength or other strange behaviors. While this may occasionally be the case, it usually is not true with evil spirits.

Many people possessed by devils and unclean spirits do not exhibit an obvious medical or psychiatric condition, and both look and act "normal;" consequently, people possessed by them will go undetected. This was taught in a discourse by Elder Orson Pratt.

[Evil spirits] have cunning beyond what you have ever seen manifested by the children of men. They can, at times, apparently, be perfect gentlemen when they enter the tabernacles of the children of men. They can become, apparently, very pious, and, if you could not discern spirits, you would think, from the manifestations of devils, when in the tabernacles of many individuals, that they were perfect angels on earth.⁹³

Possession is referenced several times in the scriptures and was taught extensively by many of the early church leaders. In fact the Church had lessons plan for young women which included this in an early publication of *The Young Woman's Journal*.^{94,95} Joseph Smith taught the early apostles and saints regarding the reality of possession by evil spirits.

90 Lee and Williams 1996. 37-38

91 Ehat and Cook 1980, Pg. 60

92 Op cit, *How the Savior Taught by Miracles* 1906

93 JD 13:64

94 Op cit, *How the Savior Taught by Miracles* 1906

95 *The Teachings of the Savior - Lesson Eleven* 1907

...The devil, thinking to thwart the decree of God, by going up and down in the earth, seeking whom he may destroy any person that he can find that will yield to him, he will bind him, and take possession of the body and reign there, glorying in it mightily, not caring that he had got merely a stolen body....⁹⁶

He also went on to say, "The punishment of the devil was that he should not have a habitation like men. The devil's retaliation is, he comes into this world, binds up men's bodies, and occupies them himself."⁹⁷

The very first miracle performed in this dispensation was the casting out of an evil spirit by Joseph Smith.

After some difficulty Joseph succeeded in taking Newel [Knight] by the hand, and with great earnestness Newel pleaded with him to cast the devil out of him, for he knew he was possessed. The Prophet said, "If you know that I can, it shall be done." Then, almost unconsciously, he rebuked the evil spirit in the name of Jesus Christ and commanded him to depart. Immediately Newel spoke, saying he saw the evil spirit leave him and vanish from his sight. This was the first miracle performed in this dispensation.⁹⁸

An early church scholar, Orson Spencer (president of the British Mission, 1847-48), published a series of open letters in response to a letter of inquiry from the Reverend William Crowel. One of these letters referenced evil spirit possession in which Elder Spencer became rather sarcastic.

Jesus found foul spirits and devils so thick, in his days, that he had occasion frequently to cast them out of persons, and also to empower others to cast out devils. Some instances are recorded where many of these fallen spirits took possession of a single person at one and the same time. Now modern Christianity must be highly favored, if they are so much better than primitive Saints, that they can escape the annoyance of these multiplied and troublesome spirits.

How is it, sir, that devils do not trouble modern churches, as they did the primitive Saints? Are they done away too? Miracles and devils done away! The canon of Scripture closed! Miracles and devils ceased! Happy Christianity; thy warfare has ceased— thy troubles are ended! Blessed rest! Joyful reign of righteousness! As many ways to heaven now, as there are eyelets in a sieve! Oh, brother, blush for thy theology, and for the doleful conclusions to which thy creeds have brought thee!

The reign of Satan, for near eighteen hundred years, has almost effaced every relic of Bible truth from the earth. Every thing [sic] that is valuable and powerful in the ancient system of prophets is done away, and the devil himself is supposed, by many, to be merely the evil passions of men. But, sir, the devil is not dead nor done away.⁹⁹

Brigham Young also taught extensively on this subject several times in general conferences.

The Lord Almighty will not let anything endure that offers hospitality to the devil and his imps. Those who suffer their bodies to be dwellings for evil spirits, must suffer loss, for devils cannot construct a house that will in any way answer their purpose; neither have they been able to do so in all the eternities there are; that is the very thing which causes us trouble continually; for

96 HC 5:388

97 HC 5:403

98 Smith 1922. 98

99 Spencer 1879. 191-192

they are trying all the time to get into our dwellings, because they have none of their own. Did you ever desire to take possession of another person's tabernacle, and leave your own? No rational person owning a tabernacle would wish to do so. The devils have no tabernacles, which is the reason of their wanting to possess human bodies. If any of you have suffered any of these houseless spirits to enter you, turn them out, and they will perhaps seek refuge in the body of an ox, or some other animal, or maybe go into Jordan.

Do you think the legion we read of, that entered the swine, in the days of Christ, had bodies of their own? No; they have no meetinghouses but in ballrooms, gaming houses, brothels, gin palaces, parlors, bedrooms, and other places which they frequent in the bodies of those they lead captive; otherwise they are wandering to and fro in the earth, seeking to possess tabernacles that other spirits, not of their order, already occupy.¹⁰⁰

Wilford Woodruff had extensive personal experience with evil spirits and taught the early Saints regarding possession.

You can see the great variety of spirits that have dwelt in the presence of God, from those who are in the presence of God, down to the devils. A good many of the hosts of heaven were cast out because of their wickedness. Lucifer, son of the morning, and those who followed after him were cast down to earth, and they dwell here to this day—a hundred to every man, woman and child that breathes the breath of life. They dwell here without bodies, only what tabernacles they can get into, to rule and preside over.¹⁰¹

The prophet, Alma the Younger taught that people can be possessed.

Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; *for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.* [Emphasis added]¹⁰²

Alma expended on this to his son, Corianton. He explained that if you commit sin, you can become possessed.

And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil—for behold, they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good; *therefore the spirit of the devil did enter into them, and take possession of their house*—and these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity, being led captive by the will of the devil. [Emphasis added]¹⁰³

Possession Common

Possession by evil spirits is more common than the vast majority of Latter-day Saints realize. While on his mission to Hawaii, Joseph F. Smith was noted among the islanders for his gift of healing and frequency of casting out evil spirits.

Of the many gifts of the Spirit which were manifest through my administration, next to my acquirement of the language, the most prominent was perhaps the gift of healing, and by the

100 JD 2:128

101 JD 18:114-115

102 Alma 34:34

103 Alma 40:13

power of God, *the casting out of evil spirits which frequently occurred*. [Emphasis added]¹⁰⁴

In a sermon Brigham Young, alluded to the fact that possession is very common and that the Latter-day Saints are not excluded.

The devil with one-third part of the spirits of our Father's Kingdom got here before us, and we tarried there with our friends, until the time came for us to come to the earth and take tabernacles; but those spirits that revolted were forbidden ever to have tabernacles of their own. You can now comprehend how it is that they are always trying to get possession of the bodies of human beings; we read of a man's being possessed of a legion, and Mary Magdalene had seven. *You may now see people with legions of evil spirits in and around them; there are men who walk our streets that have more than a hundred devils in them and round about them*, prompting them to all manner of evil, and some too that profess to be Latter-day Saints, and if you were to take the devils out of them and from about them, you would leave them dead corpses; for I believe there would be nothing left of them.

I want you to understand these things; and if you should say or think that I know nothing about them, be pleased to find out and inform me. You can see the acts of these evil spirits in every place, the whole country is full of them, the whole earth is alive with them, and *they are continually trying to get into the tabernacles of the human family*...[Emphasis added]¹⁰⁵

In a 1921 general conference, Elder Nicholas G. Smith (grandson of Elder George A. Smith, the first cousin of Joseph Smith, Jr.) gave a talk in which he talked about the frequency of possession by evil spirits. “You think it was an exceptional miracle when, after crossing the sea, the Savior with his disciples came upon one who was a maniac, and cast the devils out of him, but it was not; *it is something that is occurring [sic] all the times [sic]*.”[Emphasis added]¹⁰⁶

Wilford Woodruff in particular was blessed with the gift of power to cast out evil spirits and he had many occasions to use this gift. “He had numerous encounters with those possessed by Satan, and God granted him the power and the faith to cast out foul spirits and rebuke their influence in the lives of believers.”¹⁰⁷ In 1907, the Church taught in its young women's lesson plans the reality of frequent possession by evil spirits.

Not only did the Savior perform miracles of healing the body, but diseases of the mind were frequently overcome by His divine power. The devil and his angels are bodiless, which is a part of their punishment for their rebellion in Heaven. In their great desire to possess mortal bodies, they *frequently* enter into the bodies of men and women to the serious injury of the person. At times they will enter even the bodies of lower animals. Many cases of individuals possessed by evil spirits, came under the notice of the Savior, and He *frequently* had occasion to cast out evil spirits. [Emphasis added]¹⁰⁸

There also seems to be a tendency by Latter-day Saints to feel that possession cannot happen to a “good” church member, but as was previously shown by Brigham Young, there are those who “profess to be Latter-day Saints”¹⁰⁹ who are possessed. President Rudger Clawson also taught this:

104 Cowley 1900. 235

105 JD 3:369

106 CR, Oct 1921. 139

107 Gaskill 2014

108Op cit, “The Teachings of the Savior” 1907. 36

109 Op cit, JD 3:369

Satan's punishment and the punishment of his followers for their rebellion in heaven, Joseph Smith the Prophet said, is that they are denied mortal bodies. The said punishment is terrible and will make those who receive it most unhappy for the reason that they are halted, they cannot progress, they cannot go forward, cannot attain a full measure of happiness. *Their eagerness to secure bodies is so great that in many cases they endeavor to steal the bodies of the more favored spirits*, and when these evil spirits enter into and take possession of the bodies of others we say of those afflicted that they are possessed by evil spirits. They can only be subdued and cast out of stolen bodies by those members of Christ's Church who are under divine authority. [Emphasis added]¹¹⁰

This was also taught by Elder George Q. Cannon:

All manner of spirits have gone forth to deceive, to lead astray and to obtain possession of the children of men, and many people yield to them because they are invisible and cannot, perhaps, think that they can be possessed by invisible influences (evil spirits). Anger, backbiting, slander, falsehood and various passions are manifested by people under the influence of false and deceptive spirits....¹¹¹

Possession of Children

There has also been a belief expressed among some Latter-day Saints that children under the age of eight cannot be possessed. This false notion occurred probably because temptation is confused with affliction. Children under the age of eight are not accountable¹¹² and cannot be tempted until they reach the age of accountability,¹¹³ yet they are afflicted with many illnesses, and as was previously demonstrated, evil spirits are responsible for part of the illnesses we endure in this world. The New Testament gives an example of a child being possessed.

And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? **And he said, Of a child.**

And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth.

And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.*

And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

110 CR, Apr 1939. 118

111 Cannon and Newquist 1987. 157

112 JST Gen. 17:11

113 Smith and McConkie 1954

But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. [Bold emphasis added]¹¹⁴

It should be noted that the New Testament of the King James Version was translated from the Greek language. In verse twenty-one, the words, “of a child,” were translated from the Greek adverb, “paidiothen,” which means, “from childhood, from early boyhood.”¹¹⁵ Paidiothen is from the noun “paidion,” which means “a little child, an infant, little one.”¹¹⁶

This scriptural account has a contemporary incident involving Wilford Woodruff during January 1840 in Manchester, England.

As soon as I was introduced to [Elder William Clayton], he informed me that one of the sisters in that place was possessed of a devil. He asked me if I would not go and cast it out of her. He thought one of the Twelve Apostles could do most anything in such a case. I went with him to the house where the woman lay, in the hands of three men, in a terrible rage. She was trying to tear her clothing from her....

...We laid hands upon her head, and in the name of Jesus Christ I commanded the devil to come out of her. The devil left, and she was entirely healed and fell asleep.

The next day being the Sabbath, the woman came before a large congregation of people, and bore testimony to what the Lord had done for her.... On Monday morning, *the devil, not being satisfied with being cast out of the woman, entered into her little child, which was but a few months old. I was called upon to visit the child, and found it in great distress, writhing in its mother's arms.* We laid hands upon it and cast the devil out; the evil spirits thereafter had no power over that household. This was done by the power of God, and not of man. [Emphasis added]¹¹⁷

114 Mark 9:17–27

115 Strong's Greek: 3812. TTai5i69£V (paidiothen) --from childhood 2014

116 Strong's Greek: 3813. neu6iov (paidion) — a young child 2014

117 Cowley 1900. 114-115

What Causes Possession?

There are two types of possession: invited and uninvited.¹¹⁸ Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated, “Manifestly, as in all things, there are laws and conditions under which devils have power to force entry into human bodies.”¹¹⁹ He also stated, “There must be circumstances of depression and sin and physical weakness that within the restrictions of divine control, permit evil spirits to enter human bodies.”¹²⁰ It seems that there are two conditions in which evil spirits are permitted to enter into and possess human bodies: first, because it is permitted by our Heavenly Father (as in the case of a little child or illness) and, second, the possessed person invited the evil spirits by committing sin. Joseph Smith said that “the moment we revolt at anything which comes from God the Devil takes power.”¹²¹

In the book of Alma chapters 39-42 inclusive, the prophet Alma had chastised his son, Corianton, for committing sexual sin. He stated that sexual sin was so serious that it was second only to the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost.¹²² To put it another way, sexual sin is second only to being sent to outer darkness as a son of perdition. Remember that Alma 40:13 states that a person can become possessed through committing “evil works.” Based on the context of Alma chapter 40, the evil works Alma mentioned are those that would consign a person to the Telestial Kingdom.

The following are examples of what causes possession.

On 6 July 1838, a group of Saints formed what was called the Kirtland Camp. The group was traveling from Kirtland, Ohio, to Missouri and the route was difficult and full of trials.

The journey was long and tedious; many difficulties were encountered and numerous obstacles overcome. *A spirit of murmuring was frequently manifested*, much sickness was in the camp, and because of their disobedience, evil spirits plagued them by getting possession of their bodies.¹²³

Elder Benjamin Brown was a high priest and missionary. Prior to his mission, he was helping the Saints in the Pomfret Branch in Vermont, and was asked to administer to a sister who was possessed of an evil spirit. This account gives two reasons for possession. The evil spirit was initially cast out of the sister, but it later returned because of sin. Also, Elder Brown’s nephew failed to heed a warning from the Holy Spirit.

118 To The Saints 1853

119 McConkie 1971. 168

120 McConkie 1980. 282

121 Op cit, Ehat and Cook 1980

122 Alma 39:5

123 Roberts 1900

Still she seemed to be surrounded by some evil influence. This puzzled us, for we knew the spirit was cast out, but we learned the cause afterwards. Just then it was revealed to us that if we went to sleep, the devil would enter one of the brethren. My nephew, Melvin Brown, neglected the warning, and composed himself to sleep in an armchair, whilst we were still watching with the sister. Directly he did so, the devil entered into him, and he became black in the face, and nearly suffocated. He awoke immediately, and motioned for us to lay hands on him, for he could not speak. We did so, and the evil spirit then left him, and he recovered at once.

About a week afterwards the same spirit reentered the sister, and this time fully confessed his character. In answer to our inquiries, he said his name was "Legion." This explained how it was that the woman, after we had cast out an evil spirit, was under an evil influence, for there must have been many spirits.

Previous to this, the sister had been a very faithful Saint, and she ever afterwards was, but *she had given the devil ground by encouraging a spirit contrary to the order of the Church, taking upon herself to rebuke the elders, and he claimed his right by virtue of her transgression.* [Emphasis added]¹²⁴

Wilford Woodruff related an experience while preaching the gospel in Maine.

I had ample evidence of the fact that lying spirits had gone out into the world, for three persons whom I had baptized had been visited by Mr. Douglass, who told them that I denied the Bible and could not be depended upon; and *they yielded to his insinuations until the devil took possession of them*, and they were in a disaffected condition, and sent for me.

When I met them they were in great affliction, but when I instructed them in regard to the principles of the gospel, and administered to them, they were delivered from the evil influence and rejoiced. [Emphasis added]¹²⁵

An early Seventy of the Church, Elder Zera Pulsipher, related another experience while living in the Nauvoo area.

Later on we counselled (sic) with old Father Smith and he advised us to get seven elders of good report and fast and pray till [his brother-in-law] was delivered. We consulted the family, who had not kept the word of wisdom, but they agreed to do it. We therefore took the man, loosened his hands, administered to him in a room by ourselves, and I do not remember of him having a raving spell after that for six months. Then the devil entered him again. We were called for the second time. The family had promised to keep the covenants, but we found they had returned to the old practice of breaking the word of wisdom.¹²⁶

In his autobiography, the apostle, Elder Amasa Lyman wrote about a possessed woman whom he healed.

On stepping to the bedside we discovered that Miss Smith's face and her entire form were distorted in the most shocking manner, her eyes were glaring wildly, but apparently sightless, her respiration was very difficult and her limbs were rigid as iron; the common restoratives were used without effect, we laid our hands upon her and rebuked the devil when she was instantly relieved, but in another moment she was bound as before, we kneeled (sic) down by her bed and prayed, when she was again released, and asked for baptism, stating that *she had been acting against her convictions of right* in some conversations we had held with her during the day....¹²⁷

124 Op cit, Brown 1853. 16-17

125 Op cit, Woodruff 1882. 40

126 Pulsipher 2014

127 Lyman 2014

In a January 1849 letter from Dan Jones to Orson Pratt, Elder Jones described an incident in the Welsh General Conference, in which a legion of evil spirits attacked some people in the conference. Two women became possessed.

I will only add the sequel, which was as follows: Having understood that these two females had been frequently possessed elsewhere; had the spirits rebuked out of them as frequently by the power of the priesthood, and again giving way to them and living in transgression, I found out the reason why; the spirits assured us so often, "that they had a right to them, and that they (the females) had broken their covenant."¹²⁸

From the context of the letter, it would appear that these women were breaking their marriage covenants. Both were subsequently excommunicated, which was the stated object of the evil spirits.

Sometimes there really is not a clearly definable reason for a person to become possessed. Two examples are the baby that was possessed by an evil spirit after being cast out of its mother and the young boy healed by the Savior.^{129,130} Another example comes from another group of early saints traveling from Kirtland to Missouri. For no apparent reason, one of the women became possessed.

She was in awful pain and talked all the time and some of the time in rhyme. The Elders administered to her. The evil spirits left her and entered another person and on being rebuked again would enter another and so continued a good part of the night. But when the devil was commanded in the name of Jesus Christ to leave the camp, he went and was very mad. He went thru the whole camp, made a roaring noise, knocked over chairs, broke table legs and made awful work.¹³¹

Sometimes it is to show the power of our Heavenly Father versus the power of Satan. The Prophet Joseph was performing an endowment ordinance for a group of elders when Satan decided to interfere.

Joseph put his hands on Harvey Whitlock and ordained him to the high priesthood. He turned as black as Lyman was white. His fingers were set like claws. He went around the room and showed his hands and tried to speak; his eyes were in the shape of oval O's. Hyrum Smith said, "Joseph, that is not of God." Joseph said, "Do not speak against this." "I will not believe," said Hyrum, "unless you inquire of God and he owns it." Joseph bowed his head, and in a short time got up and commanded Satan to leave Harvey, laying his hands upon his head at the same time. At that very instant an old man said to weigh two hundred and fourteen pounds sitting in the window turned a complete summersault (sic) in the house and came his back across a bench and lay helpless. Joseph told Lyman to cast Satan out. He did. The man's name was Leanon [Leman] Copley [Copley], formally a Quaker [Shaker]. The evil spirit left him and as quick lightning Harvey Green fell bound and screamed like a panther. Satan was cast out of him. But immediately entered someone else. This continued all day and the greater part of the night.¹³²

128 Letter From Dan Jones to President Pratt

129 Op cit, Cowley 1900

130 Mark 9:25

131 Autobiography of John Pulsipher 2014

132 Autobiography of Levi Hancock 2014

In an 1853 Deseret News editorial, the Saints were counseled on how to avoid becoming possessed.

False spirits are more subtle, and more contagious than the small pox; their number and diversity of operations cannot be counted by man; and the first moment the saints leave the path of duty, that moment they are subject to the influence of evil, false spirits, which once having taken possession of the soul, are difficult if not impossible to be removed by the person so receiving them, without assistance from those who have more wisdom. The great object of evil spirits is to get bodies, and the only chance they have is to dispossess a soul of the spirit of the Lord, the light of eternal truth, and take possession of that body thus dispossessed; and when thus once in possession, it may truly be said there is a body possessed of the devil.

Jesus and his disciples in different ages have commanded the unclean and wicked spirits to depart out of those of whom they had taken possession, and they have departed; but there are those spirits which are not easily dispossessed, and go out only by prayer and fasting. And again, there are those spirits that will hardly go out at any price, except it is by the will of those who harbor them. And of what class are they? They are invited spirits. Invited spirits? Yes, many spirits watch their opportunity to thrust themselves into a person when and where they are not wanted, and such are much more easily cast out than those who are invited guests.

For instance, a person, for some real or supposed injury or neglect from a friend, wishes to retaliate to be revenged, and of course, opens the way and invites the spirit of jealousy to take possession; and the moment jealousy enters the breast, there is a perfect hell of happiness; and no scheme that hell itself can devise to torment, perplex, harass, disturb, vex and mar the peace of the wife, or the wife of the husband, is left untouched, unmoved; and by that time the breast of the harbinger is opened to all the evil spirits of Pandemonium, all have free access; and oh, what a world of glory dwells there.

And how shall that jealous spirit be removed? By the laying on of hands? The Lord deliver us from such an ordinance, in such a case. Why? That spirit was invited to take up its abode there, and while that spirit is made welcome by that person, what right have we to dispossess it? It would be abridging the agency of the individual who invited the spirit, for any one to cause that spirit to depart, without the persons leave, and we choose that all should exercise their own agency and responsibility, and then they are subjects of accountability.

Other spirits, not particularly invited or desired, gain an easy access to those who are careless, heedless, and but too indifferent to the statutes, ordinances, and duties of God's kingdom; who neglect their prayers, their assembling together, and doing as they would be done unto; and from these spirits arise contention, strife, evil thinking, evil speaking, evil surmising, detraction, revenge, law-suits, and a host of such perplexing annoyances, sufficient to disturb a nation; but the man who is obedient to his God *in all things*; who knows no will of his own, only to do the will of his father in heaven; is free from these spirits; the Devil has no power over him; for he resists him, and evil spirits are compelled to flee at his rebuke.

Some may ask "how shall I know when I am operated upon by a false spirit?" There are many keys by which the door of knowledge is unlocked to the saints, in relations to spirits, as well as other things pertaining to the kingdom; but one may suffice at the present time, for we have not designed this brief notice to cover all or any considerable portion of the ground which the subject includes.

The spirit of heaven is a spirit of peace, joy, comfort, consolation and knowledge to its possessor; and all saints who have enjoyed this spirit, (and all saints have more or less,) may know when this peaceful spirit dwelling within them is disturbed, that something is wrong, that some false spirit is lurking within or about them, striving to enter; and if they will resist the first impulse of their disturbed feelings, and command Satan in the name of Jesus to depart, peace will instantly be restored to their souls.

It is not the wrong doings of others which destroys that peace within ourselves which the world can neither give nor take away. It is our own wrongs which cause that peaceful spirit to leave us; and would to God that this truth were indelibly imprinted on the heart and recollection of every saint, *it is your own wrongs or evil spirits that destroy your peace, and not the wrongs of your friend or neighbor.* Know ye, all ye saints, if the peace of heaven and a foretaste of the

blessings of the celestial world are not continually with you, there is something wrong within, some foul spirit has got possession of yourself, and the quicker you dispossess it the better.¹³³

At the danger of stating the obvious, but which must be emphasized, possession must be guarded against as strongly and as steadfastly as possible. The Saint who is able to keep his life in order will create a bastion of peace in his home and his life. As taught by Elder George Q. Cannon –

So long as evil spirits can obtain possession of living, human beings and influence them according to their wishes, so long has evil a tangible existence upon the earth. If there were no tabernacles for them to operate through—no men and women who would allow them to use their bodies (the great object of their desire, because of their own great lack of earthly attributes)—evil and sin would have no existence upon the earth....¹³⁴

133 To The Saints 1853

134 Cannon and Newquist 1987. 500

Evil Spirits Control Other Spirits

There are several important points to recall. Elder Rector taught that “it is the spirit we must bring into subjection,”¹³⁵ and in order to do this we were given our body to help our spirit “overcome our addictions, bad habits, and evil desires.”¹³⁶ Brigham Young taught that while our spirit is influenced by the body, the body does not control the spirit.¹³⁷ This is very important to remember because he also taught that when an evil spirit possesses a person’s body, it cannot control the body; it can only control the spirit within.¹³⁸ This is exactly the same thing that happens after a wicked person dies. After death, his disembodied spirit is immediately subjugated to the control of Satan.^{139,140}

The best way to describe what it feels like to be possessed is the example of a car. The car is a person’s body and the driver with a steering wheel who controls the vehicle is the spirit. A normal car has only one steering wheel controlled by one driver. The car goes wherever the driver directs. When the car is possessed, it has multiple steering wheels; one for every other passenger occupying the car. At the whim of the passenger, he turns the wheel trying to make it go in the direction *he* desires.

This creates a tug-of-war between the driver and the passenger, each one trying to go in a different direction. However, the passenger is usually much stronger, giving him the advantage. At this point, the driver begins to lose dominance over the direction the car takes. He slowly relinquishes control to the passenger and becomes an unwitting accomplice to the whims of the passenger. When there are multiple passengers, the effect is even worse with each passenger attempting to steer the car in a separate direction.

Based on the author's personal experiences and from talking to others who have been possessed, the person possessed by some types of unclean spirits does not even realize he is possessed. There are a few reasons for this. The first reason is that if a person is possessed when they are a young child, he grows up with the evil spirit within him. This causes him to believe that his life’s experiences are “normal” not realizing he has been influenced and led by the evil spirit. Secondly, the overwhelming majority of the time, the possessed person believes in the wisdom of the world, which states that possession does not happen, or if it does, it will be very obvious. Third, because the feelings, compulsions and traits come from within, and because they come from within, they are assumed by the victim to be a normal part of his makeup. He thinks that any strange, bizarre, or lustful thoughts are his own because they come from within his

135 Op cit, CR, Oct 1970. 73

136 Ibid

137 JD 2:255-56

138 JD 4:133, December 1856

139 Op cit, Alma 34:34

140 JD 4:273

mind. Fourth, unless he has the gift of discerning those who are possessed by evil spirits, he will not recognize his plight.

Traits of Those Possessed

Without question, indulging in pornography falls under the category of sexual sin and evil works. Once a person is possessed, the evil spirit attempts to overpower and dominate his spirit through coercion, influence¹⁴¹ and manipulation. An addict initially is transiently possessed when he first dabbles in pornography, but the more he looks, the longer he becomes possessed until possession becomes permanent.

Because the Holy Spirit has fled from the addict, he lacks any ability to discern and will not recognize the presence of an evil spirit, *especially* if he is steeped in false traditions and the wisdom of the world. The evil spirit adds to the addict's existing weaknesses, imposing other thoughts, feelings, appetites, and desires. The addict probably knows that something is wrong or off within him, but because those feelings and thoughts come from within, he will think they are his own feelings and thoughts.

Possession by evil spirits also exacerbates the addict's existing character flaws. They are very good at turning a mole hill into a mountain. They also transfer to or impose on the addict their own addictive desires and undesirable character traits such as lust, compulsive lying, malicious manipulation, profanity, anger, unreasonable irritability, compulsively telling dirty jokes, pedophilia, homosexual tendencies, paraphilia (e.g. exhibitionism, fetishism, masochism/sadism, cross dressing, and voyeurism), etc.

Elder Parley P. Pratt wrote about this.

Some of these [evil] spirits are adulterous, and suggest to the mind all manner of lasciviousness, all kinds of evil thoughts and temptations.

There are, in fact, most awful instances of the spirit of lust, and of bawdy and abominable words and actions, inspired and uttered by persons possessed of such spirits, even though the persons were virtuous and modest so long as they possessed their own agency.¹⁴²

An example of this comes from an 1842 letter from three missionaries to the Church affiliated publication, *Times and Seasons*. The letter describes the antics of several religious people who were possessed by unclean spirits of religion.

[Some] others would snort like wild beasts, bark as dogs, run through the creek, pretending to sing and speak in tongues, crying prophecy, prophecy; others would lie in a swoon for several hours, and springing to their feet again, state that the spirit had commanded them to chastise certain characters who were present, and would then fall upon them with all their strength as though they were to be exterminated in reality; one of these young ladies fell on her knees before me, and said, although I was a stranger yet she loved me because I was a preacher, and

141 Elder William J. Critchlow Apr 1966

142 Pratt 1915. 110-111

attempted to put her arms around my neck; I put forth my hand and rebuked the evil spirit by which she was actuated, and she immediately fell to the earth and wept with shame¹⁴³

George Q. Cannon talked about “the spirit of adultery, the spirit of whoredom, the spirit of drunkenness, the spirit of theft, and every other evil influence and spirit...”¹⁴⁴

From the author's personal experiences, not only are the possessed person's character flaws exacerbated, but he also experiences a kind of mental fog or fuzziness that is not the same as the confusion associated with a mental disability such as Alzheimer's. It is more of the distraction type of fog. The distractions can be only described as when a person is trying to count a number of objects while at the same time, another person standing beside him is saying, “Four, seven, two, five, eight...”

There also is a manifest unwillingness to engage in any spiritually uplifting or testimony building activities. Activities like scripture study, family and personal prayer, church attendance, and Family Home Evening are difficult to engage in because the possessed person feels an unexplainable, unreasonable frustration, unwillingness, and irritation about doing those activities even though he knows these activities are necessary. When he feels forced into those activities, he will be impatient and short tempered with those around him.

Compulsions

Compulsions are the worst of the traits imposed on the addict by these spirits. They are what separate true addiction from the act of simply giving in to temptation. Without compulsions, dabbling in addictive behaviors (e.g. pornography, gambling, internet, video games) is the weakness of giving in to temptation, not an addiction. With temptations, you can do as President Hinckley said, “Set it aside. Put it behind. Leave it there.”¹⁴⁵ However, addiction is not far behind dabbling.

Compulsions are the driving force and the hallmark of all addictions, including behavioral addictions; without them, there is no addiction. The main cause of compulsions is possession by evil spirits. This is worth repeating: the major cause of addictive compulsions is possession by evil spirits. When a wicked person dies, his “every desire, every feeling will be greatly intensified,”¹⁴⁶ especially if he has an addiction. His bad habits and evil desires will make the spirit world a prison.¹⁴⁷ Brigham Young said that it is one hundred times harder to repent in the next life;¹⁴⁸ by extension, that would make any addiction one hundred times worse in the spirit world. Compulsions probably are the obsessive cravings of an unclean spirit trying to satisfy the addictions he was afflicted with while alive.

While the feel-good biochemicals produced by the body certainly are a contributing factor to addiction, it is not the cause. The “rush,” the powerful, pleasurable feelings one gets from looking at porn are very similar to the rush from drugs, but they are not the cause of compulsions. Based upon the author's personal experiences, these biological factors are secondary.

When you add addictive compulsions, temptations are almost impossible to resist. The

143 Lee, Young, and Frost 1842

144 JD 11:30

145 CNN 2004

146 Ballard 1922. 14

147 Op cit, CR Oct 1970. 74

148 Ibid

compulsion is the “thing” inside you that makes temptation irresistible and the thing is an evil spirit. When an evil spirit possesses you, it becomes a nearly overwhelming force that drives you to look at pornography, engage in other addictive activities, and commit sin. You can try to resist, you can pray for help, you can promise yourself that you will not look ever again, but unless you take the necessary steps to repent, you will eventually give in. It is the beast waiting in the bushes.

False Traditions and Unbelief

“One of the most important means by which Satan can corrupt and deceive the children of men is through the traditions of their fathers.”¹⁴⁹ The Latter-day Saints do not understand the serious danger posed by the power of tradition. “It can cause us to forget our heavenly heritage.”¹⁵⁰ Starting with Joseph Smith, the early leaders of the Church taught extensively about the capabilities of Satan and evil spirits, and their ability to possess people, but this greatly decreased after 1900. It stopped altogether after the 1930's and become nothing more than a generic teaching.

The question is: why? Why did Church leaders stop teaching about possession and the capabilities of evil spirits? Brigham Young gave us a clue when he said, “When we first came here [to Utah] we had no sickness, and we had no sickness until we had doctors.”¹⁵¹ Several early Church leaders condemned the Saints for believing more in doctors than they did in the priesthood,¹⁵² As medical science increased in knowledge along with the increasing acceptance of psychology, the Saints have come to believe more and more in science and psychology than in faith and the priesthood, and modern secular science denies the existence of Satan. Now, many times, priesthood blessings are a last resort, not the first resort. This indicates unbelief and a lack of faith.

Intellectually, Latter-day Saints have a knowledge of Satan and evil spirits, but for the vast majority of Saints, that knowledge is distorted, and for a large minority outright rejected because of traditions steeped in secular learning and worldly wisdom. In 2001, the Deseret News published a survey in which only 59% of Church members indicated that they believed that “Satan is a real being who can influence people's lives.”¹⁵³ That is an amazing figure which demonstrates the extent of how badly many members are deceived considering that it is Church doctrine that Satan is real.

“False ideas from any apparent source, are the work of the father of lies....”¹⁵⁴ One major way Satan deceives us “is to have us believe that the wisdom and the learning of the world is the only source of knowledge we should follow.”¹⁵⁵ What is so sad is that this deception is being spread by the Latter-day Saints themselves. A psychology professor at BYU taught his students that evil spirits do not exist.

149 Duke 1972

150 Hallstrom 2000

151 JD 13:142

152 JD 25:37-39, JD 2:275-277, JD 24:285

153 Religious Beliefs Vary Widely By Denomination 2001, Moore 2001

154 Riddle 1976

155 Schultz 2002

A young psychologist was attending an Abnormal Psychology class at BYU. The class was being taught by a High Priests' group leader, a fine man. While turning the pages and following along in the textbook, looking carefully at what was being discussed (it was Coleman's book on Abnormal Psychology) he remembers hearing these words: "Now we know, of course, that there are no such things as evil spirits. We recognize that these are simply mental disorders." That remark had the effect of a *cold* slap in the face. The student's reaction: "Now wait a minute. Wait a minute. How can you say that? What's the message of the New Testament?" The professor insisted that demonic possession was a symbolic or unsophisticated way of saying that people were troubled mentally and emotionally. This caused great concern. It seemed as if an awful price was being paid needlessly.

Anyone who has had experience with demonic possession will testify of the reality of evil powers. We are foolish to ignore or deny their existence. The issue of demonic possession is one example of many in which Mormon professionals have been forced, as they suppose, into an unnecessary compromise, which compromise may follow such a dichotomy.¹⁵⁶

The above example is not an unusual response from Latter-day Saints. Brigham Young University has the 100 Hour Board where questions of any type can be asked and the answers are given by other students. It is eye opening to read some of the answers, which demonstrates the self-deception among the Saints. The answers range from half correct answers to false doctrine touted as "doctrine." The answer to Question 20288 is one example of how the truth is distorted.

Moses 1:12-21 -- This is how a haunting/possession takes place, if someone sees the depths of hell and fears Satan more than God.

BACK TO DOCTRINE

You can't feel a devil. D&C 129:7-8. They cannot physically manipulate things.

BACK TO OPINION

Because of this, they cannot force a possession upon you, only can they possess you as you give heed to the words they whisper to the hearts of the children of men.¹⁵⁷

The above response is a combination of both truth and falsehood. In the same answer, a second board member agreed saying, "It's really only possible for a person to be under the influence of Satan, and in turn, affect a household."¹⁵⁸ Satan's temper tantrum in front of Moses caused him to "fear exceedingly" and God used that moment to show Moses "the bitterness of hell."¹⁵⁹ How the board members concluded that is the reason for a "haunting/possession" taking place is incomprehensible. Moses was understandably afraid of the power of Satan, but it did not lead to possession. What this scripture does demonstrate is the power and authority of the priesthood to cast away devils and unclean spirits from about oneself.

Then there is the claim that evil spirits cannot "physically manipulate things." If this claim was true, perhaps the board member could explain why Satan was able to bind Joseph Smith's tongue so that he was unable to speak,¹⁶⁰ or as previously discussed, why could evil spirits knock people down or physically injure them. Lastly is the false claim that evil spirits "cannot force a possession upon you...." Again, as was previously discussed, Elder Bruce R.

156 Madsen and Millet 1981

157 "Board Question #20288 | The 100 Hour Board" 2005

158 Ibid

159 Moses 1:20-22

160 Joseph Smith-History 1:15

McConkie taught that “there are laws and conditions under which devils have power to force entry into human bodies.”¹⁶¹

In response to Board Question #3715,¹⁶² which inquired about ghosts, one board member responded by quoting the talk by Elder James E. Faust (previously mentioned), “The Great Imitator.”¹⁶³ The problem is that the board member cherry-picked what he wanted from the original quote without including other important relevant portions that indicated the true intent of the quote. This changed the meaning of the quote so that it appeared to agree with the board member's answer. This cherry-picking of answers is very common.

One problem with the deceived Latter-day Saints is the tendency to “mormonize”¹⁶⁴ the secular teachings and philosophy of the world. Mormonizing happens when a church member believes more in secular theories and ideas that are not in harmony with the gospel, but are appealing to the natural man. This causes dissonance within him, and in an attempt to resolve the conflict between the appealing, but conflicting secular ideas and gospel truths, the member cherry-picks and/or “interprets” various gospel concepts to rationalize and justify their acceptance of these ideas. This is nothing more than self-deception. Nephi warned of deception among the “humble followers of Christ...because they are taught by the precepts of men.”¹⁶⁵

Most of these deceptive secular ideas are the result of decades of traditional “wisdom” passed on from one generation to another, even though the tradition is false. Elder H. Verlan Andersen wrote about the false traditions passed on from parent to child. He called them “inherited lies and false traditions.”¹⁶⁶

One of the chief problems is that of false traditions which are handed down from parents to children. The fact that we each enter mortality as helpless infants utterly dependent upon our parents with whom we spend so much of our early childhood, makes us highly amenable to their influence and those teachings. However, the frequency with which erroneous beliefs are perpetuated from generation to generation is indicated by the following revelation which speaks of,

the influence of that spirit which hath so strongly riveted the creeds of the fathers, who have inherited lies, upon the hearts of the children, and filled the world with confusion, and has been growing stronger and stronger, and is now the very mainspring of all corruption, and the whole earth groans under the weight of its iniquity. (D&C 123:7)

Attention is directed to the statement that this problem is “the very mainspring of all corruption.” Another scripture which speaks of the effect of false tradition is the following:

Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light. And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers. (D&C 93:3 1, 39)

The failure of parents to search the scriptures inevitably leads to erroneous beliefs which are then passed on to the children as false traditions.¹⁶⁷

Several of the early prophets and apostles warned against the deception of false traditions that permeate the Latter-day Saints. “...There are these traditions; there is this unbelief, this reluctance on the part of the people to part with their old systems and to adopt the principles of

161 Op cit, McConkie 1971. 168

162 "Board Question #3715 | The 100 Hour Board" 2004

163 CR, Oct 1987. 40

164 Op cit, De Hoyos 1986

165 2 Nephi 28:14

166 Andersen and Andersen 1972. 10

167 Ibid

the Gospel and the revelations of Jesus Christ....”¹⁶⁸ Elder George A. Smith commented on the problem of deception caused by false traditions.

But, with our views, prejudices, and traditions, we are all the time struggling with ourselves and our own peculiar notions. Every person has in his own brain a series of ideas implanted from early youth, which he considers to be right; and it is a very hard matter for us to relinquish these deeply-implanted traditions, which in nine cases out of ten are not right.¹⁶⁹

Even the Prophet Joseph Smith lamented about the false traditions of the Latter-day Saints.

But there has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. It has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corn-dodger for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle. Even the Saints are slow to understand.

I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all. How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation, I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen.¹⁷⁰

What happens to those who allow themselves to be led astray by false traditions? That person who does this condemns himself just as assuredly as if he had overtly committed sin. Elder Orson Pratt told the Saints that there was no excuse for being deceived.

But, it may be inquired, how are the humble, honest souls to discern between truth and falsehood? Must they be condemned with liars, because they are deceived with lies? We answer, that all will be condemned who suffer themselves to be deceived: for there is a way for every person to come to the light of truth; and it is not in the power of the devil to invent lies so plausible as to prevent the really honest person from discovering the truth that pertains to his salvation. The scriptures have expressly declared, that "cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm." Now any person who will put his confidence and trust in popular lies, invented by the devil to prevent the people from discovering the truth, must rest under that curse, and in the day of judgment be condemned with liars.¹⁷¹

This concept was expanded upon by Elder H. Verlan Andersen.

Some may question the justice of a law which denies blessings to one who has lived honorably according to his beliefs but who has been misled by false teachings. We must recognize, however, that no one can possibly receive a blessing unless he has obeyed that law upon which the blessing is predicated. (D&C 130:21) If one is ignorant of the law in question or misconstrues its meaning, we will never become entitled to that blessing.

The scriptures assure us that God will do no injustice to any man. We must conclude therefore, that if an honorable person has been deceived, he has failed in some way. Either he has not sought for the truth diligently enough or he has not searched in the right place.¹⁷²

When it comes right down to it, the problem of self-deception among the Latter-day Saints simply shows prophecy being fulfilled.

168 JD 13:372

169 JD 6:160

170 HC 6:184-185

171 Pratt 1854

172 Andersen 1967. 21

And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: *I am no devil, for there is none*—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance. [Emphasis added]¹⁷³

173 2 Nephi 28:21-22

Discernment

The ability to discern the workings of the evil spirits surrounding us is essential in the fight against them. One little known fact among the Latter-day Saints is that the terms, “gift of discernment” and “spirit of discernment” cannot be found in the scriptures. The correct term is the “discerning of spirits.”¹⁷⁴ Not in any of his writings or sermons did Joseph Smith ever refer to the gift of the discerning of spirits in the current popular forms. In fact, because of the problem of false spirits among the Latter-day Saints, there was no other subject that he spent more time teaching them than the discerning of spirits.¹⁷⁵

In the April 1950 general conference, Elder Stephen L. Richards taught that “wisdom cannot be disassociated from discernment...” and “is sometimes defined as sound judgment and a high degree of knowledge.”¹⁷⁶ Additionally, “...being quick to observe is a prerequisite to and a preparation for the gift of discernment. We can hope to obtain that supernal gift of discernment and its light of protection and direction only if we are quick to observe....”¹⁷⁷

To help eliminate deception we must gain correct knowledge. The secular knowledge of the world today rarely even mentions the subject of Satan and evil spirits. When it does, it teaches that they do not exist or that it is quaint superstition that only the gullible believe. The secular arguments against the existence of Satan are similar to the arguments used by the antichrist, Korihor.¹⁷⁸

He propounded insidious and destructive doctrine. However, he “had much success,” and what he taught was “pleasing unto the carnal [that is, earthly] mind” (vs. 53). Much of Korihor’s preaching centered on the nature of knowledge. His major premise was that we can only know what we can see. From this it followed that no one can know the future, so that prophecy is impossible and, thus, merely foolish tradition. From this line of analysis his other doctrines followed. His arguments were both reasonable and logical.

Note that the teachings of Korihor were “pleasing unto the carnal mind.” Conversely, “The...teachings of Joseph Smith did not appeal to those with worldly thoughts. Joseph's teachings came into conflict with man-made traditions and prejudices.”¹⁷⁹ He taught that the knowledge we must obtain includes a “knowledge of the laws by which [evil] spirits are governed”¹⁸⁰ and how to control them.¹⁸¹ Along with prayer and scripture study, and being quick to observe, gaining a true knowledge and understanding of the insidious nature of evil spirits,

174 1 Cor. 12:10, D&C 46:23

175 Ehat and Cook 1980. 21

176 CR, Apr 1950. 163

177 Bednar 2006. 34

178 Alma Ch. 30

179

their capabilities, and activities will forearm you in the fight to combat them. This knowledge will allow you to recognize what is actually going on with someone who is ill or addicted. You will be able to discern what you are seeing as the result of evil spirits.

However, you must disabuse yourself of the secular ideas and teachings that permeate the membership of the Church. It cannot be stressed enough just how much the acceptance of secular ideas distort the truth and limit discernment. Those who obtain the Celestial Kingdom are those who “were not deceived by the craftiness of men....”¹⁸² Acceptance of secular ideas lead to unbelief, which was the reason why the apostles were unable to cast out the evil spirit from a young boy.¹⁸³ They were so steeped, so believing in the traditions and secular wisdom of the day, that in spite of seeing with their own eyes the miracles performed by the Savior, they still did not believe. They believed *in* Christ, but they did not *believe* Christ.¹⁸⁴ Unbelief was the reason why the Savior was unable to show the Jews “so great miracles”¹⁸⁵ as he did to the Nephites.

The problem of unbelief *cannot* be stressed enough. It exists when faith is absent; it exists when false tradition takes the place of truth, however unknowingly. The unbelief caused by believing in the secular wisdom of the world will make you more susceptible to thinking you are listening to the Holy Spirit when you are actually listening to a false spirit. This is because the false spirit will be prompting and influencing you with feelings, thoughts, and ideas that agree with your traditions, prejudices, ideas, and secular education.

Additionally, it is human nature to want to be right, and for the vast majority of Saints, they cannot contemplate the possibility they could ever be deceived by a false spirit. Without disabusing yourself of false concepts, you will have the tendency to dismiss that Still Small Voice when it attempts to prompt you contrary to your own traditions. You will be like the Jews who witnessed with their own eyes the miracles performed by the Savior, yet still rejected them because it went against their traditions.

To many Saints, being deceived by a false spirit equates oneself with following Satan and not God. To acknowledge this, the Saint would have to admit he is wrong and had been following the promptings of a false spirit. Unless one is sufficiently humble enough to admit this, that Saint will be more inclined to accept those false promptings and influence because they *do* agree with his traditions, prejudices, ideas, and secular education. Doing anything else is against his tradition and he will do as Joseph Smith said: “fly to pieces like glass.”¹⁸⁶

The general perception about discernment among the Saints seems to be that it is mainly the ability to discern right from wrong, to know when someone is distressed and needs help, detecting evil in others, etc. What is often overlooked is the ability to discern differences between what we might think is the voice of the Spirit, but is actually the desires of our own spirit and the hidden evil or false ideas within ourselves. Elder George Q. Cannon taught about this.

I have seen Elders in my experience that when they got their own spirit moved very much they imagined that it was the Spirit of God, and it was difficult in some instances to tell the

180 HC 4:573

181 Op cit, Whitney 1921

182 Benson 1988

183 Matthew 17:20

184

185 3 Nephi 19: 35

186 Op cit, HC 6:185

difference between the suggestions of their own spirit and the voice of the spirit of God. This is a gift of itself, to be able to distinguish that which suggests itself to our own hearts and that which comes from God. And we are misled sometimes by our own feeling, because of our inability to distinguish between the voice of the Spirit of God and the suggestions of our own spirit.¹⁸⁷

Elder Cannon taught extensively on the subject of discernment and gave a further powerful reason for gaining knowledge on the discerning of spirits.

Now the gift of discerning of spirits not only gives men and women who have it the power to discern the spirit with which others may be possessed or influenced, but it gives them the power to discern the spirit which influences themselves. They are able to detect a false spirit and also to know when the Spirit of God reigns within them. In private life this gift is of great importance to the Latter-day Saints.¹⁸⁸

Elder David A. Bednar reemphasized the importance of discerning one's own thoughts and feelings and that which comes from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit “helps us detect hidden errors and evil in ourselves. Thus the spiritual gift of discernment is not exclusively about discerning other people and situations, but, as President Cannon taught, it is also about discerning things as they really are within us.”¹⁸⁹

One important reason for discerning the different evil spirits is being able to perceive if a sick person is simply sick or mentally ill as a result of the normal processes of life, or if that person is sick as a result of being afflicted or possessed by evil spirits. It is also important because the possessor of this gift will be able to perceive the reasons behind addictive behaviors. A tremendous amount of pain and suffering by the addicted, sick, and mentally ill continues unnecessarily because the elders of the church fail to understand and discern this difference.

187 JD 22:104

188 Op cit, Cannon and Newquist 1987

189 Op cit, Bednar 2006

The Priesthood

As we know, the Melchizedek Priesthood is the authority and power of God given to men to represent Him on earth. Now, the question must be asked, “Do we know *how* and *when* to use the power of the priesthood on behalf of others?” Because of the lack of knowledge and lack of acceptance of the role of evil spirits in addictions, sickness, disease, and mental illness, very few elders of the Church rebuke evil spirits from the afflicted or from about them while pronouncing a blessing. In some instances, elders simply pray over afflicted people without actually blessing them. If we are living our lives in accordance with our Heavenly Father's commandments, we have the right to bless a person to get well subject to His will. “And again, it shall come to pass that he that hath faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed.”¹⁹⁰

One way for the afflicted to be healed is simply rebuking the evil spirit afflicting them and commanding it to depart. This eliminates the underlying force and cause behind the illness and allows the afflicted person's body to begin healing without the interference of the evil spirit. There are dozens of stories from the scriptures and Church records that document the casting out of evil spirits. When He ordained the apostles to the priesthood, the first power the Savior gave them was power over devils and unclean spirits.¹⁹¹

Why would the Savior give the power over unclean spirits as the first power? Because the Lord recognized the reality of possession by evil spirits when He said “these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils....”¹⁹² Then He gave the Elders of the Church this commandment: “Require not miracles, except I shall command you, *except casting out devils*, healing the sick, and against poisonous serpents, and against deadly poisons...” [Emphasis added].¹⁹³ He also told the Saints, “...whoso shall ask it in my name in faith, they shall cast out devils; they shall heal the sick; they shall cause the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk.”¹⁹⁴ Notice again that like the first sign to follow them that believe is the casting out of devils and the power given to the apostles was the power over unclean spirits, the first exception to not requiring miracles and to those asking in faith was the casting out of devils.

Elder Orson F. Whitney also gave a reason.

There are many evil spirits in this world—spirits that have never had bodies. They are here by permission or toleration of the Most High, against whom they rebelled when the Savior was chosen. Satan and his legions, those cast out of heaven, are all wicked spirits, and they

190 D&C 42:48

191 Matthew 10:1, Mark 6:7, Luke 9:1

192 Mark 16:17

193 D&C 24:13

194 D&C 35:9

wander up and down the world, endeavoring to lead mortals astray. Wherever possible, they take possession of the bodies of men and even of the lower animals. Therefore is power given to the Priesthood to “cast out devils.”¹⁹⁵

One other reason was given by Elder Orson Pratt.

It is very evident, however, that this was not the principal object of the Signs. "These signs shall follow them that believe. In my name" says Jesus, "they shall cast out devils." Although this power might, in certain cases, convince the unbelieving world, yet it is by no means to be supposed that this was the principal design. Devils and unclean spirits frequently took possession of the human tabernacle, tormenting individuals in various ways. Jesus promised believers that they, in his name, should cast them out. Now one object which Jesus had in view in granting this power, was to benefit the one possessed. Another object was to confirm the believer, that they, by having power over the devil in this life, might be more fully assured that they should obtain a complete victory and final triumph over him in the world to come. That person who cannot obtain power in the name of Jesus to cast out devils in this life, has great reason to fear lest the devil shall have power over him in the next. What assurance has any one that he shall obtain a complete salvation from the power of the devil, when his spirit shall leave the body, if he cannot claim, the promise of Jesus, and cast him out while in this world? One of the purposes, then, which Jesus had in view in bestowing this blessing, was that believers might learn to prevail against the devil before they should enter the invisible world of spirits. And another purpose, as we have already named, was to deliver the unhappy demoniac from his miserable and wretched condition, and set him free from the grasp of this awful monster.

17.—Now both of these purposes are just as essential for the good of mankind in this age as in the first age of Christianity. It would be equally as essential for a man who is possessed of devils, in this age, to be liberated, as it was in any former one. And it would also be equally as essential that a believer should learn to command the devil in the name of Jesus, that he might obtain a complete victory over him in all things, as it was for ancient believers. Therefore, as there is no Scripture to do away this promise, nor any reason to prove it unnecessary, it must be intended for believers of all ages, until the devil is bound.¹⁹⁶

Another way for the afflicted to be healed is to do as the Savior did and rebuke the disease or illness itself and command it to depart.¹⁹⁷ This concept was first taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith and several subsequent prophets and apostles.

Let us remember and ponder upon these counsels, and cleave to the Priesthood and have confidence in it; and let the Elders administer to the sick in faith, and let them rebuke disease when the Spirit prompts them, and it will be rebuked, and the sick will be healed by the power of God.¹⁹⁸

It seems there is a correlation with rebuking diseases and the rebuking of evil spirits. This would be natural since the scriptures and Joseph Smith, and other prophets and apostles taught that evil spirits cause disease and sickness. However, you need to know when you can and cannot rebuke evil spirits from a person and/or rebuke a disease. If a person is possessed by an evil spirit, you need to perceive if the possession is by invitation or by force.

195 Whitney 1921. 310

196 Pratt 1856. 84-85

197 Luke 4:39

198 JD 25:38

And how shall that jealous spirit be removed? By the laying on of hands? The Lord deliver us from such an ordinance, in such a case. Why? That spirit was invited to take up its abode there, and while that spirit is made welcome by that person, what right have we to dispossess it? It would be abridging the agency of the individual who invited the spirit, for any one to cause that spirit to depart, without the persons leave, and we choose that all should exercise their own agency and responsibility, and then they are subjects of accountability.¹⁹⁹

This is in line with the commandment contained in the scriptures that we should not bless a person “except it be required of you by them who desire it....”²⁰⁰ If an elder is prompted to not bless a person to get well or cast out evil spirits and he goes ahead and attempts it anyway, there can be dire penalties as a result of disobeying the Lord's commands. Joseph Smith described an incident in which some of the Saints were disobedient and were struck with a devastating illness as a result. When Joseph attempted to heal the afflicted, he was met with God's displeasure.

At the commencement [of the illness], I attempted to lay on hands for their recovery, but I quickly learned by painful experience, that when the great Jehovah decrees destruction upon any people, and makes known His determination, man must not attempt to stay His hand. The moment I attempted to rebuke the disease I was attacked, and had I not desisted in my attempt to save the life of a brother, I would have sacrificed my own.²⁰¹

When attempting to pronounce a blessing, consideration should be given to those who are present. Only those who have the belief and faith necessary for the blessing to succeed should be present. Whenever unbelievers are present, including those pronouncing the blessing, their unbelief can diminish the faith and power of the priesthood. Elder Wilford Woodruff related such an experience.

Had I acted upon my own judgment I should have refrained from administering to her in the company of those present; but as I was a stranger there, and Brother Clayton presided over the branch, I joined with him in administering to the woman. *The unbelief of the wicked who were present was so great that we could not cast the devil out of her, and she raged worse than ever; I then ordered the room to be cleared, and when the company, except the few attending her, had left the house, we laid hands upon her head, and in the name of Jesus Christ I commanded the devil to come out of her. The devil left, and she was entirely healed and fell asleep.* (Emphasis added)²⁰²

When giving a blessing to cast out a suspected evil spirit, anointing with oil is essential. The anointing is for the sick and *the afflicted*. While a possessed person may not necessarily be sick, they are always afflicted. Elder Jedidiah M. Grant taught this.

If any are sick among you, let them send for the Elders of the Church to pray for them, and to lay their hands upon them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick. People neglect to anoint with oil when they should and might use it. I have seen the Elders try to cast out devils, and to accomplish it they have fasted, and prayed, and laid on hands, and rebuked the devil, but he would not go out. I have then seen them bring consecrated oil, and anoint the person possessed of the devil, and the devil went out forthwith. That taught me a good lesson—that God Almighty, when He speaks, means what He says; and if a man's works are right, his faith will be right; and if his faith is wrong, his works are wrong. When a man whose faith is right goes forth to administer to the sick, he will anoint with oil, as well as

199 Op cit, To The Saints 1853

200 D&C 24:14

201 HC 2:114

202 Woodruff and Cowley 1909. 114-115

lay on his hands and pray. Unless you anoint with oil, your prayers will not rise higher than the fog, and you know that it seldom rises much higher than the tops of the mountains.²⁰³

There are things an Elder can and should do when pronouncing a blessing. Remember, as was previously discussed, evil spirits can and will project thoughts and feelings into the minds of those who are not on guard against these cunning influences. To help stop these subtle and devious attacks, the Elder should cast away any evil spirits from about the area or home of the afflicted person.²⁰⁴ This should be done after the anointing and sealing but before pronouncing a blessing. The Elder should address the evil spirits by saying something like, “Evil spirits, I rebuke you from about us and from this home, and command you to depart in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Additionally, when an evil spirit is cast out of an afflicted person or from around them, or from a home, the Elder should consider what the Savior did when he commanded an evil spirit to not return or re-enter its victim.

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.*

And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.²⁰⁵

Of all the instances of the Savior casting our evil spirits, this is the only time He commanded the evil spirit to not return. Quite possibly this is because of the age and innocence of the young boy. It can be inferred that this was an uninvited evil spirit because it had forced entry into the boy when he was a young child possibly through some physical weakness and not the result of anything the boy had done.

An evil spirit can re-enter a person because of that person's unrighteousness or physical weakness. This is something to consider when casting out evil spirits from a person who is committing sin, especially sexual sin (e.g. petting, fornication, adultery, viewing pornography, etc.). For the person with a pornography problem or addiction, every time they view pornographic images, they immediately put themselves in Satan's power and will most likely be re-possessed. This person must be advised of this risk because his sins will be added back to him if he re-offends.²⁰⁶

One thing to consider is that as was in the early days of the Church, there is the possibility that those priesthood holders attempting to cast out an evil spirit may be attacked. That is because when “he is challenged, Satan is angry, as he was with Moses...who was resolute.”²⁰⁷ The elder giving the blessing must be determined and without fear because evil spirits are essentially cowards and *they* fear the priesthood.²⁰⁸ An elder has the *right* to rebuke those spirits.²⁰⁹ They *must* obey a righteous priesthood holder because the consequences to the evil spirit are unpleasant to experience.

203 JD 2L276-277

204 JD 7:174

205 Mark 9:25-26

206

207 Kimball 1976

208 Widtsoe 1943. 109

209 JD 12:128

After one blessing, an afflicted Saint had a conversation with the evil spirit that had possessed and afflicted him. During the conversation, the evil spirit explained why he was wanted to obey the command of the priesthood holder.

“Having been sick a long time, I sent for President Goodman and Elder Dry—(we will call the gentlemen by these names, for the sake of having names) on the 21st of January, 1889. They came in the evening and anointed me with oil, laid hands upon me and prayed for me earnestly. They remained with me until late in the evening. After they had left the house I was for a short time alone.”

The reason why he was alone, as he related to me, his wife went to a neighbor's house close by while the brethren were there, so as not to leave him alone with the baby, but as soon as she was gone the brethren went out.

“And a personage opened the door and entered the room where I was in bed. He began conversation as follows:”

“Well, that was a heavy lick we gave you.”

“I made no reply. Presently he continued, ‘But it was not quite enough to send you over.’”

“I replied, ‘While you were at it why did you not finish me?’”

“We were called on to halt.”

“I asked, ‘Do you make a practice of minding such calls?’”

“We have to,’ was his reply.”

“I said, ‘How is that?’”

“You know as well as I do,’ said he.”

“I inquired, ‘In case you should not?’”

“He replied, ‘When called upon by that authority, if we fail to mind, we get so roughly handled that for a time we scarcely know where we are, so we would sooner mind when called on.’”

“I asked, ‘Are you not sorry you were interfered with?’”

“No, not at all,’ he replied.”

“How is that?’ I asked.”

“He replied, ‘We have so much of the kind to do; it has long since ceased to be a pleasure.’”

“Well, then, why do you not quit the business?’”

“We cannot,’ was his answer.”

“How is that?’ I asked.”

“We live under the most despotic government you can conceive of,’ he replied,” and Brother Burgess (we will call him) said to me that he told more about that government than he was willing to repeat.

Well, Brother Burgess said to him, “Notwithstanding all you have told me, your room would be more congenial to me than your company.”

“Yes,’ said he, ‘I suppose so.’”

“And he retired by the same way he came in.” (*Paragraph formatting, punctuation, grammar, and spelling standardized.*)²¹⁰

When the Savior said “these signs shall follow them that believe,”²¹¹ the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the Savior was referring to “them that believe,” were members of the Church who had been baptized and confirmed. There was no distinction made between women or men that believe; those signs would follow all baptized members. In an address to the Relief Society in 1842 recorded by Eliza R. Snow, Joseph taught that women could give blessings.

210 Huntington 1895

211 Mark 16:17

No matter who believeth, these signs, such as healing the sick, casting out devils, etc, should follow all that believe, whether male or female. He asked the Society if they could not see by this sweeping promise, that wherein they are ordained, it is the privilege of those set apart to administer in that authority, which is conferred on them; and if the sisters should have faith to heal the sick, let all hold their tongues, and let everything roll on.

* * * * *

Respecting females administering for the healing of the sick, he further remarked, there could be no devil in it, if God gave His sanction by healing; that there could be no more sin in any female laying hands on and praying for the sick, than in wetting the face with water; it is no sin for anybody to administer that has faith, or if the sick have faith to be healed by their administration.²¹²

Elder Orson Pratt gave further instruction along these lines.

It seems that the gifts here named are general gifts, intended more or less for the whole Church; not only for those in the Priesthood, but for those out of the Priesthood, for males and for females. For instance, children are often taken sick, and it is the privilege of their parents, whether they have the Priesthood or not, by virtue of this promise, to lay their hands on their sick children, and ask the Lord, in the name of Jesus, to heal them. Suppose that the father, the head of the family, is absent, has the mother the right to lay her hands upon her sick child? We say that, by virtue of this promise which the Lord has made, she may lay her hands upon her child or children, and ask God to heal it or them. How many scores and scores of cases have there been in this Church, every year since it was organized, where the parents, both brethren and sisters, have had power over disease, through the Spirit of God being poured out upon them, and their children have been healed through the laying on of their hands?²¹³

While the teachings of the early Church leaders allowed sisters to cast out evil spirits and give blessings as do holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood, that practice was eventually curtailed in 1846. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith wrote -

"While the Authorities of the Church have ruled that it is permissible, under certain conditions and with the approval of the Priesthood, for sisters to wash and anoint other sisters, yet they feel that it is far better for us to follow the plan the Lord has given us and send for the Elders of the Church to come and administer to the sick and afflicted."²¹⁴

Note that there was no actual prohibition placed on the practice of sisters giving blessings. *Every effort* must first be made to call for the Elders of the Church to give blessings and cast out evil spirits. However, there will be times when that is simply not possible. It may be an inability to communicate because of an emergency, or isolation to the extent that it may be hours before an elder can be reached. This is the time when a sister is able to lay hands upon the heads of her children or husband, or another person who requests a blessing.

Of course, not everyone will be healed when given a priesthood blessing. For that matter, very few will be healed. Often it is a problem with the sick or afflicted person lacking faith. Combine this with the Elder giving the blessing lacking faith and confidence in himself,²¹⁵ and/or he lacks knowledge,²¹⁶ or because of unrighteous living as was explained by Brigham Young.

212 HC 4:603-604

213 JD 16:289-290

214 Derr et al.

215 JD 4:283-284

216 JD 3:353

We have been baptized by men having the authority of the holy Priesthood of the Son of God, and consequently we have power over him which the rest of the world do not possess, and all who possess the power of the Priesthood have the power and right to rebuke those evil spirits. When we rebuke those evil powers, and they obey not, it is because we do not live so as to have the power with God, which it is our privilege to have. If we do not live for this privilege and right we are under condemnation.²¹⁷

However, Joseph Smith taught that “if the Saints are sick or have sickness in their families, and the Elders do not prevail, every family should get power by fasting, prayer, and anointing with oil, and continue so to do [until] their sick shall be healed; this also is the voice of the Spirit.” (*Grammar and punctuation standardized*)²¹⁸

217 JD 12:128

218 Op cit, Ehat and Cook 1980. 37

Review

In summary, let us review the points made previously.

1. Pornography addiction is not a disease of the body, but one of the spirit.
2. In our premortal life, we developed our spirit personalities. We developed talents and abilities, along with varying appetites, passions and desires.
3. When we were born, we brought our personality including our talents, abilities, passions and desires.
4. While our body influences our spirit, it is our spirit that controls our body.
5. Because we are in a war with Satan, we need to study evil and its consequences.
6. There are differences between devils and unclean/foul spirits.
7. Evil spirits have extensive power and capabilities to afflict and cause illness and disease, and eventually death.
8. One of the most overlooked capabilities is that they commonly enter into and possess the bodies of humans.
9. Being possessed feels something like driving a car that has multiple steering wheels and controls, one for each occupant.
10. There are many causes of possession, usually because of sin.
11. Evil spirits control other spirits.
12. The existing weaknesses of those possessed are exacerbated.
13. Evil spirits impose and transfer their character traits onto the addict.
14. Without compulsions there is no addiction and compulsions are caused by evil spirits.
15. Inherited lies and false traditions are the mainspring of all corruption and deception.
16. A correct knowledge and being quick to observe are prerequisites for the gift of discernment.
17. The power to cast out evil spirits is given because they frequently possess the bodies of human beings.
18. An invited evil spirit cannot be cast out unless requested by the person who invited that spirit.
19. In addition to rebuking evil spirits, we can also rebuke and cast out disease and sickness.
20. Because evil spirits can project thoughts, it is important to cast them away before pronouncing a blessing.
21. Women are also permitted to cast out evil spirits and give blessings when an Elder cannot be summoned.

Now the reader must honestly ask himself, “Have I been taken in by the wisdom of the world and secular education?” Do you still have trouble accepting what you have learned? Do you believe as one LDS psychiatrist believes when he said that regarding evil spirits, many Latter-day Saints “operate out of a set of superstitions rather than religious belief?”²¹⁹

Consider what President Joseph Fielding Smith taught regarding the stories of possession found in the New Testament.

These evil spirits have great power to tempt, persuade and entice men to deny the correct origin of man. We do not see them, but we do feel their presence, and unconsciously we hearken to their whisperings. Having been denied bodies they, at times, steal them. It is a common error, especially in scientific circles to scoff at such a thing as the temptation by the devil and more especially so to ridicule the idea that these wicked spirits have power to possess living bodies and subdue the spirit within them. But all the scoffing and ridicule does not change the fact. The stories of possession as recorded in the New Testament are true. The scoffer cannot explain away successfully the casting out of devils by Jesus Christ, when they called him by name and he commanded them to hold their peace; the story of the devils asking to enter the bodies of swine; the story of the seven sons of Sceva, and numerous others listed in the scriptures. There are scores of such incidents that have occurred in this dispensation. Our missionaries can give the evidence in such cases. No, it is not always a diseased mind that disturbs the normal thinking, the possession by devils is a positive fact.²²⁰

Also consider what President Harold B. Lee taught concerning possession.

Don't have any mistaken ideas about the devil. We sometimes rule out the possibility of evil and the power of the devil taking possession of a man's body or a woman's body and turning one from saint to sinner or from a normal person into a demon. You cannot tell me that there isn't such a thing as a devil possessing the body of a person who allows himself to take a course that makes that possible. If you forget everything else I have said today, please remember, young people, that the prince of this world, Satan, is going to try to trap every one of you. That is his program. He is trying to destroy our agency.²²¹

The Prophet Joseph Smith said that “nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God.”²²² The influence of the world enters so subtly that, unless you are constantly on guard, it will sway many of your opinions about what is true. Satan has shrewdly packaged his “truth” to appeal to LDS prejudices. The Prophet also taught, “A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth.”²²³ “In knowledge there is power” and knowledge “does away with darkness, suspense and doubt.”²²⁴ However, it must be correct knowledge.

Brigham Young said that “when you leave the truth you have nothing but unbelief.”²²⁵ Once again, the problem of unbelief cannot be stressed enough. As was previously mentioned, unbelief kept the apostles from performing miracles even though they watched these miracles

219 Moench 1985

220 Smith 1954

221 Op cit, Lee and Williams 1996, 47

222 HC 4:573

223 HC 4:588

224 HC 5:340

225 JD 13:241

being performed by the Savior. A true understanding and knowledge of how the source of all opposition operates is the one of the first steps in fighting back. It will attenuate the strength of temptations and make it easier to resist them. Although this knowledge will not eliminate the trials of life, it will make coping with those trials easier.

Have you “mormonized” the wisdom of the world and your secular education to fit your traditions and beliefs? Has Satan influenced you to form your own conception of “truth” that differs slightly or greatly from genuine truth? He takes the Gospel teachings that the Devil exists, then changes it to that he really does nothing more than tempt or influence. In doing this, Satan has downgraded himself to the status of a symbol of evil rather than a literal personage of spirit who would kill you if you gave him the power and has a mission to do everything he can to thwart your progress.²²⁶

If your feelings are ambiguous, you now must decide the answers to several questions. Is Jesus Christ the Son of God? Did He teach correct principles? Are the scriptures the word of God? Are the scriptures accurate when describing the miracles performed by Jesus Christ and the apostles? Was Joseph Smith really a prophet of God? Did he restore the true Gospel of Jesus Christ in its fullness in these latter days? Did he receive true revelation and did he teach correct principles?

There cannot be a “maybe” answer to any of these questions. If the answer to any of these questions is, “yes,” then the answer to every question must also be yes. If the answer is “no” to any of them, then all the rest of the answers must be no. A person cannot cherry-pick which parts of the Gospel truths he agrees with and discard the rest. However, the answers to each question are an emphatic, “Yes!” Wilford Woodruff quoted Brigham Young as saying, “Whatever the Lord reveals to this or any other people does not ignore anything revealed before.”²²⁷ Elder Woodruff went on to say, “No part of the gospel is superfluous. It is the same yesterday, today, and forever...”²²⁸

Evil spirits exist and are an everyday fact of life. We are surrounded by them every moment of our lives²²⁹ and they cause us suffering and anguish. They afflict and torment us to such a degree that some people mistakenly take their lives thinking this will relieve their torment. Evil spirits are doing every possible thing they can to thwart us in our efforts to return to our Heavenly Father. Their one and only mission is to keep us from returning to our Heavenly Parents.

226 JD 2:11
227 JD 12:13
228 Ibid
229 JD 4:133

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APPENDIX

Abilities of Evil Spirits

Devil imitates gift of tongues

The devil himself can appear like an angel of light. False prophets and false teachers have arisen in the world. *There is perhaps no gift of the spirit of God more easily imitated by the devil than the gift of tongues.* Where two men or women exercise the gift of tongues by the inspiration of the spirit of God, there are a dozen perhaps that do it by the inspiration of the devil.

Pres. Joseph F. Smith
CR, Apr 1900, Pg. 41

Devil takes advantage of the gift of tongues

The people of God do enjoy the gift of prophecy, the gift of healing, the gift of tongues; and *probably the latter gift has been taken advantage of by the evil one more than any other gift in the Church.* The Saints should be guided by the Spirit of God, and subject to those who preside in the meetings. If the Bishop, who is a common judge in Israel, tells a person to restrain this gift, or any other gift, it is the duty of that person to do it. The Bishop has a right to the gift of discernment, whereby he may tell whether these spirits are of God or not, and if they are not they should not have place in the congregations of the Saints.

Elder Abraham O. Woodruff
CR, Apr 1901, Pg. 12

Evil Spirits Can Cause Lack of Sleep

My beloved wife, while I am waiting for a boat to go to Buffalo, I improve a few moments in writing to you. I have been to Kirtland, left there about one o'clock this morning in order to take the morning boat, and I have been so haunted with foul spirits that I could hardly sleep a wink in the place.

Letter From Brigham Young to his Wife Mary Ann Angell
The Improvement Era, Vol. 44, No. 7, Jul 1941, Pg. 405

Sometimes we are troubled and scarcely know why

I have learned that we are sometimes troubled and we scarcely know why and what about and, although we may strive and pray, yet we find it almost impossible to remove that feeling; we feel very different at other times, there is a different atmosphere around us, our feelings are different, we enjoy a great deal more, and still we do not pray any more, we are not anymore faithful than when suffering from those unpleasant sensations and still we enjoy a great deal more.

Why is it, and what is the reason? Why cannot we feel the same when we are busily at work day by day? There are periods when we will be happy and comfortable in our minds for weeks and months, and then after this there will be clouds, and there will seem to be no possible means of eradicating those unpleasant feelings from our minds. Though we may pray and contend against the powers that trouble us will all our faith they still hang around us for days and in times that are past, I have known such to be the case for weeks.

I do not know that I can fully explain to you the reason of this, but I can give you my ideas and

opinion upon it, and my opinion is this, that evil spirits sometimes come and make a violent attack upon us to endeavor to overcome us; They will gather around us, get into our houses, and be a source of great trouble to us, and we may try to cast them out, yet it will take a season to do this; it will be some time before we can get those evil spirits away from our persons and our habitations, and I believe that the experience of others will correspond with mine when I say that it requires all the power within our grasp, at such times to cast them out.

I view this as a trial of our faith. I have had some experience in this matter, and conclude that the time the enemy comes upon us is the time when we must exert a double influence, that he may not gain more power over us than is necessary to try and test our integrity.

There is something upon my mind that is rather singular, but still it has a bearing upon this subject; it is a matter that occurred no longer ago than last night, and I will mention it to illustrate this part of my subject.

I perceived there was an evil spirit about my habitation, but still it did not take possession of any member of my family, still I could not pray him out of the house before I went to bed, nor could I succeed after I had retired, and the consequence was he tormented me all night; I did not sleep good nor rest well, and there was not that peace of mind that there is at other times. I know that there was an influence there that was endeavoring to thwart me in my designs, and make inroads into my family.

Have any of you ever felt so? What is the reason that we sleep so much better sometimes than we do at others? It is because there is a spirit around that is contrary to our faith and doctrine, and that is opposed to that exaltation that we are aspiring to.

The devil is a good deal better acquainted with 'Mormonism' than a great many of this people are, and he knows what we are endeavoring to do and to obtain, hence he endeavors to throw every thing in our way to oppose us he possibly can, and he is ever ready to thwart us in every thing that will tend to exalt us in the kingdom of God.

We read of one man who had a legion of devils and when the Savior cast them out they went into a herd of swine. Devils are ever on the alert, they are right on hand, and only let the least vacuum be made and they are ready to enter in, and there is a great deal more trouble to get them out than it was to admit them.

Discourse by Bishop Edwin D. Woolley in the Bowery, Sunday Morning, May 17, 1857

Deseret News, Jun 3, 1857, Pg. 100

Evil spirits impersonate former living

If the witches, wizards, necromancers and familiar spirits, placed under the ban of the law, did not sometimes foretell the truth there would have been no need to warn the people against consulting them. If the devil never told the truth he would not be able to deceive mankind by his falsehoods. The powers of darkness would never prevail without the use of some light. A little truth mixed with plausible error is one of the means by which they lead mankind astray. There is nothing, then, in the history of the interview between Saul and the woman of Endor which, rationally or doctrinally, establishes the opinion that she was a prophetess of the Lord or that Samuel actually appeared on that occasion.

There is no satisfactory evidence that the spirits of the departed communicate with mortals through spiritual mediums or any of the means commonly employed for that purpose. Evil spirits, no doubt, act as " familiars " or as "controls " and either personate the spirits of the dead or reveal things supposed to be known only to them and their living friends, in order to lead away the credulous, but those who place them selves under the influence of those powers of darkness have no means by which they can compel the presence of the spirits of the just or induce disclosures from them to the living.

They are above and beyond the art of such individuals, and the mediums themselves are frequently the dupes of evil spirits and are thus "deceivers and being deceived."

The Witch of Endor

Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star

Vol 60, No. 24, June 16, 1898, Pg. 372

Evil Spirits Kill A Missionary

"During this time of trouble with the elements, and sea sickness, the powers of the evil one were manifested in the case of a lad named Mackenzie, about twelve years of age, who in the dead hour of night came leaping from his bunk, shouting at the top of his voice the name of John McNeil; it soon became apparent that he was possessed of an evil spirit, which was so enraged that for hours the brethren labored to exorcise him; but this proved effectual only for a short time, as the evil one returned bringing others of his companions with him and again entered into the lad. This was repeated several times, until there were seven of them who called themselves legion and bid defiance to all who were on the ship, declaring that they would be subject to no one but Brigham Young. They also threatened to follow the Saints until they should reach the mountains. During the administrations of the brethren, the spirit of the Lord was so visibly manifest, that the discernment of spirits was given to Elder Thomas Smith so plainly that he could see them, and he demanded of them in the name of Jesus Christ, that they should tell their names. With this request they complied very reluctantly, but finally yielded, and one by one obeyed and were exorcised. The seventh and last one was finally cast out. This left the poor boy in a very feeble state, and for several days his life was in jeopardy. At times, when the evil spirits were expelled from the boy, they would afflict others, though not to such an extent as the main object of their power. On one occasion the writer and two of his immediate friends, were overcome by this power. True to their threats, as I afterwards learned, they followed in the wake of the Saints, their special object of hatred being Elder Smith, whom they finally overcame, and in the town of St. Joseph, Missouri, the poor man succumbed to their dreadful power, while he was calling for help from the Elders of the Church, of whom there were none to be reached in time to save his life. President William Howell also died in great distress at Council Bluffs the following year after our arrival in the United States.

Church Emigration

The Contributor

Volume 13, No. 8, June 1892, Pg. 346

Evil spirits want to destroy the priesthood

Then what manner of men and women and children ought we to be in our time and generation? These things are of great importance, and of heavy weight for us to consider. I have said to our young men that if their eyes were opened to see and comprehend their work, their responsibilities and the numbers that are connected with them and looking to them, you could not get a boy to smoke a cigar, or a young man to enter a liquor saloon. But the enemy is in our midst, and seeks to lead astray the Latter-day Saints. There are no persons upon the earth that the evil spirits labor so hard with as with men bearing the Holy Priesthood--men, women and children under the covenant. These are the people whom they labor to destroy.

President Wilford Woodruff

In conjoint meeting of Relief Society and Young Ladies' Association of Weber Stake

Man physically attacked by evil spirits

Below is an extract from a letter written by Elder William R. Palmer, a missionary laboring in the Indian Territory, U.S.A. It is dated at Coalgate, March 14, 1898.

On the first day of this month four other Elders and myself baptized a family named Lewis, here at Coalgate. The man had been baptized in Wales about nineteen years ago by our Elders, but when he came to the States he got separated from the Saints. He had nothing to show that he had been baptized, so the president of the mission thought it best to baptize him again. He could not see that he needed that and was reluctant to do so. His wife and three children became converted to the Gospel, but they were afraid to be baptized. Our conference president and his companion came to visit us, and the five of us fasted and prayed for two days that Brother Lewis and his family might see the necessity of being baptized. About noon of the second day we went to their home and were delighted to find them ready for baptism.

"The ordinance was promptly attended to, and we returned to the house to hold a confirmation meeting. While we were holding that meeting an evil spirit or spirits seized Brother Lewis and gave him the hardest shaking I ever saw a man get. His mouth was stretched almost from ear to ear, and his face was drawn into all shapes imaginable.

"We knew what was the matter, for we were prompted to rebuke the destroyer. Accordingly Brother Lewis was anointed by one of us and hands were laid on him. At our rebuke it left but came back in a moment with more violence. The rebuke was repeated with the same results. Retiring to another room we held prayers then went back and commanded it to depart the third time. It, obeyed and we confirmed him, that he might have the Spirit of the Lord to assist him in throwing off the evil one.

"In about an hour the evil spirit returned with doubled energy and fairly made him writhe with pain. This time we were prompted to command it in the name of Jesus to depart and return no more, and it did so. Brother Lewis was brought down so weak through the ordeal that he could not get out of bed for several hours.

Word From the Indian Territory

The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star

Vol 60, No. 16, April 21, 1898, Pg. 256

Contests with the Devil

When I was in England, brother Geo. D. Watt was the first man baptized, and his mother was baptized directly after he was. The night previous to my going forward to baptize brother Watt and eight others, I had a vision, as old father Baker used to say, "of the infernal world." I saw legions of wicked spirits that night, as plain as I now see you, and they came as near to me as you now are, and company after company of them rushed towards me; and brother Hyde and brother Richards also saw them. It was near the break of day, and I looked upon them as I now look upon you. They came when I was laying hands upon brother Russell, the wicked spirits got him to the door of the room, I did not see them till after that took place, and soon afterwards I lay prostrate upon the floor. That was in England, pious England, in the little town of Preston, at the corner of Wilford Street, and they struggled and exerted all their power and influence. That was the first introduction of the Gospel into England, and I was shown those spirits as plainly as ever I saw anything. I was thinking of that circumstance while brother Brigham was speaking this morning, and I was thinking that those spirits were just as much on

hand to perplex this people as they were on hand there. I saw their hands, their eyes, and every feature of their faces, the hair on their heads, and their ears, in short they had full-formed bodies.

If evil spirits could come to me, cannot ministering spirits and angels also come from God? Of course they can, and there are thousands of them, and I wish you to understand this, and that they can rush as an army going to battle, for the evil spirits came upon me and brother Hyde in that way. There is one circumstance in the visit of those evil spirits, that I would not tell if brother Hyde had not often told it himself; they spoke and said to brother Hyde, “We have nothing against you,” no, but I was the lad that they were after. I mention this to show that the devil is an enemy to me, he is also an enemy to brother Brigham, to brother Jedediah, to the Twelve, and to every righteous man. When brother Benson goes to the old country he will find hosts of evil spirits, and he will know more about the devil than he ever did before. The spirits of the wicked, who have died for thousands of years past, are at war with the Saints of God upon the earth. Do I ever pray that I may see them again? No, I do not. We had prayed all day, and almost all night, that we might have power to establish the Gospel in England. Previous to this, Mr. Fielding, a clergyman, came and forbid my baptizing those persons who had come forward. Said I, sir, they are of age, and I shall baptize them, if they wish for it, and I baptized nine. The next morning I was so weak that I could scarcely stand, so great was the effect that those spirits had upon me. I wrote a few words to my wife about the matter, and brother Joseph called upon her for the letter and said, “It was a choice jewel, and a testimony that the Gospel was planted in a strange land.”

When I returned home I called upon brother Joseph, and we walked down the bank of the river. He there told me what contests he had had with the devil; he told me that he had contests with the devil, face to face. He also told me how he was handled and afflicted by the devil, and said, he had known circumstances where Elder Rigdon was pulled out of bed three times in one night.

Heber C. Kimball
JD 3:229-230

Spirits of Evil People Tempt

Are the people striving to do right? Yes, they are. It has been observed that we are pretty clear from those unruly spirits that have been in our midst. So we are; but you need not flatter yourselves for a moment that the Devil has left us. You will find that he marshals his forces more particularly against this people; and if we are now clear from those unhallowed spirits and the tabernacles they occupied, you may expect that he will, if possible, find somebody here in whom he can have a resting place. You will learn that the wicked disembodied spirits have not left this people, though the most of those wicked persons who sought to destroy the Saints have left us. There are myriads of disembodied evil spirits—those who have long ago laid down their bodies here and in the regions round about, among and around us; and they are trying to make us and our children sick, and are trying to destroy us and to tempt us to evil.

They will try every possible means they are masters of to draw us aside from the path of righteousness.

Brigham Young
JD 6:73-74

Spirits of Evil People Tempt 2

There are scores of evil spirits here—spirits of the old Gadianton robbers, some of whom inhabited these mountains, and used to go into the South and afflict the Nephites. There are millions of

those spirits in the mountains, and they are ready to make us covetous, if they can; they are ready to lead astray every man and woman that wishes to be a Latter-day Saint. This may seem strange to some of you, but you will see them. As soon as your spirits are unlocked from these tabernacles, you are in the spirit world, and you will there have to contend against evil spirits as we here have to contend against wicked persons.

* * *

If you revolt in your feelings against the ordinances and commandments of God, and against the counsel given you by his servants, and continue to do so, you may become angels to the Devil, and it will be through your own conduct.

Brigham Young
JD 8:344, 347

Unclean Spirits Prompt to Commit Sin

Some people do not believe that there are any devils. There are thousands of evil spirits that are just as ugly as evil can make them. The wicked die, and their spirits remain not far from where their tabernacles are. When I was in England, twenty-eight years ago next June, I saw more devils than there are persons here today; they came upon me with an intention to destroy me; they are the spirits of wicked men who, while in the flesh, were opposed to God and his purposes. I saw them with what we call the spiritual eyes, but what is in reality the natural eye. The atmosphere of many parts of these mountains is doubtless the abode of the spirits of Gadianton robbers, whose spirits are as wicked as hell, and who would kill Jesus Christ and every Apostle and righteous person that ever lived if they had the power. It is by the influence of such wicked spirits that men and women are all the time tempted to tell little lies, to steal a little, to take advantage of their neighbor a little, and they tell us there is no harm in it. It is by the influence and power of evil spirits that the minds of men are prejudiced against each other, until they are led to do each other an injury, and sometimes to kill each other.

Heber C. Kimball
JD 11: 84-85

Evil Spirits Communicate With Each Other

When we commence again on the walls of the temple to be built on this Block, the news will fly from Maine to California. Who will tell them? Those little devils that are around here, that are around this earth in the spirit world; there will be millions of them ready to communicate the news to devils in Missouri, Illinois, California, Mexico, and in all the world. And the question will be, "What is the news? There is some devilish thing going on among the 'Mormons' and I know it. Those 'Mormons' ought to be killed." They do not know what stirs them up to this feeling, it is those spirits that are continually near to them.

President Brigham Young
JD 3:372

Evil Spirits Listen in to Blessings

One of the most interesting things that has occurred to me during this Conference was a visit at the Presiding Bishop's Office of one of my former associates in the Church who was recently appointed a Patriarch and set apart and ordained by Dr. Widtsoe. He told me of how he felt his inability to meet that wonderful calling until he was blessed by Brother Widtsoe, and then he told of the joy he had had

in giving blessings to the young people in the Church and of the manifestations that had come to him. Among other things he said that while he was blessing one young man he saw an evil spirit standing by his side, and the impression came to him that the evil spirit was listening to what was being said so that he would know what his mission in life was, that he might try to destroy that mission. It reminded me of a picture I saw in Brussels many years ago, when I was on my first mission, of a man who shot his head off, and by his side stood two angels, one of light and one of darkness, and as he committed the deed the angel of darkness laughed with a laugh of triumph and the angel of light turned his head and wept.

Bishop Le Grand Richards
Conference Report, Apr 1940, Pgs. 131-132

Evil Spirits Communicate

Spiritual Communication

If on the one hand we admit the principle of communication between the spirit world and our own, and yield ourselves to the unreserved or indiscriminate guidance of every spiritual manifestation, we are liable to be led about by every wind of doctrine, and by every kind of spirit which constitute the varieties of being and of thought in the spirit world. Demons, foul or unclean spirits, adulterous or murderous spirits, those who love or make a lie, can communicate with beings in the flesh, as well as those who are more true and virtuous.

Again—The spirits who are ignorant, uncultivated, and who remain in error, can communicate through the same medium as those better informed.

Elder Parley P. Pratt
JD 2:43

Evil Spirit Instill Evil Thoughts

Those evil spirits, ... invisible to our eyes, yet palpable to our senses, are constantly seeking to instill into our minds evil thoughts and wrong desires, to prompt us to commit sin and thereby grieve the Spirit of God and to lead us, as Cain was led, to perpetrate crime which resulted in his becoming Perdition.

Elder George Q. Cannon
Gospel Truth, Pg. 66

Joseph Smith Was Tempted With Inappropriate Images

On one occasion, he went to a small grove of trees near his father's home and knelt down before God in solemn prayer. The adversary then made several strenuous efforts to cool his ardent soul. He filled his mind with doubts and brought to mind all manner of inappropriate images to prevent him from obtaining the object of his endeavors; but the overflowing mercy of God came to buoy him up and gave new impetus to his failing strength. However, the dark cloud soon parted and light and peace filled his frightened heart. Once again he called upon the Lord with faith and fervency of spirit.

Orson Hyde, *Ein Ruf aus der Wüste (A Cry out of the Wilderness)*, 1842, extract, English translation, Page 1

<http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/orson-hyde-ein-ruf-aus-der-wste-a-cry-out-of-the-wilderness-1842-extract-english-translation#!/paperSummary/orson-hyde-ein-ruf-aus-der-wste-a-cry-out-of-the-wilderness-1842-extract-english-translation&p=1>.

Satan can convey thoughts

But while Satan can convey thoughts, he does not know whether these thoughts have taken root unless they are reflected either in words or in actions.

Elder Francis M. Gibbons
CR, Oct 1991, Pg.109

Satan can place thoughts

He has power to place thoughts in our minds and to whisper to us in unspoken impressions to entice us to satisfy our appetites or desires and in various other ways he plays upon our weaknesses and desires.

Joseph Fielding Smith
Answers to Gospel Questions, Pg. 81

Evil spirits plant disease and death in our bodies

Do you not think that brother Jedediah can do more good than he could here? When he was here the devils had power over his flesh, he warred with them and fought them, and said that they were around him by millions, and he fought them until he overcame them. So it is with you and I. You never felt a pain and ache, or felt disagreeable, or uncomfortable in your bodies and minds, but what an evil spirit was present causing it. Do you realize that the ague, the fever, the chills, the severe pain in the head, the pleurisy, or any pain in the system, from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, is put there by the devil? You do not realize this, do you?

I say but little about this matter, because I do not want you to realize it. When you have the rheumatism, do you realize that the devil put that upon you? No, but you say, "I got wet, caught cold, and thereby got the rheumatism." The spirits that afflict us and plant disease in our bodies, pain in the system, and finally death, have control over us so far as the flesh is concerned. But when the spirit is unlocked from the body it is free from the power of death and Satan; and when that body comes up again, it also, with the spirit, will gain the victory over death, hell, and the grave.

Brigham Young
JD 4:133

Evil Spirits Make Us and our Children Sick

Are the people striving to do right? Yes, they are. It has been observed that we are pretty clear from those unruly spirits that have been in our midst. So we are; but you need not flatter yourselves for a moment that the Devil has left us. You will find that he marshals his forces more particularly against this people; and if we are now clear from those unhallowed spirits and the tabernacles they occupied, you may expect that he will, if possible, find somebody here in whom he can have a resting place. You will learn that the wicked disembodied spirits have not left this people, though the most of those wicked persons who sought to destroy the Saints have left us. There are myriads of disembodied evil spirits—those who have long ago laid down their bodies here and in the regions round about, among and around us; and they are trying to make us and our children sick, and are trying to destroy us and to tempt us to evil.

Brigham Young
JD 6:73

Joseph Smith Healed From Affliction of Evil Power

On this particular journey, while passing through the southern part of Indiana, Joseph and his companions had a thrilling adventure and serious accident. The stage horses became frightened and ran away. It was very dangerous to remain inside, for the high coach was likely to be tipped over and wrecked, and they also found it dangerous to get out. Joseph and Bishop Whitney tried it, and Joseph reached the ground safely. Bishop Whitney, however, was not so fortunate. His foot slipped into the swiftly whirling wheel and the bones of his foot and leg were twisted and broken, and then he dropped, limp and bleeding into the road.

Joseph took his friend to an inn at Greenville and for nearly a month cared for him tenderly. At the end of this time the Prophet rose one day from the table, walked to the door and began vomiting frightfully. Blood and poison came up, and so violent was the retching that his jaw was thrown out of place, and the poison acted so powerfully on him that it loosened his hair. With his own hands he replaced his jaw and then hurried to Bishop Whitney's bed. Bishop Whitney laid his hands upon his head and rebuked the evil power that was afflicting him, and instantly he was completely healed.

But what was to be done now? Bishop Whitney had not yet been able to move his broken leg from the bed, and of course the Prophet would not leave him. He walked into a grove near by to think. About him were fresh graves. He had seen them before, but now he knew what they meant. Suddenly the inspiration of the Lord came upon him and he hurried back to the inn.

George Q. Cannon

The Latter Day Prophet: Young People's History of Joseph Smith, Pgs. 64-65

The Prophet on Old Houses

When the Saints moved to Nauvoo or Commerce, as it was then called, it might be called a deserted town, or partly so at least, as there were many empty houses, mostly built of logs and had stood so long that the mud had fallen from the spaces between them.

The Saints just driven from Missouri were glad to get such shelter as those old houses would afford, and they were all soon filled, sometimes two and three families in one house. Some houses had no floors, some no doors. Soon the inmates became sick— sickness increased until Joseph began to be alarmed and saw something very unusual in the new affliction. He looked into the matter as only a Seer and Prophet could look. He saw the trouble and where it came from. Those houses had been dens of iniquity. He instituted means to empty them again

by moving the people into tents and doubling up families in better houses. My father's family he took into his own house and tent.

I once heard him say concerning houses that had been inhabited by wicked people, that before the Saints moved into them they should be thoroughly cleansed, then fumigated with brimstone and whitewash. Afterward there should be a season of prayer in the house, and it should be dedicated unto the Lord for the use they designed it.

Those old houses had been owned or occupied by wicked, unprincipled men, gamblers, outlaws, licentious robbers, etc., and those that were of the same stamp had met there for evil practices and criminal purposes and there carried on their orgies. While this was the pastime or work of men and women in bodies, disembodied spirits of the same ilk stood around in highest glee and in various ways manifested to one another their enjoyment of the performance of the vilest of sins.

When the owners or occupants of the houses were dead, they enjoyed each other's society with their new pals in the spirit state, and when the righteous took possession of their old houses, all combined to kill the new inhabitants, and hence so much sickness—for all evil spirits, whether in the body or out of

the body, are opposed to this work and this people, and the spirits in the spirit world have means by which they can affect people on earth, and are as diligent there as here to do good or evil.

O. B. Huntington

The Young Woman's Journal, Vol. 6, Pg. 467

Joseph's Child Made Sick by the Devil

I will relate one circumstance that took place at Far West, in a house that Joseph had purchased, which had been formerly occupied as a public house by some wicked people. A short time after he got into it, one of his children was taken very sick; he laid his hands upon the child, when it got better; as soon as he went out of doors, the child was taken sick again; he again laid his hands upon it, so that it again recovered. This occurred several times, when Joseph inquired of the Lord what it all meant; then he had an open vision, and saw the devil in person, who contended with Joseph, face to face, for some time. He said it was his house, it belonged to him, and Joseph had no right there. Then Joseph rebuked Satan in the name of the Lord, and he departed and touched the child no more.

Life of Heber C. Kimball

Pg. 270

Devil has power to cause plagues

Have not devils and fallen angels power? Did they not have mighty power in ancient days? Yes. Could they not smite the earth with plagues, and turn water into blood anciently, as Moses the servant of God did? Yes. Could not the wicked magicians of Egypt perform great signs by casting down their staves, and causing them to appear like serpents, performing great and marvelous things similar to those the Prophet Moses performed?

Orson Pratt

Masterful Discourses And Writings Of Orson Pratt, Pg. 130 ... Salt Lake City, Utah: N.B. Lundwall.

Devil has power to cause affliction and sickness

What is the condition of the wicked? They are in prison. Are they happy? No. They have stepped through the veil, to the place where the veil of the covering is taken from their understanding. They fully understand that they have persecuted the just and Holy One, and they feel the wrath of the Almighty resting upon them, having a terrible foreboding of the final consummation of their just sentence, to become angels to the devil; just as it is in this world, precisely.

Has the devil power to afflict, and cast the spirit into torment? No! We have gained the ascendancy over him. It is in this world only he has power to cause affliction and sickness, pain and distress, sorrow, anguish, and disappointment; but when we go there, behold! the enemy of Jesus has come to the end of his chain; he has finished his work of torment; he cannot come any further; we are beyond his reach, and the righteous sleep in peace, while the spirit is anxiously looking forward to the day when the Lord will say, "Awake my Saints, you have slept long enough;" for the trump of God shall sound, and the sleeping dust shall arise, and the absent spirits return, to be united with their bodies; and they will become personages of tabernacle, like the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ; yea Gods in eternity.

Brigham Young

JD 3:95

Devils Have Control Over Spirits Not Bodies

Perhaps you do not understand me. Take a spirit that has gone into the spirit world, does it have control over corruptible bodies? No. It can only act in the capacity of a spirit. As to the devils inhabiting these earthly bodies, it cannot control them, it only controls spirits. But when the spirit is again united to the body, that spirit and body unitedly have control over the evil bodies, those controlled by the devil and given over to the devils, if there is any such thing. Resurrected beings have control over matter as well as spirit.

A Funeral Sermon by President Brigham Young, Delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, Utah Territory, December 4, 1856.
JD 4:133

Satan Has Power Over the Body

I have formerly spoken about the spirits overcoming the flesh; the body or flesh, is what the devil has power over. God gave Lucifer power, influence, mastery, and rule, to a certain extent, to control the life pertaining to the elements composing the body, and the spirit which God places in the body becomes intimately connected with it, and is of course more or less affected by it.

Brigham Young
JD 3:277

Evil Spirits Tempt and Suggest

You know that we sometimes need a prompter; if anyone of you was called by the government of the United States to go to Germany, Italy, or any foreign nation, as an Ambassador, if you did not understand the language somebody would have to interpret for you. Well, these evil spirits are ready to prompt you. Do they prompt us? Yes, and I could put my hands on a dozen of them while I have been on this stand; they are here on the stand. Could we do without the devils? No, we could not get along without them. They are here, and they suggest this, that, and the other.

When you lay down this tabernacle, where are you going? Into the spiritual world. Are you going into Abraham's bosom. No, not anywhere nigh there, but into the spirit world. Where is the spirit world? It is right here. Do the good and evil spirits go together? Yes, they do. Do they both inhabit one kingdom? Yes, they do. Do they go to the sun? No. Do they go beyond the boundaries of this organized earth? No, they do not. They are brought forth upon this earth, for the express purpose of inhabiting it to all eternity. Where else are you going? Nowhere else, only as you may be permitted.

President Brigham Young
J.D. 3:369

Spirits of Evil People Tempt

Some people do not believe that there are any devils. There are thousands of evil spirits that are just as ugly as evil can make them. The wicked die, and their spirits remain not far from where their tabernacles are. When I was in England, twenty-eight years ago next June, I saw more devils than there are persons here today; they came upon me with an intention to destroy me; they are the spirits of wicked men who, while in the flesh, were opposed to God and his purposes. I saw them with what we call the spiritual eyes, but what is in reality the natural eye. The atmosphere of many parts of these mountains is doubtless the abode of the spirits of Gadianon robbers, whose spirits are as wicked as hell, and who would kill Jesus Christ and every Apostle and righteous person that ever lived if they had

the power. It is by the influence of such wicked spirits that men and women are all the time tempted to tell little lies, to steal a little, to take advantage of their neighbor a little, and they tell us there is no harm in it. It is by the influence and power of evil spirits that the minds of men are prejudiced against each other, until they are led to do each other an injury, and sometimes to kill each other.

President Heber C. Kimball
J.D. 11:84

Spirits of Evil People Tempt

The spirits of the ancient Gadiantons are around us. You may see battlefield after battlefield, scattered over this American continent, where the wicked have slain the wicked. Their spirits are watching us continually for an opportunity to influence us to do evil, or to make us decline in the performance of our duties. And I will defy any man on earth to be more gentlemanly and bland in his manners than the master spirit of all evil. We call him the devil; a gentleman so smooth and so oily, that he can almost deceive the very elect. We have been baptized by men having the authority of the holy Priesthood of the Son of God, and consequently we have power over him which the rest of the world do not possess, and all who possess the power of the Priesthood have the power and right to rebuke those evil spirits. When we rebuke those evil powers, and they obey not, it is because we do not live so as to have the power with God, which it is our privilege to have. If we do not live for this privilege and right we are under condemnation.

Brigham Young
JD 12:128

Abilities of Evil Spirits

Many spirits of the departed, who are unhappy, linger in lonely wretchedness about the earth, and in the air, and especially about their ancient homesteads, and the places rendered dear to them by the memory of former scenes. The more wicked of these are the kind spoken of in Scripture, as "foul spirits," "unclean spirits," spirits who afflict persons in the flesh, and engender various diseases in the human system. They will sometimes enter human bodies, and will distract them, throw them into fits, cast them into the water, into the fire, etc. They will trouble them with dreams, nightmare, hysterics, fever, etc. They will also deform them in body and in features, by convulsions, cramps, contortions, etc., and will sometimes compel them to utter blasphemies, horrible curses, and even words of other languages. If permitted, they will often cause death. Some of these spirits are adulterous, and suggest to the mind all manner of lasciviousness, all kinds of evil thoughts and temptations.

A person on looking another in the eye, who is possessed of an evil spirit, may feel a shock, a nervous feeling, which will, as it were, make his hair stand on end, in short, a shock resembling that produced in a nervous system by the sight of a serpent.

Some of these foul spirits, when possessing a person, will cause a disagreeable smell about the person thus possessed, which will be plainly manifest to the senses of those about him, even though the person thus afflicted should be washed and change his clothes every few minutes.

There are, in fact, most awful instances of the spirit of lust, and of bawdy and abominable words and actions, inspired and uttered by persons possessed of such spirits, even though the persons were virtuous and modest so long as they possessed their own agency.

Some of these spirits cause deafness, others dumbness, etc.

We can suggest no remedy for these multiplied evils, to which poor human nature is subject, except a good life, while we are in possession of our faculties, prayers and fastings of good and holy

men, and the ministry of those who have power given them to rebuke evil spirits and cast out devils, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Among the diversified spirits abroad in the world, there are many religious spirits which are not of God, but which deceive those who have not the keys of Apostleship and Priesthood, or, in other words, the keys of the science of Theology to guide them. Some of these spirits are manifested in the camp-meetings of certain sects, and in nearly all the excitements called "revivals."

All the strange ecstasies, swoonings, screamings, shoutings, dancings, jumpings, and a thousand other ridiculous and unseemly manifestations, which neither edify nor instruct, are the fruits of these deceptive spirits.

We must, however, pity rather than ridicule or despise the subjects or advocates of these deceptions. Many of them are honest, but they have no Apostles nor other officers nor gifts to detect evil, or to keep them from being led by every delusive spirit.

Real visions, or inspirations, which would edify and instruct, they are taught to deny. Should Peter or Paul, or an angel from heaven, come among them, they would denounce him as an imposter, with the assertion that Apostles and angels were no longer needed.

There is still another class of unholy spirits at work in the world, spirits diverse from all these, far more intelligent, and, if possible, still more dangerous. These are the spirit of divination, vision, foretelling, familiar spirits, "animal magnetism," or "mesmerism," etc., which reveal some important truths mixed with the greatest errors, and also display much intelligence, but have not the keys of the science of Theology, the holy Priesthood.

These spirits generally deny the divinity of Christ, and the great truths of the atonement, and of the resurrection of the body. From this source are all the revelations which deny the ordinances of the Gospel, and the keys and gifts of the holy Apostleship.

Last of all, these are they who climb up in some other way, besides the door, into the sheepfold; and who prophesy or work in their own name, and not in the name of Jesus Christ. No man can do a miracle in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, except he be authorized by Him.

Parley P. Pratt

Key to the Science of Theology, pp 110-113

Joseph was tempted by the powers of darkness

“At first, he was severely tempted by the powers of darkness, which endeavoured to overcome him; but he continued to seek for deliverance, until darkness gave way from his mind; and he was enabled to pray, in fervency of the spirit, and in faith.”

Orson Pratt

An Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, p 5

Becoming an Unclean Spirit

Departed Spirits Continue With the Dispositions They Possessed on Earth

God says, "My house is a house of order, and not of confusion." The Holy Ghost will not dwell where there is confusion. I do not ask you whether you know this or not, because everyone knows that confusion does not come from the Father, nor from the Son. Does it come from the Holy Ghost? Everyone of you will answer, "No." Where does it come from? It comes from the author of confusion, and is produced by those who rebel against God and against His authority. There were many who did this formerly, and they form part of that hell which brother Wells was talking about. Although those men and women are dead, they have a good deal of power; their spirits have power over us when we render ourselves subject to them; their spirits are busy at work. They are diligent in performing the work of destruction and confusion; they go at that work the very moment their spirits leave their bodies.

On the other hand, when righteous persons die, their spirits also go into the spirit world, but they go to work with the servants of God to help to do good, and to bring about the purposes of the Almighty pertaining to this earth; while wicked spirits, those who have been wicked in this probation, take the opposite course, just the same as they did here. I have said, a great many times, that that spirit which possesses us here will possess us when our spirits leave our bodies, and we shall there be very much the same as we are here.

If you are subject to rebellious spirits, or to a spirit of apostasy here, will you not have the same spirit beyond the veil that you had on this side? You will, and it will have power over you to lead you to do wrong, and it will control your spirits. If, then, you are opposed to the truth while you are here, you will be occupied in that opposition hereafter, for the spirit that is opposed to the work of God here, will be opposed to that work when beyond the veil.

President Heber C. Kimball
JD 4:273

Same Personality Exists after Death

The scripture which I have quoted makes clear two vital points of doctrine connected with this subject, that as in Adam all die so in Christ all are made alive through the resurrection, and that the personality of the individual persists after death, otherwise how could he be responsible for the deeds done in the body?

The two outstanding attributes of God are justice and mercy. How can I in justice be held responsible for the transgressions of another or rewarded for his righteousness? No; I must answer for myself, just as you must answer for yourself; so my personality must persist, I must be the same man, my future life inseparably connected with this life.

Elder Anthony W. Ivins
CR, Apr 1918, Pg. 85

Personality After Death

Death does not change our personality or our desires for good or evil. Those who chose to obey God in this life live in a state of happiness, peace, and rest from troubles and care. Those who chose not to obey in this life and did not repent live in a state of unhappiness.

Preach My Gospel, Pg. 52

Personality Persists After Death

The Latter-day Saints are not a highly emotional people, given to hysteria. On the contrary, they are a matter-of-fact, practical, thorough-going people. To know that they have implicit faith in all that the monument commemorates—the appearance of a resurrected and immortal being to a young man in this generation—is a significant thing. This is material proof that personality persists after death and that the resurrection is a glorious reality. I know of no other monument like that. This is a marvelous testimony in a day of unbelief and skepticism.

Elder Le Grand Richards
CR, Oct 1936, Pg. 23

Personality Exists After Death

Moses, Peter, James and John, also John the Baptist, appeared unto the Prophet Joseph Smith, by the word of God's command, with messages essential to the salvation of the children of men. There is a permanent personality here and hereafter, a continued and active existence of the inhabitants in that "mysterious country." Joseph Smith spoke the truth when he said "there are no angels who minister to this earth but those who do belong or have belonged to it."

Conference Report Oct. 1939, Pg. 19
Elder Charles A. Callis

Personality After Death

Death will not change your personality or your desire for good or evil. If you choose to follow Jesus Christ during your life on Earth, you will be at peace in the spirit world. Those who choose not to follow Christ and do not repent will be unhappy.

Introduction to Family History, Student Manual 2012, Pg. 8

Wicked compelled to act as evil spirits act

All the wicked who are entirely overcome by these malicious spirits will have the heavenly principle of love wholly eradicated from their minds, and they will become angels to these infernal fiends, being captivated by them, and compelled to act as they act. They cannot extricate themselves from their power, nor ward off the fiery darts of their malicious tormentors.

Orson Pratt
The Seer, Vol. 1, October 1853, pg. 156

Wicked subject to evil spirits

Some people suppose that when they leave this state of existence they are going into the paradise of God, but if they do not overcome evil and subject themselves to the will of God and to him that is appointed to lead us here in the flesh, they will become subject to those wicked spirits. Angels will not come by legions to defend those whose faith fails them when the destroyer comes, but he will be permitted to waste the wicked.

Heber C. Kimball
JD 4:2

Departed Spirits Continue With the Dispositions They Possessed on Earth

God says, "My house is a house of order, and not of confusion." The Holy Ghost will not dwell where there is confusion. I do not ask you whether you know this or not, because everyone knows that confusion does not come from the Father, nor from the Son. Does it come from the Holy Ghost? Everyone of you will answer, "No." Where does it come from? It comes from the author of confusion, and is produced by those who rebel against God and against His authority. There were many who did this formerly, and they form part of that hell which brother Wells was talking about. Although those men and women are dead, they have a good deal of power; their spirits have power over us when we render ourselves subject to them; their spirits are busy at work. They are diligent in performing the work of destruction and confusion; they go at that work the very moment their spirits leave their bodies.

On the other hand, when righteous persons die, their spirits also go into the spirit world, but they go to work with the servants of God to help to do good, and to bring about the purposes of the Almighty pertaining to this earth; while wicked spirits, those who have been wicked in this probation, take the opposite course, just the same as they did here. I have said, a great many times, that that spirit which possesses us here will possess us when our spirits leave our bodies, and we shall there be very much the same as we are here.

If you are subject to rebellious spirits, or to a spirit of apostasy here, will you not have the same spirit beyond the veil that you had on this side? You will, and it will have power over you to lead you to do wrong, and it will control your spirit. If, then, you are opposed to the truth while you are here, you will be occupied in that opposition hereafter, for the spirit that is opposed to the work of God here, will be opposed to that work when beyond the veil.

Heber C. Kimball
JD 4:273

Wicked People Become Devils

The wicked spirits that leave here and go into the spirit world, are they wicked there? Yes.

The spirits of people that have lived upon the earth according to the best light they had, who were as honest and sincere as men and women could be, if they lived on the earth without the privilege of the Gospel and the Priesthood and the keys thereof are still under the power and control of evil spirits, to a certain extent. No matter where they lived on the face of the earth, all men and women that have died without the keys and power of the Priesthood, though they might have been honest and sincere and have done everything they could, are under the influence of the devil, more or less. Are they as much so as others? No, no. Take those that were wicked designedly, who knowingly lived without the Gospel when it was within their reach, they are given up to the devil, they become tools to the devil and spirits of devils.

Go to the time when the Gospel came to the earth in the days of Joseph, take the wicked that have opposed this people and persecuted them to the death, and they are sent to hell. Where are they? They are in the spirit world, and are just as busy as they possibly can be to do everything they can against the Prophet and the Apostles, against Jesus and his kingdom. They are just as wicked and malicious in their actions against the cause of truth, as they were while on the earth in their fleshly tabernacles.

Brigham Young
JD 3:370

Evil People Subject to Evil Spirits After Death

Some people suppose that when they leave this state of existence they are going into the paradise of God, but if they do not overcome evil and subject themselves to the will of God and to him that is appointed to lead us here in the flesh, they will become subject to those wicked spirits. Angels will not come by legions to defend those whose faith fails them when the destroyer comes, but he will be permitted to waste the wicked. I never said that I ever saw an angel from God, though I have dreamed about them; neither did I see those evil spirits with my natural eyes, nor was I at the time asleep, but I saw them after I was laid prostrate upon the floor.

When I recovered I sat upon the bed thinking and reflecting upon what had past, and all at once my vision was opened, and the walls of the building were no obstruction to my seeing, for I saw nothing but the visions that presented themselves. Why did not the walls obstruct my view? Because my spirit could look through the walls of that house, for I looked with that spirit, element, and power, with which angels look; and as God sees all things, so were invisible things brought before me, as the Lord would bring things before Joseph in the Urim and Thummim. It was upon that principle that the Lord showed things to the Prophet Joseph.

I speak of these things because I do know that if you do not yield obedience to true principles, and bring your wills into subjection thereto, you will be overcome of evil.

Heber C. Kimball

JD 4:2

People Who Die in Sin are at the Mercy of the Devil

November 16th, 1897, President Woodruff performed the marriage ceremony which united his daughter Alice to William McEwan. After bestowing upon them his benediction, he spoke to them as follows: "You are now husband and wife, having entered into a mutual covenant. Promises for time and eternity have been made to you. If you, yourselves, honor God and your parents, and keep His commandments and the covenants you have entered into, you will be true and faithful throughout all eternity; and I will tell you why. While we are here we are surrounded by temptations because we are where devils dwell. They are around us and have power to tempt us; and here is the place they work.

But there is no man or woman who has been true and faithful here until death that will ever be disturbed or annoyed by them after death, for the reason that when faithful Saints receive their resurrected bodies they will occupy a place in the celestial kingdom, and there devils do not dwell. In that kingdom there will be no one to tempt you or lead you astray. If you are true and faithful here you will be true and faithful there, and be so throughout all eternity.

"When those who are guided by these evil spirits die they go where the evil spirits are, and they will continue to have power over them. Those who resist such spirits in the flesh will be free from their power hereafter."

Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors As Recorded In His Daily Journals, 1909, Pgs. 618-619

Foul Spirits Are From This Earth

It was told you here that Brother Joseph warned the Elders of Israel against false spirits. It was revealed to me that if the people did not receive the spirit of revelation that God had sent for the salvation of the world, they would receive false spirits, and would have revelation. Men would have revelation, women would have revelation, the priest in the pulpit and the deacon under the pulpit would have revelation, and the people would have revelation enough to damn the whole nation, and nations of them, unless they would hearken to the voice of God. It was not only revealed to Joseph, but to your

humble servant, that false spirits would be as prevalent and as common among the inhabitants of the earth as we now see them.

Seeing that I have got on this thread, I will ask, Is there any revelation in the world? Yes, plenty of it. We are accused of being nothing more nor less than a people possessing what they term the higher order of Spiritualism. Whenever I see this in print, or hear it spoken, "You are right," say I. "Yes, we belong to that higher order of Spiritualism; our revelations are from above, yours from beneath. This is the difference. We receive revelation from Heaven, you receive your revelations from every foul spirit that has departed this life, and gone out of the bodies of mobbers, murderers, highwaymen, drunkards, thieves, liars, and every kind of debauched character, whose spirits are floating around here, and searching and seeking whom they can destroy; for they are the servants of the devil, and they are permitted to come now to reveal to the people." It was not so once, anciently or formerly, when there was no Priesthood on the earth, no revelations from Heaven. Then the Lord Almighty shut up this evidence, and all intercourse between men on the earth and the foul spirits, so that the latter could not deceive and destroy the former with their revelations.

Brigham Young
JD 13:280-281

Discerning of Spirits

Ability to Discern When Someone is Possessed

If, then, they were in the earth as early as the Garden of Eden, no doubt, they have been here from that day to this, and that the earth is the place of their habitation. They wander to 64 and fro in the earth seeking whom they may devour! Only think of a hundred devils to every being that now exists on the earth.

Though these spirits had not the full knowledge of the Almighty; though they had not that superior knowledge that reigns in the bosom of the Son of God, and of many that stood in His presence, yet they had great information before their fall. They had stood in the presence of God, and had, no doubt, learned many things from His own mouth. How long they had been in His presence it is not for us to say, God has not revealed it. But they had great experience. I am speaking of the knowledge and the cunning that these enemies of God possessed when they were cast down here to the earth. They have cunning beyond what you have ever seen manifested by the children of men. They can, at times, apparently, be perfect gentlemen when they enter the tabernacles of the children of men. They can become, apparently, very pious, and, if you could not discern spirits, you would think, from the manifestations of devils, when in the tabernacles of many individuals, that they were perfect angels on earth.

The devil operates in every conceivable form, and this is what the apostle meant when he said, "We do not merely wrestle against flesh and blood, but also against principalities and powers." We have enemies far more powerful than men to contend against. The devil has not the power to take full possession of the tabernacles of human creatures, unless they give way to him and his influence to that degree that he gets power over them.

Elder Orson Pratt
JD 13:63-65

Adversary usually of an urging crowding hurrying nature

I should like also to add my testimony to the testimonies of my brethren who spoke this morning, concerning the spirits that are with us to guide, inspire, and protect us. Many people have said to me: "Brother Smith, how can you tell the difference between the promptings of the Lord, or his agencies, and the promptings of the adversary or his agencies?" They say they are unable, in most respects, to discern the difference between those promptings. I have said: "After earnest and sincere prayer follow your first impression, and you will always go right." Then they say: "Well, how can I tell which is my first impression? They are usually so close to each other it is difficult to even tell which is the first impression." Then I say "The impression made by the Spirit that is for our guide in safety in the Church is always from a good spirit, the Spirit that proclaims and announces the truth, and the truth doesn't need an alibi or crutches to support it." So if you go back and knock down all the crutches, all the alibis, all the excuses, the ifs and ands and buts that attempt to support it, that crowd and urge us—because, as a rule, I have discovered that the adversary's agencies, in their promptings, are usually of an urging, crowding, hurrying nature, while the Spirit of the Lord and his agencies are always of a quiet, sweet, peaceful and convincing character,—so that after we have done away with all the excuses, all the alibis that usually support our experiences, we can discover which is the right spirit. The spirit of conviction, of peace and of charity, which is the love of the Lord and his work, is not in a hurry, but has time to decide, time to weigh, time to consider; does not act in haste, but in calm deliberation. We

learn then the truth, and we have a guide which is a companion to every member of the Church who is faithful and true, so that we are able, through the blessings of the Lord, to receive that comfort and consolation which will support us, even in time of distress.

Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith
CR, Oct 1931, Pg. 27

Discerning Between Your Spirit and the Spirit of God

I noticed when I was very young in the Church, that men who were greatly gifted of the Lord and had many manifestations, were the men who apostatized; with the exception of the Prophet Joseph Smith, nearly everyone was overthrown. I suppose the reason of it was that they were lifted up in pride and allowed the adversary to take advantage of them. I would like well enough to see these gifts and blessings multiplied among us and upon us, that as a people we should have dreams and visions and manifestations of the Spirit; but there is one thing that we have all got to be very careful about, and that is this: I have seen Elders in my experience that when they got their own spirit moved very much they imagined that it was the Spirit of God, and it was difficult in some instances to tell the difference between the suggestions of their own spirit and the voice of the spirit of God. This is a gift of itself, to be able to distinguish that which suggests itself to our own hearts and that which comes from God. And we are misled sometimes by our own feeling, because of our inability to distinguish between the voice of the Spirit of God and the suggestions of our own spirit.

George Q. Cannon
JD 22:104

Discerning is seeing with spiritual eyes and feeling with the heart

Discernment is so much more than recognizing right from wrong. It helps us distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant, the important from the unimportant, and the necessary from that which is merely nice.

The gift of discernment opens to us vistas that stretch far beyond what can be seen with natural eyes or heard with natural ears. Discerning is seeing with spiritual eyes and feeling with the heart—seeing and feeling the falsehood of an idea or the goodness in another person. Discerning is hearing with spiritual ears and feeling with the heart—hearing and feeling the unspoken concern in a statement or the truthfulness of a testimony or doctrine.

David A. Bednar
Quick to Observe, Ensign December 2006, Pg. 36

Discerning the spirit that heals

Persons may see miracles performed; may see the sick healed, the eyes of the blind opened, the lame made to leap, and even the dead raised, and may acknowledge that it is all done by the power of God, but will all this enable them to discern whether it is the power of God or not? No, it will not. They must have the spirit by which the dead are raised, by which the sick are healed, and the eyes of the blind opened, or they cannot tell whether it is done by the power of God or the power of the devil, or whether there is a mist over their own eyes.

Brigham Young
JD 3:155

Discerning if someone else or oneself is possessed by evil spirit

No, the gift of discerning of spirits not only gives men and women who have it the power to discern the spirit with which others may be possessed or influenced, but it gives them the power to discern the spirit which influences themselves. They are able to detect a false spirit and also to know when the Spirit of God reigns within them. In private life this gift is of great importance to the Latter-day Saints. Possessing and exercising this gift they will not allow any evil influence to enter into their hearts or to prompt them in their thoughts, their words or their acts. They will repel it, and if perchance such a spirit should get possession of them, as soon as they witness its effects they will expel it or, in other words, refuse to be led or prompted by it.

Elder George Q. Cannon
Gospel Truth, Pg. 157

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Brigham Young
JD 3:155

Discerning of Spirits

There is a variety of blessings; a different blessing being probably given to one, two, three or four of this congregation. Thus, one will have faith to lay hands upon the sick and rebuke disease, and drive it from the person afflicted. Many may receive this blessing of faith, the gift of healing. Some may receive faith to the discerning of spirits; they can discern the spirit of a person, whether it is good or evil. They have such power, that when a person enters this congregation they can tell the spirit of such person; then they have received the gift of discerning of spirits.

Brigham Young
JD 16:164

Discerning Those Who Are Possessed

A man that has had the light, the truth, the Spirit of God and has grieved that Spirit, when the other spirit takes possession of him, there is a complete transformation. Those who know see it in his face and feel it in his spirit. They cannot associate with him without discerning that there is a spirit of darkness and evil taken possession of him, and so it is with all who take this course.

George Q. Cannon
Gospel Truth, Pg. 66

Discernment

One of the gifts of the Gospel which the Lord has promised to those who enter into covenant with Him is the gift of discerning of spirits—a gift which is not much thought of by many and probably seldom prayed for, yet it is a gift that is of exceeding value and one that should be enjoyed by every

Latter-day Saint.... No Latter-day Saint should be without this gift, because there is such a variety of spirits in the world which seek to deceive and lead astray.

Elder George Q. Cannon
Gospel Truth, Pg. 198

Discernment operates in four ways

As we integrate the teachings of Presidents Cannon and Richards, we learn that the gift of discernment operates basically in four major ways.

First, as we “read under the surface,” discernment helps us detect hidden error and evil in others.

Second, and more important, it helps us detect hidden errors and evil in ourselves. Thus the spiritual gift of discernment is not exclusively about discerning other people and situations, but, as President Cannon taught, it is also about discerning things as they really are within us.

Third, it helps us find and bring forth the good that may be concealed in others.

And fourth, it helps us find and bring forth the good that may be concealed in us.

Elder David A. Bednar
Quick to Observe, Ensign Dec 2006, Pg. 35

Try the Spirits

Recent occurrences that have transpired amongst us render it an imperative duty devolving upon me to say something in relation to the spirits by which men are actuated.

It is evident from the Apostles’ writings, that many false spirits existed in their day, and had “gone forth into the world,” and that it needed intelligence which God alone could impart to detect false spirits, and to prove what spirits were of God. The world in general have been grossly ignorant in regard to this one thing, and why should they be otherwise—for “the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

The Egyptians were not able to discover the difference between the miracles of Moses and those of the magicians until they came to be tested together; and if Moses had not appeared in their midst, they would unquestionably have thought that the miracles of the magicians were performed through the mighty power of God, for they were great miracles that were performed by them—a supernatural agency was developed, and great power manifested. The witch of Endor is a no less singular personage; clothed with a powerful agency she raised the Prophet Samuel from his grave, and he appeared before the astonished king, and revealed unto him his future destiny. Who is to tell whether this woman is of God, and a righteous woman—or whether the power she possessed was of the devil, and she a witch as represented by the Bible? It is easy for us to say now, but if we had lived in her day, which of us could have unraveled the mystery?

It would have been equally as difficult for us to tell by what spirit the Apostles prophesied, or by what power the Apostles spoke and worked miracles. Who could have told whether the power of Simon, the sorcerer, was of God or of the devil? There always did, in every age, seem to be a lack of intelligence pertaining to this subject. Spirits of all kinds have been manifested, in every age, and almost among all people.

If we go among the pagans, they have their spirits; the Mohammedans, the Jews, the Christians, the Indians—all have their spirits, all have a supernatural agency, and all contend that their spirits are of God. Who shall solve the mystery? “Try the spirits,” says John, but who is to do it? The learned, the eloquent, the philosopher, the sage, the divine—all are ignorant. The heathens will boast of their gods,

and of the great things that have been unfolded by their oracles. The Mussulman will boast of his Koran, and of the divine communications that his progenitors have received. The Jews have had numerous instances, both ancient and modern, among them of men who have professed to be inspired, and sent to bring about great events, and the Christian world has not been slow in making up the number.

Ignorance of the Nature of Spirits

“Try the spirits,” but what by? Are we to try them by the creeds of men? What preposterous folly—what sheer ignorance—what madness! Try the motions and actions of an eternal being (for I contend that all spirits are such) by a thing that was conceived in ignorance, and brought forth in folly—a cobweb of yesterday! Angels would hide their faces, and devils would be ashamed and insulted, and would say, “Paul we know, and Jesus we know, but who are ye?” Let each man of society make a creed and try evil spirits by it, and the devil would shake his sides; it is all that he would ask—all that he would desire. Yet many of them do this, and hence “many spirits are abroad in the world.”

One great evil is, that men are ignorant of the nature of spirits; their power, laws, government, intelligence, etc., and imagine that when there is anything like power, revelation, or vision manifested, that it must be of God. Hence the Methodists, Presbyterians, and others frequently possess a spirit that will cause them to lie down, and during its operation, animation is frequently entirely suspended; they consider it to be the power of God, and a glorious manifestation from God—a manifestation of what? Is there any intelligence communicated? Are the curtains of heaven withdrawn, or the purposes of God developed? Have they seen and conversed with an angel—or have the glories of futurity burst upon their view? No! but their body has been inanimate, the operation of their spirit suspended, and all the intelligence that can be obtained from them when they arise, is a shout of “glory,” or “hallelujah,” or some incoherent expression; but they have had “the power.” The Shaker will whirl around on his heel, impelled by a supernatural agency or spirit, and think that he is governed by the Spirit of God; and the Jumper will jump and enter into all kinds of extravagances. A Primitive Methodist will shout under the influence of that spirit, until he will rend the heavens with his cries; while the Quakers (or Friends) moved as they think, by the Spirit of God, will sit still and say nothing. Is God the author of all this? If not all of it, which does He recognize? Surely, such a heterogeneous mass of confusion never can enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Discerning of Spirits by Power of Priesthood

Every one of these professes to be competent to try his neighbor's spirit, but no one can try his own, and what is the reason? Because they have not a key to unlock, no rule wherewith to measure, and no criterion whereby they can test it. Could any one tell the length, breadth or height of a building without a rule? Test the quality of metals without a criterion, or point out the movements of the planetary systems, without a knowledge of astronomy? Certainly not; and if such ignorance as this is manifested about a spirit of this kind, who can describe an angel of light? If Satan should appear as one in glory, who can tell his color, his signs, his appearance, his glory, or what is the manner of his manifestation? Who can detect the spirit of the French prophets with their revelations and their visions, and power of manifestations? Or who can point out the spirit of the Irvingites, with their apostles and prophets, and visions and tongues, and interpretations, etc. Or who can drag into daylight and develop the hidden mysteries of the false spirits that so frequently are made manifest among the Latter-day Saints? We answer that no man can do this without the Priesthood, and having a knowledge of the laws by which spirits are governed; for as no man knows the things of God, but by the Spirit of God, so no

man knows the spirit of the devil, and his power and influence, but by possessing intelligence which is more than human, and having unfolded through the medium of the Priesthood the mysteries operations of his devices; without knowing the angelic form, the sanctified look and gesture, and the zeal that is frequently manifested by him for the glory of God, together with the prophetic spirit, the gracious influence, the godly appearance, and the holy garb, which are so characteristic of his proceedings and his mysterious windings.

A man must have the discerning of spirits before he can drag into daylight this hellish influence and unfold it unto the world in all its soul-destroying, diabolical, and horrid colors; for nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God. Thousands have felt the influence of its terrible power and baneful effects. Long pilgrimages have been undertaken, penances endured, and pain, misery and ruin have followed in their train; nations have been convulsed, kingdoms overthrown, provinces laid waste, and blood, carnage and desolation are habiliments in which it has been clothed.

The Turks, the Hindoos, the Jews, the Christians, the Indian; in fact all nations have been deceived, imposed upon and injured through the mischievous effects of false spirits.

The Spirit of God the Spirit of Knowledge

As we have noticed before, the great difficulty lies in the ignorance of the nature of spirits, of the laws by which they are governed, and the signs by which they may be known; if it requires the Spirit of God to know the things of God; and the spirit of the devil can only be unmasked through that medium, then it follows as a natural consequence that unless some person or persons have a communication, or revelation from God, unfolding to them the operation of the spirit, they must eternally remain ignorant of these principles; for I contend that if one man cannot understand these things but by the Spirit of God, ten thousand men cannot; it is alike out of the reach of the wisdom of the learned, the tongue of the eloquent, the power of the mighty. And we shall at last have to come to this conclusion, whatever we may think of revelation, that without it we can neither know nor understand anything of God, or the devil; and however unwilling the world may be to acknowledge this principle, it is evident from the multifarious creeds and notions concerning this matter that they understand nothing of this principle, and it is equally as plain that without a divine communication they must remain in ignorance. The world always mistook false prophets for true ones, and those that were sent of God, they considered to be false prophets and hence they killed, stoned, punished and imprisoned the true prophets, and these had to hide themselves “in deserts and dens, and caves of the earth,” and though the most honorable men of the earth, they banished them from their society as vagabonds, whilst they cherished, honored and supported knaves, vagabonds, hypocrites, impostors, and the basest of men.

The Gift of Discernment of Spirits

A man must have the discerning of spirits, as we before stated, to understand these things, and how is he to obtain this gift if there are no gifts of the Spirit? And how can these gifts be obtained without revelation? “Christ ascended into heaven, and gave gifts to men; and he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers.” And how were Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers and Evangelists chosen? By prophecy (revelation) and by laying on of hands—by a divine communication, and a divinely appointed ordinance—through the medium of the Priesthood, organized according to the order of God, by divine appointment. The Apostles in ancient times held the keys of this Priesthood—of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, and consequently

were enabled to unlock and unravel all things pertaining to the government of the Church, the welfare of society, the future destiny of men, and the agency, power and influence of spirits; for they could control them at pleasure, bid them depart in the name of Jesus, and detect their mischievous and mysterious operations when trying to palm themselves upon the Church in a religious garb, and militate against the interest of the Church and spread truth. We read that they “cast out devils in the name of Jesus,” and when a woman possessing the spirit of divination, cried before Paul and Silas, “these are the servants of the Most High God that show unto us the way of salvation,” they detected the spirit. And although she spake favorably of them, Paul commanded the spirit come out of her, and saved themselves from the opprobrium that might have been heaped upon their heads, through an alliance with her, in the development of her wicked principles, which they certainly would have been charged with, if they had not rebuked the evil spirit.

The Gift Held by the Prophets

A power similar to this existed through the medium of the Priesthood in different ages. Moses could detect the magician's power, and show that he was God's servant—he knew when he was upon the mountain that Israel was engaged in idolatry; he could develop the sin of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, detect witches and wizards in their proceedings, and point out the true prophets of the Lord. Joshua knew how to detect the man who had stolen the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment. Michaiiah could point out the false spirit by which the four hundred prophets were governed; and if his advice had been taken, many lives would have been spared, (2 Chronicles 18) Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and many other prophets possessed this power. Our Savior, the Apostles, and even the members of the Church were endowed with this gift, for, says Paul, (1 Corinthians 12), “To one is given the gift of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discerning of spirits.” All these proceeded from the same Spirit of God, and were the gifts of God. The Ephesian church were enabled by this principle, “to try those that said they were apostles, and were not, and found them liars.” (Revelation 2:2.)

Difference Between Body and Spirit

In tracing the thing to the foundation, and looking at it philosophically, we shall find a very material difference between the body and the spirit; the body is supposed to be organized matter, and the spirit, by many, is thought to be immaterial, without substance. With this latter statement we should beg leave to differ, and state the spirit is a substance; that it is material, but that it is more pure, elastic and refined matter than the body; that it existed before the body, can exist in the body; and will exist separate from the body, when the body will be mouldering in the dust; and will in the resurrection be again united with it.

Spirits Eternal

Without attempting to describe this mysterious connection, and the laws that govern the body and the spirit of man, their relationship to each other, and the design of God in relation to the human body and spirit, I would just remark, that the spirits of men are eternal, that they are governed by the same Priesthood that Abraham, Melchizedek, and the Apostles were: that they are organized according to that Priesthood which is everlasting, “without beginning of days or end of years,”—that they all move in their respective spheres, and are governed by the law of God; that when they appear upon the earth they are in a probationary state, and are preparing, if righteous, for a future and greater glory; that

the spirits of good men cannot interfere with the wicked beyond their prescribed bounds, for Michael, the Archangel, dared not bring a railing accusation against the devil, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan."

Wicked Spirits Restricted in Power

It would seem also, that wicked spirits have their bounds, limits, and laws by which they are governed or controlled, and know their future destiny; hence, those that were in the maniac said to our Savior, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" and when Satan presented himself before the Lord, among the sons of God, he said that he came "from going to and fro in the earth, and from wandering up and down in it;" and he is emphatically called the prince of the power of the air; and, it is very evident that they possess a power that none but those who have the Priesthood can control, as we have before adverted to, in the case of the sons of Sceva.

Having said so much upon the general principles, without referring to the peculiar situation, power, and influence of the magicians of Egypt, the wizards and witches of the Jews, the oracles of the heathen, their necromancers, soothsayers, and astrologers, the maniacs or those possessed of devils in the Apostles' days, we will notice, and try to detect (so far as we have the Scriptures for our aid) some few instances of the development of false spirits in more modern times, and in this our day.

False Prophets

The "French Prophets" were possessed of a spirit that deceived; they existed in Vivaris and Dauphany, in great numbers in the year 1688; there were many boys and girls from seven to twenty-five; they had strange fits, as in tremblings and faintings, which made them stretch out their legs and arms, as in a swoon; they remained awhile in trances, and coming out of them, uttered all that came in their mouths.

Now God never had any prophets that acted in this way; there was nothing indecorous in the proceeding of the Lord's prophets in any age; neither had the apostles nor prophets in the apostles' day anything of this kind. Paul says, "Ye may all prophesy, one by one; and if anything be revealed to another let the first hold his peace, for the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets;" but here we find that the prophets are subject to the spirit, and falling down, have twitchings, tumblings, and faintings through the influence of that spirit, being entirely under its control. Paul says, "Let everything be done decently and in order," but here we find the greatest disorder and indecency in the conduct of both men and women, as above described. The same rule would apply to the fallings, twitchings, swoonings, shaking, and trances of many of our modern revivalists.

Johanna Southcott professed to be a prophetess, and wrote a book of prophecies in 1804, she became the founder of a people that are still extant. She was to bring forth, in a place appointed, a son, that was to be the Messiah, which thing has failed. Independent of this, however, where do we read of a woman that was the founder of a church, in the word of God? Paul told the women in his day, "To keep silence in the church, and that if they wished to know anything to ask their husbands at home;" he would not suffer a woman "to rule, or to usurp authority in the church;" but here we find a woman the founder of a church, the revelator and guide, the Alpha and Omega, contrary to all acknowledged rule, principle, and order.

Jemimah Wilkinson was another prophetess that figured largely in America, in the last century. She stated that she was taken sick and died, and that her soul went to heaven, where it still continues. Soon after, her body was reanimated with the spirit and power of Christ, upon which she set up as a public teacher, and declared that she had an immediate revelation. Now the Scriptures positively assert

that “Christ is the first fruit, afterwards those that are Christ’s at His coming, then cometh the end.” But Jemimah, according to her testimony, died, and rose again before the time mentioned in the Scriptures. The idea of her soul being in heaven while her body was [living] on earth, is also preposterous. When God breathed into man’s nostrils, he became a living soul, before that he did not live, and when that was taken away his body died; and so did our Savior when the spirit left the body, nor did His body live until His spirit returned in the power of His resurrection. But Mrs. Wilkinson’s soul was in heaven, and her body without the soul on earth, living without life!

Irvingites

The Irvingites are a people that have counterfeited the truth, perhaps the nearest of any of our modern sectarians. They commenced about ten years ago in the city of London, in England; they have churches formed in various parts of England and Scotland, and some few in Upper Canada. Mr. Irving, their founder, was a learned and talented minister of the Church of Scotland, he was a great logician, and a powerful orator, but withal wild and enthusiastic in his views. Moving in the higher circles, and possessing talent and zeal, placed him in a situation to become a conspicuous character, and to raise up a society similar to that which is called after his name.

The Irvingites have apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and angels. They profess to have the gift of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, and, in some few instances, to have the gift of healing.

The first prophetic spirit that was manifested was in some Misses Campbell that Mr. Irving met with, while on a journey in Scotland; they had [what is termed among their sect] “utterances,” which were evidently of a supernatural agency. Mr. Irving, falling into the common error of considering all supernatural manifestations to be of God, took them to London with him, and introduced them into his church.

They were there honored as the prophetesses of God, and when they spoke, Mr. Irving or any of his ministers had to keep silence. They were peculiarly wrought upon before the congregation, and had strange utterances, uttered with an unnatural, shrill voice, and with thrilling intonations they frequently made use of a few broken, unconnected sentences, that were ambiguous, incoherent, and incomprehensible; at other times they were more clearly understood. They would frequently cry out, “There is iniquity! There is iniquity!” And Mr. Irving has been led, under the influence of this charge, to fall down upon his knees before the public congregation, and to confess his sin, not knowing whether he had sinned, nor wherein, nor whether the thing referred to him or somebody else. During these operations, the bodies of the persons speaking were powerfully wrought upon, their countenances were distorted, they had frequent twitchings in their hands, and the whole system was powerfully convulsed at intervals: they sometimes, however, (it is supposed) spoke in correct tongues, and had true interpretations.

Under the influence of this spirit the church was organized by these women; apostles, prophets, etc., were soon called, and a systematic order of things introduced, as above mentioned. A Mr. Baxter (afterwards one of their principal prophets) upon going into one of their meetings, says, “I saw a power manifested, and thought that was the power of God, and asked that it might fall upon me, and it did so, and I began to prophesy.” Eight or nine years ago they had about sixty preachers going through the streets of London, testifying that London was to be the place where the “two witnesses” spoken of by John, were to prophesy; that (they the church and the spirit were the witnesses, and that at the end of three years and a half there was to be an earthquake and great destruction, and our Savior was to come. Their apostles were collected together at the appointed time watching the event, but Jesus did not come, and the prophecy was then ambiguously explained away. They frequently had signs given them by the

spirit to prove to them that what was manifested to them should take place. Mr. Baxter related an impression that he had concerning a child. It was manifested to him that he should visit the child, and lay hands upon it, and that it should be healed; and to prove to him that this was of God, he should meet his brother in a certain place, who should speak unto him certain words. His brother addressed him precisely in the way and manner that the manifestation designated. The sign took place, but when he laid his hands upon the child it did not recover. I cannot vouch for the authority of the last statement, as Mr. Baxter at that time had left the Irvingites, but it is in accordance with many of their proceedings, and the thing never has been attempted to be denied.

All This Is Wrong

It may be asked, where is there anything in all this that is wrong?

First. The church was organized by women, and God placed in the Church (first apostles, secondarily prophets,) and not first women; but Mr. Irving placed in his church first women (secondarily apostles,) and the church was founded and organized by them. A woman has no right to found or organize a church—God never sent them to do it.

Second. Those women would speak in the midst of a meeting, and rebuke Mr. Irving or any of the church. Now the Scripture positively says, “Thou shalt not rebuke an Elder, but entreat him as a father;” not only this, but they frequently accused the brethren, thus placing themselves in the seat of Satan, who is emphatically called “the accuser of the brethren.”

Third. Mr. Baxter received the spirit on asking for it, without attending to the ordinances, and began to prophesy, whereas the scriptural way of attaining the gift of the Holy Ghost is by baptism, and by laying on of hands.

Fourth. As we have stated in regard to others, the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets; but those prophets were subject to the spirits, the spirits controlling their bodies at pleasure.

But it may be asked how Mr. Baxter could get a sign from a second person? To this we would answer, that Mr. Baxter’s brother was under the influence of the same spirit as himself, and being subject to that spirit he could be easily made to speak to Mr. Baxter whatever the spirit should dictate; but there was not power in the spirit to heal the child.

Satan May Give Manifestations in Tongues

Again it may be asked, how it was that they could speak in tongues if they were of the devil. We would answer that they could be made to speak in another tongue, as well as their own, as they were under the control of that spirit, and the devil can tempt the Hottentot, the Turk, the Jew, or any other nation; and if these men were under the influence of his spirit, they of course speak Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Italian, Dutch, or any other language that the devil knew.

Some will say, “try the spirits” by the word. “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.” 1 John 4:2, 3. One of the Irvingites once quoted this passage whilst under the influence of a spirit, and then said, “I confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” And yet these prophecies failed, their Messiah did not come; and the great things spoken of by them have fallen to the ground. What is the matter here? Did not the Apostle speak the truth? Certainly he did—but he spoke to a people who were under the penalty of death, the moment they embraced Christianity; and no one without a knowledge of the fact would confess it, and expose themselves to death, and this was consequently given as a criterion to the church occasion cried out, “I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God!” Here was a frank acknowledgment under other circumstances that “Jesus had come

in the flesh.” On another occasion the devil said, “Paul we know, and Jesus we know”—of course, “come in the flesh.” No man nor sect of men without the regular constituted authorities, the Priesthood and discerning of spirits, can tell true from false spirits. This power they possessed in the Apostles’ day, but it has departed from the world for ages.

False Spirits in the Church

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has also had its false spirits; and as it is made up of all those different sects professing every variety of opinion, and having been under the influence of so many kinds of spirits, it is not to be wondered at if there should be found among us false spirits. Soon after the Gospel was established in Kirtland, and during the absence of the authorities of the Church, many false spirits were introduced, many strange visions were seen, and wild, enthusiastic notions were entertained; men ran out of doors under the influence of this spirit, and some of them got upon the stumps of trees and shouted, and all kinds of extravagances were entered into by them; one man pursued a ball that he said he saw flying in the air, until he came to a precipice, when he jumped into the top of a tree, which saved his life; and many ridiculous things were entered into, calculated to bring disgrace upon the Church of God, to cause the Spirit of God to be withdrawn, and to uproot and destroy those glorious principles which had been developed for the salvation of the human family. But when the authorities returned, the spirit was made manifest, those members that were exercised with it were tried for their fellowship, and those that would not repent and forsake it were cut off.

At a subsequent period a Shaker spirit was on the point of being introduced, and at another time the Methodist and Presbyterian falling down power, but the spirit was rebuked and put down, and those who would not submit to rule and good order were disfellowshipped. We have also had brethren and sisters who have had the gift of tongues falsely; they would speak in a muttering, unnatural voice, and their bodies be distorted like the Irvingites before alluded to; whereas, there is nothing unnatural in the Spirit of God. A circumstance of this kind took place in Upper Canada, but was rebuked by the presiding Elder; another, a woman near the same place, professed to have the discerning spirits, and began to accuse another sister of things that she was not guilty of, which she said she knew was so by the spirit, but was afterwards proven to be false; she placed herself in the capacity of the “accuser of the brethren,” and no person through the discerning of spirits can bring a charge against another, they must be proven guilty by positive evidence, or they stand clear.

There have also been ministering angels in the Church which were of Satan appearing as an angel of light. A sister in the state of New York had a vision, who said it was told her that if she would go to a certain place in the woods, and angel would appear to her. She went at the appointed time, and saw a glorious personage descending, arrayed in white, with sandy colored hair; he commenced and told her to fear God, and said that her husband was called to do great things, but that he must not go more than one hundred miles from home, or he would not return; whereas God had called him to go to the ends of the earth, and he has since been more than one thousand miles from home, and is yet alive. Many true things were spoken by this personage, and many things that were false. How, it may be asked, was this known to be a bad angel? By the color of his hair; that is one of the signs that he can be known by, and by his contradicting a former revelation.

We have also had brethren and sisters who have written revelations, and who have started forward to lead this Church. Such was a young boy in Kirtland, Isaac Russell, of Missouri, and Gladden Bishop, and Oliver Olney of Nauvoo. The boy is now living with his parents who have submitted to the laws of the Church. Mr. Russell stayed in Far West, from whence he was to go to the Rocky Mountains, led by three Nephites; but the Nephites never came, and his friends forsook him, all but some of the blood relations, who have since been nearly destroyed by the mob. Mr. Bishop was

tried by the High Council, his papers examined, condemned and burned, and he cut off the Church. He acknowledged the justice of the decision, and said “that he now saw his error, for if he had been governed by the revelations given before, he might have known that no man was to write revelations for the Church, but Joseph Smith,” and begged to be prayed for, and forgiven by the brethren. Mr. Olney has also been tried by the High Council and disfellowshipped, because he would not have his writings tested by the word of God; evidently proving that he loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil.

Joseph Smith

HC 4:571-581. (See also *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 202-215.)

Gift of Discernment and Wisdom

Gift of Discernment

First, I mention the gift of discernment, embodying the power to discriminate, which has been spoken of in our hearing before, particularly as between right and wrong. I believe that this gift when highly developed arises largely out of an acute sensitivity to impressions—spiritual impressions, if you will—to read under the surface as it were, to detect hidden evil, and more importantly to find the good that may be concealed. The highest type of discernment is that which perceives in others and uncovers for them their better natures, the good inherent within them. It's the gift every missionary needs when he takes the gospel to the people of the world. He must make an appraisal of every personality whom he meets. He must be able to discern the hidden spark that may be lighted for truth. The gift of discernment will save him from mistakes and embarrassment, and it will never fail to inspire confidence in the one who is rightly appraised.

The gift of discernment is essential to the leadership of the Church. I never ordain a bishop or set apart a president of a stake without invoking upon him this divine blessing, that he may read the lives and hearts of his people and call forth the best within them. The gift and power of discernment in this world of contention between the forces of good and the power of evil is essential equipment for every son and daughter of God. There could be no such mass dissensions as endanger the security of the world, if its populations possessed this great gift in larger degree. People are generally so gullible one is sometimes led to wonder whether the great Lincoln was right, after all, in the conclusion of his memorable statement, "You can't fool all the people all the time." One does feel at times, however, a sense of pity and sympathy for some of the peoples of the world whose education, information, and exposure to higher ideals and exalted concepts have been so arbitrarily and ruthlessly restricted.

There is a class of people now grown sizable in the world who should possess this great gift in large degree. They know how the gift is attained. They have been educated in its spiritual foundations. They have been blessed with the counsels which foster it. They know how to order their lives to procure it. You know who they are, my brethren and sisters. Every member in the restored Church of Christ could have this gift if he willed to do so. He could not be deceived with the sophistries of the world. He could not be led astray by pseudo-prophets and subversive cults. Even the inexperienced would recognize false teachings, in a measure at least. With this gift they would be able to detect something of the disloyal, rebellious, and sinister influences which not infrequently prompt those who seemingly take pride in the destruction of youthful faith and loyalties. Discerning parents will do well to guard their children against such influences and such personalities and teachings before irreparable damage is done. The true gift of discernment is often premonitory. A sense of danger should be heeded to be of value. We give thanks for a set of providential circumstances which avert an accident. We ought to be grateful every day of our lives for this sense which keeps alive a conscience which constantly alerts us to the dangers inherent in wrongdoers and sin.

Gift of Wisdom

The next gift of the gospel which I present is that of wisdom. Wisdom cannot be disassociated from discernment, but it involves some other factors, and its applications are rather more specific. Wisdom is sometimes defined as sound judgment and a high degree of knowledge. I define wisdom as being the beneficent application of knowledge in decision. I think of wisdom not in the abstract but as functional. Life is largely made up of choices and determinations, and I can think of no wisdom that does not contemplate the good of man and society. Wisdom is true understanding, and we are told in Proverbs that she is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her, Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace... Happy is the man that findeth wisdom. (Proverbs 3:15-17, 13.)

I do not believe that true wisdom can be acquired or exercised in living without a sound fundamental knowledge of the truth about life and living. The cry of the world is for wisdom and wise men. This is so particularly in the field of human relations. Why are they not found? It is because men are so blinded to the truth. Nearly one-half of the world are steeled against it, and the other half not too well-fortified in past and present performance to promote it. We have had for centuries a formula for peace. Wisdom for composition of the world's troubles is available, but the minds and hearts of men are not prepared to receive it. It is the mission of the Church of Christ to teach them how. We need wisdom in so doing, and we need to maintain our divinely appointed society in the wisdom which comes from God.

Elder Stephen L. Richards
CR, April 1950, pp. 162-164

The Importance of Being Quick to Observe

Let me now address the question of why the spiritual gift of being quick to observe is so vital for us in the world in which we do now and will yet live. Simply stated, being quick to observe is an antecedent to and is linked with the spiritual gift of discernment. And for you and for me, discernment is a light of protection and direction in a world that grows increasingly dark.

Much like faith precedes the miracle, much like baptism by water comes before the baptism by fire, much like gospel milk should be digested before gospel meat, much like clean hands can lead to a pure heart, and much like the ordinances of the Aaronic Priesthood are necessary before a person can receive the higher ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood, so being quick to observe is a prerequisite to and a preparation for the gift of discernment. We can hope to obtain that supernal gift of discernment and its light of protection and direction only if we are quick to observe—if we both look and obey.

Elder David A. Bednar
"Quick To Observe". Ensign December 2006. Pg. 34

This gullible generation

Satan has had great success with this gullible generation. As a consequence, literally hosts of people have been victimized by him and his angels. There is, however, an ample shield against the power of Lucifer and his hosts. This protection lies in the spirit of discernment through the gift of the Holy Ghost. This gift comes undeviatingly by personal revelation to those who strive to obey the commandments of the Lord and to follow the counsel of the living prophets.

This personal revelation will surely come to all whose eyes are single to the glory of God, for it is promised that their bodies will be “filled with light, and there shall be no darkness” in them (D&C 88:67). Satan’s efforts can be thwarted by all who come unto Christ by obedience to the covenants and ordinances of the gospel. The humble followers of the divine Master need not be deceived by the devil if they will be honest and true to their fellow men and women, go to the house of the Lord, receive the sacrament worthily, observe the Sabbath day, pay their tithes and offerings, offer contrite prayers, engage in the Lord’s work, and follow those who preside over them.

Elder James E. Faust
CR, Oct 1987, Pgs. 43-44

The Power of God and the Power of Satan

I am aware that even some of the Latter-day Saints are slow to believe in relation to the power of Lucifer, the son of the morning, who was thrust from the heavens to the earth; and they have been slow to believe in relation to the spirits that are associated with him; but from the first revelations of the Almighty to brother Joseph Smith, not only revelations in relation to the deep things of the kingdom of God, and the high things of heaven, and the depths of hell, but revelations showing him the power of Lucifer, the opposite to good, that he might be aware of the strength of his opponent, and the opponent of the Almighty—I say, from perusing these revelations, I have always been specially impressed with the doctrine relating to the power of Satan, as well as with the doctrines relating to the power of God.

I have always felt that no Saint fully comprehends the power of Satan as well as God's Prophet; and again I have thought that no Saint could fully understand the power of God unless he learn the opposite.

Elder Jedediah M. Grant
JD 2:10

Deception and False Spirits

Deception by False Spirits

3. From the time of the fall of man until now Satan and his followers who were cast out of heaven, have been deceiving men. Today as in the beginning Lucifer is saying, "I am also a son of God * * * believe it or not," and men today believe not for the same reason that they refused to believe in the beginning. "Some commandments are of men," so the Savior informed Joseph Smith in the Great Vision. (Sec. 46:7.) Some commandments are of devils, and these were also made manifest largely through the activities of men. "There are many spirits which are false spirits, which have gone forth in the earth, deceiving the world." These false spirits make themselves manifest in various ways and in all communities. Some of the most startling and prevalent forms of false manifestations are in the false gifts of tongues, and in religious meetings particularly among some sects, where the worshippers fall in fits, shout, sing and pray in disorderly fashion, sometimes frothing at the mouth and their bodies partaking of unnatural contortions. This influence of the devil entered into the Church in an early day and had to be rebuked by the Prophet for such unseemly conduct was prevalent in that day among many religious groups and some of the Saints were deceived in thinking this disorderly conduct was a manifestation of the Spirit of the Lord. It was to correct this evil and to warn the Saints against all false

spirits, whether of men or of devils, that this revelation (Sec. 50) was given. Members of the Church had already come in contact with the "Shakers," or "Shaking Quakers," who believed in and were subject to these evil gifts.

Speaking of these manifestations as they crept into the Church, Parley P. Pratt has written:

"As I went forth among the different branches, some very strange spiritual operations were manifested, which were disgusting, rather than edifying. Some persons would seem to swoon away, and make unseemly gestures, and be drawn or disfigured in their countenances. Others would fall into ecstasies and be drawn into contortions, cramps, fits, etc. Others would seem to have visions and revelations which were not edifying, and which were not congenial to the doctrine and spirit of the gospel. In short, a false and lying spirit seemed to be creeping into the Church.

"All these things were new and strange to me, and had originated in the Church during the absence, and previous to the arrival of President Joseph Smith from New York.

"Feeling our weakness and inexperience, and lest we should err in judgment concerning the spiritual phenomena, myself, John Murdock, and several other Elders, went to Joseph Smith, and asked him to inquire of the Lord concerning these spirits or manifestations.

"After we had joined in prayer in his translating room, he dictated in our presence the following revelation: each sentence was uttered slowly and very distinctly, and with a pause between each, sufficiently long for it to be recorded by an ordinary writer in long hand." (Autobiography of P. P. Pratt, p. 65.)

In this way and under these circumstances Section Fifty was received for the Church.

If the members of the Church will carefully consider the word of the Lord and follow the precepts here given they will not be deceived by the evil spirits of man or devils. The promise is made in a positive manner that all "who buildeth upon this rock shall never fall." Yet, sad to say, there are members of the Church who are ready to follow any theory, philosophy, or strange doctrine especially if with it there is something mysterious.

Even in that day there were hypocrites and deceivers drawn into the Church and with them they brought their abominations which had to be speedily eliminated by the Lord making known their evil practices.

Joseph Fielding Smith

Church History And Modern Revelation Vol 1, pp 183-184

Satan Sends Forth False Apostles

Satan imitates the truth. God has a Church and so does the devil. There are false Christs, false prophets, false apostles, false spirits, false ministers. "In relation to the kingdom of God," the Prophet Joseph Smith said, speaking of the Church restored in this dispensation, "the devil always sets up his kingdom at the very same time in opposition to God." Also: "False prophets always arise to oppose the true prophets and they will prophesy so very near the truth that they will deceive almost the very chosen ones." (Teachings, p. 365.)

13. False apostles] In the general sense, a true apostle is an especial witness of the Lord's name, one who knows by revelation that Jesus is the Lord. A false apostle is one who pretends to be a teacher and witness of true doctrine without having the requisite personal revelation. In the specific sense, a true apostle is one who has been ordained to that office in the Melchizedek Priesthood and who normally serves as a member of the Council of the Twelve, and who therefore has power and authority to govern the Church. A false apostle is one who professes to have power to govern the affairs of the Church on earth, but does not in fact have the requisite endowment of divine authority.

14. There are true visions and false ones. Angels appear to men and so do devils. Manifestly

when a devil appears, he pretends to be an angel and to be delivering a true message from Deity. As Jacob describes it, he "transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light." (2 Ne. 9:9.) Korihor was one person to whom such an appearance was made. After being struck dumb by the power of God, he wrote this confession: "Behold, the devil hath deceived me; for he appeared unto me in the form of an angel, and said unto me: Go and reclaim this people, for they have all gone astray after an unknown God. And he said unto me: There is no God; yea, and he taught me that which I should say. And I have taught his words; and I taught them because they were pleasing unto the carnal mind; and I taught them, even until I had much success, insomuch that I verily believed that they were true; and for this cause I withstood the truth, even until I have brought this great curse upon me." (Alma 30:53; Teachings, pp. 204-205, 214.)

15. His ministers] Satan's ministers. Who are they and how may they be known? Joseph Smith has given us this answer: "If any person should ask me if I were a prophet, I should not deny it, as that would give me the lie; for, according to John, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; therefore, if I profess to be a witness or teacher, and have not the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus, I must be a false witness; but if I be a true teacher and witness, I must possess the spirit of prophecy, and that constitutes a prophet; and any man who says he is a teacher or preacher of righteousness, and denies the spirit of prophecy, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; and by this key false teachers and impostors may be detected." (Teachings, p. 269.)

Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, vol. 2 (1971)

The very elect can be deceived

May I encourage all of you to listen to and accept the teachings and counsel of your brethren given in this general conference of the Church. How important it is for the Saints of the kingdom to be guided aright, knowing that false spirits are abroad in the land to deceive, yes, even the very elect of God if they are not careful in keeping the commandments and walking in faithful obedience to God's laws.

Elder Delbert L. Stapley
CR, Oct 1959, p 73

So many fools in the world for the devil to operate upon

...My only trouble at the present time is concerning ourselves, that the Saints will be divided, broken up, and scattered, before we get our salvation secure; for there are so many fools in the world for the devil to operate upon, it gives him the advantage oftentimes.

Joseph Smith
HC 6:184

Devil Performs Miracles

How does he know he is the servant of God, or that he performs that miracle by the power of God? Have not devils and fallen angels power? Did they not have mighty power in ancient days? Yes. Could they not smite the earth with plagues, and turn water into blood anciently, as Moses the servant of God did? Yes. Could not the wicked magicians of Egypt perform great signs by casting down their staves, and causing them to appear like serpents, performing great, and marvelous things similar to those the Prophet Moses performed?

Elder Orson Pratt

The Holy Ghost does not contradict its own revealings

To the Officers and Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

From the days of Hiram Page (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 28), at different periods there have been manifestations from delusive spirits to members of the Church. Sometimes these have come to men and women who because of transgression became easy prey to the Arch-Deceiver. At other times people who pride themselves on their strict observance of the rules and ordinances and ceremonies of the Church are led astray by false spirits, who exercise an influence so imitative of that which proceeds from a Divine source that even these persons, who think they are "the very elect," find it difficult to discern the essential difference. Satan himself has transformed himself to be apparently "an angel of light."

When visions, dreams, tongues, prophecy, impressions or any extraordinary gift or inspiration conveys something out of harmony with the accepted revelations of the Church or contrary to the decisions of its constituted authorities, Latter-day Saints may know that it is not of God, no matter how plausible it may appear. Also they should understand that directions for the guidance of the Church will come, by revelation, through the head. All faithful members are entitled to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for themselves, their families, and for those over whom they are appointed and ordained to preside. But anything at discord with that which comes from God through the head of the Church is not to be received as authoritative or reliable. In secular as well as spiritual affairs, Saints may receive Divine guidance and revelation affecting themselves, but this does not convey authority to direct others, and is not to be accepted when contrary to Church covenants, doctrine or discipline, or to known facts, demonstrated truths, or good common sense. No person has the right to induce his fellow members of the Church to engage in speculations or take stock in ventures of any kind on the specious claim of Divine revelation or vision or dream, especially when it is in opposition to the voice of recognized authority, local or general. The Lord's Church "is a house of order." It is not governed by individual gifts or manifestations, but by the order and power of the Holy Priesthood as sustained by the voice and vote of the Church in its appointed conferences.

The history of the Church records many pretended revelations claimed by impostors or zealots who believed in the manifestations they sought to lead other persons to accept, and in every instance, disappointment, sorrow and disaster have resulted therefrom. Financial loss and sometimes utter ruin have followed. We feel it our duty to warn the Latter-day Saints against fake mining schemes which have no warrant for success beyond the professed spiritual manifestations of their projectors and the influence gained over the excited minds of their victims. We caution the Saints against investing money or property in shares of stock which bring no profit to anyone but those who issue and trade in them. Fanciful schemes to make money for the alleged purpose of "redeeming Zion" or providing means for "the salvation of the dead" or other seemingly worthy objects, should not deceive anyone acquainted with the order of the Church, and will result only in waste of time and labor, which might be devoted now to doing something tangible and worthy and of record on earth and in heaven.

Be not led by any spirit or influence that discredits established authority, contradicts true scientific principles and discoveries, or leads away from the direct revelations of God for the government of the Church. The Holy Ghost does not contradict its own revealings. Truth is always harmonious with itself. Piety is often the cloak of error. The counsels of the Lord through the channel he has appointed will be followed with safety. Therefore, O! ye Latter-day Saints, profit by these words of warning.

JOSEPH F. SMITH, ANTHON H. LUND, CHARLES W. PENROSE, First Presidency.

Clark, James R. 1975. *Messages Of The First Presidency Of The Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-Day Saints*. Salt Lake City.

False spirits take advantage of LDS

Said I, "Don't you know that the devil would be very foolish, if he wished to lead astray men who had been in this Church, who had been taught for years to believe the principles you believe in, if he should undertake to lead them astray by telling them there was no truth in all these things? The devil can adapt himself to the belief of any person. If you believed in plurality he would make you think it was all right. If he could get you to swallow down one or two great lies that would effect your destruction, and which you would preach and destroy many others, he would not mind how many truths you might believe. He would be willing that you should believe a great many things absolutely true if he could only deceive you and lead you astray and get you to reject some of the fundamental principles of your salvation, and the salvation of the people." "But O," said they, "how happy we feel! We do not feel any animosity to anyone; no anger in our bosoms. We love the President and his council; we love the Twelve and the whole Church."

"Now," said I, "supposing, for argument's sake, that you really believe these manifestations were from God, but that the personages calling themselves Peter, James, John, Joseph, Jesus, Heber C. Kimball were not those personages at all, so long as your faith was fixed that they were what they represented themselves to be, what would be your feelings about it? You would die for it, just the same as the Pagans will do for their idol worship; just the same as thousands have done among the false sects of Christendom in ages past. They were sincere, they had joy in their works, but by and by, as the Book of Mormon says, 'the end comes and they are hewn down and cast into the fire.'"

So those men have joy in their works; they are as happy as happy can be, apparently, because they believe in these simple, foolish, vain, false spirits that have taken advantage of them to lead them astray.

Elder Orson Pratt
JD 13:73

On the Influence of False Spirits

Great, unspeakably great, are the privileges and blessings which the covenant people of the Lord God are permitted to enjoy; and as we grow in grace and increase in the spirit of the Lord, are we enabled to appreciate and value our blessings the more; but nevertheless, while we are thus highly favored, let us bear in mind those things by which we are surrounded, which are adverse and contrary to us;--for numerous indeed are the agencies which encompass us, and that are ever ready to make an inroad upon us, to wound our peace, to mar our joy, and if possible separate us from the relationship in which we stand to our Heavenly Father, and cause us to grieve his Holy Spirit.

It is not the open enemy, the public blasphemer, that we have to fear, for we know that by the spirit of the Lord God we can be clothed with power, to confound such, and to turn their opposition into a confirmation of the truth.

It is not the changed aspect which the world assumes towards us, or the frowns of those who once were smiling friends; no, this we expect, and are prepared even to find our foes to be those of our own household. But in these things we have a glorious consolation, for inasmuch as we are in sincerity saints of God, we have entered into a more endearing relationship than the tenderest ties of humanity boast of; we have become the adopted children of the Most High,--heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, and have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry "Abba Father."

Neither is it against the effects of poverty, of suffering and privation for the truth's sake, that we

would particularly call the attention of the Saints to at this time, but it is against the advances of the arch foe of all, against the powers of darkness, that we may be apprised of his most subtle way of approaching, when he comes in the garb and appearance of an angel of light.

Being persuaded that through ignorance of the order of the kingdom of God many have fallen into error, that being unacquainted with the proper channels through which the great head of the Church communicates his laws for the regulation thereof, many have been induced to give heed to the seducing influences of false spirits, the result of which has been much disorganization, calling for the exercise of the severest discipline.

It is true it is written "They shall speak with new tongues, &c." And the Saints do well to rejoice in the manifestation of the gifts of the spirit in these days, and our gratitude ought to exhibit itself to our Heavenly Father for the glorious tokens which follow them that believe, by which we know that the doctrine which we have embraced is of God.

But while we are conscious of the signs following them that believe, there is another that knows it well, and that is our grand enemy, the Devil. Let him but cause the Saints to get disorganized or to rebel against the authority of the holy priesthood,--and if they be ignorant of the laws of God, he will speedily take care to ratify, and apparently justify their proceedings by gifts of power from himself, of which we shall do well to beware, and to throw out a few hints on this subject, by which the Saints may be able to detect his influences, is the object of the present address.

In the first place, then, we would observe that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1st Cor. 14th chap. 32v.); not so with the spirit of the evil one, for very soon will the individual possessed be subject to the influence of Satan, and he will not be able to control himself under that power. Thus have we known of individuals actuated by a false spirit, speaking under its influence with great energy, and with a continuance and vehemence that seemed almost enough to tear the human system to pieces, while the interpretation thereof equally violent, has been of a character not fit to be uttered.

But again, a true spirit will at once acknowledge the powers that be as those that are ordained of God; while a false spirit will give revelation to individuals not connected with the priesthood, in order to teach the priesthood, and lead them into consequent disorder. What should we think if the Queen of these realms were to communicate her will through an individual who was merely a citizen in order to direct her ministers in their duty? Yet just as absurd is it to suppose that the Lord God would give revelation to those who are only citizens of his kingdom to direct the priesthood, who are the governing power thereof.

Yet much evil has arisen in some branches, from a want of knowledge of these principles; individuals have engaged in missions on which they have been directed by a false spirit, and have been so far deluded as to receive what they considered the ministration of an angel, which has proved to be but Satan transformed as an angel of light. God will have but one mode of conducting his government, and that will be one of order,--and as sure as the Lord liveth, and that he hath renewed his covenant and established his laws again by his spirit, so surely will he recognize only those authorities which have been established by his will, and to whom he has communicated the priesthood and the apostleship again.

Beware then, brethren, of the wily inroads of the adversary; we know the near approach in appearance of the counterfeit to the original; but try the spirits, for the one will be under the control of the prophet, and subject to the authorities of the church, while the other will control those possessed of it, and exhibit itself in rebellion against the legal authorities of the kingdom of God.

While we make these remarks we would not discourage the Saints in the exercise of those blessings with which they are privileged; no--but on the contrary, would bid them rejoice in them, cultivate them, and pray earnestly that they may be *perfected*.

And let us not, while guarding against the influences of the evil one withhold from exercising the gifts of the spirit of God, for this would be a triumph for Satan, which he eagerly desires; no--but continuing humble, and in much prayer to the Lord God, let us be subject to the laws and authorities recognized of Him, and then may we freely exercise every gift with which the spirit has blessed us.

THOMAS WARD.

Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star

Vol. 2, No. 11, March 1842, pp 172-174

False Spirits

When any of this people, who believe the Gospel, forsake the duty which they owe to God and His cause, they are at once surrounded by an influence which causes them to imbibe a dislike to Saints and to the conduct of Saints; they receive a false spirit, and then the Saints cannot do right in their eyes, the ministers of God cannot preach right nor act right, and soon they wish to leave the society of the Saints, and that too, as they suppose, with a sanctified heart and life. They wish to withdraw from this, as they believe, wicked people, fancying all to be wicked but themselves, and wish to separate themselves until the people are as holy as they flatter themselves that they are, when they calculate to return again. Others will lose the spirit of their calling, and realize that they have lost it; they are wicked, and know it, and will have more confidence in others than in themselves. But the self-righteous will go away and wait until we as a people are sanctified and able to endure their presence, and think that then they will, perhaps, gather among us again.

People are liable in many ways to be led astray by the power of the adversary, for they do not fully understand that it is a hard matter for them to always distinguish the things of God from the things of the devil. There is but one way by which they can know the difference, and that is by the light of the spirit of revelation, even the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. Without this we are all liable to be led astray and forsake our brethren, forsake our covenants and the Church and kingdom of God on earth. Should the whole people neglect their duty and come short in performing the things required at their hands, lose the light of the Spirit of the Lord, the light of the spirit of revelation, they would not know the voice of the Good Shepherd from the voice of a stranger, they would not know the difference between a false teacher and a true one, for there are many spirits gone out into the world, and the false spirits are giving revelations as well as the Spirit of the Lord. This we are acquainted with; we know that there are many delusive spirits, and unless the Latter-day Saints live to their privileges, and enjoy the spirit of the holy Gospel, they cannot discern between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. Consequently, it becomes us, as Saints, to cleave to the Lord with all our hearts, and seek unto Him until we do enjoy the light of His Spirit, that we may discern between the righteous and the wicked, and understand the difference between false spirits and true. Then, when we see a presentation, we shall know whence it is, and understand whether it be of the Lord, or whether it is not of Him; but if the people are not endowed with the Holy Ghost they cannot tell, therefore it becomes us to have the Spirit of the Lord, not only in preaching and praying, but to enable us to reflect and judge, for the Saints are to judge in these matters.

Brigham Young

JD 3:43-44

One deviation can lead you out of God's kingdom

On one occasion Elder Orson Pratt was striving to teach this to some members of the Church who had been led astray. They couldn't understand how they could be deceived if they believed in essentially the same things the Church taught. They claimed their beliefs were similar to those

espoused by the Church, with just a few exceptions. (The exceptions were the reason they had joined an organization separate from the Church.)

Elder Pratt explained:

“Don't you know that the devil would be very foolish, if he wished to lead astray men who had been in this Church, who had been taught for years to believe the principles you believe in, if he should undertake to lead them astray by telling them there was no truth in all these things? The devil can adapt himself to the belief of any person. If you believed in plurality [of wives] he would make you think it was all right. If he could get you to swallow down one or two great lies that would effect your destruction, and which you would preach and destroy many others, he would not mind how many truths you might believe. He would be willing that you should believe a great many things absolutely true if he could only deceive you and lead you astray and get you to reject some of the fundamental principles of your salvation, and the salvation of the people.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 13:73.)

What these misled people did not understand is that believing or accepting even *one* exception to the truths, saving principles, and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ—just one deviation—can lead one out of God's kingdom.

Hoyt W. Brewster

Prophets, Priesthood Keys, & Succession, pp 119-120

No excuse for being deceived

But, it may be inquired, how are the humble, honest souls to discern between truth and falsehood? Must they be condemned with liars, because they are deceived with lies? We answer, that all will be condemned who suffer themselves to be deceived: for there is a way for every person to come to the light of truth; and it is not in the power of the devil to invent lies so plausible as to prevent the really honest person from discovering the truth that pertains to his salvation. The scriptures have expressly declared, that "cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm." Now any person who will put his confidence and trust in popular lies, invented by the devil to prevent the people from discovering the truth, must rest under that curse, and in the day of judgment be condemned with liars. What excuse can any one have for rejecting the truth, because the devil has made lies, and nearly all mankind believe them? The scriptures inform us that we are to "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." There must be some infallible rule by which to prove things and discern the good from the evil, or else we never should have been exhorted to do so. This infallible test by which to discover the truth, is the light which God has already given us, and which He will give us if we will but properly seek after it.

Elder Orson Pratt

Repentance, The Seer, Vol. 2 No. 3, March 1854, Pg. 234

Satan is the commander in chief of deception

Make no mistake about it, my young brethren, Satan is the commander in chief of deception. He is not satisfied with just taking prisoners; he wants the souls of men. One of his insidious strategies is to progressively soften our senses regarding what is right and wrong. Satan would have us convinced that it is fashionable to lie and cheat. He encourages us to view pornography by suggesting that it prepares us for the real world. He would have us believe that immorality is an attractive way of life and that obedience to the commandments of our Father in Heaven is old-fashioned. Satan constantly bombards us with deceptive propaganda desirably packaged and carefully disguised. Satan creates false heroes who, if emulated, will lead us to the depths of sin.

Bishop H. David Burton
CR, Apr 1993, Pg. 60

False Prophets

The ravening wolves are amongst us, from our own membership, and they, more than any others, are clothed in sheep's clothing, because they wear the habiliments of the priesthood; they are they to whom Brother Widtsoe referred, as distorting the truth. We should be careful of them, and I endorse every word that Brother Widtsoe said, as to the obligations of those who instruct the youth.

Elder J. Reuben Clark, Jr.
Improvement Era, May 1949, Pg. 268

Healing and Rebuking Illnesses

Rebuking Disease

We are to be like the good physician; and if we see the sick – those afflicted with pain and distress in the head, eyes, teeth, or in any of the limbs or other portion of the body, it is our duty to have the medicine – the remedy to administer to that pain, to heal, to cure, to rebuke the disease and save the sick like a good physician, and not kill them by dosing down the medicine as do some of our doctors.

Brigham Young
JD 9:125

Knowledge and Confidence in Self

Now to return to those teachings by the Elders, in such cases I would say to my dear brethren, to those who are of the household of faith, try to get a little confidence in yourselves, and then try to live so as to have confidence in your God. Ask even an infidel whether he believes that the wonder workings of nature, the strange phenomena which he sees and cannot account for, are produced, and he will answer, “Yes, I know they are.” Do you know that men, women, and children are healed? Yes, you know they are. You behold those remarkable phenomena, though you cannot fully account for them. You believe in a great many things which you do not understand, but do you believe in yourselves? No, that is the grand difficulty with everyone of us.

I will take my own experience. When men and women bring their sick to me, if I had the power I would heal all that should be healed. And if I had perfect confidence in myself, and the Lord had that confidence in me which I should then have in Him, no power beneath the heavens could prevent the power of God from coming on them and healing them through me. But I have not yet attained to perfect confidence in myself in all circumstances, neither has God in me, for were such the case, He would answer every request I made of Him, every wish of mine would be answered to the letter. And this is the difficulty with the people, they have not attained to perfect confidence in themselves, neither have we as yet sufficient grounds for that degree of confidence.

We lay hands on the sick and wish them to be healed, and pray the Lord to heal them, but we cannot always say that He will. We do not always know that He will actually hear our prayers and answer them. Sometimes the Elders will get that faith, and the sisters will often lay hands on their children and have faith and confidence in themselves that God will answer their prayers, and say to fevers and pains, “Be ye rebuked and stand far off from this the afflicted,” and it is done. But you have to attain to this power by your faithfulness and confidence in yourselves, that God will answer your prayers. We know that the Lord often heals the sick; and we believe all the time that He is able to do so, but will He because we ask Him to? That is the question, and we are often doubtful about it.

Do you think that I would have let my brother die, if I had the power the Lord has? Would I have let Jedediah gone behind the veil, had I had that power? No; though in that I might have gone contrary to the wishes of the Almighty. For want of the knowledge which the Lord has, if I had power I might bring injury upon myself and this people.

We must have knowledge pertaining to ourselves, and that knowledge will give us the key to know how to ask and obtain, and without that knowledge we cannot have eternal life, which is “to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.” If we have that knowledge we will know how to ask so as to obtain, and not ask amiss, we will ask and have our requests granted. How can we have that knowledge? By applying our hearts to wisdom and our lives to rectitude; by living as

perfectly before God as we know how; by doing those things that we know to be right, those about which we have no doubt or dubiety, and never doing that which we are suspicious is wrong, and then be satisfied and not crave after that which is not for us, but let it remain in the hands of God. If we can obtain faith and confidence in ourselves, there is no lack in the power of God; neither is there any lack in His diligence, for He is always on the alert.

In our ignorance and darkness we may be led into error, if we follow our feelings, as I just now observed might have been the case in regard to retaining brother Jedediah, as also brother Willard, brother Whitney, and many others. Had we had the power, would we have parted with Joseph? No, notwithstanding his work was finished on the earth. Many ideas have been imbibed and advanced concerning the death of Joseph. It was precisely as the Lord had decreed, designed, willed and brought about. No power could have altered it in the least. He had finished his work on the earth. Still if you and I had had the power without the knowledge, we would have kept Joseph on this earth, and then he would have failed to perform his mission in the spirit world.

Brigham Young
JD 4:283-284

Rebuke Illness When Spirit Prompts

Let us remember and ponder upon these counsels, and cleave to the Priesthood and have confidence in it; and let the Elders administer to the sick in faith, and let them rebuke disease when the Spirit prompts them, and it will be rebuked, and the sick will be healed by the power of God. Every Elder in Israel should so live before the Lord as to have confidence in Him to do this. And let the Presidents of Stakes and the Bishops and the leading influential men encourage faith among the people, depending upon God and the ordinances of His house rather than trusting in man. And while they seek for wisdom to nurse the sick in a manner calculated to do them good, let them learn too, that herb medicine, unless administered in wisdom and intelligence, is liable to injure the patient instead of benefiting him.

Elder Erastus Snow
JD 25:38-39

Rebuke Sickness

And instead of having to call in physicians to minister to the members of our families when sickness makes its appearance, the power of God will be upon us in such rich abundance as to enable us to rebuke it from our dwellings, and to invoke the blessings of health to attend us and ours, which was the case years ago in the primeval days of the Church. If we have lost any of these blessings it is not through any fault in the Lord, or that there is less power and efficacy in the priesthood we bear, but rather in our own lack of faith in the promises made to the faithful. Amen.

Elder Moses Thatcher
JD 20:195

Rebuke Sickness

There is a variety of blessings; a different blessing being probably given to one, two, three or four of this congregation. Thus, one will have faith to lay hands upon the sick and rebuke disease, and drive it from the person afflicted.

Brigham Young
JD 16:164

Rebuke Sickness

Then, if I received a spirit by which, in the name of Jesus Christ, I was enabled to rebuke sickness, and that sickness was rebuked, and the persons were raised up, should I not have reason to believe that I had received that true Spirit of the Gospel, called the Holy Ghost? I certainly should. If I received a revelation telling me what would be the best course for me to pursue under certain circumstances, should I not know that it was a revelation from God? I think I should know, just as well as the ancient Prophets knew when they received a revelation. If I received knowledge by revelation concerning this, that or the other thing or principle, would not that be a testimony to me that I had received the Holy Ghost? Again, if I was sick and afflicted and in great pain, and I sent for the Elders of the Church to come and pray for me and to rebuke the disease which was afflicting me, and, in the name of Jesus, command it to depart, and it was done, would not this be a testimony unto me that the Lord had heard the prayers of his servants, and that he had really and truly verified his promise? Certainly.

Elder Orson Pratt
JD 16:290-291

Live so as to Rebuke Sickness

Learn to take proper care of your children. If any of them are sick, the cry now, instead of “Go and fetch the Elders to lay hands on my child!” is, “Run for a doctor.” Why do you not live so as to rebuke disease? It is your privilege to do so without sending for the Elders. You should go to work to study and see what you can do for the recovery of your children. If a child is taken sick with fever give it something to stay that fever or relieve the stomach and bowels, so that mortification may not set in. Treat the child with prudence and care, with faith and patience, and be careful in not overcharging it with medicine. If you take too much medicine into the system, it is worse than too much food. But you will always find that an ounce of preventive is worth a pound of cure. Study and learn something for yourselves. It is the privilege of a mother to have faith and to administer to her child; this she can do herself, as well as sending for the Elders to have the benefit of their faith.

Brigham Young
JD 13:155

Doctors in Utah

I am happy to say I have never been under the necessity of calling a doctor to my family for forty years. I have had them in my family, but not from necessity. I like them when they are gentlemen; when they are wise and full of intelligence I am very fond of them; but I do not ask them to doctor my family in any case; and there are no circumstances under which I think them necessary except in case of a broken bone, or where skillful mechanical or surgical aid is necessary. But to call a doctor to my family to administer physic to them, I am not under the necessity of doing it. Is this so? Yes, it is; and if the experiment could be tried, independent of the Gospel and of faith, in any community, I care not where, nor for what length of time, of having any number of persons, with regularly qualified physicians to attend them; and the same number without such physicians, but who will doctor themselves according to nature and their own judgments, among that portion without doctors there would be less sickness and fewer deaths than among those who had their doctors. The experience of the Latter-day Saints in Utah confirms this. When we first came here we had no sickness, and we had no sickness until we had doctors. When they began to obey the Gospel they did not want to dig in the

field, hoe potatoes, go to the canyon for lumber or wood, to secure for themselves and families the necessaries of life; but they wanted to live by doctoring the people, and from that time on, as we got richer and built warm houses, and have lived more richly, indulging in sweet cake, plum pudding, roast beef and so on, we have had more or less disease among us. Perhaps I have said enough about doctors.

Brigham Young
JD 13:142

Real doctors

Would you want doctors? Yes, to set bones. We should want a good surgeon for that, or to cut off a limb. But do you want doctors? For not much of anything else, let me tell you, only the traditions of the people lead them to think so; and here is a growing evil in our midst. It will be so in a little time that not a woman in all Israel will dare to have a baby unless she can have a doctor by her. I will tell you what to do, you ladies, when you find you are going to have an increase, go off into some country where you cannot call for a doctor, and see if you can keep it. I guess you will have it, and I guess it will be all right, too. Now the cry is, "Send for a doctor." If you have a pain in the head, "Send for a doctor;" if your heel aches, "I want a doctor;" "my back aches, and I want a doctor." The study and practice of anatomy and surgery are very good; they are mechanical, and are frequently needed. Do you not think it is necessary to give medicine sometimes? Yes, but I would rather have a wife of mine that knows what medicine to give me when I am sick, than all the professional doctors in the world. Now let me tell you about doctoring, because I am acquainted with it, and know just exactly what constitutes a good doctor in physic. It is that man or woman who, by revelation, or we may call it intuitive inspiration, is capable of administering medicine to assist the human system when it is besieged by the enemy called Disease; but if they have not that manifestation, they had better let the sick person alone. I will tell you why: I can see the faces of this congregation, but I do not see two alike; and if I could look into your nervous systems and behold the operations of disease, from the crowns of your heads to the soles of your feet, I should behold the same difference that I see in your physiognomy—there would be no two precisely alike. Doctors make experiments, and if they find a medicine that will have the desired effect on one person, they set it down that it is good for everybody, but it is not so, for upon the second person that medicine is administered to, seemingly with the same disease, it might produce death. If you do not know this, you have not had the experience that I have. I say that unless a man or woman who administers medicine to assist the human system to overcome disease, understands, and has that intuitive knowledge, by the Spirit, that such an article is good for that individual at that very time, they had better let him alone. Let the sick do without eating, take a little of something to cleanse the stomach, bowels and blood, and wait patiently, and let Nature have time to gain the advantage over the disease. Suppose, for illustration, we draw a line through this congregation, and place those on this side where they cannot get a doctor, without it is a surgeon, for thirty or fifty years to come; and put the other side in a country full of doctors, and they think they ought to have them, and this side of the house that has no doctor will be able to buy the inheritance of those who have doctors, and overrun them, outreach them, and buy them up, and finally obliterate them, and they will be lost in the masses of those who have no doctors. I know what some say when they look at such things, but that is the fact. Ladies and gentlemen, you may take any country in the world, I do not care where you go, and if they do not employ doctors, you will find they will beat communities that employ them, all the time. Who is the real doctor? That man who knows by the Spirit of revelation what ails an individual, and by the same Spirit knows what medicine to administer. That is the real doctor, the others are quacks.

Brigham Young
JD 15: 225-226

Faith necessary to him who administers

Faith is necessary to him who administers as well as those who are to receive the benefits.

Elder Charles W. Penrose

Deseret News Weekly, October 3, 1891

Nothing Impossible for Those Who Have Faith

And through the whole history of the scheme of life and salvation, it is a matter of faith: every man received according to his faith—according as his faith was, so were his blessings and privileges; and nothing was withheld from him when his faith was sufficient to receive it. He could stop the mouths of lions, quench the violence of fire, escape the edge of the sword, wax valiant in fight, and put to flight the armies of the aliens; women could, by their faith, receive their dead children to life again; in a word, there was nothing impossible with them who had faith. All things were in subjection to the Former-day Saints, according as their faith was. By their faith they could obtain heavenly visions, the ministering of angels, have knowledge of the spirits of just men made perfect, of the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven, of God the judge of all, of Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and become familiar with the third heavens, see and hear things which were not only unutterable, but were unlawful to utter.

Joseph Smith

Lectures on Faith, Pg. 67

Faith and Works - Doctors

Now I want to dwell a little upon this point. I do not know but some use the ordinances of God too commonly, and on too slight occasions. Some, if they get a sliver in their finger, will call for the laying on of hands and for prayer to cure the wound; or if they get a little gravel or dust in their eye, they will want you to lay hands on them to eradicate it; and so of other little complaints for which we already have simple and known remedies. I do not wish to teach this, but I wish to teach you the doctrine of the Bible. “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.” This is the doctrine of the Bible, mark the words. If any of the Apostles are sick, let them send for some of the rest of the Apostles, and let their brethren Apostles administer to them, and they shall be healed; the Bible does not read thus. It does not read that only the renowned in the Church shall reap the benefits of this institution, but it says, “Is any sick among you?” etc. Suppose God has a true Church upon the earth in this age, what mode would that Church adopt in case any were sick? Says one, “If they had the same faith as the ancients, they would perform the same works.” How shall we ascertain whether the Latter-day Saints have the like precious faith with the Apostles? You know that the Apostles said they had the like precious faith. How are we to ascertain that we have it? If any are sick among you, you will send for the Elders of the Church, and let them anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick.

You see at once that it is necessary for your works to correspond, and for you to send for the Elders of the Church. Do you see this practiced among the Latter-day Saints? Some of them must first try the physician, have the head shaved, take a dose of calomel and gamboge, have a blister plaster on the back of the neck, and another all over the bowels, besides one on each hip—in short, they must have six or eight large blister plasters on them at once. After trying all this, and running up a bill with a

physician of from six to six hundred dollars, they then send for the Elders. When James is about dead, having had two quarts of blood taken from him on Saturday, and another on Monday, and when the life is nearly drawn out of the poor fellow by physicking and bleeding, why then they send for the Elders, and ask them to pray for him. When a man or woman sends for me after taking such a course I feel insulted, if I do not act so. I go to the house perfectly good natured apparently, and administer, but there is a frown of indignation within me. I feel that they have insulted the Priesthood, trampled upon the order of the house of God, and treated lightly His holy ordinances. I am not anxious to exercise faith for such persons, for I think that they are fools, and let them die the fool's death.

If the Saints of God actually have the faith of the ancients, let them practice the doctrine in their works. A man will tell me that he is a "Mormon," that he believes in the faith of the ancients, when at the same time he practices everything else but their religion. My rule is to practice our religion. If I want a drink of catnip tea, or of composition, or of lobelia, it is all right, but I will first practice my religion. You know that it is hardly allowable in Utah to drink any more than five gallons of lobelia at once, for the Assembly of Deseret once had the matter under consideration.

I wish to see the Saints practice their religion, and carry it out, and if they cannot live by their religion, then die by it. That is the doctrine. I want my religion if I am going to die. Most certainly that is the time I would not like to lay it by, for it would be unwise to do that, since that is the very time that one needs it the most, and is the time when he should be immersed in it. I want to see the Saints actually show by their works that they have the faith of the ancients.

When the Elders go forth to preach, and people are healed by the laying on of hands, some have said, "We cannot expect the sick to be healed in Zion; we cannot expect to see miracles when we are gathered to Zion." That is the very place for the sick to be healed, and the place where the people of God should exercise the most faith, and be the most diligent in keeping the ordinances of the Lord's house perfectly. You have only heard the theory taught abroad, but you have now come home to practice what you have been taught in other lands.

If any are sick among you, let them send for the Elders of the Church to pray for them, and to lay their hands upon them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick. People neglect to anoint with oil when they should and might use it. I have seen the Elders try to cast out devils, and to accomplish it they have fasted, and prayed, and laid on hands, and rebuked the devil, but he would not go out. I have then seen them bring consecrated oil, and anoint the person possessed of the devil, and the devil went out forthwith. That taught me a good lesson—that God Almighty, when He speaks, means what He says; and if a man's works are right, his faith will be right; and if his faith is wrong, his works are wrong. When a man whose faith is right goes forth to administer to the sick, he will anoint with oil, as well as lay on his hands and pray. Unless you anoint with oil, your prayers will not rise higher than the fog, and you know that it seldom rises much higher than the tops of the mountains.

If I am sick, and send for an administrator, I want him to fulfil every word of the Lord; and if there is anybody there you don't like when you come to me, invite them out of the door. When devils are in the house, and you don't like them, cast them out, but be sure to administer the ordinances right. When an Elder comes to administer to the sick, and is afraid of greasing his fingers, or of dropping a little oil on his vest or pants, and says, "O never mind the oil, there is no virtue in the olive oil; you might as well drink it as anoint with it; besides, I might grease my gloves; I will dispense with it," I want such a man to walk off. If I was sick, and he came to me in that manner, I should say, "You are a poor, miserable hypocrite." That is the way I should feel and talk. Let a man, when he has the right kind of faith, practice the works thereof; and when God says, "Anoint with oil," anoint; I don't care if it runs down your beard as it ran down Aaron's, it will not hurt you. When a man complies with every requisition of heaven, his works and his faith are right. He offers up prayer for the sick, he anoints with

oil, and lays on his hands. When his works are right they will correspond with his faith, and men and women will be healed.

Elder Jedidiah M. Grant
JD 2:275-277

Knowledge

Foreknowledge of Evil Spirits is Power

As usual, when times and seasons are given—for foreknowledge is power, with evil spirits as well as good—Satan had diligently sought to make the word of God of no effect.

Life of Heber C. Kimball

Pg. 263

Evil spirits are in the teachings of Christ

But so called Christian scientists say there is no such thing as matter; that there is only spirit. They deny the existence of evil and of Satan and maintain that all that really exists is truth and love because God is love. These doctrines are clearly not Christ's teachings. He taught the actual existence of Satan, recognizing him as a personality. Evil spirits are in the teachings of Christ represented as real persons, not imaginary beings. They have power to afflict men and can be cast out. They are not "nothings."

Elder Charles W. Penrose

Religious

Deseret News, October 3, 1891

Study Evil

I think we will witness increasing evidence of Satan's power as the kingdom of God grows stronger. I believe Satan's ever-expanding efforts are some proof of the truthfulness of this work. In the future the opposition will be both more subtle and more open. It will be masked in greater sophistication and cunning, but it will also be more blatant. We will need greater spirituality to perceive all of the forms of evil and greater strength to resist it. But the disappointments and setbacks to the work of God will be temporary, for the work will go forward (see D&C 65:2).

It is not good practice to become intrigued by Satan and his mysteries. No good can come from getting close to evil. Like playing with fire, it is too easy to get burned: "The knowledge of sin tempteth to its commission" (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, p. 373). The only safe course is to keep well distanced from him and any of his wicked activities or nefarious practices. The mischief of devil worship, sorcery, casting spells, witchcraft, voodooism, black magic, and all other forms of demonism should be avoided like the plague.

However, Brigham Young said that it is important to "study ... evil, and its consequences" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, comp. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941, pp. 256–57). Since Satan is the author of all evil in the world, it would therefore be essential to realize that he is the influence behind the opposition to the work of God. Alma stated the issue succinctly: "For I say unto you that whatsoever is good cometh from God, and whatsoever is evil cometh from the devil" (Alma 5:40).

Elder James E. Faust

The Great Imitator

Ensign October 1987

Study Satan's Organization

Obviously, in this day “when the children of men shall esteem [the words of the Lord] as naught,” (Moses 1:4 1) the overwhelming majority of the people pay no attention to these scriptures because they don’t believe them. But how about those few who do? Some may have imagined that no useful purpose can be served by discussing Satan’s organization. Others may even consider it evil to do so. But let it be recognized that the prophets who wrote the scriptures did not view the matter in this light because they have discussed it at some length. It is true that there are certain practices of the devil’s organizations which they have been commanded to keep hidden, (Alma 37:27) but all which they have written, we are under obligation to know because we are commanded to “live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God.”

It is submitted that Satan’s overwhelming success today is directly traceable to apathy and massive ignorance concerning him and his organization. The great majority of people would not join his church and participate in his plan if they were aware of what they were doing.

Elder H. Verlan Andersen
The Great and Abominable Church of the Devil, Preface

Learn About Evil

I am aware that even some of the Latter-day Saints are slow to believe in relation to the power of Lucifer, the son of the morning, who was thrust from the heavens to the earth; and they have been slow to believe in relation to the spirits that are associated with him; but from the first revelations of the Almighty to brother Joseph Smith, not only revelations in relation to the deep things of the kingdom of God, and the high things of heaven, and the depths of hell, but revelations showing him the power of Lucifer, the opposite to good, that he might be aware of the strength of his opponent, and the opponent of the Almighty—I say, from perusing these revelations, I have always been specially impressed with the doctrine relating to the power of Satan, as well as with the doctrines relating to the power of God.

I have always felt that no Saint fully comprehends the power of Satan as well as God's Prophet; and again I have thought that no Saint could fully understand the power of God unless he learn the opposite. I am not myself acquainted with any happiness that I have not learned the opposite of.

Elder Jedediah M. Grant
JD 2:11

Don't Ignore Anything Revealed Before

I rejoice in all the principles revealed to us, and the more I see, hear, and learn, the more I am satisfied of the importance of the revelations that God has given to us. As President Young remarked in one of his sermons south, “Whatever the Lord reveals to this or any other people does not ignore anything revealed before.” No part of the gospel is superfluous. It is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and all the inhabitants of this world and all others have got to be saved by it, if saved at all.

Elder Wilford Woodruff
JD 12:13-14

Worth of the power of the priesthood

Unclean spirits, also, have been subject to the priesthood through our administration in a number of instances, the most of those that were possessed of the evil spirit have been restored to their proper mind, indeed I never realized so sensibly the worth of the power of the priesthood since I have

been called to the ministry, as I did on this occasion.

John D. Lee

A. Young

Samuel B. Frost

Letter From Tennessee, May 18, 1842

Times and Seasons, Vol 3, No 16, Pg. 821

The shocking character of evil spirits - GQC

If those who allow such spirits to possess and influence and speak and act through them were to behold them, with their eyes enlightened by the Spirit of God, in all their repulsiveness, they would be shocked at the character of the visitors they had entertained. But the first approaches of such influences are so insidious and insinuating that those to whom they introduce themselves are not aware of their character and the hideous train that they will call to their assistance and encourage to follow them, when once they have obtained an entrance into the human heart.

When an Elder or a Saint (through being off his guard and not suspecting the nature of the influence that is operating upon him) suffers himself, by any of the numerous temptations and fascinations which such spirits know so well how to use, to be diverted from attending to the duties of his ministry and religion with a perfect heart and an eye single to the glory of God, he has but little idea of the wicked troop which will follow the entrance of this unsuspected visitor at the avenue which he has left unguarded unless he instantly expel it and bid it begone. . . .

George Q. Cannon

Gospel Truth, p 500

Wisdom is the right application of knowledge

But gaining knowledge is one thing, and applying it, quite another. Wisdom is the right application of knowledge, and true education—the education for which the Church stands is the application of knowledge to the development of a noble and Godlike character.

President David O. McKay

CR, Apr 1968, Pg. 93-94

While a part of the world one cannot have knowledge of evil spirits

While in the world, surrounded with fashions, vanities, abominations, and evil spirits, it cannot be expected that the members of the church of Christ, considering their opportunities to acquire knowledge, having but little time, or opportunity, with the elders who declare the word to them, can be free from the world; neither is it expected that they will have a knowledge of the evil spirits which are abroad in the earth, nor keep all the commandments, and have an understanding of all the statutes of the Lord, as perfectly, as those who have been upon the land of Zion for years. Where much is given, much will be required. How important, then, that all walk perfectly, so that, when the destroying angel goes through, he may pass over them and not slay them. Not all that say Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom.

Evening and Morning Star

Vol. 1, No. 12, May 1833, Pg. 180

Principle of salvation

The principle of knowledge is the principle of salvation. This principle can be comprehended by the faithful and diligent; and every one that does not obtain knowledge sufficient to be saved will be condemned. The principle of salvation is given us through the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Salvation is nothing more nor less than to triumph over all our enemies and put them under our feet. And when we have power to put all enemies under our feet in this world, and a knowledge to triumph over all evil spirits in the world to come, then we are saved, as in the case of Jesus, who was to reign until He had put all enemies under His feet, and the last enemy was death.

Perhaps there are principles here that few men have thought of. No person can have this salvation except through a tabernacle.

Now, in this world, mankind are naturally selfish, ambitious and striving to excel one above another; yet some are willing to build up others as well as themselves. So in the other world there are a variety of spirits. Some seek to excel. And this was the case with Lucifer when he fell. He sought for things which were unlawful. Hence he was sent down, and it is said he drew many away with him; and the greatness of his punishment is that he shall not have a tabernacle. This is his punishment. So the devil, thinking to thwart the decree of God, by going up and down in- the earth, seeking whom he may destroy any person that he can find that will yield to him, he will bind him, and take possession of the body and reign there, glorying in it mightily, not caring that he had got merely a stolen body; and by-and-by some one having authority will come along and cast him out and restore the tabernacle to its rightful owner. The devil steals a tabernacle because he has not one of his own: but if he steals one, he is always liable to be turned out of doors.

Joseph Smith (1843)
HC 5:387-388

Study Both Good and Evil

Now, brethren and sisters, receive the exhortation and counsel of brother Snow, and profit by it; and employ the rest of your lives in good thoughts, kind words, and good works. “Shall I sit down and read the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Covenants all the time?” says one. Yes, if you please, and when you have done, you may be nothing but a sectarian after all. It is your duty to study to know everything upon the face of the earth, in addition to reading those books. We should not only study good, and its effects upon our race, but also evil, and its consequences.

Brigham Young
JD 2:93-94

Must Do Homework to Get Power of Heaven

Then he gave me the lesson, which I now give to you, in about these words: “Hal, when we had done all we knew how to do, when we had our backs to the wall, then God gave us the revelation. Hal, if you want to get revelation, do your homework.”

President Harold B. Lee to Elder Eyring

Henry B. Eyring
Speeches—Waiting Upon the Lord
<http://speeches.byu.edu/?act=viewitem&id=775>

Losing Knowledge When We Leave God

As far as we degenerate from God we descend to the devil and loose knowledge and without

knowledge we cannot be saved. While our hearts are filled with evil and we are studying evil there is no room in our hearts for good or studying good....

Joseph Smith

The Words of Joseph Smith, Pg.113

Grammar, paragraph formatting, spelling and punctuation standardized

Those willing to be in the dark subject to every evil work

Surely this is true philosophy, surely men do become subservient to evil, accomplices in disloyalty and rebellion! Surely every man who is unfamiliar or indifferent or negligent as to this, who tampers with evil, who yields to suggestions, who is willing to be in the dark, who is not in possession of or has grieved and lost the spirit, must know, does know, that, left to himself, he becomes "subject to every evil work," and that countless numbers are engaged in this controversy, and war is, according to the revealings of the spirit of truth, surely evident enough.

"Give not heed to seducing spirits," has been advised since the organization of the Church. "Try the spirits," was the advice of experience. "Many spirits have gone forth to deceive;" it was revealed of old that "strong delusions" should characterize the latter-day, making victims of those who take pleasure in unrighteousness. To try the spirits hereabouts, is as much of a necessity, if not a greater one, as in any preceding dispensation.

Elder Henry W. Naisbitt

The Great Conflict

The Improvement Era, *Vol. 5, No. 12, Oct 1902, Pg. 943*

Search the Darkest Abyss

A fanciful and flowery and heated imagination beware of; because the things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity—thou must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God, than the vain imaginations of the human heart!

Joseph Smith

HC 3:295

Gain Knowledge

He was the leader of the people by the command of heaven, and he was the leader of the people by his growing intellectual greatness. The Prophet had already become a scholar. He loved learning. He loved knowledge for its righteous power. Through the tribulations which had surrounded him from the day when first he made known to a skeptical world his communion with the heavens, he had been ever advancing in the acquisition of intelligence. The Lord had commanded him to study, and he was obeying. Such branches of learning as he knew not, teachers were employed to communicate. His mind, quickened by the Holy Spirit, grasped with readiness all true principles, and one by one he mastered these branches and became in them a teacher.

George Q. Cannon

The Life of Joseph Smith The Prophet, Pg. 183

Knowledge

Then if we would know the Lord Jesus Christ, and his servants, who are in our midst, and that their testimonies are true, we must enjoy the light of the Spirit of the living God individually. The possession of this heavenly knowledge is absolutely necessary to keep us in the paths of life and truth, for without it we cannot distinguish the voice of the true shepherd, which is spiritually discerned; and although we may be in fellowship with the Church, fully believing the counsels of our brethren to be dictated by wisdom, yet without something more than mere belief or supposition we cannot stand; and furthermore under such circumstances we cannot consistently claim that we have part or lot in the kingdom of God. For as it is written, “An actual knowledge to any person, that the course of life which he pursues is according to the will of God, is essentially necessary to enable him to have that confidence in God without which no person can obtain eternal life.” For unless a person does know that he is walking according to the will of God, it would be an insult to the dignity of the Creator were he to say that he would be a partaker of his glory when he should be done with the things of this life. But when he has this knowledge, and most assuredly knows that he is doing the will of God, his confidence can be equally strong that he will be a partaker of the glory of God. Then let us search after truth—for the light of the Spirit which leadeth into all truth, that we may comprehend the Gospel, be able to sustain the hands of the servants of God in their efforts to build up Zion, and work out our own salvation.

Brigham Young
JD 3:23

Knowledge is power

In knowledge there is power. God has more power than all other beings, because he has greater knowledge; and hence he knows how to subject all other beings to Him. He has power over all.

Joseph Smith
HC 5:340

Knowledge is power; and as I gain knowledge I gain power.

Brigham Young
JD 4:300

Intelligence Defined

Intelligence is the righteous application of knowledge and understanding in action and judgment.

David A. Bednar
Increase in Learning, p. 70

Knowledge Saves

Knowledge saves a man; and in the world of spirits no man can be exalted but by knowledge. So long as a man will not give heed to the commandments, he must abide without salvation. If a man has knowledge, he can be saved; although, if he has been guilty of great sins, he will be punished for them. But when he consents to obey the Gospel, whether here or in the world of spirits, he is saved.

Joseph Smith
JD 6:8

Joseph's Beginning Of Instructions on Discernment

The morning after the visitations from the angel Moroni (21-22 September 1823), Joseph Smith went to the side of the hill Cumorah to unearth the plates he had seen in his vision. As he later told Oliver Cowdery on the road to Cumorah he became fixed and determined to obtain the plates for wealth and prestige and not for the glory of God. Only after attempting unsuccessfully three times to remove the plates from the stone box in which they were enclosed did he become aware that Moroni was present. The angel indicated that he was permitted by God to be led by this evil spirit so that from that time forth he would always know the difference between a true spirit and an evil spirit. This was only a beginning of his instructions in the gift of discerning spirits (D&C 46:15-16, 23, 27).

The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph, Pg. 20

Prophet Joseph dwelt more on discerning of Spirits

George A. Smith, who received his endowment with Parley P. Pratt in December 1843, and who also was a witness to all the dimensions of Joseph's teachings on this subject, later said, "There was no point upon which the Prophet Joseph dwelt more than the discerning of Spirits" ("Minutes of Meetings held in Provo City," 28 November 1869, Church Archives).

The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph; Pg. 21

Rule by which you may know the Spirit of God from the spirit of evil

I will tell you a rule by which you may know the Spirit of God from the spirit of evil. The Spirit of God always produces joy and satisfaction of mind. When you have that Spirit you are happy; when you have another spirit you are not happy. The spirit of doubt is the spirit of the evil one; it produces uneasiness and other feelings that interfere with happiness and peace.

Elder George Q. Cannon
JD 15:375

Study evil and its consequences

Now, brethren and sisters, receive the exhortation and counsel of brother Snow, and profit by it; and employ the rest of your lives in good thoughts, kind words, and good works. "Shall I sit down and read the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Covenants all the time?" says one. Yes, if you please, and when you have done, you may be nothing but a sectarian after all. It is your duty to study to know everything upon the face of the earth, in addition to reading those books. We should not only study good, and its effects upon our race, but also evil, and its consequences.

Brigham Young
JD 2:93-94

A Law Pertaining to Spiritual Influences

The day is fast approaching when the nature of spiritual influences (evil spirits) will be fully recognized and understood and when man, by listening to the teachings of God's Spirit and Priesthood and obtaining a correct knowledge of the laws which govern them, will be freed from the power which in the days of his ignorance they have wielded over him....

Elder George Q. Cannon
Gospel Truth, Pg. 500

Learn to Control and Resist Evil Spirits

We often talk about and desire to see angels. Every person who has joined this Church has had a desire to have revelations from God our Heavenly Father, and have knowledge poured out upon him as it was poured out in abundance upon the prophets of old. I merely suppose that this is so with everybody else, because I have these feelings myself, and judge others in this respect by myself. But, until we can learn to control and resist those evil influences (evil spirits) that are now invisible, I think it would be unprofitable to have the administration of angels personally or visibly unto us. Until we can do this, I do not expect that we can have those other blessings profitably bestowed upon us. I do not expect, that, in the providence of God, we will be favored with those other blessings until we can listen unto and obey the counsels of those appointed to preside over us.

Elder George Q. Cannon
Remarks, Deseret News, January 11, 1865

Must learn to control Satan in this life

It matters not how beautiful a place it may be, although it is as lovely as the Garden of Eden, though everything in the eternal world harmonizes and the elements all conspire to produce happiness, yet place a people there with wicked hearts, and it is hell. You take a man full of corruption and introduce him into the society of the pure and just, and it would be a perfect hell to him. I have often heard blasphemers and drunkards and abominable characters say, I really hope I shall at last get to heaven. If they get there, they will be in the most miserable place they could be in. Were they to behold the face of God, or the angels, it would kindle in them a flame of unquenchable fire; it would be the very worst place a wicked man could get into; he would much rather go and dwell in hell with the devil and his host. On the other hand, you take a man that is pure in heart—a holy being—and place him in the society of the devils, and he is not in his element; the society is disagreeable. If he were obliged to stay there and behold the corrupt and evil doings of the wicked and abominable, it would in some degree make a hell for him to look upon their conduct, and still such a being would have one principle about him that would enable him to control, in a measure, his feelings; that is, he would have control over those characters; and herein is the power of the Priesthood. If the servants of God are sent to the spirit prison to minister unto them, if they are sent to those who are in a state of wickedness and degradation to minister to them, they have one source of comfort, they are not confined there as prisoners; they go there voluntarily; they do not associate with their wickedness; but hate it; they are willing to stay there, peradventure they may bring some of them to repentance; and the Devil has no power over them; they have learned to control him in this life, to rebuke him, and to say unto him, Get behind us, Satan! When a Saint arrives in that eternal world, if he be sent on a mission into the dominions of Satan, to reclaim some under his power, he can say to Satan and to all his armies. Depart hence! He has the power of the Priesthood to command him and all powers under him, and they are obliged to obey. Not so with a wicked man; he gets into a perfect hell, wherever you place him, so long as he harbors wickedness in his breast.

Elder Orson Pratt
Masterful Discourses And Writings Of Orson Pratt, pp. 267-268

One great evil is the ignorant of the nature of spirits

One great evil is, that men are ignorant of the nature of spirits; their power, laws, government, intelligence, etc., and imagine that when there is anything like power, revelation, or vision manifested, that it must be of God.

Joseph Smith

HC 4:572

Miscellaneous

Spirit of anger literal personage of spirit

From these revelations it is plain that the Lord bestows His Spirit very liberally upon the children of men—much more liberally than they themselves are probably conscious of—and it bears witness to them concerning the truth. But the difficulty with mankind is that they are not apparently conscious of the different influences that prevail in the world, which are invisible to their mortal eyes, but which can make themselves felt in their operations upon those who entertain them. President Woodruff, in his remarks this morning, alluded to the number of evil spirits that there are who are invisible to us, but who bring their influence to bear upon us. One of the causes of our being in this state of probation and trial is that we may, through the power and blessing of God, be able to pass through this world and to overcome these adverse influences that are seeking to lead us astray and to destroy us. In the plan of salvation which our Father has devised, and which contemplates our exaltation in the eternal worlds, it is essential that we should be exposed to various temptations and trials, that through the experience we thereby gain we may be able to overcome. God our Eternal Father intends to endow those of His children who are faithful to Him in their second estate with indescribable glory. Even if the human mind could conceive, the human tongue could not describe that glory. We cannot, though our minds be fully illumined by the Spirit of God, conceive in our mortal estate the greatness of the glory that God has in store for His faithful ones. When we even approach the understanding of it, it must be by vision. Yet to those who are true to Him in the midst of the numerous temptations that abound in the world that glory will be given. Every properly constituted person can feel the influence of the various spirits that are in the world, and that seek to bring us in subjection to them. To some it is given to see these influences; but all can feel them. Whence is it that anger comes? You will see a man all at once seized with a spirit of anger: another time you will see a person seized with a spirit of jealousy, or some other evil influence, infuriated sometimes, so much so that he or she is transformed. You have seen people's faces completely changed by the spirit that takes possession of them. They cannot see that power; but it is undoubtedly a spiritual entity. We may not be conscious of it, but it takes possession of us if we yield to it. The Lord our God has sent us here to get experience in these things, so that we may know the good from the evil, and be able to close our hearts against the evil. "But," says one, "I have not power to do that. It takes possession of me and I have not power to resist it." Another says, "I am assailed by doubts and by unbelief, and I cannot help it." Now, this is not so. It is true that some have greater power of resistance than others, but everyone has the power to close his heart against doubt, against darkness, against unbelief, against depression, against anger, against hatred, against jealousy, against malice, against envy. God has given this power unto all of us, and we can gain still greater power by calling upon Him for that which we lack. If it were not so, how could we be condemned for giving way to wrong influences? There could be no condemnation for our doing what we could not help; but we can help doing these things. We can help yielding to wrong influences, and being quarrelsome and selfish. We can help giving way to the spirit of theft, and we can resist the spirit of lust. God has given us power to resist these things, that our hearts may be kept free from them, and also from doubt; and when Satan comes and assails us, it is our privilege to say, 'Get thee behind me, Satan, for I have no lot nor portion in you, and you have no part in me. I am in the service of God, and I am going to serve Him, and you can do what you please. It is no use you presenting yourself with your blandishments to me. You come and try to insinuate into my heart evil thoughts about the servants of God or about the work of God, and I will not listen to you; I

will close my heart against you."

Do we not have this power? Certainly we have. In the same way every human being outside of this Church has the power to receive the spirit of light; for the Spirit of God is a spirit of light and it does not bring darkness. Whenever darkness fills our minds, we may know that we are not possessed of the Spirit of God, and we must get rid of it. When we are filled with the Spirit of God we are filled with joy, with peace, and with happiness, no matter what our circumstances may be; for it is a spirit of cheerfulness and of happiness. The Lord has given unto us the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is our privilege to have that Holy Ghost reign within us, so that from morning till night and from night till morning we shall have the joy, the light and the revelation thereof. It is our duty to prepare ourselves for the world to come by living in the light of this spirit.

President George Q. Cannon

Delivered at Mill Creek, Salt Lake County, August 26, 1894

"Discourse" Deseret News, Sept 29, 1894

Spirit of different sins

While the brethren were speaking upon one point, namely, the disposition of some people to imbibe spirituous liquor, it brought some reflections to my mind connected with the influences that prevail throughout the various portions of the earth. I believe there are places and circumstances in which people can be placed, where there are influences of this character brought to bear upon them that are more difficult to resist than there would be under other circumstances and in other places. I have often heard it remarked by the brethren, and I have remarked it myself, that in some places there is a greater disposition entertained by the people to commit adultery and indulge in kindred sins of this description than there is in this country. There seem to be influences (evil spirits) in the atmosphere in those lands of such a character, that unless a person is on his guard and constantly watching and resisting them, he will be led down to destruction by them. A spirit and disposition will creep over the people unless they are careful, to lead them astray in the direction which I have named. This is undoubtedly the case. There are spirits in the atmosphere that are filled with that disposition, and who seek to influence those with whom they are brought in contact, impressing those who are in the tabernacle of flesh to indulge in the same sin.

There are influences in the atmosphere that are invisible to us that, while we are here upon the earth, we ought to resist with all our might, mind, and strength—influences which, if we would be led by them, would lead us to destruction—influences that are opposed to the Spirit of God—influences that would bring upon us destruction here and hereafter, if we would yield to them. These influences we have to resist. We have to resist the spirit of adultery, the spirit of whoredom, the spirit of drunkenness, the spirit of theft, and every other evil influence and spirit, that we may continually overcome; and, when we have finished our work on the earth, be prepared to govern and control those influences, and exercise power over them, in the presence of our Father and God. I have no doubt that many of my brethren and sisters have sensibly felt in various places and at various times evil influences around them. Brother Joseph Smith gave an explanation of this. There are places in the Mississippi Valley where the influence or the presence of invisible spirits are very perceptibly felt. He said that numbers had been slain there in war, and that there were evil influences or spirits which affect the spirits of those who have tabernacles on the earth. I myself have felt those influences in other places besides the continent of America; I have felt them on the old battle grounds on the Sandwich Islands. I have come to the conclusion that if our eyes were open to see the spirit world around us, we should feel differently on this subject than we do; we would not be so unguarded and careless, and so indifferent whether we had the spirit and power of God with us or not; but we would be continually watchful and

prayerful to our heavenly Father for His Holy Spirit and His holy angels to be around about us to strengthen us overcome every evil influence.

When I see young men indulging in drunkenness and in stealing, I come to the conclusion that they are led captive by the evil spirits around them. We call it the spirit of the evil one; but he has numerous agencies at work, even as the Lord has numerous agencies to assist him in bringing to pass the consummation of His great designs. The adversary has numerous agencies at his command, and he seeks to control and lead to destruction the inhabitants of the earth who will be subject to them. If we could see with our spiritual senses as we now see with our natural senses, we should be greatly shocked at the sight of the influences that prompt us to disobey the counsels of God or the Spirit of the Lord in our hearts. But we cannot see them, for they are spiritually discerned; and he who discerns the most, is the most fully impressed by the Spirit of God; he who does not discern, has not profited by the instructions given to him, and yields to those evil influences in an unguarded moment, and is taken captive in his blindness. He who is imbued with the Spirit of God is sensibly aware when the evil power approaches; but he does not welcome it to his bosom; he resists it with all the might and strength God has given unto him, and he obtains power over it, and it no more troubles him; if it does, its influence is more weakened than previously.

Elder George Q. Cannon
JD 11:29-30

Wicked have good spirits leave them

Those who are habitually given to vice, immorality and abomination; those who walk in the daily indulgence of unlawful lust; those who neither believe in Jesus Christ, nor seek to pray to Him and keep His commandments; those who do not cultivate the pure, refined and holy joys of innocent and heavenly affection, but who would sacrifice every finer feeling at the shrine of lawless pleasure and brutal desires; those persons will not understand and appreciate these views, because their good angels, their kindred spirits, have long since departed, and ceased to attend them, being grieved and disgusted with their conduct.

The Spirit of the Lord has also been grieved, and has left them to themselves, to struggle alone amid the dangers and sorrows of life; or to be the associates of demons and impure spirits. Such persons dream of adultery, gluttony, debauchery and crimes of every kind. Such persons have the foreshadowings of a doleful death, and of darkness, and the buffetings of fiends and malicious spirits.

Parley P. Pratt
Key to the Science of Theology, Pgs. 115-116

Difference Between the Holy Ghost and the Gift of the Holy Ghost

There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the Gospel, but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this sign or ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him. Until he obeyed these ordinances and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands, according to the order of God, he could not have healed the sick or commanded an evil spirit to come out of a man, and it obey him; for the spirits might say unto him, as they did to the sons of Sceva: "Paul we know and Jesus we know, but who are ye?" It mattereth not whether we live long or short on the earth after we come to a knowledge of these principles and obey them unto the end. I know that all men will be damned if they do not come in the way which He hath opened, and this is

the way marked out by the word of the Lord.

Joseph Smith

Scriptural Teachings of Joseph Smith, Pg. 199

Holy Spirit Can Also Possess

When the Prophet reached the house Newel was in a frightful condition. His features and limbs were twisted out of shape and he was being thrown violently around the room. A number of persons had come, but they knew not what to do. Joseph at length caught his hand and Newel immediately spoke and begged the Prophet to cast the devil out of him. Joseph rebuked the evil spirit, and in the name of Jesus Christ commanded it to depart. Newel was instantly freed from it and declared that he saw the devil come out of him and disappear.

He was in his natural state only for a moment. Another power seized him and raised him to the ceiling where he remained for a time unconscious. But this was the Spirit of God, not of the devil and when he came to himself he told of a heavenly vision of unspeakable beauty that had been given him.

Those present in the room were astonished. They had seen the destroying power of Satan and the enlightening power of God. They had beheld a miracle such as the world had not seen since the time of the Apostles, and they were convinced that Joseph held the same power as did they of old.

George Q. Cannon

The Latter Day Prophet: Young People's History of Joseph Smith, Pgs. 41-42

Evil Spirits Outnumber Good Spirits

There are millions and millions of spirits in these valleys, both good and evil. We are surrounded with more evil spirits than good ones, because more wicked than good men have died here; for instance, thousands and thousands of wicked Lamanites have laid their bodies in these valleys. The spirits of the just and unjust are here. The spirits that were cast out of heaven, which you know are recorded to have been one-third part, were thrust down to this earth, and have been here all the time, with Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, at their head.

Brigham Young

JD 4:133

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glory. We cannot, though our minds be fully illumined by the Spirit of God, conceive in our mortal estate the greatness of the glory that God has in store for His faithful ones. When we even approach the understanding of it, it must be by vision. Yet to those who are true to Him in the midst of the numerous temptations that abound in the world that glory will be given. Every properly constituted person can feel the influence of the various spirits that are in the world, and that seek to bring us in subjection to them. To some it is given to see these influences; but all can feel them. Whence is it that anger comes? You will see a man all at once seized with a spirit of anger: another time you will see a person seized with a spirit of jealousy, or some other evil influence, infuriated sometimes, so much so that he or she is transformed. You have seen people's faces completely changed by the spirit that takes possession of them. They cannot see that power; but it is undoubtedly a spiritual entity. We may not be conscious of it, but it takes possession of us if we yield to it. The Lord our God has sent us here to get experience in these things, so that we may know the good from the evil, and be able to close our hearts against the evil. "But," says one, "I have not power to do that. It takes possession of me and I have not power to resist it." Another says, "I am assailed by doubts and by unbelief, and I cannot help it." Now, this is not so. It is true that some have greater power of resistance than others, but everyone has the power to close his heart against doubt, against darkness, against unbelief, against depression, against anger, against hatred, against jealousy, against malice, against envy. God has given this power unto all of us, and we can gain still greater power by calling upon Him for that which we lack. If it were not so, how could we be condemned for giving way to wrong influences? There could be no condemnation for our doing what we could not help; but we can help doing these things. We can help yielding to wrong influences, and being quarrelsome and selfish. We can help giving way to the spirit of theft, and we can resist the spirit of lust. God has given us power to resist these things, that our hearts may be kept free from them, and also from doubt; and when Satan comes and assails us, it is our privilege to say, 'Get thee behind me, Satan, for I have no lot nor portion in you, and you have no part in me. I am in the service of God, and I am going to serve Him, and you can do what you please. It is no use you presenting yourself with your blandishments to me. You come and try to insinuate into my heart evil thoughts about the servants of God or about the work of God, and I will not listen to you; I will close my heart against you.'

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President George Q. Cannon
Discourse
Deseret News, Sept 29, 1894

Premortal Personality

The written standards of scripture show that all people who come to this earth and are born in mortality, had a pre-existent, spiritual personality, as the sons and daughters of the Eternal Father.

Statement of the First Presidency
Improvement Era, March 1912, Pg. 417

The nearer a person approached to the Lord

Words of Helen Mar Whitney: We had struggles with evil spirits at Winter Quarters, which were something similar to what the Prophet Joseph Smith experienced in Far West, Missouri. He said the devil contended with him face to face, after he had afflicted his little child, claiming that he had the best right to a house which Joseph had purchased, it having been previously occupied by some wicked people. But the Prophet rebuked the devil in the name of the Lord, and he had to leave the house.

My father [Heber C. Kimball] also had some contests with the evil spirits when young in years and inexperienced. The Prophet once requested him to relate those occurrences and the vision of evil spirits which he had in England on the opening of the gospel to that people. After doing so, he asked Joseph what all those things meant, fearing there might be something wrong in him. Joseph's answer was, "No, Brother Heber. At that time, when you were in England, you were nigh unto the Lord. There was only a veil between you and Him. When I heard of it, it gave me great joy, for I then knew the work of God had taken root in that land. It was this that caused the devil to make a struggle to kill you."

Joseph then said the nearer a person approached to the Lord, the greater power would be manifest by the devil to prevent the accomplishment of the purposes of God.

Hyrum L. Andrus and Helen Mae Andrus
They Knew the Prophet, p. 176

The devil cannot compel mankind to evil

He (Joseph Smith) then observed that Satan was generally blamed for the evils which we did, but if he was the cause of all our wickedness, men could not be condemned. The devil cannot compel mankind to evil, all was voluntary — Those who resist the spirit of God are liable to be led into temptation, and then the association of heaven is withdrawn from those who refuse to be made partakers of such great glory—God would not exert any compulsory means and the Devil could not: and such ideas as were entertained by many were absurd.

The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph, p 72

The moment we revolt Devil takes power

All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not. The devil has no power over us only as we permit him; the moment we revolt at anything which comes from God the Devil takes power.

Joseph Smith

The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph, p 60

Satan laughs at the misfortune of those who have been duped

In our time, drug dealers, distributors of pornography, promoters of evil entertainment, supporters of lies, advertisers of inappropriate apparel, enticers of immorality, and critics of the traditional family all promote choices that will diminish the spiritual life, even result in the spiritual death, of God's sons and daughters.

Bear in mind that Satan laughs at the misfortune of those who have been duped by such enticements (see Moses 7:26). His methods vary, but they have a common objective: disobedience and

the associated loss of blessings.

Elder Keith K. Hilbig
Ensign, Jul 2013, Pg. 49

Evil Spirits Are Organized and Combine Forces

It has been treated as a bubble upon the wave that soon would burst asunder; but I am satisfied the result of the manifestations of the spirits (wicked spirits) will be to combine their forces in as systematic an order as they are capable of, to successfully resist the Priesthood upon the earth.

I am aware that even some of the Latter-day Saints are slow to believe in relation to the power of Lucifer, the son of the morning, who was thrust from the heavens to the earth; and they have been slow to believe in relation to the spirits that are associated with him; but from the first revelations of the Almighty to brother Joseph Smith, not only revelations in relation to the deep things of the kingdom of God, and the high things of heaven, and the depths of hell, but revelations showing him the power of Lucifer, the opposite to good, that he might be aware of the strength of his opponent, and the opponent of the Almighty—I say, from perusing these revelations, I have always been specially impressed with the doctrine relating to the power of Satan, as well as with the doctrines relating to the power of God.

I have always felt that no Saint fully comprehends the power of Satan as well as God's Prophet; and again I have thought that no Saint could fully understand the power of God unless he learn the opposite. I am not myself acquainted with any happiness that I have not learned the opposite of. You may perhaps enjoy a great deal, the opposite of which you know nothing of, you may be constituted different to me, your feelings may be different, you may have learned to enjoy without first experiencing the opposite; but I may say with safety, nearly all the blessings I enjoy and highly prize are most appreciated after I have learned their opposite; and I am of opinion that all Saints sooner or later will have to learn the opposite to good, they will have to partake of the bitter in order to properly appreciate the sweet, they will have to be impressed with pain that they may appreciate pleasure.

In relation to spirits, for it seems to be the subject introduced today, I have this idea, that the Lord our God absolutely gave Lucifer a mission to this earth; I will call it a mission. You may think it strange that I believe so good a being as our Father in heaven would actually send such an odd missionary as Lucifer. You may call him a missionary, or anything else you please, but we learn he was thrust out of heaven, the place where the Lord dwells, to this earth; and his mission, and the mission of his associates who were thrust down with him, and of those whom he is successful in turning away from God's children who have tabernacles, is to continue to oppose the Almighty, scatter His Church, wage war against His kingdom, and change as far as possible His government on the earth. He could take the Savior upon the pinnacle of the temple, and show him the kingdoms of this world, and could perform many wonderful works in the days of Jesus. When the Priesthood of God is upon the earth, then the priesthood of the devil may be seen operating, for he has got one. When the kingdom of God is on the earth, you may expect to see a special display or manifestation of the opposite to the Gospel of the kingdom, or of the Priesthood of God.

Elder Jedediah M. Grant
JD 2:10-11

Evil Spirits Affecting Saints Who Try to do Right

I know very well that, whether we are active or not, the invisible spirits are active. And every person who desires and strives to be a Saint is closely watched by fallen spirits that came here when Lucifer fell, and by the spirits of wicked persons who have been here in tabernacles and departed from

them, but who are still under the control of the prince of the power of the air. Those spirits are never idle; they are watching every person who wishes to do right, and are continually prompting them to do wrong. This makes it necessary for us to be continually on our guard—makes this probation a continual warfare.

We do not expect to be idle. The individual that obtains a celestial kingdom will never be idle in the flesh. It is a spiritual warfare. He contends against the spirits of darkness and against the workers of iniquity, and wars all the day long against his own passions that pertain to fallen man. It is therefore necessary that the people speak often one with another, encourage each other in every good word and work, sustain every one in every good act, operate against every evil act, and continue so to do through life.

President Brigham Young
JD 7:239

Evil Spirits

It seems to be one of the weaknesses of human nature that we are apt to forget the principles of truth and righteousness, and to give way to influences that are not of God. We are placed in this existence for the express purpose of learning to overcome all these things. One of the great objects, as I imagine, which God has in view in sending us here upon the earth, is to give us experience in the influences of the earth that we may contend with them successfully and overcome them, that when we pass beyond the veil we may be in a position to comprehend them to a greater extent than we could had we not come here and felt the influences to which human nature is subject. I have thought that we, as a people and as individuals, do not sufficiently realize the importance of keeping guard upon ourselves, and upon our feelings, and of resisting the influences that surround us.

While the brethren were speaking upon one point, namely, the disposition of some people to imbibe spirituous liquor, it brought some reflections to my mind connected with the influences that prevail throughout the various portions of the earth. I believe there are places and circumstances in which people can be placed, where there are influences of this character brought to bear upon them that are more difficult to resist than there would be under other circumstances and in other places. I have often heard it remarked by the brethren, and I have remarked it myself, that in some places there is a greater disposition entertained by the people to commit adultery and indulge in kindred sins of this description than there is in this country. There seem to be influences in the atmosphere in those lands of such a character, that unless a person is on his guard and constantly watching and resisting them, he will be led down to destruction by them. A spirit and disposition will creep over the people unless they are careful, to lead them astray in the direction which I have named. This is undoubtedly the case. There are spirits in the atmosphere that are filled with that disposition, and who seek to influence those with whom they are brought in contact, impressing those who are in the tabernacle of flesh to indulge in the same sin.

There are influences in the atmosphere that are invisible to us that, while we are here upon the earth, we ought to resist with all our might, mind, and strength—influences which, if we would be led by them, would lead us to destruction—influences that are opposed to the Spirit of God—influences that would bring upon us destruction here and hereafter, if we would yield to them. These influences we have to resist. We have to resist the spirit of adultery, the spirit of whoredom, the spirit of drunkenness, the spirit of theft, and every other evil influence and spirit, that we may continually overcome; and, when we have finished our work on the earth, be prepared to govern and control those influences, and exercise power over them, in the presence of our Father and God. I have no doubt that many of my brethren and sisters have sensibly felt in various places and at various times evil influences

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We often talk about and desire to see angels. Every person who has joined this Church has had a desire to have revelations from God our Heavenly Father, and have knowledge poured out upon him as it was poured out in abundance upon the prophets of old. I merely suppose that this is so with everybody else, because I have these feelings myself, and judge others in this respect by myself. But, until we can learn to control and resist those evil influences that are now invisible, I think it would be unprofitable to have the administration of angels personally or visibly unto us. Until we can do this, I do not expect that we can have those other blessings profitably bestowed upon us. I do not expect that in the providence of God we will be favored with those other blessings until we can listen unto and obey the counsels of those appointed to preside over us. I know it is natural for people to be anxious to have some ministering spirit wait on them, and reveal itself unto them. For my own part, my reflections have caused me to view this in a different light than I viewed it in the beginning.

Elder George Q. Cannon
JD 11:29-31

Saints Led Astray by Little Sins

There are many spirits who have gone abroad in the world, and men are overcome by false spirits, and led astray from the path of truth. They will begin by doing some evil thing out of sight, and say, "O, it is nothing, it is a mere trifle, and the Lord is merciful, and forgiveth sin." The sins which are considered trifles lay the foundation for greater evils, and expose men to be tempted, and buffeted by Satan, and they will be overcome little by little, until by and by they are overtaken in a fault which is more aggravating in the sight of justice, which lays the foundation for another trial more severe, and to be buffeted more by the devil, for they lay themselves more liable to his power.

Why and how we are tempted

There is much doctrine in the Book of Mormon and Book of Doctrine and Covenants that would be instructive to the Saints, if they would not let them stay upon their shelves. Knowledge of truth would not harm you, though it may be better for some to let their books remain shut, rather than to transgress against greater light, for then greater would be their damnation and punishment. In proportion as we advance in the knowledge of the things revealed from the heavens, and in the powers and keys that are conferred upon us, the greater will be the condemnation, if we fall therefrom. This shows the propriety of every man's and woman's habituating themselves, as I have already said, to righteousness.

If you were, within one week from this time, to be let into all the visions that the brother of Jared had, what a weight of responsibility you would have upon you; how weak you would be, and how unprepared for the responsibility; and after the vision had closed up in your minds, and you were left to yourselves, you would be tempted in proportion to the light that had been presented before you. Then would come the trial, such as you never have had. This is the principle upon which the devil is allowed to try us. We have a circumstance in relation to Moses being tempted; when the vision withdrew, and the heavens closed, the devil presented himself and said, "Moses, son of man, worship me." Moses replied, "Who are you?" "I am the son of God," was the answer. Then said Moses, "You call me son of man and say that you are the son of God, but where is your glory?" Could Moses have withstood that terrible manifestation, if he had not; practiced for many years the principles of righteousness? A mere vision would not have strengthened him, and even to show him the glory of God in part would not have enabled him to combat with the powers of darkness that then came to him. It was by his knowledge of God, by his perseverance, his diligence and obedience in former years, that he was enabled to rebuke the devil, in the name of Jesus Christ, and drive him from him.

So it will be with you, whether you have the necessary preparation or not, for the Lord will say to the powers of darkness, you are now at liberty to tempt my servants in proportion to the light that I have given. Go and see if they will be steadfast to that light; use every plan so far as I permit you, and if they will yield they are not worthy of me nor of my kingdom, and I will deliver them up and they shall be buffeted. You, Satan, shall buffet and torment them, until they shall learn obedience by the things that they suffer.

Hence the propriety of preparing for these things, that when they come you will know how to conquer Satan, and not want for experience to overcome, but be like Michael, the archangel, who, with all the knowledge and glory that he had gained through thousands of years of experience, durst not bring a railing accusation, because he knew better. And when Moses withstood Satan face to face, he knew who he was and what he had come for. He had obtained his knowledge by past trials, by a long series of preparation; hence he triumphed.

So it must be with Latter-day Saints, and if we prepare ourselves we shall conquer. We must come in contact with every foe, and those who give way will be overcome. If we are to conquer the enemy of truth his power must be made manifest, and the power which will be given of the Lord through faithfulness must be in our possession. Do you wish to prevail—to conquer the powers of darkness when they present themselves? If you do, prepare yourselves against the day when these powers shall be made manifest with more energy than is now exhibited. Then you can say, the evil powers that have been made manifest, the agents that came and tempted me, came with all their force, I met them face to face and conquered by the word of my testimony, by patience, by the keys which have

been bestowed upon me, and which I held sacred before God, and I have triumphed over the adversary and over all his associates.

Elder Orson Pratt
JD 3:352-353

Possession by Evil Spirits

A spirit contrary to the order of the Church causes possession

The signs spoken of include the casting out of devils. This recalls to my remembrance something of the kind which occurred at the Pomphret Branch, previous to which I had had but very little experience as to what may be termed the physical power of the devil. I was then far from the body of the Church, consequently what I learned I had to find out by experience, having no one to tell me. The case was that of a sister, who was possessed, and whom I, with two other elders, was called upon to visit. Directly we entered her room, she called out, "Take your shoes from off your feet, this is holy ground, the Prophet Elijah is here." I saw the spirit by which she was influenced, so I walked up to her and said, "I am a servant of the Lord, I obey no command of the devil." She became uproarious directly, for all who had gone in previously, had complied with her directions.

As soon as we attempted to rebuke the evil spirit, in the name of the Lord, she arose up from the bed, on her feet, without apparently bending a joint in her body, stiff as a rod of iron. From this we saw the power with which we had to contend; and, failing at first to eject the spirit, we bowed ourselves in prayer before the Lord, and asked him to assist us. The evil spirit then came out full of fury, and as he passed by one of the brethren, seized him by both arms, and gripped them violently, [For similar instances of power see Elder Kimball's Journal.] and, passing towards me, something which by the feel appeared like a man's hand, grasped me by both sides of my face, and attempted to pull me sideways to the ground, but the hold appearing to slip I recovered my balance immediately. My face was sore for some days after this. The other brother that was seized was lame for a week afterwards.

As soon as this was done, the sister partially recovered, so much so that she obeyed anything I chose to tell her to do, whereas before she was perfectly ungovernable. Still she seemed to be surrounded by some evil influence. This puzzled us, for we knew the spirit was cast out, but we learned the cause afterwards. Just then it was revealed to us that if we went to sleep, the devil would enter one of the brethren. My nephew, Melvin Brown, neglected the warning, and composed himself to sleep in an armchair, whilst we were still watching with the sister. Directly he did so, the devil entered into him, and he became black in the face, and nearly suffocated. He awoke immediately, and motioned for us to lay hands on him, for he could not speak. We did so, and the evil spirit then left him, and he recovered at once.

About a week afterwards the same spirit reentered the sister, and this time fully confessed his character. In answer to our inquiries, he said his name was "Legion." This explained how it was that the woman, after we had cast out an evil spirit, was under an evil influence, for there must have been many spirits. [See case of Mary Magdalene.--Mark xvi, 9. The Lunatic.--Mark v.] He also reviled our priesthood, but he had to submit to it at last, saying to us, "O! you have the priesthood, have you? Well, then cast me out, command me to come out," trying to shake our faith, and thus incapacitate us to rebuke him successfully. Failing in this, he tried another method by entering me. I felt seized by a strange influence, and to every question put to the woman, I knew the answer she was going to give, for I was possessed by a similar spirit. This broke the chain of our union and strength, consequently I requested the elders to rebuke the evil spirit from me, after which, at our united rebuke, he left the woman.

Previous to this, the sister had been a very faithful Saint, and she ever afterwards was, but she had given the devil ground by encouraging a spirit contrary to the order of the Church, taking upon herself to rebuke the elders, and he claimed his right by virtue of her transgression. No doubt one

object of the Lord's permitting him to exercise his physical power was to give me experience of such facts, without which I never could have known; but I, like many others who may read this record, might have argued my ignorance of such things, as a proof that they did not exist except in imagination. By "physical power" is meant such power as was manifested in the case of the man mentioned in the Gospels, who "could not be bound even with chains," so great was the strength of the devil by which he was possessed. I know very well that this religious generation are so fearful lest anyone should suppose there is any resemblance between their faith and practice, and those of the ancient church, that, after most vigorously asserting that "Apostles, Prophets, and other similarly inspired men, are done away; revelations are done away; visions are done away; tongues and prophecy are done away; healings and miracles are done away;" and, in a word, all external manifestations of the Holy Ghost, or the power of God, devils are added to this list of "done aways," and forsooth we are to rejoice and be exceeding glad.

Happy generation! Shall we say, where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise? They practically say it for themselves. What! they, "living in the blaze of gospel light, troubled with devils!" It is true that even now, sometimes, some are seized with strong afflictions called fits, which make them wallow on the ground, gnash their teeth, foam, tear their hair off their heads, and display such miraculous strength, that a dozen people cannot sometimes hold one person while under these strange affections. But what of that? Who but poor deluded "Mormons" would attribute such things to the power of the devil? May we ask what else they are caused by? Oh, they are caused by fits. Yes, but what are fits? "Why fits are--that is to say, we don't know what they are, except that they are fits." And this is all we can be told about the matter.

Then again, there are certain people called "madmen," who, generally, previous to their having "the disease," are quiet-going people enough, possessing no more bodily strength than anybody else, but who, through some "affection of the mind," have increased their bodily strength to such an extent, that they have to be manacled--bound with cords and fetters, and put in great houses, where the windows have to be barred with iron, to protect them. "But these people are not possessed of devils, their brains are affected." Indeed, their brains are affected, as well as many other parts of their bodies, when the devil gets possession of them.

We are told these are mysteries. They were no mysteries anciently! But this generation, despising revelation as being requisite now, have lost the key of knowledge, and are consequently surrounded by phenomena which they cannot understand. And if the Bible does not happen to say anything about them, as such persons have no hope that God will, they are quite contented to die ignorant.

Autobiography of Benjamain Brown (1794-1878)

<http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/BBrown.html>

Devils Steal Bodies

At times these fallen spirits steal possession of the bodies of men and women, overpowering the spirit who has rightful ownership. They realize what they have lost and are willing, when opportunity is given them, of possessing bodies of lower animals, so anxious are they to be clothed with flesh even for a season. On one occasion a legion of these evil spirits, when cast out by the Lord, asked the privilege of entering the bodies of a herd of swine. Out of Mary Magdalene the Lord cast seven devils. These evil spirits know the Lord from the knowledge and experience they obtained in the heavens before their banishment for rebellion. They called him by name when he disturbed them in their stolen habitations, saying: "Thou art Christ the Son of God, . . . for they knew that he was Christ."

Joseph Fielding Smith

Devils compress the rightful spirit and take possession – DN Editorial

Devils are spiritual beings, but they have not mortal bodies. They will have no part in the resurrection and yet they will continue to exist in the future life. These evil spirits are in their nature and substance the same as the spirits of men. They sometimes enter and abide in human tabernacles; they compress the rightful owner and take possession.

Immortality

Deseret News, May 25, 1889

Devils Without Tabernacles Have Meetinghouses In Bars

The Lord Almighty will not let anything endure that offers hospitality to the devil and his imps. Those who suffer their bodies to be dwellings for evil spirits, must suffer loss, for devils cannot construct a house that will in any way answer their purpose; neither have they been able to do so in all the eternities there are; that is the very thing which causes us trouble continually; for they are trying all the time to get into our dwellings, because they have none of their own. Did you ever desire to take possession of another person's tabernacle, and leave your own? No rational person owning a tabernacle would wish to do so. The devils have no tabernacles, which is the reason of their wanting to possess human bodies. If any of you have suffered any of these houseless spirits to enter you, turn them out, and they will perhaps seek refuge in the body of an ox, or some other animal, or maybe go into Jordan.

Do you think the legion we read of, that entered the swine, in the days of Christ, had bodies of their own? No; they have no meetinghouses but in ballrooms, gaming houses, brothels, gin palaces, parlors, bedrooms, and other places which they frequent in the bodies of those they lead captive; otherwise they are wandering to and fro in the earth, seeking to possess tabernacles that other spirits, not of their order, already occupy. They are in our midst watching for an opportunity to enter where they may. What will be the doom of those who give way to them, and yield to them the possession of their tabernacles? They will wander to and fro, happiness will be hid from them, they will weep, and wail, and suffer, until their bodies return to their mother earth, and their spirits to judgment.

Brigham Young

JD 2:128

Devil Wants to Constantly Possess People

The Devil was cursed and sent down from heaven. He has no body of his own; therefore he is constantly endeavoring to obtain possession of the tabernacles belonging to others.

Brigham Young

JD 5:331

Evil spirits would rather have a body of an animal than be without one

Those evil spirits are not permitted to receive tabernacles of their own, and that is their condemnation and punishment. They have been known to take possession of the bodies of men and women, and rather than to be without a body, they have entered the bodies of brutes.

Brigham Young

JD 9:333

Evil Spirits Enter Into and Then Influence

If evil spirits can enter into and thus influence mortal bodies (Mark 5:1-12), it must be within the power of the Holy Ghost on occasions similarly to contact and influence human souls for good. Perhaps that's why he has not taken upon himself a mortal body.

Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr.
Conference Report, Apr 1966, Pg. 45

Incidence of Possession

I believe I realize to a certain extent the feeling experienced by some of the Seventies in the time of Christ when they returned from their missions, and with joy reported that even the evil spirits had been subjected unto them by the name of Christ. I have also had a similar experience, when even the evil spirits have been subject unto us through the name of Christ. We had one in the mission field afflicted with an evil spirit, and his body tormented and tortured by the possession of that evil spirit. I came into the room upon one occasion, and the evil spirit sprang upon me and seized me by the throat with a grip of iron, shutting off even my ability to speak and almost to breathe, while the elders stood round about, also my wife with a feeling of fear in her heart that the evil spirit would overcome me he shouted with a voice that was most terrific he declared himself to be the devil. "My name is Satan," he declared, "and I have more authority than you." And again tightening his grip upon my throat he declared, "I have more authority than you." I could not speak, but I looked the person in the eye, and releasing his grip and falling upon the bed, that same voice declared, "No, I have not more authority," and he hid his face in the pillow and was subject to the power of the Priesthood. Elder Kooyman, who was conference president, anointed him with oil, and with other elders I laid my hands upon him, and I began to confirm the anointing with oil. When I reached the point in prayer, that "in the name of Jesus Christ," I was going to say, "we rebuke the spirit," he sprang from the bed, and pleaded: "Do not use that name, do not use that name." We placed him upon the bed, and in the name of Jesus Christ I rebuked that spirit and commanded it to depart from him, and the person who was afflicted fell limp upon the bed and slept for hours, the first peaceful sleep he had enjoyed for several days. One of the greatest witnesses that have come into my life was upon this occasion.

I had been taught by my father and mother that there is power in the Priesthood. I had been taught it in the Sunday school and in the elders' quorum. I doubted it not, I felt that there was power in that Priesthood, but this was the first occasion which had come into my life where I had seen evil spirits subject to that power without even a word being spoken. I realize that those who are set apart and ordained to preside have authority to administer in the ordinances of the gospel and have power over unclean spirits.

Elder Charles S. Hyde
Conference Report, Apr 1926, pp 123-124

False spirits are more subtle – DN Editorial

False spirits are more subtle, and more contagious than the small pox; their number and diversity of operations cannot be counted by man; and the first moment the saints leave the path of duty, that moment they are subject to the influence of evil, false spirits, which once having taken possession of the soul, are difficult if not impossible to be removed by the person so receiving them, without assistance from those who have more wisdom. The great object of evils spirits is to get bodies, and the only chance they have is to dispossess a soul of the spirit of the Lord, the light of eternal truth, and take possession of that body thus dispossessed; and when thus once in possession, it may truly be

said there is a body possessed of the devil.

Jesus and his disciples in different ages have commanded the unclean and wicked spirits to depart out of those of whom they had taken possession, and they have departed; but there are those spirits which are not easily dispossessed, and go out only by prayer and fasting. And again, there are those spirits that will hardly go out at any price, except it is by the will of those who harbor them. And of what class are they? They are invited spirits. Invited spirits? Yes, many spirits watch their opportunity to thrust themselves into a person when and where they are not wanted, and such are much more easily cast out than those who are invited guests.

For instance, a person, for some real or supposed injury or neglect from a friend, wishes to retaliate to be revenged, and of course, opens the way and invites the spirit of jealousy to take possession; and the moment jealousy enters the breast, there is a perfect hell of happiness; and no scheme that hell itself can devise to torment, perplex, harass, disturb, vex and mar the peace of the wife, or the wife of the husband, is left untouched, unmoved; and by that time the breast of the harbinger is opened to all the evil spirits of Pandemonium, all have free access; and oh, what a world of glory dwells there.

And how shall that jealous spirit be removed? By the laying on of hands? The Lord deliver us from such an ordinance, in such a case. Why? That spirit was invited to take up its abode there, and while that spirit is made welcome by that person, what right have we to dispossess it? It would be abridging the agency of the individual who invited the spirit, for any one to cause that spirit to depart, without the persons leave, and we choose that all should exercise their own agency and responsibility, and then they are subjects of accountability.

Other spirits, not particularly invited or desired, gain an easy access to those who are careless, heedless, and but too indifferent to the statutes, ordinances, and duties of God's kingdom; who neglect their prayers, their assembling together, and doing as they would be done unto; and from these spirits arise contention, strife, evil thinking, evil speaking, evil surmising, detraction, revenge, law-suits, and a host of such perplexing annoyances, sufficient to disturb a nation; but the man who is obedient to his God *in all things*; who knows no will of his own, only to do the will of his father in heaven; is free from these spirits; the Devil has no power over him; for he resists him, and evil spirits are compelled to flee at his rebuke.

Some may ask "how shall I know when I am operated upon by a false spirit?" There are many keys by which the door of knowledge is unlocked to the saints, in relations to spirits, as well as other things pertaining to the kingdom; but one may suffice at the present time, for we have not designed this brief notice to cover all or any considerable portion of the ground which the subject includes.

The spirit of heaven is a spirit of peace, joy, comfort, consolation and knowledge to its possessor; and all saints who have enjoyed this spirit, (and all saints have more or less,) may know when this peaceful spirit dwelling within them is disturbed, that something is wrong, that some false spirit is lurking within or about them, striving to enter; and if they will resist the first impulse of their disturbed feelings, and command Satan in the name of Jesus to depart, peace will instantly be restored to their souls.

It is not the wrong doings of others which destroys that peace within ourselves which the world can neither give nor take away. It is our own wrongs which cause that peaceful spirit to leave us; and would to God that this truth were indelibly imprinted on the heart and recollection of every saint, *it is your own wrongs or evil spirits that destroy your peace, and not the wrongs of your friend or neighbor.* Know ye, all ye saints, if the peace of heaven and a foretaste of the blessings of the celestial world are not continually with you, there is something wrong within, some foul spirit has got possession of yourself, and the quicker you dispossess it the better.

Incidence of Possession

A young lady came to me last winter and said: "I would like to have you and President Dark and Patriarch Warren P. Smith" (who was formerly the bishop) "go over to Lehi" (a distance of three miles) "and administer to a lady who is very sick."

I said, "Why, they have brethren over there who are just as good as we are, and I don't know why we should go over there."

She said, "Well, I just feel that if you brethren will go over there and administer to that girl, she will get better," "Well, if it is all right with the brethren over there, why it will be all right."

So we went over, and we met at the home where the girl was sick, and when we went into the room the grandfather of the girl came to the door. He said, "Now, brethren, this is a very peculiar sickness that this young lady has: she is out of her mind, she doesn't know what she is doing, and if she knows you brethren are here, we will not be able to hold her; you can come in, she is in the next room." We went in; a cousin of the young lady was present; also one of our brethren, a member of our high council; also President Abel John Evans. We heard the statement of the grandfather and of the mother of the girl. She had been in this condition for nearly two weeks; they had been unable to control her. She refused to talk, and she was able to eat but very little, except what they could induce her to eat, with a great deal of effort, to maintain her existence. When we sat there deliberating upon what we should do, we thought perhaps she was possessed of evil spirits, and we remembered the saying of the Savior that this healing or administration should be done with fasting and prayer. We sat there deliberating upon the subject whether we ought to fast and pray first before we administered, or whether we ought to administer immediately to her. As we did so the thought came to us that if we let brother so and so go in, with whom she is acquainted, perhaps he could pacify her. As soon as we had decided that this brother should go in and talk to her, she sprang out of the arms of those who were trying to hold her and opened the door into the room where we were, then counted just like that (illustrating), and she went back and wrote on a piece of paper, "five evil spirits," and then she wrote underneath these words: "I don't want brother so and so to come in here; I hate him." Now how she knew that we had decided on that brother to go into that room I don't know, but after a great deal of persuasion the little girl who came to get us persuaded her to let a couple of the brethren come in and administer to her, and she said she would, and wrote it down. When the brethren went in she was standing with her face toward the wall; wouldn't look at them; they couldn't get her to sit down, but with the persuasion of this young lady, who seemed to have a great deal of influence with her, they persuaded her to sit down on a chair, and one of the brethren anointed her head with oil and the other brother confirmed the anointing and commanded and demanded that the evil spirit depart from her body and leave the room, when she sank down just like a limp rag. It was necessary to pick her up and place her on the lounge. She lay there just as weak as she could possibly be, without any strength, and before this, my brethren and sisters, the grandfather told me that he had strained his wrist trying to hold her, she was so strong.

About the third day after this administration, I received a telephone message to come to the home of this young lady who wanted us to go and administer to this girl, and I went up to the home, and when I arrived there, this young lady who had been administered to was present, just as well and normal as we are here now, talked sensibly and has been well ever since. Now, my brethren and sisters, I tell you this incident that the young people of Zion may know that the gifts of the gospel, promised to the believers, are with the Latter-day Saints, in order that they may be encouraged and feel that there is

power in the Priesthood.

Elder Stephen L. Chipman

Conference Report, Oct 1919, pp 168-169

Disobedience causes possession

A company of two hundred and forty-nine males, and two hundred and sixty-six females, a total of five hundred and fifteen souls, with twenty-seven tents, ninety-seven horses, twenty-two oxen, sixty-nine cows, camped about a quarter of a mile south of the Lord's House in Kirtland, on the fifth of July, 1838; and the next day started for Missouri. The journey was long and tedious; many difficulties were encountered and numerous obstacles overcome. A spirit of murmuring was frequently manifested, much sickness was in the camp, and because of their disobedience, evil spirits plagued them by getting possession of their bodies. At times they would camp by the way-side to rest their jaded teams, when the brethren would generally get a small contract of work to do; such as harvesting a field of grain, building fences or making road. In this way they spent the summer in journeying to Missouri, where they arrived late in autumn.

The Missouri Persecutions

Pg. 195

Instance of unclean spirits of religion

They have some tremendous combats with the devil in order to prepare for the contest, they would take off their coats and hats and roll up their sleeves, as though they had a Goliath [sic] to encounter, and after an engagement of several hours, they would finally succeed in divesting the room of these demons; but frequently after the doors were closed great exertion was made to prevent their returning again. These were some of the effects of that spirit which animated the bosom of these counterfeit Mormons. They taught their converts to contend for the same spirit which they possessed, and when they obtained it and were impelled by it, it produced a change of countenance depicted with horror; a trembling, twitching, falling down and wallowing in the mud; others would snort like wild beasts, bark as dogs, run through the creek, pretending to sing and speak in tongues, crying prophecy, prophecy; others would lie in a swoon for several hours, and springing to their feet again, state that the spirit had commanded them to chastise certain characters who were present, and would then fall upon them with all their strength as though they were to be exterminated in reality; one of these young ladies fell on her knees before me, and said, although I was a stranger yet she loved me because I was a preacher, and attempted to put her arms around my neck; I put forth my hand and rebuked the evil spirit by which she was actuated, and she immediately fell to the earth and wept with shame.

John D. Lee

A. Young

Samuel B. Frost

Letter From Tennessee, May 18, 1842

Times and Seasons, Vol 3, No 16, Pg. 821

Jesus Frequently Cast Out Devils

Jesus found foul spirits and devils so thick, in his days, that he had occasion frequently to cast them out of persons, and also to empower others to cast out devils. Some instances are recorded where many of these fallen spirits took possession of a single person at one and the same time. No less than seven occupied one female. Now modern Christianity must be highly favored, if

they are so much better than primitive Saints, that they can escape the annoyance of these multiplied and troublesome spirits.

How is it, sir, that devils do not trouble modern churches, as they did the primitive Saints? Are they done away too? Miracles and devils done away! The canon of Scripture closed! Miracles and devils ceased! Happy Christianity; thy warfare has ceased— thy troubles are ended! Blessed rest! Joyful reign of righteousness! As many ways to heaven now, as there are eyelets in a sieve! Oh, brother, blush for thy theology, and for the doleful conclusions to which thy creeds have brought thee!

The reign of Satan, for near eighteen hundred years, has almost effaced every relic of Bible truth from the earth. Every thing that is valuable and powerful in the ancient system of prophets is done away, and the devil himself is supposed, by many, to be merely the evil passions of men. But, sir, the devil is not dead nor done away.

Orson Spencer

Letters Exhibiting the Most Prominent Doctrine, pp 191-192

Judas was Possessed

Strange as it may appear at first thought, yet it is no less strange than true, that notwithstanding all the professed determination to live godly, apostates after turning from the faith of Christ, unless they have speedily repented, have sooner or later fallen into the snares of the wicked one, and have been left destitute of the Spirit of God, to manifest their wickedness in the eyes of multitudes. From apostates the faithful have received the severest persecutions. Judas was rebuked and immediately betrayed his Lord into the hands of His enemies, because Satan entered into him.

Joseph Smith

HC 2:23

Little Children Can Be Possessed

On the day following I parted with Elders Taylor and Fielding, who went to Liverpool, and with Elder Richards, who tarried in Preston. Elder Turley and I went to Manchester; it was the first time I had visited that city. There I met for the first time Elder William Clayton. As soon as I was introduced to him, he informed me that one of the sisters in that place was possessed of a devil. He asked me if I would not go and cast it out of her. He thought one of the Twelve Apostles could do most anything in such a case. I went with him to the house where the woman lay, in the hands of three men, in a terrible rage. She was trying to tear her clothing from her. I also found quite a number of Saints present, and some unbelievers, who had come to see the devil cast out and a miracle wrought.

Had I acted upon my own judgment I should have refrained from administering to her in the company of those present; but as I was a stranger there, and Brother Clayton presided over the branch, I joined with him in administering to the woman. The unbelief of the wicked who were present was so great that we could not cast the devil out of her, and she raged worse than ever; I then ordered the room to be cleared, and when the company, except the few attending her, had left the house, we laid hands upon her head, and in the name of Jesus Christ I commanded the devil to come out of her. The devil left, and she was entirely healed and fell asleep.

The next day being the Sabbath, the woman came before a large congregation of people, and bore testimony to what the Lord had done for her. We had a large assembly through the day and evening, to whom I preached the gospel. On Monday morning, the devil, not being satisfied with being cast out of the woman, entered into her little child, which was but a few months old. I was called upon to visit the child, and found it in great distress, writhing in its mother's arms. We laid hands upon it and

cast the devil out; the evil spirits thereafter had no power over that household. This was done by the power of God, and not of man. We laid hands upon twenty in Manchester who were sick, and most of them were healed.

Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors, Pgs. 114-115

Latter-day Saints Can Be Possessed

All manner of spirits have gone forth to deceive, to lead astray and to obtain possession of the children of men; and many people yield to them because they are invisible and cannot, perhaps, think they can be possessed by invisible influences (evil spirits). Anger, backbiting, slander, falsehood and various passions are manifested by people under the influence (possessed) of false and deceptive spirits....

George Q. Cannon
Gospel Truth, p 157

Listening to Lies of Others Can Cause Possession

I had ample evidence of the fact that lying spirits had gone out into the world, for three persons whom I had baptized had been visited by Mr. Douglass, who told them that I denied the Bible and could not be depended upon; and they yielded to his insinuations until the devil took possession of them, and they were in a disaffected condition, and sent for me.

When I met them they were in great affliction, but when I instructed them in regard to the principles of the gospel, and administered to them, they were delivered from the evil influence and rejoiced.

Wilford Woodruff
Leaves From My Journal, p 40

Men Possessed for Not Believing the Truth

I had ample evidence of the fact that lying spirits had gone out into the world, for three persons whom I had baptized had been visited by Mr. Douglass, who told them that I denied the Bible and could not be depended upon ; and they yielded to his insinuations until the devil took possession of them. They were in a disaffected condition, and sent for me. When I met them they were in great affliction, but when I instructed them in the principles of the gospel and administered to them, they were delivered from the evil influence and rejoiced.

Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors, p 84

Possession can be caused by depression, sin and physical weakness

Why did the demons desire to enter the bodies of the swine? or, for that matter, how came they to take up tenancy in the body of the man? We cannot tell and do not know how it is that evil spirits-few or many-gain entrance into the bodies of mortal men. We do know that all things are governed by law, and that Satan is precluded from taking possession of the bodies of the prophets and other righteous people. Were it not so, the work of God would be thwarted-always and in all instances-for Lucifer leads the armies of hell against all men, and more especially against those who are instrumental in furthering the Lord's work.

There must be circumstances of depression and sin and physical weakness that within the restrictions of divine control, permit evil spirits to enter human bodies. We do know their curse is to be

denied tabernacles, and we surmise that the desire for such tenancy is so great that they, when permitted, even enter the bodies of beasts.

Bruce R. McConkie
The Mortal Messiah, Vol. 2, p 282

Possession by Evil Spirits

There is a vast number of fallen spirits, cast out with him, here on the earth. They do not die and disappear; they have not bodies only as they enter the tabernacles of men. They have not organized bodies, and are not to be seen with the sight of the eye.

Elder Wilford Woodruff
JD 13:163

Possession – Wilford Woodruff

You can see the great variety of spirits that have dwelt in the presence of God, from those who are in the presence of God, down to the devils. A good many of the hosts of heaven were cast out because of their wickedness. Lucifer, son of the morning, and those who followed after him were cast down to earth, and they dwell here to this day—a hundred to every man, woman and child that breathes the breath of life. They dwell here without bodies, only what tabernacles they can get into, to rule and preside over.

Elder Wilford Woodruff
JD 18:114-115

Possession – Brigham Young

The Lord Almighty will not let anything endure that offers hospitality to the devil and his imps. Those who suffer their bodies to be dwellings for evil spirits, must suffer loss, for devils cannot construct a house that will in any way answer their purpose; neither have they been able to do so in all the eternities there are; that is the very thing which causes us trouble continually; for they are trying all the time to get into our dwellings, because they have none of their own. Did you ever desire to take possession of another person's tabernacle, and leave your own? No rational person owning a tabernacle would wish to do so. The devils have no tabernacles, which is the reason of their wanting to possess human bodies. If any of you have suffered any of these houseless spirits to enter you, turn them out, and they will perhaps seek refuge in the body of an ox, or some other animal, or maybe go into Jordan.

Do you think the legion we read of, that entered the swine, in the days of Christ, had bodies of their own? No; they have no meetinghouses but in ballrooms, gaming houses, brothels, gin palaces, parlors, bedrooms, and other places which they frequent in the bodies of those they lead captive; otherwise they are wandering to and fro in the earth, seeking to possess tabernacles that other spirits, not of their order, already occupy. They are in our midst watching for an opportunity to enter where they may. What will be the doom of those who give way to them, and yield to them the possession of their tabernacles? They will wander to and fro, happiness will be hid from them, they will weep, and wail, and suffer, until their bodies return to their mother earth, and their spirits to judgment.

President Brigham Young
JD 2:128-129

People can be Re-possessed by Evil Spirits

After giving an account of his labors in the Historian's Office for the months of January and February, Apostle Woodruff's journal of March 17th contains the narration of a peculiar circumstance which transpired at the City Hall. The police had in their custody a man possessed of evil spirits. He was a raving maniac. Elder Woodruff called to see him, and being alone with him, he laid his hands upon the man's head and commanded the devils to leave him. They obeyed; and the man became instantly sane and begged Elder Woodruff to take him to his home. The latter complied, and the man remained in a sane condition of mind until about one o'clock the following morning, when he again became possessed. Again Elder Woodruff rebuked the evil spirit. The man was relieved and remained quiet until morning. There were some subsequent attacks upon this unfortunate, but through the power of faith, he was healed.

Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors, pp 444-445

Possession Common

Hence he exerts an invisible agency over the spirits of men, darkens their minds, and uses his infernal power to confound, corrupt, destroy and envelope the world in confusion, misery, and distress; and, although deprived personally of operating with a body, he uses his influence over the spirits of those who have bodies, to resist goodness, virtue, purity, intelligence, and the fear of God; and consequently, the happiness of man; and poor erring humanity is made the dupe of his wiles. The Apostle says, "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Cor. iv. 4. But not content with the ravages he has made, the spoliation, misery, and distress, not having a tabernacle of his own, he has frequently sought to occupy that of man, in order that he might yet possess greater power, and more fully accomplish the devastation.

John Taylor

The Government Of God, pp 32-33

Possession

Now, in this world, mankind are naturally selfish, ambitious and striving to excel one above another; yet some are willing to build up others as well as themselves. So in the other world there are a variety of spirits. Some seek to excel. And this was the case with Lucifer when he fell. He sought for things which were unlawful. Hence he was sent down, and it is said he drew many away with him; and the greatness of his punishment is that he shall not have a tabernacle. This is his punishment. So the devil, thinking to thwart the decree of God, by going up and down in the earth, seeking whom he may destroy any person that he can find that will yield to him, he will bind him, and take possession of the body and reign there, glorying in it mightily, not caring that he had got merely a stolen body; and by-and-by some one having authority will come along and cast him out and restore the tabernacle to its rightful owner. The devil steals a tabernacle because he has not one of his own: but if he steals one, he is always liable to be turned out of doors.

Joseph Smith

HC 5:388

On Possession

The spirits in the eternal world are like the spirits in this world. When those have come into this world and received tabernacles, then died and again have risen and received glorified bodies, they will have an ascendancy over the spirits who have received no bodies, or kept not their first estate, like the

devil. The punishment of the devil was that he should not have a habitation like men. The devil's retaliation is, he comes into this world, binds up men's bodies, and occupies them himself. When the authorities come along, they eject him from a stolen habitation.

Joseph Smith
HC 5:403

Satan often possesses bodies

Satan and his evil angels are bodiless. That is their heavy punishment. Their power, now and hereafter, is greatly limited by this lack. Therefore, they often seek entrance into human bodies, even bodies of lower animals. Whenever this occurs, the individual thus made to share his body is caused much agonized suffering.

Elder John A. Widtsoe
Evidences and Reconciliations, p 109

Satan has three main purposes

Satan's plan is well documented, then. There are three things that Satan sets out to do. First, he plans to destroy the agency of man. That was the issue in the contest which resulted in his expulsion with the third of the hosts of heaven. Moses declared that he is here "to destroy the agency of man" (Moses 4:3). Now, therefore, we may see him in power wherever we see an individual so overwhelmed by his own habits as a result of his sinning and where he seems powerless to control his habits and evil tendencies. You will find that in evidence in men who have vicious habits, who claim they are overwhelmed by a power that is beyond their control. Then you may conclude that you have one who has so far lost the power of agency that he is almost [under] the control of that evil power which is trying to destroy him. Likewise in that nation where representative government has given way to the will of dictatorships, there you may see the power of Satan, or the "prince of this world," reigning in great demonstration.

Satan's second purpose is to possess the bodies of Adam and his posterity. Why? Elder John Taylor, in his very excellent work *The Government of God* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1852), discusses this subject:

[Satan] exerts an invisible agency over the spirits of men, darkens their minds, and uses his infernal power to confound, corrupt, destroy and envelop the world in confusion, misery, and distress; and, although deprived personally of operating with a body, he uses his influence over the spirits of those who have bodies, to resist goodness, virtue, purity, intelligence, and the fear of God; and consequently, the happiness of man; and poor erring humanity is made the dupe of his wiles. But not content with the ravages he has made, the spoliation, misery, and distress, not having a tabernacle of his own, he has frequently sought to occupy that of man, in order that he might yet possess greater power, and more fully accomplish the devastation.

The third purpose of Satan, which is described carefully and accurately in the scriptures, was to make captive the souls of men (see Alma 34:35; 2 Nephi 26:22).

Harold B, Lee
The Teachings Of Harold B. Lee, pp 37-38

Possession by devils is a positive fact

These evil spirits have great power to tempt, persuade and entice men to deny the correct origin of man. We do not see them, but we do feel their presence, and unconsciously we hearken to their

whisperings. Having been denied bodies they, at times, steal them. It is a common error, especially in scientific circles to scoff at such a thing as the temptation by the devil and more especially so to ridicule the idea that these wicked spirits have power to possess living bodies and subdue the spirit within them. But all the scoffing and ridicule does not change the fact. The stories of possession as recorded in the New Testament are true. The scoffer cannot explain away successfully the casting out of devils by Jesus Christ, when they called him by name and he commanded them to hold their peace; the story of the devils asking to enter the bodies of swine; the story of the seven sons of Sceva, and numerous others listed in the scriptures. There are scores of such incidents that have occurred in this dispensation. Our missionaries can give the evidence in such cases. No, it is not always a diseased mind that disturbs the normal thinking, the possession by devils is a positive fact.

Joseph Fielding Smith
Man, His Origin and Destiny, pp 282-283

Possession of the More Favored Spirits

Satan's punishment and the punishment of his followers for their rebellion in heaven, Joseph Smith the Prophet said, is that they are denied mortal bodies. The said punishment is terrible and will make those who receive it most unhappy for the reason that they are halted, they cannot progress, they cannot go forward, cannot attain a full measure of happiness.

Their eagerness to secure bodies is so great that in many cases they endeavor to steal the bodies of the more favored spirits, and when these evil spirits enter into and take possession of the bodies of others we say of those afflicted that they are possessed by evil spirits. They can only be subdued and cast out of stolen bodies by those members of Christ's Church who are under divine authority.

President Rudger Clawson
CR, Apr 1939, 118

Possession occurs all the time

You think it was an exceptional miracle when, after crossing the sea, the Savior with his disciples came upon one who was a maniac, and cast the devils out of him, but it was not; it is something that is occurring (sic) all the times (sic). It was my privilege, in company with Elder June B. Sharp, of this city, to go into an asylum down in the city of Cape Town, and there we found a woman insane, whose husband had heard of the Latter-day Saints and who had written and asked if we would visit her. We went there, and they told us that she was mad, and they took us into her presence, and we saw from her eyes that she was possessed, and I said to Elder Sharp, "She is possessed of an evil spirit: we will rebuke it." And we bowed our heads, and by virtue of the Holy Priesthood in us vested, we commanded that he come out of her and leave her. And from that instant, she was healed. We went away from the asylum, and a day or two later. Elder Sharp left for home. I was going down a week later to see how she was getting on. I met one of the nurses and she said, "Why, she has gone home: after you men were here the other day, she suddenly regained her senses, and after we watched her for about a week, we released her, and she has gone back up to her home." We heard no more about her for about six months, when one of our elders, traveling without purse or scrip, from Bloemfontein down to East London, stopped and held a cottage meeting in Queenstown, and a strange woman stood up in the cottage meeting and said. "I feel that I must bear my testimony to what these men have been saying. I tell you that I was mad, insane, and two of these men came into the insane asylum, and by the power which they said they had, they rebuked in the name of Jesus Christ the evil spirits which they declared possessed me, and from that instant I was another woman; I was cured absolutely."

Smart Devils Possess Smart People

If those troops could have come in here, let me tell you, all the finest and smartest devils would have entered into the smartest bodies and come here to overturn us. You will not catch a mean, low, inferior, stupid devil in a smart man. I will tell you the Devil has his smart men. Says he, “You get into a smart body.” Smart spirits do not get into inferior bodies. Would you? No. Well, then, do you suppose they would do what we would not do under the same circumstances?

Was not Lucifer a pretty smart lad? Just look at it—son of the morning—when all heaven wept when he fell. He was a smart man. It takes a smart man—that is, one who thinks he is, to act the devil.

President Heber C. Kimball
JD 6:35

If people did not allow themselves to be possessed, sin would cease

So long as evil spirits can obtain possession of living, human beings and influence them according to their wishes, so long has evil a tangible existence upon the earth. If there were no tabernacles for them to operate through—no men and women who would allow them to use their bodies (the great object of their desire, because of their own great lack of earthly attributes)—evil and sin would have no existence upon the earth....

George Q. Cannon
Gospel Truth, p 500

Spirit of different sins

While the brethren were speaking upon one point, namely, the disposition of some people to imbibe spirituous liquor, it brought some reflections to my mind connected with the influences that prevail throughout the various portions of the earth. I believe there are places and circumstances in which people can be placed, where there are influences of this character brought to bear upon them that are more difficult to resist than there would be under other circumstances and in other places. I have often heard it remarked by the brethren, and I have remarked it myself, that in some places there is a greater disposition entertained by the people to commit adultery and indulge in kindred sins of this description than there is in this country. There seem to be influences in the atmosphere in those lands of such a character, that unless a person is on his guard and constantly watching and resisting them, he will be led down to destruction by them. A spirit and disposition will creep over the people unless they are careful, to lead them astray in the direction which I have named. This is undoubtedly the case. There are spirits in the atmosphere that are filled with that disposition, and who seek to influence those with whom they are brought in contact, impressing those who are in the tabernacle of flesh to indulge in the same sin.

There are influences in the atmosphere that are invisible to us that, while we **30** are here upon the earth, we ought to resist with all our might, mind, and strength—influences which, if we would be led by them, would lead us to destruction—influences that are opposed to the Spirit of God—influences that would bring upon us destruction here and hereafter, if we would yield to them. These influences we have to resist. We have to resist the spirit of adultery, the spirit of whoredom, the spirit of drunkenness, the spirit of theft, and every other evil influence and spirit, that we may continually overcome; and, when we have finished our work on the earth, be prepared to govern and control those

influences, and exercise power over them, in the presence of our Father and God. I have no doubt that many of my brethren and sisters have sensibly felt in various places and at various times evil influences around them. Brother Joseph Smith gave an explanation of this. There are places in the Mississippi Valley where the influence or the presence of invisible spirits are very perceptibly felt. He said that numbers had been slain there in war, and that there were evil influences or spirits which affect the spirits of those who have tabernacles on the earth. I myself have felt those influences in other places besides the continent of America; I have felt them on the old battle grounds on the Sandwich Islands. I have come to the conclusion that if our eyes were open to see the spirit world around us, we should feel differently on this subject than we do; we would not be so unguarded and careless, and so indifferent whether we had the spirit and power of God with us or not; but we would be continually watchful and prayerful to our heavenly Father for His Holy Spirit and His holy angels to be around about us to strengthen us overcome every evil influence.

When I see young men indulging in drunkenness and in stealing, I come to the conclusion that they are led captive by the evil spirits around them. We call it the spirit of the evil one; but he has numerous agencies at work, even as the Lord has numerous agencies to assist him in bringing to pass the consummation of His great designs. The adversary has numerous agencies at his command, and he seeks to control and lead to destruction the inhabitants of the earth who will be subject to them. If we could see with our spiritual senses as we now see with our natural senses, we should be greatly shocked at the sight of the influences that prompt us to disobey the counsels of God or the Spirit of the Lord in our hearts. But we cannot see them, for they are spiritually discerned; and he who discerns the most, is the most fully impressed by the Spirit of God; he who does not discern, has not profited by the instructions given to him, and yields to those evil influences in an unguarded moment, and is taken captive in his blindness. He who is imbued with the Spirit of God is sensibly aware when the evil power approaches; but he does not welcome it to his bosom; he resists it with all the might and strength God has given unto him, and he obtains power over it, and it no more troubles him; if it does, its influence is more weakened than previously.

Elder George Q. Cannon
JD 11:29-30

Sunday School Lesson Teaching About Possession

Guide Department

THE TEACHINGS OF THE SAVIOR.

LESSON XI.

For third meeting in February.

REVIEW OF LESSONS V-IX.

One half of the miracles performed by the Savior deal with the healing of the physical ailments of the human body. On at least two occasions the Savior healed persons afflicted with the terrible scourge of leprosy. It is interesting; to note that the Savior, who did not desire His followers to build their testimonies upon miracles often avoided performing them; but when His suffering brethren came to Him with petitions, His sympathy over came Him and the miracles were performed. In the healing of the lepers, it is also interesting to note that of ten lepers who were healed, only one came back to follow Christ. Something more than miracles is required to establish in the hearts of men a testimony of the gospel.

Five of the healing miracles made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak. In these

miracles great faith was shown by those who were healed, and it would appear that great faith is always irresistible. The Savior never refused it.

Each of the healing miracles taught a lesson in itself, though in the great majority of cases the value of great faith was the most important lesson taught. The discussions that usually followed the performance of a miracle enabled the Savior to expound many important principles pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

Most of the healing miracles were performed upon persons who were in the vicinity of the Savior. In some cases, however, people who were far away from the Savior were touched by His healing influence. In this way Jesus showed that His powers were not limited to the necessity of contact with the object to be acted upon. God uses the natural forces as His servants, and He is able to transmit His will from world to world, if it be necessary.

Not only did the Savior perform miracles of healing the body, but diseases of the mind were frequently overcome by His divine power. The devil and his angels are bodiless, which is a part of their punishment for their rebellion in Heaven. In their great desire to possess mortal bodies, they frequently enter into the bodies of men and women to the serious injury of the person. At times they will enter even the bodies of lower animals. Many cases of individuals possessed by evil spirits, came under the notice of the Savior, and He frequently had occasion to cast out evil spirits. As a remarkable testimony of the truth of the claim of Jesus that He was the son of God is the oft repeated statement of the Gospels that the evil spirits recognized Jesus, and openly confessed that they knew Him to be the Son of God. The casting out of devils led to many fine testimonies of the truth of the work that Jesus was establishing. However, the Pharisees, and other persecutors of Jesus, who saw many of the miracles performed, paid no heed to them, except to charge that they were done by the power of the devil. The discussions that resulted from the performance of the miracles, however, frequently confounded the enemies of Jesus.

To the human mind, the greatest miracle that can be performed is the raising of the dead. No human agency has been able to return to life, even for a moment, a person who has passed the portal of death. The Savior, however, had the power to perform this miracle of miracles. Not often did He raise the dead; but on a few occasions He compelled the spirit to return to the mortal body from which it had departed. These most wonderful miracles resulted, generally, from the overflowing love of Jesus for His fellowmen. In the presence of sorrow and suffering, His compassion rose uppermost, and He was impelled to give His divine aid to those who were tried. The raising of the dead man Lazarus, was one of the last miracles performed by the Savior; and as it was performed just before the week of His trial and execution, it had much to do with awakening in the hearts of His old enemies their fear and hatred of Him.

One by one, the miracles of the Savior may be studied; and in each one, lessons of great truth may be discovered. To the Master of the universe, the miracles were simply expressions of His infinite power and knowledge—to us, they surpass understanding.

Among the methods of teaching employed by the Savior, that of parables is most attractive to most people. A parable is usually a wholly imaginary story which teaches some important truth. However, the parable always deals with events and situations that are possible, and probably do occur in actual life. In that respect the parable differs from the fable, in which the lower animals are frequently given the power to speak and think; and from the myth, which is often a fanciful story in which gods and demigods are made to appear and disappear. In one sense, a parable is a perfectly true story, since it is one that may happen.

It may be noted that the parables told by the Savior, justify story telling as a legitimate manner of conveying information. The Savior taught largely in parables because the people with whom He labored were not in a position to understand the simple statement of the gospel truth. The story

interested them and they were led to think about the moral that it contained, and in that manner many became conscious of the great truths that the Savior desired to impress upon them. Moreover, it required more intellectual effort to get the truth out of a parable than to accept it simply and directly stated ; that which is given for nothing is seldom greatly appreciated.

The parables fall into three great classes: first those that deal with the general principles of the plan of salvation and the Kingdom of Heaven: second, those that deal almost wholly with the charity of God towards His sinful children; and third, those that deal with the great judgments that will be measured out to those who fail to keep the word of God.

The parable of the Sower teaches that the gospel is like a seed, in that it flourishes best where the soil is in the proper condition: that is to say when the gospel is taught to a man with a heart undesirous of receiving God's word, the gospel will not take hold upon that man to change him for the better. It is important that we all prepare ourselves to receive the gospel message.

The parable of the Tares teaches that all kinds of people are gathered into the church of Christ frequently the good and the bad seem so nearly alike that it is difficult to distinguish them. In time, however, when they begin to show their faith by their works, a distinction appears. The parable further teaches, that the tares in the Kingdom of God are not to be removed until seed time comes, because mistakes may be made, and they are to be given a chance to produce seed if it is in them. A Christian life must be led in a heartfelt manner. The counterfeit follower of Christ will, at last, be destroyed.

The parable of the Drag Net teaches practically the same moral. The gospel is for all men, but not all men accept it as they should. All is well with the gospel. It is the business of man to see to it that all is well with himself.

The parable of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl teach that a possession of the Kingdom of God is above earthly price, and that he who disposes of all he possesses to acquire a right in God's Kingdom, makes no mistake. A person is justified in sacrificing his all for the gospel's sake.

The lesson taught in the parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven is one that gives great joy to every Christian. When Jesus spoke, it was under the persecution and contempt of His people, yet He declared, that as a mustard seed grows to a large herb, and the leaven influences many measures of flour, so His message would touch all mankind. This has been fulfilled literally in the years since Christianity was first established. So, we may feel today that the truth of God as taught by Joseph Smith, will ultimately triumph. Similarly in the life of an individual, the gospel will leaven the whole man, until he changes in spiritual strength beyond the recognition of his own strength.

A somewhat similar moral is taught in the parable of the Blade, the Ear, and the Full Corn. As in the life of a plant there is gradual and steady growth, leading to the production of seed, so there will be a similar growth in the life of any individual" who enters the Kingdom of God and partakes of its power. Moreover, the Lord watches over the growth. If we do our simple duty we shall grow in spite of ourselves.

REVIEW AND QUESTIONS.

1. How many of the miracles deal with the healing of physical ailments?
2. In many cases, what was the reason why (lie Savior performed miracles?
3. Why are not miracles sufficient to establish a testimony of the truth of thegospel ?
4. In what way are the miracles lessons in faith?
5. What was nearly always an incidental but important- result of the miracles?
6. Why do evil spirits enter the bodies of men and animals?
7. What did the evil spirits testify concerning Jesus?
8. How did the Pharisees receive the miracles?

9. What were the greatest miracles of the Savior?
10. What appears to have been the leading motive of the Savior in raising the dead?
11. What is the most attractive method of teaching employed by the Savior?
12. What is a parable?
13. How does a parable differ from a myth? From a fable?
14. Why did the Savior teach in parables?
15. Into what great classes do the parables fall?
16. What is the moral of the parable of the Sower? The Tares? The Hidden Treasure? The Pearl of Great Price and the Mustard Seed?

The Teachings of the Savior

Lesson 11

The Young Woman's Journal

Vol. 18, No. 1, January 1907, pp 36-38

Sunday School Lesson Teaching About Possession 2

How the Savior Taught by Miracles

Lesson VI

4. Mind Miracles and Raising the Dead

Man is composed of body and spirit. There are diseases of the spirit as of the body. The condition of the body influences the Spirit; and any disorder of the spirit affect the body. Since, however, the spirit is subtler than common matter, it is more difficult to understand and cure diseases of the spirit than the common ailments of the body. The power of the Savior penetrated body and spirit. Many of the most marvelous miracles are those that affected the spiritual part of man.

There are in existence numerous spirits. Many are good, and some are evil. At the great council in heaven, when the plan of salvation was formulated, the devil turned away one-third of the hosts of heaven, who became the angels of the devil. These spirits are not permitted to come on earth in mortal bodies. This is their great punishment. No spirit can attain full happiness unless it is clothed upon with a body obtained in a probationary earth existence. The angels of the devil know this, and attempt to circumvent the will of God in various ways. They will enter the bodies of men and women, to the serious injury of the person; and at times will enter bodies of the lower animals. Moreover, since the mission of these unclean spirits is to do evil, by their influence and suggestion they may torment the minds and bodies of men. The miracles of the Savior therefore, which dealt with the diseases of the mind, frequently concerned themselves with the spirits that as emissaries of the evil one seek power over the children of men.

Very soon after the beginning of Christ's ministry he was recognized by an evil spirit (read Mark 1:23-26). The man who was possessed declared that Jesus was the "Holy One of God." When in obedience to Christ's command, the spirit left the man, the people marveled, for such a thing had never been seen before. This miracle must have taught to those present that Christ was indeed a divine teacher for even the spirits of evil admitted it.

This power over spirits that afflicted humanity the Savior manifested on many occasions. One of the most remarkable spirit miracles is recorded in Mark 5:1-20 (which read). Across the lake of Galilee was a man who was terribly possessed of spirits. When Jesus appeared these spirits were afraid, and pleaded with Jesus, that if cast out, they might be allowed to enter the bodies of some swine that were feeding near by. This petition was granted with the result that the frightened swine were drowned in the lake. In this case, also, the unclean spirits acknowledged the place of the Savior as the Son of

God. The most striking lesson taught by this miracle is perhaps the almost uncontrollable desire of the spirits for bodies, which harmonizes with the doctrine regarding the purpose of man's coming upon earth.

A fine lesson in the power of faith and prayer was taught in the healing of the lunatic boy (read Mark 9: 14-29). The apostles had been unable to heal a boy whose mind was afflicted. When the Savior had accomplished the miracle he explained that such work can be done only by fasting and prayer. It was at this time that he told his followers that if they had faith "as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you"(a).

Several of these spirit miracles show how utterly useless it is to convert men by miracles alone. The Pharisees and other persecutors of Jesus saw many of the miracles that he performed, but paid no heed to them, except to charge that they were done by the power of the devil. However, the miracles frequently resulted in discussions that confounded the Pharisees. For instance, on an occasion when the Savior had cast out an evil spirit from a boy who was dumb and blind, the Pharisees declared that it was done by the power of Beelzebub. This led Jesus to ask them if they thought that the devil would cast out his own, and if a kingdom divided against itself could stand. This silenced the enemies of God for the time being(b).

To the human mind the greatest miracle that can be performed is the raising of the dead. No merely human agency has been able to return to life, even for a moment, a person who has passed the portal of death. Still as the history of the Savior is read it becomes evident that he, the Master, has the same power over death, that he has over living things. Death is only the separation of the eternal spirit from the mortal body; and, given the power to compel the spirit to return, the fact of the raising from the dead may be understood.

The Savior did not perform this miracle of miracles very often; but whenever it was effected it caused a feeling, akin to consternation and fear, to pass over the people. Over many things, man may have power, but God only is the Master of death.

At the time that the Savior taught, many believed that there is no life hereafter, but that death is the final end of life. It seems that Jesus raised the dead to show that this doctrine was untrue. There is no more glorious doctrine in the Gospel of Christ than the knowledge that there is life hereafter, and that we shall inherit eternal life.

In the miracle of raising the dead daughter of Jairus (read Mark 5:22-24, 35-43), the Savior expressly declared that the girl slept, meaning no doubt, that the change that had come over her was not permanent, but would lead to an awakening. This he proved by recalling her immediately to a continuation of mortal life. The lesson in this miracle needs no reinforcement.

However, the few miracles of this nature seem mostly to have been caused by the overflowing love of the Savior for all mankind. The raising of the widow's son at Nain shows this. The widow was probably in poor circumstances. Her only son had died. The woman had no one but God to look to for earthly help. To human eyes it was an extremely sad case. To the clear vision of the Savior the pathos of the conditions was bared; and, filled with compassion, he returned the boy to his mother.

The raising of Lazarus was somewhat of the same nature(c). The Savior loved Lazarus and his two sisters. The family had frequently cared for the Savior in the day of his trial. To the home of Martha and Mary the Master had often gone for earthly comfort. Now the brother was dead; and the beloved sisters were anguished in their sorrow. Christ's love for all who suffered welled up and Lazarus was restored to life, to live until he was an old man. Though this was no doubt in part the motive of this miracle, yet there was, another motive of great importance to the cause of Christ. The raising of Lazarus was done as a great testimony to the might of Jesus. Lazarus had been four days dead when Jesus called him forth from the grave. No other miracle performed by the Savior appears so mighty.

The event occurred just before the crucifixion when great testimonies needed to be given to a wicked people. In fact, it did make a most remarkable impression upon the people who heard of it and the news was rapidly spread over the Holy Land. It was an unheard-of marvel, even among the miracles of the Man from Nazareth.

In this manner, the miracles maybe taken one by one and studied, and in all lessons of great truth may be discovered. Nothing that the Savior said or did is devoid of meaning to those who seek salvation. To the Master of the Universe, the miracles were simple expressions of his infinite power and knowledge; to us, they surpass understanding.

(a) Matt. 17: 20.

(b) Matt. 12: 22-28.

(c) John 11: 1-44.

Review and Questions

1. What constitutes man?
2. How many spirits followed Lucifer at the rebellion in Heaven?
3. What is the great punishment of the angels of the devil?
4. Why do evil spirits enter the bodies of men and animals?
5. What did the evil spirits usually say when the Savior came near them?
6. Relate the miracle of permitting the spirits to enter the swine. What lesson can you draw from this miracle?
7. Relate the miracle of the healing of the lunatic boy. What is the great lesson of the miracle?
8. How do the miracles of Jesus show that men are not necessarily converted by miracles alone?
9. What is the greatest kind of miracle?
10. What did the miracles of raising the dead teach?
11. What is the most glorious doctrine contained in the Gospel of Christ?
12. Relate the story of the raising of the daughter of Jairus. What is its lesson?
13. Relate the story of the raising of the widow's son at Nain. What is its lesson?
14. Why do you think Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead?

How the Savior Taught by Miracles

Lesson VI

The Young Woman's Journal

Vol. 17, No. 10, Oct 1906, Pgs. 468-470

Rebuking and Casting Out Evil Spirits

Casting out devils from man in police custody

The police had in their custody a man possessed of evil spirits. He was a raving maniac. Elder Woodruff called to see him, and being alone with him, he laid his hands upon the man's head and commanded the devils to leave him. They obeyed; and the man became instantly sane and begged Elder Woodruff to take him to his home. The latter complied, and the man remained in a sane condition of mind until about one o'clock the following morning, when he again became possessed. Again Elder Woodruff rebuked the evil spirit. The man was relieved and remained quiet until morning. There were some subsequent attacks upon this unfortunate, but through the power of faith, he was healed.

Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors
Pg. 445

Casting Out Evil Spirits and Healing the Sick – Women Giving Blessings

It seems that the gifts here named are general gifts, intended more or less for the whole Church; not only for those in the Priesthood, but for those out of the Priesthood, for males and for females. For instance, children are often taken sick, and it is the privilege of their parents, whether they have the Priesthood or not, by virtue of this promise, to lay their hands on their sick children, and ask the Lord, in the name of Jesus, to heal them. Suppose that the father, the head of the family, is absent, has the mother the right to lay her hands upon her sick child? We say that, by virtue of this promise which the Lord has made, she may lay her hands upon her child or children, and ask God to heal it or them. How many scores and scores of cases have there been in this Church, every year since it was organized, where the parents, both brethren and sisters, have had power over disease, through the Spirit of God being poured out upon them, and their children have been healed through the laying on of their hands? Here, then, is another point wherein we differ from the religious world. Go and ask them if they will come and visit a sick person. “Oh yes,” says the minister, “I will visit the sick.” When he arrives, the sick person or his friends request him to pray. That is all right and in accordance with the Gospel. They kneel down, and the minister prays that the Lord will look in mercy upon the sick person, and, if it please him, heal and restore him. But do they lay on hands or anoint with oil as the Scriptures direct? The Scriptures say—“If anyone among you is sick, let him send for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray for him”—it is all right to pray—“and let them anoint the sick in the name of the Lord.” Now, when they do this they are complying with the requisitions of the Gospel of the Son of God, and why not follow this ordinance of laying on of hands on the sick, and anointing them with oil, just as well as following the praying part? No wonder that they do not have power over sickness and disease, for they only attend to half their duties—they pray, but neglect the other part. Inquires one, “Cannot the Lord hear prayer and heal the sick just as well without laying on of hands and anointing with oil as with?” He could have thrown down the walls of Jericho without the children of Israel walking around them and blowing rams' horns; but the Lord has a form, then why not comply with it, and leave the event with him. It requires faith on the part of the sick in order to be healed; they ought to have faith as well as their friends. When an infant child is sick, it, of course, is not required to exercise faith; but its parents and friends can exercise faith on its behalf, as was done in ancient times. Sometimes sickness will deprive an adult person of his senses, in that case his friends may exercise faith for him. But where there is no faith in God, as in the case of infants, his servants may prevail, and heal the sick, but this is

not always the case. For instance, as great a man as Paul was, a person who had the gift of healing to such a degree that even by carrying a handkerchief, or some little article from him to those who were sick, devils would flee and the sick would be healed; I say that as great a man as he was obliged on a certain occasion to leave one of his fellow laborers in the ministry sick at Miletus. Why? Because he had not faith. People may sometimes have faith, and at other times they do not exercise it; sometimes people are appointed unto death, and in such cases the administrations of the Elders are not likely to be effectual. If believers could always exercise faith to be healed of disease, all the ancient Saints might be living now, eighteen hundred years after they were born. But the Lord heals the sick when it seems good unto him, and he gives us, inasmuch as we are not appointed unto death, the privilege of calling upon his name, and of having the administrations of his servants in our behalf. This has been practiced ever since this Church was organized—forty-three years since—and if it had done no good, if there had been no healings in that time, do you suppose the Latter-day Saints would continue to be members of the Church? No, the Church would have quickly broken up, it would not have lasted more than two or three years if its members had not found the promises verified, according to the word of the Lord; but they have found that the Lord really does stretch forth his hand to heal the sick, and that he does raise them up from the very point of death, and restore them, almost instantly, to health and strength. Knowing this to be the case, the afflicted Saints have faith in the ordinances, and they continue sending for the Elders, and God blesses their administrations.

Then, if I received a spirit by which, in the name of Jesus Christ, I was enabled to rebuke sickness, and that sickness was rebuked, and the persons were raised up, should I not have reason to believe that I had received that true Spirit of the Gospel, called the Holy Ghost? I certainly should. If I received a revelation telling me what would be the best course for me to pursue under certain circumstances, should I not know that it was a revelation from God?

I think I should know, just as well as the ancient Prophets knew when they received a revelation. If I received knowledge by revelation concerning this, that or the other thing or principle, would not that be a testimony to me that I had received the Holy Ghost? Again, if I was sick and afflicted and in great pain, and I sent for the Elders of the Church to come and pray for me and to rebuke the disease which was afflicting me, and, in the name of Jesus, command it to depart, and it was done, would not this be a testimony unto me that the Lord had heard the prayers of his servants, and that he had really and truly verified his promise? Certainly.

Elder Orson Pratt
JD 16:289-291

Casting out Foul Spirits – Quoted by President Monson

Go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, full of the power of God, and full of faith to heal the sick even by the touch of your hand, rebuking and casting out foul spirits, and causing the poor among men to rejoice, and you will return bringing your sheaves with you. If you do not go in this way your mission will not be very profitable to yourselves nor to the people. I wish you to bear this in mind.

Brigham Young
JD 12:33

Conversation with an evil spirit 1

I am about to relate an incident that I have in writing from the brother that experienced the wonderful event, and whom I afterwards met in intimate seclusion, when I received a more minute rehearsal of the event from his own lips. I will copy from the written statement, omitting all real

names.

“Having been sick a long time, I sent for President Goodman and Elder Dry—(we will call the gentlemen by these names, for the sake of having names) on the 21st of January, 1889. They came in the evening and anointed me with oil, laid hands upon me and prayed for me earnestly. They remained with me until late in the evening. After they had left the house I was for a short time alone.”

The reason why he was alone, as he related to me, his wife went to a neighbor's house close by while the brethren were there, so as not to leave him alone with the baby, but as soon as she was gone the brethren went out.

“And a personage opened the door and entered the room where I was in bed. He began conversation as follows:”

“Well, that was a heavy lick we gave you.”

“I made no reply. Presently he continued, ‘But it was not quite enough to send you over.’”

“I replied, ‘While you were at it why did you not finish me?’”

“We were called on to halt.”

“I asked, ‘Do you make a practice of minding such calls?’”

“‘We have to,’ was his reply.”

“I said, ‘How is that?’”

“‘You know as well as I do,’ said he.”

“I inquired, ‘In case you should not?’”

“He replied, ‘When called upon by that authority, if we fail to mind, we get so roughly handled that for a time we scarcely know where we are, so we would sooner mind when called on.’”

“I asked, ‘Are you not sorry you were interfered with?’”

“‘No, not at all,’ he replied.”

“‘How is that?’ I asked.”

“He replied, ‘We have so much of the kind to do; it has long since ceased to be a pleasure.’”

“‘Well, then, why do you not quit the business?’”

“‘We cannot,’ was his answer.”

“‘How is that?’ I asked.”

“‘We live under the most despotic government you can conceive of,’ he replied,” and Brother Burgess (we will call him) said to me that he told more about that government than he was willing to repeat.

Well, Brother Burgess said to him, “Notwithstanding all you have told me, your room would be more congenial to me than your company.”

“‘Yes,’ said he, ‘I suppose so.’”

“And he retired by the same way he came in.”

It was related to me that he opened and shut the door as plainly as his wife did a few moments after the spirit retired.

Oliver B. Huntington

“Spiritual Experiences”, The Young Woman’s Journal, Volume 6, Number 4, Jan 1895, Pg. 189-190
Paragraph formatting, punctuation, grammar and spelling standardized.

Conversation with an evil spirit 2

A person knew himself to be under the tormenting influence of an evil spirit, from whom he could not obtain release. After three weeks of suffering he sent for the elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They came, and by the authority of the Priesthood rebuked the spirit of evil and the victim released saw the departing spirit, and said, "How do you like to be cast out?" The angel of

torment answered, "I am glad." The man said, "Why, then, have you remained here and tormented me so long?" The answer was, "If you knew the torment I should have been subjected to, had I refused to torment you, you would not ask the question."

Lesson XI—The Higher The Law, The Greater The Liberty, The Lower The Law, The Less The Liberty
Improvement Era, Volume 23, No. 2, Dec 1919, Pg. 165

Devil cast out of a woman

We addressed the people several times during this conference, and at its close were called to administer to a woman who was possessed of a devil. At times she was dumb and greatly afflicted with the evil spirits that dwelt in her. She believed in Jesus, and in us as His servants, and wished us to administer to her. Four of us laid our hands upon her head, and in the name of Jesus Christ commanded the devil to depart from her. The evil spirits left immediately, and the woman arose with great joy and gave thanks and praise unto God; for, according to her faith, she was made whole from that hour. A child that was sick was also healed by the laying on of hands, according to the word of God.

Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors, Pg. 71

Devils attend the wicked

While this was going on, the wicked mob in the place, led by one Kilburn, had become alarmed, and followed us into Brother Noble's house. Before they arrived there, Brother Joseph called upon Brother Fordham to offer prayer. While he was praying, the mob entered, with all the evil spirits accompanying them. As soon as they entered, Brother Fordham, who was praying, fainted, and sank to the floor. When Joseph saw the mob in the house, he arose and had the room cleared of both that class of men and their attendant devils. Then Brother Fordham immediately revived, and finished his prayer.

Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors, Pg. 106

Evil Rebuked at a Conference

A conference of the Church was held at Kirtland June 6, 1831, and all the Elders and Saints that could be gathered together were present. The Holy Ghost was made manifest in its workings upon the Prophet and many of the Elders. The spirit of evil was also shown to be present, but as soon as discerned it was rebuked in the name of the Lord Jesus, and vanished. The High Priesthood, a degree of the Melchizedek higher than the Elder, was conferred for the first time on a number of faithful men.

The Latter Day Prophet: Young People's History of Joseph Smith, Pg. 55

Exorcism

See DEVILS, SORCERY, SPIRITUALISM.

In imitation of the true order whereby devils are cast out of people, false ministers (having no actual priesthood power) attempt to cast them out by exorcism. This ungodly practice was probably more common anciently than it is now, because few people today believe either in miracles or in the casting out of literal devils. But over the years it has not been uncommon for so-called priests to attempt to expel evil spirits from persons or drive them away from particular locations by incantations, conjuration, or adjuration. Commonly some holy name is used in these false rituals.

Bruce R. McConkie
Mormon Doctrine, Pg. 187

Joseph F. Smith Cast out Many Evil Spirits

When fifteen years of age, he, with other young men, was called on his first mission to the Sandwich Islands. The incidents of the journey to the coast by horse, his work in the mountains at a shingle mill for means to proceed, and the embarkment and journey on the Vaquero for the islands, are sufficient for a long chapter in themselves; while his labors in the Maui conference, under President F. A. Hammond, his efforts to learn the language in the district of Kula, his attack of sickness, the most severe of his life, caused by the Panama fever, and his other labors and varied, trying experiences while there, would fill a volume.

He says, "Of the many gifts of the Spirit which were manifest through my administration, next to my acquirement of the language, the most prominent was perhaps the gift of healing, and by the power of God the casting out of evil spirits which frequently occurred."

One incident shows how the Lord is with his servants: Joseph was studying the language, being alone with a native family in Wailuku. One night while he sat by a dismal light poring over his books in one corner of the room where dwelt a native and his wife, the woman was suddenly possessed ; she arose and looking toward Joseph made the most fearful noises and gestures, accompanied by terrible physical contortions. Her husband came on his bended knees and crouched beside him, frightened to trembling. The fear that our young missionary felt under those circumstances was something indescribable, but presently it all left him, and he stood up facing the maniac woman, exclaiming: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I rebuke you." Like a flash, the woman fell to the floor like one dead. The husband went to ascertain if she were alive, and pronounced her dead. Then he returned, and set up a perfect howl, which Joseph likewise rebuked. What should Joseph do? His first impression was to get away from the horrid surroundings, but upon reflection he decided that such action would not be wise. His feelings were indescribable, but having rebuked the evil, it was subdued and peace was restored, and he proceeded again with his studies. These are the class of experiences that bring a lone missionary, young as he was, close to the Lord.

Gospel Doctrine, pp. 671-672

Communications with devil can appear as coming through the same channels as revelations

Angels of the devil are working to influence members to do evil. Now that is worth knowing! [You] should understand and know from reading the scriptures that the devil is real. And you should know he has angels, and that communications with angels of the devil can appear as coming through the same channels as revelations that come from angels of God.

Boyd K. Packer

Mine Errand From The Lord

Joseph and Hyrum Smith Cast Out Devils

The branch of the Church at Kirtland had become numerically strong, for it numbered nearly one hundred members. But they had been led into strange errors and darkness. False spirits had crept in and had manifested themselves in the subjugation of the physical and mental powers of their victims—as Newel Knight had formerly been controlled and possessed by the evil power at Colesville. The Saints at Kirtland, not having had experience to enable them to distinguish between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, and believing these things to be divine manifestations, were yielding to them and imperiling their earthly and eternal salvation, when the Prophet came and by his presence and the prayers and faith of those Elders who accompanied him, banished all these dark influences from the

congregation of the Saints. When the faith of the Saints was aroused and exercised, the miracle which had been wrought at Colesville was here repeated. Joseph, by the power of God, rebuked the vile one and his crew; and his brother Hyrum, under the Prophet's direction, laid his hands on the sufferers' heads and cast out the devils.

The Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet, Pg. 86

Men who do not need power from God to cast out devils

Men who do not need power from God to cast out devils will find themselves made fast in his chains beyond the power of extricating themselves.

Orson Spencer

Letters Exhibiting the Most Prominent Doctrine, Pg. 191

Must Cast Out With Oil

If any are sick among you, let them send for the Elders of the Church to pray for them, and to lay their hands upon them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick. People neglect to anoint with oil when they should and might use it. I have seen the Elders try to cast out devils, and to accomplish it they have fasted, and prayed, and laid on hands, and rebuked the devil, but he would not go out. I have then seen them bring consecrated oil, and anoint the person possessed of the devil, and the devil went out forthwith. That taught me a good lesson—that God Almighty, when He speaks, means what He says; and if a man's works are right, his faith will be right; and if his faith is wrong, his works are wrong. When a man whose faith is right goes forth to administer to the sick, he will anoint with oil, as well as lay on his hands and pray. Unless you anoint with oil, your prayers will not rise higher than the fog, and you know that it seldom rises much higher than the tops of the mountains.

Elder Jedidiah M. Grant

JD 2:276-277

Evil spirits gain literal entrance into mortal bodies

This particular instance of ejecting spirit beings from a stolen tenement is set forth in detail by the gospel authors to show:

- (1) That evil spirits, actual beings from Lucifer's realm, gain literal entrance into mortal bodies;
- (2) That they then have such power over those bodies as to control the physical acts performed, even to the framing of the very words spoken by the mouth of those so possessed;
- (3) That persons possessed by evil spirits are subjected to the severest mental and physical sufferings and to the basest sort of degradation—all symbolical of the eternal torment to be imposed upon those who fall under Satan's control in the world to come;
- (4) That devils remember Jesus from pre-existence, recognize him as the One who was then foreordained to be the Redeemer, and know that he came into mortality as the Son of God;
- (5) That the desire to gain bodies is so great among Lucifer's minions as to cause them, not only to steal the mortal tabernacles of men, but to enter the bodies of animals;
- (6) That the devils know their eventual destiny is to be cast out into an eternal hell from whence there is no return;
- (7) That rebellious and worldly people are not converted to the truth by observing miracles; and
- (8) That those cleansed from evil spirits can then be used on the Lord's errand to testify of his grace and goodness so that receptive persons may be led to believe in him.

Bruce R. McConkie
Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3 vols. [1965–73], 1:311

Don't rule out the possibility of possession

Don't have any mistaken ideas about the devil. We sometimes rule out the possibility of evil and the power of the devil taking possession of a man's body or a woman's body and turning one from saint to sinner or from a normal person into a demon. You cannot tell me that there isn't such a thing as a devil possessing the body of a person who allows himself to take a course that makes that possible. If you forget everything else I have said today, please remember, young people, that the prince of this world, Satan, is going to try to trap every one of you. That is his program. He is trying to destroy our agency.

President Harold B. Lee
Teachings of Harold B. Lee, p 47

Possessed Man Healed by GQ Cannon

Twice he [Geroge Q. Cannon] made a journey to the continent to visit the missions in France, Switzerland, Germany, Holland. Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. In Denmark on one of these visits occurred an interesting incident of which he spoke in later life. A man possessed of an evil spirit had his head twisted into a repulsive position. In other ways he was a most disgusting object. By the power of the priesthood the devil was cast out of him and the man became immediately normal again. The Instructor, Vol 50, No 1, Jan 1945, Pg. 12

Reason for having power to cast out devils

It is very evident, however, that this was not the principal object of the Signs. "These signs shall follow them that believe. In my name" says Jesus, "they shall cast out devils." Although this power might, in certain cases, convince the unbelieving world, yet it is by no means to be supposed that this was the principal design. Devils and unclean spirits frequently took possession of the human tabernacle, tormenting individuals in various ways. Jesus promised believers that they, in his name, should cast them out. Now one object which Jesus had in view in granting this power, was to benefit the one possessed. Another object was to confirm the believer, that they, by having power over the devil in this life, might be more fully assured that they should obtain a complete victory and final triumph over him in the world to come. That person who cannot obtain power in the name of Jesus to cast out devils in this life, has great reason to fear lest the devil shall have power over him in the next. What assurance has any one that he shall obtain a complete salvation from the power of the devil, when his spirit shall leave the body, if he cannot claim, the promise of Jesus, and cast him out while in this world? One of the purposes, then, which Jesus had in view in bestowing this blessing, was that believers might learn to prevail against the devil before they should enter the invisible world of spirits. And another purpose, as we have already named, was to deliver the unhappy demoniac from his miserable and wretched condition, and set him free from the grasp of this awful monster.

17.—Now both of these purposes are just as essential for the good of mankind in this age as in the first age of Christianity. It would be equally as essential for a man who is possessed of devils, in this age, to be liberated, as it was in any former one. And it would also be equally as essential that a believer should learn to command the devil in the name of Jesus, that he might obtain a complete victory over him in all things, as it was for ancient believers. Therefore, as there is no Scripture to do

away this promise, nor any reason to prove it unnecessary, it must be intended for believers of all ages, until the devil is bound.

Elder Orson Pratt

Necessity for Miracles, Pgs. 84-85,(1856)

Reason for Having Power to Cast Out Evil Spirits

Evil Spirits at Large—A very important question now arises: How may good or bad spirits be known? For every spirit is not good, nor is every spiritual manifestation genuine. There are frauds and counterfeits innumerable. Even if real spirits and actual manifestations are alone considered, we must still be on our guard against deception. There are many evil spirits in this world—spirits that have never had bodies. They are here by permission or toleration of the Most High, against whom they rebelled when the Savior was chosen.

Satan and his legions, those cast out of heaven, are all wicked spirits, and they wander up and down the world, endeavoring to lead mortals astray. Wherever possible, they take possession of the bodies of men and even of the lower animals. Therefore is power given to the Priesthood to "cast out devils." Against these fallen spirits, mortals must be ever on the defensive, lest their souls be ensnared. Temptation, however, is an important factor in man's probation; for by resisting it, the soul is developed and made stronger. This is probably one reason why the pernicious activity of such spirits is tolerated. Punished in part by being denied bodies, the full penalty for their misdeeds—the second death—is yet to be visited upon them.

Spiritualism a Reality.—Spiritualism is not altogether what some people imagine. Despite the frauds connected with it, it is a reality, and was recognized as such long before Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir A. Conan Doyle proclaimed their conversion thereto, thus lending to it the prestige of their illustrious names. But all realities are not righteous. Because there is a devil—an actual demon and his dupes, is no reason why we should associate with them, confide in them, or accept their evil communications.

How can We Know?—There are bad spirits as well as good, and the vital question is: How can we know the difference between them? Let us at this stage consult an expert—for there are such—one who came in contact with spiritual forces to a marvelous extent, not only receiving messages from other worlds, but also interviewing the messengers. Joseph Smith knew the difference between good and evil communicants, and here is his testimony concerning them.

Expert Testimony.—"When a messenger comes, saying he has a message from God, offer him your hand, and request him to shake hands with you.

"If he be an angel, he will do so, and you will feel his hand." [An angel is a resurrected- being, with a body as tangible as man's.]

"If he be the spirit of a just man made perfect, he will come in his glory; for that is the only way he can appear.

"Ask him to shake hands with you, but he will not move, because it is contrary to the order of heaven for a just man to deceive; but he will still deliver his message."

"If it be the Devil as an angel of light, when you ask him to shake hands, he will offer you his hand, and you will not feel anything [he also being without a body]. You may therefore detect him."

In another place, the Prophet says: "Wicked spirits have their bounds, limits and laws, by which they are governed; and it is very evident that they possess a power that none but those who have the Priesthood can control."

To his declaration that "a man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge," he adds that if men do not get knowledge, including the knowledge of how to control evil spirits, the latter will have more

power than the former, and thus be able to dominate them. This is precisely the condition of "the spirits in prison." They are dominated by a power which they cannot control. They are in Hell, and Satan sways the scepter over his own dominion.

Elder Orson F. Whitney
Saturday Night Thoughts, Pgs. 309-311

Rebuke and Don't Fear Evil Spirits

These evil "angels" use deception as their main tool of destruction. They simulate all that is good. They urge the satisfaction of sensual appetites. In the words of Brigham Young, they tell a hundred truths so that the one lie may be accepted. Sometimes they may come as angels of light, in borrowed or stolen raiment. Always they fail to reveal themselves as they are. Satan and his evil angels are bodiless. That is their heavy punishment. Their power, now and hereafter, is greatly limited by this lack. Therefore, they often seek entrance into human bodies, even bodies of lower animals. Whenever this occurs, the individual thus made to share his body is caused much agonized suffering.

However, one does not really need to fear the angels of evil. They are essentially cowardly. They fear light and truth. Darkness and untruth are their native habitat. Their successes always come when the mind of man is darkened by unbelief or unholy practices. A resolute determination to have nothing to do with them drains their strength. They are morally afraid of the power of the Priesthood. The command, "Get thou behind me," coupled with righteous living is sufficient to drive them away. Yet, one must always be on guard against new forms of temptation in which these messengers from evil and with evil may appear to offer transient satisfactions.

Elder John A. Widtsoe
Evidences and Reconciliations, Pg. 109

Preach the Gospel to Evil Spirits

Those who have died without the Gospel are continually afflicted by those evil spirits, who say to them—"Do not go to hear that man Joseph Smith preach, or David Patten, or any of their associates, for they are deceivers."

Spirits are just as familiar with spirits as bodies are with bodies, though spirits are composed of matter so refined as not to be tangible to this coarser organization. They walk, converse, and have their meetings; and the spirits of good men like Joseph and the Elders, who have left this Church on earth for a season to operate in another sphere, are rallying all their powers and going from place to place preaching the Gospel, and Joseph is directing them, saying, go ahead, my brethren, and if they hedge up your way, walk up and command them to disperse. You have the Priesthood and can disperse them, but if any of them wish to hear the Gospel, preach to them.

President Brigham Young
JD 3:372

Faithful have power to rebuke evil spirits

This is the promise to the Saints, if they continue faithful, and in all things abide the law of the Lord, and keep sacred and holy the covenants they made in baptism. It is faith in the first principles of the Gospel, faith in the first testimony that is presented, and repentance of their past sins, and baptism for the remission of sins, laying on of hands by the Elders for the gift of the Holy Ghost, that they may receive the remission of sins and the blessings of the Holy Spirit, and that they may be endowed with

power to prophesy, to speak in tongues, to interpret tongues, to heal the sick, and rebuke evil spirits, and cast them out from those possessed; yes, that they may even have faith to raise the dead, and exercise the power of God in every case of necessity.

Elder Erastus Snow
JD 8:218

Why Some Cannot Rebuke Evil Spirits

It requires all the care and faithfulness which we can exercise in order to keep the faith of the Lord Jesus; for there are invisible agencies around us in sufficient numbers to encourage the slightest disposition they may discover in us to forsake the true way, and fan into a flame the slightest spark of discontent and unbelief. The spirits of the ancient Gadiantons are around us. You may see battlefield after battlefield, scattered over this American continent, where the wicked have slain the wicked. Their spirits are watching us continually for an opportunity to influence us to do evil, or to make us decline in the performance of our duties. And I will defy any man on earth to be more gentlemanly and bland in his manners than the master spirit of all evil. We call him the devil; a gentleman so smooth and so oily, that he can almost deceive the very elect. We have been baptized by men having the authority of the holy Priesthood of the Son of God, and consequently we have power over him which the rest of the world do not possess, and all who possess the power of the Priesthood have the power and right to rebuke those evil spirits. When we rebuke those evil powers, and they obey not, it is because we do not live so as to have the power with God, which it is our privilege to have. If we do not live for this privilege and right we are under condemnation.

President Brigham Young
JD 12:128

Rebuke Evil Spirits From Your Home

The Lord commands, controls, and governs. A little more faith in the name of Jesus Christ, and I can say to my enemies, Be thou rebuked and stay thou there. I then can say to the power of the Devil, Be thou rebuked; and to evil spirits, Come not within these walls, and they could not enter. A little more faith, and, by way of comparison, I can say to my wheat and corn, Grow, and command the heavens to shed forth rain.

Suppose that the whole people could see things as they are, they would soon be able to control the elements by the power of their faith. This people, since we believe that they are in the kingdom of God, must so live as to gain power and faith to control all things of a perishable nature, and thus prepare themselves to endure forever and ever; while every other creature will, ere long, return to its native element.

President Brigham Young
JD 7:174

Remedy for Evil Spirits is Cast Them Out

We can suggest no remedy for these multiplied evils, to which poor human nature is subject, except a good life, while we are in possession of our faculties, prayers and fastings of good and holy men, and the ministry of those who have power given them to rebuke evil spirits and cast out devils, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Elder Parley P. Pratt

The First Miracle

The First Miracle.—After some difficulty Joseph succeeded in taking Newel by the hand, and with great earnestness Newel pleaded with him to cast the devil out of him, for he knew he was possessed. The Prophet said, "If you know that I can, it shall be done." Then, almost unconsciously, he rebuked the evil spirit in the name of Jesus Christ and commanded him to depart. Immediately Newel spoke, saying he saw the evil spirit leave him and vanish from his sight. This was the first miracle performed in this dispensation. As soon as the devil departed Newel became normal again, his distortions of body ceased, and the Spirit of the Lord opened his vision to a glorious manifestation of the heavens.

Joseph Fielding Smith

Essentials in Church History, Pg. 98

Unbelieving Must Be Removed Before Casting Out Baby Possessed by Evil Spirit

On the day following I parted with Elders Taylor and Fielding, who went to Liverpool, and with Elder Richards, who tarried in Preston. Elder Turley and I went to Manchester; it was the first time I had visited that city. There I met for the first time Elder William Clayton. As soon as I was introduced to him, he informed me that one of the sisters in that place was possessed of a devil. He asked me if I would not go and cast it out of her.

He thought one of the Twelve Apostles could do most anything in such a case. I went with him to the house where the woman lay, in the hands of three men, in a terrible rage. She was trying to tear her clothing from her. I also found quite a number of Saints present, and some unbelievers, who had come to see the devil cast out and a miracle wrought.

Had I acted upon my own judgment I should have refrained from administering to her in the company of those present; but as I was a stranger there, and Brother Clayton presided over the branch, I joined with him in administering to the woman. The unbelief of the wicked who were present was so great that we could not cast the devil out of her, and she raged worse than ever; I then ordered the room to be cleared, and when the company, except the few attending her, had left the house, we laid hands upon her head, and in the name of Jesus Christ I commanded the devil to come out of her. The devil left, and she was entirely healed and fell asleep.

The next day being the Sabbath, the woman came before a large congregation of people, and bore testimony to what the Lord had done for her. We had a large assembly through the day and evening, to whom I preached the gospel. On Monday morning, the devil, not being satisfied with being cast out of the woman, entered into her little child, which was but a few months old. I was called upon to visit the child, and found it in great distress, writhing in its mother's arms. We laid hands upon it and cast the devil out; the evil spirits thereafter had no power over that household. This was done by the power of God, and not of man. We laid hands upon twenty in Manchester who were sick, and most of them were healed.

Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors

Pgs. 114-115

Wilford Woodruff blessed 1150 people, including casting out devils

I have blessed several hundred children. I have administered to one thousand one hundred and fifty sick persons by the laying on of hands and anointing with oil; rebuking diseases and evil spirits in

the name of Jesus Christ; and many have been healed by the power of God, devils have been cast out, the dumb caused to speak, the deaf to hear and the lame to walk, and the sick have been raised up by the power of God and not of man.

Wilford Woodruff

Epistle To The Young Men of Israel, The Contributor, Vol. 8, No. 6, Apr 1887, Pg. 234

Reason for Having Power to Cast Out Evil Spirits

Evil Spirits at Large

A very important question now arises: How may good or bad spirits be known? For every spirit is not good, nor is every spiritual manifestation genuine. There are frauds and counterfeits innumerable. Even if real spirits and actual manifestations are alone considered, we must still be on our guard against deception. There are many evil spirits in this world—spirits that have never had bodies. They are here by permission or toleration of the Most High, against whom they rebelled when the Savior was chosen.

Satan and his legions, those cast out of heaven, are all wicked spirits, and they wander up and down the world, endeavoring to lead mortals astray. Wherever possible, they take possession of the bodies of men and even of the lower animals. Therefore is power given to the Priesthood to "cast out devils." Against these fallen spirits, mortals must be ever on the defensive, lest their souls be ensnared. Temptation, however, is an important factor in man's probation; for by resisting it, the soul is developed and made stronger. This is probably one reason why the pernicious activity of such spirits is tolerated. Punished in part by being denied bodies, the full penalty for their misdeeds—the second death—is yet to be visited upon them.

Spiritualism a Reality.—Spiritualism is not altogether what some people imagine. Despite the frauds connected with it, it is a reality, and was recognized as such long before Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir A. Conan Doyle proclaimed their conversion thereto, thus lending to it the prestige of their illustrious names. But all realities are not righteous. Because there is a devil—an actual demon and his dupes, is no reason why we should associate with them, confide in them, or accept their evil communications.

How can We Know?—There are bad spirits as well as good, and the vital question is: How can we know the difference between them? Let us at this stage consult an expert—for there are such—one who came in contact with spiritual forces to a marvelous extent, not only receiving messages from other worlds, but also interviewing the messengers. Joseph Smith knew the difference between good and evil communicants, and here is his testimony concerning them.

Expert Testimony.—"When a messenger comes, saying he has a message from God, offer him your hand, and request him to shake hands with you.

"If he be an angel, he will do so, and you will feel his hand." [An angel is a resurrected- being, with a body as tangible as man's.]

"If he be the spirit of a just man made perfect, he will come in his glory; for that is the only way he can appear.

"Ask him to shake hands with you, but he will not move, because it is contrary to the order of heaven for a just man to deceive; but he will still deliver his message."

"If it be the Devil as an angel of light, when you ask him to shake hands, he will offer you his hand, and you will not feel anything [he also being without a body]. You may therefore detect him."

In another place, the Prophet says: "Wicked spirits have their bounds, limits and laws, by which they are governed; and it is very evident that they possess a power that none but those who have the Priesthood can control."

To his declaration that "a man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge," he adds that if men

do not get knowledge, including the knowledge of how to control evil spirits, the latter will have more power than the former, and thus be able to dominate them. This is precisely the condition of "the spirits in prison." They are dominated by a power which they cannot control. They are in Hell, and Satan sways the scepter over his own dominion.

Elder Orson F. Whitney
Saturday Night Thoughts, Pgs. 309-311

Rebuke Devils

It is faith in the first principles of the Gospel, faith in the first testimony that is presented, and repentance of their past sins, and baptism for the remission of sins, laying on of hands by the Elders for the gift of the Holy Ghost, that they may be endowed with power to prophesy, to speak in tongues, to interpret tongues, to heal the sick, and rebuke evil spirits, and cast them out from those possessed; yes, that they may even have faith to raise the dead, and exercise the power of God in every case of necessity.

Elder Erastus Snow
JD 8:218

Rebuke Devils 2

If the servants of God are sent to spirit prison to minister unto them, if they are sent to those who are in a state of wickedness and degradation to minister to them, they have one source of comfort – they are not confined there as prisoners; they go there voluntarily; they do not associate with their wickedness, but hate it; they are willing to stay there, peradventure they may bring some of them to repentance; and the Devil has no power over them; they have learned to control him in this life, to rebuke him, and say unto him, Get behind us, Satan! When a Saint arrives in that eternal world, if he be sent on a mission into the dominions of Satan, to reclaim some under his power, he can say to Satan and to all his armies, Depart hence! He has the power of the Priesthood to command him and all powers under him, and they are obliged to obey.

Elder Orson Pratt
JD 7:89

Rebuke Evil Spirits

The Lord commands, controls, and governs. A little more faith in the name of Jesus Christ, and I can say to my enemies, Be thou rebuked and stay thou there. I then can say to the power of the Devil, Be thou rebuked; and to evil spirits, Come not within these walls, and they could not enter.

Brigham Young
JD 7:174

Rebuke Evil Spirits

We have been baptized by men having the authority of the holy Priesthood of the Son of God, and consequently we have power over him (the Devil) which the rest of the world do not possess the power of the Priesthood have the power and the right to rebuke those evil spirits.

Brigham Young
JD 12:128

Rebuking Foul Spirits

While they were there, the manifestation of the power of God being on Joseph, he set apart some of the Elders to the High Priesthood. Ezra Booth was bound, and his countenance was distorted, and numbers of the brethren looked at him, and thought it was a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but to their astonishment, Joseph came forward and rebuked the foul spirit, and commanded it to depart, in consequence of which Booth was relieved, and many of the brethren were greatly tried at such a singular treatment by the prophet of these wonderful manifestations of power.

Elder George A. Smith
JD 11:6

Rebuking Devils

A mere vision would not have strengthened him (Moses), and even to shew him the glory of God in part would not have enabled him to combat with the powers of darkness that then came to him. It was by his knowledge of God, by his perseverance, his diligence and obedience in former years, that he was enabled to rebuke the devil, in the name of Jesus Christ, and drive him from him.

Elder Orson Pratt
JD 3:353

First Miracle

Many serious conversations ensued, and Newell became so far convinced of the divinity of the work that he gave a partial promise that he would arise in meeting and offer supplication to God before his friends and neighbors. But at the appointed moment he failed to respond to Joseph's invitation. Later he told the Prophet he would pray in secret, and thus seek to resolve his doubts and gain strength. On the day following, Newell went into the woods to offer his devotions to Heaven; but was unable to give utterance to his feelings, being held in bondage by some power which he could not define. He returned to his home ill in body and depressed in mind. His appearance alarmed his wife, and in a broken voice he requested her to quickly find the Prophet and bring him to his bedside. When Joseph arrived at the house, Newell was suffering most frightful distortions of his visage and limbs, as if he were in convulsions. Even as the Prophet gazed at him Newell was seized upon by some mysterious influence and tossed helpless about the room. Through the gift of discernment Joseph saw that his friend was in the grasp of the evil one, and that only the power of God could save him from the tortures under which he was suffering. He took Newell's hand and gently addressed him. Newell replied, "I am possessed of a devil. Exert your authority, I beseech you, to cast him out." Joseph replied, "If you know that I have power to drive him from your soul, it shall be done." And when these words were uttered, Joseph rebuked the Destroyer and commanded him in the name of Jesus Christ to depart. The Lord condescended to honor His servant in thus exercising the power which belonged to his Priesthood and calling, for instantly Newell cried out with joy that he felt the accursed influence leave him and saw the evil spirit passing from the room.

This was performed the first miracle of the Church.

George Q. Cannon
The Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet, Pg. 62

Devils Cast out At Organization of Church

On the 6th of April, 1830, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized in the

town of Fayette, Seneca County, state of New York. Some few were called and ordained by the spirit of revelation and prophecy, and began to preach as the Spirit gave them utterance, and, though weak, they were strengthened by the power of God, and many were brought to repentance, were immersed in the water, and were filled with the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. They saw visions and prophesied, devils were cast out, and the sick healed by the laying on of hands.

George Q. Cannon

The life of Joseph Smith the Prophet, Pgs. 385-86

Power given to the Priesthood to cast out devils

Satan and his legions, those cast out of heaven, are all wicked spirits, and they wander up and down the world, endeavoring to lead mortals astray. Wherever possible, they take possession of the bodies of men and even of the lower animals. Therefore is power given to the Priesthood to "cast out devils." Against these fallen spirits, mortals must be ever on the defensive, lest their souls be ensnared.

Orson F. Whitney

Saturday Night Thoughts, p 310

Unbelief

Unbelief and education

I want to say here that there is a wave of unbelief sweeping over the land, and we can feel the effects of it among us. The leading magazines or the popular magazines, are filled with ideas tending to unbelief, scientific hypotheses that are designed to destroy faith in the Bible, faith in the creation of the world, faith in the origin of man, and in the existence of God. Now these doctrines are being spread very insidiously. They are being taught in all the universities and colleges, speaking generally, of the land, with but few exceptions. There is a generation growing up who do not believe in the cardinal principles of the Bible taught by our fathers, before the Gospel in its fulness was revealed. These doctrines are being undermined and it becomes the duty of the Latter-day Saints—it is the mission of the Latter-day Saints—to uphold these old truths and doctrines that have come down to us from God through the ages, to strengthen the faith of our children in them, and, so far as we can, to neutralize the effect of these false doctrines that are being taught. And our Sunday Schools are among the greatest agencies to be used for this purpose—the teaching of our children the principles of the Gospel, and counteracting this dreadful unbelief and darkness that is spreading over the land. I feel that this is of great importance to us. I do not know of an organization today among any other people who are in the position we are, that are so well prepared to counteract these things, because we have the books and records that God has given.

P. Joseph Jensen

Theology and Evolution—From the Historical Point of View

The Improvement Era, Vol. 33, No. 10, August 1930, Pg. 692

Mingling with the world causes unbelief

But a spirit of unbelief, darkness and hardness of heart has gone forth, and it is shared to some extent by this people. The more we mingle with the world the more of this spirit we feel. It permeates the literature of the present day.

George Q. Cannon

JD 15:373

Modern Education and Unbelief

Dangers in modern education.

It is a difficult thing in the midst of the widespread unbelief and the false doctrines and theories which come to us and to our children in the guise of science to prevent the spirit of unbelief from influencing us. This also is one of the great obstacles in the way of the education of our children. The books which are in our schools, and from which our children are taught, contain theories that are unsound; they are based upon false premises that lead to wrong conclusions; and it requires the utmost care on the part of parents and teachers to prevent bad effects following education based upon such text books....

We have all these things to contend with. The rising generation have to be watched over with a care that in former times was not necessary. There is danger in education of this kind. (Oct. 7, 1894, *DW* 49:737)

George Q. Cannon

Greater the unbelief the less miracles

It is the general opinion of modern churches that the principal object of miracles was to do away with unbelief. But when Jesus went into His own country, among His old acquaintances, He marveled because of their unbelief {See Mark vi. 5). "And He did not many mighty works because of their unbelief" [Mathew xiii) . But according to the ideas of the false teachers of modern times. He should have performed greater works there than anywhere else. As they consider signs to be for the convincing of the unbeliever, therefore the greater the unbelief the greater should be the signs. When He found His own countrymen so very unbelieving. He should, according to modern notions, concerning the object of signs, have performed far more splendid and magnificent miracles there, than He did in any other region where their unbelief was not so great. But the facts of the case were directly the reverse. The greater the wickedness and unbelief of a people, the less were the mighty works performed among them. So among the Christian churches, as their unbelief increased, the mighty works decreased.

Elder Orson Pratt

A Series Of Pamphlets On The Doctrines Of The Gospel, p 55