

"Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

-Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night
(Dylan Thomas 1971:207)¹

16. PREMORTAL DEATH ORDINANCES

¹ An illuminating insight into Thomas' relationship to his father comes from the postscript appended to this poem when he sent it, prior to publication, to Princes Caetani on 28th May, 1951: 'The only person I can't show the little enclosed poem to is, of course, my father, who doesn't know he's dying.' (Jones 1971:275)

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INTRODUCTION:

In preparation for the birth ordinances that move a pre-existent spirit from that phase into a mortal fetal body, the spirit passes through a process analogous to the death process we mortals go through when our spirits are extracted from those same vehicles at the other end of this phase, and moved onward into the post-mortal world. We believe that this pre-existent death is only the first of three deaths that we experience during our metamorphosis. The concept developed here is that there is a [birth+death process] that applies to our spirits at the end of pre-existence, again at the end of mortality and finally at the end of post-mortality.²

We state that these different deaths are "analogous", rather than identical, to each other because it is impossible at the present stage to ascertain whether there are only similarities between the various death processes, or virtual identity.³ But whether there are identical, or merely comparable, ordinances, we claim that a spirit has to undergo a profound priesthood-mediated transformation at the end of its sojourn in each phase. This transformation prepares it for its exit from that "region" and for its entry into the next.

GRIEVING PROCESS:

The 'experience', but not the 'life', of the pre-existent spirit closes at the point of this "death" or transformation. This distinction is a subtle one that can be restated for mortality. It is our belief that if people truly comprehended and believed in this concept, there would be considerably less anxiety about death. We also believe that there are more similarities than commonly understood between what happens there at the time of this PE death, and what happens here on earth at the time of mortal death. This is not attested in the canon, but we believe, for example, that an

²Details about this cross-phase process are outlined below in chapter 51. NESTED OR CRISS-CROSSED DEPENDENCIES?

Of course, a basic question involves the nature of 'death'. One point to make that is true of all three applications is that it is a priesthood-mediated process which moves a spirit from one phase to another.

³We tend to think that there are probably virtual identities in some respects, so are leaving the question open. Part of the reason for this suspicion is the belief that basic patterns are created through the priesthood, which patterns repeat wherever appropriate. This, in another sense, is an expression of the Parsimony Principle.

individual's family⁴ and friends are present in some setting to bid the spirit farewell⁵. There is probably sadness and grief on their part at the loss. Those who remain behind will miss the spirits just as we in mortality long for those who go forward without us. We believe here that the PE spirits actually experience a comparable sort of uncertainty and anxiety because they don't have clear knowledge of the nature and conditions of mortality⁶. So when spirits "die", they simply disappear. This is parallel to our mortal experience. Here we, too, believe in some sort of a next-phase (post-mortality), but we don't know what it really is, or actually whether it even exists. When a mortal dies, we are pained by that loss, and carry that pain for many years. Perhaps this isn't how it is for PE spirits, but we believe it is.

TWO PRE-EXISTENCE PHASES:

As noted above, we believe in this model that spirits in the PE operate on the basis of faith, which means that they do not know any more about the post-pre-existent states than we down here know of the post-mortal one -or the pre-existent one. Pre-existent spirits will have their own beliefs⁷ which may give them some confidence and comfort about the "future" awaiting them, but they will feel grief and uncertainty at the death of familiars. This concept appears reasonable at one level, but it entails a most complex problem, because of another assumption endorsed in this work.

This other assumption involves the pre-existent birth process. Recall that it is believed that our spirits were actually born to

⁴ Note the totally foundationless assumption that we are organized into some type of nuclear units in the PE, that we term 'families'. It is certainly possible that the 15,000,000,000 of us who were there at one time were just sort of unorganized, milling around doing whatever we wanted. But that doesn't seem to fit with the nature of the POS and priesthood, both of which are highly structured and finely textured with units of various sizes and types, serving various functions.

⁵ We don't know whether there are any sort of pathological states in the PE analogous to those experienced during mortality. Do spirits there become ill and experience near-death states? If there is pathology, then what is the etiology? It wouldn't seem likely that there could be pathogens like the micro-organisms or mortality, so what would be the active or infections agent?

One is tempted to suggest that if there is pathology, it would most likely be related to the degree of the two priesthoods present in an individual's 'life'. An excess of the black priesthood would cause states of "torpor and lassitude", comparable to mortal pathological states. Conversely, the absence of the black influence would be accompanied by positive states of being.

A major problem with this concept of bidding the deceased spirits goodbye, is the assumption that there is a residuum to be mourned. There probably is not. So if there is commemoration, it will be in the form of a memorial service, commemorating the life of the departed spirit. Or the departure of a loved one.

⁶ We are obviously assuming here that a veiling had already been applied to our spirits early in the PE such that knowledge of the conditions of the three phases of the metamorphosis is lost - or perhaps, never supplied. It is possible that PE the details of this metamorphosis are not ever provided in the PE, and perhaps that is actually the manner in which we would be uncertain there about what was happening when spirits disappear. In the latter case, the veiling would perhaps occur right at the point of PE death+mortal birth. This veiling is discussed in detail below.

⁷ This entails a religious organization, doesn't it.

the Father (and His consort) into the PE world.⁸ This assumption seems to entail a belief that these spirit children lived in His presence after their birth. At least we must believe that is the case, if we believe that our parenting process on earth where the newborn remains with its mother is the pattern of the parenting process in the PE. "Good"⁹ parenting involves a mom and dad who would have raised us to a suitable age and then sent us on our way. This obviously is pure speculation, but it seems possible. We admit it is also possible that the Father served His parental role in such a manner that after the creation of our spirits, they were born into or existed in a location or condition or state where He is/was/will not be. However, if, as we believe here, we did live with a heavenly father (and a heavenly mother¹⁰), we have a problem with the aforementioned business of faith in the PE.

If we lived in His presence, how is it possible that we exercised faith up there? Living with Him would give us knowledge of kinds that would supervene the exercise of faith¹¹. As stated previously, here we do not believe that we had true knowledge when we made our Satan/Christ choice. One of the major arguments to support this strong, but unattested claim, involves that Savior/Satan pair. If we all truly 'knew' what the right plan was, then two things would follow -at least to our simple minds they would follow: first, everyone would have chosen that plan because the consequences, i.e. being cast out, etc. would have been understood by everyone up there¹². And/or second, choosing a thing that is 'known' by the chooser to be true, is an act that doesn't deserve a reward.

For example, when we obey stop lights because we know that is the right thing to do, no one rewards us. No policeman stops us halfway down the block to commend us for obeying the traffic laws. It is believed here that this is analogous to the process of

⁸ See chapter 11. SPIRIT BIRTH ORDINANCES for some of the details, as well as a few earlier footnotes.

⁹ We quickly note that parenting today can be done by fathers alone, or mothers alone, or by both together, by adopted parents, by the state, guardians, etc.

Are there any analogues of any of these organizations in the PE? We don't know and can't guess, though we wouldn't be surprised if there were. We say the latter because we lived by faith, so had to have lived in an imperfect environment, at least imperfect compared to perfection of the Celestial world.

¹⁰ We are less sure about Her than Him. Not because of atavistic male chauvinism, rather simply because the scriptures available to us absolutely fail in any respect to recognize, admit, etc. anyone before this mortal world or after it who is/was/will be of female gender. But for the sake of this article, more than for any other reason, we will keep Her in the equation as a StrawWoman at least, to help the argument go forward. The truth, if we admit it, is actually cowardly. We can't begin to guess how to proceed with a discussion of the spirit creation process in any other way than by the [fe\male] pairing of mortality.

¹¹ We suppose it is possible to have lived with Him in a state of ignorance of the information possessed by, or represented by, Him. But here we are going to make a strong claim: we believe that we did not live in His light during the entire PE. Therefore, at some point we had to exercise faith.

¹² That is, everyone who was not outright, unreasonably perverse and intent on self-destruction would have chosen the Savior plan.

choosing one of the two plans. We could not have known the bad consequences of one plan and the good consequences of the other. We didn't know the real consequences of the two plans. We could not have been allowed to know. It was only by taking a chance, only by operating on a hunch and faith and belief -not knowledge- that we deserved commendation. That is why we are down here now. We deserved a shot at the second testing phase because we made the right choice under conditions that merited a reward. Choosing an obvious, known option is a meaningless exercise, worthy of no reward¹³

SECOND PE PHASE:

Now that we have beat that idea around a bit, come back to the real dilemma posed by

- (1) the claim that we lived by faith in the PE, and**
- (2) that we lived with Him¹⁴.**

It means, then, that while we apparently lived with Him during our formative upbringing, we may have been sent away from His home at some point. That is a particularly disturbing assertion if you haven't pondered these things before. Of course, the operating conditions of the PE didn't have to be analogous to those of mortality. That is, the PE may not have required the use of faith. In that case perhaps we didn't get sent away from Him. But we obviously don't buy this latter concept.

The major justification for postulating a "sending away", is our belief that the knowledge and light we probably would have had if we had lived in His presence, would have to be taken away from us at some point during the PE. Our spirit had to be "veiled" there as well. How preposterous that must sound to you, dear reader. There is absolutely nothing in the Christian canon or other cosmologies, that we have read, that suggests that there were TWO disjunctively ordered, rigidly sequenced pre-mortal phases that our spirits passed through. There are myriad non-Christian cosmologies where spirits were created in a pre-earth condition prior to their coming to earth,¹⁵ but there are none, that we are aware of, where spirits were created at one point and then sent

¹³ It would be sheer stupidity and stubbornness to make the wrong choice, knowing it was wrong. I suppose it's possible that some individuals did that, but seriously doubt it.

¹⁴ The latter is either an intrinsic part of MMF or SMD, though not of the rest of Christianity in general. We can't tell which, but are confident that most LDS would admit believing that we all lived in the presence of the Father during our entire stay in the PE.

¹⁵ Look at the SUMMARY OF QUOTATIONS at the end of this work for a variety of quotes from a variety of religions that describe how spirits were created. These include ancient Egyptian, Sumerian, ancient Hebrew, etc. cosmologies. Clarification: cosmologies generally are descriptions of how the universe and this world were created and do not automatically entail theories of spirit/soul formation. But the latter are not unusual inclusions.

through another phase prior to coming to earth¹⁶.

This is are various consequences of the two assumptions discussed above. These consequences result from the claim that faith must have been involved when we made our choice between the two Plans, and during the rest of our testing in the PE.

If we did live with the Father, we had to have been isolated from Him "physically" and "mentally" at some point, and veiled¹⁷. That is necessary if we exercised free agency and faith. That is the only way to force¹⁸ us to truly exercise free agency¹⁹.

We note, however, an alternative to the being sent away from the presence of the Father hypothesis. This is perhaps only a notational variant on the theme. Perhaps we did continue to live in His presence after our spirits were born. But in this case, our abilities to perceive and understand what was going on in our environment were so primitive and simple that we didn't understand the full import of it all. That would be analogous to the manner in which mortal children do not comprehend the adult things going on right in their vicinity. This perhaps is a more satisfactory option to consider because it is strained to suggest two PE phases, given the nature of the few scriptures we have about the PE.

PRE-EXISTENT FAITH AND ANXIETY:

Let's look at this notion of faith in the PE again. SMD provides evidence that faith was operative there²⁰. There are various consequences to this notion. The most important one, as noted above, is this: pre-existent spirits have no more clear conception of what mortality is going to be like than mortals have of what post-mortality, and the post-resurrection world, are going to be like. We believe that this is entailed by the notion of

¹⁶ However, there are some cosmologies that refer to different "worlds" that existed before this one was created. For example, the Navaho creation legends have four worlds existing prior to this one. However, the spirits in those worlds were insect-like, rather than humanoid, though they thought and talked like humans. If these pre-earth worlds are construed as different stages of pre-existence, then this concept of more than one PE phase is shared.

¹⁷ Of course, one could argue that we DIDN'T live with Him at all times, that we simply were created by Him, sort of behind a screen where we couldn't see Him. This works. But it is totally out of harmony with the assumptions of SMD that we lived with Him. SMD, admittedly, may be wrong because this is an assumption or interpretation of scant scriptural evidence.

¹⁸ Note the Machiavellian twist of accepting Christ's plan: were thereby FORCED (like Satan's plan) into doing something. We were put on a greased rail leading through this horribly painful metamorphosis where we have no choice but to use our choice to prove whatever it is we choose to prove. Admittedly, this forced choice leads to hope for greater outcomes than we would have had with Satan's choice, but FORCING is nonetheless entailed because once we made the choice, we had no choice but to go through the process.

¹⁹ If you have trouble even accepting the possibility of this idea, don't feel alone. But do try to devise another model of the PE that puts us in a condition where we don't have knowledge. That issue is really the fundamental issue that to allowing us to exercise both free agency and faith. Good luck. Write me and tell what you dreamed up because I'm interested.

²⁰ Recall the Alma reference to faith.

faith, and it blends with the concept that successfully exercising one's free agency requires being tested under conditions of ignorance - regardless of the testing phase we are in.

Another consequence then, of this ignorance is that, as noted earlier, PE spirits experience fear and uncertainty as they anticipate their own "death", and the death of others in their environment. They feel anxiety about the prospect of passing on to another uncertain world where they will experience unknown things. To those of us who are here now, this concept is probably startling. Could we have been nervous about coming here? In this model, we claim that we didn't know the truth about it, so we were nervous about it.

Another consequence of these concepts is that those individuals left behind probably experience a separation anxiety from the deceased, just as we do in mortality. This separation anxiety would derive not only from a personal anxiety about one's personal death, but also from the sense of bereavement for the loss of a friend or loved one who had been a source of enjoyment or support.

We obviously assume that the PE death and dying process and experience are essentially identical to mortal ones in terms of the emotional impact on those that remain behind.²¹ Those spirits probably have a degree of anxiety and confidence about a post-pre-existent death²² existence, i.e. mortality, that is comparable to our mortal confidence/hope regarding post-mortality.²³ They would have ideas about the general outlines of the POS, if they were believers, and about what is to happen here, just as mortals have comparable general outlines of post-mortality. But if their information is as sparse as ours, they really know little about mortality.

PRE-EXISTENT RESIDUUM:

In contrast to the mortal phase, there is not a PE analogue of the mortal residuum we term a cadaver. At least to our way of thinking. When premortals come to earth, they take their 'body',

²¹ There are exegetical LDS works which assert that we remain the same in the next world of post-mortality, that mortal death doesn't alter our personalities or behaviors. I believe that's true. And I take this to be indirect support, by reverse extension, for the belief that mortal testing is basically a continuation of pre-existent testing, and that we remain essentially the same people here that we were there. This is a neat idea. It allows for greater continuity between the three testing phases, a continuity that isn't noted in SMD. I'm glad I was me in the PE, that I am me now, and that I will be me in the post-mortal world, and on into the post-resurrection world. I like that. It makes the metamorphosis more believable, because it would be peculiar to have me -anyone- somehow being profoundly altered or changed in identity between phases.

This seems so logical and true, that stated this way it seems like a trivial truism. But it ain't. We don't think.

²² I am skeptical that they really "knew" much. I think they/we were/are in the dark to the same degree we are now. (I can't help wondering whether the current mortal cant about 'knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt' was also practiced there as well.)

²³ We know of two states, that the gospel 'will be preached', the those in the higher level will be able to visit the lower, that Satan et al will be active there. But little else.

which is the spirit itself, through the veil or dimensional boundary²⁴. This spirit body then is implanted into a mortal body. Then, when we die, the mortal corpus, created of pi muons, various types of baryons, fundamental forces, etc., remains behind. Note that there are no scriptures that state that something like a 'body' will be taken up from the PE at the time of the

resurrection.²⁵ Nor are there any references to say that something from PM is taken up. Obviously, those who disagree with our concept that neither of those phases produces a residual that is involved in the resurrection, will simply assert that these absences are proof that the mortal body is what is resurrected. However, given the eternal patterns that the Lord uses, it strikes us as peculiar that He would deviate from a pattern in terms of what passes from each of the three testing phases into the resurrection process. Specifically, if He allows something from one phase to be carried forward into a future ordinance, we believe that He would have it pass through all succeeding phases. To state it another way, if He allows something to be harvested from the mortal environment, we would expect Him to be symmetrical and harvest something from all three phases. This is not absolutely necessary, we know, but we believe it is true. The metamorphosis condition produces something that is judged and resurrected, which to us, means the spirit itself.

We also suspect that after the PE death has occurred, there is probably some sort of memorial service held for the deceased spirit in an appropriate location. Leaders of some sort will oversee the memorials, and friends and family will attend. Stories will be recounted of the goodness of the person, and through this modality, the grieving process will be able to move to its conclusion for those spirits who were familiar with and loved the departed one.²⁶

The setting in which the memorial service is held will be

²⁴ Note another neat consistency. We claim in this model that it is actually the spirit body that moves through the three testing phases. It is our spirit body which leaves pre-mortality to go to mortality and finally into post mortality.

This is a slick way to lead into 44. RESURRECTION AND METALLURGY. We don't believe the mortal body plays a part in the resurrection, rather that the spirit body itself is what it is all about. Many of you will balk at the notion. Just read the chapter and decide for yourself. Most confusing issue if you try to understand it. Taking it on faith, the only valid way to do it, is the only way one CAN take it after knowing these issues.

²⁵ Speaking of scriptures, we do believe that there were analogues of scriptures in the PE. We say this because a condition where knowledge and light were missing, thereby forcing us to use faith, would require some sort of religious texts to serve as guides for us. They would more than likely be "written" in first person by whoever wrote them because those spirits would have had transcendental experiences which provided them the information they would have been instructed to transmit to the rest of us. We can't guess whether there would have been need for 'scribal' transcriptions of original transcriptions. And we can't guess about whether there would have been any or no error in the transmission of these scriptures through the generations of time. And we imagine that there were/are religious-type services held there, with leaders, and prayers and talks, etc..

²⁶ See Kubler-Ross' DEATH AND DYING for the best introduction into the notion of a grieving process which can actually be elaborated beyond matters of death into any type of loss we experience in our lives.

dictated by the nature of the environment of that phase.²⁷ We use churches, candles, flowers, holes in the ground, black clothing, written programs, music, chairs, etc. as part of our ceremonies. In the PE, their props will obviously depend on what's used there. They will use clothing appropriate for the occasion, if they wear clothing, colors if they are available will be used, etc. In mortality, we have a viewing as a part of our ceremonies. This allows people to pay their last respects²⁸ and to tell the person goodbye. The PE apparently won't have a cadaver, so they can't have viewings, but the memorial service will be sufficient for its purpose²⁹.

However, there will be some similarities between their memorials and ours. There will be officials who will preside by virtue of their callings and authority, i.e. analogues of bishops, etc.. There will be prayers, perhaps scriptures, probably some form of music or its analogue³⁰. The bereaved family will probably be placed in a location of honor during the ceremony.

PRIESTHOOD CONTROL:

This process of "dying" in the PE is a priesthood-governed process, just like it is in mortality. It doubtless entails a variety of ordinances³¹. The ordinances that are applied to the spirit, in order to prepare it for birth down here, affect the

²⁷ Remember that we postulate that the PE phase was created, just the mortal phase was. The environment of the mortal phase has textures and artifacts that resulted from the initial conditions. The environment of the PE also has textures and artifacts, though they will somehow be different.

²⁸ What that really is, we don't know.

²⁹ Personally, we find viewings as barbaric as the burial customs of other cultures where the body is macerated so that the meat can be stripped off the skeleton, after which the bones are stored in a container of some sort. Is there really much difference? Cremation seems much more efficient, less traumatic and more hygienic.

³⁰ Once more, the nature of the environment will dictate what form music takes. Since they apparently don't have "physical" things, there can hardly be pianos and drums. However, there will be some method to communicate between spirits, which will be analogous to our voices. In this case, we predict that these voices will be adaptable to vocal music in some manner. Perhaps there actually will be choirs of angels, if one perceives PE spirits as angels, with heavenly choirmasters, etc. But no organs, sorry.

³¹ We wonder whether or not there are analogues of temples in the PE where a portion of the endowment is imparted to obedient spirits. These places would be sacred ones only accessible to worthy ones. We obviously don't know whether or not all spirits were obedient or not, but the old discussion of Abraham being 'noble and great' implies that there were those who were not noble and great. So by extension, we wonder whether there were those who chose to not participate in whatever church services and ordinances were available. We also wonder whether there were degrees of priesthood bestowed on spirits in the PE. And if so, what were those degrees and what keys would have been granted. And how was this priesthood even obtained in the PE in the first place?

In fact, we wonder whether or not there are temples in the PE. Sort of a shock to consider that possibility, but why not? Those spirits require some sort of preparation for entering mortality. If the pattern of mortality holds true, then only a temple could provide the opportunity for PE spirits to undertake whatever ordinances were available to prepare them. If there are temples with ordinances, it is predictable that the spirits won't perceive the ordinances as specifically preparing them for entering mortality, just as we mortals don't think of our ordinances in that respect.

Thinking of mortal temple ordinances, however, one notes that they seem to be aimed at a time after the post-mortal world. If this is the case, and it may not be, then the PE temple ordinances would probably be analogues of mortal ones.

level of "consciousness" of the spirit, to diminish its ability to see outside the domain of this experimental conditions of mortality. They will also authorize or empower a spirit to do whatever a spirit must be empowered to do down here, etc. The general purpose of these processes will be to prepare it for implantation into a mortal body. But they must also formally bring the PE trial to closure, perhaps modifying the veil in some manner³².

Since ordinances always entail ordinance workers, there will be individuals who are some how selected and empowered to perform those rituals for the departing spirits. Empowerment will come from leaders of the church³³ there who will have to replace workers as they take their turn here on earth. Will there be male and female workers?³⁴

CONCLUSION:

The chapter that follows, 17. MORTAL BIRTH ORDINANCES, is written as a chapter separate from this one, which suggests that these two sets of ordinances -[death] + [birth]- are distinct from each other. We maintain that distinction in the text primarily to emphasize that there are two fundamentally different processes occurring at this point of transition. The truth is that the two sets of ordinances are inter-dependant and occur simultaneously. We suspect that there is even a single set of workers who are performing both sets of ordinances. They occur at the same "time" and in the same "place". As you read the next section, you will see just how interdependent the two sets are.

³² Neat new idea. Perhaps the veiling that we refer to during mortality actually occurred early during the PE to veil the spirit as just described. This way, we mortals would still be operating under that veiling, a lovely idea because it coalesces two separate ordinances that were postulated to do the same thing, but each of which would occur at a different time. Much more elegant merge the two ordinances and to claim that the veiling we underwent up there after we left the Father's presence (if we ever were in it) is still operational today on us, and will remain operational until the judgement and resurrection occur.

³³ Will there be a "Church" organization in the PE? That depends on one's definition of church, I suppose, and on one's perception of its function. If we were exiled from Him and/or had to live by faith, then we needed guidance. But who would 'lead' the church there? Christ would seem the most likely since He leads it here and in the next worlds. Will there be regular meetings and conferences? Will there be lesson manuals and teachers in classrooms? (Will there be a -sigh- correlation committee to whitewash anything original or creative?) Will there be an entry-sort of ordinance like baptism/confirmation? And if there is the latter, then the implication is that there would be individuals there who were not yet 'members' of the church, rather surprising with various implications. There would be 'gentiles' there, who were not cast out. Could that be so?

³⁴ This latter question is a curious one as noted above. There is no evidence to demonstrate whether there were females there or not. All gender references to the PE are to males, so we don't know what that means, whether that is simply a grammatical convention. For a detailed discussion of PE gender see chapter 21. MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE THEM...