sin. To choose to follow Satan by succumbing to sin and resisting Christ’s entreaties to repent is to choose death.

The freedom to choose effectively between life and death is a result of the redemption of Christ (2 Ne. 2:27), and it is God’s work and glory “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

The scriptures speak of two spiritual deaths. The first has already come upon all human beings as a result of the Fall, separating “all mankind... from the presence of the Lord” (Hel. 14:16). The second will be experienced by only those who, having once known Christ, willfully deny him and refuse to repent, being thus “cut off again as to things pertaining to righteousness” (Hel. 14:18). Spiritual death does not mean that a person’s spirit literally dies (the spirit is immortal), but that one is in “a state of spiritual alienation from God” (Smith, Vol. 1, p. 45), a death “as to things pertaining unto righteousness” (Alma 12:16; 40:26).

Because little children are not capable of sinning (Moro. 8:10–14), the first spiritual death does not begin for an individual on the earth until the age of accountability (eight years of age; D&C 68:27). Generally, as individuals mature they begin to recognize the consequences of their acts and become responsible for them (D&C 18:42). Insofar as they do not harmonize behavior with an understanding of truth and goodness, they create a gulf between themselves and God—that is, spiritual death.

The first step toward overcoming this state was taken, paradoxically, before the Fall occurred: in premortal life. All who have been or will be born on this earth chose both physical and spiritual life when as spirit children of God they chose to follow the Father’s plan for earth life. After they reach the age of accountability during earth life, they must again choose.

According to LDS understanding, the choice between spiritual life and death is made at the time of baptism and confirmation, the ordinances that symbolically reconcile a person to God and initiate a lifetime process of spiritual rebirth. Once baptismal covenants are made and the gift of the Holy Ghost is conferred and received, the symbolic rebirth must be made actual through the day-to-day struggle to repent and choose life—Christ and righteousness. The choice is not made once and for all, but many times during a lifetime.

Latter-day Saints do not view righteousness simply as a way to avoid an unpleasant afterlife and gain a heavenly reward. Following Christ is also the path to happiness in mortal life. As people harmonize their lives with God’s laws, they are “blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual” (Mosiah 2:41). In Christ is life abundant (John 10:10): “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matt. 19:17).

In an everyday sense, choosing life for the Latter-day Saint should include loving and serving others, praying and studying the words of God daily, sharing knowledge of Christ and his plan with others, speaking the truth, remaining chaste before marriage and faithful after marriage, rearing children with patience and love, and being honest in all things. Enjoying such things constitutes the abundant life.

In the postmortal period, “life” again depends upon Christ’s atonement, which overcomes the first spiritual death by making it possible for all men and women to come into God’s presence to be judged. At that point, everyone will be judged worthy of a degree of glory and its quality of life except the sons of perdition. These individuals suffer the second spiritual death for having committed the unpardonable sin, which is denying Christ in the face of full knowledge and truth (D&C 76:30–38; HC 6:314).

[See also Eternal Life; Lifestyle; Opposition; Spiritual Death.]

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SUE BERGIN

LIFESTYLE

Early Latter-day Saints, who typically gathered into their own communities and shared cultural and religious concepts and experiences, developed a distinctive lifestyle that helped overcome differences in social class or a variety of geographic and religious backgrounds among members of the fledgling Church. The members, mostly former Protestants from New England, New York, Ohio, eastern Canada, the British Isles, and Scandinavia, had compatible Christian and social values, and a
shared purpose in building Zion and in creating the culture of their communities. A century and a half later, with more than seven million Latter-day Saints living throughout the world in a multitude of nations and in varied circumstances, the LDS lifestyle continues to be focused on shared personal beliefs and the desires to progress toward exaltation and to build up the kingdom of God on earth.

In the 1940s, more than a century after the Church was established, its one million members were concentrated largely in the western United States. Converts had tended to migrate to join the main body of the Church, and many Utah Church members and leaders were descended from early pioneers. In these circumstances, a concept of LDS lifestyle became clearly defined. Religious observance and participation in Church programs became almost inseparable from other aspects of life in communities comprised largely of Church members. The people with whom one worshiped at Church were also one's neighbors, schoolmates, and associates at work.

This lifestyle, especially in the LDS towns of the rural Intermountain West, was family-oriented and home- and Church-centered. Self-sufficiency through gardening, canning, sewing, and bread-making, and also commitment to hard work, service, duty, thrift, and education were shared cultural patterns and values. The lifestyle, based upon practical considerations, cultural heritage, and family traditions as well as Church teachings, reflected the influence of pioneer agrarian values, the independence and vigor of western frontiersmanship, and New England Puritanism. This lifestyle pervaded LDS society in North America, and even beyond as the Church began to expand rapidly throughout the world in the decades following World War II.

Today, Latter-day Saints make up groups ranging from entire small towns in Utah and surrounding states to small congregations of only a few individuals or families in other areas and countries. Latter-day Saints are now encouraged to build up the Church in their home areas rather than migrate to Utah. Converts retain national and family traditions while adopting the religion and moral teachings and activities of the Church.

While Latter-day Saints throughout the world feel a common spiritual heritage and devotion to their faith, their daily lives may vary considerably. Nevertheless, there are certain shared patterns of LDS lifestyle practiced throughout the world by faithful members regardless of language or cultural differences. These practices identify the members and families as Latter-day Saints and constitute a bond and similarity of values among members—even where there is significant cultural diversity.

A typical day begins and ends with individual and family prayer, and includes scripture study. The Word of Wisdom affects a Latter-day Saint's choices in food and drink. Clothing choices are influenced by teachings on modesty. Gospel teachings influence somewhat the choice of an occupation and affect one's conduct while at work, school, and home. Active Church members feel they should be good examples of Jesus Christ's message to their families and all other associates (see Missions). Members' commitment to tithing and to making other contributions to the Church affects financial decisions. Latter-day Saints who live their religion avoid profanity and entertainment that advocates or encourages immorality. Many members have callings requiring significant weekly or even daily commitments of time and energy.

Church members are taught that they should establish valutive priorities in order to avoid becoming overwhelmed by the many demands on their time and energies. Important decisions are often made in consultation with one's spouse, parents, or perhaps the entire family, and with the Lord through prayer (cf. D&C 9:8–9). Since there are more opportunities and obligations available than one person can possibly fulfill, Latter-day Saints try to direct their energies by wise individual choices through thought, prayer, consultation with Church leaders, and personal inspiration through the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Such resources help them decide what is most important at any given time. The influence of Church culture, especially in the United States, is sufficiently strong that even those who become disaffected and no longer participate in LDS religious activities often continue to describe themselves as "cultural Mormons."

Each close-knit community of Saints may have distinctive characteristics, depending upon the area where such Church members live. Ideally, a Church meetinghouse, whether in a large or small ward, or involving a scattered few members, becomes a second home, a place where one is accepted, loved, helped, and given the opportunity to participate. A sense of belonging, both to the local ward or branch and to the worldwide commu-
nity of those who have accepted the name of Christ through baptism and are bound to him by covenant, is the foundation of the spiritual and emotional life, as well as the practical daily life, of the Latter-day Saint.

[See also Civic Duties; Community; Enduring to the End; Family Life; Individuality; Joining the Church; Lay Participation and Leadership; “Peculiar” People; Self-sufficiency.]

JAROLDEEN EDWARDS

LIGHT OF CHRIST

The light of Christ refers to the spiritual power that emanates from God to fill the immensity of space and enlightens every man, woman, and child. Other terms sometimes used to denote this same phenomenon are HOLY SPIRIT, “Spirit of the Lord,” and “Spirit of Truth,” but it is different from the HOLY GHOST. The scriptures are not always precise in the use of such terminology, and several attempts have been made to describe the various aspects of this important manifestation of God’s goodness and being.

Jesus Christ is the light and life of the world (John 8:12; 3 Ne. 15:9). This light is described in the Doctrine and Covenants as “the same light that quickeneth your understandings; which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things” (D&C 88:11–13). B. H. Roberts, a seventy, interpreted this to mean that the light of Christ is a creative power, a governing power, a life-giving power, and an “intelligence-inspiring power” (Roberts, 2:7–8).

This light manifests itself in different ways and degrees. In its “less refined existence,” wrote Parley P. Pratt, it is visible as sunlight. It is also the refined “intellectual light of our inward and spiritual organs, by which we reason, discern, judge, compare, comprehend, and remember the subjects within our reach.” It is revealed as instinct in animals, reason in man, and vision in the prophets (p. 25).

John A. Widtsoe gave this general description of the emanation of God’s power: “God is a personal being of body—a body limited in extent. He cannot, therefore, at a given moment be personally everywhere. . . . By his power, will and word, [he] is everywhere present. . . . The holy spirit permeates all the things of the universe, material and spiritual” (Widtsoe, pp. 68–69).

Since God possesses a fulness of this power and man only a small portion, it becomes a goal of Latter-day Saints to receive more of this light, which for the faithful grows “brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24). Initially, this “Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world” (D&C 84:46; see also John 1:9; Moro. 7:16). It equips all people with a basic discernment of good and evil, which Latter-day Saints often equate with conscience. By listening to the promptings of the Spirit one is led via faith and baptism to a higher spiritual blessing called the GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST, “a greater and higher endowment of the same Spirit which enlightens every man that comes into the world” (C. W. Penrose, JD 23:350). Continued progression will eventually lead to a fulness of the Spirit, or glorification in the Celestial Kingdom.

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LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Many juxtapositions of light and darkness are identifiable in latter-day scripture. Darkness was apparently the primeval condition (Gen. 1:2; Moses 2:2; Abr. 4:2). Light was introduced by the divine word: “Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen. 1:3; Moses 2:3; Abr. 4:3). It was decreed “good” and was divided from the darkness, light being known as “day” and darkness as “night” (Gen. 1:4–5; Moses 2:4–5; Abr. 4:4–5). The account in Abraham adds that “they (the gods) comprehended the light, for it was bright” (Abr. 4:4; see also GODHEAD, CREATION AND CREATION ACCOUNTS).