

oured out upon all flesh, "when the sons and the daughters will prophecy, the old men dream dreams, and the young men see visions," etc.; and when the earth and all that live upon it shall be redeemed and sanctified; the earth will then be as it was when it rolled out of the hands of the Creator, and the people will understand God and His ways; they will understand them like. There will not be a thousand different religions; but there will be one only, one God the Father of all, and one Holy Spirit burning in the hearts of His children.

At the present time there is a diversity of opinions and notions and ideas concerning God and His ways; but I have stated that this one way, in which the Saints have begun to walk, is the only true way. That may sound very exclusive; it may seem also to some a little inconsistent. That is because they may not understand the matter in all its bearings. I say, there can be but one true religion, simply because there is only one true God. True religion is that religion which comes from God; and that religion which man-made cannot be the religion of God; it is therefore not binding; nothing religious is binding upon mankind but that which is revealed from God. That which comes from God through His servants and is declared to the people, is binding; and that receives it will be saved, and he that rejects it will be condemned. This must be so because it comes by authority, from Deity itself. It is His word; it is His will; and he who rejects it, rejects it against his own salvation; and none can be saved who do not obey.

Some may ask, "Do you mean to say that all the people that have lived upon the earth since the days when Jesus and the Apostles preached, who did not hear and who did not obey the Gospel, are all damned and lost forever?" I answer, no. We merely hold to the proposition that there is but the one true way. I will refer you to the language of the Savior himself upon this point spoken to Nicodemus, one of the rulers of the Jews, who sought an interview with Jesus by night: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." There is a very plain declaration, and a very conclusive one. There are millions of people who have lived upon the earth who have not been "born of water and of the Spirit." Take, for instance, the millions of Jews alone who lived before the introduction of the Gospel by Christ, and after it was preached to their ancestors. For, let me tell you, the Gospel was preached before Christ preached it. When Jesus came, he did not introduce anything new; he came to restore something that had been lost. The Gospel was known by our first parents when they came out of the Garden of Eden. It was known to Abraham; it was preached to Israel before the law was added. It is stated by Paul to the Hebrews, "All our fathers were under the cloud, and they all passed through the sea; and they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did partake of the spiritual rock that followed them, which rock was Christ." They were baptized the same as we have been, but they did not receive the faith of the Gospel fully in their hearts; they did not profit by the word preached, therefore, God added the law as a schoolmaster, to bring them to the right way. He added the law of carnal commandments because they would not receive the fulness of the greater law in faith. When Jesus came, he restored the Gospel; but there had been millions and millions of people among the Jewish nation alone, from the days of Moses to those of Jesus, who had not been "born of water and of the Spirit." They termed nations outside the Jewish nation the heathen, and none of them for hundreds of years had obeyed the Gospel; had received ordinances by which they could be born of water and of the Spirit. So in regard to the people from the days since the ancient Apostles were put to death, who had authority from God, who were sent forth to minister in His name, to preach the Gospel to all people, and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and to teach them all things whatsoever he had commanded them. From their day to the time in which we live, thousands and millions of people have passed away without receiving or obeying the Gospel of the Son of God. According to the doctrines of men, be-

cause they did not hear it, they will be condemned forever. The heathen nations for ages past have not even heard the doctrines of men professing to be Christian. They worship idols; they worship beasts; they worship the heavenly bodies, etc. Many millions of them are outside the pale of Christendom. What is to become of them? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye are born of water and of the Spirit, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." So says the Savior; and there is no other name given under heaven whereby man can be saved than the name of Christ Jesus; and yet there are millions and millions of people who have passed away from the earth never having heard the name of Jesus Christ. A great many millions more have died without a knowledge of the true Gospel. And what is to become of them all? According to the doctrines of modern Christendom, they are all destroyed, they are all damned. That is a horrible thing to think of.

There is considerable controversy going on in the Christian world today, not only in reference to the plenary inspiration of the Bible, but in regard to probation. There is a discussion in progress now in regard to what is called "probation after death." The question is whether there is a probation after people leave this world, or it is confined to the sphere in which we now move. Some of the ministers are beginning to think that there must be a chance for souls after they leave the earth to learn the way of life and salvation, but the great majority of modern divines, representing popular religious opinions, believe that this is the only state of probation; that when death overtakes a man, that is the end of his opportunities for salvation. According to that rule all those millions of people who have died without hearing the name of Jesus Christ have gone to hell.

There are different ideas about hell now-a-days. A few years ago there was only the one idea, which was that hell is a great, bottomless pit full of flaming fire and brimstone, into which the wicked are cast never to return, whilst the devils are continually stirring up the flames for the everlasting torment of the doomed. And this scene used to be described by popular divines in the most hideous and shocking manner. People have recently modified their ideas concerning future punishment, and the change is greatly due to the teachings of the Elders of this Church, and the doctrines which have been set forth and published as revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The controversy that is now being conducted by leading theological minds upon the subject of probation, has been brought about through the effects upon the public mind of the preaching of the Elders of the doctrine revealed in the very beginning of the Church. You will find in the Doctrine and Covenants that God revealed to Joseph Smith as early as March 1830, that "eternal punishment is God's punishment." Because God is an eternal being. His laws are eternal, and there are penalties attached to all of them. But it does not follow that because a person may be banished into the eternal punishment it is intended that he shall stay there eternally. He may go into eternal punishment, he may go to the place prepared for the rebellious and the sinner and stay there but for a certain period. Some may stay longer than others. In the language of the Scripture, some are beaten with many stripes, and others are beaten with but few stripes; but all stay until they have paid the uttermost farthing, "all are punished according to the gravity of their guilt. It will be 'more tolerable' in the day of judgment for people who did not hear the word of God in the flesh, and who were wicked, than for the wicked who did hear the word of God and rejected it. But the time will come when all men will be judged, and the Apostle Paul says they will be judged by the Gospel; all will appear before the judgment seat to be judged according to their work, receiving according to their merits or demerits, gauged by their light and their opportunities.

Now the Lord made this very plain in the revelation he gave to Joseph Smith. The term eternal damnation God said had been used to work upon the hearts of the children of men altogether for His glory. That is, in the low condition of humanity in which most people are placed there must be a threat of punishment and a promise of reward to influence people to do that which is right. They ought to do what is

right simply because it is right; to love truth for its own sake. But humanity is in a low, degraded condition, and a promise of reward has to be held out to induce people to do right, and threats of punishment to restrain them from doing wrong. That is not the higher plane on which men are yet to stand. If people are trained aright they will love that which is true and dislike that which is untrue; they will love that which is virtuous, pure and Godlike, and dislike everything contrary thereto. They will do good, but not for reward; they will turn from evil, but not from fear of punishment. They will love truth and work righteousness for their own sake. But in the degraded condition of humanity this eternal punishment that has been preached has been allowed to go forth to work upon the hearts of the children of men altogether for the glory of God, that evil might be curbed, that transgression and sin might be restrained, that people might be checked from going headlong to destruction through fear of the consequences.

On the 18th of February, 1832, the Lord made this matter plainer. He gave to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon one of the most glorious visions that human beings ever gazed upon. It is the most complete and delightful that I have ever read. There is nothing in the book called the Bible that can compare with it. It is full of light; it is full of truth; it is full of glory; it is full of beauty. It portrays the future of all the inhabitants of the earth, dividing them into three grand classes or divisions—celestial, terrestrial, and telestial, or as compared to the glory of the sun, the glory of the moon, and the glory of the stars. It shows who will be redeemed, and what redemption they will enjoy; and describes the position the inhabitants of the earth will occupy when they enter into their future state. In that glorious vision we are told that there is only a certain class who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord. I will read a few verses:

Thus saith the Lord, concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves, through the power of the devil, to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power—

They are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born.

For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity;

Concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come.

Having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father—having crucified him unto themselves, and put him to an open shame,

These are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels.

And the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power;

Yea, verily, the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath;

For all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb, who was slain, who was in the bosom of the Father before the worlds were made.

And this is the gospel, the glad tidings which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us.

That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;

That through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him.

Who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition, who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him.

I do not intend to read from this vision the condition of the people who will be redeemed in the different degrees of glory; you can do that for yourselves. I merely refer to it that the point may be made clear, that there are only a certain few who will not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, through the merits of the atonement wrought out by Jesus Christ. The sons of perdition are to go away into this everlasting punishment and abide there. And as we are told in another part of the revelation, the height and the depth, and extent of their misery no man knoweth. It is not revealed except to a few, and then the vision is closed up, as the things they behold are unlawful to be uttered.

The "sons of perdition" are those who have received the Gospel, those to whom the Father has revealed the Son; those who know something concerning the plan of salvation; those who have had keys placed in their hands by which they could unlock the mysteries of eternity; those who received power to ascend to the highest pinnacle of the celestial glory; those who received power sufficient to overcome all things, and who, instead of using it for their own salvation, and in

the interest of the salvation of others, prostituted that power and turned away from that which they knew to be true, denying the Son of God and putting Him to an open shame. All such live in the spirit of error, and they love it and roll it under the tongue as a sweet morsel; they are governed by Satan, becoming servants to him whom they list to obey, they become the sons of perdition, doomed to suffer the wrath of God reserved for the devil and his angels. And for them, having sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no forgiveness either in this world or the world to come. But all the rest Christ will save, through the plan of human redemption prepared in the beginning before the world was.

Now the question may be asked, how can these things be? If no man can enter into the Kingdom of God except he be born of the water and of the Spirit, and only a few are to receive this eternal condemnation, how can the rest obtain this great salvation, how can they escape eternal punishment? The Lord has provided a plan for them, and it is very simple when properly understood. I noticed in reading the reports of recent discussions on probation after death that it was admitted by the learned men engaged in it that they did not know anything definite about it. The notions and ideas of even the most advanced divines are but theories and speculations. But here we have the revelations of God concerning these things, that we may not be in the dark; so that we can all come together and see eye to eye and understand alike. For it is true, and truth can be made plain to all that desire its light. But when people do not want to see the truth, they can shut their eyes and exclude it from their spiritual vision, as people sometimes shut out from their eyes the light of the sun, from their "best rooms," which, by the way, are their worst rooms, for the very reason that the blessed sunlight does not enter there—so people can close the windows of the soul and shut out the rays of the sun of righteousness; but he who desires to behold the truth may see it and comprehend it. As we now see each other by the light of the sun, so people of different minds and different races may turn their eyes towards the truth, and by the light of the Holy Ghost, they will see it exactly alike. They will no longer be divided on principles of doctrine.

But how can salvation come to those who never heard the name of Jesus Christ, who never heard the Gospel while living; who never had the opportunity of being born of the water and of the Spirit, of being baptized by one with authority, for the remission of their sins, and having hands laid upon their heads for the reception of the Holy Ghost—how can they hear, how can they understand, how can they obey? People have fallen into the common mistake that it is impossible to learn the will of God when they leave this world. I do not know where the idea sprung from. I think it came from some of the monkish cells of the old Romish Church, descending down through the various sects that have come out from that Church. Why should not a person when out of the body be able to understand as when in the body? If we believed like some of the people of India, that when the spirit leaves the body it goes back to Brahma, or emerges into the generally diffused spirit of the universe, then we might conclude that they would not understand anything when they leave the body. If the spirit becomes a nonentity when it is disembodied we might have reason for entertaining such a notion. But we understand that the spirit is the real man, and that the body is but the outside covering; that when the change we call death comes, the body returns to the earth as it was, but the spirit returns to God who gave it. That the spirit is the actual person, that which thinks and reasons, the body being but the medium conveying impressions to the real man operating inside of it. That when the spirit is liberated, although not subject to the same laws as when in the tabernacle, yet it is the same person, a son or daughter of God; a being capable of thinking; of receiving inspiration; of accepting or rejecting that which is presented; and therefore is a subject of salvation. If not, why not? What is the reason? I think we will find when we shuffle off this mortal coil, when we get rid of the trammels of the mortal body, and enter into the spirit state, we shall be if anything more intelligent than when in the body. We

shall not be bound by the same laws that now bind our mortal flesh, and we will be able to comprehend a great many things which were very hard for us to get a little inkling of while in the mortal tabernacle. "Well," somebody may say, "that is very reasonable; but how does it coincide with the Christian religion, with the doctrines laid down in the Scriptures?" Let us see. Jesus Christ, we read, was put to death by wicked men. They took His body down from the cross and laid it in a new tomb hewn out of the rock. But where was Jesus? That was not Jesus in the tomb. It was his mortal body that was laid away. Where was Jesus? People generally suppose that He went to heaven. Stop a moment. After Jesus Christ was raised from the dead a woman whose name was Mary was weeping at the sepulchre, when Jesus appeared before her. Mary stepped forward apparently to embrace Him, whereupon He said to her: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." Three days had elapsed between the time when the body was taken down from the cross—the time when he said, "Father, unto thy hands I commend my spirit," and the time of His resurrection. Where had He been in the interval? Peter tells us in his first epistle, 3d chapter, from the 18th to the 20th verses: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit: by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient; when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." It appears that after being put to death He went somewhere. Where? "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." What spirits? "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." Now, that makes the matter very clear to a person that wants to understand. But you take a learned divine whose mind has become befogged by the traditions of men and he does not want anything to do with that scripture, or if he does he will try to explain it away. How do the clergy explain it? They say the spirit of Jesus in Noah preached to the people before the flood. Now, compare that idea, with the text I have quoted. It was not Noah who was put to death. But it was He that was put to death in the flesh and quickened by the spirit that went and preached to the spirits in prison. Again, in the 4th chapter of the first Epistle of Peter, and the 8th verse, we read this: "For for this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, and live according to God in the Spirit." Here were people that were preached to who were not men in the flesh. Who were they? They were spirits in prison, and they were in prison because of their disobedience in the days of Noah. They had been there about 2,000 years, and Jesus went and preached to them. What did he preach? He preached the Gospel. What did he preach to them for? That they might be further condemned and taunted with their miserable fate? Oh no. He went there that He might preach to them the Gospel, so "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit." This is what the ancient prophet predicted concerning Jesus. We read that he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for to read. He took the book of the Prophet Isaiah, and what he read was this: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." That was Christ's mission—not only to preach to men in the flesh, but to preach to men in the spirit. Isaiah says in c. xlix, 9 v. "That thou mayest say to the prisoners, go forth, to them that are in darkness, shew yourselves;" and in c. xlii, 7 v. "to bring out the prisoners from the prison and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."

Jesus left His body sleeping in the tomb and went to the spirit world, and the repentant thief who died by