

as they did, or they had the power to refrain from doing it. If this were not so, they could not be punished. The instrument that accomplishes a certain end, that has no volition in its accomplishment, or that merely is a blind instrument used by a higher power, is not to blame for that which is accomplished. They who committed that awful crime of crucifying the Savior did so through the exercise of their own agency. Therefore the terrible penalty that came upon them. So with our first parents. Adam was not deceived. It was the woman that was deceived. But, as we are told by Lehi in the Book of Mormon, Adam felt that man might be; and men are that they may have joy. Adam saw that the partner that had been given him by the Father had broken the law, and that there would be an eternal separation between them unless he also broke the law and partook of the forbidden fruit. He did so with his eyes fully open, aware of all the consequences which would follow, in order to remain with his partner. If he had not fallen, man would not have been.

The one-third that followed Satan were spirits. They were the children of God. We are told that when the foundations of the earth were laid the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Why? Because the foundations of a habitation for them had been laid, where they could come and take tabernacles, as the Son of God came in the meridian of time. There were two-thirds then who were loyal to the Father. One-third fell. The punishment of their rebellion was that they should not have tabernacles. Satan himself has not a tabernacle of flesh. The spirits that followed him have not. But the two-thirds who were loyal to the Father, who were obedient and willing to do that which He decided should be done, had the privilege of receiving tabernacles, and they have come from the beginning until the present, taking tabernacles of flesh, generation after generation. I know that in speaking thus of these spirits it comes in contact with preconceived ideas and traditions. Men say, "Why, if I had an existence before I came here, it is strange that I do not remember it," and they advance that as an argument against pre-existence. It is a fact, however, that there is scarcely any of us who at some time in our life have not had glimpses, so to speak, of some past period. We feel sometimes that there is something that we once knew; it is very faint in our minds, as though it was something that had happened in a dream or at some previous time in our existence, which we cannot recall. Something or other may occur that will bring to us these feelings, and we struggle with our memories to try and recall what it is; but it is fleeting; we cannot recall it. How often has it been the case that we have met with people whom we have never seen before that have been as familiar to us as though we had always known them. These, perhaps, may be slight reminiscences of the life that we have enjoyed, of associations that we have had. But it is no argument to suppose that because we cannot recall anything connected with our previous existence we did not exist; for it is very evident

to all of us that though we lived when we were two or three years of age, there are very few that can recall the incidents of that early period of our lives. Some have better memories than others; but it is rarely that you can find a person who can recall an incident as far back as when he was two years of age. Yet they would reject immediately the idea that because they could not recollect these events they therefore did not live.

The Lord has had a wise purpose in concealing this from us. The reason is apparent to those who reflect—that if we had a pre-existence, in order to have us satisfied with our present existence, and not rush out of it, as so many do now even, without knowing anything about it, cutting short their own lives by their own hand, there should be a veil drawn between our former existence and our present, because, as it was said about the Son of God himself, that He descended below all things, when He came on earth, in order that He might rise above all things, we have descended from our high estate, from our associations in the eternal worlds, to this condition and these surroundings, and in the providence of God it has seemed to be necessary that that past should be concealed from us, in order that we might cling to life and not be in haste to terminate it. Why do we cling to life? Because in many instances we do not know where we are going. This life is tangible, and the thought of leaving it with many people is abhorrent. They want to live. But if we all knew that which had taken place in the past, when we were among the two-thirds who were faithful to God, it is very questionable whether we would be content to stay here.

We have our agency here, because of the decision that was adopted concerning the plan of salvation; and those of us who can understand it ought to thank God for it, because through this agency we are able to exercise our powers in any given direction that we choose, and we are promised that we shall be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body. This could not be the case if our agency were taken from us. But with our agency we can do that which seemeth good in our sight. We can take the path that the Father points out. We can pursue the course concerning which He has given us commandments; or, on the other hand, we can reject these commandments. But if we do reject them we can blame no one but ourselves. Therefore, in the great day, when we stand up to be judged according to the deeds done in the body, we cannot plead that we could not help doing so and so, because if we commit sin we do so by our own free will. God has not predestined any of us to be damned. On the contrary, He has desired and does desire the salvation of all the children of men; and He will save all with certain degrees of salvation, if they do not go so far as to commit the unpardonable sin. Some people think they have done this when they have not. A man must have attained to considerable knowledge about God and eternal things before he is in a condition where he can commit the unpardonable sin. But when that sin is committed it will be committed as it was in the

case of Judas, who is a most notable illustration of this kind of a sinner. But there are comparatively few who get so far as this. A man must have sufficient knowledge to make him a God in order to be a devil. Lucifer had to be a great and a powerful being. He stood high in the presence of God; and his fall was greater than it would have been if he had occupied an inferior station. Therefore, the more we know concerning God, the more power and the more gifts we get from God, if they are abused the greater will be our condemnation and the greater will be the depth to which we shall fall when we do fall. On the one hand, there is glory and exaltation in proportion to faithfulness, to knowledge and to gifts and opportunities enjoyed. On the other hand, there is damnation and a withdrawal of these blessings, and the depth to which that soul will fall will be in proportion to the knowledge, to the understanding, to the gifts, to the opportunities, and to the blessings that he possessed and that he enjoyed. But our Father intends to save all His children, if they will be saved. He loves us and those of you who have had children, who have had wayward children perhaps, know how your feelings of sympathy and kindness have gone out for them, and you felt as though you could do anything for them, upon correct principles, if they would let you; and do you not think that our Father in heaven, who is full of beneficence and love, and whose unceasing watchcare is over us from birth to death, has greater affection for us than we can possibly have for our children? Certainly he has. But there are attributes which He has, through which He is God, the Being whom we worship. One of these attributes is justice; and though he is merciful—for that is another attribute of His—yet He cannot consistently allow mercy to rob justice. The demands of justice must be satisfied. Then mercy steps in and claims the creature. Therefore this horrible doctrine that is taught, through a misconception of the Scriptures, concerning beings that are consigned to hell throughout the endless ages of eternity, without any possibility of redemption, is not true. It does not follow that because there is a place of punishment which is eternal in its character, or that the punishment itself is eternal, the being consigned to it shall remain in it eternally. God has made this plain to us, and it has relieved us to a great extent from the horrible fears with which the idea of a future place of torment is associated in the minds of modern men. After the transgression is atoned for, then salvation comes.

We are not held responsible for the sin of Adam. The death of the Savior has redeemed us from that, and from all the other consequences of the fall to a very great extent, and it will do entirely. It has redeemed us from the grave. It has brought about the resurrection of the body. He became the first fruits of them that slept. He broke the bands of death. He led captivity captive. He triumphed over the grave, and became, as I have said, the first fruits of them that slept. And others who had died before, and who were righteous, came