

God knew His children before they came here. Speaking to Jeremiah, He said: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a Prophet unto the nations." He knew Jeremiah before he made his appearance in the flesh, and He knew that he would be a Prophet, for He knew the spirit of the man, and He knew also the course that he would take. So with the other Prophets and Apostles. God, in His infinite mercy, has revealed to us that we had a pre-existence, that we lived with Him before we came here in the flesh, just as our Savior did. The Apostle Paul, quoting from the psalms, says of the Savior, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Who were His fellows? We were His fellows—we who are here today, and all the children of men upon the face of the earth. We were all companions of the Son of God in the eternal worlds, born in the spirit, living with Christ before He became our earthly Savior. God foreordained Him, chose Him, elected Him, to come forth and perform the work of a Savior upon the earth. He was ordained to this express work, God knowing before hand that He would do this. So with the Apostles, with the Prophets, and with all of us. We were sent here on earth, foreordained to do good, to keep the commandments of God, and to be saved; for God loves all His children, and would save every human soul. He would not that any one should be lost; but He desires the salvation of all. And all will be saved, except the sons of perdition. This is the grand truth that God has revealed unto us in these last days; that every human being will be saved except a certain class who commit the unpardonable sin—they who shed innocent blood, they who are accessory thereto, or who consent to the shedding of innocent blood. For them there is no salvation, we are told. Therefore, Jesus said: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Every sin not of this unpardonable character will receive forgiveness, sooner or later. But will it not be punished? Yes. There is punishment affixed to every sin. No man can commit sin without receiving the punishment therefor. He will have to expiate that sin, either in this life or in the life to come. For there is a penalty affixed to every transgression of the laws of God, and we shall have to pay the penalty unless we repent of our sins, and by going forth into the waters of baptism, obtain a remission of them, according to the promise which God has given. In this way our sins can be remitted and be blotted out, and we be re-

lieved from the penalty that is affixed to sin.

These features of the Gospel, as they have been revealed to us, I think, must fill every soul who contemplates them with gladness, with joy, with satisfaction. The idea that has been preached by ignorant teachers who have put erroneous constructions on the words of the Bible for so many generations concerning the punishment that God has affixed to sins has filled men with great horror, and has driven probably a great many into atheism or unbelief respecting God, because they could not reconcile such teachings with the character of a Being such as our God is. Before this Church was organized, the Lord gave a revelation unto the Prophet Joseph Smith, in which this was explained, and it was explained with such clearness that a child might understand it; that because God's punishment is eternal punishment it does not necessarily follow that the being who receives it is consigned to it eternally. For instance, a prison might stand for a hundred years. It might be a place of punishment. A person consigned to that prison might go in there and exiate his crime in the prison by suffering a certain punishment, and after the time pronounced as the punishment had expired he could emerge therefrom. Still the prison exists. So it is with God's punishment. His punishment is eternal punishment, because He is eternal; but it does not follow, as the Lord has said with great plainness, that a person who is consigned thereto will endure it eternally. The Lord Jesus Christ has died for all men, and He will draw all men unto Him. But there are degrees of punishment affixed to sin; and in proportion to men's crimes they will be punished. But they will not be consigned to endless punishment—that is, to suffer it eternally.

The revelation which God gave, and which is embodied in the seventy-sixth section of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, is wonderfully plain upon this subject. In that revelation we are told that there are three degrees of glory. There is a glory which Paul likened, in I Corinthians 15th chapter, to the glory of the sun. There is a glory which he likened to the glory of the moon; and there is a glory which he likened to the glory of the stars, and as "one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." Men and women who keep the commandments of God in their fulness; who labor continually, as many have done, to carry out the principles of truth; who are willing to suffer martyrdom for the sake of the truth, as the Apostles did in the days of Jesus; men and women who have died by hundreds and by thousands, in various ages of the world, for the truth—these will undoubtedly receive a greater glory than those who have never made such sacrifices. There are people who have not stamina to stand up to the truth, and who are not willing to endure the persecutions that follow the practice of truth. They weaken before the op-

position that is brought to bear against them. They love popularity, they love a good name, they love the good things of this life, and they are willing to trust the future to itself. They go in for the enjoyment of the present day, of the present hour, and are willing, as they say, to risk the future. But there are others who look above and beyond this; who love the truth better than they love worldly ease, or comfort, or riches, or good name, like our Lord and Savior and His Apostles. They went through life enduring every conceivable hardship and privation, and at last had their lives taken from them. Why was this? Because they knew that God had in store for them a wonderful reward, a great glory. As Jesus said, in response to a question of one of the Apostles: "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." They believed the words of Jesus. They believed that Jesus would give them thrones, that they would be rulers in the Kingdom of God. They did not labor for an earthly crown. We read of men who have endured everything for the sake of a worldly crown. We read of men going to battle, risking their lives and undergoing all sorts of privations and hardships, for worldly fame. But these heroes of whom I speak looked beyond this life. They saw that worldly honors, crowns and fame were perishable. But Jesus had promised unto them that they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. They would become kings. And they looked forward with perfect confidence to the fulfillment of that promise. Therefore they endured these privations.

But now, as then, there are other classes—men who love their own ease; who will not endure these privations; who will not go through that which the Apostles had to meet; and, of course, though they may be worthy people in many respects, they cannot hope to attain unto the same glory as these did who made such immense sacrifices for the truth. Therefore, there is, as Paul says, one glory of the sun, or the celestial glory. Who shall attain unto that? Those who keep the law that pertains to that glory; those who do everything that is commanded them of God; those who are willing to endure everything for His sake and to do that which He requires at their hands. There have been, no doubt, millions of people on the earth who have had this willingness. They will attain, we are told, unto the celestial glory. Where God and Christ are they will dwell. They are promised crowns, thrones, exaltation. Everything that heart can desire, or that will add to the glory of a human or an immortal soul, will be given unto this class. Jesus is the great exemplar of that class. He himself came here on earth. He forsook His throne and His glory; He left His father's presence, and was willing to come down