

who gave it. Now would there be any sense in that doctrine if we had never been there before? Could I say I will return to China, when I have never been to China. No, the word "return" would not correctly express the idea. If the spirit returns to God, it has been there before, and we are only strangers here, having been sent forth from our Father's house to one of His mansions in its imperfect state. What for? To try us and give us experience, to place us in a school in which we may learn some things that we never could have learned if we had stayed at home, where we were at the time this earth was formed. By and by we will return home again. There is something comforting in the anticipation of returning home when we have been away for a long time; but if we never had been in heaven, in our Father's house; if we never had associated with the heavenly throng and had never beheld our Father's face we could not realize the feelings we now realize when we reflect that we are going back to where we once dwelt. Happy thought, to think that the memory, now clogged so that we cannot pierce the veil and discern what took place in our first estate, will by and by be quickened again and that we will wake up to the realities of our past existence. When a man goes to sleep at night he forgets the doings of the day. Sometimes a partial glimpse of them will disturb his slumbers; but sleep as a general thing, and especially sound sleep, throws out of the memory everything pertaining to the past; but when we awake in the morning, with that wakefulness returns a vivid recollection of our past history and doings. So it will be when we come up into the presence of our Father and God in the mansion whence we emigrated to this world. When we

get there we will behold the face of our Father, the face of our mother, for we were begotten there the same as we are begotten by our fathers and mothers here, and hence our spirits are the children of God, legally and lawfully, in the same sense that we are the children of our parents here in this world. We are so called in the scriptures. It is written in the epistle of James: "Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the father of our spirits?" Again, we read that Jesus was with the Father from before the foundation of the world; and in his last prayer he prayed that he might be restored to that glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

Now, who is Jesus? He is only our brother, but happens to be the firstborn. What, the firstborn in the flesh? O no, there were millions and millions born in the flesh before he was. Then how is he the firstborn? Because he is the eldest—the first one born of the whole family of spirits and therefore he is our elder brother. But why these spirits came to inherit mortal tabernacles is a question worthy of consideration. This world is full of sin, sorrow, affliction, and death, and mankind see nothing, as it were, but mourning and sorrow, from their birth until they go down to the grave; then why send these heavenly spirits to dwell in mortal tabernacles, corrupt, fallen, and degraded as we are in this world? It is to learn, as I have already said, certain lessons that we never could learn up in yonder mansions. Learn to understand by experience many things pertaining to the flesh that we never could learn there, that when we should be redeemed by the blood and atonement of our elder brother, the firstborn of every creature, and brought back into the mansions whence we emigrated we might appreciate that