

whether living or dead, an equal chance to avail themselves of the means of salvation; and that we are to operate in their behalf, working out certain ordinances for them which they are now incapable of doing for themselves. It means that as God feels interested in the welfare of all his family, men in the flesh who are in possession of his spirit and the light of eternity, having come to a knowledge of him and his eternal laws, should cooperate with him in the accomplishment of this object. And it means too that if he has conferred the Gospel and the power thereof and the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, sending his messengers from the heavens for this purpose, that it is not for a phantom, it is not for a plaything to be trifled with at pleasure; but it is that we should operate with God and with the Priesthood who lived before us, in the accomplishment of the things of God on the earth. That is what it means. And hence, says he, when EliJah comes he will "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," etc. It is not for mankind to come and live and exist a little while to be blotted out and nothing more of them; but it is that they should be enlightened by the Spirit of God, that they should sympathize with and have regard for all the human family living and dead, feeling desirous to promote their happiness and welfare, as he himself does. How often when abroad preaching this Gospel have I heard men say, and you have heard the same sentiment expressed, "If this is true what has become of our fathers? Are they to be lost forever?" And then you know they have certain peculiar ideas about hell and damnation, the lake of fire and brimstone into which a certain portion of the human family are to be cast to be forever burning and never to be consumed. And if

our doctrine be true they think it would be cruel that this state of things should exist. Why, God is more merciful than man is, he possesses more sympathies with human nature than man does or ever did, one with another. The Lord has been feeling after the welfare of mankind all the day long, from the first commencement of the world to the present time. But there are certain eternal laws among the Gods in the eternal worlds which render it necessary that mankind shall go through certain ordeals and observe certain ordinances and be governed by certain laws before they can be exalted in the kingdom of God. And as Satan has been operating in opposition to the Lord's designs, and having so far succeeded in drawing men after him, it became necessary that these ordinances that God has instituted should be introduced and that man should be governed by them. Hence it was necessary that a Redeemer should be provided, which was perfectly understood by one of the Prophets who said, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." Who was he? When Jesus appeared, says John, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." He was the ransom.

What about the others, they who have died without a knowledge of the Gospel? They are amply provided for. The Lord has shown us that we must build Temples in which to officiate for them. We have commenced to do so, and our fathers have already commenced to feel after us, manifesting themselves by dreams and visions, and in various ways to those most interested in their welfare. And having inaugurated this state of things for our guidance that we have today, with Presidents, Apostles, Presidents of Stakes, High Councils, High Priests, Seventies, Bishops,