

curse mankind? No, but to bless them; he came to seek and to save those that were lost; He came to unfold the principles of eternal truth, to bring life and immortality to light by the Gospel. He came, according to the eternal decree of the Almighty, to offer his life as a sacrifice, as an atonement for the sins of the human family. He came to introduce principles that emanated from God to organize his church upon the earth, and to endow his disciples with authority that they might go forth as His messengers to proclaim the principles of eternal truth to the human family. Hence says he, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This is one of those eternal decrees that you cannot get away from. And then we talk about the damnation of hell; and people have as strange notions about that as they have about other things. I have read statements from men which were really terrible when depicting the state of the damned. It is bad enough, but it is not the kind of thing they represent. I remember, too, reading a piece of poetry, which ran something like this:

"Infinite years in torment must I spend,
And never, never, never have an end.
Ah! must I lie, in ruinous despair,
As many years as atoms in the air;
When these are past as many thousand more,
As grains of sand upon the ocean shore.
When all these doleful years are spent
In pain, and multiplied by millions yet again
Till numbers drown the thought,
Could I suppose that then my dismal years
Would have a close, this would afford a hope;
but ah! I shiver
To ponder on this dreadful word, forever;
I in this burning gulf blaspheming lie,
Time is no more, but vast eternity."

This may be poetic. It is certainly grim and terrible; but it is not true. Is there justice? Yes. Eternal justice? Yes. These men that I have referred to suffered eternal justice; they were destroyed by the Almighty, and at last were saved again by the Almighty. Have we eternal punishment? Yes. What is it? It is God's punishment. Are there everlasting prisons? Yes. What are they? God's prisons. Do people stay in them forever? No. Not in all of them. We have prisons upon the earth, penitentiaries, in which to confine people for one, five, ten or twenty years, as the case may be; and when their time expires they come out; but the prison is there still. Is it an everlasting prison? You may call it so if you please; but people do not stay in it always. Has God a way to manage his affairs? Certainly; the Judge of all the earth ought to be at least as capable in the management of his affairs, as mortal men are in theirs.

We have come upon this stage of action, and are called to preach. And God has revealed his will, and some people seem to be very angry about it. Joseph Smith had revelations from God. Do I know it? Yes, I do. Could he help it? Suppose the Lord were to speak to any of you, could you help it? Or if an angel were to come to you, could you help it? No, you could not. Now, you might do what they tell you, or not; that is optional. If you did what they told you, however, the world and the devil would say you were a fool; and they have always said so in every age of the world; and the devil and the world have always been opposed to God and his law, and they would persecute you as they persecuted him. Very well, do we have need to fight? I do not. I thank God for the light