EXERCISE OF AGENCY. 197

in white robes? and whence came they?"
And he was answered: "These are they
which came out of great tribulation, and
have washed their robes, and made them
white in the blood of the Lamb. There-
fore are they before the throne of God,
and serve him day and night." Well, how
did the world treat such people? It gen-
erally treated them very scornfully. Paul
tells us, that by faith Moses endured,
as seeing him who is invisible; by faith
women received their dead raised to life
again; by faith men wandered about in
sheepskins and goatskins; being desti-
tute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the
world was not worthy:) they wandered in
deserts, and in mountains, and in dens
and caves of the earth. Now, why was it
that men that were aiming at an exalta-
tion among the Gods should be so per-
secuted and cast out by men? For in-
stance I might mention a few of them.
I might refer to Job and the kind of
trials he passed through; I might talk
about Abraham and the trials he had
to endure; I might bring to your minds
many other prominent men of God, but
I will come to Elijah, who was a man
that feared God and wrought righteous-
ness. The people had departed from the
Lord and trampled under foot His pre-
cepts, etc. So much so that Elijah was
obliged to flee and hide himself in a cave
away from the face of man. While in
the cave the word of the Lord, "a still,
small voice"—came to him saying, "What
doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I
have been very jealous for the Lord God
of hosts: for the children of Israel have
forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets
with the sword; and I, even I only,
am left; and they seek my life, to take
it away." Well, it was a critical posi-
tion to be in, but it was just as crit-
ical for many others who lived in an-
cient times. And this spirit of murder
and persecution still exists. It was ex-
hibited in the mobbing and drivings of
our people from Ohio, Missouri, Illinois,
and other places, in the martyrdom of
Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum
in Carthage jail, more recently in the
assassination of Elder Joseph Standing,
and again only a few days ago in an at-
tempt to murder Brother John T. Alexan-
der, one of our Elders in Georgia, the
particulars of which you have doubtless
read in the newspapers. In the face of
such diabolical outrages as these, there
is not much room to boast about our lib-
erties. But I merely refer to these things
to show that the spirit that actuated men
in former times is at work today; irre-
versible of times, forms of government,
places or circumstances.

Nevertheless, as I have said, it is nec-
essary that we pass through certain or-
deals, and that we be tried. But why
is it that we should be tried? There is
just the same necessity for it now that
there was in former times. I heard the
Prophet Joseph say, in speaking to the
Twelve on one occasion: "You will have
all kinds of trials to pass through. And it
is quite as necessary for you to be tried
as it was for Abraham and other men of
God, and (said he) God will feel after you,
and He will take hold of you and wrench
your very heart strings, and if you can-
not stand it you will not be fit for an
inheritance in the Celestial Kingdom of
God." Some people have wondered why
so many of the Twelve fell away. God
tries people according to the position