

some instances, to be false, to be nonsense. They could not comprehend it, because they had none of the Spirit of God about them, none of the knowledge of God, and they refused to accept him as an exponent of divine truth. So it is with the Elders who go out at the present day, to talk to the inhabitants of the earth. They are looked upon in the same light; though there is this to be said: that which has been taught by the Elders has had effect in the earth, and much misconception has gradually disappeared. There are men even now, for instance, who are ready to believe a doctrine which, when it was first preached, they rejected—the doctrine that there is a space between death and the resurrection in which a man can repent of his sins. Now, when that doctrine was first taught, some 42 years ago, it was looked upon by many as an absurd doctrine. They said it was contrary to the divine will. If man, they contended, did not receive the Gospel or the truth here in this life, he lost his opportunity, and would be damned throughout all the endless ages of eternity. That was the popular idea, and many believed it. Many believed that this would be the case with pagans, and with these Indians that we know something about, and with other heathen peoples, who had never heard the name of the Son of God—the only name under heaven by which man can be saved; many believed those people were to be consigned to hell by millions, never to be delivered therefrom, and yet they called God just, the God they worshiped.

Joseph Smith taught a different doctrine even before the Church was organized. He taught the doctrine, in a revelation given to Martin Harris—it had to be given with great

care, because it was entirely different to what was generally believed—that "eternal punishment is God's punishment;" but it does not follow that those who come under God's punishment are to be punished throughout the endless ages of eternity. He taught that grand truth in the year 1829. Then it was followed up by the Vision, which explained in the most wonderful manner the goodness of our God, and showed Him to be the being that He is described to be by all the holy Prophets—a being just and merciful, a being who labored to save His children, and had their salvation at heart continually.

But Joseph taught in later years, this doctrine: that there was a space between death and the resurrection, and during that space the children of men who had not had an opportunity of hearing the Gospel in this life, could hear it proclaimed by men who had authority in the spirit world; and he explained that the Savior himself, during the time that His body was in the tomb, "went and preached to the spirits in prison. Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

It was a doctrine that was new to the sectarian world; new to everyone; no one had ever thought of such a doctrine. But now I see by allusions in the newspapers occasionally, that popular ministers are taking hold of this idea and ventilating it and speaking about it. How wonderful! Is it not? It shows that when knowledge is upon the earth, there are some at least who profit by it, though they may not accept it as coming from God. In this way the preaching of this Gospel has had its effect upon the inhabitants of the earth. I have seen of late, and doubtless you have, many