

we have. "Well," say some of our wise men, "was not that cruel to destroy so many people?" Perhaps it would be according to your ideas, but it was not according to the Lord's ideas: because he looked upon men as immortal beings. These men were accountable to their Maker, they had a dual existence, they were associated with time and with eternity, and we might go still further and say they were associated with the past, the present and the future, and the Lord as a great cosmogonist, took in the various stages of man's existence, and operated for the general benefit of the whole. But was it not cruel to destroy them? I think God understood precisely what He was doing. They were His offspring, and He knowing things better than they did, and they having placed themselves under the power and dominion of Satan, He thought they had better be removed and another class of men be introduced. Why? There were other persons concerned besides them. There were millions of spirits in the eternal worlds who would shrink from being contaminated by the wicked and corrupt, the debauchee, the dishonest, the fraudulent, the hypocrite, and men who trampled upon the ordinances of God. It might seem harsh for these men to be swept off from the face of the earth, and not allowed to perpetuate their species thereon; but what about the justice of forcing these pure spirits to come and inhabit tabernacles begotten by debauched corrupt reprobates, the imagination of whose heart was only evil, and that continually—what about them? Had they no rights that God was bound to respect? Certainly they had, and He respected them. He cut off the wicked. What did he do with them? He did with them

as we do with some of the wicked, and that we do not do with a great many others—that is, they were put in prison. Had He a right to do that? I think He had. They were his offspring. I think He had the right to act according to the counsel of His own will. At any rate he took the liberty of doing it. And who was there to say, "Why doest thou this?" First, He called upon them to forsake their wickedness, but they would not, and a while after He destroyed them. Had He a right to do it? He had and He sent them to hell. Some people talk about roasting there. That is something of man's getting up. He sent them to prison, and they were confined there, and when the proper time came, Jesus, when He was put to death in the flesh, was quickened by the Spirit, and went and preached to those spirits that sometime were disobedient in the days of Noah. Perhaps they had time enough during their stay, to reflect upon their acts, and to become a little steadier, and to reflect upon God and His laws. At any rate Jesus went and preached to those spirits in prison.

What, then, became of the inhabitants of the world? There were a few who went through the narrow gate that Jesus spoke of, and they were caught up and Zion with them, and the Lord is taking care of them in his own way. They will be dealt with according to His purposes and designs, and be numbered among His jewels. The others, as I have said, were cast into prison, and there they remained about 2,500 years. It was a pretty long imprisonment. Still the Lord had a right to manipulate these things as He pleased, and He so manipulated them, and although this time seems very long, yet in the eternities to come it would only be a comparatively short period;