

must not touch me now. "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father and to my God and your God." This was His expression when His body had been resurrected from the tomb. He had not yet been to His Father—that is, directly to the immediate presence of His Father. Therefore it was not fit that any mortal should put hands upon Him. It was not the privilege even of Mary, closely connected as she was with Him—it was not her privilege to put her hand upon her resurrected Lord. He had not yet ascended to the Father.

Thus you see the Scriptures corroborate that which I have said in this respect. His body had lain, as I before remarked, from Friday until Sunday, in the tomb, and then it was resurrected. But during that period His spirit had been engaged preaching to the spirits in prison; they heard the glad tidings of salvation from the Savior. His voice penetrated the depths of hell, the gloom of darkness, and it awakened hope within their hearts. He proclaimed liberty to the captive. He opened the prison doors to those that were bound. He preached unto them the acceptable year of the Lord: for the time had come for them to be redeemed from their prison house in which they had been so long incarcerated for the sins committed in the flesh.

This is the Gospel of salvation that God has revealed. Every human being that has ever been born upon the face of the earth, every human being that ever will be born will hear these glad tidings of salvation proclaimed by those who have authority to administer it unto fallen man, whether they lived before Jesus, whether they lived at the time of or

since Jesus, or whether they will live yet in the future. They cannot hear the Gospel. They cannot be judged until they do hear it. Every principle of salvation will be proclaimed to those who have died without the privilege of hearing it in the flesh—they must hear it in the spirit world as well as those who hear it in the flesh. Therefore, we need not be in any anxiety concerning our ancestors; we need not puzzle ourselves with questions as to the fate of the heathen; we need not be disturbed in our feelings to reconcile the justice of God with His mercy, or His mercy with His justice, to the children of men. None of these questions need trouble us, for the reason that by the revelation of these glorious principles God's mercy is reconcilable in the most perfect manner with His justice. We see by this that God will not consign any soul to endless torment without first giving him an opportunity of receiving or rejecting the Gospel. If he be consigned to torment it will be as a punishment for violating law. Where there is no law there is no transgression of the law. There can be therefore no punishment if a man does not comprehend the law. If it is not made plain to him, its binding force does not operate upon him; but when he understands it, when his mind comprehends it, when it is declared to him, then it begins to operate upon him, and if he reject it, then the penalty begins to operate also, and unless he repents and obeys that law he will receive severe condemnation. Therefore in the spirit world there are grades of punishment just as there are grades of spirits. Some are ignorant. Some men who never heard the name of Jesus have lived according to the light that God gave them; for God has given to every man