

them in complete possession of all the knowledge necessary to prove to them that He is God? Questions of this kind are frequently propounded by men. They ask: Why does He not reveal Himself fully to His creatures? Why should He leave them a prey to doubt? Why should He leave them in darkness? Why should He give opportunities to the adversary of their souls to assail them as He does for want of that knowledge which He might communicate so easily. These are important questions, and they are questions which as Latter-day Saints we should understand.

We must remember, to begin with, that God our Eternal Father has given unto each of us our agency. There is no human being born on the earth from whom God has withheld his or her agency. We have as much right to exercise our agency in our sphere as God the Eternal Father has to exercise His agency in His sphere; just as much. It is not sacrilege, it is not any infringement upon the power of Our God to indulge in this thought or to have this belief. It does not detract in the least from His glory, from His power, nor from our dependence upon Him as an infinite and almighty Being to entertain this view of ourselves. Jesus said when He was upon the earth: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." How could we be if man did not have the power within him, through the agency which God has given him, to be thus perfect. Everywhere throughout the divine record where God has communicated His mind and His will to men, this principle is plainly manifest: that man has had given unto him, in the greatest freedom and without limit, the power to exercise his own agency. It was so

in the beginning—in the very commencement of the work of our God upon the earth when He placed Adam in the garden and gave Eve unto him for a wife. He set before them the principle of knowledge—that is, He told them what they should do; He told them what they should refrain from doing. He told them that if they did certain things, certain penalties should follow. Had such a thing been possible and consistent with the purposes of Heaven, He might, at the very beginning, have prevented Adam from exercising His agency. Instead of saying to him, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat except the tree of knowledge of good and evil," and leaving him free to eat of the fruit of that tree, He might have put it out of his power to touch or taste it. But not so; He gave him the opportunity of exercising his agency; He told him he could eat of every tree freely, except the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but that he should not eat of it, "for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." There was no attempt on the part of our Father to interfere with the agency of Adam in this respect. He left him perfectly free and in the exercise of that freedom Adam did partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. His wife, Eve, was deceived in eating of the fruit; she partook of it, being beguiled, yet in the perfect exercise of her agency, and after she had partaken of it, and become subject to the penalty that God had pronounced—the penalty of death and expulsion from the garden—then she came and told Adam what she had done. Adam was fully conscious of all the consequences that had attended this act. He knew perfectly well that the penalty would be executed—that