

surrounded are not, particularly or specially, of our own making, nor the principles in which we believe. We have an abiding faith, as we heard referred to this morning, in certain principles which have emanated from the heavens; and we find ourselves on the earth at this particular time, in this peculiar dispensation, and engaged in a work that is dependent, I was going to say, altogether upon the Almighty, and which is part and parcel of that program which existed in his mind before the world rolled into existence.

There have been different dispensations existing in the various ages of time, as the purposes of God have rolled on in relation to this earth; all of them, more or less, partook of the same principles that have been revealed unto us, that is so far as the Gospel is concerned, but all of them more or less differing.

The first command given to man was to be fruitful, to multiply and replenish the earth; in other words, an earth had been created, and it was necessary, as it had been brought into existence and man placed upon it, that his seed should be propagated, that there might be bodies prepared for spirits to inhabit, that they together might accomplish certain purposes, in the designs of God, pertaining to the creation of the earth.

By and by we find the people departing from the principles of truth, from the laws of the Gospel, repudiating the fear of God, grieving his Holy Spirit and incurring his displeasure. Then a flood came and the inhabitants of the world, with the exception of a very few, were swept from it, after the Gospel had been preached to all who then lived and all had had an opportunity to believe in and obey it. A few of them did so and lived in the fear of God, and, according to the revela-

tions which we have, they were translated and caught up, they had a separate existence from those who lived upon the earth, and occupied the position of translated beings and were necessarily governed by other laws than the denizens of the earth. This was one peculiarity of the dispensation before the flood. Then came the flood, which many people, unacquainted with things as they existed in the bosom of God and with his purposes and designs, consider was a great cruelty, an act of tyranny, evincing a spirit of outrage and oppression upon the inhabitants of the world. Skeptics reason in this manner sometimes, the only reason of their caviling being that they do not understand God or his laws and designs in relation to the earth and the inhabitants that live upon it, and being ignorant of these things they are not competent judges as to the fitness of things generally, and the course pursued by the Almighty in relation to the inhabitants of the earth, hence they arrive at all kinds of foolish conclusions. The fact is there were certain ideas connected with the destruction of the world that were good, proper and merciful. Mankind had committed unto them certain powers, among which was the power to perpetuate their own species, of which they could not according to the laws of nature be deprived while living. And they had a certain agency of their own, which they could act upon, and the people who were destroyed in the flood had departed from the laws of God. Man has a dual being, not only a body or mortal tabernacle, but a spirit, and that spirit existed before he came here; and if men before the flood had been allowed to go on in their iniquities, and if, with every thought and imagination of their hearts, which were all unlawful and evil,