

attain to great knowledge, and understanding, and wisdom, but that they should show themselves approved in every sphere in which they might be placed. Where little is given, but little will be required. And having determined in his own purpose and mind that they should be agents to themselves, he designed to try them in their agency, with a small degree of light and truth at first, to see how they would act in relation to the degree of intelligence given; in other words, to see whether they would make a good use of the same, exercising their agency in doing that which is right, cleaving to that which is good, and resisting evil of every kind. And then having been found worthy he would impart a greater degree of light, and impart to them greater knowledge concerning himself, and his purposes, and his ways, and the works of his hands. If we were created with a fullness of knowledge, it would be very difficult for us to conceive how it could be possible, to use this agency properly before the Lord. It is true we would be placed in possession of a vast amount of information concerning the past, present and future, but being agents to ourselves we might, peradventure, use this knowledge in a manner to do great injury. Therefore the Lord determined that we should only be entrusted with a little information, and with an agency to use it according to his mind and will.

We are the sons and daughters of God, just as much so as the children, present this afternoon, are the sons and daughters of their parents, and in the same light, that we are the children of our earthly parents, so are the children of men the offspring of the Almighty. He is our Father in the full sense of the word, and we were begotten by him, and born to him, not in this probation, but in the

world prior to the existence of this one—in our former or first estate. There we were born, there we were begotten, there we received a spiritual existence in the image of God, we were then without flesh, without bones, without the organization we now are in possession of. When I speak of a spiritual existence, do not misunderstand me, I do not mean the kind of existence spoken of in the writings of many theologians in which the spirits of men are represented as occupying no space, and as having no relation to duration or time. Such an existence is inconceivable; it is absurd in its very nature, to suppose that there can be any existence, either in an immortal form, or in the present form of body and spirit, as persons occupying no space; it is one of the greatest absurdities ever invented by intelligent beings. Yet this is incorporated in the articles of faith of some of the Christian societies and especially in their theological writings. They try to make spiritual existence as mysterious as they possibly can, and often declare our Father and God to be a person, and yet, according to their articles of faith, he is said to be without body, parts or passions, as though we could comprehend the existence of something without a body or parts.

Some of you, my hearers, may be surprised, especially the rising generation growing up in these valleys, when I tell you that there are millions of Christians (so called), who believe that God occupies no space, that is, as a body, and yet is a person. You read the 39 Articles of the Church of England, if you doubt what I say, and you will there find it just so; also the Articles of the Methodists, which are more or less copied from those of the Church of England. In the Methodist discipline it reads: We believe in one