

of the Son of God, is a source of greater joy and pleasure to righteous men than all that the world can give. To know that we are in fellowship with the Saints; to know we are held in confidence by them; to know that we have their faith and prayers, is worth more to the honest-in-heart than all that the pleasures of the world can bestow. To know that we have enjoyed privileges by which we have secured to ourselves peculiar blessings for time and eternity is beyond all comparison with earthly things. We would not exchange the least of the gifts that have been bestowed upon us by and through the authority of the Holy Priesthood for all the world can produce; because that which cometh from God is eternal and will not perish. If I were to be deprived of the privileges I have referred to, all else of an earthly character would be worthless, senseless and evanescent to me. We want something that reaches out into eternity. We want to know where we came from, and where we are going. Where did we come from? From God. Our spirits existed before they came to this world. They were in the councils of the heavens before the foundations of the earth were laid. We were there. We sang together with the heavenly hosts for joy, when the foundations of the earth were laid, and when the plan of our existence upon this earth and redemption were mapped out. We were there; we were interested, and we took a part in this great preparation. We were unquestionably present in those councils, when that wonderful circumstance occurred to which President Taylor has so often referred of late, when Satan offered himself as a savior of the world, if he could but receive the honor and the glory of the Father for doing it. But

Jesus said, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever." Wherefore, because Satan rebelled against God, and sought to destroy the agency of man, the Father rejected him and he was cast out, but Jesus was accepted. We were, no doubt, there, and took a part in all those scenes; we were vitally concerned in the carrying out of these great plans and purposes; we understood them, and it was for our sakes they were decreed and are to be consummated. These spirits have been coming to this earth to take upon them tabernacles, that they might become like unto Jesus Christ—being "formed in his likeness and image," from the morn of creation until now, and will continue until the winding-up scene, until the spirits who were destined to come to this world shall have come and accomplished their mission in the flesh.

This we have learned. How have we found it out? I answer, through the prophet Joseph Smith, by revelation and the inspiration of the Almighty upon our own minds, by which we are able to ascertain the truth respecting the predictions of the Prophet Joseph Smith, respecting the truth of the sayings of the ancient Prophets, respecting the truth of the Scriptures, respecting the validity of the promises that God has made to the children of men; for every man has the privilege of obtaining the inspiration of the Almighty—or the gift of the Holy Ghost—to know for himself and need not depend upon Joseph Smith, nor upon Brigham Young, nor upon John Taylor, nor upon any of the prophets who wrote and spoke as the Spirit of God gave them utterance, upon these principles. We have learned these things. We have learned whence we came, why