

## PRE-MORTAL EXISTENCE

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(Inaudible) . . . outline and orientation is independent with you, figuring out some gospel problems, but noting the light. We will have one test. I think it will be an essay-type test. Now, I may just make the test a little hard for my own interest, just to see what kind of answers I get. I am going to read the papers myself, just to have a feel of what college students know about the gospel from a personal standpoint. But I will not be as tough in the grades as you may think from the test because I understand that you are all already informed and stable and that you have to get a certain grade average to maintain post-graduate work, but it will be essay. Now, you will pick it up this way—we will take a question or so out of a multitude of the subjects that we discussed, although it may not be exactly what we did discuss, because, as we have indicated, we are opening up avenues of investigation. You want the roll on that, Dr. Riddle? We are opening up avenues of investigation. For instance, today, we are going to take the subject of pre-existence. Now one of the reading assignments that will grow will be all the related things to this subject that are in our text.

Well, this is one of the things that is unique and distinctive to us. There is no people in the world, as far as I know (at least none of any substance or size) that has a concept of a doctrine like this—pre-existence. We won't cover this subject, but we will take some selected portions of it for our consideration. And our number one heading in our outline is the obvious and simple thing—What is pre-existence? And I say this is an obvious and simple thing, and yet we immediately get into a field of where there is a lot of speculation and a lot of uncertainty and a lot of ambiguity. And I am not going to pretend to answer all the questions of the day in the field that we discuss. But I am hopefully going to open up one of these avenues of investigation and make some suggestions as to what the seemingly is founded and certain and absolute as far as the revelations are concerned. And what other things seemingly get off into somewhat a realm of speculation and uncertainty. We are not going to say, categorically, that this is true or that this is false. But I will suggest that some of the things that are commonly said in the Church are in the realm of speculation and cannot be definitely and categorically known, as far as the revelations are concerned. You talk about LDS doctrine and philosophy. Well, philosophy, the way that the philosophers define it in the text, is the system that attempts to explain eternal realities such as where we came from and the ethical principles that are involved in our lives—explain to them on the basis of reason, rather than the basis of revelation. And when we get talking about pre-existence, we are talking about where the human personalities—the ego, the thing that is the living, sanctioned part of the human personality, where it came from. The pre-existence, as I view it at least, has a very definite meaning to us. Now, we are concerned in this connection with the problem, “What is a spirit?” And in answer to that, I simply refer to such things as this: the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke where the man, Jesus, resurrected, appeared to the disciples in the upper room and the record says they thought they had seen a spirit. He was a man in all respects, indicating that they understood that a spirit was a man. The same thing is true when he walked on the water. They thought it was a spirit. In other words, the spirit is a man. The same thing is true in this account in the book of Ether where the Lord Jesus

appeared and said, “This body which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit, and even as I appear unto thee in the spirit, will I appear unto my people in the flesh.”

Well, when we talk about a spirit now, what we are talking about is an entity. We will just make our own definition here so that we will all be clear on what is being discussed. Now we are not talking about some ethereal essence or fluid or something else that fills immensity. We are talking about spirits as men and women as the offspring of God. And this brings us to this consideration—the foundation upon which pre-existence rests. There are certain things that have to be known and have to be understood in order to be capable of believing in pre-existence. And one of these things is the eternity of matter. You cannot believe in the doctrine of pre-existence unless you believe that all things exist everlastingly. If you believe the heresies of the sectarian world, particularly of the past have been that God created things out of nothing, then you would have a problem with this.

Now let us read and we will open our Doctrine and Covenants and keep it there for a little while, to Section 93. Let us read the 29<sup>th</sup> verse, in Section 93. We are going to be involved a little in this section this morning. “Man was also in the beginning with God.” Previously in this section, He said that He was the firstborn, and that He was in the beginning with the Father. Now He is coming to the added thing that man was also in the beginning with God. We will have a real problem of interpretation here—that said man. Now the next sentence says, “Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.” Now, here is something that is called intelligence. This is not intelligence in the sense that we use the word when we talk of intellectual things and native endowments and capacities, at least not strictly that. This is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth. We are going to get some very difficult words to define. It has always existed; it was not created. It was not made; it has always been. This is the doctrine of the eternity of matter. It “was not created or made, neither indeed can be.” So here is something that has always existed, it fills all immensity. It is everywhere present. It has a name, “intelligence,” that seemingly is the best name that the Lord can give it as far as we are concerned, to get the concept over.

Now, put a marker there and we will turn to Abraham. We will come back to this section. We will try and take this slow and easy and let it be the main portion of our subject that we talk about. Let’s turn to the third chapter, beginning with verse 22,

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, these intelligences. (Now here is a word that’s very similar to the word we had here:) The intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said, These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.

Well, intelligence, something that everlastingly and everywhere exists and cannot start and cannot stop—it just is. Now this is beyond our capacity to comprehend, just like life itself is beyond our capacity to comprehend. You have to have a starting point and so we start here. Now Abraham sees something in vision, and what he sees is called intelligences. And he added an “s” to this word over here. He says the “intelligences that were organized,” so there is something involved here in the way of organization. And then as he continues down in the account, he equates intelligences with spirits. He has them (as near as I can read what he is saying here) synonymous: intelligences and spirits. Now, spirits are frequently called souls, standing alone. Sometimes, or in a limited number of instances, the soul is the spirit and the body combined. But in almost all scriptural references where it talks about souls, it is talking about spirits, standing alone. It is not in this passage, I guess, yes it ought to be. Verse 24, no, verse 23. In any event, the spirits and souls are synonymous normally, with some different definitions in some instances.

Now what concerns us right now is that, seemingly, Abraham equates intelligences with spirits. And we have got something over here that is called intelligence, which is an ever-existing matter. Now, look at Section 131 and let us take our standard statement about matter. Section 131, we are concerned with verses 7 and 8: “There is no such thing as immaterial matter.” That is, everything has substance. These spirit children, these spirit beings from pre-existence have some substance. “All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes. We cannot see it, but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter.” Spirit is matter. Well, now suppose I write, based on that phrase, this statement: “Spirit,” (I won’t put the *is* there) “Spirit is matter.” Let us just say, “spirit matter” in order to have something that we can use as a word, to give a concept to us. Well, I think really that that does it. Intelligence and spirit matter, spirit matter and spirits.

Well, what is pre-existence? Now, you talked about us being the sons and daughters of God. Well, how did you get to be a son or a daughter of God? You were born, weren’t you? There is a definite specific time in existence when each of us was born as the offspring of deity. Christ is the firstborn. What does it mean for Christ to be born as the offspring of deity? Or, think an eternity ahead in terms of somebody in this life who gains exaltation he has eternal increase. He has, in Joseph Smith language, spirit children in the resurrection. So there is going to be a specific time that you gain exaltation where spirits will be born to you. Christ, the firstborn of the Father . . . if I evaluate this correctly, this spirit matter or spirit element (and revelation uses the word “matter”) it would be, in effect, the equivalent of elements, as we use the term. And we are just trying to get words to get a concept over. This spirit element was born as a spirit-being or offspring. Or, in other words, this thing that is called intelligence was organized into intelligences who are spirits. Now you think about this line. You get married and you have children. Well, you organize temporal elements into a mortal soul, or in other words, temporal elements is born into a mortal body, formed or framed. Our bodies are created from the dust of the earth, meaning that they come from the element that surrounds us—this is analogous. It is the same process, as far as we understand it, that went on in pre-existence. Now what I am saying is that intelligence and spirit matter seem to be equated as the same thing; and

that intelligences and spirits seem to be the same thing. And that the organization of intelligence is into intelligences; and the birth of spirit matter (which is the same thing) is a birth into a state as spirits, when we begin our pre-existent life.

Now this, as I understand it, is as far as we can prove and establish and go from the revelations. But what is not a bit uncommon in the Church is for people (you hear it everywhere and I do not say it is false, I just say it is in the realm of speculation, you find them going one step farther than this. And we will read the passages that are involved in this, out of which this concept grows. People say, "Here is pre-existence," and they say, "Here is something before pre-existence." Well, this is true in my judgment, if you get it right. Now here is spirit matter, as we have been saying, and this spirit matter is born as an entity. So the problem becomes one of what is involved before the state that we talk of as pre-existence, the way we are defining it this morning. As far as I evaluate it, it is just a matter of spirit matter.

Now let us go back to this 93<sup>rd</sup> Section where we were reading and let us take the next verse, the 30<sup>th</sup> verse: "All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it," now note, "to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise, there is no existence." Now this is an extremely interesting verse. Remember that life and truth is equated here as a synonym for intelligence. Now this seems to say that intelligence is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it. I do not think that is too far of a conclusion to draw, taking 29 and 30 together: "To act for itself." Well, it says it has all intelligence also, "otherwise there is no existence." And our problem revolves around those five words: "otherwise there is no existence." Well you read that and you get an assumption immediately, or at least it is logical to get an assumption from it, that over here is something that is called intelligence which always exists; and this intelligence is independent in its sphere. And then this phrase, "otherwise there is no existence." Well, if it is independent in its sphere, it sounds like there is some kind of agency involved that causes portions of this intelligence to get itself organized into intelligences. Now I am saying that is what it sounds like. I do not think that is really what it is saying, but it sounds like it is saying that. And this theory that there is something that precedes pre-existence, as far as I know, was created by B. H. Roberts years ago. And when he created it, he invented a new word that is not in the English language in order to describe what he was thinking about, what he was saying. And the word that he invented was this: "intelligencies." And he speculated, if I may so term it, that there were these things which were intelligencies and they were the things that were born as spirit children. Well, our scripture now has said that "otherwise there is no existence," that is, if there was not agency involved. Now, I will take one more passage and then we will discuss a little of what is involved.

This next passage is in the second chapter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Nephi. Open to that but keep your marker in Section 93 because we will come back to this 30<sup>th</sup> verse. There are some things in the Book of Mormon that are quite deep and quite philosophical, and this is one of them. You talk about philosophy. You want some mental exercises in spiritual things?

Here is a sample of it. Lehi is talking, and he says to Jacob (let us follow this reasoning now), “If ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin.” Now notice his reasoning: no law, well, then there is no sin. Now the next step, “If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness.” No sin, no righteousness, now that is clear. “And if there be no righteousness there be no happiness,” and I think that is clear. “And if there be no righteousness nor happiness there be no punishment nor misery. And if these things are not there is no God.” You want some philosophical reasoning, same syllogisms, “If these things are not there is no God.” Now he is talking about agency, the ability to choose to go one direction or another. “If these things are not there is no God. And if there is no God we are not, neither the earth; for there could have been no creation of things,” now notice this language, “neither to act nor to be acted upon; wherefore, all things must have vanished away.” If there were no agency, all things must have vanished away.

Now this is impossible. This is just totally beyond possibility, but this is a tremendous argument. He is arguing that because things exist (and this is a philosophical thing), therefore there is agency. If there were no agency, there would be no existence, that is the effect of this. You have opposites, which means agency, and opposition in all things (two sides). So the fact that things exist, that we are, proves that there is opposites. Otherwise, philosophically, we could not exist, and all things would have vanished away.

Now, with that in mind (this is 2 Nephi, beginning there), go back to this verse in Section 93: “All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself,” agency, “as all intelligence also,” now I am going to twist this scripture a little, “otherwise all things have vanished away.” Do you follow me? “Otherwise there is no existence.” “Otherwise all things have vanished away.” I wonder if those two things are not equated. I wonder if they do not mean that same thing. It seems to me that they do. Lehi makes a marvelous, marvelous argument here. And when the Lord gets to talking about it here, He does not bother to argue the case. He just draws the conclusion, that there is no existence of anything unless there is agency. Unless there is a choice to go one way or the other, there is no existence. If there is not hot on the one hand and cold on the other, there is nothing. There is no middle ground. Unless there is light on the one hand and darkness on the other, there is nothing because you have to have opposites to have existence. That is the philosophical argument. If there is no sin there is no righteousness. And the ultimate argument is, there is no man, no God, no earth, no nothing and all things have vanished away. And so in verse 30 of Section 93, intelligence and truth, which is back here, can act for itself, as this expresses it: “otherwise there is no existence.”

Now, could you tell me what this means. Does that mean that this back here has some power to elect to be born as the offspring of God or to be born as a spirit rabbit or something else (because everything existed in the spirit, animals have spirits as well)? I do not think it means that. What I think is as far as these revelations are concerned that we erase that. And that agency exists among intelligent beings; and we are endowed with agency when we are born the offspring of God. And some have power to act; and the things that have power to act are those that are endowed with the power. And some things have power to be acted upon. We read both of these phrases, did we not? And the things

that are acted upon are the inert things, the things that have no life of the kind that we are talking about when we say spirits. Now, there is a sense in which there is life in everything, even though we consider it to be dead. Well, I throw that out to you now and the only conclusion that I am drawing (which I think is fully substantiated in my mind), is that the revelations say there is this which becomes this which in due part is born into mortality. And that if we go farther than that, we are in the realm of speculation.

Now, to my personal knowledge, there have been at least a dozen times since I have been at 47 East South Temple, more times than that maybe, when the Brethren have taken out of either Priesthood or gospel doctrine lessons any concept that denotes agency and power and the ability in this to choose to be born. They did it out of this year's gospel doctrine lessons, about four or five paragraphs of it. But I understand that somebody was only half asleep when a little indication of it got left in which could contend it to be taken out. But this is the way I understand the doctrine of pre-existence and beyond this seems to me to be speculation. Now would anybody like to raise any questions or make any comments?

Comment: I think it is in 1965, Brother Krigswell's Conference address where he raised the question, "Did we choose to be male or female?" The family head, or the family heart in effect? And it was in answer to a woman's letter about, she had been a little upset about not having the priesthood. And he raised a lot of questions but did not give any answers.

**BRM:** He really was not trying to evaluate doctrine and whatnot, and I remember that speech. It was a very interesting, good speech.

Comment: I am just wondering if this fits in here.

**BRM:** Well, I really do not think that thought ever occurred to him when he was preparing that speech. But it could be interpreted as a doctrinal matter. Now, I do not think we chose whether we would be a male or a female. I think God chose that. Now if by that you mean that some of this intelligence back here chose to be born as a female spirit.

Comment: I don't know, I was just wondering if . . . (inaudible).

**BRM:** You see, you just get off in the realm of pure speculation.

Comment: One question I have, and that is did we equate Priesthood with this? I try to equate this with it and I get in trouble.

**BRM:** We have some extremely interesting concepts and some them (and they are only revealed in part) are beyond our ability to understand. Things just go on everlastingly. Here is pre-existence, meaning spirit children, the way we are defining things. Now, following this is mortality, and that is where we are now. And following mortality, leading out the Spirit World is kingdoms of glory—three of them: Terrestrial, Telesial

and Celestial. And in the Celestial glory, in the highest heaven, the marriage union continues. And people who get acknowledged through marriage and that are in this union have spirit children. And so, we have come to a point where there is pre-existence all over again, because here are exalted beings who have spirit children and you have duplicated what went before. And these spirit children have a mortality and a limited few of them gain exaltation; and so you have got pre-existence all over again. And so you just go on everlastingly. And we have this phrase in the scriptures that says that Christ is from everlasting to everlasting. Christ is from everlasting to everlasting to everlasting to everlasting, the same. From one pre-existence to the next as long as things roll, through all eternity, He is the same. Wherever you say the priesthood is eternal . . . (inaudible) . . . sure the Priesthood is eternal. These pre-existences go out this opposite direction through all eternity and the Priesthood was always involved in it.

In our outline, we were down to “1A, 1,” and we were talking about the foundations of the fathers in pre-existence then. And number 1 was the eternity of matter. Number 2 is a personal God. You cannot have a doctrine of the pre-existence unless you know God is a personal being. Those two things preclude the world from having this doctrine. Now number 1, B in the outline is the law of governing in pre-existence and under that is the plan of salvation and this principle of agency. Number “1C” is the kind of beings in pre-existence and it is God and spirits—two kinds of beings. “B” is the fact that this applies to the earth and all life. Now turn down to heading 2 on our outline and we talk about the pre-existence of man as such. And the certain thing there is that Christ is the prototype; and this is the way it is in all things. Jesus is the prototype of everything, excepting the one thing that he worked out—the Atonement. We do not do that. But everything else we pattern ourselves after him, so Christ is the prototype. We find what he was like in the various passages. Then we talk about the fact that we are the spirit children of God, that we have the various passages on that point with which, in general, we are familiar. And then we come to this heading (now this is what you mentioned): the status of spirit man when they are born in pre-existence. And here again we can spend a few minutes more because this is quite an interesting problem for us. Well, the status of men in pre-existence certainly is this: They were innocent in the beginning. And the reference on that, we are back to Section 93, and it is verse 38. That let us read, “Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning.” Now this is not all the time but in the pre-existence, really are “innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, man became again, in their infant state, innocent before God.” Well, spirits in pre-existence, as such, are not innocent. How do you know that? You know it because of Lucifer, don’t you. They had their agency and they had laws and Lucifer rebelled. But when they started out in pre-existence, they were innocent. Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning. So, from that standpoint, every spirit of man started out on a basis of equality. And having laws and agency, they either obeyed or they disobeyed; they either followed righteous teachings or they followed Lucifer. And soon there were spirits in pre-existence who were not innocent. In fact, the revelation says about Cain that “he was a liar from the beginning,” meaning he was a liar from pre-existence. So although once he was innocent, he soon was not innocent. He became a liar because he followed Lucifer. Now the next heading, (and here is something that is somewhat of a problem and I am not to say that this is categorically so, but let us put it down and we will read a passage and see if this is

what it says and you make up your own mind) in my judgment this is true: “But the spirits of men were equal in the beginning,” that is, God started them out on the same level. And what we will read in this connection is Alma, the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter and we will pick out those particular verses. Let us just take time to read that. And when we have read it you make up your mind or you tell me if that is what that says. We just do not visualize how much of everything we have in this life is based on pre-existence. And I guess we do not have this portrayed before us because if we had too much knowledge about pre-existence it might discourage some of us. You see, if we knew the details of pre-existence and where some people were and where some of the rest of us were, it would make so much difference between us and them that it might be discouraging. And so, if we don’t . . . (inaudible) . . . I think the Lord deliberately withholds the full knowledge of pre-existence from us. And yet, we have to understand the concept in order to have a real knowledge of what this life is about. And so, I am not too sure what this means in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Alma, but let us take a look at it. It is talking about Priesthood. Just scan down that first column of the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter. Verse three he talks about the people being prepared from the foundation of the world. He talks about the foreknowledge of God. He talks about these people in the first place being left to choose good or evil, therefore they having chosen good, and so on. Note the phrases, however, the “foundation of the world” and the “foreknowledge of God”. Now drop down to verse five, “Or in fine,” that is, in summary, “in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren,” people who were high priests who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. “Thus this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the Atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared—And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest”—quite complex. “This high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things.” Now out of that seventh verse I get these two phrases: “the foundation of the world,” being equated with pre-existence, or, in other words, “without beginning of days.” He seems to be talking about pre-existence:

Now they were ordained after this manner—being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end—

Thus they become high priests forever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth.

Now, that is difficult, and I don’t know that I interpret it perfectly, but this is what it says to me. It says to me that in the first place, in the beginning, in pre-existence, all men were on the same standing with their brethren, and that then some of them were more righteous and they ended up becoming inheritors of this Priesthood, which they got, of course, in



pre-existence. Now if it means that, fine, and if it doesn't there is no scripture I know about that talks about this question. Although in my judgment, this is right or wrong, depending on whether I interpret it correctly, we started out equal as spirits. It just seems that that would be the just thing. It would not be fair for God to endow in some way one spirit more than He endows another.

Now, out of this grows the question of Christ being the Son of God, or being chosen to be the Son of God. Well, He must have been chosen to be the Son of God because He obeyed the laws more fully than anyone else obeyed them. And was more zealous and more diligent; and that is ascended to the height that has enabled Him to become like unto God in pre-existence. I don't really know that we could go farther than that, and maybe we cannot go that far. But there is an avenue of investigation for you as to the status of spirit men.

Question: The fact that he was firstborn then, is unimportant?

**BRM:** Relatively, in my estimate he was the firstborn, that has some bearing of course, but Lucifer is a son of the morning, which seemingly would mean that he was among the early-born spirits. And yet Lucifer is way down here in intelligence and spirituality and Christ is way up there. And some of you may be an infinite period older in the pre-existence than I am; or I may be an infinite period older than you. How do we know in the eternal scheme of things? Mary has a son and he is Christ and he is an infinite period older than she was. But she, in this life, was his mother—you would not know.

Comment: W. W. Phelps indicates that Lucifer is the next heir after Jesus. In this letter to William Smith, written . . . (inaudible).

**BRM:** The next heir?

Comment: Yes. There is also a statement in an old journal indicating that a fellow who quotes the Prophet Joseph Smith as saying the same thing.

**BRM:** That is new to me. That is an interesting concept, the next heir.

Comment: The term "next heir" is used both in his journal and in W. W. Phelps.

**BRM:** That could, I take it that that means to you that he was the next-born spirit or I do not know what that would mean. Well, that is an interesting concept.

Out of what we are saying right here, relative to the status of spirit men, grows the next thing that is a tremendous concern and interest to us; and that is the doctrine of foreordination.

Let us just say a word about foreordination and I will tell you tomorrow we will take probably one more lesson on pre-existence. It is worth two days of our consideration, that

there is another phase of this subject which is almost totally ignored in the Church. I really never have heard anybody preach a sermon or explain (maybe it is done in classes, but you do not hear it in meetings) all these things that Paul said that the world takes to mean predestination and to mean a stronger form of foreordination than we are in the habit of using. Let us take them tomorrow, but let us just say a word here about foreordination.

Now foreordination comes purely and simply because of such things as this: we have our reference in the third chapter of Abraham. We have the statement in the fifth verse of Jude about the spirits that kept not their first estate. We have this excellent passage in John about the man born blind, implicit in which is the fact that the apostles have been taught the doctrine of pre-existence. We have the statement of Jeremiah that he was ordained before he was born. We will take up tomorrow the statements in the tenth chapter of John about "my sheep hearing my voice." But let us just say for the moment here, under this heading, that out of this principle of people having agency in pre-existence there grows all of the situations and circumstances and variety of races, and so on, that we have today. Men are born in particular races because of what they earned in pre-existence. The Negroes, just purely and simply are Negroes because of pre-existence. They were less valiant. They did not develop the talent for spirituality that some others did. The House of Israel is the House of Israel because of pre-existence. It is all an outgrowth of this principle where some are foreordained to do particular things.

I was saying as we do not have the knowledge of pre-existence that we might . . . (inaudible) . . . and it well could be that the Lord justifiably and deliberately withholds that knowledge from us. But in a very real sense, things operate like this: here is a spirit that is born as a man or a woman, back here in pre-existence. He has agency and he has laws. The Prophet's statement, if you would like the reference, the exact statement is this: "God, himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits in glory, because he was more intelligent, thought proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself." Now this is *Teachings of the Prophet [Joseph Smith]*, page 354.

Well, God is over here, an exalted, glorified being. And here is one of his children born in pre-existence. And the scheme of things provides the opportunity for that spirit child to advance and progress until he has exaltation and dominion and is like the Father. Well, he has agency and he has laws given to him and he begins his progression. And he starts it out in pre-existence; and goes on in pre-existence until the time comes when he can come down to mortality. Then he comes down here to be tested; and what he is doing is taking the final examination of pre-existence. Mortality is the final exam. You get your doctor's degree, you are taking your comprehensive test here, and this is the test of pre-existence, how we live here, but it is dual. It is also the test that is going to award us a place in the Kingdoms of Glory. So we go on through this life, progressing and advancing and we get into the Spirit World. And in due course, we are resurrected and this progression just continues on. You do not become exalted in the full and total sense of power and dominion that you will have if you are going to gain it, immediately. Joseph Smith said the sentence, in substance, there are many things that have to be done, even after the grave. Or does he say even after the resurrection? I suppose he does, I will have to look

that one up. Is it after the grave? In order to work out your salvation, you are not through when you finish this life. And the fact of the matter is, you will get resurrected and you will continue to advance and progress and then it will be a long state and time before eventually you become like the Father. Where you start out down here, you have pre-existence and you have eternity ahead. We are in this segment of eternity. And since this segment of eternity is appointed to be the testing part of eternity, it becomes, in a very real sense, the most important part of all eternity, because this is the period where we make the determination as to whether we will get a good grade for pre-existence. And this is the period where we make the determination that whether we will have exaltation in the world to come. Nobody, for instance, would go through all the schooling process and get ready to have his PhD. and get up here to take the test and say, "Ah, what's the use," or "Why bother to take this test this afternoon, rather go sit on the riverbank and smoke a cigarette and hold somebody's hand." Well, you just do not do that sort of thing. If you are all ready to take the test and you are ready to get the reward, you go ahead and take it. But the point is, if you do not pass the test here, you are throwing away all the schooling that went before the comprehensive exam that awards you your degree. So this is the testing part of pre-existence—we forget that. We think in terms of this being the testing part of eternity, of future eternity. But in a very real sense, it is the testing part of what went before although we were tested back here, when the decision was made by us as to whether we would follow Christ or Lucifer. So this is the most important part of eternity in a very real sense. But until we obtain the state of exaltation, we are going . . . (inaudible) . . . has the bell rung?

Comment: It did not ring in here.

**BRM:** It did not ring in here, all right. Well, we will pick up an additional concept about pre-existence tomorrow and let us study all things related to this in the interim in our text.