

ELDER RUDGER CLAWSON.

Obtaining knowledge by study and by faith—Value of the book of Genesis—It answers perfectly the false doctrine of evolution—The law of marriage instituted that mankind might multiply and replenish the earth—Relationship of Abraham to us and the world—The lesson of obedience in the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—The blessings of these patriarchs have come down to us—Modern Scripture to be studied, and also the counsels of the living oracles.

Brethren and sisters, “The glory of God is intelligence,” and this great truth is confirmed and emphasized in another statement occurring in the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord, in speaking to Joseph Smith the Prophet, said: “As all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom. Seek learning even by study and also by faith.”

I take it that this is very important counsel to the Church of God. We know that there are two ways of getting intelligence—one is by study, the other is by faith; and these two methods go well hand in hand. The injunction is that we should seek words of wisdom out of the best books. The world today is full of literature. There are very many good books, but as members of the Church of Christ I assume we will agree that the very best books in the world today are the standard church works—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. Take, for example, the Bible. This book, brethren and sisters, has come down through the centuries of the past and is hoary with age, but never-

theless it breathes forth the very strength and vigor of youth. It contains many wise sayings and thrilling incidents and teachings of priceless value. From this book and other church works we are constantly taking lessons and compiling them into manuals and sending them forth into our various organizations and priesthood classes and auxiliary associations, but these books are especially recommended for general use throughout the Church and for careful study, and should often be consulted by Latter-day Saints.

Referring to the Bible, I may say that if there was not one vestige of the Holy Record left to us but the book of Genesis, it would still be worth while, and would be of priceless value to the children of men. In the first chapter of Genesis many valuable truths are imparted. We learn that God created the heavens and the earth and all things that in them are. We are also given to understand in this matter of creation that the Lord operated and worked in an orderly way and by law, for we are told that the Lord God of heaven and his Son Jesus Christ work by law, that in the beginning things came into being by the power of God. God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light, and this was effected, as I have just said, by the power of God.

We are told that God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the fishes of the sea after their kind, and the winged fowl of the air after its kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, after its kind. And the Lord saw that they were good, and he blessed them, saying, “Multiply and fill the waters of the deep, Let the fowl

multiply upon the earth." But the supreme creative act came with the appearance of man. "And the Lord said, Let us make man in our own image and after our likeness, and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air and over the earth and every living creature." "So God made man in his own image, in his own image made he him, male and female created he them." But the Lord did not stop there, he blessed them and he said, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over it," and so forth.

Now, it seems to me that there is to be a very great lesson learned from this important chapter in the Bible. In the first place, I think that it answers perfectly the false doctrine of evolution. We are distinctly given to understand that every living creature was made after its kind. We are not to expect that a lion will grow into a horse, or that a cow will grow into an elephant, but we have reason to believe that a horse will always be a horse. You may be able to improve the horse, but it will still be a horse, and so with the other animals of God's creation.

And since man in the beginning was made in the image of God and after his likeness, and since he is still in the image of God and will so continue, we have no reason to conclude that there has ever been any change at all in the order of things as first instituted.

Furthermore, you will remember, and there is a great lesson in it, that God commanded these living creatures throughout all the animal kingdom as also man to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the

earth, but man could not properly do this without matrimony, and so God instituted the law of marriage in the garden of Eden. We must know from this that marriage is honorable, because it originated with the Almighty. He introduced it in the garden of Eden, and this law has since prevailed throughout the earth. But we also find in many places and in very many instances that the command of God is not obeyed, and that people, even those who are married, sometimes do not fulfil this obligation, for they are not fruitful and do not multiply and replenish the earth. In that particular they come short. This ought not to be so with the Latter-day Saints. It is expected of us that we shall be a fruitful people, that we shall become a numerous people, that the Church shall grow until it shall fill the whole earth, because it has in it the spirit of endurance. As Latter-day Saints we must of necessity obey this great and important law of marriage. That is one of the lessons that comes down to us from the very beginning.

How very beautiful, brethren and sisters, is the story of the patriarchs, our progenitors. What would we know about them, how could we ascertain their names, how could we learn what they did, if it were not for the record, and I ask you candidly, how could we know anyhow, unless we searched the record and made a study of it, because I take it that you cannot find any knowledge in the mind of man that is not put there.

Take Abraham, for instance. Have you ever thought of him? Have you ever considered his relationship to us and to the world? It seems upon one occasion that God

appeared unto Abraham and commanded him to leave his country and go out from among his own people into a strange land. Abraham did not hesitate. He obeyed the voice of God willingly, and when he came into this strange country the Lord said to him, "Lift up now thine eyes from the place where thou art to the northward and the southward, to the eastward and the westward, for all the land that thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed, and I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if any man can number the dust of the earth, so also shall thy seed be numbered." What a wonderful saying, what a glorious promise! and the lesson that we can draw from it is that Abraham was obedient, he was willing to follow the voice of counsel and to do the will of God, and thus he secured a blessing. Upon another occasion he was subjected to a very severe test, as great, I think, as any test that could come to us or any one of us. The Lord commanded him to take his beloved son, the son of promise, to take Isaac up into a mountain and offer him up as a sacrifice to the Lord. To do this he must needs slay his son with his own hand. But he did not hesitate. No. It was the command of God. He responded readily—I would not say willingly—it must have been a great sorrow to him, but he was obedient and the Lord accepted this act upon the part of Abraham as a sign of obedience and of righteousness, and did not require the sacrifice. After the offering was made then came the blessing, in other words, after the sacrifice comes the blessing. The Lord then said to Abraham, "By myself have I sworn, saith the

Lord, for because thou hast done this thing and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand upon the sea shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thee and in thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." What greater promise than this could come to a man, and yet it came through the righteousness of Abraham through the spirit of obedience. It is a very great lesson, Latter-day Saints, and we should take it to heart. We should cultivate the spirit of obedience in our hearts, be willing to listen to the voice of God, and walk by the counsels of his servants who are divinely called.

The blessing that was put upon Abraham was also conferred upon Isaac, for Isaac as a boy and as a man exhibited the spirit of submission and obedience. He honored his parents. They desired him to go down among his people and kindred for a wife rather than marry among strangers, or among the daughters of the Canaanites.

Isaac yielded to the wish of his parents. He honored them, and God honored him, and put upon him the blessing of Abraham.

And so it was with Jacob. He was willing to listen to the voice of his parents, and went down among his people to get a wife, while Esau seeing that it displeased his parents went straightway among strangers and married some of the daughters of Canaan. Now, in the one case the displeasure of the Lord was shown, and in the other case the blessing followed, because the blessings that were put upon Abraham

and Isaac were also put upon Jacob, and thus, brethren and sisters, the names of those great patriarchs were linked together, and they were called Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Lord himself has greatly honored them by sometimes saying, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Jacob was further distinguished by a change in his name. The Lord said to him upon one occasion, "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." So the name of Jacob was changed to Israel, and the children of Jacob after that were called the children of Israel, and the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were pronounced upon their posterity. These blessings were to be realized by them through their righteousness, through their faith and faithfulness to the God of heaven. So the blessings of the patriarchs have come down to us, even to us who are assembled in this great building here, for we are of the posterity of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

All this seems wonderful to me, and I have obtained the knowledge of it, by a study of the scriptures. We would do well to give attention to this matter, so also to the study of the New Testament, and the Book of Mormon, which is closely identified and connected up with the Bible, and the book of Doctrine and Covenants, containing the revela-

tions of God to his prophet and to his people of latter times. Oh, what a wonderful, marvelous book is the book of Covenants! And then there is the Pearl of Great Price. Is it not beyond price, embodying, as it does the writings of Abraham, Enoch and Moses? We ought to familiarize ourselves with the scriptures that have been given.

May the Lord bless us and sanctify to our good these great books which have been committed into our keeping; and may he sanctify to our good also, the counsels of the living oracles, the teachings of the servants of God in our day. Let us remember them and let us receive their words and honor their teachings, and God will bless us and multiply us abundantly, which may he grant, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A notice of the performance of "Elijah" in the Tabernacle at 5 o'clock tonight, was given out.

It was also announced that the General Priesthood meeting would convene in the Tabernacle at 7 o'clock tonight.

The choir and congregation sang: "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet."

Conference adjourned until Saturday morning at 10 o'clock.

President Andrew Kimball, of the St. Joseph stake, Arizona, pronounced the benediction.