

also that all places of worship be dedicated as such and be registered with the government.

I pray that the blessings of the Lord may continue with his people everywhere, that the Gospel may spread, and that the Church may grow until ultimately the cause of right shall triumph in the earth. This is my prayer, which I ask humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER RULON S. WELLS

of the First Council of Seventy

My heart is full, made so by the spirit of this great Conference, for we have been fed the bread of life.

My thoughts have been led to consider the holy scriptures, the word of the Lord, and I shall take the liberty of quoting a few of those precious words which are found in Holy Writ.

Let me start at the beginning:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

"And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.

"And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

What a glorious beginning to the great work of creation! What tremendous forces were turned loose with the utterance of that great command: "Let there be light!"

It seems from this passage of scripture that light played a most important part in the creation of the heavens and the earth. How was that all accomplished? The Apostle Paul gives us a little idea of it, for he tells us, this great Apostle to the Gentiles, in his letter which he wrote to the Hebrews, not only how it *was* done, but also how it was not done. Says he:

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

No, they were not made in this way. This is man's way. When we build our homes to house our families, our wives and children and see our home in its completed form, we conclude at once that it has been made out of the things which do appear around about us. We gather the rock—quarry it from the mountain side. We hew the timbers from the forests, we gather the sand and slack the lime to make the mortar, and we gather clay and make it into bricks; and thus we build our homes. But not so with God. He has a better way—a more effective way—in creating the home of his children.

In the very beginning God created the heaven and the earth. What for? He created the worlds to become the habitation of his

children. When, therefore, he considered us who were born of him in the spirit before the world was, as he stood in our midst he said unto those who were with him: "We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell." (Abraham 3:24.) The materials were not created; they were already there, but they were without form and void—the elements are eternal, but God understands the constitution of matter and the forces of the universe; so, looking out upon the great expanse, he says:

"Let us go down and make an earth whereon these may dwell."
 "These" meant you and me, my brethren and sisters, and the many millions who inhabit this globe, and the many other millions that have inhabited it from the very beginning of time.

And how did he do it? By the word of God, through faith. "Let there be light," was the beginning. There must then be something in this light possessing creative power. Let us seek a little more light by quoting more scripture:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

"The same was in the beginning with God.

"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not."

"That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

This then was the Word that was with God in the very beginning and by whom, through his unbounded faith, the worlds were framed, and without whom was not anything made that was made, and in whom was life itself, and this life was the light of men and is the "light that shineth in darkness." This light even penetrated that darkness that was "upon the face of the deep" and there are ninety-three million miles of it between us and the sun, and how many more millions of miles there are between us and the dwelling place of God, where "He sits enthroned in the midst of all things in the bosom of eternity," we may not even guess. Science teaches us, however, that utter darkness prevails throughout the boundless space; but when God says: "Let there be light," it penetrates it all and shineth in it but the darkness comprehends it not.

Again I quote from the first chapter of John: "No man hath seen God at any time." This was quoted and properly explained yesterday by Apostle Orson F. Whitney in his excellent address, by citing these words added by the Prophet Joseph Smith: "unless quickened by the Spirit of God." Surely this clarifies it and makes it harmonize with the scriptures wherein are recorded the many appearances of God to his servants the prophets. And yet, I think there was another thought in the mind of the beloved disciple John when he wrote this paragraph which I infer from the remaining part of this verse. Let me quote it

in full: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

Who was it that created this world? Have we not read it was the Word that was with the Father in the very beginning, and that all things were made by him and without him was not anything made? He it was then that created the heavens and the earth. He it was then who, under the Father, created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden. He it was, this Son of God, known then as Jehovah, who appeared to Abraham upon the plains of Mamre. He it was who called Moses up into the mountain and delivered unto him the law of the Lord, the law of carnal commandments. He it was who came in the meridian of time and was born of the Virgin Mary. Thus he was made flesh. This Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, who now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on High from whence proceedeth the light to fill the immensity of space, even "the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things." (Doc. and Cov. 88:13). So John to whom the heavens were opened, seeing these wonderful achievements of his Lord and Master but having God the Father in mind, declares "No man hath seen God [that is the Father] at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

From these scriptures which I have quoted and many more that might be cited, it is evident that our Redeemer, known to ancient Israel as Jehovah and to us as Jesus Christ, was the One who appeared to the prophets and although the voice of the Father had been heard as at the baptism of the Savior: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," not until the spring of 1820 do we have any account of the appearance of the Father, when both Father and Son appeared to Joseph in the Sacred Grove, when this latter-day Prophet, then less than fifteen years of age, being transfigured before them and quickened by the Spirit, not only beheld them both, observing that the one was the express image of the other, but also heard again his voice declaring: "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." A most wonderful vision which, although most unusual, was doubtless made necessary in order to dispel forever the false conceptions of the modern religious world regarding the personality of God.

What unanimity there is in the utterances of the inspired apostles and prophets of God! One of the characteristics by which we are able to recognize all true prophets of God is this: They all teach the same thing—they do not contradict each other but uniformly bear witness to the same fundamental truths. Let me now call your attention to some of the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and we shall discover that same unanimity, the same incontrovertible evidence that he too was a true prophet of the living God. Let me read:

"He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth;

"Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made.

"As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made;

"As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made;

"And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand." (Doc. and Cov. 88:6-10).

If the former prophets and apostles have been even in the smallest degree obscure regarding the "Light" and the part it performed in the creation and as to who that Light was, then these paragraphs which I have just read remove all dubiety and declare unequivocally that Christ was that Light which animated the universe and by which through faith the worlds were evolved or framed by the Word of God.

Now let me read a little more from John:

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

And again:

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name;

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Here we are told that power was given to them that believe on him to become the sons of God. That applies to all true believers. What was that power to which he refers? It was the Gospel of Jesus Christ, through obedience to which we may become both sons and daughters of God; thus as Paul tells us the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. But how are we to become his sons and daughters, we who were born "not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God?" No, there was only one that was thus born, "the only Begotten Son;" he was the only one begotten in the flesh but we were also born not of flesh nor blood but of God. Clearly this can only refer to our pre-existence where we were born of God in the spirit, but he gave them that believe on him the power through obedience to his Gospel to become his sons and daughters, both in body and spirit, and members in his household.

He came to his own and not only did they reject him but they crucified him, and on the third day he rose from the tomb, having overcome death and the grave, thus becoming the Redeemer of mankind. And how was that accomplished? The answer is plain: The principle of life was in him by which he became our Creator, for "in him we live and move and have our being." By that same power he becomes the resurrection, overcomes death and makes alive again for "as in Adam all men die so in Jesus Christ shall all be made alive again."

The incident recorded in the eleventh chapter of John makes this plain. It will be remembered that Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, the friend of Jesus, died when the Savior was in another part of the country; but when he came up to the home of Martha and Mary, Martha came out to meet him and said this:

"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

"Thy brother shall rise again."

"I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Then the Lord makes this declaration:

"I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

"She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

Now let me give one more illustration of the perfect unanimity among the prophets, but in this instance as between this statement made by the Savior which I have just read and a revelation given to Joseph Smith wherein the Lord makes known to him the same truth. It is told in entirely different language and was given under entirely different circumstances and yet it sets forth in great plainness the same truth:

"And the spirit and the body are the soul of man,

"And the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul.

"And the redemption of the soul is through him that quickeneth all things."

In other words, he is the resurrection and the life. Here we also learn that the redemption of the soul which is the resurrection from the dead is through him who quickeneth all things, or in other words, it is through him who is "the light which is in all things which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God," as I have already quoted from Section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants; or as John states it: "In him was life and the life was the light of men;" and as we read further in the Doctrine and Covenants, he is also the light of the sun, the moon and the stars and the earth upon which we stand and is the power thereof by which they were made; and when we look out upon this beautiful world and behold the splendor of the starry heavens, the morning and the evening red, the different forms and colors of the clouds and particularly at this time of the year when we see the swelling of the buds, the unfolding of the leaves, the blossoms and the flowers and all nature bursting into life, we may know from these numerous quotations which I have read from the revealed word that all this is through him who was in the beginning with the Father, even the Lord, our Savior, the Redeemer of mankind. As we contemplate these things let our hearts rejoice, let us lift up our souls in grateful adoration to God that he has so beautifully and inimitably adorned his great creation work. Amen.