

The congregation joined in singing the hymn, "O ye mountains high."

The benediction was pronounced by Elder Elmer F. Taylor, President of the Young Stake.

Conference adjourned until 2 o'clock p. m.

## AFTERNOON MEETING

The fourth session of the Conference commenced at 2 o'clock, Saturday afternoon, April 9th.

President Heber J. Grant, who presided, announced that the Relief Society Ladies' Chorus, under the direction of Sister Lottie Sackett, would sing "Recessional," as the opening number.

After the singing of this selection by the Chorus, the opening prayer was offered by Elder Harry L. Payne, President of the St. Joseph Stake.

The Relief Society Ladies' Chorus sang the anthem, "Within this sacred dwelling," solo part by Brother Cornelius G. Van Os.

### ELDER RULON S. WELLS

*Of the First Council of Seventy*

There is one thing that has always been evident to me, since I have made a study of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is this, that there has been a constant, progressive divine purpose in all of the dealings of God with man, and the history of the world is replete with evidence of this fact; that divine purpose is manifest in the coming of all the servants of God, the prophets, the apostles, and in the revelations that have been given in every dispensation of his providence.

That divine purpose has been stated in the writings of the prophet Moses when he said: "This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." That purpose was promulgated before the foundations of this earth were laid. It was considered beforehand, and we are now in the process of the development of that purpose. It is now approaching its great climax, the accomplishment of God's purposes with his children that have dwelt upon the earth.

It is true that we have only glimpses of these things that took place before the foundations of this earth were laid, but, oh, what light and understanding are contained in those few glimpses that have been given to us. We read in the scriptures:

"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."

In holy writ reference is made to a council held in heaven before the foundations of the earth were laid. The Lord said to his servant Job:

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. \* \* \*

"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

These words are very significant. They tell of a time when the sons of God were assembled together and shouted for joy. That particular phrase does not state exactly what it was they shouted for, but in modern revelation that is made clear. It was the promulgation of that divine purpose that God had in relation to his children, and the very plan by which that purpose might be accomplished.

I am going to read again from the scriptures:

"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 any thing made that was made.

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

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

From these passages of scripture we must concede that Jesus Christ is the light of the world and the power thereof by which it was made. The whole plan then centers in that Son of God that was chosen in that primeval day to carry out the divine purpose. He was sent into the world,

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

This revelation of the Son of God, who was with the Father in the beginning, and by whom all things were made, came and dwelt among us in a mortal body of flesh and bones. That was a vital part of the divine plan.

The coming of the children of God to this earth was fundamental, for it was to bring to pass their immortality and eternal life that this world was created, that God sent his Only Begotten Son. From the very beginning we see the purpose in the course of its development. This Son of God was born of the virgin Mary. An angel of the Lord appeared unto her and told her that she was greatly favored among women; that she had found favor with the Lord; that she would conceive and give birth to a son, and should call his name Jesus, and he should be called the Son of God. Said Mary unto this angel, "How shall this be, seeing that I know not a man?" And the angel replied, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Thus is recorded the coming of that Son of God in mortal body to dwell among us, the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh. None other was born of God in the flesh, and yet we were all the children of God, but not born of him in the flesh. Let me read again from the scriptures.

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

No, they crucified him.

"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 have it plainly stated that they were not born and begotten of God in the flesh, not by the will of man, but of God, clearly pointing to the fact that we were the children of God born of him in the spirit before the foundations of this earth were laid. But he gave unto even them that believed on him the power to become the sons of God, even as Jesus Christ is the Son of God, of the flesh and of the spirit. For it was to them who are thus born of the spirit that he gave the power to become the sons of God. What was that power? That power was the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is in the divine purpose that all the children of God shall be begotten sons and daughters unto him in body and in spirit, these two component parts of our eternal souls, before they can be received into his celestial dwelling place, before they can become members of his household and the divine purpose be accomplished.

But, although we were born of God in the spirit before the foundation of this earth was laid, when the sons and daughters of God sang together and shouted for joy upon the promulgation of the divine purpose, it still remained necessary in order to be in very deed his sons and daughters, that we should be born in these mortal bodies of the blood and of the flesh, which were not begotten of him but of our natural parents. Therefore, when Nicodemus asked the Lord: "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" he made it plain by answering: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Thus it will be seen that the second birth is necessary, which symbolizes the first one—born of the water, quickened by the spirit, and through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, we are made the sons and daughters of God throughout the endless ages of eternity. Thus is brought to pass the immortality and eternal life of man, and the Gospel becomes the power of God unto salvation. Such is the divine purpose.

The children of Abraham have been called "God's chosen people." That too was in the divine purpose, and people oftentimes ask the question, how is it that God shows such preference to any particular family? Why is it that we who also claim to be the children of Abraham should

be preferred before others when it is clearly stated in holy writ that God is no respecter of persons?

Neither is he a respecter of persons, but this process of choosing the great and the good in order to carry out the divine purpose was predicated on their faithfulness and did not begin here, but before we came to the earth; and these were chosen for their integrity and because they were valiant for the truth in order to carry out his divine purpose. So it appears that even in that primeval day before the foundation of the earth was laid, God chose the great and noble ones from among his children and elected that they should come through the lineage of Abraham, because he knew Abraham before he was born and that he loved the Lord and would teach his children after him; and also in order to maintain their solidarity as a nation or as his chosen people.

Let me read from the Book of Abraham:

"Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, 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."

Thus Abraham was chosen to become the father of the faithful, and he received the promise that in him and his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. This was truly a natural selection, or, if you please, a survival of the fittest. In this respect, at least, it seems to be in accord with modern scientific thought.

This does not mean that all the children of Abraham will be chosen; neither does it mean that none other will be chosen. The children of God are again on trial in this their second estate, and the natural selection is still in progress. There will be many of Abraham's seed cast out on account of their evil deeds and many who are not of that lineage, on account of their integrity and obedience to God's plan, will be grafted into the olive tree and become likewise sons and daughters of God and members of his household.

But before we shall become the sons and daughters of God in body and in spirit we shall have rendered obedience to his glorious Gospel which is indeed the power of God unto salvation. This reconciles the coming and development of the house of Israel, the children of Abraham, as God's chosen people. It also explains the motive for the scattering of that seed that all nations might thereby be blessed, for it was through that seed that the knowledge of the only true and living God was perpetuated in this world. It was through that seed that God has communicated to mankind; through them he has sent his apostles and prophets and they have been endowed with power from on high. They have been the messengers of God to teach the people the way of life. God's chosen people, then, are the children of Abraham through Isaac the son of promise and Jacob to whom the Lord gave the name of Israel; with them he established his covenant. Jacob became the father of twelve sons who became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel.

We live in a day when the children of Israel are again to be gathered after their long dispersion. We have heard something of the return of the Jews, the tribe of Judah, to the land of their inheritance, even Palestine; but we are not of that tribe but of the tribe of Joseph, "that bright and glorious morning star," and particularly through Ephraim, his son, and are now being gathered on this the land of Joseph, given to him and his seed as an everlasting inheritance—a land choice above all other lands, the land of liberty, even the land of America. We are of that lineage and are now being gathered, having given heed to the call of the Gospel, hearing the voice of the true shepherd, even as we did in our former estate when we were counted among the great and noble ones; but now as then, many are called but few are chosen. The natural selection still goes on.

And now comes the great responsibility that rests upon that chosen few. The Savior said, "In my Father's house there are many mansions \* \* \* I go to prepare a place for you \* \* \* that where I am, there ye may be also." When the Lord makes up his jewels which shall constitute the membership of his household you may be sure it will not be limited to those who happen to live upon the earth during a Gospel dispensation. Nevertheless the same requirements will be made of all before they can become members of his household, his sons and daughters both in body and in spirit. This must be accomplished through obedience to his Gospel and by being born of the water and of the Spirit. Those who have died without a knowledge of the Gospel may, if they are honest in heart, be converted and brought to repentance when the Gospel is preached to them in the spirit world, but even as the question arose in the mind of Nicodemus with reference to the living, "How can a man be born when he is old," the question now might naturally arise: how can a man be born when he is dead? Provision is likewise made for this in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence baptism and other ordinances for and in behalf of our dead kindred by their living representatives; "For," as we read in the scriptures, "for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." Therefore before that final judgment shall overtake the world, that dreadful day of the Lord, he has sent Elijah the prophet as predicted by Malachi, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers lest he, the Lord, should smite the earth with a curse.

It would indeed be a calamity if we should fail to do the part assigned to us in the accomplishment of the divine purpose as children of Abraham and descendants of Joseph and Ephraim, namely, performing the work for and in behalf of our ancestors who died without a knowledge of the Gospel, the work which they are no longer able to do for themselves, namely, baptisms and other ordinances in order that they too may become the sons and daughters of God, both in spirit and in body; all this, of course, being conditioned on their acceptance and obedience on the other side. Here again it is seen that God is no respecter

of persons but every child of God shall hear the glad tidings and those who believe on Jesus Christ shall be given power to become sons and daughters unto God, even as many as shall believe on him from father Adam until the latest generation of his posterity. May we be numbered among that grand assembly I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The congregation arose and sang the hymn, "O say, what is truth?"

### ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

*Of the First Council of Seventy and President of the Mexican Mission*

I am very pleased, my brethren and sisters, to stand before you this afternoon and represent the Mexican mission, as well as the Council of the Seventies. You understand, of course, that in the last six months, since I first stood before this congregation, my entire time has been spent in the Mexican mission. Because of that I shall take the liberty of telling you just a little of what we have done in that mission and what we would like to do, and then I shall take my seat.

Judged from one point of view we may say that the Mexican mission is in good shape. From another point of view we must say that it is not in good shape. Our Mexican people depend entirely upon the service that they can render others for their food and clothing, and at times like this, when industry is at a standstill, they are usually the first ones to go out of employment. Because of that fact there is considerable suffering among the members of the Church of that race, and because of that fact also thousands and thousands of the people with whom we were wont to make contact in our missionary labors have found it expedient to return to Mexico.

I think close to a hundred thousand Mexicans, perhaps, from the United States, have been repatriated, as they say, within the last year. I passed one afternoon between Laredo and San Antonio more than twenty vehicles of various sorts and sizes, laden with Mexicans who were homeward-bound, all, almost without exception, poverty-stricken and forced to retreat because of the lack of employment. That has taken out of our territory just that many prospective candidates, just that many people with whom we would like to make contact, with whom we would like to leave Books of Mormon and tracts explaining the principles of the Gospel. They are gone now from our territory, leaving, however, a great many people.

Our headquarters are in Los Angeles, and it may surprise you, just as it did me, to learn that the city of Los Angeles is reputed to be the second largest Mexican city in the world. It is, or was just recently, second only to the city of Mexico in number of Mexican inhabitants. It is quite natural then that we should retain for the time-being at least, under existing laws of Mexico, our headquarters in Los Angeles.

The Mexican people whom we have been able to baptize, most of them are a faithful and good people. Those of you who know Mexi-