

cabin'd and confin'd," and our souls reach out to grasp eternity; we feel that this is not our permanent home. We are dwelling just for the time in this flesh.

I will read to you a passage from the Doctrine and Covenants, page 331. This book contains some of the revelations from God to the Prophet Joseph Smith, a man whose name is despised and cast out as evil all over the world because he is not understood. So it was with all the prophets in their day. They were "despised and rejected of men" even as Jesus the Son of God, the Savior of the world was when He came and tabernacled in the flesh and spent His time here in mortality. But the Prophet Joseph Smith received from God a vast fund of truth. Floods of intelligence came down from the Fountain of all light to his mind, and some of the things revealed to him are in this book.

Having read the portion named from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, the speaker continued: From this we learn that every man is a free agent, and condemnation comes because he will not receive that which was made manifest from the beginning, which is light. We learn from this, too, that man is a spirit; the intelligent individual or being which inhabits the body is the real person. We read in the Scriptures that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Jesus, the Great Teacher, uttered that grand truth. Man is the offspring of God. This body came from the earth, from the elements which exist here; and these, we read in this revelation, are eternal. They were not created in the sense that some people understand the term.

The idea of people generally concerning creation is that it means the making of something out of nothing; but, as the old Latin adage has it, "out of nothing nothing comes." So it will be eternally. Nothing cannot produce something, neither can something be produced out of nothing by any being that exists. You may take this book which I hold and burn it; the elements may go off in smoke, but every atom remains. The elements are eternal, indestructible. Matter can be organized or disorganized; but the atoms remain; and these elements of which I speak, organized into human form by the process of generation, as ordained by the great Creator, can be made the abode of the spirit which comes from God, and which is eternal because it is the offspring of God; the spirit of man, placed in these elements, organized in the human form, with them constitute a living soul.

The body can be destroyed, so far as its organization is concerned, but the elements remain; the spirit, separated from the body, continues to exist. It existed before it came into the body; it can and will exist after it leaves the body. This idea with respect to the spirit existing before it came into the body may be a new one to some people; but it is an idea older than the

hills. It is an eternal truth. In this same Book of Doctrine and Covenants (page 330, 29th verse) we read that "man was also in the beginning with God," and on the same page we read, "And now, verily, I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father and am the firstborn." "Ye were also in the beginning with the Father."

According to the revelation of God to Joseph Smith, this is not our first estate. Our first estate was "in the beginning with the Father." Jesus, according to the old scriptures, was in the beginning with the Father before the world was, and so it was with us. Was not that what the Father referred to when speaking to Job out of the whirlwind? I think so. Read Job xxxviii: 1-7.

When the foundations of this earth were laid and the corner stones were brought together, when God spake and chaos heard and the worlds came into order by the power of His word through faith, "all the sons of God shouted for joy and the morning stars sang together." So we read. Who were those sons of God? We are told over and over again in the sacred record that "we are the sons of God." In his First Epistle iii. chap. 2d verse John specially mentions this. In the 9th verse of Hebrews 12th we read: "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits and live?"

This is a cogent argument. We had fathers of our flesh; they corrected us and we gave them reverence. How much rather, then, should we be in subjection to Him who is the Father of our spirits?

A great many people declare that God is unknown and unknowable, not only uncomprehended but incomprehensible. Well, I presume He is, just now, in our present condition; the finite cannot comprehend the infinite; but in some respects He is comprehensible to us by His Spirit, "which searcheth all things yea the deep things of God."

God is our Father as well as our Creator. The term "create," as I have said, does not mean to form something out of nothing. In Genesis we read that God *created* man. But he formed him out of the dust; and if God created man out of the dust of the earth, then He may have created the earth itself out of pre-existing elements. Experience and chemistry tell us that not a particle of matter can be annihilated. Its form may be changed, but the elements remain; for they are eternal.

It may be asked, why cannot we remember what took place in the eternal world if our spirits existed there in the beginning? Because the past is shut out from our memory through the spirit becoming incorporated in the tabernacle of flesh, just as it was with Jesus.

Jesus is the great pattern for us all. He was "the firstborn among many brethren." After some thousands of years had transpired He came down from above and was born of a woman, just exactly

as we are, only that we have had earthly fathers of our flesh. God was the Father of His body as well as of His spirit. He was the only begotten son according to the flesh—the first begotten according to the spirit. After undergoing the troubles and trials of this earth, and having performed His mission, He yielded up His life, "gave up the ghost"—died for the sins of the world. He knew no sin Himself, but He gave himself a offering for sinners.

When His body was taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb it did not become disorganized. It was dead, that is, without a spirit. Where did the spirit go? Some people say it did not go anywhere; they have a notion that when the body dies the spirit dies also. They believe in the spirit in a certain fashion, and that when the body is resurrected the spirit is resurrected likewise. Now read I Peter iii, 18-20.

Ministers make a great effort to try and cover this up to suit their own peculiar views, but they make a terrible mess of it. Take it as it stands and it is all clear and plain. It tells us that the people who were disobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, and who were destroyed by the flood, were shut up in prison. They were imprisoned spirits and Jesus after being put to death in the flesh went by the spirit and preached to them. What did he preach? Read the next chapter, 6th verse. These, then, were not "men in the flesh" but men who were called dead. The spirits of men who were dead shut up in prison for their disobedience, were visited by Jesus Christ, and He preached to them the same gospel which was given to men in the flesh, so that they might be judged the same as men in the flesh. When Jesus himself left the flesh, crying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," His spirit went forth and he preached the Gospel to the spirits in prison and thus fulfilled the scripture which he read from Isaiah in the synagogue, one Sabbath day. They were glad tidings that he presented to those spirits who had been in the spirit world about 2000 years for disobedience to the preaching of the Prophet Noah. They had been warned by him but had neglected the warning. Christ went into that prison house alone, He came out with a multitude; He "led captivity captive." He then arose from the dead and appeared to His disciples. In what capacity? Simply as a spirit? Oh, no. He came to them in the same body which was hung on the cross and bore the marks of the nails and the spear. Read Luke xxiv, 36-43, also John xx, 19-29.

Some people think that we Latter-day Saints are very credulous because we believe a great many things which we do not see. It is a blessed and happy thing when we can have faith in Him whom we cannot see with our natural eyes; it is a blessed thing to have faith in His promises, to lay hold upon them with the grasp of faith; they are bound to be fulfilled if we live for them.

It is the spirit that gives life to all