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LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR

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"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."—REV. 20: 12.

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DISCOURSE BY ELDER ANTHON H. LUND.

THE following discourse was delivered by Elder Anthon H. Lund at the Seventieth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints held in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, October 6, 1900:

I hope I shall be able to make myself heard by this vast congregation. I was very much interested in the remarks of our brethren this forenoon, and the subjects they touched upon are of great value and importance to us as a people. When Brother Cowley spoke he alluded to the blessings we have received in having the living word of God in our midst and the Prophet of God to lead us. It made me think, do we really appreciate this great blessing of having inspired men in our midst to lead us? Do we give heed to their counsel and advice? The brethren have dwelt upon the importance of paying heed unto the Lord's commandments to His people. When He commands, He desires His children to obey. Obedience to the Father's will is a principle that we must all learn. He has not left us in the dark in regard to what He wants us to do. I believe the Latter-day Saints have more faith and a stronger testimony than any other people. They received this strong testimony when the hands of the servants of God were laid upon their heads. They received the Holy Ghost, which leads into all truth and makes known the Father's will. So that, while we have inspired men in our midst to give us the word of the Lord, we are not dependent upon that alone. The Lord has given unto us His Holy Spirit to witness unto our spirits whether that which is given us is right or not. The Latter-day Saints who perform their duty are not in the dark in regard to the counsel which they receive. When it comes

from the servants of God unto them the Holy Spirit gives them a testimony that it is true.

Lehi of old had a beautiful dream. He saw the world spread before him. He stood by a tree—the tree of life—enjoyed its precious fruit and saw how multitudes were hurrying to get to that tree. He saw that there was a mist came down that obscured the tree of life from the view of the multitude. They wanted to reach it, but this darkness or mist prevented them from seeing it. The Lord, however, had provided means whereby they could reach it. There was a path leading to the tree and at the side of it a rod of iron. By taking hold of this and following it, although they were not able to see the tree, but believing what had been told them, that this rod led to the tree of life, many found it. But many would not take hold of the iron rod, and they went astray and did not reach the tree with its precious fruit. Lehi saw also how that the greatest number were walking on the other side of a river, which divided them from the tree of life. They went to a spacious building. He saw his own children, Laman and Lemuel, and he feared for them when he saw that they did not come where he was. His wife and his other children, shared with him the blessing of partaking of the fruit of the tree of life. This iron rod, it was explained, is the word of God. By taking hold of that we need not go astray. Although we may have to look forward with the eye of faith, holding to the iron rod we will be just as safe as if there were no mist.

We are blessed, brethren and sisters, in having the word of God in our midst; not only the written word, but also the living word of God. We are thankful that we have so much of the written word of God in our midst. While we do not look upon the Bible as many protestants do, still we have just as great reverence for it as they have. We have just as great a testimony, and greater, that it contains the word of God. We revere its contents, and we are trying to carry them out in our lives. We have testimony of the truth of the Bible from other sources, which the world do not accept, however. But the book itself proves to us that it is genuine. Its own prophecies, fulfilled since it was written, prove to us that it is a book containing the word of God. Look at Daniel's prophecy. In what a nutshell is the history of the future portrayed there? We could not any better describe it to-day, after we have followed history down for more than two thousand years. Daniel's prophecies are like history written beforehand, showing that they were inspired. The words of Jesus have been fulfilled since they were written and given to the world. In Matthew we have a clear prophecy concerning the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. How deeply I felt impressed when I sat on Mount Olivet and looked down upon the Temple ground. I thought of the prediction that not one stone of that building should be left upon another. This was uttered when Jerusalem was flourishing. It seemed an impossibility that such a prophecy could be fulfilled, but within forty years it came to pass. The Temple, built of large masses of rock, was entirely destroyed, the stones carried away and the Temple ground plowed, so as to obliterate any trace of the Temple. It was considered policy by a Roman emperor to do this, but it was the fulfillment of a prophecy of Jesus. We look

upon the Bible as containing the word of God written to those of old, but much of it in a general way applies to us.

We also believe the Book of Mormon to contain the word of God. We look at its contents and we find that it contains internal evidences of the truth that it sets forth, which also show that it is a divinely inspired book. Take the tenth chapter of second Nephi, and you will find that in that book, which was published to the world some months before the Church of Jesus Christ was organized, prophecies concerning our time. It alludes to this land; it designates it as the land of Zion and tells how the Gentiles shall come and enjoy liberty here; that there shall be no king here, and that those who fight against Zion shall not succeed. The prediction that there shall be no kings upon the land has been fulfilled even in our day. When I read of Dom Pedro of Brazil having been dethroned, and the report went forth that being so popular he might again take the reins of government over that state, I said that I did not believe that he would do so. I believed that the words uttered by Nephi, six hundred years before Christ, would be fulfilled, and that the time was hastening when there should not be any kings upon this land. When Louis Napoleon tried to establish an empire in Mexico he miserably failed, and the man who tried to become king there lost his life.

But I specially want to draw your attention to the allusion to this being a land of Zion. It here gives us an intimation of the gathering; that people should come from other nations, gather to this land, establish a Zion and that the Lord should protect them so that the enemies of Zion should not have power over her. This was years before emigration to this country took place, but the prophecy has been fulfilled. We look upon this as the land of Zion, and the principle of gathering, though a unique one, has been one that has pervaded the teachings and belief of the Latter-day Saints from the beginning. Even before the Elders in their missionary labors have said anything about a Zion, the spirit of God has witnessed to the spirits of those who have received the Gospel that there would be a gathering, that God would have a people of His own and that they would be gathered to one place. From the very beginning of the Gospel being sent to England we have evidence to prove this. I have seen in my administrations how quickly this spirit has taken possession of the Saints. And while we do not urge gathering to-day, feeling that the work will be strengthened by most of the Saints remaining in the branches for a time and helping the Elders carry the warning message of the Gospel, yet the principle of gathering is just as true to-day as ever it has been. We feel, however, that it is better for those who receive the Gospel abroad to become well grounded in the faith before they make the sacrifice of leaving their homes and their relatives, and when they are well grounded in the faith and have helped to build up the Church where they have received the Gospel, we want them to gather with us and to make a part of the great united Church of God.

We have also the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, which contains numerous prophecies that have already been fulfilled. Take the 45th Section and that alludes to the gathering. The first year after the Church

was organized this revelation was given and it plainly tells us that the people should gather from all the nations to this land, and that no weapon formed against Zion should prosper. Take the 49th Section, and what a plain prophecy it contains! So early in our history we are told that Jacob should flourish on the mountains—alluding to the people coming to the mountains and becoming a strong people here, as the Prophet Joseph prophesied twelve years after the organization of the Church.

These books we look upon as containing the word of God to us. But further, we believe that God has living witnesses upon the earth; that He has a mouth-piece upon the earth to give forth His words. Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God. His teachings prove that what he taught was divinely inspired. Some of his prophecies have been fulfilled, and others remain to be fulfilled. His predictions have not been guesswork. In 1832 he looked down and saw the fate of the nation. Earlier than that he told us the fate of the Church. Now it is reasonable to suppose that if the Lord raised up a Prophet, that Prophet would say something in regard to these two important things—the nation and the Church, and he did. He told how the Church would be persecuted and driven, and that even the blood of some should be spilt and should cry unto Heaven against those who had shed it. He prophesied that the Church should go to the Rocky Mountains, and he was so much impressed with the spirit of this that he appointed a committee to go and search for a place to locate the Saints. He did not live to see this accomplished, but we have seen this prophecy fulfilled. In regard to the nations he plainly foretold where the Rebellion should begin and what its results should be. Every one can see plainly that part of that revelation has been fulfilled and the other part remains to be fulfilled. Take the successors of the Prophet Joseph, and they have been inspired of the Lord to give His word unto the people, and we have known that it has been the word of the Lord.

To-day, brethren and sisters, the word of the Lord to us through His Prophet is that we should remember the law of tithing. It has been preached to you in many of your Stakes, and I am very happy to see the response that you have made to the call of the servants of the Lord. I hope that this will not be a temporary effect, but that you will all see and appreciate the importance of continually obeying the word of the Lord. To-day we are walking in faith; that mist which Nephi saw lies around us, but we are shown the iron rod. Let us not let go of it and think that we can follow in another direction and that we will get through any way. If you and I shall obtain the privilege of eating of that precious fruit of the tree of life, we must hold to the iron rod. When the servants of God give us His word, let us cling to it; let us obey His will, and we will have no cause for regrets. In the book of Doctrine and Covenants we are taught that no religion has salvation in it that does not ask for sacrifice. It should not be a great sacrifice to us to pay our tithing. Great blessings have been promised those who will obey this law. The experience of the Saints has been that the Lord has fulfilled His promise in this regard. Before I close I wish to say to all: if you want your faith strengthened, if you want your testimony made clearer, pay your tithing and the Lord

through His spirit will witness His approbation of your work. God bless you all. Amen.

THE UNITED STATES MARRIAGE SCANDAL.

MONEY creates in our day almost the only "class" (properly so called) left, and men and women with money are more than usually in need of excitement, and are more than usually able to procure it. When they get vicious, their wealth makes their offences more than usually interesting to that immense body of the public whose means are small. When a wife runs away from a husband who has five millions to join a paramour who has only three millions, it sets the readers of the Sunday papers nearly wild with excitement and curiosity, which are naturally increased if the husband be a decent man and the paramour a little cad, and rises to boiling-point if the cad is abandoning a wife of his own. Every detail of the wretched business is worth a round sum. But you will not find the morality of the matter much debated. What rouses the gossips more than expansion, or the Briggs case, is the question why the wife left a man with five millions for a man with only three. That the matter has a moral side has ceased to interest people. It is the business side which occupies them. They are not concerned about the wife's morality, but about her apparent want of business sagacity, especially if it can be shown that she is not such a fool after all, since the cad, besides his three millions, has plenty of diamonds of his mother's. As the cases in which these details are presented are of course rare, there is but little discussion of the general condition of our marriage laws, but that condition is well known to be such that the institution of marriage can hardly be said to exist among us, any more than in the fifth century at Rome, when twenty wives in succession was not an extraordinary allowance, even for a Christian deacon. When you see a couple living together happily or unhappily in "God's holy ordinance," you may feel pretty sure that it is not the law of the land that is causing it, but pure inclination or strong sense of loyalty, truth, and honor. Ministers, and even judges who administer the law, have no hesitation in making the law on this point a mockery, without taking the trouble to offer any excuse but personal taste or convenience. Men and women both act as if we were dwelling on a desert island, where sense of individual duty had to do the work of lawgivers and jurists.

The reason of this is plain. We allow persons who have broken their marriage vows, or wish to break them, to use the law to enable them to break them with impunity—that is, to give what is really a state of concubinage the appearance of a real marriage, and thus to escape the social stigma which is the law's best support. Any one who is tired of his wife, any wife who is tired of her husband, finds in the law an arrangement by which the veriest strumpet can put herself on a level with the purest, bravest, most constant wife. This is the literal consequence of allowing every State to have its own marriage law; and the only remedy for it is a national divorce law. Moreover, the public, with the aid of the news-