THE BOOK OF TIME

A Discourse by Elder Orson F. Whitney, Delivered at the Ensign Stake Conference, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, September 19, 1909.

(Reported by F. W. Otterstrom.)

"There are more things in heaven and earth Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." So Shakespeare makes Hamlet say to his friend Horatio. I was forcibly reminded of this proverb, a few days since, by an editorial article in one of the leading newspapers of this city, and I will take the liberty of reading here one or two paragraphs of that article, which was entitled, "A Topsy Turvy World."

"A TOPSY TURVY WORLD."

"Some of the professors of Cornell university are hunting for whatever may be interesting in Alaska, and have found that much of the vegetable product of the tropics once grew in that sun-forsaken country. Preserved in rock and coal there are palms and ferns and soft wood growths which never grow except where the torrid heat prevails. They say it proves that tropical conditions once prevailed at Nome. This must be a topsy turvy world. How could the flora of the torrid zone have been moved to the arctic circle? There is a problem which it will take Cornell university a long time to explain. Some men say the whole polar circle bears evidence of having at one time been under the immediate and intense influence of the sun. Some have declared, until very lately, that if the north pole ever were discovered, it would be found to present conditions favorable to gentle animal life, and they were educated men too. Is there a big volume of information about this old world still sealed? Are we people who inhabit the globe to find presently that we know little or nothing of its history, or shall we go through to the end with these disturbing evidences, and never get the truth about the very earth on which we live?" (Herald-Republican, Sept. 12.)

I have often had cogitations of a similar kind. But it is not my purpose to enter upon a geological dissertation. Rather has the trend of my thoughts in relation to this article, taken a spiritual direction. I have been thinking that it would be strange indeed if no better record had been kept, upon which we could rely for the true history of this world, than that which man has made for himself. We all know from experience and observation how unreliable is human testimony, even when unprejudiced and perfectly sincere.

HUMAN TESTIMONY FALLIBLE.

For instance, go into a court of justice and listen to the testimony of witnesses put upon the stand and questioned concerning the same event, the same subject, and note how their statements will differ. Honest men, good men, desirous of telling the truth, will differ from each other, and the testimony will vary according to the disposition, or the temperament, or the point of view held by the witness when he saw that particular object or event.

It is the same with the newspapers. The reporters of our papers—they are a good set of fellows as a rule—and they desire to get at the facts. That is their province, their profession—to tell what happens, not what does not happen. I believe that most newspaper men are honest, and that they desire to tell the truth as they see it; but they are not always permitted to use the facts which they secure. The policy of the paper is the determining influence. Some facts are suppressed, other facts are given undue prominence, in headlines and in context, and the reporter cannot help himself. It is the paper and its policy that are responsible for such things.

NAPOLEON AND HISTORY.

The same is true of historians. "What is history," said Napoleon, "but what imagery it shall be?" That great military chieftain, whose name was almost a synonym for victory and conquest, would call his generals together after a battle—and I suppose that all generals do the same, and that they are decided upon the accounts brought to them by their subordinates as to how the thing happened, how that took place, and how the final outcome was achieved—and the concensus of their reports made up the history of that battle—Austerlitz, Marengo, Wagram, or any other great conflict of that period. Their united impressions and statements became the history of the event. And who could dispute it? These men were on the ground; they related the story and those who read it, most of them, were not there. They were dependent upon the statements made by men of like passions, prejudices, and weaknesses as themselves. Well might Napoleon say, after sending off to The Monitor at Paris some of his accounts of famous battles lost or won—perhaps not what actually took place, but what he desired the world to believe, for he was not above practises of that kind—well might he say, in summing up, "What is history but what we agree it shall be?"

BIBLE AND BOOK OF MORMON.

And is this all that we can depend upon for the true history of our mother earth, of God's dealings with this so-called "topsy turvy world," of which we know so little? Why, the Bible itself is only a fragment, a skeleton of history. The Book of Mormon is avowedly an abridgement. We have been singing concerning the coming forth of that record, the Book of Mormon, and the unsealing of its pages to the world. What does it tell? It tells of God's dealings with the people who inhabited the western hemisphere, and predicts things that will come to pass hereafter. It has comparatively little to say concerning what happened elsewhere. The Bible gives a history of God's dealings with man upon the eastern hemisphere, and foretells some of the great things that will yet occur in relation to the human family. But it is a mere sketch, or skeleton record. We receive it as the word of God, so far as it has been translated correctly, and that is all that we can say. Many things are left unexplained—untold.

A PERTINENT INQUIRY.

Well might the intelligent writer that I have quoted ask the question: "Is there a big volume of information about this old world still sealed? Are we people who inhabit the globe to find presently that we know little or nothing of its history, or shall we go through to the end with these disturbing evidences, and never get the truth about the very earth on which we live?"

DIFFICULTIES OF A HISTORIAN.

I have had some experience as a historian; and I know how difficult it is sometimes to arrive at the truth of things. Perhaps the historian's best sources of information are the original record of events, made at the time those events occurred, but even these may contain errors. Who does not know how easy it is, while keeping a daily journal, to make mistakes as to dates, to write June for July, and August for September, in a moment of abstraction or of hurry and bustle? Who expects a newspaper to be absolutely accurate when it is thrown together in haste—a daily paper, which has no opportunity to verify all the items of information that it contains? We must make allowance for these things; we only have a right to complain when the truth is perverted and facts distorted for a purpose.

AUTHORITIES DISAGREE.

This reminds me that not long ago I read in a paper—I forget the name of it—that the murderers of Joseph and Hyrum Smith were some of their own brethren who had blackened their faces in order that they might not be recognized. It was a "new one" to me. I never heard that before. The late John Hay, former private secretary to President Lincoln, and afterwards secretary of state under President McKinley, in his account of the Carthage jail tragedy, places the responsibility for that deed upon a body of mob militia from the town of Warsaw, where the Hays lived at the time, and that body of militia, he said, was led by one Col. Levi Williams. He names the men who committed the murder, and they were afterwards tried for it. I mention this in order to show you how authorities sometimes disagree. I leave you to judge for yourselves which of these authorities is the more reliable.

A TYPICAL INCIDENT.

While I was writing the history of Utah, some years ago, I called one day upon an old pioneer, who was practically on his death bed. I asked him to tell me his story. I did not wish to depend upon the documents alone; I wanted to consult the memories of the veterans who founded this intermountain empire. I heard his story, and he said among other things: "I want you to say of me that I brought the first cow to Salt Lake valley. She followed the wagon as docile as a dog, and we had fresh milk and butter all the way. She was the only cow in the pioneer camp, and the first cow that ever crossed the Rocky mountains." "Well," I said, "that is a very interesting item, and if it be true, I will take pleasure in recording it." "Oh," he said, "it is true," and he called to his wife to bring the book in which he had recorded the incident—not at the time, but some years afterward, stating the case according to his recollection. He was just as honest and sincere as a man could be, but before I committed myself to the acceptance and use of his story, I thought I would consult again the journals of the pioneers. My own father—Horace K. Whitney—was one of them. Wilford Woodruff, Orson Pratt, William Clayton, and others kept journals, and some of these were the official historians of the camp. There, in black and white, I found a statement of the census, the complete census of the pioneer company, and what was it? One hundred and forty-three men, three women, two children, so many wagons, so many oxen, so many cows—19 cows—etc., etc., etc. Well, up went his story—"up the flume," as they say: it vanished in smoke. It was not history. Documents written at the time confuted it, and yet the man was sincere.

I mention these things merely to illustrate how far we can depend upon human testimony and human judgment. Well might the Great Judge say, "Judge not that ye be not judged." We do not know enough to judge each other, my friends, my brethren, my sisters. There is only One who can sit in judgment upon us, and be just as well as merciful. Thank God, it is before his bar that we must appear at the last, there to face the history written by the pen of the recording angel and indited by a Spirit that cannot lie, who never makes mistakes, and is not interested in perverting the truth.

THE BOOK OF LIFE.

John the apostle, after his banishment to the Isle of Patmos, had a great vision, showing him "the things that must come to pass hereafter." Beginning with verse 11, chapter 20, of the Revelation, he says:

"And I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

"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."

Not by what they had written concerning themselves, mark you; not by what their enemies had written concerning them, but by what the God of Truth had caused to be recorded.

"Man's course, God's chronicle, life's tale told true,
Nor tinged with favor's tint, with hatred's hue."

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every man, according to their works."

This is a just judgment and it is the only just judgment. What is written on the tablets of our own hearts by our own actions, that will be the judgment of the Almighty concerning us. No man can escape it; every man will testify for or against himself; and his status at the day of account will represent the judgment of God concerning him. One will fit the other.

THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS.

Something more is said by John regarding a book. In the fifth chapter of the Revelation (verses 1 to 5) you will find these words:

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book . . . sealed with seven seals.

"And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?

"And no man in heaven nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book; neither to look thereon.

"And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open and read the book, neither to look thereon;

"And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not, behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof."

Then follows, in the sixth chapter, an account of the opening of the book, seal by seal, the meaning of which was revealed by the Prophet Joseph Smith in his Key to John's Revelation, a series of questions and answers on the Apocalypse. I will read:

"Q. What are we to understand by the book which John saw which was sealed with seven seals? A. We are to understand that it contains the revealed will, mysteries, and works of God, the hidden things of his economy concerning this earth during the seven thousand years of its continuance, or its temporal existence.

"Q. What are we to understand by the seven seals with which it was sealed? A. We are to understand that the first seal contains the things of the first thousand years, and the second also of the second thousand years, and so on until the seventh.

"Q. What are we to understand by the sounding of the trumpets mentioned in the eighth chapter of Revelations? A. We are to understand that, as God made the world in six days and on the seventh day he finished his work and sanctified it and also formed man out of the dust of the earth, even so, in the beginning of the seventh thousand years will the Lord God sanctify the earth and complete the salvation of man, and judge all things, and shall redeem all things except that which he hath not put into his power when he shall have sealed all things unto the end of all things; and the sounding of the trumpets of the seven angels are the preparing and finishing of his work in the beginning of the seventh thousand years, the preparing of the way before the time of his coming."

I have read from the seventy-seventh section of the Doctrine and Covenants, containing the revelations of God to the founder of this Church. We are here informed that the dealings of God with man upon this planet, from the time of Adam and Eve down to the second advent of the Son of God and the introduction of the Millennium—that this great stretch of duration is divided into seven periods, each one represented by one of the seals of the book that John beheld—a volume that might well be termed the Book of Time.

A VAST THEME.

We must bear in mind, when we study what is called Mormonism, that we are dealing with all time, and even passing into eternity, both ways—dealing with the eternal future as well as with the eternal past. We must not allow ourselves to become entangled in trivial details. We must take as comprehensive a view as the mind is capable of taking, or we shall never understand the mighty problem of Mormonism. That is simply a nickname for a great system of religion, a great plan of salvation, "a great volume of information" covering the entire history of this planet. The earliest events that took place upon this earth have a direct relationship to events now happening, and to others mightier that are yet to come.

The gospel has been given to man in a series of dispensations, and this dispensation is the greatest of all, in that it will witness the consummation of what God has decreed. He will "complete the salvation of man" and "seal all things unto the end of all things." Our religion takes account of Adam and Eve and their fall in the Garden of Eden; it takes account of Enoch and his city that were carried into the heavens; of Noah and the deluge; of Abraham, in whom and in whose seed all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. It takes account of the patriarchs and prophets of old. It takes account of what the Savior did in the meridian of time—what he did on the eastern hemisphere, and on the western hemisphere—and it comes down to our time, when these past dispensations, with all that they signified, will be welded together and made one in this the dispensation of the fulness of times.

THE WORLD'S SABBATH.

I repeat, that this great stretch of duration is divided into seven great periods—seven days, so to speak, but each of those days is of a thousand years, and the seventh day is the thousand years of peace, the Sabbath of the world. It was to prepare for this great Sabbath that Mormonism came forth. John foresaw its coming in his great vision on Patmos. You will read in Revelation xiv: 6, 7:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

"Saying with a loud voice, fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come."

Concerning the opening of the sixth seal, John says:

"And I beheld, when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo! there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth as a fig tree casting her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind, and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

If you will consult the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, beginning at the 29th verse, you will find that the Savior perdicts the same terrible event foreseen by his beloved apostle:

"Immediately after the tribulations of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken,

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

We believe that this day has dawned, though all predicted for it has not yet taken place. The sun has not been darkened, the moon has not been turned to blood, the stars have not fallen, and consequently the Son of God has not yet come and the Millennium has not yet been introduced. The Millenium will dawn when Christ comes in glory to reign upon the earth. That will be the dawn of the Sabbath, and the morning of the first resurrection.

Some of the preparatory events have taken place. The gospel has been restored, and is being preached again in all the world as a witness unto all nations before the end comes, and the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the scattered seed of Israel—are beginning to be gathered from the nations to build up Zion upon the American continent and prepare for the coming of the Lord in his glory. This, my friends, is the significance of Mormonism. This is the purpose for which Mormonism came into the world. It is the restored religion of Jesus Christ from which the world had departed and it is a friend to all mankind. It is the gospel of salvation, not the gospel of damnation, and the preaching of this gospel in all the world is the prelude to the reign of universal peace.

And what is the purpose of that reign of peace, when Satan shall be bound, when nation shall not rise against nation, nor learn war any more; when the lion shall eat straw like the ox; when the animal world shall subsist upon the vegetable world, and no longer tear and rend one another; when peace and good will shall prevail, and man, in every other man, meet a brother and a friend? What is the purpose of it all? Why, it is said, here that in the beginning of the seventh thousand years, "the Lord God will sanctify the earth." That is the purpose of the millennial reign; it is to sanctify our mother earth, and prepare her for still greater things; for a greater change will come than sanctification. There shall yet come a glorification of the earth, and a glorification of man and the relegation of every man and of every woman to his or her proper place in eternity.

THE GOSPEL OF EXALTATION.

The gospel of Christ is not only the gospel of salvation; it is also the gospel of exaltation. We should not be content merely to be saved. All men will be saved, except a few who do not care for salvation, who receive all the means by which they might be saved and exalted, and then cast it all away, and trample it under foot. Those who cannot repent, and consequently cannot be forgiven, are the only ones who will be lost; all other souls will be saved, but they will be saved and rewarded according to their works. Christ never taught that one half the world was elected to be saved, and the other half to be damned. That is not Christ's doctrine; it is a doctrine of men—or rather a doctrine of devils. The spirit of evil must have suggested it, for it plants despair instead of hope in the heart. Men will be saved according to their merits.

"There is a glory of the sun, and a glory of the moon, and a glory of the stars." Paul taught this doctrine, and this is doubtless what the Son of God meant when he said, "In my Father's house there are many mansions. It remained, however, for Joseph the modern prophet, to make the matter clear.

DEGREES OF GLORY.

We may be saved in celestial glory, the highest of all, "where God's full presence shines;" or we may be saved in terrestial glory, which is comparable to the celestial as the moon is comparable to the sun; or in telestial glory, of which the stars are typical. Who are they that are exalted to celestial glory? According to the vision of Joseph the seer: These are they who received the gospel here, and were valiant for it, and endured to the end. Who are they that receive terrestrial glory? They who received not the gospel here, but afterwards received it, when preached to them in the spirit world. And who are they that inherit telestial glory? They who were cast down to hell, impenitent criminals, who had to pay their debt to justice before mercy could claim her own; but when they had paid the debt "to the uttermost farthing," they were released and brought forth and saved in glory greater than the finite mind can comprehend. But who profers to be saved in telestial glory, or terrestrial glory, when the great prize of celestial glory may be gained?

I was crossing the Atlantic 25 years ago, and was what they called a first cabin passenger. The ship was divided into three great compartments, the first cabin, the second cabin, and the steerage. In the first cabin there were 40 or 50 others besides myself; about double that number were in the second cabin, while in the steerage there were several hundred souls. Our food was of the choicest, our berths were the safest and the most comfortable, and we had all the privileges of the vessel. We could go down into the second cabin, and from there down into the steerage, and come back again, without question or hindrance. But it was not so with the passengers in the second cabin. They could not come up into the first cabin. They could go down into the steerage, and came back again, but that was the extent of their freedom. It was not the full freedom of the ship, and their food was not so good, and their berths were not so comfortable nor so safe, and all their privileges were restricted. Down in the steerage, it was still more so; the food was still more inferior, the berths still less comfortable, and the passengers had to stay right there in their own place. Why? Because they had paid for only that much, and the others had paid for their greater freedom and privileges. These conditions illustrated to my mind the great Mormon doctrine of universal salvation, celestial, terrestrial, and telestial—every soul saved, but saved according to its merits in different degrees of glory.

This earth, we are told, obeys the celestial law, and therefore it shall be sanctified and glorified, crowned with the presence of its Redeemer, and made into a heaven, the home of God, and of beings who have obeyed celestial law, who have lived by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. They will be exalted with the earth, and will inherit it, as celestial beings, and earth will then be heaven.

WHAT IS HEAVEN?

"What is heaven? I remember picking up, on a railroad train, a card which some pious person had left upon a seat, reading thus: "Where do you expect to spend eternity?" Some years ago a similar question went the rounds of the religious newspapers, all asking, "How do you expect to spend eternity?" One gentleman—I think he was a Presbyterian minister—answered the question in these words, "I expect to spend the first million years gazing upon the face of the Savior." Well, I commend his piety, and his love for the Lord, and I believe I love the Lord, too, but I do not think I would care to gaze upon his face for a million years and do nothing else. I do not think he would care to have me look at him that long. I want a more practical, a more common sense heaven than that. I want a better way to occupy my time than sitting listlessly, doing nothing, for a million years. I want a chance to exercise all the powers that I have been developing in this life. Otherwise this would be wasted time. I expect to spend eternity doing what I have learned, or shall yet learn, to do here; only in a higher and more perfect way. I am a lover of music. I love the harp. I love the sound of sweet voices united in song, but I would not want to play upon a harp eternally, nor listen to the singing of hymns and anthems through endless duration. I turn to the Mormon idea of heaven, as being the more reasonable, the more consistent. What is heaven, and what is hell? In one sense, heaven and hell are conditions of the mind and of the heart. If we do right, the spirit of God rests upon us, and approves of what we have done, and then how quickly heaven is in our hearts. Where God dwells, where the Holy Spirit dwells, there is heaven; and hell is where God is not. It is the opposite of heaven. Do wrong, grieve the spirit of the Lord, and you cause it to withdraw, you bring upon yourselves the condemnation of your own conscience, the light against which you have sinned; and then how quickly hell will be in your heart, and how quickly you will be in hell. But that is not all: hell and heaven are places as well as conditions. Hell is a place of departed spirits. It is where murderers go, where adulterers go, where liars and criminals of all kinds go, who refuse to repent of their sins and have them washed away. Heaven is also a place of departed spirits. There happiness and peace dwell, there sin cannot enter, all such things having been left behind, repented of, forgiven, buried out of sight, and blotted out of memory. Hell is to desire what we cannot possess, to desire to be where we have no right to be; and heaven is the realization of all our best, highest, and holiest desires and aspirations. When the heart is pure, and has nothing but good desires, to realize them will mean heaven. There are many heavens and many hells. The Prophet Joseph, while speaking once to his brethren, said "Brethren, they say they will send the Mormons to hell. Never mind," he added with a smile, "if they do, we'll turn the devils out and make a heaven of it."

This is the spirit and mission of the Gospel of Christ. It takes hold of bad things and makes them good, of good things and makes them better, and it also makes better things best. It takes a man in all his weaknesses and frailties, and induces him to repent, to have his sins washed away, gives him the Holy Ghost, kindles within him an eternal hope, and eventually exalts him into a God. It takes the earth, this crude, rudimental sphere, and converts it into a heaven, where will dwell the just and pure.

EARTH AND MAN'S DESTINY.

That is the destiny of this planet, to be made into a heaven where God will dwell, where Christ will dwell, and where peace and happiness will abound. The God who created this earth had created many earths like it, and he is applying to this planet the same principles and processes that have redeemed and glorified many similar creations. He is our Father and our God. He made us in his own image, male and female. We have a Mother as well as a Father in heaven. Had it not been so, we could not have been in their image, male and female. And we have the right, as the children of God, formed in his image, and endowed with divine attributes, to progress to that degree that finally we shall merge into a perfected state and blossom into divine beings.

This earth has labored for nearly six days—nearly six thousand years—since our first parents fell in the Garden of Eden. We are now in the Saturday night of human history, and when the morning dawns, it will dawn upon a world prepared for the coming of its King; a world that will keep the Sabbath and enjoy peace for a thousand years. God speed that day when the seventh seal of the great Book of Time shall be broken, and the Son of God, the heir of this inheritance, shall come into his own. Amen.

HUSLER'S FLOUR
KEEPS ME HEALTHY

SUMMER-DIARRHEA CURE FREE

There are few troubles about which the sufferer is given more bad advice than summer diarrhea, or "running off of the bowels." Your friends will probably tell you to take Jamaica ginger, a mixture of laudanum or some other astringent remedy. These are the very things you should not take. Summer diarrhea is caused by catching cold in the stomach or bowels or because of some unfit food or water that you took. These were germ-laden, and the germs got into the bowels and irritated them. The thing to do is to take a reliable antiseptic laxative like DR. CALDWELL'S SYRUP PEPSIN, which will promptly remove the germs and tone and strengthen the stomach and bowels and thus give them a new start. Young and old can use it with equal effect. Thousands of American families keep it constantly in the house for just such digestive troubles as summer complaint, indigestion, biliousness, constipation, sick headache, and especially for the digestive ailments of babies and children. No baby will refuse DR. CALDWELL'S SYRUP PEPSIN as it is very pleasant to take, and, unlike salts and purgative waters, tablets and pills, it acts naturally and does not gripe. A bottle can be bought at any drug store for 50 cents or $1.00, and one bottle is sufficient to keep an entire family in good health for a long time.

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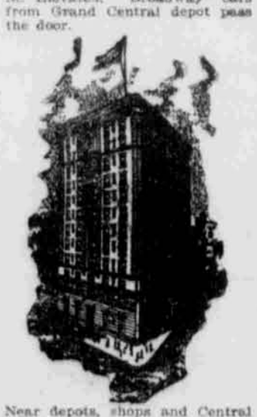

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Information regarding "The 24 Hour New Yorker" and other New York trains over "The Standard Railroad of America" will be cheerfully furnished at the Pennsylvania's New York Short Line St. Louis Ticket Office, 10th and Olive Streets, or please address:

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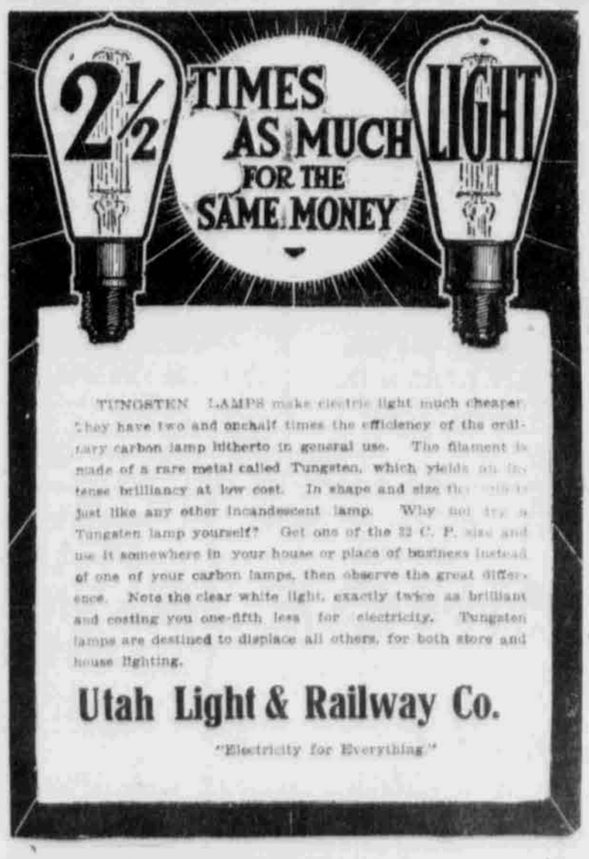

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